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Revisiting the Conrad Oeuvre an Eastern Gaze

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Revisiting the Conrad Oeuvre

An Eastern Gaze

by

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Dissertation
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For
Sara and Yusuf

Declaration

I do hereby declare that the dissertation titled "Revisiting the Conrad Oeuvre: An Eastern Gaze" submitted to the University of Rajshahi through the Department of English for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English is a product of my own research. The work sufficiently documents the references to the other works cited. I also declare that this dissertation, either in part or full, was not previously submitted anywhere for any kind of degree or title of recognition.

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Certification

It gives me immense pleasure to certify that the dissertation entitled "Revisiting the Conrad Oeuvre: An Eastern Gaze" is an original research work done by Md. Sakhawat Hossain under my supervision. This work by the researcher was not submitted in part or full to any other institutions for the award of any kind of degree or title of recognition. Ideas and quotations borrowed from other works have been duly acknowledged in this dissertation. The entire thesis is well-organized thematically and structurally, and so, I find the work worth submitting.

Therefore, I strongly recommend and forward the dissertation to the University of Rajshahi for necessary formalities and due action for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English.

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of ongoing debate about Joseph Conrad being a colonialist or anti-colonialist and a conservative or liberal European writer, the present study offers a moderate view of Conrad examining his presentation of the East and the West from an Eastern perspective. While most critics have focused on aesthetic aspects, themes of human values, treatment of imperialism, moral perspectives and narrative methods in his works, a few have looked at his portrayal of Africa and the East. In his fiction, the presence of moral question, psychological reflections of characters, critical views of empire, anarchy and revolution, fidelity to duty and human experiences has made him one of the universally acknowledged modern writers. Most critics have considered the writer a genius, except some early reviewers, who, mostly British, consider his Eastern fiction too exotic, and also, some postcolonial critics who label him as Eurocentric and racist. Creating indeterminacy these debates, nonetheless, have made him appear as an ambivalent and complex writer. Much of this ambivalence and complexity arises, however, owing to his representation of different races of people in different settings of his fiction that comprise almost every continent of the world– Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia and America; and this has given his oeuvre a magical transnational aura. Thus, this dissertation appraises Conrad as a transnational writer, and even as a precursor of postcolonial literature. Drawing on Edward Said's secular criticism, this study compares both his Eurocentric secular and contrapuntal presentation of the East with his secular criticism of the West from an Eastern perspective and offers a more nuanced point of view. It also investigates his pessimistic views about European politics of imperialism and war, Russian politics of autocracy, anarchy and revolution, and American globalization that caused widespread human suffering.

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter offers a short overview of the thesis through the objective, rationale and literature review, and develops the theoretical framework drawing on Postcolonial criticism and Said's secular criticism. The second chapter provides a short biography of the author from his childhood up to the start of the writing career and then connects the incidents of his life to his works. The third chapter examines his European perspective but at the same time traces his contrapuntal portrayal of the East and Africa, and secular criticism of imperialism. Then Chapter Four investigates Conrad's political and social views of the West, and marks his critical skepticism about autocracy, anarchy and revolution. And the fifth chapter critically views Conrad's Eurocentric colonial treatment of the East and at the same time explores his ambivalent and contrapuntal secular viewpoints. The sixth chapter concludes the thesis showing Conrad's greatness as a writer and his relevance to our time.

The dissertation also examines Conrad's characters and narrators with a view to exploring the depth of his craftsmanship. His characters dwell in the sites of struggle; they live, dream, act and face uncertainties and dilemmas of a moral world. Their life and fate evoke tragic feelings and lead the reader to a discovery of their psychological complexities. And his style is ironic and dramatic. In his stories, readers expect something but get something else, sometimes more illuminating and shocking. The unexpected thrives through the end in a kind of gloomy mode. It is neither happy in the beginning nor in the end. We never know what is to come next. But the tone indicates something unpleasant from the start. From his "Author's Notes", essays, letters and autobiographical works the reader gets to know about his theories of art, literature and criticism, and some insights into his works and philosophy of life as well. His fiction offers a plethora of life in both sea and land, East and West, and presents the struggle of a wanderer or a traveller,

a lover, an exile, an immigrant or a settler, a colonizer or a colonized. And the reader whose first language is not English, but who reads, writes, thinks or does research in this language must feel, like Edward Said, a kind of affinity with Conrad. Thus, Conrad is a case in point for the expatriate, Diaspora, exiled and non-Western writers in English, who struggle to search for meanings in their own dislocations and rootlessness.

Key Terms

East, Eastern, West, Western, Africa, Exoticism, Eurocentrism, Romance, Secular Perspective, Secular Criticism, Revolution, Anarchy, War, Autocracy, Racism, Postcolonialism, Imperialism, Socio-Cultural Representation

Abbreviations

The following abbreviated titles for frequently cited major works of Joseph Conrad have been used in my in-text citations. And full references to his works are from different editions and different publishers and they are given in the Works Cited list. I have followed the Conradian critic Allan H. Simmons's *Joseph Conrad*: *Critical Issues* for abbreviations.

AF	*Almayer's Folly*
OI	*An Outcast of the Islands*
NN	*The Nigger of the Narcissus*
HD	*Heart of Darkness*
LJ	*Lord Jim*
N	*Nostromo*
SA	*The Secret Agent*
UWE	*Under Western Eyes*
V	*Victory*
PR	*A Personal Record*

Why, then, 'tis none to you, for there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so. To me it is a prison.

—William Shakespeare: *Hamlet*

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

—Joseph Conrad: *Lord Jim*

Chapter One
Introduction
Reassessment of the Conrad Oeuvre

> "THE great English novelists are Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James, and Joseph Conrad – to stop for the moment at that comparatively safe point in history."
>
> — F. R. Leavis: *The Great Tradition*

Joseph Conrad is one of the fiction writers, who have carved a niche for themselves in the British canon of fiction, and have continued, after almost a century, to attract and influence new readers, writers and researchers both in the West and in the East. He is hailed as an inaugurator maestro novelist of the South East Asian literature in English, as about his early Eastern fiction Robert D. Hamner says that Conrad "virtually opened a new literary world" (1). His presentation of romance and the test of Western characters' morality and integrity in his fiction of the East and Africa have earned him the fame of a distinct writer. His distinct narrative style and elusive literary language have made him one of the complex but profound psychological storytellers. His deep analysis of characters' motives of action and behaviour, his critical observations of incidents and skeptical views of political events and institutions have made him an acknowledged interpreter of the maladies of our world. After the initial reviews of and responses to his works by his contemporaries from the publication of his first novel in 1895 till his death in 1924, his reception from the 1940s onwards in the critical academy has risen to an impressive height giving us today the opportunity to talk about the industry of Conrad criticism. His works even today appeal to us and help us address our contemporary social

and political issues in the midst of the rise of neocolonialism, populist theories, religious militancy and hate crime.

While Conrad's wide appeal to the Western reader is marked by his representation of an exotic East, sea life, and a pessimistic portrayal of the modern West, his massive influence to the Easter reader lies in his criticism of imperialism and contrapuntal[1] portrayal of the East. His passionate and humane portrayal of Eastern people in the Malay fiction and harsh criticism of colonialism in the African fiction, especially in *Heart of Darkness* have given him the image of a moral writer and a genius too —"Poland's English Genius".[2] Yet this very subject of his representation of the East and Africa has given rise to diverse conflicting responses to his woks initiating the postcolonial studies on him. In *Conrad the Novelist* Albert J. Guerard sets Conrad apart from other English novelists for his powerful "creation of conflict in the reader, and his fine control of that conflict" (59). Indeed, in the East and Africa, he is mostly praised or blamed for his treatment of imperialism and portrayal of the natives and the Europeans in the colonies. His dismantling of the central philosophical and political rhetoric of European imperialism is unparalleled. He has undermined the dominant ideology of white racism by delineating failed Europeans in his Malay and African fiction. Thus, he has shaken the adventure myth of Robinson Crusoe and his establishment of a European fiefdom by parodying Crusoe's survival alone in an uninhabited island through the character of Martin Decoud in his *Nostromo*, who, unlike Crusoe in *Robinson Crusoe*, commits suicide in confrontation with only a three-day loneliness in the island of Isabella. Thus,

[1] The term derived from Edward Said refers to the objective view of subject/object presented from the perspective of both the presenter and the represented.

[2] Hugh Clifford wrote an essay entitled "The Genius of Joseph Conrad" in 1904 and M. C. Bradbrook wrote the book *Joseph Conrad: Poland's English Genius* in 1941.

Conrad has appropriated the tradition of adventure fiction and colonial literature in order to show a different view of their socio-economic and political realities.

Conrad found his required inspiration and materials in the Malay Archipelago to start his writing career and he presented exotic but tragic romances for Western readers, which however appear frustrating as well as promising to Eastern readers. While European readers find their representatives in many inglorious activities in Conrad's fiction unlike in other contemporary writers' fiction, Eastern readers confront the history of Western domination, resistance and a network of power relations. Indeed, Eastern readers also realize that there was nobody to tell their tales to the world other than the Western writer. How far these tales are authentic or politics-free or politically motivated is arguably the concern of an Eastern critic. Elaine Jordan in the introduction to *Joseph Conrad*: *Contemporary Critical Essays* points to Conrad's target audience and European perspective which a reader cannot ignore at present, as Europeanism has become a sensitive term to a reader in the present world. He says:

> In late twentieth-century classrooms where English is read, Conrad's fictions raise questions about power and ethics, the power of writing and of certain perspectives, which point beyond the local and the individual. *Heart of Darkness* questions European colonization of Africa, its ideology and effects; *Nostromo* is concerned with British and US economic imperialism in Latin America; *The Secret Agent* brings comparable questions home to the great metropolis of the time, London, where the richest in suffering are poor in words. What is true of all them is that the imagined reader, whether appealed to or affronted, is European. Sensitivity about this Eurocentrism is what distinguishes recent from earlier studies of Conrad. (2)

Obviously, Conrad has raised questions about the projects of European imperialism and the rising scientific modern world. But as is obvious from the above quotation, Conrad's concern is always for the European. The present study explores this European point of view

and reassesses Conrad's treatment of the East in relation to the West through an Eastern perspective in order to put resistance to the Western dominant ideas in academic criticism drawing on arguments of Edward Said, Chinua Achebe, Frantz Fanon, Michel Foucault, Ngugiwa Thion'go, Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Dipesh Chakraborty, Talal Asad, and many other Conrad critics. Going to do so, the thesis alligns itself with Said's "Secular Criticism",[3] which critiques both Western domination and Eastern weaknesses, and marks the redeeming qualities of Conrad the writer and his works rejecting the one-sided polemics of some of the postcolonial critics. Hence, the Eastern gaze is an objective gaze, which is not just a one-sided view, as it shows, on the one hand, the colonial ideology and European secular perspective inherent in Conrad's works, and, on the other hand, the anti-imperial postcolonial spirit in their aesthetics and secular criticism of the West. Though many critics like Chinua Achebe, Francis B. Sing call him a colonial writer, critics like Andrea White, Terry Collits, Andrew Francis, Bill Ashcroft , V. S. Naipaul, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Peter Nazareth and Tom Henthorne consider Conrad a postcolonial writer. The Modern Language Association held a seminar on Joseph Conrad and titled it as "The Postcolonial Conrad". Terry Collits wrote the book *The Postcolonial Conrad: Paradoxes of Empire* in 2005. Even with reservations, Ngugi wa Thiong'o recognises Conrad's postcoloniality: "The African writer and Joseph Conrad share the same world and that is why Conrad's work is so familiar. Both have lived in a world dominated by imperialism" (qtd. in Henthorne 3). Peter Nazareth goes further to identify Conrad as a "Third-World Writer" in "Out of the Darkness: Conrad and other Third World Writers" and says in "Conrad's Descendants" that he and some other postcolonial writers such as Tayeb Salih, Lloyd

[3] Drawing on Eric Auerbach's *Mimesis*, Said in his "Introduction: Secular Criticism" of this book deems his own critical stand-point as 'secular' which is a kind of objective criticism, the business of which is to critique both the self and the other and write back to the dominant ideology. But when I say his presentation is secular, I want to mean that it is European imperial secular perspective which ignores a represented class's religious culture and identity which causes partial or complete misrepresentation; and when I say his style is secular, it is objective and critical of the dominant Western ideology.

Fernando, and Wison Harris are Conrad's descendants. However, as Tom Henthorne argues in *Conrad's Trojan Horses: Imperialism, Hybridity, & the Postcolonial Aesthetic* that it depends on how one defines postcoloniality:

> Whether Conrad can be classified as "postcolonial" depends, of course, on how one defines the term. Certainly, Conrad is not postcolonial if one uses the term only to describe the period of decolonization that mediately followed World War II since he died in 1924. If, however, following Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, one employs the term "to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day," then Conrad can be understood as a postcolonial since he addressed postcolonial directly in most of his work. (3-4)

Yet, he is not fully satisfied because under the umbrella of this definition Rudyard Kipling and Katherine Mansfield can be mistakenly called postcolonial. He also says that because Chinua Achebe began writing while his nation was still a colony, he did not suddenly become a postcolonial critic/writer the moment his nation got independence. Therefore, applying McLeod's distinguishing ideas about post-colonial with hyphen and postcolonialism without hyphen can help us determine the nature of a text or the identity of a writer. In his opinion, "Postcolonial seems more appropriate to denote a particular historical period (after empire), whereas 'postcolonialism' refers to 'disparate forms of representations, reading practices and values that can circulate across the barrier between colonial rule and national independence' (qtd. in Barabara Bush 50-51). Thus, because of his critique of Eurocentrism, empire and imperialism in the Malay, African and North American works of fiction, Conrad can be considered a postcolonial one. And Heliena Krenn's definition is, I think, more appropriate for Conrad: "Within the frame of this study 'imperialism' refers to the set of values, the sense of mission and racial consciousness that impel Western nations and their individual representatives to seek relationships with other continents which – intentionally or not – in all cases become

relations of power and dominance" (xix). According to Barabara Bush "empire" implies "expansion of states outside their territory, a widening of geographical space, either by land or sea, extending boundaries of power and influence. Empire ... inscribes social, cultural and political relations of power between the empire and its subordinated periphery" (1-2). And a postcolonial critic or a writer must address these dimensions of domination and power relation.

In the same line, Conrad can be understood as a postcolonial for his criticism of the power relations fostered by imperialism; he can be identified as the same also for his contrapuntal portrayal of the colonial world and the East. And despite being a European, he has been able to develop, to use Barbara Bush's idea, "a less Eurocentric perspective" by interrogating "empires and imperialism" (2). Thus, because Conrad is a white European he should not be outright rejected as a postcolonial one. He wrote about the colonial world and colonial encounters too, but as Andrew Francis says, "Conrad wrote about the colonial world of his time in ways that foreshadowed the postcolonial interrogation of empire" (147). Thus, this study does neither critically discard each and every view expressed about the East by the characters and narrators in Conrad's works, nor it accepts everything without critical investigation. It rather hails Conrad as an early postcolonial writer before the historical birth of the postcolonial world. This study is, therefore, like that of Said's secular criticism, self-critical and critical of any hegemonic politics too. Said's ideas about the nature of a text and criticism are worth mentioning:

> The realities of power and authority-as well as the resistances offered by men, women, and social movements to institutions, authorities, and orthodoxies-are the realities that make texts possible, that deliver them to their readers, that solicit the attention of critics. I propose that these realities are what should be taken account of by criticism and the critical consciousness. (*The World* 5)

The introductory chapter of the book *The World, The Text and the Critic* titled "Secular Criticism" by Said is influenced by Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis,* especially by his idea that "our philological home is the earth: it can no longer be the nation" (Said, *The World* 7).[4] He further says:

> His [Auerbach] essay makes clear, however, that his earthly home is European culture. But then, as if remembering the period of his extra-European exile in the Orient [Turkey], he adds: "The most priceless and indispensable part of a philologist's heritage is still his own nation's culture and heritage. Only when he is first separated from this heritage, however, and then transcends it does it become truly effective. (*The World* 7)

What Said wants to emphasize is Auerbach's trans-national position in writing his book *Mimesis* which was possible due to his exiled life in Turkey for which he did not get access to all the theories and books of the Western tradition, as he did not have any worthy library for that purpose. Both Said and Auerbach were exiled people, the former being a self-willed exile and the latter being a forced exile from the Nazi Germany, as he was a Jew. Said argues that Auerbach attained this objective trans-national character because he was away from his home; so the state of being homeless and the consciousness of remaining away from the academic influences of teaching and learning of the dominant European academies helped him achieve the truthful representation of reality and a judicious judgement on literary works. So, to dissociate oneself from one's own nationality while writing about the world, one has to forget one's location and nationality and has to become the world's citizen – one "to whom the entire world is as a foreign land" (Said, *The World* 7). Auerbach lays emphasis on a writer's complete objectivity which a writer can achieve only by going beyond the world; only when the whole world is his/her home, and when he/she truly assumes himself/herself as an

[4] Said quotes this line from Erich Auerbach's, "Philologie der Weltliteratur", to say that philology should deal with humanity and transcend national boundaries.

outsider, he or she can be a true writer and a true critic. Said calls this style and perspective of criticism "Secular Criticism" by which a writer, not being conditioned or enforced by any political or national prejudice, can speak 'truth to power", that is, can critique the dominant hegemonic ideology of a society or of the world, which is most often oppressive, exploitative and authoritarian. But to go beyond one's own culture while living inside that culture is too difficult, as culture contains the individual "by virtue of its elevated or superior position to authorize, to dominate, to legitimate, demote, interdict, and validate" (Said, *The World 9*).

Thus, Said shows the dominant culture's subtle politics of ideas, standardising norms and canons in a given culture. According to him and Foucault, to speak the truth against the dominant culture is the real task of a critic. Though, he himself is based on Western academic tradition in spite of his non-Western national identity, (as some of the theorists and critics of Postcolonialism belong to the Western academia), his ideas are as universal as the invention of medicine or the discovery of a new planet or the language of a nation, as a critic argues:

> Despite the objections many writers have raised against using the colonial language [the English language] and applying Western literary/critical tools, these [Postcolonial writers] are voicing themselves to reach a wider readership and have found ample deconstructive tools in these. Therefore, they have accepted it [the English language] the way people of all cultures and religions accept the boon of scientific invention, medicine, great philosophical ideas, or literatures keeping them outside the question of who or which nation or culture originally produced those. (Hossain 109)

However, the issue of language is the most debatable issue still today. Does the English language bear any colonial legacy? Does its use by the non-English of the once colonized countries display a colonial, privileged mentality? While Achebe advocates for the use of

the English language for a particular goal in "The African Writer and the English Language", Ngugi condemns it in *Decolonizing the Mind*. But both of them have written profusely in English and have become famous for their works written in English as it helped them attract much wider readership to make Africa heard than they could have been able to if they had not written in English. Rabindranath Tagore's translation of *Gitanjali* (*Song Offerings*) is such a case in point. Conrad had to face the same crisis and guilty feeling for his location. But he wrote in neither the Russian language, nor in Polish. Nevertheless, writing against imperialism in the colonizer's language has created uneasiness for such writers who are often aligned with colonial mentality or charged with lack of patriotism by some critics. Minnette Marrin quotes Arundhati Roy who has described the situation of such writers as "being the child of a raped mother" (Marrin). Learning a foreign language for business or practical purposes is different than using it in creative and critical works. However, people use or appropriate an idea, theory or critical tool now-a-days like that of a foreign language and technology without considering which nation or culture owns it or has contributed to its production or invention. As a religious text or a scientific invention is open to all across cultures, so are the literary tools and theories which become a part of the world heritage and transnational. Likewise, I too find reasons enough to use postcolonial theories of Edward Said and others, and I want to align my perspective with Said's "Secular Criticism" that speaks out from a neutral position to critique the dominant ideology of a discourse or narrative. Said offers in *Culture and Imperialism* his reading of Western authors and texts from a new perspective which is secular, postcolonial or transnational, albeit, ethically realistic and objective. But he likes those Western works for their intrinsic worth in consideration of themes, characters, language, style, structures and aesthetic beauty. For example, he likes Joseph Conrad for many reasons he provides elsewhere and he has written his doctoral thesis on

his short fiction; nevertheless he is not oblivious to Conrad's functioning in the British Empire and his imperialist concerns. Quoting a passage from *Nostromo*, he shows Conrad's paternalistic attitude to imperialism. When he applauds Conrad for his "prescience" of "the unstoppable unrest and misrule of the Latin American republics" (Said, *Culture* xviii) and North America's influence there, he discerns his limitations as a transnational writer:

> Conrad is the precursor of the Western views of the Third World which one finds in the work of novelists as different as Graham Greene, V. S. Naipaul, and Robert Stone, of theoreticians of imperialism like Hannah Arendt, and of travel writers, film-makers, and polemicists whose specialty is to deliver the non-European world either for analysis and judgement or for satisfying the exotic tastes of European and North American audiences. For if it is true that Conrad ironically sees the imperialism of the San Tome silver mine's British and American owners as doomed by its own pretentious and impossible ambitions, it is also true that he writes as a man whose Western view of the non-Western world is so ingrained as to blind him to other histories, other cultures, other aspirations. All Conrad can see is a world totally dominated by the Atlantic West, in which every opposition to the West only confirms the West's wicked power. (*Culture* xix)

The task of a critic is to dissect not only a text's formal structures but to demonstrate, to use Judith Fetterly's words, its "palpable design upon us" (xi)[5], that is, its political and cultural agenda. Said hails Conrad's farsightedness to think of the rise of globalization and rise of America as an Empire and at the same time criticises him for his tacit complicity in upholding the imperial tradition. Hence, this study is postcolonial in scope and approach but not limited to it only; rather, as the term "postcolonialism" itself is not a very cogent methodology deriving much of its arguments and criticality from other major theories specially Marxism and Post-structuralism, this thesis also relates to relevant ideas and arguments of other theories of literature, criticism and cultural studies, and does not

[5] Fetterly agues that traditionally literature is political and male, so it has a palpable design upon the female reader.

take up the position of a politicised or nationalist jingoistic analyst who believes in conflict paradigm and rejects everything which the Western writer has written. Rather, while it critiques and challenges some assumptions and historical imagination that are associated with the representation of the Eastern and non-Western people as subhuman, it also appreciates aesthetic aspects and humane concerns of the author.

Background

Conrad was writing at a time when Britain was the world's largest empire and she was undergoing a rapid change from the Victorian norms of complacent life, albeit with its own struggles, portrayed in the works of Jane Austen, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Charles Dickens, Rudyard Kipling, Louis Stevenson, and D. H. Lawrence to the early modern traits of anxieties, uncertainties, alienation, skepticism and dislocation presented in those of the works of T. S. Eliot, E. M. Forster, W. B. Yeats and Virginia Woolf. However, Conrad was mostly compared with Kipling, and was held as the most innovative and experimental writer of the time. The distinct characteristics of his fiction are however the effect of the European continental literature and politics on him. His fiction is marked by the combined effect of - apart from European politics within Europe – the Polish, French, Russian and English literature. And one of the chief distinguishing marks in his fiction that separates him from others is his ironic and ambivalent treatment of the existing themes of literature during that time like romance, human alienation, materialism, capitalism, colonialism, politics, revolution and war and so on. This study under this backdrop of this rising modernism examines Conrad.

Since his acceptance as a British novelist by F. R. Leavis and Thomas C. Moser, criticisms on Conrad have grown to a sprawling network inviting conflicting opinions and contesting interpretations. The early critics of Conrad's time, Ford Madox Ford, Richard Curle and others considered Conrad's greatness in respect of new literary settings, subject matter of adventure, romance and love, melancholic tone and pessimistic vision modelled on the tradition of liberal humanist criticism and New Criticism. Before the first book on Conrad by Curle in 2014, the first review on his first novel *Almayer's Folly* in *The Scotsman* appeared on April 29, 1895, the very day the book was published. This review, as John G. Peters writes in his *Joseph Conrad's Critical Reception*, "calls the book 'remarkable' and praises Conrad's descriptive powers and the unity of effect that colors the book with pathos"(1).[6] The first article on Conrad's works, however," as he writes, "is an unsigned 1896 column in The Bookman ... notes the exotic atmosphere of Conrad's first two novels" (Peters, *Critical Reception*, 1). Peters notes that early criticism and reviews on Conrad until 1930 were of "biographical/historical" and "belles lettres" type. Hugh Clifford's review in 1898 praises Conrad's works as well as points to his limitations in understanding Malays, as he himself spent quite a long time in Malaysia as a British official and knew the Malays from close quarters. Edward Garnet, the first reader of his first novel, also wrote a review in 1898 and praised Conrad's humanity, realism and style.

Ford Madox Ford was a friend of Conrad's, and a collaborator too with whom Conrad wrote two novels and a non-fiction.[7] But Ford was more reputed as a critic who inspired and helped Conrad much to get acquainted with the British literary circle. His reviews of Conrad's works and reminiscences of the author helped subsequent readers to

[6] Much of the information regarding critical reviews, articles and books on Conrad in this "background" are gleaned from this book.

[7] Conrad and Ford wrote together *Romance*, "The Nature of a Crime" and *The Inheritors*.

do researches on Conrad. Articles by Clifford "The Art of Joseph Conrad" in 1902, "The Genius of Mr. Joseph Conrad" in 1904 and "A Sketch of Joseph Conrad" 1905 made Conrad's image of a genius. As early as 1908 John Galsworthy, an author and a friend of Conrad's, praised Conrad's presentation of different societies, especially of the British society from an outsider's point of view. Ford wrote a review in 1911 refuting Conrad's foreignness and aligned him with the Elizabethan tragedians. However, it was Curle who wrote his monograph *Joseph Conrad: A Study* in 1914 on the living Conrad which initiated Conrad in the academia: "Conrad's work actually does mark a new epoch" (1). Edward Garnett discovered Conrad's talent and accepted his first novel and published it. Curle reports that Conrad told him that if his first novel had been rejected, he would never have attempted for the second one for the second time. After him Wilson Follet, an American critic, wrote a book on him in 1915 entitled *Joseph Conrad: A Short Study* discussing Conrad's humanity, warmth of temperament and search for truth. Follett was followed by Hugh Walpole who appreciated Conrad's work without much extended study. However, in the midst of so many appreciations of the early reviews, there are some disapproving critics as important as Conrad himself for they themselves are fiction writers and critics. E.M. Forster and Virginia Woolf writing in 1921 and 1918 respectively found Conrad lacking in clarity and unity. Forster says that Conrad's "genius contains a vapor rather than a jewel" (qtd. in Peters14). However, after Conrad's death some books on him were written by Polish, French and other writers. His works also got published in different languages. Ford's biography and commentary on different aspects of his life and works in *Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance* (1924) paved the way for future critics to take up studies on Conrad. Surprisingly, Conrad's wife, Jessie Conrad, also wrote a biographical work on her husband *Joseph Conrad as I Knew Him* (1926) (based on her recollection) that however has not been taken seriously by critics.

An important biographical work followed in 1927 by G. Jean-Aubry's *Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters*. After that the 1940s witnessed the first major critical work of Albert J. Guerard's *Conrad the Novelist,* a first ranked critical book on Conrad reinvigorating the vibrancy of Conrad studies. Then there followed the most classical book of criticism *The Great Tradition* (1948) by F. R. Leavis which not only makes a canon of great English writers but also provides the standard of judging writers. He is the first who has shown Conrad the highest honour including him in his book as one of the English novelists of the great tradition after Austen, George Eliot, and Henry James. Moser applauds Conrad but also points to his weak and strong works and thus initiates the debate of Conrad's declining power in his late years. Then David Warner and Douglas Hewitt wrote important monographs attempting to make Conrad popular. The political dimension of his works has been dealt with by Jacques Berthoud and Elios Knapp Hay. Ian Watt and Cedric Watts have written influential critical books and have considered him as a psychological novelist and also a realist of his own contemporary world in the later decade of the 1970s. Ian Watt's *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century* (1979) is a standard book of criticism. Then a number of biographers focus on his biographical materials. Zdzislaw Najder, Jocelyn Baines, and Jeffrey Meyers have written excellent works containing the real life references to his fictional settings and characters. Norman Sherry's *Conrad's Eastern World* and *Conrad's Western World* are very important authoritative biographies that trace the historical roots of Conrad's life and works. In the 1980s John McClure's *Kipling and Conrad: The Colonial Fiction* (1981) and Jacques Darras's *Joseph Conrad and the West: Signs of Empire* (1982) are important works regarding colonialism and imperialism in Conrad's works. *Conrad and Imperialism* (1983) by Benita Parry carries the brunt of postcolonial criticism pointing to Conrad's colonialist ideas.

However, in "Heart of Darkness: Anti-Imperialism, Racism, or Impressionism?" (1985) Patrick Brantlinger makes a synthesis between Achebe and Watts but essentially holds the text as both imperialistic and anti-imperialistic, and racist and anti-racist but thinks that Conrad shows the Victorian image of Africa and he writes: "*Heart of Darkness*, I believe, offers a powerful critique of at least certain manifestations of imperialism and racism, at the same time that it presents that critique in ways which can only be characterized as both imperialist and racist" (364-365).

John Lester investigates Conrad's religious convictions, use of religious language and imagery in his *Conrad and Religion* (1988). D. C. R. A. Goonetille's *Joseph Conrad: Beyond Culture and Background* (1990) appreciates Conrad's ability to transcend his immediate context and engage with universal truths. Heliena Krenn, Andrea White, John W. Griffith, Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan, Geoffrey Galt Harpham, Christopher GoGwilt, Jeremy Hawthorn have contributed to the Conrad Criticism significantly highlighting Conrad's use of adventure tradition, romance, imperialism and some more modern and anthropological issues. When things started to take a turn to cliché materials, in the 1970s Edward Said reinvigorates Conrad, and Achebe enunciates, to use Bhabha's idea, the third space of postcoloniality by his harsh criticism of Conrad's portrayal of Africa. D. C. R. A. Goonetilleke and Hunt Hawkins however appreciate Conrad's portrayal of non-Western people and criticism of imperialism. Arnold Kettle and Raymond Williams analyse his works from Marxist point of view which is later applied by Terry Eagleton too in *Criticism and Ideology* (1976). Robert Hampson's *Cross-cultural Encounters in the Malay Novels of Joseph Conrad,* Helina Krenn's *The Lingard Trilogy*, and Agnes S.K. Yeow's *Conrad's Eastern Vision* (2009) deal with Conrad's Eastern stories but they are more descriptive and informative than analytical. Terry Collit's *Postcolonial Conrad:*

Paradoxes of Empire (2005) and Tom Henthorne's *Conrad's Trojan Horses: Imperialism, Hybridity and the Postcolonial Aesthetic* (2008) focus more on Conrad's anti-imperialist stance and postcoloniality. Critical essays in *Joseph Conrad Under Postcolonial Eyes*, *Conrad in the Twenty-first Century*, and *Joseph Conrad and the Orient* show Conrad's lack of proper knowledge of the East but praise him nonetheless as a good writer. These essays written by different scholars from different locations, both East and West, talk about Conrad's influences on the subsequent writers and relevance to their own times.

The critical background thus provides a good number of themes and domains of study. Many critics have either praised Conrad as an anti-colonial writer or charged him as a colonial writer because of his novella *Heart of Darkness*. Critics have written on other books too, but they more often judge Conrad by this widely read text. Hence the essential Conrad is not viewed by those who focus only on *Heart of Darkness* and its critics. But ironically, as Terry Collits argues in *Postcolonial Conrad: Paradoxes of Empire*, this controversy has "enhanced rather than damaged" his canonical status (1). Of late, both Acheraiou and Agnes Yeow marked in his works an authorial ambivalence which they think keeps Conrad ever present in the critical arena. And truly most writers, as Collits says, invoke Conrad either for praise or blame: "was Conrad for or against European imperialism, and in his representation of non-European peoples was he even-handed or in fact deeply racist" (*Postcolonial Conrad* 3)? Said says in this regard that "Conrad was both anti-imperialist and imperialist, progressive when it came to rendering fearlessly and pessimistically the self-confirming, self-deluding corruption of overseas domination, deeply reactionary when it came to conceding that Africa or South America could ever have had an independent history or culture" (*Culture* xx).

But Conrad's larger contribution, which these critics overlook, is his introduction of a new narrative, a new literature, albeit literature of adventure and romance but not fully imaginary; rather, his new literature of the Borneo region is realistically humane. Also, they tend to overlook Conrad's European secular perspective that criticises the dominant European ideology on the one side, and presents a secularised East on the other. Before the advent of the South-East Asian literature by Conrad, there were other writers who produced literatures on India and imperial outposts: Aphra Ben, Eliza Fay, Daniel Defoe, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Rudyard Kipling, D.H. Lawrence, Somerset Maugham and E. M. Forster. These English writers and many other French and European writers helped form imperial notions and cultures through their fiction. Among them Aphra Ben was more concerned with slavery and revolts of the slave; Austen, Dickens and Lawrence with the positive effects and benefits of empire; and Kipling and Forster with a liberal colonialist ideology. They along with Fay represented India and revealed Indian experiences from an imperial eye, sometimes racist, sometimes colonialist and at times humane. Thus, "...stories are at the heart of what explorers and novelists say about strange regions of the world; they also become the method colonized people use to assert their identity and the existence of their own history" (Said, *Culture* xiii). Though the native people assert their identity through these local stories, Said says, these are often blocked by the colonial administrator's narratives which are culturally formed by novelists of the age of empire. Said further argues, "The power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism" (*Culture* xiii). According to Said,

> Culture is a sort of theatre where various political and ideological causes engage one another... Far from being a placid realm of Apollonian gentility, culture can be a battleground on which causes expose themselves to the light of day... students who are

> taught to read their national classic before they read others are expected to appreciate and belong loyally, often uncritically, to their nations and traditions while denigrating or fighting against others. (*Culture* xiv)

Slavery, colonialism, patriarchy, war, racial oppression and imperial subjection are all parts of different cultures addressed, criticized but often patronized for follies of national and racial superiority by writers of literature, philosophy and science. Conrad is, however, neither a conservative nor a liberal colonialist; he does not, like Forster, Kipling and others, believe in the benevolence of colonial ideology nor does he believe in coercive methods to be applied to rule the native and perpetuate domination. Rather, his skeptic ideas about the colonial administration and efficacy have given birth to his ambivalent position. Like Eliza Fay he tells the stories of the unsuccessful colonizers but does not hold the natives as unfaithful and docile.

While the other writers, to some extent, have represented the East, particularly India and the Malay Archipelago, to study the Oriental people with a motive to better govern them, Conrad has not done so; rather he has shattered the central ideology of imperialism, that is, the colonial white racism. When Forster deems the Marabar Caves in *The Passage to India* as something ominous and threatening to the relationship between the Indian and the English, Conrad blames the ideology of white supremacy, their business motives and oppressive measures. As all colonialist writers and ideologists believing in the Darwinian idea of 'survival of the fittest' (It is no coincidence that Darwin comes up with this theory in the heyday of imperialism) hide the fact of colonial loot and plunder, Conrad blatantly exposes these two hidden motives of economic advantage and sexual fantasy, in *Heart of Darkness* and in the Malay fiction. Even Bacon's "Of Plantations", Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* try to

establish the idea and justification of colonial domination and search for the ways to make that possible. Their ideas seem philanthropic as Shakespeare's Prospero in *The Tempest* protects Ariel and his daughter from the savage Caliban, Robinson in *Robinson Crusoe* saves Friday from his fellow cannibals; but they have overlooked the native perspective that by saving them they become their masters. Thus, the idea, that colonial rule is a blessing for the natives, was a mere rhetoric to justify the colonial rule. Thus, these writers contributed to the expansion of the British Empire. Fakrul Alam says in *Imperial Entanglements and Literature in English*, "Initially, the thrust for an English Empire came from the commercial-political needs of the English but their writers were always at the forefront of their colonial ventures" (1). He argues that writers like Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Francis Bacon, and Daniel Defoe supported overseas expansion of the British Empire though Swift and Burke expressed their anxiety, as they were Irish.

Thus, how much Conrad contributed to this ideology of the empire that was so strong during his time has been a matter of debate. Obviously, being a member of the British merchant marine service and a European writer, he may have upheld the dominant ideology. But he has also undermined some of this dominant ideology in his works for which he has been called an ambivalent writer. The point of dichotomy is that he treats the Oriental people as humans equal to the Europeans, but while describing them for European readers, he uses the existing corpus of terminology generally used by other European writers. After the inconclusive debate about Conrad's convergence with or divergence from colonial mission and rhetoric, some critics in line with Said find both colonial and anti-colonial elements in Conrad and thus trace ambivalence, though most of them have considered him as a writer of Western/European perspective. Critics' ambivalent responses to Conrad as an ambivalent writer give, to use Bhabha's idea, a new

space to talk about colonial themes beyond the Western and native perspective. This indeterminate position creates, to use Derridean idea, the un-decidability of his texts and hence infinite possibilities of meaning. Texts produced during the period of imperialism, as Said argues, are not free of politics of race and culture, and thus those texts should be looked at from the perspective of 'secular criticism' that will read a text beyond the dominant established Western view. The present work in line with this Saidean critical tool attempts to look at Conrad's works from an Eastern perspective. In this connection, Maswood Akhter's view of postcolonialism in his "Pre-musings: On Doing Postcolonialism" is illuminating:

> Postcolonialism tends to claim itself to be a disciplinary project devoted to the task of examining the processes and effects of, and responses, resistant or otherwise, to European colonialism from the sixteenth century up to the neo or covert colonialism of the present day….Over the years it has come to represent a certain holdall, if you like, of different theoretical perspectives, attitudes and styles, besides signifying a huge academic industry the centre of which is to be found primarily in the West. (32)

Akhter has described the scope of this perspective from colonial to neocolonial reality and also points to its centre, that is, its Western origin and base. The debate also centres on this new perspective with which the colonial writings are critically viewed. The theory on which the scholars of the East now depend in order to critique the Western paradigm is also Western in origin, as proponents like Edward Said and others are based in the West, which is the centre. In this circumstance Maswood Akhter advocates for a new kind of postcolonial vision:

> [T]o cultivate our own creative and critical traditions….interpreting ourselves to ourselves is perhaps more important than interpreting ourselves to the West. It is not that the present postcolonialism is useless, but it is, as we can see, not useful enough for our purposes; it does not take postcolonials far enough on the path to their own self-recovery as autonomous subjects. ("Pre-musings" 47)

Hence, in order to create our own critical tradition we must not reject all Western literature and critical tools; rather we should utilize the best of the Western tradition from our engagement with Western literature and criticism, the aim of which would be to achieve inclusive and autonomous literary and critical tradition of our own free from colonial mindset, and its positive outcome would at least be felt by the generations to come. The issues of centre and periphery in postcolonial literature and criticism are linked to the theory of domination of one country or one culture over another; the Western domination of the East is therefore a part of the history of "Empire". Then it appears that Western tools are appropriated by postcolonial critics based in the West or East.

True it is that colonization has been present in the world since the ancient period, whereas the Western Empire dates back only to the early seventeenth century. It can be understood that the earlier civilizations were not so interconnected and advanced in liberal tradition, so they could devise a theory of conflict like that of Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations*. But when the present world sticks to these theories of war and conflict in this era of science and technology, liberalism and democracy, it is not hard to find the vested interest of such theories. Undoubtedly, Europe greatly benefitted from colonization, first economically and politically, and then culturally, with two myths justifying their rule/misrule over the colonies. The first one is the civilizing mission of the imperialist; the second one is the theory of their degeneration in the form of '*Troppenkollered*' (a German word which means "maddened by the tropics") and consequently, the colonizer's fascination with the native/ savage culture, whose echo partly can also be found in Ecocriticism and Ecopsychology.[8] These two theories were

[8] These theories state that human's actions are influenced and determined by the natural environment. Therefore, humans are not fully responsible for their misdeeds, rather the foul weather, the extreme and unbearable heat or sunlight or cold or atmosphere of fear and anarchy may be the cause of actions.

put forward to quarantine the colonist's inhuman oppression and amassing of wealth. The hypocrisies, follies, failures and evils of these white people were sidelined or camouflaged by their feigned madness, which was, as they said, the effect of loneliness, tropical wilderness and savage people. No wonder, it was a kind of mere rhetoric, a pretext. It is the fear of the other, that is, the fear of the native's retaliation which makes them resort to force or violence. This rhetoric was not only propagated by various means of media and communication, but also by literature. Kipling's use of the word 'child' as a metaphor for India implies that the colonized people must be treated as a child whose demand and desire for freedom should be deemed unreasonable and who must be under the guidance of an authority, without which these children would not behave properly and could pose a threat. Likewise, Forster's India is a 'muddle', an enigma, an unintelligible place governed by irrational forces. Thus, no study would be proper without considering the reciprocal impact of empire and literature on each other. Though "Imperialism", as Fakrul Alam writes, "is usually viewed negatively and with good reason the word evokes images of exploitation, oppression, and enslavement and calls to mind a host of jingoistic and racist attitudes ..." (*Imperial Entanglements* 94) the study of its impact on the colonized as well as the colonial nations, that is, the third world countries and the West is undeniably immense. And truly, as Mr. Alam says, "… imperial entanglements and colonial encounters … seem to be attractive areas of doing analytical work" (*Imperial Entanglements* 94). Thus, it would be a prejudiced view to entirely depend only on the postcolonial writers of the once-colonized nations and also on the Diaspora writers. As Akhter suggests, instead of having a mode of ready acceptance or rejection of the Western texts, there should be exchanges in which neither we would be victimized by the West nor be victimizers. However, an exchange, which emerges from the colonial/postcolonial hybrid culture is, never, according to Amar Acheraiou, possible and

gives rise to "…a twisted, multilayered imperial tale of forced encounters and unequal relationships" (2).

Usually, when Western writers write about the orient, they cannot see the abnormality of Western domination, and they, to use Homi Bhabha's words, give normality to "the hegemonic structures of power" (*Location* 242) and "normality to the uneven development and the differential, often disadvantaged, histories of nations, races, communities, peoples" (qtd. in During 190). Conrad's portrayal of the East is seen from this kind of perspective of Bhabha that critically probes into the uneven forces of cultural representation. Conrad's involvement in European imperial politics and South East Asian commerce shapes his presentation of the East. And an Eastern gaze inevitably, with reference to both Western and Eastern critics' study of Conrad, attempts to find out Conrad's limitations and strengths in the treatment of the East in relation to the West.

Thesis Statement

Conrad's portrayal of the East and the West is Eurocentric and secular but critically contrapuntal and transnational because of his profound moral concern.

Objective of the Study

Keeping in view that the nature and approach of Western literature and criticism mostly from the eighteenth century to date is predominantly secular, the main objective of this research is to examine Conrad's portrayal of the East from an Eastern perspective to see how much objective or prejudiced Conrad has been in representing the East and the non-European against that of the West. Conrad's construction of the East is a three-fold

combination. First, his own continual visit and short stay in the Malay Archipelago, Singapore and Bangkok inspired him to take pen to represent those "far off people". Second, he was influenced by the contemporary adventure fiction, Orientalist discourses, Western secular education and literature, reports and stories on and of the East. And finally, his remote connection with British imperialism due to his own service in the British Merchant Marine and his own childhood experience under the colonial Russia shaped his response to the East and European imperialism. My objective is, therefore, to examine Conrad's narratives from an Eastern perspective, by which I mean, as stated earlier, an objective way of critically and politically reading Western literature on or about the East and other non-Western world. In so doing this study critically views Conrad's perception of Western as well as Eastern racism, and colonial, anti-colonial and postcolonial issues. How Conrad has contributed to the advent of postcolonial literature and criticism, for which he can be called a forerunner of Postcolonial Criticism and Literature, is also examined. Daniel Vogel says that "Most contemporary scholars see Conrad as being one of the first postcolonial writers – someone who criticized the ruthless colonial expansion of European empires and the concept of the 'White Man's Burden'" (97). Thus, the thesis focuses on Conrad's European secular perspective, his empathetic feeling towards the East and moral criticism of racism, imperialism, modernism, anarchy and war.

Scope

Though the title of the thesis suggests a study of the representation of the East and Eastern characters, it has a wider scope than that. First, as the novels were written during the high tide of British imperialism, the study addresses the themes of colonialism and imperialism in Conrad's fiction. As different characters' dreams and illusions are

dramatised with tragic ends, it would be a study of the marginalised people. Relation between the colonizer and the native ranges from their business relation and social relation to power relation, and this study would critically probe into its intricacies. Conrad's Eastern fiction portrays racism and economic exploitation and shows the clash of interests and rivalry for monopoly of trade and power among various stakeholders - the native Malay, the Dutch, the Arab, the Chinese and other minority groups of the neighbouring places of the Malay Archipelago. Apart from political and business rivalry, the social life and interaction among various groups necessitate the study of hybrid culture. As the author under study is a European, his location, his involvement in the East and his own exilic life under Russia would be considered to examine his works. And from his debut as a novelist up to the present time, the relevant criticism and the debate concerning him in the Postcolonial studies will be addressed. His understanding of the Malay Muslim culture, his first- hand experience as a seaman serving in the British Empire and his knowledge gathered from different sources about the East would be taken into consideration to politically and culturally read his long and short fiction. Thus, a kind of cultural study will also be done to view how much he has been able to portray the truth without any Western bias in his treatment of the East. On the other side, as the thesis focuses on his complete works of fiction, it critically looks at his Western novels and short stories and comments on his treatment of European politics. Along with many other themes that will come by way of references, this study focuses on Conrad's relevance to our time.

Theoretical Framework

The Eastern gaze, by its essential geopolitical location, is a mode of interpretation resistant to the influence of Western paradigm of representation of the non-Western world in the historical context of European imperialism. However, this particular gaze, a

viewpoint, though focuses on the myopic vision of the Western writer's portrayal of the East, the failure or success of this portrayal in terms of faithful or truthful representation of realities and its extent, also acknowledges the writer's merits, concerns, humanitarian qualities and contributions to literature on the East. This stance probes into the narrative view-points of the portrayal of Eastern people and their culture, here albeit, of those places of Malaysia, Singapore, Bangkok and Indonesia which have been the settings of his fiction. This Eastern viewpoint is postcolonial in perspective and draws on Said's secular criticism. While modern Western life is secular in spirit, the mainstream of the Eastern life is grounded on religious faith and practices. In fact, Western literature is secular in its art of representation. And when the same mode of representation is applied to the East, a misrepresentation is likely to arise. In her *The Critique of Postcolonial Reason* Gayatri Spivak offers a new perspective to read colonial literature, that is, literature produced during the historical colonial period. She writes, "Colonial Discourse studies, when they concentrate only on the representation of the colonized or the matter of the colonies, can sometimes serve the production of current neocolonial knowledge by placing colonialism/imperialism securely in the past, and/or by suggesting a continuous line from that past to our present" (Spivak 1).

Spivak here advocates for a study that will not only look at the representation of the colonized but also the colonial masters. Conrad has portrayed both the colonized and the colonial, so an Eastern or a Postcolonial study, according to Spivak, should concentrate on a study of both of them. The Malay world depicted by Conrad, a man from the West, must be fraught with the European dominant ideology of the late Victorian and Early Modern period. One such dominant ideology is the rise of secular thoughts embedded in Europeanism separating religion from public and state life. This ideology

had been born out of the six hundred years of contest between the Church and the sovereignty of the state (King/Queen), and then between the Church and the Parliament in Europe, particularly in England. The quarrel between the medieval church and the King was settled not by any public opinion or peaceful means but on the point of the sword. In England the murder of Thomas Beckett by King Henry II at Church of Canterbury in 1170 is the prime example. But the Magna Carta (1215) during King John's time and the Great Charter during Edward III in 1337 paved the way for Henry VIII's dissociation of the English Church in 1533 from the Roman Pope and then for the Puritan Revolution and the Commonwealth in 1949 under the Lord protectorate of Cromwell. Then the democratic culture started after the bloodless Glorious Revolution of 1688. Religion was gradually sidelined; so was the power of the monarchy. And the West after the French Revolution of 1789 gradually felt the necessity of the cessation of the monarchy, and the establishment of the parliamentary form of government keeping in some places monarchy just as a tribute to tradition. Under the background of these political changes, both the rise of the novel and the rise of empire took place. Firdous Azim in her *The Colonial Rise of the Novel* states:

> The birth of the novel coincided with the European colonial project; it partook of and was part of a discursive field concerned with the construction of a universal and homogeneous subject. This subject was held together by the annihilation of other subject-positions. The novel is an imperial genre, not in theme merely, not only by virtue of the historical moment of its birth, but in its structural form — in the construction of the narrative voice that holds the narrative structure together. (30)

Thus, the conflict between science and religion, religion and literature, and science and literature arising gradually from the Renaissance period raged the entire Victorian period which caused the triumph of scientific ideas and secular thoughts of Charles Darwin and other social thinkers like Rousseau, Voltaire, Marks, Hegel, Nietzsche and the existential

philosophers. Nevertheless, the early secular mode which is often called, to use Neelam Srivastava's phrase in *Secularism in the Postcolonial Indian Novel* the "rationalist secularism" (18) that sent religion to private affairs and rationalism to public one was accepted by European people and writers as it helped them avoid sectarian violences. Moreover, the conflict between scientific truth and biblical claim, like that of the Earth's rotation, shook the foundation of people's faith in Christianity or the Bible to some extent. Many Christians in Europe seeped the panacea of secularism sending religious life to the private sphere. Today, the West is largely identified as secular, but most of the Western people call themselves Christian. Graeme Smith in his *A Short History of Secularism* stresses this fact and argues that the Western secularism is in essence an offshoot of Christianity and, therefore, an integral part of it. He suggests that most of the Westerners believe in God and in Christianity but they have dissociated themselves from the Church and its services. Instead, they value the goodness of God and hence they want "to be and do good" (3). He says:

> In the Western secular society we talk about good deeds and on the whole we are charitable to our neighbours and those in need. But in public we do not talk much about Christianity. We can be generous and caring without at the same time needing to sort out the details of the doctrine of atonement. Secularism in the West is a new manifestation of Christianity. (2-3)

In *A Secular Age* Charles Taylor says that "secularism is an old category of Christian culture" ... "developed within Latin Christendom" (2).The present claim of superiority of the West over the East however rests on this secular conception of the state and public life. The West being secular is considered rational, and the East not being secular is deemed irrational.

Conrad's life does really follow this change. In his father's funeral, as Conrad's grandmother describes, "with bitter tears, he prayed for the soul of his father kneeling between the priest and the nuns, until at length Mr. Buszczynski took him away and pressed him to his heart" (qtd. in Baines 24). But in later growing years, he never took part in any Church activities, though occasionally he uttered the name of God or Christ. Neither does he show any concerns for Christianity through narrative voices in any of his fictional or non-fictional works, though some of these contain a lot of biblical references, as Dwight H. Purdy shows in *Joseph Conrad's Bible*:

> Whether appreciating the work of others, describing his own imaginative experience, or wrestling with theory, Conrad turns for his metaphors to the English Bible... For another, perhaps only in the Bible could Conrad find metaphors of commitment equal to his own. His scriptural metaphors for writing do not imply a theory of the religion of art. Nor are they meant to suggest that art can be a surrogate for the religious experience. They certainly are not meant to advocate a Christian idea of the temporal and spiritual functions of art. (11)

Purdy demonstrates Conrad's knowledge of the Bible and extensive use of biblical language and references in his *The Secret Agent*, *Under Western Eyes*, *The Rescue* and in some other texts. But he does not do so for any kind of Christian teaching or religious purposes. Purdy speculatively considers Conrad an agnostic and says that "it would be reckless to speculate merely from Conrad's fondness for scriptural metaphor about the nature of his religious sensibilities... The usual terms – skeptic, agnostic, Christian – will not do to describe so dualistic a mind" ("Peace" 91).Thus, though Conrad noticed the Malay Archipelago as predominantly a Muslim society with other religious groups like the Chinese and the Hindus, he did not think it important to portray the details of their religious, cultural and social lives, which the secular Western reader may not like to read. Conrad's writing career started towards the end of the Victorian period, as *Almayer's*

Folly, his first novel was published in 1895. It was the time when Europe had almost changed into a secular society from a Christian one. But this secular mode was not separate wholly from the Christian one, as most of the secular principles were deployed according to the dominant Christian creed, that is, Protestantism. Peter L. Berger's argument is worth mentioning here: "Protestantism served as a historically decisive prelude to secularization" (118). He further argues that historically "... the roots of secularization are to be found in the earliest available sources for the religion of ancient Israel. In other words, we would maintain that the disenchantment of the world begins in the Old Testament" (Berger 18-19).

Thus, the Western claim, that secularism is a concept beyond religion and an alternative to religion, is not genuine. Talal Asad and Wendy Brown also claim the link between Christianity and secularism. Wendy Brown says:

> "Secular" can suggest a condition of being unreligious or antireligious, but also religiously tolerant, humanist, Christian, modern or simply Western. And any effort at settling the term immediately meets its doom in the conflicts among these associations, conflicts epitomized by the recent phenomenon of an American neoconservative political agenda that simultaneously sought to legitimize Christian prayer in American public schools and to make secularization a central tenet of the regime change project in the Middle East. Indeed, today the secular derives much of its meaning from an imagined opposite in Islam, and, as such, veils the religious shape and content of Western public life and its imperial designs. (*Critique Secular* 10)

Therefore, as Brown suggests, secularism has been a Western tool to devalue other religions, especially Islam more than Christianity and a weapon to establish imperial control. Saba Mahamood in her interview with Seda Altug also says that "European secular identity does not transcend Christianity; on the contrary, it presumes Christianity as the ground from which secular European identity emanates. Many key theorists – such

as Charles Taylor, Marcel Gauchet, and Jurgen Habermas – take Europe's Christian heritage to be crucial to the birth of secularism as well" (138). Therefore, European enlightenment, reformation, industrial revolution, scientific progress and modernism – all these have their roots in Christianity. This way the ideas of democracy, freedom and enlightenment are aligned with Christianity and the West; by contrast, autocracy, repression and backwardness are with Islam and the rest of the world. Thus, these authors point to the failure of secularism to ensure non-discriminatory treatment by citing examples of Israel and the USA. When sectarianism was erased from Christendom because of secularism and industrial capitalism, it has been created in the Muslim world in the modern high era of secularism and immediately after the cessation of official imperialism. Many critics argue that secularism has worked in the West, especially in Europe properly whereas it has failed in the East and non-European world which is still torn between a secular world view and the traditional, cultural or religious one. Saba Mahmood thus argues about the failure of two imaginary projects in the third world countries: one is the anti-colonial, postcolonial nationalist vision and the other secular vision. The first one, she claims, has failed "to deliver us from subjection of Western power and national elite, in order to create a more just, democratic, and equitable society"; the second one has failed to make us "overcome the inequalities that religion had spawned and create a society without trenchant religious hierarchies" (*Mahmood* 140). Thus, these two imaginaries "no longer characterize our horizon of expectation" (Mahmood 140).

Thus, Conrad's treatment of the Eastern people, based on his limited experience and large scale media information, is also influenced by a secular outlook. While Malay people are mostly religious, Conrad does not focus much on their religious ways of life. A

surface knowledge of Islam and Muslim culture often appears, but the mainstream life of the region is absent. A secularised version of the Malay world is presented against a massive practicing Muslim society. The subalternist, Dipesh Chakrabarty "characterizes the life of the subalterns as nonsecular and nonmodern; therefore, to think of subalterns in literature through the very secular and modern lens of realism may appear... to refuse to take them on their own terms" (qtd. in Chakraborty 6). Therefore, a true representation of the dalit or marginalized people is not possible through a Western secular perspective. Conrad's depiction of the East is influenced by this Western tradition, in which most of the authors tend to generalize as E. M. Forster says in his *Aspects of the Novel* that a character's nature in a novel is "conditioned by what he guesses about other people, and about himself, and is further modified by the other aspects of his work" (44). William W. Bonney in "Eastern Logic under my Western Eyes: Conrad Schopenhauer, and the Orient" says, "Appropriately, there are no unadulterated practitioners of oriental religions in Conrad's fiction, though there are many allusions to these religions made by Western characters who remain, however, tenuously and unauthentically, within a Western context" (233).

This type of construct of the East as the image of the antagonist of Western civilisation by most of the Western travellers, colonial administrators, fiction writers, and historians was created on the basis of these writers' partial knowledge or mere guess and it did the privileging of the West. European writers have portrayed the East the way it suited them for their political ends. They have studied the characteristic temperament and belief systems of the Eastern people, their strengths and weaknesses. This knowledge of the subject races helped imperialism function properly. They have portrayed the East as "the other", "the foil". The empire opened up new domains of knowledge and sparked the

Western writers' imagination to the creation of an exotic other and a hybrid culture in which the European culture intrudes slowly among the indigenous culture because of the rivalries among natives that helped them establish monopoly of trade and colonies. This idea of colony further gave the European to explore more ideas both moral and political to extend their stay and rule in the colonies. This resulted in the concept of the other, as Fanon, Said and many postcolonial writers have talked about, which helped to create the modern Europe and the West. Fanon says In *The Wretched of the Earth*, "Europe is literally the creation of the Third World" (81). Robert Young, known as an Oxford literary critic, says in *White Mythologies*: "European thought since the Renaissance would be as unthinkable without the impact of colonialism as the history of the world since the Renaissance would be inconceivable without the effects of Europeanization" (158)

This Western representation politics is examined in detail in *Orientalism* by Edward Said who argues that "[K]nowledge of subject races or Orientals is what makes their management easy and profitable; knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge, and so on in an increasingly profitable dialectic of information and control" (36). Further, in his *Culture and Imperialism* Said reads European writing on the East and other non-Western world politically:

> European writing on Africa, India, parts of the Far East, Australia, and the Caribbean; these Africanist and Orientalist discourses, as some of them have been called, I see as part of the general European effort to rule distant lands and peoples and, therefore, as related to Orientalist descriptions of the Islamic world, as well as to Europe's special ways of representing the Caribbean islands, Ireland, and the Far East. What are striking in these discourses are the rhetorical figures one keeps encountering in their descriptions of "the mysterious East," as well as the stereotypes about "the African" ... mind;" the notions about bringing civilization to primitive or barbaric peoples, the disturbingly familiar ideas about flogging or death or extended punishment being required when "they" misbehaved

> or became rebellious, because "they" mainly understood force or violence best; "they" were not like us and for that reason deserved to be ruled. (xi)

According to Said, these discourses defined the East in a way as if the Western writers were the creators of the East, and so they, without much knowledge about the history and culture of the East, without intimately mixing with the people, without participating in their cultural events and without having lived experiences, have described, portrayed, evaluated, and represented them with a pride of superior knowledge. And he like Foucault explores a significant relation between knowledge and power and argues that for a successful conquest of a place it is necessary to have the knowledge of the people of that place. The preceding quotation can be found very much pertinent even if we only analyse it in the light of *Heart of Darkness* that shows the European people's mindless brutality in keeping the black African chained, unfed and terrified. When Marlow was going to the Company's station in the Congo, he saw "a boiler wallowing in the grass", "an undersized railway-truck lying there on its back with its wheels in the air", some pieces of "decaying machinery", and "a stack of rusty rails" (*HD* 42). He then saw:

> Six black men advanced in a file, toiling up the path. They walked erect and slow, balancing small baskets full of earth on their heads...Black rags were wound round their loins ... I could see every rib, the joints of their limbs were like knots in a rope; each had an iron collar in his neck, and all were connected together with a chain whose bights swung between them, rhythmically clinking... these men could by no stretch of imagination be called enemies. They were called criminals..."(42-43).

Although exploitation and brutality were extreme in the Belgian Congo, it was often argued that the British, French, Dutch and Portuguese empires were a bit liberal and progressive. But their preconceived image of the natives as savage was common, and the colonial discourse spread it more as Pramod K Nayar in *The Postcolonial Studies Dictionary* writes:

> Colonial discourse in the numerous studies that followed that of Said is seen as offering particular kinds of images of the non-European: as savage, effeminate, primitive, vulnerable, child-like, superstitious, illiterate, apolitical, etc. It represented the land as empty (terra nullius, in case of Americas, Canada and Australia), savage (Africa), once-glorious- but- now-decadent (India). Such representations, in the manner of all discourse, circulated powerfully and became (i) the rationale and justification for colonial rule since, according to this unchallenged discourse, the natives are savages and incapable of ruling themselves; and (ii) accepted by the natives as the true representation of themselves. This second was a very insidious means of imposing colonial rule because this discourse, once it was accepted by the subject, presented the colonial rule as necessary, benevolent and natural. (32-33)

Nayar talks about how the empty lands were colonized and ruled through certain discourses that involved empty rhetoric of development to hide the economic motive. He also shows the effect of such discourses on the colonialists, that is, people of the mother country: "Another consequence of this discourse can be traced to the self-representation of the English – as heroic, just and fair – that they themselves imbibed and which enabled them to train their young men and women to become colonial rulers" (*Dictionary* 33). Dipesh Chakrabarty also analyses the nature of this European discourse, which recognizes only one subject in the domain of history – "Europe": "Europe remains the sovereign, theoretical subject of all histories, including the ones we call 'Indian', 'Chinese', 'Kenyan' and so on. There is a peculiar way in which all these other histories tend to become variations on a master narrative that could be called "the history of Europe" (27). This narrative according to Chakrabarty has made the subaltereity position of the colonized country look naturalized, and this has been possible because of the pervasive presence of Europe, as an image of imitable modernity, plurality, democracy and socialism in the Third World countries. Jeffrey Meyers says in *Fiction and the Colonial Experience* that "Europe has imposed its manners, customs, religious beliefs and moral

values on an indigenous way of life" (qtd. in Bhbha, *Nation* 61). Not only during the colonial period but also after the demise of formal colonialism this kind of imposition continues as Spivak says in *The Postcolonial Critique* that "In the context of decolonization the only things you have to work with, are the great narratives of nationalism, internationalism, secularism, and culturalism. These were *alibis* for decolonization used by that class in the colonies ... to change the indigenous power structure in terms of what the colonists imposed" (102). This is how the people in Asia and elsewhere accepted Marx as a universal model forgetting his European location; in the same way they also accepted other European writers and their works. Dipesh Chakrabarty says that every thought and work of art must be influenced by the place in which they are produced. Thus, I do not forget Conrad's, to borrow Dipesh's word, "Europeanness" and formidable relation to the European empire while examining his portrayal of the East.

Thus, the East, which was totally under the Western domination for about two hundred years, was not only invested with Western political and social ideologies but also with literary and critical perspectives. Though Christian missionaries came to the East and established their churches and converted many to Christianity, they did not succeed in making any of the Eastern countries a Christian country. Part of this reality was due to the colonial administrators' non-interference policy in matters of religion, otherwise which could have given birth to many more rebellions in the form of religious nationalism threatening the colonizers' lives and stay. Most of the colonisers lived on the principles of Protestantism-cum-secularism and commercial motives. Hence, the European writers being influenced by this secular outlook of the colonial administrators produced literature to help imperialism flourish. Fiction writers too produced literature on the East on the

models of Western literary traditions of secularism; in fact, in spirit, all Western literature is, to a great extent, secular; that is not to say, irreligious; rather the perspective is close to the Protestant sect of Christianity which is made to appear secular.

Being a European Conrad cannot but be influenced unconsciously by Oriental Studies. How far Conrad has shared these ideas will be cleared from a close examination of his works. Though he ironically shows inefficacy of the colonial rule in the Congo in *Heart of Darkness* and in the trading posts of Africa in "An Outpost of Progress", he surely treats the European idea of the disintegrating effects of savage customs of primitive people and society on the European colonial administrators and the utter solitude and loneliness faced by the colonists. This duality in his artistry is what makes Conrad a centre of attention to the readers of East and West. And that is why Conrad is hailed by the Singaporean critic Tamara Wagner "…as the founder …of a literary Southeast Asia in the imaginary geographies of an increasingly globalized English literature, especially in the region itself" (50).

While Conrad's presentation of the South-East Asia was, to use the Bangladeshi academician Serajul Islam Chowdhury's phrase "hitherto unexplored area of experience" (1), his representation of the West for the English reader was a challenge for him as he was then "… very much an outsider; recognizably in his use of the English language, and, more importantly, in his isolation from the tradition of the English novel" (Chowdhury 1). His sense of alienation and exile which never gave him a proper sense of belonging to any nation before the start of his writing career gave him impetus to attempt to write about the Eastern world, the reservoir of his materials for fiction which carry significance for an Eastern reader.

Though the East has always been a victim of Western representation, it has got some redeeming features in the life and works of Joseph Conrad, and there lies the ambivalence, a kind of Conradian dichotomy or paradox. When most of the present media offer a very negative picture of the East, especially, at present, of Muslims associating them with terrorism, Conrad's idea of Islam and Muslim culture provides solace. My arguments in this regard run counter to John Lester's remarks in his "Conrad and Islam" that Conrad portrayed Muslims only to show failings of the Christian and that Conrad believed in the Victorian image of Islam as a religion of superstition and fanaticism. That he has understood and viewed Islam in a positive light is also important for us to know how to respond to a different race and religion. In his *A Personal Record* Conrad writes of the agony of "astonished indignations, the mockeries and the reproaches of a sort hard to bear for a boy of fifteen...charged with the want of patriotism, the want of sense, and want of heart too..." (110) and of the impact of the East and his knowledge of and response to Islam as well:

> In that faint, ghostly sound there live the memories of twenty years, the voices of rough men now no more, the strong voice of the everlasting winds, and the whisper of a mysterious spell, the murmur of the great sea, which must have somehow reached my inland cradle and entered my unconscious ear, like that formula of Mohammedan faith the Mussulman father whispers into the ear of his new-born infant, making him one of the faithful almost with his first breath. (*PR* 110)

The Muslim culture of chanting the call for prayer (azan) into the ear of the new-born baby has been highly liked by Conrad, who compares his own faithful mysterious attachment with the sea life and the people he met and saw in different distant parts of the world with the Muslim's faith which is ingrained in the unconscious mind of the baby. John Lester misreads this passage and argues that this passage demonstrates Conrad's stereotyped idea of the Muslims as fanatics. But I think that Conrad felt the desire for the sea life in his very

early childhood and the same longing for it lasts long in his memory, and this permanence of love is compared with the Muslim's faith which is indomitable, strong and everlastingly durable. Thus, this duality in Conrad's treatment of the East presents a deep aura of ambivalence to critics. The way these European trade and imperial politics are presented gives both colonists and natives space to say from their own respective perspectives. Amar Acheraiou aptly says in "Joseph Conrad's Eastern Geopolitics: Trade and Imperialism", "… Conrad allows equal discursive space to both die-hard colonialists and anti-colonialists….Conrad's Malay fiction functions at best as a resonance chamber to the Southeast Asian anti-colonial struggles, rather than as a revolutionary "postcolonial aesthetics" openly inviting the natives to bring down empire (40)."

The Conrad Oeuvre is a worthy area both in Postcolonial and Cultural Studies. Gramsci, Said, Foucault and other postcolonial critics deem culture as a promoter of class interests through its various discourses and representations, and like the early Marxist critics they also emphasize the culture of the marginalized. And Conrad's Eastern fiction prioritizes the marginalized whites and the natives, presents conflicts of interest among individuals and races, and shows the culture of the respective races and so provides ample materials for cultural studies. While Kipling shows the Indian girl Lispeth's acceptance of the English man as superior and while his narrative voice preaches this superiority complex of the West as real, Conrad shows the rejection of such values by the local Malays and also by the half-caste women. The chaplain's wife, in whose household Lispeth was working as a maid and fell in love with the Englishman she nursed back to life, represents the European women who had believed in the idea of European superiority when she says that "... it was wrong and improper of Lispeth to think of marriage with an Englishman, who was of a superior clay" (Kipling, "Lispeth" 6). This is how the natives

are made to acknowledge the superiority of the Europeans, and this is propagated by colonial literature of Kipling. But when Conrad's Nina rejects her European father and the Arab outsiders, when Aissa is pursued by the European Willems and when Pata Matara's sister is married to a Dutch man, we can say that Conrad has undermined the imperial myth of racial purity and created some powerful and memorable Eastern characters. In his Eastern works Conrad presents the colonial European people's power and at the same time, plight of staying in the Malay Archipelago. In spite of racial jealousy, local girls seem to get attracted to them. Conrad's fiction deals with this cross-cultural representation of a colonial and colonized interface. Despite their oppressed condition in the colonized society, the natives, to use Ngugi wa Thiong'o words, "maintain their defiance: liberty from theft" (3). Conrad's works not only project a world accommodating all these issues relevant to cultural and postcolonial studies, but also a critical lens through his contrapuntal viewpoints. Padmini Mongia commenting on Conrad's distinctness as a colonial writer different from Kipling and Stevenson rightly says, "Conrad has been everywhere before all of us who were schooled in English Literature, whether we come from the areas he wrote about or not" ("Between Men" 87).

Rationale

Conrad criticism has been focused mainly on Conrad's moral imagination, portrayal of complex characters, colonialism, imperialism, modernism, skepticism, adventures, loneliness, capitalism, postcolonialism and many other related issues. Though many critics have discussed the issues of colonialism and imperialism, they have based it only on *Heart of Darkness,* ignoring his other great works. Some readers label him as a colonial writer, while some other as an anti-colonial writer. This duality of Conrad's

character has given him an ambivalent position which is examined in detail in this thesis. And though postcolonial studies have been done on Conrad, the book length study is negligible. Moreover, most of those studies have been done by Western critics or critics based in the West and only on most popular works like *Heart of Darkness*, *Lord Jim* or *Nostromo*; hence, a detailed analysis of his portrayal of the East and Africa and also the West from an Eastern perspective on his entire oeuvre is a new area of study. Eastern readings of Conrad's Western texts are also very limited, and they have not been done on his entire fictional works. Moreover, Conrad's Western secular representation of the East and "the other" has not been dealt with so far by any critic; nor his secular critical perspective, which is more humane and transnational, has been studied properly. A close look at his fiction, essays and autobiographical notes reveals his ideas and perspective about the East, West and Africa, and also his style of representation. The present thesis would be different from the earlier criticisms on Conrad's colonial and postcolonial issues by showing Conrad as an early postcolonial writer, not by placing him within historical time frame but exclusively by the merit of his themes and portrayal of resistant characters. The thesis also attempts to present him as a 'glocal' writer.[9] In this case, in spite of sharing some of the dominant colonialist Eurocentric ideology and stereotyped images of the non-Western people, how Conrad's representation of the Eastern and African people and culture differs from that of the contemporary Western paradigm is a new aspect which would be the main concern of the thesis undertaken. When his critical perspective is like "Secular Criticism" of Said, his representational perspective is very much Eurocentric and secular. Critics have not yet considered his secular style and secular representation of "the other". Scanning the available criticism on him, I have not

[9] I borrow the word from Sandhya Rao Mehta's book *Language and Literature in a Glocal World* referenced in the Work Cited list. By the word she wants to mean a perspective which includes the local and the global, the periphery and the centre in order to challenge the centre.

found any other critics taking up the Eastern perspective to read all of Conrad's fiction, and so as an Eastern reading of the Conrad oeuvre, I think, my study would significantly contribute and add to the present corpus of Conrad criticism.

Methodology

The method of research for this thesis is exegetical, that is, content analysis, based on a close textual reading of the author's relevant works, biography and criticism on him. The study examines the portrayal of the East and Africa from an Eastern perspective which is postcolonial in scope but particularly based on Edward Said's secular criticism as it is critical of the dominant view of the West, and it marks Conrad's European prejudice and perspective as well as his secular cosmopolitan and global perspective. Hence, though based primarily on thematic analysis, the study explores the author's cultural point of view and critical stance. As modern theories often are intertwined with each other and also significantly differ from each other, my thesis would also draw on different traditional and modern theoretical perspectives instead of applying any particular one. Therefore, it would be a kind of mix of theories though postcolonial theory would be predominantly used. While closely looking at the primary texts of my study to find out the writer's and the characters' ideas and notions about the East and Africa, I would show critics' views and debates which deal with those textual evidences either in favour of imperialism or against it and then weigh the anti-imperial elements against those of the imperial. I have avoided deliberate polemics and discursive analysis, and applied Said's contrapuntal reading, a form of secular criticism, to examine Conrad's European perspective. In doing so, it combines theoretical, contextual and aesthetic aspects of his works and holds Conrad as a precursor of postcoloniality. In support of my views and position, I draw arguments from

Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, Amar Acheraiou, Chinua Achebe, Jonah Ruskin, Homi Bhabha, Dipesh Chakraborty and Talal Asad. I have also consulted Conrad's *A Personal Record* and *Notes on His Life and Art* which record some of his contemporary incidents and his own ideas about literature. First of all, I have talked about Conrad's place as a writer in World Literature, shown his critical reception from the early twentieth century to the present, have explained my Eastern critical viewpoint and theoretical perspective of Said's secular criticism and stated the objective and rationale and other relevant points in the introduction. Then after a brief biography, I have explored Conrad's Eastern and Africa fiction to find his secular European but contrapuntal perspectives about the East and then have focussed on his Western fiction to find his East European politics and skeptical views of globalization, revolution and war. And in the fifth chapter I have exclusively examined Conrad's secular style of presentation of the East and secular criticism of the West and then concluded with a focus on his strengths and relevance to our time. For documentation I have followed the MLA style of the new eighth edition, and I have also used footnotes to illustrate some of the ideas, sources and terms.

Literature Survey

From the early twentieth-century to date many critical books and articles on the author's life and works have been published and are still being published every year. The early reviews on Conrad's works were mixed as shown in the critical background. One of the early major critics is Richard Curle who in *Joseph Conrad* (2014) makes a study of his settings, themes and characters and hails Conrad as a distinct writer. It is he who first tried consciously to introduce Joseph Conrad and his works like *The Nigger of the Narcissus* and *Nostromo* to the reading public commenting on his irony, prose style and

aesthetic qualities. Hugh Walpole in his *Joseph Conrad* focuses on Conrad's themes, plots and characters, and highlights Conrad's romantic realism. The early criticism mostly was a kind of critical appreciation of his works. However, with F. R. Leavis' *The Great Tradition* that includes Joseph Conrad as one of the great British fiction writers in the line of Jane Austen and Henry James due to his serious moral tone and tragic realistic vision, the study of Joseph Conrad took a different turn. Thomas Moser's *Joseph Conrad: Achievement and Decline* (1957) comments on Conrad's strengths and weakness staring a debate about what are his best works and what are not. Moser seems to suggest that before 1912 Conrad wrote his best works and after that his creative imagination declined, though he points out that the date is not a watershed as there are some weak points in his early works and some strong points in his later works. Moreover, Moser finds Conrad weak in his presentation of romantic or love scenes. Of course, Moser's idea has been challenged by many critics. While Moser and many others do not consider his *Chance* and *Victory* as good works, some have considered these two his classics. When Moser traces Conrad's weakness in love scenes, I find Conrad capable of creating romance and love-scenes in both his Eastern and Western fiction.

Eloise Knapp Hay in *The Political Novels of Joseph Conrad* (1963) explains Conrad's duality in matters of politics. When early critics did not consider Conrad as a political novelist, Hay, quoting Ford and Orwell, tries to show Conrad as a novelist whose political convictions were not parochial, nationalistic and patriotic. *The Rescue*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Nostromo*, *The Secret Agent*, *Under Western Eyes* and *The Rover* are his great political novels where his political concerns transcend national boundary. Hay seems to take Conrad as a novelist who used this genre for his Polish politics but not as a partisan one. She finds in Conrad's political novels "… the psycho-political image of men bent on

sailing to utopia but turned back by disaster, futility, or both" (10). But while Conrad is called by many a conservative in politics, Hay opines differently, for she holds Conrad's nostalgia for tradition not as a support to royalist cause but as a lost thing. However, *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, *Lord Jim* and *The Secret Sharer*, according to Hay, "bear the impress of the politically engaged Conrad (13)." Hay deems Conrad as a nationalist arguing that he is anti-internationalist. But this view of Hay is not much convincing. She argues that Conrad sees some of the evils of internationalism, which oppress some national states which are weaker in military strength and poorer in wealth. Conrad's politics is really to expose the exploitative agenda of modern capitalists, imperialists, neo-liberal democrats and revolutionaries.

Albert J. Guerard in *Conrad the Novelist* (1965) sheds light on many important things in his works ─ from biographical information to themes and styles. His emphasis is on Conrad's modernism and psychological aspects in relation to his life. He reads Conrad's sea novels as "the journey within", a voyage of self-discovery. He says, "The sea voyages and the one great Congo journey are unmistakably journeys within, and journeys through a darkness" (15).The "fidelity" motif, according to Guerard, is pervasive and strong in Conrad. He makes a good thematic study of *Heart of Darkness*, the Malay trilogy and short stories, *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, *Lord Jim*, *Nostromo*, *The Secret Agent*, *Under Western Eyes*, *Chance* (1913) and *The Shadow Line* (1917). According to Guerard, except the last one, from *Heart of Darkness* through *The Nigger of the Narcissus* to *Chance*, Conrad shows his best skills but after *Chance* he loses his early creative power. This idea of Guerard is akin to Moser's "achievement and decline philosophy". Conrad is to him a pessimistic writer whose early works contain the tragic predicament of human beings in their divided loyalties, moral dilemmas, and difficult situations which

obviously create a profound dark world. Guerard who finds Conrad closer to Faulkner in theme and style, does not talk about the mighty world of empire, though he focuses on politics in the Malay world and in Europe from the point of view of a European.

In *Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography* (1966) Edward Said brings about the best of Conrad in relation to his letters written to different people from publishers to litterateurs to friends and family members. The work is a profound study in finding a link of a tripartite relation: Conrad's own experience as a sailor, an exile and a writer writing in an alien language. His various letters and short fiction, the last of which Said claims, contains Conrad's episodic life. Said, himself an exile, finds the echo of his own hearts in Conrad's fiction and letters – the desire to share the strange dislocations and necessary arrangements for accommodation, and the struggle with a foreign tongue. Exonerating Conrad from many charges like over-rhetorical and obscurantism of meaning brought against him by some critics like Richard Curle and F.R. Leavis –(though Said likes these very characteristics qualities), Said focuses on the three phases of Conrad's literary career from the beginning to the end of his life. And Conrad's letters are a gateway to Conrad's essence of existence reflected in his fiction. Truly, Said's spiritual Conrad as well as Fredric Jameson's intellectual Conrad emerges from his letters and fiction.

Jocelyn Baines' *Joseph Conrad: A Critical Biography* is one of the most important biographies on Conrad that has introduced Conrad both as a man and a writer from his early childhood to death. He has started his work from Joseph Conrad's parents' marriage and Conrad's birth on 3rd December 1857 to death on 3rd August in 1924. It is indeed a detailed study of the facts of the author's life. These facts moreover have been recorded to trace the fictional settings and characters. He has also drawn on Conrad's

letters, essays, and autobiographical works to strengthen his references to Conrad's works. And his critical commentary on Conrad's each and every work is highly illuminating and directional.

Norman Sherry's *Conrad's Eastern World* (1966) and *Western World* (1971) are two biographical books which mainly describe in detail the places he visited and the elements he incorporated in his writings. The places that have become his settings and people who have become his characters are well-documented in these books. Sherry suggests that Conrad enormously drew on his own experiences for his fiction but this experience was not only direct knowledge sometimes; rather many of his works were based on Conrad's reading materials. Sherry says in *Conrad's Western World*, "More and more, as he progressed as a novelist, Conrad turned to reading, not simply as in his early days in order to buttress his limited knowledge of the Far East, but in order to find the plot itself, the characters in all their variety, and the themes" (3). Conrad said about *Nostromo* that he knew the main incident of the theft of silver by a man in a newspaper; and he heard about the bombing of the Greenwich Observatory and the death of the suicide bomber from one of his acquaintances. These two biographical works present not only Conrad the man in a historical context, but also Conrad's important characters and settings of his major works providing commentaries and clues to understanding those works.

However, Chinua Achebe opened a new chapter on Conrad criticism delivering a public lecture entitled "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* " which has come to be recognized as one of the most important and influential treatises in post-colonial literary criticism. He has gone to an extreme conclusion calling Conrad "a bloody racist" (124) and refusing to accept *Heart of Darkness* as a piece of good art. He writes,

"Heart of Darkness projects the image of Africa as 'the other world,' the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization, a place where a man's vaunted intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant bestiality" (119). This biting attack on Conrad has been a point of reference for many subsequent postcolonial critics. Though I agree that *Heart of Darkness* contains the Western stereotyped images of Africa, Conrad nonetheless does not bear the same notion, for it is he who has exposed the Belgian oppression and questioned the whole project of colonialism. And there is the place for contending that the way Africa has been presented is to question the Western idea of Africa and bring it into the critical arena. Yet I keep Achebe in high esteem for his original daring remark. His article is the first of its kind to exemplify a postcolonial reading of a text.

Ian Watt in *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century* (1979) has studied some representative Conrad works which have Eastern settings except *Heart of Darkness* and *The Nigger of the Narcissus*. This superb study of the link between Conrad's fiction and their sources is highly illuminating in providing clues to the meanings of his works and understanding of his characters. Starting with Conrad's early life (1857 – 1894), Watt focuses on Conrad's weak health and turbulent childhood memories of alienation and exile and shows their influences on his works which surprisingly evade the personal dimension. No works of Conrad directly present his personal stories and history – the exile and fate of his patriotic family, the struggle of his native land Poland against the colonial Russia which are not only the fit subjects of history but also of fiction. And Watt provides reasons "… Conrad's exile was much more absolute – with minor exceptions he did not write about his own country, and he wrote nothing for publication in his native tongue" (Ian Watt 32). Watts provides sources for his works *Almayer's Folly*, *The Nigger*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Lord Jim* and talks about Conrad's subject matter, style and language as well. He often

shows Conrad's fictional affinity with Zola and Hardy, though to a minimum level. The influence of the nineteenth-century Victorian romance, exotic literature, naturalism, and Darwinian themes on Conrad's fiction is explored by Watt. He comments on Conrad's use of his past experiences and memory as sources of material for his fiction, which is, I think, Watt's Wordsworthian view of "emotion recollected in tranquility." Ian Watt thus makes a thematic analysis of his books. He, like many other critics, overlooks the issues of racism and imperialism, except that he shows Conrad's duality regarding colonization only in *Heart of Darkness*.

John McClure's *Kipling & Conrad: The Colonial Fiction* (1981) identifies Conrad as a colonialist writer: "Conrad prided himself on introducing another social exotic, the colonialist, to the metropolitan reader" (1). He suggests that "students of Conrad and Kipling have uniformly overlooked the colonial themes in their works" (2). It is partly because literature of the aftermath of the decolonization period recognised the empire as something bad and ominous of the past era, and that it does not have any positive relation with the present. He explores the effect of historical facts of empire on Conrad's colonial adventurers and businessmen, and Kipling's soldiers and colonial officers. McClure makes a very deep study of colonialist characters in both these writers from a very European colonialist perspective. Indeed, Conrad shows the European wanderers in the Malay Archipelago in a very alien and difficult situation risking their own life and facing solitude and exile.

Benita Parry in *Conrad and Imperialism* (1983) thinks that Conrad's works tend to recreate a colonial world where the dominant imperial values fail but which do not have any other better visions other than the benevolent ideas of progress of imperialism.

While she mentions Conrad's dislike of colonialist literatures of Buchan and Haggard, she argues that he has much affinity with their works. She also like other moderate critics gives a very ambivalent response stating Conrad's ambivalence which is due to his juxtaposition of the irreconcilable antagonism. She writes, "The intellectual and ethical ambiguities embraced by Conrad's colonial fictions have deeper sources and take more paradoxical forms that can be suggested by locating his casuistry in excluding Britain's colonial ventures from the general castigation of imperialist exploits..." (12). She suggests Conrad's characteristic paradoxical or dualistic mind referring to Conrad's faith in British imperialism in one of his letters written to his Polish relative where he says that liberty "can be found under the English flag all over the world" (12) and to his texts' critical disavowal of the efficacy of imperialism.

Heliena Krenn in *Conrad's Lingard Trilogy: Empire, Race, and Women in the Malay Novels* focuses on Conrad's three novels *Almayer's Folly*, *An Outcast of the Islands* and *The Rescue*. She is the first critic to consider those three novels as a trilogy as these three have some common characters. Krenn critically views Conrad's ideas about empire, race and women in these novels and give a kind of mixed response. While she questions like Hugh Clifford Conrad's authenticity of knowledge, she also informs Conrad's anti-imperialistic attitude. She addresses the pertinent question if Conrad was a racist and sexist. And she finds Conrad sexist but not colonialist. Finding a close relation Conrad between Conrad's life and his works, she tries to justify her own arguments about Conrad's idea about imperialism. She describes the history of the Malay Archipelago a bit and the European involvement in the region to understand Conrad's engagement with and presentation of the place called Borneo, and she says that "During his brief sojourn in the East, Conrad became witness to these developments and registered them in his Malay

novels"(xxiii). Krenn argues that Conrad has criticized imperialism in the Malay with a kind of paternalistic attitude as she says that Conrad has shown the follies of domination in both the Europeans and the Asians, mainly the Arabs there. And Krenn rather than identifying this optimism as a colonial motif in Conrad, she finds satisfaction in it that at least Conrad is not a protégé of pessimism of life in the empire. She is thus ambivalent regarding Conrad's treatment of imperialism.

Joseph Conrad: Third World Perspectives is a collection of critical essays by as diverse hands as Hugh Clifford, Florence Clemens, Ponnunthurari Sarvan and V.S Naipaul. The very title indicates the book's perspective. Hugh Clifford in "The Genius of Joseph Conrad" (1904) and Florence Clemens in "Conrad's Malaysia" (1941) (Both of them had experience of living in the Malay Archipelago during Conrad's time) have questioned Conrad's authenticity of facts and some Eastern characters' behaviour and manners but they have accepted his geographical description and general conception of the region. Hans van Marle in "The Jumble of Facts and Fiction: The First Singapore Reaction to *Almayer's Folly*" and D. C. R. A. Goonetilleke in "Conrad's Malayan Novels: Problems of Authenticity" also express the same views and argue that Conrad has interpolated Polish materials in the Eastern characters. Their objections are to the deviations Conrad brought to the historical figures like Tom Lingard and Almayer and others. These critics however miss the authorial liberty of imagination to use the already known facts or stories like that of Shakespeare, to create something new and more artistically valuable. J. C. Hilson and D. Timms write in "Conrad's 'An Outpost of Progress' or, The Evil Spirit of Civilization", "In both African tales, Conrad is far more interested in what happened to the whites in the Congo than in what happened to the blacks" (107).

Ponnuthurari Sarvan in "Under African Eyes" shows Conrad's influences on African writers and talks about the similarity between Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat* and Conrad's *Under Western Eyes*. Sarvan says, "Conrad is an inspiration to the African writer who ventures to express himself through a foreign linguistic medium" (153). But he talks about Conrad's personal prejudice which he notices in *Under Western Eyes*: "In Conrad, there is a strong element of prejudice against Russians, a prejudice which, though one can understand it in the light of Polish history and the suffering of Conrad's family, nevertheless mars the work" (157). Sarvan also points to Conrad's pessimism in revolutions which Ngugi presents optimistically.

On the other hand, Wilson Harris in "The Frontier on which Heart of Darkness Stands" presents a counter-argument to Achebe's dismissal of *Heart of Darkness* as a good piece of fiction: "[H]is judgement or dismissal of Heart of Darkness – and of Conrad's strange genius – is a profoundly mistaken one. He sees the distortions of imagery and, therefore, of character in the novel as witnessing to horrendous prejudice on Conrad's part in his vision of Africa and Africans" (161).

One of the major fiction writers, V. S. Naipaul, betrays the Conradian influences in his works and in an article relates his first experience of reading Conrad through the stories "The Lagoon" and "Karain." He says that he always found Conrad difficult to understand and gives a divided response to his works. Sometimes he seems to give credit to Conrad and sometimes wants to withhold it. He likes his stories but also finds flaws. He says about *Victory*, "The Conrad novel was like a simple film with an elaborate commentary" (192). In fact, all Conrad's stories are like that. The incidents of his plot are few, but the descriptions of settings and explanations of characters' motives and actions

are elaborate. Naipaul perhaps misses Conrad's study of psychological complexity of characters for which he needs to use many adjectives to bring home his understanding of the sensibilities of characters and the incomprehensible mysteries of human hearts. Naipaul's objections to Conrad's romanticisation of native lands are not groundless, but if it is seen from outsiders' perspectives, from the European readers' perspectives for whom Conrad was writing, it would not be hard to understand the reason. And Naipaul also suggests the same thing for he says that "To understand, then, it was necessary to begin to match his experience" (194). Naipaul's ambivalent response is also evident when he says,

> "There is something flawed and unexercised about his creative imagination. He does not — except in *Nostromo* and some of the stories – involve me in his fantasy; and *Lord Jim* is still to me more acceptable as a narrative poem than as a novel. Conrad's value to me is that he is someone who sixty to seventy years ago meditated on my world, a world I recognize today. I feel this about no other writer of the century. His achievement derives from the honesty which is part of his difficulty....(195)

Andrea White in her *Joseph Conrad and the Adventure Tradition* (1995) focuses on Conrad's use of the tradition of adventure fiction. While this genre along with the travel writing largely fostered European imperialism, Conrad critiqued it and unmasked the gap between the ideal and the reality. White says, "Conrad's early work … demythologized the basic assumptions of the very genre it appeared to derive from... he had the modernist's double vision which demanded that he applaud the desire but condemn its disastrous consequences" (6-7). Truly, Conrad imitated the form of adventure fiction but not without any change. In its spirit, he liked man's dream of reaching the unknown and different lands, fighting odds and gaining experience, knowledge, and profits out of trade as are in travel writing but he saw the dark consequences of all these enterprises. This is what made Conrad conservative and pessimistic in life especially about any sudden and drastic changes like that of the French Revolution in France. And in form, his narratives

are never conclusive, and his narrators are often naive or unreliable demanding reader's own individual judgement; therefore, his fiction is, to use Robert Hampson's phrase a "reader trap" (*Conrad and the Idea of Empire* 498).[10]

Linda Dryden's *Imperial Romance* (2000) is a well-researched book on Conrad's handling of the elements of romance and adventure of the late Victorian period and their contribution to his imperial vision in his early works *Almayer's Folly*, *An Outcast of the Islands*, "Karain" and *Lord Jim*. She discusses the issues of Englishness, ideas of English gentleman, stereotypical images, and exotic elements in the context of European imperialism in Conrad's works and shows Conrad's skeptic attitude toward all these high flown ideas and dreams. She further suggests that Conrad was true to his novelistic purpose and faithful to the idea of the freedom of the author, and that is why without writing popular romantic and exotic fiction, of which he was capable, he actually produced the seamy side of life in the colonies. She states: "There may have been pressure on Conrad, for financial reasons, to write a more conventional type of popular fiction, but except perhaps in "The Lagoon" and "Karain", he never gave in to the temptation" (15). Lind Dryden's focus is on the elements of romance and imperial heroes in Conrad's fiction rather than on the Eastern or African characters.

Robert Hampson in his *Cross-cultural Encounters in Conrad's Malay Fiction* (2000) shows Conrad's engagement with Malaysia from which he drew both inspiration and materials for his fiction. He focuses on Conrad's representation of the other culture and dealing with race, gender and identity in the background of the history of Malay Archipelago and Western intervention in the region. He reads Conrad's Malay fiction as a

[10] Hampson wants to mean by "reader trap" Conrad's ironic impressionistic technique that takes the reader to a different realm beyond their expectations and the readers are left with no conclusive judgement and hence they are bound to draw their own conclusion.

site of cross-cultural encounter between the native pirates and the European adventurers, between the Arab and Western traders. He suggests that these encounters had a tremendous influence on the cultural identities of different races. The hybridized political identities of the native people and the outsiders demand a critical understanding of the representation of the other culture. The Malay fiction, says Hampson, "offers a more complex instance of hybridised political identities" (111). The Malays are natives but they live under the Dutch and British empire; and the foreigners, like those of the Chinese, Indian and Arab who stay there for trade or other reasons are also Dutch or British subjects. That is why Lingard calls the Arab trader Abdullah as British. He also points to Conrad's idea of common humanity among these different national groups. However, Conrad's ambivalent treatment of the encounter between the East and the West is underscored by Hampson:

> While Conrad asserts this idea of 'common humanity', he also buys into the Enlightenment model of barbarism, savagery, and civilisation – or, at least, he makes use of this discourse (and, in particular, the savage/civilised binary). Thus, when Nina is introduced, her eyes are described as having 'the tender softness common to Malay women, but with a gleam of superior intelligence', and it is subsequently made clear that this 'thoughtful tinge' is 'inherited from her European ancestry' (113).

Jeffrey Meyers's *Joseph Conrad: A Biography* (2001) is one of the great biographies on Conrad focusing on the author's three periods of life: Polish life, French Life and English life. How Conrad became a sailor, what parts of the world he visited are beautifully presented with a kind of controlled precision. The book sheds light on Conrad's voyages in the East and in the Congo, and also when he turned from a sailor to a writer. What is significant in Meyers' book is that he includes a chapter on Jane Anderson with whom Conrad had fallen in love and whose character is partly portrayed in Rita of *The Arrow of God*. But to me this Conrad biography focuses much on Jane Anderson and Borys Conrad (Conrad's son), which is redundant. It is more frustrating to see the book end with Jane

Anderson. After all, the book provides all necessary information on Conrad's life, from his Polish childhood through French experience to English life and sea voyages across different parts of the world and his relationships with publishers, literary acquaintances and women.

Edward Said's interview in 2003 with Peter Mallios about Joseph Conrad is rather more illuminating than reading a particular critical book or essay, for there is a kind of intense personal reason of relation between him and Conrad that comes straight from this conversation. Some of the most important elements in Conrad's work and life, which have often been discussed by Said himself and other critics, have got a new life which in turn also shows the critical perspectives of Edward Said not only on Conrad but also on the Palestine-Israel conflict. The theme of empire, treatment of the irreconcilable truths in life, the fighting spirit of a man in an alien or strange setting and the attempt or failure to live in impossible situations which drew Said to Conrad has created the same trajectory for these two writers. Said says in the interview, "Conrad's fiction is a search for – and an opportunity for us to learn to search for – ways of living in an impossible situation" (301). How Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, *The Secret Agent*, *Nostromo*, and *Victory* and his letters and essays on politics provided Said with thoughts about the cause of the Palestinian, their relation to their lost land and recognition of the injustice done by Israel and the USA/the Western powers are brilliantly captured in the interview.

In *Conrad and Empire* (2004) Stephen Ross, the Canadian critic attempts to bypass the Conradian paradox of empire, issues of colonialism and postcolonialism stating that these concerns do not portray Conrad's real engagement with another larger issue of the world's transformation into global capitalism fostered under modern fascist and democratic totalitarianism. Therefore, Ross claims that this phenomenon of global

capitalism and his own childhood experience of imperial Russia made Conrad engage with the personal and the political, the psychological and the real in all aspects of life. Ross says that because of these larger issues like post-imperial modern life and how to live in such a period, Conrad failed to make a proper criticism of imperialism: "Conrad's failure to be sufficiently critical of imperialism …is less a symptom of his complicity with imperialism than a consequence of his grander, and less oblique, and less articulate concern with…incipient globalization" (Ross 5-6). But to Conrad, the purpose of art is to make readers see things, not to directly satirize the evils of imperialism.

Terry Collits in *Postcolonial Conrad: Paradoxes of Empire* (2005) talks about the Conradian moment and divides his novels into four interpretative moments. Placing his colonial novels and treatment of imperialism in focus, Collits shows critics' different treatment of Conrad's novels which in fact have strengthened his canonical position and which shows Conrad's ability as a writer to influence the literary and cultural criticism of his time and the aftermath. Collits says, "His colonial novels represent – at the very moment of high imperialism – the most significant encounter recorded in canonical literature between Europe and Europe's Other" (*Postcolonial* 3). This critic however wants to show the general nature of an ever changing shift of the critical paradigm with the change of time infesting a text with different meanings at different times.

Geoffrey Galt Harpham in "Beyond Mastery: The Future of Conrad's Beginnings" (2005) talks about some new aspects like Conrad's adoption of knowledge and learning and his own self into his works. That his experiences made him a writer is an accepted fact but his relation with the medium of writing is what puzzles critics. Harpham traces the linguistic development of Conrad from his early novel *Almayer's Folly* and *Heart of*

Darkness to the later novels *Nostromo*, *The Nigger of the Narcissus* and *The Secret Agent* and wants to show that at the beginning Conrad's control of the English language was like that of a foreigner and he gradually matured into owning the language, and in this context Conrad appropriates a kind of Sassurean linguistic structuralism to his advantage and also exceeds him. Harpham says, "Conrad's use of the alien English language provided the best possible example of mastery, since his facility was learned, laboriously, as an adult. In this respect, Conrad was an exemplary Saussurean writer" (31). Harpham suggests that Conrad had to struggle a lot with the English language. His failure to communicate with others in English made him use some words which lend a kind of obscurity. Kurtz is just a word, a voice, as Marlow at the beginning of his story expresses this uncertainty to his listeners, "Do you see him? Do you see the story? Do you see anything? It seems to me I am trying to tell you a dream …. It is impossible to convey the life-sensation of any given epoch of one's existence – that which makes its truth, its meaning – its subtle and penetrating essence … We live as we dream – alone (*HD* 57)."

Allan H. Simmons in *Joseph Conrad* (2006) has provided the reader with many new insights and fresh critical perspectives on Conrad's much acclaimed works from the earliest Malay novels to his late novels. The book focuses on Conrad's life and letters and his individual works in a chronological manner. Simmons talks about Conrad's Malay tales to concentrate on the European characters' success, failure and personality. The racial conflict, the trade and commerce under empire and some basic universal themes are focused with historical hindsight. He further shows Conrad's deep engagement with the sea and his ships in *The Nigger of the Narcissus* and "Typhoon" through which Conrad's development in and mastery over the English language is hailed by critics. His preoccupation with the life on board the ship and the sea, the craftsmanship and

captainship in the sea administration in disperse risky situations of life, the ever haunting danger in the sea are not fictitious but real. The author's treatment of Marlow as a character and an interpreter of Conrad's tales is really fresh in critical parlance and his viewing of Conrad's experiences as moral and philosophic is an accepted fact. And finally his comments on Conrad's political novels, short fiction and the late novels in conjunction with textual history and Conrad's own life and contemporary world really make the book a worthy read.

Tom Henthorne in Conrad's *Torjan Horses: Imperialism, Hybridity, and the Postcolonial Aesthetic* (2008) presents Conrad as a postcolonial writer because of his ant-colonial stance in his Eastern and African works. Henthorne classes Conrad as "postcolonial" on the basis of a definition of "postcoloniality" given by Jorge de Alva in "The Postcolonization of the (Latin) American experience[11]. Henthorne argues that critics like Fredric Jameson and Terry Eagleton identify Conrad as a colonialist writer without considering him in the cultural context of imperialism. Following F. R. Leavis, he says that many other British critics and readers label him as belonging to the great tradition of the British fiction, and so as the great tradition is mostly drawn from the Victorian British experience in the context of European expansion, Conrad is identified as one such colonial or colonialist. But these critics miss Conrad's aesthetic of ironic distance, a kind of Bakhtinian dialogic, by which Conrad indirectly through the narrative of indirect method, offers a critique of empire and imperialism. He says that "in *Lord Jim* and *Nostromo*, at least, Conrad does imagine an end to imperialism and the formation of postcolonial states and therefore can be regarded as postcolonial in even the strictest sense of the term" (7). He

[11] "postcoloniality can best be thought as a form of contestatory/oppositional consciousness, emerging from either preexisting imperial, colonial, or subaltern conditions, which fosters processes aimed at revising the norms and practices of antecedent or still vital forms of domination"(qtd. in Henthorne 4).

makes a critical study of *Almayer's Folly* and argues that Nina Almayer, Almayer's half-caste daughter is the protagonist of the novel and thus upholds Conrad's postcolonial spirit of resistance. But Henthorne's study seems to be one-sided as he has tried to trace sometimes forcibly only the antiracist and anti-imperial elements in Conrad's works ignoring some of the colonialist biases.

John Peters' *Conrad and Impressionism* (2004) and *Joseph Conrad's Critical Reception* (2013) are two noteworthy books on Conrad. The first one focuses on Conrad's style, especially impressionistic technique which was a new experiment based on Henry James' and Flaubert's styles. Peters argues that Conrad's relentless target to make his stories appear real is responsible for the break-up of chronological order, which gives the story a conversational shape and tone. His second book presents an excellent survey of commentary and criticism on the life and works of Joseph Conrad from 1895 to 2012. But the study is not comprehensive or engaging; it is more an overview of reviews, commentaries and criticisms than a fresh critical work.

*Under Postcolonial Eye*s: *Joseph Conrad after Empire* (1996) and *Joseph Conrad and the Orient* (2012) are two edited volumes containing critical essays that deal with issues more recent in themes and approaches. Despite their differences, the essays of the first book have an underlying similarity regarding Conrad's treatment of Eurocentric binary. Paul Armstrong in "*Heart of Darkness* and the Epistemology of Cultural Differences" views Conrad "neither as a racist nor as an exemplary anthropologist but a skeptical dramatist of epistemological processes" (23). According to this critic, Conrad has failed to achieve cross-cultural understanding in *Heart of Darkness* that points to the problem of a narrator or an artist to objectively represent the other. He thinks that Conrad

failed to depict the "other" because he lacked first hand experiences of those places of Malaysia. Rather, when an artist does it as a traveller, then the possibility of misunderstanding is immense, and when one cannot recognize the individuals in another race as individuals but homogenizes them, misrepresentation or racism is the result.

Gail Fincham's "Empire, Patriarchy and The Secret Agent" is an excellent study of the link between British Empire and its sinister effects on the English and other European people in the metropolitan city of London. He shows in *The Secret Agent* how the common people like Winnie Verloc and her brother Stevie have been victims of the empire. For, the rise of anarchists and their attempts to destroy the Greenwich Observatory show the conflicts between European powers, between European empires. He further shows that Winnie Verloc's murder of her husband is reminiscent of the "savage other" of the colonies. She has been treated as a colonized subject: "Conrad's vision is of an oppressive domestic dependency more complete than anything suffered by the colonised subject abroad" (51).

Robert Hampson in "Conrad and the Idea of Empire" (1989) says that *Heart of Darkness* shows darkness at the heart of civilizing mission. He refers to the influences of the Blackwood Magazine, Stanley's *In Darkest Africa* and Booth's *In Darkest England* on Conrad. Conrad by using the reader trap technique engages the reader to his narrative and then lays bare the bitter truth that darkness prevails in Europe and its idea of civilizing the other. Hampson says that Conrad had the intended reader of the Blackwood magazine when he ventured writing his novels, and *Heart of Darkness* is obviously a novella dealing with the theme of imperialism, adventure and exoticism very much liked by Victorian conservative readers who felt proud of Britain's imperial position and achievement.

Conrad in Perspective: Essays on Art and Fidelity (1997) by Zdzislaw Najder is a book of essays on Conrad's parents, his uncle, Conrad's own life and works. The essays connect Conrad's life and historical milieu to his fiction. He has focused on Conrad's Polish background, national and cultural heritage. The author also shows Conrad's attitude towards Russia and Dostoyevsky and places Conrad in the European intellectual and philosophical context. He points out to Conrad's problematic conservative relation with Russia and shows his juxtaposition of Tsarist tyranny in Russia and the liberal Europe in *Under Western Eyes*. He writes, "Conrad was a Russophobe" (122). Further he says, "Conrad was a 'Eurosceptic' in assessing Europe's role overseas" (167). He places Conrad in the intellectual tradition of Rousseau and Burke. He comments on Conrad's autobiographical notes and talks about his ideas of honour in *Lord Jim* and melodrama in *The Secret Agent*. He puts emphasis on the author's idea of fidelity which is one of the central motifs in the framework of Conradian narratives. And Najder identifies Conrad as a European writer for his settings of Europe and concerns for Europeans in the other settings in the Far East, Africa and North America.

Findings from the Literature Review

From the literature review it is seen that though different critics have talked about race, empire, colonialism, postcolonialism and the East, none of them have primarily focused on the images of the East, Africa and the people inhabiting these places. While Conrad's Western critics have overlooked Conrad's secular perspective and genuine concern for the East, the Eastern critics have overlooked too Conrad's empathetic portrayal of the East and modern themes in Western fiction. Western critics have focused on universal and exotic aspects of his texts ignoring the authenticity of facts and European

images of the East; whereas the Eastern critics focus only on imperialism and moral concerns ignoring his aesthetic aspects and redeeming qualities. Moreover, when the Western critics deem his Western ones such as *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, *The Secret Agent* and *Nostromo* as great classics, Eastern critics have not focused on the politics of canonization or anthologization of texts. The Eastern critics' focus on Conrad's treatment of colonialism, imperialism, race and capitalism has made them overlook some of the major themes of Conrad like war, autocracy, politics and revolution. Nor any of these books closely examines the cultural perspectives. No studies have come to my notice which exclusively studies all the works of Conrad from the Eastern perspective. Nor has any Eastern critic done an extensive study covering the Conrad oeuvre. Hence, my topic, "Revisiting the Conrad oeuvre: An Eastern Gaze", can be a distinctive study.

Limitations of the Study

In a single work Conrad's life and works cannot be fully explored with justice. This work would not provide any detailed background of Conrad's life, nor would consider every work in detail, as he has written as many as thirteen complete novels, twenty nine short stories, two stage plays, two major works of reminiscence and about forty essays. So to give equal focus on each text would be impractical. Thus, the thesis would not consider his reminiscences, plays, letters and essays; and it would not also deal with his incomplete works published after his death and the collaborative works with Ford Madox Ford. Instead, it would focus on those works in detail which deal with the East and which have Eastern settings. And the study would also critically comment on his Western stories. It would not,

however, deal with Conrad's style of fiction and experiments of methods in detail though they might come in passing to substantiate my arguments.

Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation is divided into six chapters including the Introduction and Conclusion. Therefore, it has four main chapters that cover, in brief, Joseph Conrad's life and works. Being the first chapter, the introduction entitled "Reassessment of the Conrad Oeuvre" discusses the subject matter and arguments I have put forward to establish my Eastern perspective. It presents the thesis statement and background of this study, my theoretical perspective, objective and scope. It studies Conrad in his particular historical context from an Eastern perspective grounded on Edward Said's "secular criticism" and postcolonial theory. It focuses on Conrad's perspective of representation of the East and treatment of imperialism. It also explains my Eastern gaze.

The second chapter entitled "From Adventurer to Writer: Encounter with the East" exclusively focuses on both Conrad's sea career and writing career, and exclusively shows how he became a writer out of his engagement with the East. It briefly presents the important incidents of his three phases of life too ─ Polish, French and British. How he joined the English merchant ship and what made him turn to writing profession are described briefly. The experience of exile and hardship with his parents in his early childhood under Russian-occupied Ukraine, the early loss of both of his parents, his sudden desire of going into the sea and coming first to France and then to the British merchant service and then roaming into different parts of the world and meeting different people – all these things made his own life exotic and adventurous. And when literally his

adventure in the physical world ended, he plunged into the more adventurous world of literature and became a fiction writer. This chapter shows the remarkable journey of a writer of English fiction.

The Chapter Three entitled "The East and Western Representation" studies his presentation of the East. It deals with Conrad's Eastern fiction from *Almayer's Folly* (1895) to *The Rover* (1923) to examine his Western perspective in his representation of the East. The recurring themes in Conrad's novels as found from the study of his Eastern fiction are racism, imperialism, colonization, internecine conflicts, romance and love. However, Conrad's depiction of the East as a land of romance and career, and the Malay society without its religious and cultural traits is explored in this chapter. And Conrad's sympathetic engagement with and contrapuntal study of the East in relation to the West in the background of the history of colonization and colonial literature are taken into consideration too.

The fourth chapter titled "Conrad's West" examines his portrayal of the West. Conrad started to write on the West only after he had attained recognition as a writer of exotic fiction or sea tales on the East. As he was born in Poland but lived and died in Britain, he was both an insider and an outsider in Britain. Conrad both as a realist and a satirist emerges from his Western stories where we can find his skeptical views about war, autocracy, anarchy and revolution. His Western stories are mostly a reflection of the political turmoil of the European history and the creeping crisis of modernity. His West is very much politically split between Eastern and Western Europe, and Conrad seems to align himself with the Western Europe because of his dislike of Russia. Therefore, this chapter investigates Conrad's engagement with European romance, European politics,

especially Russian politics, racial conflicts in Europe and much larger issues like autocracy, war, revolution and globalization.

The fifth chapter with the title “Conrad under Eastern Eyes” is a core critical study from an Eastern perspective which comments on Conrad’s European position and secular stance. Though his treatment of the East and imperialism has been dealt with in the previous chapters, this chapter critically views Conrad’s Eurocentric imperial and secular perspective in his portrayal of the East as well as his secular criticism of the West. Rather than focusing on individual works, it takes up the political issues and perspectives. Hence, the chapter is a kind of critical discussion on the issues explored in the early chapters.

Finally, the sixth chapter is the conclusion titled “Conrad, Our Contemporary” that concludes the thesis with a short overview of the preceding chapters with comments on the author’s merits and relevance to the present time. The concluding chapter thus captures the quintessence of the thesis by recapitulating the main points and arguments. In the previous chapters Conrad’s life and works have been discussed to explore his view of the East and the West, and his critical viewpoint. Traditional controversial issues have been discussed from the postcolonial Eastern perspective. This final chapter, however, presents Conrad both as a great writer and critic and shows the relevance of his life and works to the present time.

Chapter Two
From Adventurer to Writer: Encounter with the East

> "[E]very novel contains an element of autobiography – and this can hardly be denied, since the creator can only express himself in his creation...."
>
> — Joseph Conrad: "A Familiar Preface", *A Personal Record*

The Conradian critic, Allan H. Simmons, begins his *Joseph Conrad: Critical Issues* with an introduction on Conrad's life and letters. How works of art are often closely connected with the writer's own life and experiences is, in his opinion, exemplified by Conrad. He writes:

> The contours of Joseph Conrad's life seem designed to shape our response to his art…The influences, affinities, and conflicts of Conrad's thoughts and poetics stem from the confluence of family, geography, and history. Such a rich inheritance yielded fictions that combine the authenticity of first-hand experience with the insights of profound meditation, and place Conrad alongside Gustave Flaubert, Henry James, Marcel Proust, and James Joyce in the pantheon of Modernist authors . (1)

Most of the critical books on Conrad have not approached his works without first looking at his life. Oliver Warner writes in his *Joseph Conrad*:

> The facts of a writer's personal life are sometimes an unimportant element in the understanding of his work. With Conrad it is otherwise. His life and his books are so close integrated, that what passes for a story, as instanced by *Youth*, is sometimes autobiography, while who shall say that passages in A Personal Record lack the flavour of fiction? He was capable of creation in the large sense, but he drew upon and returned again and again to the store of direct experience he had acquired in his dealings with fellow men of almost every race and creed. (8)

In line with these critics I also deem it important to focus briefly on Conrad's life in relation to his works. Truly his works are permeated with the insights, ideas and stories culled from his real life experiences. Characters, places, settings and ideas are directly

influenced by his contemporary historical facts, places with which and people with whom Conrad was associated. And as Simmons says, there is no denying the fact that the writer's biography often helps to understand his works properly or helps to form a perspective. Even one of the earliest critics on Conrad, Richard Curle, gives the similar view: "Of course, Conrad is an exceptionally difficult writer to discuss. He is one of these men whose extraordinarily vivid personality pervades everything he writes to such an extent that a good many people do find him impossible to read"(2). And it is the critic's task to attempt to distinguish the writer from his/her works. Therefore, what follows in this chapter is the brief account of Conrad's life and career. The chapter also demonstrates Conrad's fascination with the East which has shaped his literary imagination and inspired him to be a writer. As Conrad himself says in the Author's Note to *Lord Jim* that without knowing Almayer in the Malay Archipelago, he would not have written anything in his life, similarly Heliena Krenn in her study says, "It was the Malay Archipelago with its truths about human life dimmed by the mists of its jungles and waterways that started Conrad on his career as a novelist" (*Lingard Trilogy* xiv). In the following chapter, my emphasis is on those episodes of life which contributed to the making of the seaman and the writer. I have tried to present some important information about his life which helped Conrad gain the kind of temperament he had and also his orientation to the East – the setting of his early fictional works. Though his choice of the sea life was entirely his own, his writing career, as he often gives the impression on some occasions, was first an amateurish one which was given a permanent base by the encouragement of some of his friends and publishers, notably Edward Garnett and T Fisher Unwin.

Albert Guerard considers Conrad as "one of the most subjective and most personal of English novelists" (1). He uses Conrad's *A Personal Record* (1912) as a book of source for both biographers and readers of his fiction. Indeed, the book contains the autobiographical elements –events of his life and impressions of his life that impacted his writing career, and also some of his ideas on literature and criticism. Daniel R. Schwarz says about Conrad in *Conrad: Almayer's Folly to Under Western Eyes*, "Throughout his career, Conrad stressed that a novel was inseparable from its author. From the first his aesthetic ideas derived in part from his needs to express his emotional life" (xiii). And the East thus had given birth to a writer in Conrad as he says about his indebtedness to the East which always poured down elements of his tales: "As to locality, it belongs to that part of the Eastern Seas from which I have carried away into my writing the greatest number of suggestions" (Foreword, *The Shadow Line* 179).

Polish Boyhood

Conrad's life is as adventurous as his fiction. He was born in 1857 in Berdyczow in Ukrain, a part of Poland owned by Russia since 1793. His father Apollo Korzenioski and mother Ewa Bobrowska both were charged with secret revolutionary activities against Russia, and the family with Conrad was exiled to Vologda, Russia in 1862. Conrad's mother caught pneumonia and her health collapsed too for which the family was permitted to move to Chernikhove near Kieve. During this time Conrad had his first lesson in French. This is the place when Conrad's father, who was an avid reader, translated several European classics, and thus Conrad got the flavour of imaginative literature and came to know about Shakespeare, Dickens and Polish Romantic poets.

Conrad, already a lonely boy travelling with his parents, became lonelier when his mother died in 1865 and father in 1866 and for his education and financial support became dependent on his maternal uncle Tadeusz Bobrowski, who till Conrad's establishment as a writer always stood by him like a guardian angel, often helping with money and giving advice. From 1866 to 1867 Conrad suffered from migraine, nervous fits, epileptic symptoms and finally caught German measles, and while on treatment in the company of Tadeusz Bobrowski he first saw the sea at Odessa. It was like love at first sight which would come out later in 1872, when young Conrad surprised his relatives by expressing his desire to go to the sea – a romantic aspiration which must have been influenced by his reading of travel books and sea literature. Bobrowski, who then had taken the responsibility for his education and upbringing, viewed it as an act of escapism and a kind of betrayal of patriotic values since his parents were dedicated Polish patriots.

Conrad went to school for only a short period of time. Little is known about his education before his sea life. Biographers assume that he was taught mostly by private tutors at home because of his illness, and so what puzzles the reader and his biographers is that how Conrad without learning the English language formally in an institution or by a tutor became able to write in English as many as fifteen novels (including two unfinished novels) and twenty nine short stories apart from three collaborative works and two autobiographical non-fiction. How keen an observer of life and people he was that by his contact with other English people and by reading books he mastered the language to become a novelist!

Self-exile in France

To the surprise of his uncle and relatives, in 1874 he left his native land for Marseilles in France and on 15 December he sailed as a boy to Martinique and other Caribbean ports on the same ship and visited many places like Saint-Pierre and Haiti. This departure from Poland is one of his two renowned "jumps" in his life, often talked about by critics, the other jump being in 1894 when he left the sea. Thus, the jump motive recurs in Conrad's fiction as in *Lord Jim*. In 1877 he got involved in obscure activities of gun smuggling to Spain where he fell in love with "Rita" for whom he had fought a duel and was wounded. *The Arrow of Gold* fictionalises this historical episode of his life, as the central female character's name is also Rita. He also got involved in gambling and fell in debt in France. His uncle came to Marseilles to see Conrad and paid his debts. His uncle's visit to the wounded Conrad was a turning point in the latter's career. Bobrowski helped Conrad decide to join the British Merchant Service. Therefore, Conrad's stay in France is marked by some negative experiences which may have contributed to Conrad's permanent pessimistic temperament, albeit in conjunction with his early experience of exilic life and loss of parents. But he surely had grown into maturity out of his stay in France from 1874 to 1879 where he learnt French and read some French literature, the influence of which in his works is amazingly enormous.

Self-exile in England

While living in France, he managed an unofficial apprentice post in the Bristish steamer *Mavis* and sailed via Constantinople and landed in Lowestoft in England in 1978. Then he sailed to Australia, the Mediterranean regions and saw the ports of Italy and Greece. Then after his return to England he got the second-mates' position in the

Palestine in 1881, the basis of his story "Youth". Because of the abandonment of the ship, in 1883 Conrad had to appear with other crews including the captain and the first mate, at a marine court in Singapore where he, along with the whole crew, was not found guilty. This incident is fictionalised in the Patna episode of *Lord Jim*. In the same year in September Conrad sailed as a second mate in the *Riversdale* for Madras via Port Elizabeth of South Africa. Conrad for the first time saw India in 1884. But again the East disappointed Conrad. When his ship reached Madras, he got engaged in a dispute with the captain and was discharged. He then travelled across India to Bombay, the present Mumbai, where he signed as a second mate in the *Narcissus,* the basis of one of his finest novels, *The Nigger of the Narcissus*. In the next year, after taking the first mate's examination successfully, he sailed as a second mate in the *Tilkhurt* and went to Singapore and Calcutta. In 1886 he wrote his first story "The Black Mate", for a literary competition in *Tit-Bits*. In the same year he became a British citizen.

The Malay Archipelago

The year 1887 is important in Conrad's life, for he sailed as first mate in the *Highland Forest* to Java and suffered a back injury for the treatment of which he had to stay in Singapore. He joined the *Vidar* as first mate and made four trading trips between Singapore and small Netherlands East Indies ports on Borneo and Celebes. There on the Berau River in East-Borneo of the Malay Archipelago he met William Charles Oljheimer; the man becomes the protagonist Almayer in his first novel and the place is made the setting of his Malay trilogy and a part of *Lord Jim*.

In 1888 he joined the *Otago* as master in Bangkok and undertook voyages via Singapore to Sydney, Mauritius and Melbourne and returned to London in 1889. In the same year he finally succeeded to get denationalized from Russian citizenship. During this time in 1990 he started his first novel *Almayer's Folly* and took about five years to complete it in 1895. In 1890 he went to Poland, his native land after sixteen years to meet his uncle Bobrowski. On the way he met Marguerite Poradowska and her ill husband, his distant cousin, in Brussels. This lady Marguerite was a fiction writer, who, critics have said, influenced and helped Conrad to enter into the novelistic career. After returning to London he got a three-year appointment to the Congo under Belgium and on the journey to Africa met Roger Casement who wrote about the atrocities done by King Leopold II in the Congo, the place which would turn into *Heart of Darkness*. Conrad became severely ill, both physically (malaria, rheumatism and neuralgia) and mentally and returned to Europe and got treatment in Germany and Switzerland.

Then after recovery from illness in 1891 Conrad joined the *Torrens,* one of the fastest sailing ships of the day for a trip to Australia when he met W.H. Jacques, a passenger who became the first reader of *Almayer's Folly* manuscript and whose comments inspired Conrad to advance towards its completion on Conrad's 35th birthday. In 1893 on the voyage home from Adelaide Conrad met two writers of his time, John Galsworthy and E.L. Sanderson. In the same year, he joined the final ship of his sea career the *Adowa* to carry French immigrants to Canada, and on 17 January 1894 he signed off the ship to end his sea career at the age of 36. This year is a transitional point in his life, and is considered his second "jump". Many significant things happened during this time. He left the sea; his uncle who always supported him financially and emotionally

died; and he finished *Almayer's Folly* and sent the typescript to T. Fisher Unwins' office. Conrad began his second novel *An Outcast of the Islands*, and his *Almayer's Folly* was accepted for publication. He met his two professional readers of Unwin's, W.H. Chesson and Edward Garnett, among whom Edward became his life-long friend and guide. Next year his *Almayer's Folly* was published, and he entered officially into his writing career and finished his second novel.

This brief biographical information is so closely connected with Conrad's works that without reference to it, Conrad's works cannot be fully comprehended.[12]Pertinently, according to Fredric Jameson's *The Political Unconscious*, without historical context and references, works of art cannot be understood properly as all works originate in historical relationship. After his second novel An *Outcaste of the Island* in 1896, Conrad has written thirteen more novels.[13] Though with the publication of the first two Malay novels, Conrad's appearance as a novelist was acknowledged, his wide-spread popularity came only after the publication of his novella *Heart of Darkness*, the novel *Lord Jim* and short stories "Youth" and "Typhoon". And he had to wait for financial success until the publication of *Chance* in 1911. Critics are divided as to considering which novels are his master pieces and which are not. However, *Lord Jim*, *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, *The Secret Agent*, and *Nostromo* are hailed as his best works. Among his short stories, "Karain", "The Lagoon", "An Outpost of Progress", "The Secret Sharer", *Heart of Darkness*, "Youth", "Typhoon", and "Because of the Dollars", "The Return" are noteworthy.

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[12] For the biographical information I am indebted to Owen Knowles' *Oxford Readers' Companion to Joseph Conrad,* Norman Page's *Joseph Conrad*, and Jocelyn Baines' *Joseph Conrad*.

[13] *The Nigger of the Narcissus (1897)*, *Lord Jim (1900)*, *Nostromo (1904)*, *The Secret Agent (1907)*, *Under Western Eyes(1911)*, *Chance (1914)*, *Victory(1915)*, *The Shadow Line (1917)*, *The Arrow of Gold (1919)*, *The Rescue (1920)*, *The Rover (1923)*, *Suspense* (1925) and *The Sisters (1928)*.

The East and Conrad the Fiction-Writer

Conrad's brief stay in Eastern Borneo in the Malay Archipelago as first mate of the Vidar in the autumn of 1887, when he travelled through 'Lingard's Passage' and made four trading visits to the Malay settlement of Berau on the Pantai River, is the genesis of his novelistic career. This is the place where he first met William Charles Olmeijer, the prototype of Kasper Almayer, and this place is his fictional setting of Sambir in his first novel *Almayer's Folly*. As he says in his *A Personal Record*, he would not have written a line if he had not known Olmeijer, his fictional Almayer. Until 1963 Malaysia had been a fluid federation of different and varied parts with their distinct names. The Malaysian territories lost its independence to the Portuguese in 1511 as these Europeans came with guns in hands to fight people with sticks and swords. Earlier these parts of Malaysia were ruled by local sultans. But after the defeat of them, there were three waves of lords who ruled and controlled Malaysian affairs. The Dutch and the English came by turns and the latter established the longest rule till the independence of Malaysia in 1957. Conrad as a seaman must have been aware of the political and colonial history of the region as he has exhibited in his Malay fiction. It is this Malaysia which sparked his writing imagination first. To a great extent, the Eastern experiences made Conrad the writer out of Conrad the seaman. Norman Sherry in *Conrad's Eastern World* says:

> Between the years 1883 and 1888 Joseph Conrad sailed for a time in Eastern waters as a British merchant seaman; when he began to write, it was to the East that he turned especially for inspiration. The East not only provided him with the initial creative impetus – he wrote in A Personal Record, 'If I had not got to know Almayer pretty well it is almost certain there would never have been a line of mine in print' – but it also remained a constant source for him.(1)

Conrad in *A Personal Record* tells the tale of his own story of becoming a writer. Though reflective in nature, the book records the incidents of his life in the East, especially in the Malay Archipelago that had sparked his writing ambition. How the complex appeal of that place and different races of people of that region pressed on his mind to start writing is nicely presented in the book. Conrad says:

> …it was my practice directly after my breakfast to hold animated receptions of Malays, Arabs and half-castes. They did not clamour aloud for my attention. They came with a silent and irresistible appeal – and the appeal, I affirm here, was not to my self-love or my vanity. It seems now to have had a moral character, for why should the memory of these things, seen in their obscure, sun-bathed existence, demand to express itself in the shape of a novel, except on the ground of that mysterious fellowship which unites in a community of hopes and fears all the dwellers on this earth? (*PR* 9)

The passage reveals the urge of creative impulse of a writer. It is his own lived experience, which is also a part of history of the Malay Archipelago, now aspiring to be revealed in imaginative prose. In the Author's Note to *The Shadow-Line* he says, "As to locality, it belongs to that part of the Eastern Seas from which I have carried away into my writing life the greatest number of suggestions (xii)." The fascination for the foreignness of people, their strange different faces and dresses, their distinct voices and different languages mesmerized Conrad. And it is a sacred duty of a man to reveal this inward feeling of human bond and sentiment which is "akin to piety which prompted me [Conrad] to render in words assembled with conscientious care the memory of things far distant and of men who had lived" (*PR* 10). Ban Kah Choon comments that:

> Conrad's first view of the East was, therefore, less than propitious. Yet it says much for the fascination the region exerted on him that, in writing of the experience years later, he would endow it with a sense of enchantment. Looking back the episode must have been reminiscent of … the moment when one crosses over from youth to maturity, innocence to experience. (ix)

Conrad tells in great detail the history of the birth of his first novel *Almayer's Folly* which he finished in between 1889 to 1994. How the idea of the story came to him and how he started with some chapters and proceeded on with intervals and suspension and finally finished it are described in his *A Personal Record* (1912). He carried his early chapters of *Almayer's Folly* to different parts of the world he travelled from the Congo to Rouen. With reference to Novalis, Conrad gives his own idea of a novel, "And what is a novel if not a conviction of our fellow-men's existence strong enough to take upon itself a form of imagined life clearer than reality and whose accumulated verisimilitude of selected episodes puts to shame the pride of documentary history" (*PR* 15).

Then at once with gratitude he introduces Jacques, the very first reader of his unfinished novel *Almayer's Folly*. In a person's life, other people's comments and reflections are very important. Especially in the liberal arts and humanities discipline, criticism plays a great role. Without encouragement, no writer can advance much. This fellow passenger of the *Torrens* bound for Australia asked Conrad, when the latter approached him with the manuscript of the novel that what it was. Conrad replied that it was a sort of tale and it was unfinished. The next day Jacques returned the manuscript without saying a word. Then Conrad asked for his opinion about the story if the story was worth finishing. Jacques replied "Distinctly". Conrad then further asked if Jacques had liked the story or not. Jacques, the young Cambridge man, answered "very much". These encouraging comments are what resurrected the suspended novel and made Conrad feel "as if the story-teller were being born into the body of a seaman" (*PR* 17). What could happen to the fate of the novel and Conrad's writing career if Jacques had given a negative or deprecatory answer is never certain. Conrad then asked him "Is the story quite clear to you as it stands?" Jacques replied "Yes! Perfectly"(*PR* 18). Conrad regrets that

his first reader Jacques did not live long to read the rest of the novel. “Line by line, rather than page by page, was the growth of “Almayer’s Folly” (*PR* 19).

Conrad’s writing career is enormously indebted to the Eastern waters and especially to the Malay Archipelago. Robert Hampson states: “From his first novel *Almayer’s Folly* through to *The Rescue* near the end of his career, Malaysia had an important place in Conrad’s fiction. Indeed, Conrad’s writing career sprang directly from his experiences of the region as a sailor and the stories he heard there” (*Cross-Cultural* 1). His feeling of affinity with those people he saw in the Malay Archipelago has been expressed in his Author’s Note to *Almayer’s Folly.* Though colonial people tried to enlighten the native, it is through the natives’ stories by which Conrad wanted to enlighten the colonial people. Conrad says that by looking at Olmeijer in the place of Borneo, the prototype of fictional Almayer, he got inspired to write his first novel. But why did he portray a failed protagonist, a kind of anti-hero? Geoffrey Galt Harpham points out that “…Conrad somehow penetrated him [Olmeijer] imaginatively, investing him with his own concerns, his own circumstances, his own dreams” (19). Therefore, Conrad found a kind of alter ego in Olmeijer in whom he saw his own image as a man travelling different lands being dislocated and feeling like an exile carrying dreams of financial success. Such is the dream of a million like him. So, he depicts a failed man for self-consolation. Though such kind of attempt to find the writer in the character is now-a-days a bit obsolete, Harpham nonetheless provides the psychological complex of the relation between a character and a writer. He says, “The experience that made Conrad a writer, I am suggesting, was his discovery that he could locate himself, his own authentic essence, outside himself, in another being” (19). This is true not only in the case of Conrad but for many other writers. Macbeth is not Shakespeare; Othello is not

Shakespeare; Kim is not Kipling; so are Conrad's Marlow and Kurtz, Lingard or Nostromo. But there might be some part of the author in these characters, either of their own life history or their dreams or unfulfilled dreams or future visions and so on. If experiences are the sources, be it practically lived or borrowed from other sources like literature or folktales, then these must have some bearing on the production of a work of art. Conrad's idea of creative impulse is stated in one of his letters, "You must squeeze out of yourself every sensation, every thought, every image, - mercilessly without reserve and without remorse: you must search the darkest corners of your heart, the most remote recesses of your brain, - you must search them for the image, for the glamour, for the right expression" (qtd. in Schwartz xiii). Without an author, a book would lose its appeal. How many books can one read and appreciate without knowing the name of the author? Therefore, Conrad seems to believe that a work of art is inseparable from its author. Indeed, Conrad looms large in his fiction but he has been able to hide himself in shadows of sensations and ideas which a reader can understand only if he or she is familiar with his life. Conrad says that "every novel contains an element of autobiography – and this can hardly be denied, since the creator can only express himself in his creation" (Preface, *PR* xv-xvi). Schwarz in this connection stresses that "His [Conrad's] novels are intimately related to his life and often reflect his psychic turmoil. Conrad not only transferred his emotional life to his fiction, but he sought to bring coherence to his life by exploring aspects of himself in his works" (xiv).

Conrad had to struggle a lot to be recognized as a British writer. His first novel *Almayer's Folly* and second novel *An Outcast of the Islands* did not sell well, though they were very much in line with the adventure fiction. With these two novels Conrad was to some extent aligned with, to use Allan Simmon's words, "the popular genre of exotic

adventure literature" of "G.A. Henty or H. Rider Haggard" (10). Though the Victorian British taste and the early twentieth century British taste were rooted in realism, they liked the stories of the English imperial or adventure heroes in exotic settings of foreign lands represented from European perspectives. Padmini Mongia commenting on *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim* says that "In these two novels, Conrad creates an Orient and an Africa that are synchronized with late nineteenth-century conventions: the Orient enables 'pure exercises of imagination'; Africa allows no such recuperation of romance" (*LJ* 282, 131). But Conrad's was a little different, for he employed some new things and styles in his plots and development of characters. Interior monologues and disruption of chronology in his works must have disturbed the English readers. And the stories though focused on European characters might distaste them, as these characters are not portrayed as ideal European people, but failed ones. As in *Almayer's Folly* Almayer is the protagonist but un-heroic; conversely, the Malay people, Mrs. Almayer, Nina, Dain and Babalatchi emerge as heroic. This is why readers of the West would consider the novel distasteful during a time when people were nationalistic in outlook and felt proud of their imperial posts and colonies; but Eastern readers would get ample elements to consider the novel as their own, albeit with certain reservations. Therefore, representations from both Eastern and Western perspectives defy any essentialist point-of-view to bind Conrad with an orthodox category, and undoubtedly, he is a writer not easily identifiable with any group or coterie. This position for Conrad has been possible due to his cultural marginality. At least four nations are claimants for his nationality: Poland, Russia, France and England. Anthony Fothergill argues that "Conrad stood both inside and outside Victorian culture. His marginality lent him the capacity to see the culturally familiar with an estranged eye. Thus he did not simply absorb and unproblematically reiterate the ideological predispositions of his time. He re-presented their forms of representation to

'make us see' their hidden terms" (93). In fact, in all his Malay stories, both Eastern and Western characters are involved; they interact and actively take part in the plot. Conrad's works capture this very individual experience and interaction of characters, which are according to Ian Watt "always unique and therefore new" (9). But the common thing he has tried to show through his Western characters' pursuit of career and success is the failure of some ordinary people in life which is not less tragic than the catastrophe of a few upper class people. Himself always entangled with the success and failure marks in his real life, he truly records the ordinary people's tragic dimension in everyday life which is really a faithful observation which meets up Ian Watt's idea that "[t]he novelist's primary task is to convey the impression of fidelity to human experience" (10).

Yet knowing the British taste he further wrote *The Rescue* in 1920 after almost two decades to complete the trilogy based on the Malay Archipelago. The East has always been in Conrad's imagination and passion throughout his writing career. Apart from the Malay novels, short fiction like "Karain", "The End of the Tether", "Amy Foster" and "Youth" are based in the Eastern setting. In all these stories the description of the physical setting with its natural landscapes is vivid. The simplicity of these people and their very different life style and culture are what attracted Conrad most, for which he is often called a cosmopolitan writer. The East is portrayed with its Malay seas, shores and landscapes. The natural descriptions are objectively vivid but sensational; wilderness, tropical heat, the monsoon rain and wind and gale are all real facts beautifully and powerfully painted by him. Even his portrayal of Africa has been applauded by many, for in those tales his vision is more political and moral than Eurocentric. And many readers have traced Conrad's use of imperial tropes and European ways of representing the other,

the non-European, as, to use Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan's phrase, "romantic paradox"[14] and appreciates him for his "radical critique of it" (Fothergill 94) . To quote Anthony Fothergill again, "Conrad shared practices of thought whose roots are buried in much earlier forms of European exploration and colonisation. The power of his writing lies in the contradictions existing between this complicity and his critique of these practices""94). This is, according to Edward Said, Conrad's secular criticism of his Western self – Western ways of representing the other. However, his first two novels are not exactly exotic adventure stories as the Western critics deem. Rather, these novels analyse the Western people's stay in the East: how they live and survive there, their hopes and dreams, disillusions and frustrations, their love and friendship with their own people and with the Eastern people, their utter loneliness and betrayal. Yet in the midst of din and bustle of everyday life, the history of colonization and the plight of a nation under domination are presented. And in this representation of the East like that of the West there is Conrad's European persona with a self-critiquing ambivalent knack radically questioning and hinting at the impossibility of an objective representation.

Identity Crisis and Politics

Reading literature of the eighteenth to mid-twentieth century without reference to imperialism and its impact on art and literature in the West would remain as incomplete as reading of them ignoring cultural perspective at present. The role of empire on literature and the role of literature on building up of empire or imperial policies remained latent for many decades. And with it is intriguingly connected the representation of both home culture

[14] Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan entitles a chapter as "The Romantic Paradox, in her *The Strange Short Fiction of Joseph Conrad* in which she argues that Conrad followed the Romantic tradition in his plots but undermined its main vision of happiness sheltered in imagination by an indirect method of storey-telling, that is, an ironic method that thwarts the readers' expectations. It is because Conrad wanted to juxtapose romance and realism.

and an alien one. Conrad wrote to a fellow Polish émigré from Singapore in 1885: "When speaking, writing or thinking in English the word Home always means for me the hospitable shores of Great Britain" (qtd. in Simmons 9). His service in the British Merchant Service provided Conrad elements which are "the ultimate shapers of my character, convictions, and in a sense, destiny" and those things are "the imperishable sea ... the ships that are no more, and …the simple men who have had their day" (Conrad, Author's Note, *The Mirror of the Sea* viii). Conrad at present is known as an English fiction writer. Though he lived permanently in England and only visited Poland twice in his lifetime, he is not recognized as an English man. He is still recognized as Polish. Therefore, Conrad's identity is dual, both Polish and British. He was a long time Russian citizen but nobody recognizes him in any moment as Russian. Neither Russia even recognizes him as her citizen. Therefore, this avoidance of historical fact may hide some other sides of Conrad's work. Yet Conrad has written about Russia in *Under Western Eyes*.

Conrad was a migrant in the true sense of the word. He never settled down in one place or in one house in England. He always moved on from house to house and place to place before he finally settled down in 1898 in Kent where he spent most of his time and died and was buried. But Conrad never owned a house. It may be because of his shortage of money or it may be that he did not want to belong to a place which was not his motherland. So Conrad wavered between two nationalities and wanted to be loyal to both. That is why on his tomb at Canterbury cemetery the tombstone contains his name as "Joseph Teador Conrad Korzenioski", which, as Fredric Karl's comments, "is neither English nor Polish but an uneasy mixture of the two" (qtd. in Page41). The tombstone of Conrad's bears the following two lines from Spenser's *Faerie Queen*: "Sleep after toyle, rest after stormie seas,/Ease after warre, death after life does greatly please".

Thus, Conrad's dislocated life helps us to align him with a migrant/an immigrant. During Conrad's time when he got British citizenship, immigration was open for foreigners in Britain but it was, Allan Simmons says, on the verge of a ban in 1905 through "Alien's Act" (10). So Conrad also had a threatened identity as a British citizen. Though he lived in England with an English wife, he retained the Polish style in his life and dress. And when he spoke English, he did not sound an English man. This complexity Conrad handled through his narrator-character Marlow who often projects Conrad's own voice in his fiction. Conrad wanted to bridge the gap between the author and the reader, between the tale and the listener through Marlow. So, Marlow is the disguised self of Conrad in some of his tales. According to Psychoanalytic study, the author must present himself or herself consciously or subconsciously into his or her works with his or her dreams and frustrations. Simmons comments on the role of Marlow: "Commentator and character, outsider and insider, Marlow mimics Conrad's own wariness as an immigrant author writing for an English audience" (12).

Conrad tried to get acculturated to the English way of life and he did so except in some things like interior decoration of the house, dress and food habit. He liked the English and wanted to be like an Englishman. But sometimes when Britain's politics did not suit him, he would turn to Polish identity, as it happened during the Boer war which Conrad disliked and termed as "idiotic".[15]Conrad said to David Bone, "[B]y choice I am more British than you are. You are only British because you could not help it" (qtd. in Simmons 14). Simmons however links Conrad to British Empire thus:

> And the Britain of Conrad's choice was imperial. The great fact of British life, the Empire, provided Conrad with a living, with security, and with a sense of communal

[15] The Boer war (held between 1899 -1902) refers to the second Boer war between British Empire and the two Boer states (South African Republic and the Orange Free State).

> recognition and belonging….engaged in the practical reality of Empire, Conrad was part of the great web of communication that assimilated remote area of the world into the British economy. (14)

After the publication of each of his fiction, critics published their reviews which often termed him as an alien in England. His pessimistic view of politics in general was based on his own experience of hardship and struggle in life. Without finding his blind political allegiance to neo-conservatism, or conservatism, or neo-liberalism and socialism, some critics cynically call him a man belonging to no country. Norman Sherry however regards him as a cosmopolitan man, a homeless person like that of Auerbach's ideal writer who should be a foreigner to this world in order to be an unbiased writer. Although he already spent twenty years in London, he had to face this politics of labelling him as an insider and outsider. Is one's being born in a country everything? Conrad rightly said that because of his choice he was more British than those who were British by birth? He chose Britain to live in, and so his freedom of choice, his willingness to live in Britain should be given more priority than the accidental or mere fact of his birth in a land. The world is like a sea, like a sky, and people are birds; wherever they want to go and settle, they should have the right to go there and settle without any barriers of passport and visa that limit man's freedom. No insider and outsider game should undermine the dignity of a human being as it happened in the case of Conrad. He writes to Garnett, "I've been so cried up of late as a sort of freak, an amazing bloody foreigner writing in English (every blessed review of S.A. had it so – and even yours) that anything I say will be discounted on that ground by the public" (Simmons 16). That is why *Nostromo* (1904), *The Secret Agent* (1907), and *Under Western Eyes* (1911) show Conrad's deep engagement with the history of a nation and his pessimistic apprehension of political institutions. In his essay on "Anatole France" he says: "…political institutions, whether contrived by the wisdom

of the few or the ignorance of the many, are incapable of securing the happiness of mankind" (33). Conrad was always aware of the cynics who questioned his identity as a British citizen and his right to write about British politics. This politics is still present today as Maswood Akhter shows it in the case of Monica Ali in "The Politics of Right to Write" where he states that Western writers write about the other people but they do not accept other people's writing about them.

Influences on Conrad

Conrad's dramatic appearance on the literary establishment in Britain with a novel in English is really surprising to many critics who are puzzled as to the fact that how a man who does not know the English language at twenty one can write a novel just after fifteen years, a full-fledged novel when he still was a seaman. Conrad is one of those writers who have used his life experiences and knowledge for intellectual purpose with authority. Henry James writes to Conrad, "No one has *known* – for intellectual use – the things you know, and you have, as the artist of the whole matter, an authority that no one has approached" (qtd. in Collits, *Postcolonial Paradoxes* 23). Yet as every great writer goes through certain experiences and processes to become a professional writer, Conrad, a complete stranger and novice to his contemporary literary world came in contact with a handful of intimates and mentors. The group includes: Edward Garnett, Ford Madox Ford, J. B. Pinker, R. B. Cunningham Graham, and John Galsworthy whose own literary works and friendship with Conrad influenced the latter greatly. Edward Garnet, first a reader of his first novel and then a mentor and a lifelong friend, often discussed things with Conrad and gave valuable advice and directions. Ford wrote three collaborative works with Conrad, and he was a great critic of Conrad as well. Graham, a socialist,

writer, Scottish nationalist and traveller was his good life-long friend as well in whose company Conrad felt happy and relaxed. The friendship between them grew when Graham wrote to congratulate Conrad about the latter's "An Outpost of Progress". The exchange of letters between them shows their engagement with the contemporary affairs, history of imperialism, and their different outlooks of world as well. Conrad's comparison between the Roman and British imperialism is influenced by Graham's "Bloody Niggers" (1897). *Nostromo* is partly influenced by some of Graham's stories. Conrad got introduced to Stephen Crane in 1897, became his friend and was influenced by the latter's *The Red Badge of Courage* and "The Open Boat", first for the theme and second for the impressionistic technique Conrad employs in *Heart of Darkness*. Conrad wrote on Stephen Crane too. Conrad's relation with Henry James was reciprocal, at first liking each other's work and then becoming neighbours, though James did show some reservations about some of Conrad's work, may be out of professional jealousy but both influenced each other. However, Conrad may have borrowed James' frame narrative and narrator Marlow in *Heart of Darkness* and other Marlow tales. Conrad had a kind of emotional engagement with his distant cousin's wife Marguerite Poradowska, who was a writer herself and who produced novels in French; she influenced Conrad through her books as well as letters. It is she, as some biographers have pointed out, who is the model of Marlow's aunt and the Intended in *Heart of Darkness*. She was the first novelist whom Conrad knew before his writing career started. He read her fiction and was attracted and influenced by the beautiful Marguerite, the widow of his distant cousin. Conrad's *Chance* was directly influenced by one of her novels.

As a reader from his childhood, Conrad read the Polish romantic Mickiewicz, his own father's works and translations of Shakespeare; he also read Hugo, Turgenev,

Dostoyevsky, Flaubert, Maupassant, Henry James and some other contemporary writers. He was influenced by Turgenev's humanism and anti-bourgeoisie outlook. He wrote an introduction to a volume named *Turgenev: A Study*. And his *The Mirror of the Sea*, *Lord Jim* and *Under Western Eyes* bear some influences of Turgenev. Conrad read Shakespeare first through his own father's translation. And during his journey to the East he carried a Shakespeare's volume with him; he recaptures this memory in *Lord Jim* in which Jim is seen to carry such a volume. Stein's reference to Hamlet, Jim's resemblance to Hamlet, Captain Whalley's resemblance to King Lear and the likeness between *The Tempest* and *Victory* show Conrad's knowledge and sharing of Shakespearean vision of the world. Conrad's works have a special connection to Dickens's works too. No other novelists have attracted and charmed Conrad more than Dickens. Conrad's ironic style with a touch of humour which he often incorporates in his novels is Dickens'. His *The Secret Agent* and *Chance* are also influenced by Dickens. Another great novelist who has contributed greatly to Conrad's imagination and narrative style is Gustave Flaubert. From the very first novel *Almayer's Folly* to *The Nigger of the Narcissus* to *Lord Jim*– all are explicitly reminiscent of Flaubert's *Madam Bovary*. The narrator Marlow is Flaubertian too.

When Conrad was directly encouraged by his English acquaintances, he was artistically influenced more by French literature. Yves Hervouet's *The French Face of Joseph Conrad* deals with Conrad's French connections and French influences on him in detail. John Galsworthy, Ernest Dawson and Joseph Retinger in particular claim that Conrad was more at ease with French and knew much more about it than that about English. Yves Hervouet says, "The remarkable intimacy with the French literary tradition had both national and family origins" (7). Polish aristocratic and educated people used French for their intellectual discussion and many children had French language tutors as we have English for that purpose

in Bangladesh and India, that is, in Asia. Conrad was encouraged and influenced by his father's translation of several French literary works in Polish. And Conrad read a lot of French literature as Ford and others have suggested. Flaubert, Maupassant and Anatole were Conrad's favourites. He could read and speak in French too.

Ford Madox Ford was Conrad's collaborator in three works – *Romance*, *Suspense* and "The Nature of a Crime". No other living writer had such a formative influence on Conrad's family life and career than Ford, who often helped him financially, and whose works have also influenced Conrad. Apart from his friends and relations, Conrad was influenced by many European writers and seamen. Frederick Marryat is one, who himself went to sea and then became a writer exactly as Conrad has been. So it is guessed that Conrad as a child read him in translation and was fascinated by his life and works and got inspired to be like him. Conrad's *Romance* and *The Rescue* were modeled on Marryat's adventurous works. Guy de Maupassant, a French novelist and short story writer, was one of the influences on Conrad. Like Conrad, Maupassant was a sailor. He was also one of the originators of frame narrative technique. Critics have showed even textual resemblances between Conrad's and Maupassant's texts. Conrad's "The Return", *Nostromo* and *The Secret Agent* have got some textual resemblances with some of the Maupassant texts.

Adam Mickiewicz was one of the Polish Romantic poets whom Conrad read in his early childhood and heard some of his ballads through his father. Conrad even carried some works of this romantic writer in his sea voyages and often read his poems. Conrad's "Karain" and "Prince Roman" were influenced by Mickiewicz's ballads. Conrad's own name was modelled on one of his heroes named Konrad Wallenrod in his most famous

Pan Tadeusz. When Conrad wrote his first novel, Rudyard Kipling was an established writer. Both of them liked each other and commented on each other. While Conrad liked Kipling's craftsmanship, Kipling liked his strangeness and foreignness.

However, Conrad's literary imagination, which may have been dormant since his childhood, was influenced by his six months' stay in the Borneo region of Malaysia. But as this period is not enough to understand the Malay life and culture fully and also the European people's relation with them and the demography of economic, political and social life there, he surely was influenced by Alfred Russel Wallace's (1823-1931) *The Malay Archipelago*, Frederick McNair's (1829 – 1910) *Perak and the Malays* and the journals of James Brooke. His friendship with Hugh Clifford, who was an administrator and a scholar with knowledge about the Malays, provided him with pertinent ideas and facts.

The influence of literature of adventure on empire and of empire on adventure is reciprocal. The works of R. M. Ballantyne, Captain Marryat, G. A. Henty, W. H. G. Kingston and Rider Haggard, as suggested by Andrea White and Linda Dryden were dominant works of adventure whose "appeal lay in the ability to transport its readers away from everyday concerns and to immerse them in uncomplicated exotic romance" (Dryden 2). Both Louis Stevenson and Conrad were influenced by these writers' works, but while the former focused on the promises of such adventures with national glories, the latter focused on the unromantic side. Captain Marryat's (1792-1848) *Masterman Ready* (1841) and *Children of the New Forest* (1847), R. M. Ballantyne's (1825-94) *The Coral Island* (1857), and G. A. Henty's (1832-1902) *Out on the Pampas* (1868) were best known adventure stories especially for children. These writers found a good writing career and became famous by writing these exotic tales. Later on, Conrad's

contemporaries like Henry Rider Haggard (1856-1925), Hugh Clifford (1866-1941), Frank Sweetenham (1850-1946) and Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) wrote many stories based on their experiences in the empire they stayed for some time or were born in and lived for a long time. Haggard's South African experiences, Clifford's and Sweetenham's Malay experiences and Kipling's Indian experiences created a different body of literature for those respective places. While all these writers had become popular by providing the European reader the glorifying romantic exotic stories flooded with deep optimism founded on empire, Conrad was disappointing them by writing just the opposite – things that undermined the imperial romance and ideology. While other writers were imbued with the mid-Victorian optimism of progress and civilization, Conrad was perhaps the last of the Victorians and first of the Moderns who captured the skeptic and pessimistic mood of that transitional time.

Chapter Three
Eastern Life and Western Representation

> My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel – it is, before all, to make you *see*. That – and no more, and it is everything.
>
> — Joseph Conrad: Preface, *The Nigger of the Narcissus*

Conrad's fiction deals with the issues of colonialism, imperialism, politics, war and revolutions that recur in all of his works from short fiction to novel to non-fiction. His knowledge about sea and ships and the places he has visited as a sailor is evidenced in his novels and short stories, especially in his Eastern works. This chapter will assess Conrad's portrayal of the East in the historical context of European imperialism in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Norman Page writes, "...works of literature are grounded in the conditions of their production in the widest possible sense of that phrase – in the history, society, ides and ideologies of their time, the lives and careers of their authors, and the prevailing circumstances of the literary market-place and the reading public" (Preface xi). Therefore, if Conrad is not read within a historical background, the essential Conrad would be missed, for colonialism, patriotism, revolution, exile, dislocation and identity crisis on the one hand, and literature, philosophy, political ideas and national and international policies, social and economic conditions on the other, inform and shape one another. In fact, all these issues function as significant determinants of meaning in Conrad's texts. According to settings, Conrad's fiction can be divided into three categories, namely, Eastern, African and Western. Almost all places of the earth he set foot on have appeared in his fiction, and many of them have been used as settings in his works. While these settings of his fiction are varied and sometimes overlapping, they share some common issues –

issues first capitalized by the author in his early novels of Eastern tales and then later in his Western tales. Among his thirteen published novels during his life-time, six novels are set in the East and six in Europe, and one is in South America.[16] While the Eastern novels deal with the realities of colonial and imperial world – sea, ships, adventure, internecine conflicts, racial prejudices, centre and periphery conflicts, dislocations, exile, trade and commerce and life in the colonies, the Western ones are concerned with autocracy, revolution, anarchy, women, national and international politics, globalization, and love – the last one being common in both. But for Conrad, the Eastern world is as much a mirror for the Western world as the latter for the former, and hence all of his works from Eastern to Western function as mirrors for each other.

However, the issue of representation of the East is what complicates the nature of interpretation. The Malay and the African fiction are very complex though they have distinct plots and meanings. Much of this complexity however arises due to Conrad's use of metaphorical language and symbols which, according to Abdullah Al Mamun, contain layers of narratives and layers of meanings, the neglecting of which might cause misreading. He says in "Readings and Misreadings: The Case of *Heart of Darkness*" that "narratives, like *Heart of Darkness* wrought in highly complex structural developments and with subtle manipulations of language involving free-play of structural ironies, paradoxes, polarities and pluralities, demand special attention. Many misreadings or rather partial readings of the text result from neglecting these subtleties" (15). Apart from all the debates about Conrad's treatment of colonialism, his representational rhetoric and style are also complex. There is no closure of critical debate in his works. Critics can take

[16] Conrad had written his novel *Suspense* which he could not finish befor his death on 3 August 1924 but it was posthumously published in 26 September in 1925 with some sort of ending provided by the publishers.

certain points in his texts to argue for their own purposes. As Reynold Humphries questions Conrad's implied Eastern perspective in "The Discourse of Colonialism: Its meanings and relevance for Conrad's Fiction": "in Conrad the fact of representing an Eastern point of view is usually only another way of representing a Western opinion of how Orientals think, a condition that tends in turn to come back to a Western and ethnocentric standpoint" (117). This is the postmodern nature of criticism as well; it always contradicts itself. Humphries also points to Conrad's Eastern point of view but says that it ultimately serves the West and presents a Western viewpoint. Sanford Pinsker argues in "Conrad's Curious 'Natives': Fatalistic Machiavellians/Cannibals with Restraint" that "Conrad's 'natives' become the dramatic foils against which characters like Almayer and Willems, Marlow and Kurtz, make efforts at resistance, and are defined" (199). Thus, the native is neither the target audience nor the subject. Jacques Darras's view is illuminating in this regard that "Conrad's artistic duplicity is marked by a secret determination to surpass reality imperceptibly in his fiction, to carry his moderate opposition to the very heart of the language. It is translated in the narrative schema by a variety of dual relationships...he does not write, like Kipling, about the English, but rather for the English" (6). Darras notices Conrad's dual nature. However, I disagree with him on the point that I think Conrad cannot write for the English without writing about the English and the East, as his feelings of love and compassion for the Eastern people and the European settlers are obvious. However, the question of authenticity raised by Hugh Clifford and Florence Clemens has been challenged by James Huneker in "The Genius of Joseph Conrad": "Conrad as a painter doubled by a psychologist; he is the psychologist of the sea – and that is his chief claim to originality, his Peak of Darien. He knows and records its every pulse-beat" (270).

Adventure, Romance and Love

James Huneker sums up Conrad's oeuvre in "The Genius of Joseph Conrad":

> He [Conrad] has taken the sea-romance ... revealed the obscure atavisms and the psychology lurking behind the mask of the savage, and shown us a world of "kings, demagogues, priests, charlatans, dukes, giraffes, cabinet ministers, bricklayers, apostles, ants, scientists, Kaffirs, soldiers, sailors, elephants, lawyers, dandies, microbes, and constellations of a universe whose amazing spectacle is a moral end in itself. (271)

No wonder that the East appears in Conrad's works as a site of romance, adventure and a place of hidden treasure – three colonial assumptions and desires. However, it is not at all always a Garden of Eden or a Utopia. On the one hand, romance is dramatised on the ships, boats, in the sea, rivers and tropical forests between two natives, between a European and an Asian; on the other hand, romance often leads to tragic consequences, betrayal and death. In the midst of dark colonial background, love affairs, though not always successful, loom large defying European ideological framework of civilization. Willems' love affair with Aissa, and Tom Lingard's romantic advancements towards Mrs. Traverse and Immada, Karain's one sided love and Pata Matara's elopement with a Dutch man, Arsat's love for his wife, Alex Heyst's relation with Lena, Davidson's friendship with Laughing Anne – all these relations obviously demonstrates the East's capacity to allow unbridled romance. Apart from these relations, the cheap girls in the hotels of Bangkok, Singapore and slave girls in the then Malay society are romantic allurements for Westerners. Romance, adventure, materialism are all intertwined, as we see Lingard, the very successful colonial man likes the East for adventure, trade, wealth and women: "He [Lingard] had discovered a river!... placing old Lingrad so much above the common crowd of sea-going adventurers who traded with Hudig in the daytime and drank champagne, gambled, sang noisy songs and made love to half-caste girls under the broad

verandah of the Sunda Hotel at night" (*AF* 7). This Tom Lingard is a representative European adventurer whose motive of material gain, pursuit of hidden treasure, small scale of sexual liberty at cheap hotels, love and courage, and business, knowledge of the native lands, frustration of and benevolence to the native unfold in the Malay trilogy symbolising the very imperial framework of discourse and desire. *An Outcast of the Islands* harps on a cross-racial love in the background of colonial encounters. The colonies were not only a place of career and business but also a place of romance and sexual relations. The love between the married Willems and the unmarried native Aissa is one such intense and complex colonial love-relation that often destroys the European lovers. Here lies the Conradian paradox, which is according to Daphna "romantic paradox". Conrad allures readers through the romantic plots and exotic settings only to shock and to awaken them to a new kind of melancholic, often tragic, romance. The Orient is presented as a land of pleasure, but not always a land of fulfillment and happiness. For, Conrad's Orient is an enigma, as Jacques Darras commenting on Marlow's narrative in "Youth" says that "Marlow gives a vague image of the east...to make it more attractive to young heroes setting out" (19).

This way mystery is attached to the East for the sake of exoticization and when readers enter Conrad's net of trap, they discover the Conradian irony and technique of reversal. The first of the trilogy, Conrad's very first novel *Almayer's Folly* (1895) "records an ending ... of a dream shared by all writers of adventure and travel, and it effectively reverses the image of the white man in the tropics created by the travel writing and adventure fiction" (White 120). And truly *Almayer's Folly* is a strange story containing love, romance, and adventure by boats, Eldorado motives which recur in Conrad's subsequent works; but the novel capitalizes on the tradition of adventure fiction to

undermine the imperialist ideology of self-glorification with its merrcenary purpose; he reverses the very tradition of adventure fiction. Here in the East the Westerners like Marlow, Lingard and different narrators of the "Typhoon", "Youth", *The Shadow Line*, "Falk", "The Secret Sharer", "Amy Foster" face gales and storms, sea pirates and tropical heat, adverse nature and unwelcoming people of different races. The physical settings of the trilogy and other Eastern tales are exotic and semi-primitive. The tropical nature and forests are the habitations of the Malay natives. These dwelling places are near the river banks, with houses made of wood and bamboo forming a long line, but here and there the foreigner's houses like that of Almayer and Hudig, called buildings, big houses towering above the Malay houses, like that of Abdullah the Arab trader, are found too. On the day time the scorching heat of the sun displays the real tropical side of the nature. The forest is made of palm trees, different flora and fauna, nipas, "luxuriant vegetation, dense foliage, red blossoms, harsh perfumes, plants shooting upward, entwined, interlaced in inextricable confusion" (*AF* 71). The nights are silent but lighted by different lamps. Nights are most often starry and peaceful lending a kind of meditative atmosphere. The exotic tropical nature of the Pantai river is conducive to Nina and Dain's secret love affair:

> There was not a breath of wind, not a rustle of stirring leaf, not a splash of leaping fish to disturb the serene repose of all living things on the banks of the great river. Earth, river, and sky were wrapped up in a deep sleep from which it seemed there would be no waking. All the seething life and movement of tropical nature seemed concentrated in the ardent eyes, in the tumultuously beating hearts of the two beings drifting in the canoe, under the white canopy of mist, over the smooth surface of the river. (*AF* 69-70)

Conrad's power of observation of a calm and quiet Eastern setting and painting of a love-scene is magically romantic:

> ... a high canopy of dense folliage...immense red blossoms sending down ... a shower of great dew-sparkling petals that descended rotating slowly in a continuous and perfumed

> stream; and over them, under them, in the sleeping water; all around them in a ring of luxuriant vegetation bathed in the warm air charged with strong and harsh perfumes, the intense work of tropical nature went on: plants shooting upward, entwined, interlaced in inextricable confusion, climbing up madly and brutally over each other in the terrible silence of a desperate struggle towards the life-giving sunshine above – as if struck with sudden horror at the seething mass of corruption below, at the death and decay from which they sprang. (*AF* 71)

The description of the various plants and the natural landscapes and their complex entanglements nicely portray the tropical island of the place Borneo. His description is marked with an observation of the cycle of plant life and its resemblance to the human life in terms of competition and struggle. He tremendously foreshadows the human events of struggle through this description of the plants' struggle to get sunlight. Conrad evokes a primitive atmosphere for the development of love between Dian and Nina that needs to overcome the hurdles of racial barrier. The love between Willems and Aissa also faces struggle of a different sort and ultimately ends in the murder of Willems by Aissa. Intense and exotic love between Arsat and Diamelen in "The Lagoon" and unprecedented love between Karain and Pata Matara's sister in "Karain" make Conrad's Eastern fiction unusually romantic.

Conrad's romantic idea of the East finds its fullest expression in his much acclaimed short fiction "Youth" which is based on his first experience of visiting Bangkok on the steamer *The Palestine* as a second mate in 1881. His first encounter with the East, particularly Bangkok, when he was twenty years old, is registered with marked enthusiasm and thrill, awe and inspiration, adventure and ordeal. The first voyage to Bangkok is like his first love. It also demonstrates the author's and the West's attraction and response to the East:

> And this is how I see the East. I have seen its secret places and have looked into its very soul; but now I see it always from a small boat, a high outline of mountains, blue and afar in the morning; like faint mist at noon; a jagged wall of purple at sunset. I have the feel of the oar in my hand, the vision of a scorching blue sea in my eyes …We drag at oars with aching arms, and suddenly a puff of wind, a puff faint and tepid and laden with strange odours of blossoms, of aromatic wood, comes out of the still night – the first sight of the East on my face. That I can never forget. It was impalpable and enslaving, like a whispered promise of mysterious delight. ("Youth" 34)

The passage demonstrates intense feeling and deep emotions the Eastern landscapes, mountains, odour of flora and fauna and wood, sunrise and sunset exerted on Conrad the introvert. This first voyage wonderfully captures, to use Hugh Clifford's expression, "the first impression wrought upon a virgin mind by the marvel, the glitter and the glory of the East" (13). A kind of meditative Wordsworthian trance is perceptible. The beauty of the place and its effect on the senses of the young writer produces poetry. Indeed, the East "...was for Conrad a theatre of images, sounds, smells, landscapes, scenes" and "above all, the colourful people that he met and the lives they lived" (Choon x). The passage evokes our feelings and sensibilities, and makes us yearn to visit the place. This is Conrad's power of impressionistic technique by which he makes the reader see the things he saw and feel the things the way he felt. Really, the East had charmed him: "I loved the ship more than ever, and wanted awfully to get to Bankok. To Bankok! Magic name, blessed name. … Remember I was twenty … and the East was waiting for me" ("Youth" 14). This is the wait for the land of the fairy. The popular literature created an enchanted East in order to lure the European to go to the East for pleasure, adventure, career and empire. And Marlow is doing the same for his contemporary and the next generation, so is Conrad. We feel like going to Bangkok to find why this place is so attarctive. When the ship was out of order, and the crew was about to leave the ship, Marlow thought the ship

would not see Bangkok. He was getting disappointed but the attraction to seeing Bangkok enlivened him:

> And for me there was also my youth to make me patient. There was all the East before me, and all life, and all the thought that I had been tried in that ship and had come out pretty well. And I thought of men of old who, centuries ago, went that road in ships that sailed no better, to the land of palms, and spices, and yellow sands, and brown nations ruled by kings more cruel than Nero the Roman, and more splendid than Solomon the Jew. ("Youth" 16)

Thus, the majestic grandeur of the East mixed with its political mishap as presented by Conrad is a kind of paradox. For though it seems a bizarre land to the Western eye, it is also a land of passion, for natural love flourishes more passionately in the East both for Europeans and Easterners. While the landscape is a matchless setting with its secluded forest life and tropical weather and river, lovers also find a free atmosphere without any strict social rules. The relations between Dain and Nina, Willems and Aissa, Jim and Jewel, Lingard and Immada and Lingard and Mrs. Traverse, Karain and Matara's sister, Arsat and his beloved, Jasper Allen and Freya, Falk, Davidson and Lena, the young captain and Jacobus' daughter, Geoffrey Renouard and Felicia Moorsom, Felicia and Arthur testify to the East's enormous capability and generosity to accommodate different patterns of love – love between natives, between whites, and between natives and whites. Though these relations often turn sinister and destructive in most cases, Conrad's focus on the intensity of emotions in love and romance is noteworthy. Thomas Moser's assessment of Conrad, I think, is not proper when he says that Conrad is not good at painting love-scenes; the above examples from "Youth" and *Almayer's Folly* show that Conrad can create powerful scenes of love and romance.

However, the nature of love in *Victory* is different. It is between two Europeans - Heyst, the aged man and the young Lena. Though these two do not get married, they stay together and live like a couple pointing to the present day "live together" in the West. And probably this is why Ricardo, one of the villains in the story, thinks of coveting the girl. Heyst and Lena elope for their mutual benefit; Lena to escape the impasse of Schomberg's hotel and the man himself, and Heyst to remove his loneliness. However, the author does not approve of such non-Christian live-together and thus makes a tragic end though he has given it a romantic beginning. Conrad's conservative attitude is exposed to some extent; or he may be apprehensive of the European and Christian readers' disapproval of such relations based on, to use Allan Simmons' words, "emotional isolation, paralysed sexuality, and female entrapment" (182).

In length a novella, "A Smile of Fortune" followed *Under Western Eyes*, and it was the first great work after the recovery from his nervous breakdown in 1910. Subtitled a 'Harbour Story', this story is after a lapse of some years set in the East. The narrator is a young captain given the freedom to apply his own merit in business by the owner is entrusted with the duty of loading a cargo of sugar from the "Pearl of the Ocean, the harbor of a tropical island and the owners recommend him to Ernest Jacobus, a very wealthy merchant. But when his ship arrives, he is greeted and served well with breakfast and various commodities and other services by Alfred Jacobus, who is the enemy of Ernest Jacobus to whom the young captain is recommended. The narrator comes to know that Ernest Jacobus, the brother of Alfred, is rude and shrewd and abusive to a mullato boy, who is supposed to be his illegitimate son. When the captain runs short of sugar bags, to load sugar he goes to Ernes Jacobus's house and falls in a kind of love with a girl named Alice, who is Jacobus's illegitimate daughter by a circus-woman. He spends many evenings with

Alice in a fairy-tale like atmosphere of verandah in front of a magnificent garden. When the narrator is successful to break her coyness and showers kisses, the girl runs away and the narrator thinks that Jacobus has seen them. However, a deal is reached between them in which the narrator gets bags but he has also to buy a cargo of potatoes. While leaving the place, he bids farewell to the girl who came to the site of kiss to find one of her lost slippers. The narrator then feels disenchanted and goes to Australia where he sells the potatoes at a very high price. This is his fortune. This is a good fortune for Conrad as well to receive good comments and critical attention for this story which is liked for its fairy tale quality and Eastern exoticism. But a potential love affair remains mysterious.

Romance thrives in "Freya of the Seven Isles" in a more tragic way. Love between two souls is obstructed by personal follies, mistakes, racial conflicts and personal jealousy. Set in the Malay Archipelago, it recalls some actions of *The Rescue*. The political and business rivalry between the Dutch and the English that often encroached into the level of personal life is nowhere openly portrayed than in this novella written in 1910. Freya, the beautiful daughter of a Danish tobacco planter Nelson is in deep love with the English trader Jasper Allen, who is the owner and master of a nice brig named *Bonito*. There is a Dutch lieutenant Heemskirk, the commander of a patrol boat, the *Neptune,* who also becomes a rival for Freya's love. He becomes jealous of the girl's affection and love for Jasper whom he wants to ruin when he is slapped by Freya for his advance towards her. He detains Jasper's brig near Carimata and finds out that Jasper's mate Schultz, an alcoholic fellow, has sold the ship's firearms to some native people without informing his master, and it is a crime. Heemskirk then takes the brig to Makassar and causes it to go under water never to be floated again by cutting the boat's tow-rope. Jasper goes mad at such treachery of Heemskirk, and at the loss of his brig

passes the rest of his life staring at the reef of Tamissa where his brig went aground. On the other hand, Freya waits for the return of Jasper with whom she wants to elope against her father's will and ultimately dies. Thus, the story ends in a tragic manner. The East is often tragic for the Westerner lovers.

In the novella "The Planter of Malata" (1913) the indomitable force of infatuation and unrequited love destroys the male protagonist. But the cross-cultural Eastern colonial setting, Malata, makes a primitive place of dark romance full of suspense like that of *The Rescue*. Geoffrey Renouard on his returning from long solitary life on his silk plantation in Malata meets suddenly Felicia Moorsom and her philosopher father at a dinner party and eventually gets attracted to the gorgeous Moorsom, who has returned to Sydney from England to search for her missing fiancé Arthur who allegedly disappeared being involved in a financial scandal and who now has been working as an assistant to Renouard in Malata under the name of Mr. Walter (Arthur's new name). Miss Moorsom comes to know the fact and goes to Renouard, who hides the fact that Arthur had died in an accident just before Renouard's departure for the city. He then takes the girl and her father to Malata for a pretext seraching for their desired man. He makes his new assistant tell a lie to Miss Moorsom that Mr. Walter is away on a trip. But the ghost of the dead Arthur haunts both the natives and the visitors. Then finally, Renouard tells the truth of the death of Arthur and confesses to his love for her who rejects him and leaves the island. Renouard out of grief and frustration in love seems to have committed suicide by drowning. Love between two European does not flourish in the world of colonies. Conrad's portrayal of the ghost of Arthur adds to the mysterious nature or superstitious ways of the East, very much like those of Conrad's Gothic stories.

Though the story “Because of the Dollars” (1913) is set in the East, it is the story of Captain Davidson, reminiscent of the Captain Davidson of *Victory*. The East is used here as a site of villainy as well as heroism for the Western lovers in the background of colonialism. Here the captain Davidson foils an attempt of robbery and murder of himself with the help of a woman named Laughing Anne, a reformed woman, whom Davidson knew in his youth. Anne who has been a plaything for men who have always deserted her in spite of her attempt to settle down with one, lives now in the Mirrah settlement, an imaginary wild Malay island with Bamtz, a reformed loafer turned rattan-trader and her young son Tony. It is Davidson who collects old dollars and rattans from Bamtz when he visits the Mirra Settlement. But this time a trio of villains, headed by a French handicapped man, enters Davidson’s ship stealthily with the help of Bamtz. But Davidson is informed of their evil plans by Anne who is then killed by the Frenchman for her betrayal. Davidson just then kills the Frenchman. The other two villaians escape empty-handed. Davidson returns with his dollars and with Anne’s son Tony whom he wants to bring up now. But his wife suspects that Tony is Davidson’s son and she being angry goes to her parents. The little man Tony grows up with the desire to be a missionary. The Western theme is viably presented in the Western colony. Anne’s unconscious love for Davidson and her humanity are marked in this story.

However, in “Falk: A Reminiscence” (1903) love triumphs over the barrier of cannibalism which raises the philosophical and moral issue whether a man can eat human flesh to save his or her life, and also if a civilized woman can fall in love with or marry such a man. Conrad seems to prioritize the instinct to live at any cost and accept such a man in society, as it is not a conscious act or crime; rather it is an imposed act connected with existential crisis. Falk, the Scandinavian, reveals at one point to his beloved’s uncle and the

narrator one of his past experiences of sea hazards and the threat of death by starvation or death by being the food for another ship-mate: “Imagine to yourselves, that I have eaten man” (“Falk” 218). Thus, Conrad brings the primitive practice of some tribal people to test a white European in the Eastern settings and implies that in times of necessity civilized humans can go primitive. Despite knowing that Falk ate human flesh, Hermans’ niece marries the man though his uncle and relatives did not like the match. This is one of the four stories that culminate in the successful union of lovers, the other three being *Almayer’s Folly*, *Chance* and *The Rover*.

The atmosphere and environment in the East are very much suited to romantic isolation and joyous lovemaking, but it is often melancholic and sometimes tragic. The charm of new life, new sights and sounds, new faces, new cultures, new people and the problem of representation of all these “other” things and the problem of living with these “other” and making a successful romance are obviously challenging for Western settlers and writers. However, the challenge is more racial and cultural, for many of the Western people could not assimilate wholly to the native culture nor they could become successful in establishing a colonial society. Most of the European people hate the place and think of leaving the place, but they cannot. Their tragedy or failure lies in their inability to think of settling down there, to belong to the place. As they are outsiders, they cannot feel the ownership or be sharer of the land from within their selves as well, apart from the mistrust about the native. But Conrad does not allow them any safe return to their homeland Europe either. Hence, his fiction is with “all the invocation of motifs of romance and adventure…consciously anti-heroic. It subverts the heroic code, pointing to the futility of a life based on dreams. Real life for Conrad, and his protagonists, is punctuated by disillusion, not romance” (Dryden 109).

When the European is shown as dreamer, the native is shown as passive in their private life. This binary setup makes the representation of the East Eurocentric as the main focus of his narratives is the Western people. And thus Humphries seems justified when he says that "Whether it be women, customs, or language itself, the methods of representation in Conrad move towards a homogenization of the world of the other through the discourse of the Other in a way that travesties reality and betrays an ignorance" (117). The natives are not seen to be concerned with any future vision of their own. The European dreams of wealth and fortune with which they would build paradise back in their home countries. This is not their home. But though they dream, they dream the wrong dreams. And while pursuing the dream, they have to bear the fatal consequences of pursuing that dream or ideal, if this can be called at all an ideal. However, adventure and romance were best suited to Westerners during Conrad's time; these are past realities for the Malays. The Malay character Babalatchi's nostalgic mind is revealed:

> He was a vagabond of the sea, a true Orang Laut, living by rapine and plunder of coasts and ships in his prosperous days; earning his living by honest and irksome toil when the days of adversity were upon him. So, although at times leading the Sulu rovers, he had also served as Serang of country ships, and in that wise had visited the distant seas, behind the glories of Bombay, the might of the Mascati Sultan; had even struggled in the pious throng for the privilege of touching with his lips the Sacred Stone of the Holy City. (*OI* 51-52)

These Eastern heroes had once their adventurous lives according to Conrad. But they have now become indolent. Omar has become blind; Lakamba is lazy, and Babalatchi is gullible. They are involved in petty local intrigues which are a sharp contrast to their past life. The varieties of experience of Babalatchi are reminiscent of the past glories. This is

the contrapuntal portrayal of Babalatchi, a native character presented, though partly, from a native's perspective.

Representation of the East

Agnes Yeow likes to see Conrad's portrayal of the East from Bakhtinian dialogism and thus draws an analogy between fiction and history. She writes:

> Conrad's East is a visual construct in the form of a hallucinated mirage, no more or less. Nevertheless, by invoking the prevailing visual culture of his times and working it to his advantage, Conrad infuses his illusion with the aura and status of truth, albeit his particular truth. The tension between a disavowal of the new visual regime and the deployment of the same regime pervades Conrad's eastern vision. Nothing is anything in and of itself and both art and history are themselves dialogic and subjective. (6)

Yeow claims that Conrad's East is not the real East but an East portrayed through an amalgamation of his artistic sensibility and experiences that are reflective of the contemporary stories about the East, which Conrad has come to know from Wallace's *The Malay Archipelago*, M 'Nair's *Perak and the Malays* and Brooke's journals and his conversation with his friend Hugh Clifford. Yeow applauds Conrad in this instance: "Indeed, it is a testament to Conrad's genius that although his knowledge of the region, its inhabitants, and the historical forces at work during the time was limited, he drew considerable mileage from the little he knew" (6). However, Florence Clemens in "Conrad's Malaysia" dubs Conrad as a faithful observer of the Malay life and culture:

> Conrad's eastern fiction is in itself an authority on the general political situation in the archipelago and on the material Malay scene. For these elements it may be read with perfect trust. Only when it is studied for information on the difficult matter of native psychology can doubts arise to Conrad's preparedness for handling his subject with complete mastery". (24)

Therefore, critics give different responses to Conrad's knowledge and treatment of the East. These two opposing views have kept the debate on the subject ongoing. However, what this research finds that this ambivalence has endowed his works with the traits of modernism, postmodernism, colonialism and postcolonialism.

Apart from the critic's debate about Conrad's accuracy in portraying the East, Conrad's treatment of the East is a considerably new domain and of much interest to postcolonial criticism. The East as the "other" of the West had always been an exotic place before the end of colonial era. In "Youth", and "Karain: A Memory" Conrad's exotic portrayal of Bangkok and the Malay Archipelago is European and imperialistic in perspective. V. S. Naipaul points to Conrad's European and colonial experience of setting two cultures face to face in "Karain":

> The story ["Karain"] is, on the surface, a yarn about native superstition. But to Conrad it is much more; it is profounder, and more wonderful...The white men have names; they talk, and act as a kind of chorus. So we are asked to contemplate the juxtaposition of two cultures, one open and without belief, one closed and ruled by old magic; one, 'on the edge of outer darkness' exploring the world, one imprisoned in a small part of it. (190)

The East being a different place full of different Eastern customs and brown people seemed a strange exotic place, and so was an enticement for the Western travellers, business people and colonialists. The most striking image of this East for a new Western adventurer is vividly portrayed by the narrator Marlow in "Youth" when he reaches the shore of Bangkok:

> The scented obscurity of the shore was grouped into vast masses, a density of colossal clumps of vegetation, probably, mute and fantastic shapes. And at their foot the semicircle of a beach gleamed faintly, like an illusion. There was not a light, not a stir, not a sound. The mysterious East faced me, perfumed like a flower, silent like death, dark like a grave. (34-35)

The stereotyped image of the East as attractive as a flower that contrasts with its image as a grave is perhaps not Conrad's own but the Western idea of the Orient. Marlow represents the Western eye here that sees the East as an enticing prison, an exotic alluring place. Conrad's presentation of the East in the above passage is thus his political reading of the whole enterprise of colonization. But his motive in "Youth" is not to present a political allegory but to demonstrate the appeal of the East on the mind of the sensible Western traveller like Marlow. Conrad also feels the appeal and moral urge to convey the impression and sensation of the life of these people to the West. His presentation of the European attitude regarding those places and people points to his moral responsibility; but he puts the Western characters to a test of morality in an alien setting, in the East. Hence, as Douglas Kerr argues in his "Joseph Conrad and the East": "The focus of Conrad's tales of the East – and this is true of the literature of colonialism in general – is predominantly on Europeans. There are some striking portraits of 'Oriental' characters ... but for the most part they are subordinate or background figures in a sense where a Western drama – tragic, comic or satirical – is played out" (3). Kerr focuses on Conrad's European perspective and European imperialism in the East.

The simplistic narrative of "Youth" like that of the Malay trilogy underlies if not a conscious but a subconscious European dominant representational strategy. The way Bangkok, Singapore and Indonesia appear as sites of mountains, rivers, vegetation, and strange odour without cultural diversity is the mark of limitation of the narratives produced in the age of empire. GoGwilt rightly comments on the text "Youth" that it "...empties 'the East' of cultural and political associations through the excess with which Marlow repeats the word, overloading it with exotic associations, such like 'The mysterious East ... perfumed like a flower, silent like death, dark like a grave'; and

through the aura with which he invests the names of Eastern places – 'Bankok! I thrilled'... 'Java – another blessed name – like Bankok, you know" (GoGwilt 17). This critic studies Conrad using Said's anti-Orientalist discourse and points out Conrad's misnaming and mispelling and mistranslating the Eastern place names, words and phrases as "Bankok", Lord Jim from Tuan Jim and the pronunciation of Mahon as Man. The point is that the Orientalists also deliberately invested new names to the Eastern places, sometimes distorted their spellings and pronunciation. Their unwillingness or inability to see different places and people differently is noticeable, as Marlow sees Bankok and Java as the same place generalizing Western "fantasies of the unchanging East as a key aspect of Orientalism, allowing hegemonic control over a whole range of territories and peoples deemed Oriental" (Kerr 18).[17]

Like "Youth", "Karain: A Memory" betrays Conrad's Eurocentric view of the East. Published in 1897 this short narrative is, like the first two novels, has its setting in the Malay Archipelago. Here the Malayan character, that is, the titular protagonist tells the strange story of being haunted by the ghost of a man he killed. While the narrator-character, who hears the story from Karain, often asks questions as to the meanings and motives of much action of the story, the tale is an attempt to portray the exotic East − the preconceived idea about the East. The story torn between reality and superstition, between rational thinking and irrational imagination presents a tragic tale of a man's stricken conscience because of his murder of his own friend. It is like Macbeth's killing of Duncan and his futile attempts to wash away the blood from his hands. Daphna Erdinast Vulcan, while reading the story as a tale of storytelling, argues that the story is bordered on "the unresolved tension between two perceptual sets of spheres: the island

[17] In Bangladesh too the place names like Chittagong, Dacca, Calcutta used by the British colonialists bear its testimony.

and the schooner; the stage and the real world; superstition and rationality; East and West" (qtd. in Middleton 62). "All his major fictions", as Keith Carabine says, "present, explore, and are constructed out of antagonisms that are never finally resolved. These famously include: egoism and altruism, emotion and reason, solidarity and isolation, moral corruption and redemption, heroism and contingency, loyalty and betrayal, idealism and scepticism, piety and scorn" (122).

However, "Karain" can be read as Conrad's contrapuntal study of two cultures looked at from both European and Eastern perspectives. The first narrator tells much about the people and places of the Malay Archipelago and also about the second narrator whose narration about his own betrayal and suffering constitutes the middle – the nucleus – of the plot. The first narrator retells the story of Karain's tale and also his own idea about the character of Karain, who represents the Eastern "ruler of a conquered land, a lover of war and danger, a fighter and a plotter" ("Karain" 94-95). He is now the Rajah of three villages through conquest of the bay. He led the wandering Bugis people to victory. Whom does he fight? His neighbours. He does not fight the Dutch whose presence in the region is felt with awe and fear and who control these local warlike rajas from a far distant place. They have been able to appear before the natives as gods, invincible, indefatigable and victorious. They have been successful to create such terrors through the policy of reign of terror like that of William I, the Norman duke who made the conquest of the whole of England applying brute force. When at the beginning there were resistances here and there, he burnt the villages, domestic animals and crops of those places where people took arms against him. His pitiless policy of inflicting severe punishment to the rebels and confiscating their lands made them accept his rule without any further resistance. The same kind of inhumanity of the Dutch makes the local rulers

of the Malay Archipelago inactive and slave to the Dutch colonials who fight less with manpower than with shrewd intelligence of divide and rule policy; and they possess lethal weapons like guns and gunpowder which they themselves use to frighten the natives and also create factions by supplying them with those arms.

The European people's trade of gunpowder and arms in the East and elsewhere is one of the successful policies of empire. They deal in arms even today to boost up their own economic condition and at the same time to keep others in conflicts and wars so that their supremacy or overlordship remains intact. They intervene in the Third World conflicts in the name of terror or democracy or to quote Noam Chomsky, "the Fifth Freedom, understood crudely but with a fair degree of accuracy as the freedom to rob, to exploit and to dominate, to undertake any course of action to ensure that existing privilege is protected and advanced" (1). If we look at the local conflicts in the Malay region as Conrad shows, we find the obvious reasons for the dominance of the West. The Eastern rulers fight each other apparently for no grave reasons. They seek help of the Western traders in establishing their own supremacy, as it is seen nakedly in "Karain" and in the Malay trilogy, more obviously in *The Rescue*. The Europeans provide arms to Karain and get money. And Karain serves them, thinks them his friends, and depend on their protection. He does not think of reconciliation with the local rivals. They are busy fighting themselves while the Dutch are fighting the other, not the local Dutch. The Eastern people's vision of the world is too limited. On the one hand, they talk of law, justice and religion, but they fight for personal honour, glory, passion and greed. This fighting is triggered more by the presence of the colonial people, who trade with all rival parties and hence secretly or openly take side with one or the other faction. And whoever gets the support from the white more than the other usually becomes the victorious.

In “Karain” Conrad enlivens the story of a marginalized Bugis and Korinchi people. These places were unknown to the West and were never mentioned in any fiction. From this perspective Conrad has voiced the marginal and tried to show the characteristics of a brave vigorous Eastern warrior with an antithesis in psychological make-up. A great warrior is haunted by the ghost of his friend whom he betrays. When it is understood that it is his guilt of betrayal which haunts him, it is equally true that his suffering is not realistic. And this is the Eastern characteristic as understood by the author. It is true to some extent that Eastern people are often swayed by the belief in the occult things, in ghosts and sorcery. But it was so too with the European people’s belief and practice of occult power, necromancy and dead man’s ghost which declined by the time Conrad was writing. Hamlet’s seeing the ghost of his father in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* is not seen as a mark of weakness in that society and no critics dare call the European as irrational, primitive or superstitious, whereas such beliefs in the East are deemed irrational and primitive.

Karain’s faith in the magic charms of the portrait of Queen Victoria on the gold coin provided by his European friend is a mockery of the Eastern people. These practices actually help people overcome their psychological fear and anxiety the way modern psychoanalysis or sedative drug does. So the presence of Gothic elements in English literature helps Conrad overcome this issue of non-rationality in an Eastern ruler. In *Almayer’s Folly*, Lingard kills all of Mrs. Almayer’s relations on the board of a Malay craft and takes the little girl as a daughter whose parents and relatives, according to the narrative of Lingard and the narrator, were sea-pirates. This is one version of the European image of the Eastern sea people. Later, we will see a different story from Mrs. Almayer’s mouth about her glorious ancestry. After being orphaned on the boat she

readily accepts the protection of Lingard, the killer of her relatives and now her benefactor, her adopted father, who took pity on the girl's orphan-hood for which he himself was guilty. The narrator identifies her manner of acceptance as stereotypically Eastern: "There was in her the dread of the unknown; but otherwise she accepted her position calmly, after the manner of her people, and even considered it quite natural; for was she not a daughter of warriors, conquered in battle, and did she not belong rightfully to the Victorious Raja" (*AF* 22)? But she did not know that she would be sent to a convent school which was, to her, worse than death. Conrad's sensitive response to this shock of new education in a convent in Singapore is very noteworthy. From his short stay for six months in the Malay Archipelago, how could he observe all these details of the Malay life and the psychology of the Malay? That the Malays are calm, and they accept their fate is true; and that is applicable to most Easterners. This calmness and acceptability of faith is the cause behind the Western domination. They are peace-loving and believe in strange peoples' promises. They never try to see into the reality of things. It implies their less political/diplomatic, less hypocritical nature. They are mostly religious-minded, and so they do not bother much whoever rules them only if the ruler does not encroach into their religious and private life. This realization of their nature by the European administrator helped imperialists make laws and regulations which would not disturb their private spiritual life and thus which would not provoke any rebellion or nationalist movement in the real sense (The Sepoy Mutiny in India in 1857 is an example). Added to this policy is the colonialist's secular ways of life which would be accepted by the natives more than that of their religious life.

Whatever is the critics' debate, Conrad has provided a contrapuntal view about the European presence. His careful study of the East and secular criticism of the West have

made it possible to provide both Eastern and Western perspectives. His negative capability of portraying the mindset of the two races is Shakespearean. Lingard provides the Western imperial perspective to the West's intervention in the East:

> You see, Willems, I brought prosperity to that place. I composed their quarrels, and saw them grow under my eyes. There is peace and happiness there. I am more master there than his Dutch Excellency down in Batavia ever will be when some day a lazy man-of-war blunders at last against the river. I mean to keep the Arabs out of it, with their lies and their intrigues. I shall keep the venomous breed out, if it costs me my fortune. (*OI* 45)

But Lingard and other white people have come to the East to make fortune. While he himself has been benefitted from the East, from trade and piracy, from the hidden treasure, he boasts of developing the East. Conrad has created some Eastern characters like Babalatchi, Lakamba, Aissa and Taminah with a kind of Shakespearean mastery of characterisation. He talks in detail about Babalatchi:

> From the safe position of a confidential adviser, a casual cut-throat he took shelter in Lakamba's rice-clearing. Then he became the chief adviser and helped Lakamba rise to power through many plottings and fights. In those long many years how many dangers escaped, how many enemies bravely faced, how many white men successfully circumvented! (*OI* 86)

But when both Lakamba and Babaltchi grew old "they had to seek refuge in prudent cunning. They wanted peace; they were disposed to reform" (*OI* 86). Conrad's understanding of the native politics and history, even without reading much about them, is highly commendable. He had an uncanny capability to see into the realities of native politics and ways of life. As an outsider, he digs out the insider's views about the native East. Babalatchi becomes the tragic voice of the Malay region. He is the witness of the political upheavals and Western intrusion. And he himself takes part in all those native

politics and change of power. He is a clever statesman of Sambir who is faithful to his Rajah and truly native.

Conrad's presentation of Western characters in the secluded East is an apt subject for a postcolonial study. His last major novel *Victory* (1915), like his other Malay novels, is an exotic one with a bleak ending. It contains the elements of adventure, romance, loneliness, love and fidelity and the essential tragedy of survival and death; Conrad shows the death of one fellow European at the hands of another European more savage and uncivilized than any Eastern or African men. Axel Heyst, an English educated Swede, the protagonist has a very struggling existence. First he roams and trades among the islands near Saigon and New Guinea. Then once he rescues a captain named Morrison and his ship from the hands of the Portuguese port authorities and as a result joins with the latter on his voyages and together establishes a coal company named "the Tropical Belt Coal Company" in the Round Island of Samburan in the Java Sea. But as ill luck would have been, the company fails because of Morrison's death and liquidation of money in Europe. Heyst then lives alone on the island Samburan where a Teutonic hotel keeper, Schomberg feels a kind of racial hatred towards him and spreads a gossip that Heyst had murdered and robbed his partner. After one and a half year he travels with Davidson to Surabaya, and when the later departs for three weeks, he meets a girl named Lena, who is living a captivated life under Schomberg who also tries to seduce her. Hearing the story of Lena who was a violinist from a touring group of Orchestra, Mr. Heyst's chivalric emotion is aroused, and he eventually flees with Lena to his isolated island of Samburan. But just after three months living alone with Lena and a native servant Wang, and when they started to understand each other, a trio of desperados − Mr. Jones, Martin Ricardo and their ape-like servant Pedro, being informed by Schomberg who wanted to avenge Heyst

for the girl, come to the island to rob him. Only Ricardo knows that a woman is also living with Heyst, and he bears a secret design to woo or seduce or assault her. But in the island Heyst was alone with the girl and the servant Wang who does not think of protecting them because of fear. And Heyst's gun is stolen by Wang, and now without a gun Heyst becomes powerless and is captured by Ricardo who was earlier trying to woo Lena. But as Lena is grateful to Heyst, she catches hold of Ricardo's dagger but is killed accidentally by Mr. Jones's bullet which was meant to kill his own partner Ricardo for the latter's betrayal in keeping secret the fact of Lena's existence in the island.[18] In the meantime Wang shoots Pedro with the stolen gun of Heyst, Mr. Jones drowns himself and Davidson comes to rescue Heyst, but Heyst commits suicide by setting fire to his bungalow burning the dead body of Lena and himself. Thus, the idyllic romance between Heyst and Lena ends with their tragic sacrifices for each other.

The novel has got mixed responses from critics. While some dislike its melodramatic scenes and construction of plot, some other like its "Edenic setting". Thomas Moser and Guerard say that Conrad's decline started with *Victory* while F. R. Levis and Frederick Karl have hailed it as a great work. While Jocelyn Baines also calls it "excellent in parts", C. B. Cox says that the novel "includes some of the best and worst of Conrad's writing" (qtd. in Norman Page 117). Tony Tanner talks about Conrad's idea of a gentleman for he says that "In Victory Conrad uses the word 'gentleman' over sixty times: it usually occurs in reference to Heyst or Mr Jones" (Introduction xi). Tanner discusses the novel's focus on the idea of savage and gentleman and says that Conrad does not make a clear distinction between the two. But it is obvious from the text that

[18] Mr. Jones is a hater of women, and though a brigand, he does not meddle into the affairs of women and always avoids women. Ricardo did not tell him that there was a girl living in the island with Heyst and he was trying to woo her. Becuase of this, he wants to kill Ricardo.

Heyst is a better gentleman from the modern perspective. Though he abandons the Café or city life and prefers an isolated jungle, he is harmless to other human beings. His sexual relation with Lena can be judged as immoral from the Victorian point of view but it is redeeming from the modern perspective. However, one might point out to his loss of faith in the civilized life for which he flees to the jungle with Lena. Sometimes *Victory* is compared with Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. However, Norman Page links Heyst's philosophy with that of Heyst's father:

> The hero Axel Heyst…has been deeply influenced by the skeptical and somewhat aristocratic philosophy of his father… to cultivate an aloofness from the involvements and entanglements of human relationships, and the fact that even on his island retreat of Samburan the younger Heyst has his father's portrait and his books suggest that he has adopted his outlook as a model for his own life." (*V* 115)

Heyst's will has been tested by Conrad who drags his character from inaction to action, from death to life, from illusion to reality and provides the catalyst, in this case, Lena. Love or eros whatever we call makes Heyst come to action. This kind of reading is a Western reading focusing on themes and aesthetic aspects; but the Eastern reading would yield Conrad's preoccupation with the ideas of race and racial superiority. Though characters are predominantly Western, except Wang and his wife, the setting is the East. How do the five Western people live in the East and engage in activities which are uncharacteristic of Western culture is the subject matter? However, this cross-cultural gathering sufficiently sheds light on Conrad's idea about the East. Apparently, Wang, the Chinaman is shown as a contrast to Pedro, the slave of the evil Ricardo and Mr. Jones. Wang is intelligent and active. But Pedro is unintelligent and savage. Wang keeps a native wife, builds cottages, makes gardens, cultivates lands and grows vegetables. He never thinks ill of Heyst or Lena. Conrad here turns the idea of civilized man and the

savage upside down. By showing this Chinaman as a controlled, hardworking and a good family man against all other European people from Heyst to Mr. Jones who are not like Wang, Conrad appears to prefer Eastern men, and Eastern values to Western ones. The Western man Heyst is found to be egoistic and inactive and unsuccessful to save Lena and himself. His tragedy is also due to his fellow wicked Europeans − Schomberg the German hotel keeper is a swindler, and a liar; Mr. Johns a desperado, a robber, and Ricardo, a robber and a lusty man, the embodiment of evil. And Wang is the only survivor, who, according to the Western model, is the Darwinian fittest man. Wang's marrying an Alfurso woman is his ability to get acculturated into the native culture. Conrad's Wang is the fittest man in Samburan according to Darwinian evolutionary theory, and thus Conrad challenges the Western superiority complex. The survival strategy and ability may be dependent also on the place. The East is superior to the West if looked from the Eastern perspective. Moreover, Conrad's use of the Malay words – Kasper, Makan, Tuan, Ada, Amok, Blanda, Dain, Chelakka, Dapat, Djinns, Inchi, Laut, Putih, Sheitan, Syed and so on – shows his passion to understand and present things from the native's perspectives and to give the Western reader a view that those people have also got distinct languages and they cannot be translated or comprehended easily.[19]David Leon Higdon notes in "A Glossary of Malay Words in Conrad's *Almayer's Folly*" that "the scattered Malay words do evoke an exotic world" (73). Conrad nevertheless adds, as, to the exotic settings of his fiction through these Malay words and gains critically contrapuntal Eastern point of view that makes him a writer hailed in the East too. And this is why he is a puzzle to Postcolonial critics who give often dived responses to Conrad's works of the East.

[19] David Leon Higdon makes a list of Malay words Conrad used in his first novel *Almayer's Folly*.

Imperialism and Materialism

Conrad presents the East not only as an alien and sovereign land, but also as a site of colonization and a contested territory for European powers. Heliena Krenn writes: "Whether seen in relation to each other or individually, the characters of the Lingard trilogy are highly functional in Conrad's presentation of his ideas on European imperialism" (xix). She finds Conrad anti-colonialist. While dealing with this issue of imperialism Conrad never seems to show his European confidence of superiority of knowledge however. He is an artist who has been driven by a kind of dystopian vision in the realm of politics, as Bertrand Russell says of Conrad: "I felt, though I do not know whether he would have accepted such an image, that he thought of civilised and morally tolerable human life as a dangerous walk on a thin crust of barely cooled lava which at any moment might break and let the unwary sink into fiery depths" (qtd. in Baines 448). However, Russell misses the marks of optimism in many of his works.

Conrad's vision of empire can be divided into two periods. They are the Malay or early period and the Kongo or later period. The Malay period comprises the Malay Trilogy (*Almayer's Folly*, *An Outcast of the Islands* and *The Recue*), "Karain" and "The Lagoon" and the later consists of *Heart of Darkness*, *Lord Jim* and *Nostromo* and all these have imperial settings and have influenced the later writers. Terri Collits says:

> Conrad's novels have been able to assume new meanings in different times and places because of their problematical relationship to imperialism. One of their important insights was that the highest point of Europe's imperial success might also be its lowest in terms of moral authority. In retrospect, that contradiction appears to foreshadow the demise of the European empires. In their angular relationship to empire, these novels mull over cracks in the edifice of imperial ideology instead of celebrating its magnificence. (13)

What Collits thinks is that Conrad has not championed the cause of imperialism. Rather, he looks into the cracks of history of imperialism and sincerely questions its ultimate idealism and legitimacy, though he does not outright reject imperialism. How could one downright reject it when there were no international organizations like that of today's UN or League of Nations? When "might is right" was in practice, and commerce was based on control of the means of transportation and local government, when sea-piracy was rampant and no unified international ethical code of action and behavior was set, how could one be such an angel to totally abandon an ideal which nourished a nation and a people? When the British people were blinded by the glory of ruling the rest of the world, when London was "the very centre of the Empire on which the sun never sets", (*SA* 174) Conrad at least represented the other side, that is, the dark side of imperialism.

The difficulty or confusion arises in the case of interpreting past works of literature and past writers by the present values. With the change of time and its varying historical modes, values also change. So to judge a work of the early twentieth century by the values of the twenty first century is problematic. Yet the universal aspects of a text often provide a holistic approach, an attitude to life derived from the common experiences of life, and this is where the greatness of a work of art lies. Conrad no doubt wrote during the heyday of imperialism, living in the midst of it and functioning as a servant of an empire. Unlike a glorious and happy life of the settlers or the natives as are found in Kipling's and others' works, Conrad's is a gloomy picture. His portrayal can be divided into three types. The first phase of empire is his Malay world. The second one is Africa and the third one is South America or the Europe. While Conrad's Malay world is not a settler imperial world, South America is a settler one. Africa is also not a settler one. In the Malay world we notice that not many people from the West are living in the Malay

society with the natives. Only a handful of Western people live in these places, and they have created some stations or outposts to control the trade. No evidence of controlling the remote countryside is seen. Conrad does not go into the details of the government policies. It is rather the historian's task. He has depicted the social life of the European in the colonies in relation to the native and their European values. The individual Western characters are the main protagonists. The natives are a foil but they have been acknowledged as human beings who speak and act, love and hate, and resist oppression. They have a past and a history of their own. They understand the motive of the outsider, that is, the European presence, and so they take side with the Arab traders who are Muslims like them and take part in intrigues against the Dutch domination. But the African people in *Heart of Darkness* are not shown as individuals or humans. They have been portrayed as savage, and none of them speaks and acts. One of the reasons for such treatment of Africa was totally racial and based on contemporary idea about them which had been coming down from the early seventeenth century. Even the German philosopher Hegel's attitude to the Africans is the same:

> Africa proper, as far as History goes back, has remained shut up …The negro as already observed exhibits the natural man in his completely wild and untamed state. We must lay aside all thought of reverence and morality – all that we call feeling – if we would rightly comprehend him; there is nothing harmonious with humanity to be found in this type of character... At this point we leave Africa never to mention it again. For it is no historical part of the world; it has no development or movement to exhibit. Historical movement in it – that is its northern part – belongs to the Asiatic or European world. What we properly understand by Africa, is the Unhistorical, Undeveloped Spirit, still involved in the condition of mere nature and which has to be presented here on the threshold of the World's History. (109)

Such attitudes prevalent in Europe surely seem to justify colonization. If we analyse the passage, we find that Hegel was writing out of conceptions or ideas learnt from heresay.

He never visited Africa but wrote about her, and his book spread these stereotyped unreal stories about Africa. Because he did not have knowledge, he could not understand them. Even primitive cultures had their own social rules and conventions which may not have been in written form but in oral tradition as has been shown by Achebe in his trilogy. Because these people still followed old or ancient customs of food and drink, ways of life, they were considered by Hegel as mere uncivilized and deformed like animals. British and European people even considered the Indian and Arab people uncivilized because of their habits of eating with hands instead of spoons and some other manners which were different from those of the European. That African people do not have a written history of their own is true but that does not give one right to write about them negatively and fictitiously. This cannot legitimize the exploitation and inhuman treatment of them, or controlling them from outside.

Yet the novella *Heart of Darkness* is recognized by the conservative British readers as aesthetically beautiful and "as the first and most incisive literary indictment of European imperialism in Africa" (Firchow 2). This short novel is conferred a classic status not only for its aesthetic appeal and psychologically complex characters like Kurtz and Marlow but also for the treatment of Africans and European exploitation of them. The novella, however, does not directly talk against the idea of imperialism; rather it questions the efficiency of imperial policies. Conrad is the first, according to Peter Firchow, to fiercely show this inefficiency of European colonial administrators. With the employment of symbols, images, ironies and history he produces an adventure story fraught with gloomy sides of human political enterprises. However, Andrea White, despite being a pro-Conrad critic, holds Achebe in high esteem and charges Conrad, albeit lightly with racism in her "Conrad's Legacy in Postcolonial Literature": "To

discuss the subversions his fictions performed, however, is not to deny the myths and stereotypes his works indeed perpetuated. Although a few individualized characters emerge from the Malayan fiction – Babalatchi, for one – Conrad's Africans are stereotypically, if sympathetically, depicted" (197).

Despite the dark vision of empire, Conrad's politics of upholding Britain and French as efficient colonial powers is very subtly betrayed in his works including this novella. In the beginning Marlow says that Britain was also a dark country but it is no more so now. He talks about glories of empire as well. Though British imperialism is deemed best by Conrad, its inherent rhetoric and goodness have been questioned. Gail Fincham and Myrtle Hooper write:

> His complex and ambiguous representation of the historically parasitic relationship between Empire and her ex-colonies complicates the reductionist mapping of the centre versus periphery, the dominant versus the marginal, and the empowered versus the un-empowered which cultural critics like Said, Spivak and Bhabha have interrogated. (xii)

Conrad in "An Observer in Malaya" comments on Hugh Clifford's "Studies in Brown humanity":

> And of all the nations conquering distant territories in the name of the most excellent intentions, England alone sends out men who, with such a transparent sincerity of feeling, can speak, as Mr. Hugh Clifford does, of the place of toil and exile as "the land which is very dear to me, where the best years of my life have been spent"—and where (I would stake my right hand on it) his name is pronounced with respect and affection by those brown men about whom he writes. (58)

Conrad harshly criticizes the other imperial powers but to some extent has a high opinion of the British colonialists. Helienna Krenn treats this theme of imperialism in her *Conrad's Lingard Trilogy* where she, agreeing with Avron Fleishman says that "His

(Conrad's) colonial background made Conrad distinguish between conquerors and colonists …and disposed him to believe in a workable form of colonialism" (*Lingard Trilogy* xix). Agnes Yeow like many other Western critics finds Conrad's complicity in imperialism: "Conrad's relations to colonialism and to its Orientalizing assumptions of the East do suggest imperial complicity on his part" (32). Critics argue that Conrad is critical of other imperialist countries but not of Britain. He criticizes only the Dutch and Belgian imperialism in *Almayer's Folly* and in *Heart of Darkness*. Some of Conrad's critics say that Conrad is never strictly anti-imperialist; he is rather unhappy with the performance and abuse of imperialism. He is more melancholic about the loss of mystery, adventure, and commercialization of adventure.

Conrad at times seems to like the idea of colonialism as long as it is benevolent for every stakeholder. Had Conrad stayed in British dominated colonies like in India, he could have a different opinion. Yet one can see the difference between Belgian colony in the Congo and British colony in India. When there was aggravated murder and plunder, inhuman brutality in the Congo, there was a kind of sophisticated empire in India, which was largely administered by the local agencies and agents under the control and supervision of British overlords. When imperialism benefited only the centre and European people in the case of Africa, imperialism in India greatly helped many people change for better, and it changed the entire Indian society. Imperialism in the Malay Archipelago is thus close to that of India. Here is the local Raja officially ruling the archipelago but his power is on the decline. Power is rather shared between the local Rajah, European people and Arab traders, though not mutually. A kind of cold war, intrigue and counter intrigue go on there but these political and commercial incidents are veiled by the characters' passion of love, friendship, greed, racial superiority, prejudice, and betrayal.

However, Conrad shows that the relationship between the centre of empire and its periphery is complex and hegemonic. Within the centre also there resides the privileged and the under-privileged, the dominant and the marginal. Almayer is a dominant European in Borneo, but he belongs to the marginalized class in Europe. He, like any other marginalized native, lives in the colony not as a dominant force but as a self-deluded struggling Westerner whose life is in no way better than the marginalized natives. And not all natives are marginalized. The Raja and his associates and those who are in league with the Imperial Powers are in a dominant position. Conrad's vision of empire is thus dystopian. The empire has improved neither the life of the colonists nor of the native people. Conrad in this connection seems to be pessimistic; otherwise he would not have overlooked the material changes that imperialism had brought about in the colonies and in the home countries. Their attempts to improve roads and communication, build new buildings and trading stations, import and export of raw materials and other products obviously had some positive changes which led to the path of urbanization. But Conrad does not talk about these changes that have been brought by imperialism.

Linked with imperialism is human's relentless pursuit for material gain which is also connected to the quest for romance and adventure. Lingard deals in Manchester goods – brass gongs, rifles and gunpowder; but he has discovered the hidden route to "that land of plenty for gutta-percha, rattans, pearl shells and birds' nests, wax and gum-dammer" (*AF* 8). So the East is a land of secret wealth; earlier the narrator in *Almayer's Folly* talks about commerce and wealth:

> At that time Macassar was teeming with life and commerce. It was the point in the islands where tended all those bold spirits who, fitting out schooners on the Australian coast, invaded the Malay Archipelago in search of money and adventure. Bold, reckless, keen in business,... making money fast, they used to have a general rendezvous in the bay for

> purposes of trade and dissipation. The Dutch merchants called those men English pedlars; some of them were undoubtedly gentlemen for whom that kind of life had a charm.... (*AF* 6-7)

Lingard and the Europeans are after the search for hidden riches in the interior of Borneo. Western people's material pursuit like that of Nostromo is shown by Conrad. Babalatchi says to Lakamba about Almayer: "The white man is grieving for the lost treasure, in the manner of white men who thirst after dollars" (*AF* 130). But these pursuits are often beset with perils and dangers, threats of betrayal and alienation. Almayer in *Almayer's Folly*, after much waiting for Lingard, his protector and mentor, who is supposed to know the secret places of the Borneo region of gold and who never returns, joins hands with the native prince Dain to get hold of the secret passage and the gold. *Heart of Darkness* too exposes the European materialistic desire. How Kurtz and his associates plunder and loot African ivory and oppress the native people without bringing any light of education or improving the material condition of the Congo is demonstrated clearly. He raises the issues of racism and imperialism and their effects on humanity. Indeed, *Heart of Darkness* is the first seminal work, to use Philip Sidney's term, "the first light giver" to realities of colonization.

Undoubtedly, Conrad appears with a marked distinction from his contemporary writers regarding imperialism. His individual vision and intellectual freedom make him a very courageous writer, who has not traversed the accepted path of Victorianism. Rather, his intense personal experiences guide him to the path of real world. That is why in his very first novel he takes the risk of offending his adopted country and the West. Daniel Schwarz writes:

> Conrad did not accept the late Victorian notion shared by the Fabians, Shaw, Cunninghame and Butler, that mankind was evolving into a higher creature or that Western civilization was of superior quality to the more primitive kinds of human life. Conrad implies that the distinction between white man and savage natives, a distinction which is taken as the essential premise of life by his Western European characters living in undeveloped areas, is fundamentally apocryphal. (*Almayer's Folly* 16)

The tragic end of his Western protagonists in the East and Africa exhibits Conrad's criticism of colonial ideology of superiority, benevolence and dominance. As in the first novel, Alamyer does no present the West in a good light as he does not accomplish any great thing other than dreaming and failing. His dream of becoming rich and returning to Europe with his only daughter Nina is rather uncharacteristic of any adventure fiction hero, and his pursuit is rather a parody of the Western phantasm. Alamyer's obsessive desire to be rich with the Eastern hidden treasure is a naked exposure of the inherent Western colonial desire for wealth and thus a blatant blow to the West's benevolent position:

> Almayer's thoughts were often busy with gold; gold he had failed to secure; gold the others had secured – dishonestly, of course – or gold he meant to secure yet, through his own honest exertions, for himself and Nina. He absorbed himself in his dream of wealth and power away from this coast where he had dwelt for so many years, forgetting the bitterness of toils and strife in the vision of a great and splendid reward. (*AF* 3)

The East is a place of career for the failed Europeans. To Lingard, "Every puff of wind is worth money in these seas" (*OI* 44). Dain for the sake of Nina engages himself with Almayer in the Eldorado expedition of finding "the mountain of gold" in Gunong Mas. Nothing important or serious thing is pursued by the Western characters other than wealth. Indeed, "the East is a career" [20] for the white, and this is the main business of these people. Conrad sees the reality behind the imperial ideology, and it is true that

[20] Benjamin Disraeli says in his novel *Tancred* that the East is a career. Edward Said refers to this idea in his Orientalism.

man's action is motivated more by personal greed than moral or national obligation. Therefore, Conrad's colonial vision is opposite to Kipling's but close to E.M. Forster's as the latter envisions a free India in *A Passage to India*. But though Conrad does not focus on anti-colonial movements or the end of colonialism, he obviously underscores the declining trend of imperialism.

Racism

Racism is, like imperialism, a controversial issue in Conrad regarding his attitude to European race and the other, notably Eastern and African. When Conrad wrote his stories, the term "racism" was not yet incorporated in the domain of literary criticism. Yet Conrad's awareness of the evils of imperialism grounded on blatant racism is obviously discernible in his works. By the demonstration of inherent racism Conrad displays this shrinking trend of European colonialism in the Malay settlement where prevails a kind of warring atmosphere on the bank of the Pantai river. In most of his Malay fiction, African stories and some of his Western stories, Conrad exhibits different facets of racism and their connections to imperialism, materialism and nationalism. In the first novel, intrigues and counter-intrigues enact a drama of love and betrayal and latent colonialism against the backdrop of racial prejudice. Almayer, being a Christian is a heretic to the Malay Muslims who actually welcome Abdullah the Arab trader, another Muslim. However, the conflict is not based on religion, for another European, Willems helps Abdullah; rather it is an issue of personal gain. The local Rajah, Lakamba and the one-eyed Babalatchi always act against the dual alliance of Dain and Almayer. Dain also secretly keeps relation with Mrs. Almayer and the Rajah. All these things Dain does for the sake of his love for Nina, who also, against the will of his father, secretly keeps the relation with

Dain. Thus, the political conspiracy and the personal passion of love get fused bringing in a very complex psychological issue of racial superiority which is also one of the inherent traits of Western dominance and imperialism. For racial superiority which is brought to the altar of colonialism often ruins the colonialists. Almayer's racial superiority is one of the causes of his downfall, as his wife and daughter Nina both reject him for his obsession with European racial superiority. Conrad shows both Malay and non-Malay characters as racists "vying with each other for moral superiority over the native people. Superiority is measured by each in terms of their distance from the 'native'" (Dryden 84-85). Though Lingard seems to keep himself away from the native, he arranges the marriage between Almayer and Mrs. Almayer.[21] And Almayer calls Willems a savage, a pig and does not consider him a white man because of his evil activities. Joanna and her brother claim their superiority as white. All of them want to belong to the West, and they are aware of their superior position; they themselves are good for nothing but they feel hereditary superiority. Even the native and the White try to show their superiority over the other as Aissa, the half-Arab and half-Malay girl, towards the end of the novel calls Joanna "A Sirani woman. A woman of a people despised by all" (*OI* 358). Obviously, racism appears in Conrad's oeuvre as a menace to human relationship.

This racism ruins individual life as well as social life; racial superiority destroys both Almayer's relation with his native wife and social position in the society of Borneo. The conflict between different races in the Malay Archipelago is not only based on racism. Dain and Nina relationship is the prime example, as this one is one of the few successful relationships in his entire oeuvre and portrayed positively against a sinister tragic background of Nina's father's ruin. This love relation is also plotted against by

[21] Mrs. Almayer is not given any name in the novel; she is called as Mrs. Almayer.

Taminah (a slave girl living under the protection of Almayer) and Babaltachi, because Taminah, though is kind to Nina, secretly loves Dain, and it is she who reveals the plot of Dain and Nina's elopement to Almayer. And also there is business rivalry between Almayer and Abdullah, the latter having good relation with the Dutch who are trying to capture Dain who killed their two men. Therefore, there is a political and racial enmity in the land of Sambir. The Anglo-Dutch rivalry in matters of trade and control of the local Rajah makes both parties weak. And in the settlement the Dutch get the edge over the English. This Dian is a Malay Hindu prince, not a Muslim. When Almayer does not trust any Malay, he trusts Dian. He says to his daughter Nina, "It is bad to have to trust a Malay, but I must own that this Dain is a perfect gentleman – a perfect gentleman" (*AF* 18). The dramatic irony works here, for Almayer's praise of this Dain makes Nina take a notice of him and fall into his love.

Babalatchi being a Muslim calls Dain as "possessed of the Sheitan" (*AF* 87). Later, when a drowned body is found near the shore, the natives mistakenly consider it to be Dain's. Then he says "Lay him there. He was a Kaffir and the son of a dog, and he was the white man's friend. He drank the white man's strong water... That I have seen myself" (*AF* 104). The Arab trader Abdullah says about the European: "White men are quick in anger and slow in gratitude" (*AF* 111). Almayer, the white European, has a very negative idea which is close to the present European hate speech. He says to the Dutch officers who have come to seek for Dain: "It is a great pleasure to see white faces here. I have lived here for many years in great solitude. The Malays, you understand, are not company for a white man; moreover they are not friendly; they do not understand our ways. Great rascals they are" (*AF* 122).

Inherent racism based on colour of the skin is presented in one of his masterpieces, *The Nigger of the Narcissus*. The novel is a sensation to those who go and admire sea life; however, it is also liked by the English readers for its celebration of the superiority of the English race and its maritime tradition. It is nonetheless autobiographical, for all the characters were personally known to Conrad who joined the *Narcissus* as a second mate. The voyage starts from Bombay and returns to the Thames. On the way home two sailors from other ships come to their ships and they threaten the complacency of the crew. One is Donkin, and the other is James Wait. The latter is the nigger of the title of the story. When Donkin incites the crew to a kind of indolence and mutiny, Wait also demoralizes them by his sickness and impending death. How the crew behaves with these two outsiders constitutes the plot of the novel.

However, the treatment of the nigger James Wait has given spark to the novel's preoccupation with racism in the sea. Michael Echeruo in "Conrad's Nigger" points to Conrad's racial treatment of the character: "Conrad presents his main character [James Wait] not as *sick sailor* but as a repulsive blackman. Conrad plays on Wait's negroid features ... The man ceases, or rather, is subsumed in the Negro identity which Conrad has created for him" (135). The other crew members derogatorily call Wait a nigger and consider him the hateful other on whom their anger and spite might be inflicted: "And we hated James Wait. We could not get rid of the monstrous suspicion that this astounding black-man was shamming sick, had been malingering heartlessly in the face of our toil, of our scorn, of our patience ... in the face of death... The secret and ardent desire of our hearts was the desire to beat him viciously" (*NN* 72-73).

James Wait also reacts to the call of the word nigger. He, while being tied by a rope, retorts to Belfast who hates him because of his colour, "You wouldn't call me nigger if I wasn't half dead, you Irish beggar!... You wouldn't be white if you were ever so well ... I will fight you ... I want air. " (*NN* 80). Jeremy Hawthorn thinks that James Wait represents "Conrad's own ideological contradictions and uncertainties and those of his age" (qtd. in Knowles, *Oxford Companion* 282). As Conrad has always showed his sympathy for the humanity far away in the East, he has also felt the same humanity for the Negro, for the Victorian English and European White people had always repudiated the negroes who suffered much as slaves in the whole world. People's mixed and confused treatment of the Negro is well-portrayed in the novel. Conrad's Marxist concern for the common workers is evident from Donkin's speech: "We were indubitably good men; our deserts were great and our pay small. Through our exertion we had saved the ship and the skipper would get the credit of it. What had he done?...We were oppressed by the injustice of the world" (*NN* 101-102). Layertes and Kayertes also suffer much due to their European identity in *An Outpost of Progress.* In "Karain" too, Pata Matara wants to kill his own sister who has eloped with a Dutchman. The racial hatred creates a barrier for him who cannot bear the marriage of his sister with a white man as Brabantio and Iago cannot tolerate the marriage of Desdemona with Othello in Shakespeare's *Othello*. Almayer's objection to her daughter's marriage with Dain is also the same.

Enmity based on racial prejudice is found not only between whites and non-whites but also between whites and whites based on national identity politics within Europe as between the Dutch and the English or between the English and the French. Apart from the enmity between Alamyer and Willems in *An Outcast of the Islands*, in "Freya of the Seven Isles", the enmity between the English trader, the owner and master of the brig

Bonito, Jasper Allen and the Dutch commander of a patrol boat, Lieutenant Heemskirk reaches to a peak when their personal rivalry is fuelled by their racial, commercial and political rivalry – rivalry between two imperial powers for their dominance in the region. The dominant Dutch officer while trying to woo Frey was slapped by her; he takes an immoral revenge upon the innocent lover of Freya. He drowns Allen's brig, and this loss makes Allen mad. Freya pines away for the love of Allen and ultimately dies. However, Conrad's own politics of championing the English over the other European nations in respect of morality and good governance is obvious. Conrad also seems to have glorified, to some extent, the English empire over others as in *Heart of Darkness* he exposes the Belgian empire but does not directly discard British imperialism making Marlow, the English man moralise and philosophise over the history of colonialism and imperialism.

Racial jealousy and conflict are shown between European nations in the Malay Trilogy and in *Victory*, in which Morrison's brig is arrested by the Portuguese on some pretenses of irregularities of papers in Delhi. Poor Morrison is rescued by Heyst, who seems to be the true white man to him. The narrator says, "… Morrison refused to accept the racial whiteness of the Portuguese officials" (*V* 16) who were rascals to him. But Morrison who was saved and who engaged Heyst on his next mission of setting up a company returned to London for some business purpose and died. And the Narrator muses, "Going to Europe was nearly as final as going to Heaven. It removed a man from the world of hazard and adventure" (*V* 22). Morrison has been portrayed as a benevolent colonist who often gave rice and other commodities whenever the islanders wanted from him and thus was often criticized by his fellow colonists. Schomberg is called a Teuton, that is, a German, and is called a good hater. He is portrayed as a malicious man like Shakespeare's Iago, and he detests Scandinavians generally. He had a theory of "white man for white

men" (*V* 93), but he does not apply his theory to Heyst. Both Schomberg and Ricardo are Eurocentric: "Both these white men looked on native life as a mere play of shadows. A play of shadows the dominant race could walk through unaffected and disregarded in the pursuit of its incomprehensible aims and needs" (*V* 157).

Racism within Europe is also shown by Conrad in "Amy Foster". Written in 1901 and published in the volume *Typhoon and Other Stories* in 1903, this story is based on Conrad's personal experience of feeling as an exile in England. This is the only story that deals with a Pole directly. Yanko Gooral, a Polish refuge on his way to immigrate to America, falls a prey to a sea storm in which his vessel sinks, and only he survives. He is washed ashore to the coast of Kent where people treat him with suspicion and call him 'a hairy sort of gipsy fellow' and an escaped lunatic or a maniac. But a simple village girl, Amy Foster, takes pity on him and eventually marries him. Though they are oceans apart in respect of ethnicity and culture, they get married, but cannot avoid the racial barrier. They speak different languages as well, and the wife does not like her husband's teaching Polish to their baby boy and treats Yanko harshly now. One day while Yanko is very sick with fever, he desperately wants water in his native Polish tongue. Amy, who does not understand his plea, flees her home and leaves him to die. Thus, the linguistic barrier gives rise to racial distrust which functions in the story humourously yet tragically. Conrad shows his anxiety or imaginary fear in living in a different country. The life of an exile has a dual meaning for Conrad. One is forced exile which he experienced under Russian Government when his parents were in exile in Volgada. And another is his own wish to leave his home country first for France and next for England. He had to live in those two countries alone with a different language and culture. But though he overcomes the linguistic barrier, he knows for sure about the anxiety of communication, especially

oral one, in practical life. This theme of exile and difficulty of an exiled person to adapt to a new situation is eternal and very much a fact even today. Critics and reviewers often call the story an autobiographical one that displays Conrad's own feelings of uncertainty, insecurity and alienation in the country of his adoption.

Moral Test and Degeneracy of the White People

European protagonists are placed in the East and Africa to be tested. Their morality is tested in an alien setting. Conrad's skeptical attitude to Western colonial ideology and his anti-Eurocentric stance are conspicuously displayed in his portrayal of characters like Willems in *An Outcast of the Island*, Kurtz in "Heart of Darkness", Jim in *Lord Jim*, and Kayertes and Layertes in "An Outpost of Progress". In Conrad's second novel *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896), which is also the second in the Malay trilogy, there are four white people in the place. They are Lingard, Hudig, Almayer and Willems. The latter two are like vagabonds doing nothing serious but in conflict with each other. Willems, who has a half-caste wife and a son, gets attracted to Aissa, the daughter of the blind old Omar, and ultimately starts living with her who possesses him so much and finally murders him in mistake. Willems's earlier moral blunder by counterfeiting Hudig's money and the illicit relation with Aissa point to the colonial theme of moral degeneracy, which is, as some critics say, often a theme Conrad has dealt in the African setting. The European is a victim to wilderness, to native charms. But to me, Conrad never seems to overtly hint at that. Rather, the inherent greed of man looms large when they find themselves in a free atmosphere where they can exercise their power freely. Their power leads them to commit the blunder they make there. They are in trading stations, and they think of only trade. They do not pretend to have any other mission other

than trade. But what is lacking in these stories is the absence of the colonial administration. There is no direct authority of administration that controls the affairs of the region. The local Rajah is there, yet we do not see any kind of stable administration or its control. No rules and laws regulate their life. The European traders take the advantage of the absence of law. Willems does many things for Hudig:

> … the quiet deal in opium; the illegal traffic in gunpowder, the great affair of smuggled firearms, the difficult business of the Rajah of Goak. He carried the last through by sheer pluck; he had bearded the savage old ruler in his council room; he had bribed him with a gilt glass coach, which, rumour said, was used as a hen-coop now; he had over-persuaded him; he had bested him in every way. That was the way to get on … the wise, the strong, the respected, have no scruples. Where there are scruples there can be no power. On that text he preached often to the young men. It was his doctrine, and he, himself, was a shining example of its truth. (*OI* 8)

We find the white man involved in the illegal opium and gunpowder business. The white people trade firearms for the Rajah as well. Willems comes to a powerful position through "sheer pluck". He manages to gain the position by bribing the Rajah and by some other crooked means. Conrad's ironic disapproval of the wise, the powerful and the strong is emblematic of the power of empire itself. The cynicism contained in the sentence of the preceding quotation that "Where there are scruples there can be no power" undermines the moral and legitimizing ideology of colonialism and imperialism. This is the power without scruples, without morality and justice, which is governing and oppressing the present world too. The power of the Security Council of the UN, the power of the world powers like USA, UK, Russia, France and China, that possess the power of veto, with all their pretensions to keep and maintain truth, justice, and democracy can be understood through the eyes of this Polish-born British writer. Yes, if president Bashar of Syria or USA or Russia or UK had scruples, there would not have been the destruction of a city, of so many

innocent people – children, women, the old and the young in Iraq, Afghanistan and so on. If George W. Bush, Tonny Blair or Putin or Saddam had scruples, there would not have been deaths and anarchy that are prevailing in Iraq now. And the indescribable plight of the Rohingya and the Palestinian is a fact. So much pain and tears, so much agony would not have afflicted the world if there were moral scruples of the powerful. If the scientists had scruples they would never dare make nuclear bombs or even any kind of bombs that are solely produced to be used against humans.

Conrad unmasks the futility of imperial power, of colonial administration too. The tendency to consider the native as savage and their subsequent inhuman treatment of them indicates European moral bankruptcy. Willems, the representative of the West, does smuggling of gunpowder and opium by bribing the local Rajah. This drug and arms trafficking is still rampant in the world. Conrad's dealing with these materials is thus very much relevant to the present context. These illegal businesses are done side by side the legal business of importing and exporting raw materials and productions. In this novel, Peter Willems, working as a clerk at Hudig and Co. Ltd., marries a half-caste girl named Joanna, the illegitimate daughter of Hudig, whom he does not love at all. He even does not like his baby son, though he likes to stay in respect and honour he receives from the poor relatives of his wife, who are dependent on him for support of their family. But when he is fired by Hudig from his company and in effect dishonoured by his wife and wife's family members, he again, with the help of Lingard, comes to Sambir to stay with Almayer. Here he gets involved into a secret plot with Babalatchi, a one eyed native politician and adventurer to bring the Arab traders to break the monopoly of Lingard, who is his protector. Conrad's attempt to show the degenerate European in Sambir is to undermine the White superiority, for older values of empire like gentlemanliness,

courage, chivalric code of conduct, success and Christian morality are not characteristics of Almayer, Willems, Joanna, Jim and Alex. Conrad presents the failed Europeans while the Western reader wants to read the story of the successful heroes. Like Haggard, Stevenson and Kipling he could not be a one-eyed man to portray only the pleasant aspects of the colonies falsifying reality. Conrad is a realist; he has subverted the nineteenth century stereotypical images of the white colonists as heroes to a significant extent. That is why Willems is not chivalric towards his half-caste wife. He does not respect her, and he does not even care for his son, the "pale yellow child", and the "dark-skinned brother-in-law". He, like Almayer, considers himself superior as a pure white man to his wife and the latter's relatives.

When the image of the imperial white hero is such that he will be loyal, faithful, loving and caring to his wife, it is absent in Conrad's most Western characters; rather here we see both Almayer and Willems tyrannizing their wives. While the former wants to get rid of her, the latter betrays her by his secret relation with Aissa, a native girl, the daughter of the blind Raja Omar. So, the ideal hero must resist the temptation of the native beauties. The native women will degenerate them or corrupt them. These values are, as Linda Dryden shows, taught in the British schools. But Willems fails in this regard. So there are certain traits which match with the ideal imperial hero, but some of them are not present in him. That the white hero would return to Europe with riches and would marry a beautiful European girl is not found in Conrad. Rather, Conrad's white heroes are not perfect, and they cannot return. So, Conrad's tales represent those who are not successful in life; rather through such portrayals he presents the dark sides of imperialism. Lind Dryden says, "In imperial romance white adventurers, masquerading as gods, bring peace, stability, and prosperity to 'native' peoples. Willems' intervention in

local affairs sparks off political unrest and highlights his inadequacy, his conceit, and his own degeneracy" (Dryden 79).

Perhaps one of the best examples of moral test of the European is shown by Conrad in *Lord Jim*. This novel after "An Outpost of Progress" in *Tales of Unrest* (1898) and *Heart of Darkness* (1899) is one which engages with the subject of empire. In the case of Jim, he is the embodiment of the European spirit of adventure – a dreamer, a brave boy failing in the Patna episode by jumping into the sea keeping the pilgrims in trouble and thus facing the trial where he meets Marlow. Like some other heroes of Conrad, Jim fails as a boy in his dream, but eventually becomes successful, and from a page, he becomes a lord and yet fails in the end. In this colonialist tale, the European's easy access to Patusan and becoming a lord is reminiscent of Kurtz's becoming a god. The novel was greeted well by readers and critics. Many did not like his new narrative style,but praised its originality. Norman Sherry investigates the extensive use of events and acquaintances of Conrad's in his *Conrad's Eastern World.* The novel takes up the first episode with the suspense of eight hundred Muslim pilgrims on board the steamship *Jeddah* bound for Mecca from Singapore, deserted by the captain and the crew. The ceremony of Haj, one of the five pillars of Islamic faith and tradition obviously arouses interest in the reader, both Eastern and Western. But surprisingly, John Lester suggesting Conrad's bookish knowledge about Muslims considers this episode of pilgrimage as Conrad's negative ideas about religious bigotry. Though the text does not say much about Haj, it makes this incident enthralling by investing it with spiritual piety. The episode is more about the duty of the captain, and the crew whose responsibility and work in the time of danger of a ship carrying so many people of other faiths is the focus of the narrative. And young Jim's knowledge about himself is emphasised here.

However, the ethical question arises when the supposed sinking ship with about one thousand Muslims of different faiths is deserted by the German Captain. But fortunately the very next day, the ship was taken into the harbour by another French gunboat. This was a real incident, and so there was a general hue and cry in Europe, and a trial was underway. Punishment was given to the captain, his certificate being suspended for three years, and the chief officer was rebuked. Conrad had the similar experience on board the Palestine and was awaiting a court of enquiry though it was a cargo ship. The incident raises two questions: first one is that if there were Christian people on board the *Jedda*, would the Captain and the officers desert her? What went inside their minds then? Didn't they associate any evil and ominous sign with the Pilgrims' voyage as some educated people also thought that the evils of modernism in England were due to the influence of Islam in Europe? In fact, Islam in the Western tradition has been deemed as a threat to the influence of Christianity. "Thus, from the 8th century to the middle of the 19th, it was the virtually unanimous Western opinion that Islam was a violent religion whose success was due to the sword" (Philip C. Almond). The Indian, Arab, Chinese, African people − all were not civilized to them, and hence they were not even considered fully human. Therefore, Jim's desertion of the ship with all other crew leaving the eight hundred people inside the sinking ship is the moral failure of the West. The European character is tested. The narrative focus is directed towards these characters' individual lives and problems against the vast Eastern setting and people's behavior. Jim's heroism is tested in different places. How Jim feels and how he survives is more important to the author than the life of the eight hundred pilgrims and the lives of the Patusan people. His sympathy is more for Jim than the other native characters.

The characters Kurtz, Kayertes and Layertes are degenerated in the African setting. In *Heart of Darkness*, Kurtz, the best specimen of Europe, gets acculturated. His relation with the naive mistress and taking part in unspeakable rites show his utter degeneration. The other Europeans, the manager, the accountant and others treat the natives savagely; they intrigue against each other too. And Layertes and Kayertes in "An Outpost of Progress" kill each other for a trivial matter. The Europeans cannot face the dark Africa, tropical heat and tremendous isolation. Conrad's ironic title shows the antithesis in the story. As no progress of civilization was seen in the Congo of *Heart of Darkness*, the similar thing is found in this "An Outpost of Progress". These two Europeans resemble his early European characters in the Malay fiction and are later carried on in *Heart of Darkness*. The oppression, injustices and rapacious follies by which the colonial people ruled the other far-off African and Asian territories have ironically been satirised by Conrad, who has really challenged the long-established Kiplingesque view of the benevolence of colonial project. And this is why Conrad is one of the widely read authors in Africa as well. The traditional Western idea of African people that they are not governable and irredeemably uncivilized is thwarted by the portrayal of Makola who keeps his sanity intact in the outpost and proves his worthiness. Daniel Vogel discusses the text as a critique against colonialism and imperialism. He tries to focus on the complexity of the situation of two Europeans who are very much idle in the outpost doing nothing though they are duly paid by the director. The way Conrad makes them discuss civilization and progress is to mock the colonialist claim of superiority of the European. Carlier and Kayerts discover an old newspaper that focuses on progress brought to Africa by Europeans: "That print discussed what it was pleased to call 'Our Colonial Expansion' in high-flown language. It spoke much of the rights and duties of civilization, of the sacredness of the civilizing work, and extolled the merits of those who

went about bringing light, and faith and commerce to the dark places of the earth" ("An Outpost"). Carlier and Kayertes read, wonder and begin to think better of themselves. Carlier says one evening, "In a hundred years, there will be perhaps a town here. Quays, and warehouses, and barracks, and – and – billiard rooms. Civilization, my boy, and virtue – and all. And then, chaps will read that two good fellows, Kayertes and Carlier, were the first civilized men to live in this very spot" ("An Outpost" 8-9). But ironically they kill each other.

Conrad also blames the unconquerable wilderness of the place: "On the sands in the middle of the stream, hippos and alligators sunned themselves side by side. And stretching away in all directions, surrounding the insignificant cleared spot of the trading post, immense forests, hiding fearful complications of fantastic life, lay in the eloquent silence of mute greatness" ("An Outpost" 8). Thus, the fear of an alien land and jungle and the monotony of the idle hours make these two European agents inactive. They went there not of their own will but circumstances forced them to come to this outpost; Carlier had to come for his brother-in-law and Kayertes for his daughter Melie. Kayertes says, "If it wasn't for my Melie, you wouldn't catch me here" (6). The theme of loneliness and savagery which bewilder a European in the forest is also present in *Heart of Darkness*:

> The contact with pure unmitigated savagery, with primitive nature and primitive man, brings sudden and profound trouble into the heart. To the sentiment of being alone of one's kind, to the clear perception of the loneliness of one's thoughts, of one's sensations – to the negation of the habitual, which is safe, there is added the confirmation of the unusual, which is dangerous; a suggestion of things vague, uncontrollable, and repulsive, whose discomposing intrusion excites the imagination and tries the civilized nerves of the foolish and the wise alike. (5)

Therefore, loneliness and hardness of life associated with the tropical island, its maddening heat and strangeness are unbearable to the Europeans, who, because of their habit of living comfortably in Europe, get sick in the tropic. While going to the Congo, Conrad himself had to walk 230 miles in the tropical heat of the place. Conrad's ambivalent attitude to colonization is strong here. Yet, when he ridicules the European colonists, his point of view becomes Eastern. He also seems to speak from the stand-point of the marginal European people who are exploited by businessmen and the government that send them to the unsafe and lonely alien East without a family or a community to live in.

However, Conrad's portrayal of characters like Kurtz is very complex and suggestive. His moral failure is shrouded with mystery, and he is both a victim to imperial rhetoric and a victimizer to the natives, and that is why Kurtz becomes an alter-ego of Marlow like Legatt in "The Secret Sharer". This is one of the famous short stories based on Conrad's own experience of the first command in the *Ottago* in the Gulf of Siam in 1888. Narrated by a young captain, the story is developed on an alter ego theme like that of *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim*. Becalmed at the Gulf of Siam, one night the narrator finds a naked swimmer named Legatt on the bottom of a rope ladder. The fugitive is the first mate of the ship *Sephora* where he kills an insolent seaman in a moment of anger in the midst of a hurricane. He is being taken to Bangkok for trial, but he manages to escape as he is a very good swimmer. The young captain feels sympathy for this man, gives him clothes and hides him in his cabin. When Captain Archibald of the *Sephora* inquires of Legatt the next day, he hides the fact. After four days, he, in order to help him escape to the nearby island, orders his ship to go near lands in the pretext of having some land breezes. While escaping the ship, Legatt drops his hat unaware on the sea. The captain sees the hat and gets the signal that the ship is blowing backwards, and he then shifts the

helm to change direction and saves the ship. This reckless act of courage wins him great respect from his crew; but the young captain's saving Legatt, a murderer, is a question of morality and legal issue. *The Shadow Line* rather is more a matured response to the Eastern seas. Mr. Burns, the first mate of the ship, is on the verge of madness because of terrible heat and malaria in the East. Other crews also catch malaria which makes the journey impossible. Only the captain and the cook do not catch the disease. The Darwinian theme of survival of the fittest, which is a rhetoric booster for the European colonists, is employed by Conrad. The earlier captain of the ship goes mad because of the tropical heat and for his Eastern lover.

Islam and Muslims

One of the significantly noticeable areas of Conrad's Eastern fiction is his display of the knowledge of Islam and the Muslims. Conrad has created a few but important Muslim characters. But John Lester like Hugh Clifford argues in his "Conrad and Islam" that whatever knowledge about Muslims Conrad has shown in his fiction is drawn from books. This is not the case I think as Conrad had stayed for about six months in the Malaysia and as Lester has suggested that he knew an Arab Muslim by the name of Syed Mohsin or Sayed Abdullah. He had a deep reverence for other cultures and religions and this he exhibits in *Lord Jim* where he describes Haj, the Muslim pilgrims' journey to the Kaba in the city of Mekka:

> …urged by faith and the hope of paradise…Eight hundred men and women with faith and hopes, with affections and memories…coming from north and south and from the outskirts of the East, after treading the jungle paths, descending the rivers, coasting in praus along the shallows, crossing in small canoes from island to island, passing through suffering, meeting strange sights, beset by strange fears, upheld by one desire. They came

> from solitary huts in the wilderness, from populous campongs, from villages by the sea. At the call of an idea they had left their forests, their clearings, the protection of their rulers, their prosperity, their poverty, the surroundings of their youth and the graves of their fathers. They came covered with dust, with sweat, with grime, with rags – the strong men at the head of family parties, the lean old men pressing forward without hope of return; young boys with fearless eyes glancing curiously, shy little girls with tumbled long hair; the timid women muffled up and clasping to their breasts, wrapped in loose ends of soiled head-cloths, their sleeping babies, the unconscious pilgrims of an exacting belief. (9-10)

The above passage seems to come out of a pen that knows something about the culture of Haj, pilgrimage to Mecca. Such a beautifully written description of the people of various ages and various places and the powerful expression of their purpose of doing the pilgrimage, the hardship they undergo, specially with women and their little babies are examples of great artistry. The close observer and interpreter of the other culture, Conrad has really showed a great reverence for this journey of the Muslims to Mecca. Without any ironical fling, without any taint of prejudice he describes the noble cause of the pilgrimage – the desire of people to show faith in their religion with a view to gaining paradise. An Arab, "…the leader of that pious voyage…" in a white gown and with a turban in his head "…recited aloud the prayer of travelers by sea…invoked the favour of the Most High upon that journey implored His blessing on men's toil and on the secret purposes of their hearts …. And far astern of the pilgrim ship a screw-pile lighthouse, planted by unbelievers … seemed to wink at her its eye of flame, as if in derision of her errand of faith" (*LJ* 10). The pilgrims' purpose of performing the Haj is called "the pious purposes". Eight hundred believers, "…the pilgrims of an exacting faith" "… surrendered to the wisdom of white men and to their courage, trusting the power of their unbelief and the iron shell of their fire-ship" (*LJ* 12).

The faithful people are taking the journey under the unbelieving captain and his mates. The Christian captain and the crew take the Muslims to their holy land where the Muslims will perform their Haj, one of the five pillars of Islam. The Muslims need the help of the unbelievers or the people of other faiths. They surrender to the wisdom, courage and dutifulness of the European white people. And Europe's power is naval. Great Britain is called the queen of the sea. The Europeans are the masters of the sea and sea-routes which give them the edge over the non-European people. During those days the trade was done by the sea routes, and the ships were solely dependent on captains and engineers and their knowledge of the sea routes. All captains, mates and engineers were European, though there were some Chinese and Arab owners; hence there was the Western supremacy on the sea.

Conrad is also aware of the European perspective, especially of atheists or secular people or Christian fundamentalists. The German captain in *Lord Jim* is the representative who calls these pilgrims "cattles". He too, like the modern Western world, is aware of the rise of terrorism in the name of Islam hinted in the novel by the character named Sherif Ali and his followers who terrorize Patusan. The blind Omar, Babalatchi, Lakamba, Taminah, Aissa– all of them are Muslim characters without any commendable characteristics; they represent the common Muslims with their usual failings and achievements. John Lester rightly points out in that that "Conrad's Muslims are usually bigoted, frequently violent, invariably unscrupulous and always complacently exclusive. They constantly accuse the Europeans of being unbelievers, infidels, and sons of Satan" ("Conrad and Islam"163). Conrad's portrayal of the veiled Malay women and the Arabs with rosary beads exemplifies his excellent power of observation of the Muslim culture. By reading Conrad one can know that "a Muslim should not eat the meat of the pig,

should not consume alcohol, should pray towards Mecca at certain times of day, and may marry up to four wives" (Lester, "Conrad and Islam" 163). His Arab Muslims in the novel demonstrate his idea about the Arab race. He describes the owner of the ship thus – "…an old, dark little man, blind in one eye, in a snowy robe and yellow slippers. He was having his hand severely kissed by a crowd of Malay pilgrims to whom he had done some favour, in the way of food and money. His alms-giving, I have heard, was most extensive, covering almost the whole Archipelago. For isn't it said that 'The charitable man is the friend of Allah" (*LJ* 182). Conrad has used the word "Allah" in several of his novels.

Chapter Four
Conrad's West

> "A civilization that proves incapable of solving the problems it creates is a decadent civilization."
>
> — Aime Cesaire: *Discourse on Colonialism*

Conrad sets half of his stories in the East and Africa, and the other half in the West. While Conrad presents the East as a site of Western people's adventure, moral test and business, he presents the West as a site of anarchy, revolution and war. The West that surfaces in the fictional world of Conrad is Europe and North America of the early twentieth century. The complex history of the world and Europe get intertwined, and a new emerging West is born from the ashes of the dying image of a unified Europe. Conrad treats this split of Europe in a political philosophy of division as between East and West within Europe. Hence, Conrad's West is portrayed more with irony and satire and most often from Western Europe's point of view against the Eastern Europe, especially, against that of Russia. The social and individual dimension is superseded by the political consideration in the Western fiction. The West is portrayed as a test for ideas and politics. Revolution, anarchy, democracy, capitalism, war and despotism thus characterize Conrad's Western world. But today the West is not identified as a land of despotism. The West is rarely described as lacking in something, though there is the absence of spirituality or faith as it is clearly stated in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and Edward Albee's *Who Is Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*. The Western political rhetoric and media never charge the West with this lack, because they have found alternatives in democracy, science and individuality ignoring a man's loneliness and alienation. Before the rise of the power of Russia, Europe

was united. But Russian power and its undemocratic nature split Europe into two, namely Eastern and Western Europe. Russia failing to live up to the European standard of liberalism and democracy belongs to the Eastern Europe giving birth to the terms 'West' and 'Western world' after the First and Second World War. Christopher GoGwilt deals with this invention of the West which is, according to him, is rhetorical, and Conrad as a critic of Russian domination over Poland gets involved in this politics of naming which is also imperialistic in practice.

Conrad's West is a newly emerging concept of the alternative of Europe which is charged with Europeanism, grounded on racism and colonialism. This Western Europe is superior to him as Britain, France and Germany supported Poland against Russia, the country which has destroyed Conrad's childhood and snatched away his parents. This is why revolution in the West is never deemed positive by Conrad, and so his conservatism is fraught with intense personal trauma and loss. His moral satire against autocratic governments of the world is hence pungent which he shows in *Under Western Eyes* and in "Autocracy and War". Lessons learnt in the French Revolution are often the point of references to the anti-revolutionists. It seems that to Conrad, only the Russian empire is oppressive but the British and French are benevolent. This duality in Conrad however has always made him a recurring subject for further discussion. There is no closure in terms of meaning and interpretation in his texts because of this ambivalence. However, apart from politics Conrad's Western fiction contains the elements of modernity – romance, crisis of identity, loneliness, morality, old age, capitalism, commerce, family problems and individual freedom.

Capitalism, Globalization and Revolution

Among his Western fiction, three novels are deemed classics that deal with the themes of capitalism, globalization, revolution and anarchy. These three novels are *Nostromo*, *The Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes*. Set in an imaginary land of Costaguana, a South American Republic, *Nostromo* (1904) is considered by most critics as one of Conrad's masterpieces. Richard Curle considers this novel "the greatest romance of the Western world ever written" (129). In its theme of capitalism, industrialization and civil wars, this novel is more modern than any of his other works. Leavis also considers this one as one of Conrad's classics in respect of its "evocation of exotic life and colour" and portrayal of a multicultural South American state that contains "population of Indians, mixed bloods, Hidalgos, Italians, and English engineers" that stage "murderous public drama" (Leavis 210). But here Curle's and Leavis' Western prejudice is revealed, for they champion one of the Western novels as his greatest one. I would, however, disagree, for I think, in *Nostromo* romance is shrouded and dimmed by the complex political revolution and skepticism, while *Almayer's Folly*, *An Outcast of the Islands*, *Lord Jim*, *Victory*, "Falk", "Freya of the Seven Islands", "The Planter of Malata" – all these Eastern tales of Eastern and Western people set in the East show Conrad's deep realization of real tragic and incomprehensible force of love and adventure. Yves Hervouet, on the other hand, likes *Lord Jim* more than any other fiction. Leavis, of course, considers "Typhoon" and *The Shadow Lines*, Eastern tales, though only in settings (Western in theme and characters), as other two classics of Conrad alongside *Nostromo*. Nevertheless, *Nostromo* is a unique piece that captures history of a struggling nation caught with a web of armed conflicts, individual and social betrayals and self-betrayals, utopia and dystopia.

As Conrad has always showed his doubt about the positive outcome of material prosperity on the backdrop of autocratic governments and internecine conflicts for power, *Nostromo* from that sense resembles the third world countries in miniature. As a very big novel, it encapsulates the history of a continent that is plagued by civil wars and disillusionment. Conrad's concern is always with the individuals' plight in a badly governed regime. The English descent Charles Gould inherits the ownership of the San Tome silver mine at Costaguana. Charles's previous two family generations who failed in this project earlier considered it a curse, and so his father warned him not to restart the mine and reinvest in it. But Charles Gould, against the advice of his father, starts the mine which he thinks will economically develop the country and thus would put an end to political strife. The American financier Mr. Holroyd comes to his help with investment, and Gould's wife Emilia morally supports him. Truly, Mr. Gould's idea comes true, for in the beginning the mine becomes a successful project whose silver booms the economy and brings political stability under the presidency of the enlightened dictator Don Vincente Ribiera of Sulaco. But after some months when General Montero, and his brother Pedrito stage a coup, Ribiera flees Costaguana to Sulaco and the rioting Monterist rebels try to take control of the San Tome mine. Charles Gould, in order to save the silver of the mine, arranges the silver to be shipped off to Europe and entrusts the skeptic, Martin Decoud, and the "incorruptible" Nostromo, a leader of the workers, with the mission. The former is secretly in league with those rebels who want to separate Sulaco from the Republic of Costaguano and poisons Nostromo's mind against the Goulds and the Rich. Consequently, both of them try to betray Gould and hide the silver in the land of the Great Isabel on which Nostromo builds a lighthouse, which is looked after by Giorgio Viola, the father of Linda and Giselle. Nostromo is betrothed to Linda but is secretly attracted to Giselle. Decoud, left alone for some days to guard the treasure of silver alone

in the island of Isabel, commits suicide out of impatience of Nostromo's return and intolerable loneliness. This Decoud episode of suicide is, I think, a parody of Robinson Crusoe of Defoe, as unlike Crusoe Decoud cannot face the lonelineess in an island only for a few days, let alone think of living for years and starting a fiefdom like Crusoe. Now Nostromo comes often to the island secretly to enrich himself with the treasure in the pretext of meeting Linda whose father mistakes him as an intruder and shoots him. On his death bed he confesses his betrayal to Mrs. Gould who does not want to know about the location of the treasure because she wants to lose it forever.

Conrad shows how the "incorruptible" Nostromo becomes corrupted because of the silver. The whole republic of Costaguana could develop with industrialisation, but the greedy and egoistic politicians and armies become obstacles to the path of progress envisioned and initiated by Charles Gould and Mr. Holroyd. Love, friendship, progress, stability and great ideals are shattered by a handful of selfish politicians. This cynical view of material prosperity is Conrad's own. It may be because he is tormented by the political strife of any country like that of his own Poland. Material prosperity and capitalism cannot alone bring peace. What is needed is people's awareness of the necessity of long, stable political government and their moral uprightness. Thus, *Nostromo* can be a novel for the Easterners as well, for it sheds light on the political corruption and civil wars, which are the realities in the East and Africa.

The novel, like that of "Karain", enacts a drama of love, betrayal and irony of fate but these individual actions are secondary in importance to the larger issues of the control of the means of economic progress and political power. And while peace can be restored in Costaguna by separating Sulaco from the republic, the foreign powers that control the

politics of the republic veto it. The present scenario of the intervention of the world powers in the internal affairs of Iraq, Libya, Yemen and Syria is the prime example. The US intervention in Iran, Cuba, Venezuela, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, the Russian intervention in Ukraine and Syria are also like that in Conrad's *Nostromo*. The ownership of the mine by an English family is also problematic, though critics have overlooked it. The new political revolution is one way to take control of the mine by the native rebels from the foreigners though the authorial standpoint is negative; the author presents the revolutionists as anarchists who have threatened the complacency of social life. This is a reality in some developing nations as the internal rival groups also engage in armed-conflicts. Conrad's presentation of these political problems is relevant to all times and his utter dissatisfaction with the victimization of individual life by the evils of political strife is what interests the common reader.

The Eastern reader, however, does not overlook the colonial aspects of the novel. Conrad subtly shows the rise of America as a world power whose colonial ambition is reflected in the character of Holroyd who, as Dorothy Van Ghent suggests, "expresses his faith in American capitalism" (xv). Holroyd says to Charles Gould:

> We shall be giving the word for everything – industry, trade, law, journalism, art, politics, and religion from Cape Horn clear over to Smith's Sound, and beyond, too, if anything worth taking hold of turns up at the North Pole. And then we shall have the leisure to take in hand the outlying islands and continents of the earth. We shall run the world's business whether the world likes it or not. The world can't help it – and neither can we, I guess. (*N* 64)

I want to disagree here with Ghent's reading of Conrad's words. The passage obviously shows America's power and neo-imperial ambition and the connection between capitalism and imperialism. But it does not mean in any ways that Conrad wanted to

uphold the rise of America as a new empire. Lenin considered imperialism as the "highest stage of capitalism" (qtd. in Bush 45). For Osterhammel, "imperialism is associated with worldwide protection of interests and capitalist penetration" (qtd. in Bush 46). But I do not think that Conrad endorses such a view; rather he has demonstrated the history of imperialism and its legacy after the colonial world as Patrick Brantlinger talks about American imperialism: "0n the contrary, since World War II and the era of decolonization, the United States has carried on where Britain supposedly left off. The US has not formally colonized other countries, but it hasn't needed to: because of its economic and military power, the US has imposed its will on much of the rest of the world" (*Victorian Literature* 147). This colonial conquest motif is present in Conrad's mind; for his long sea experiences have enriched him with the experiences that have found colonial interventions failing. But like Charles Gould his trust seems to be in "What is wanted here is law, good faith, order, security" (*N* 69). Truly, though Conrad is a bit ironical about his statement, it is the most required thing for the development of a city or a poor country. Charles Gould says to his wife, "Only let the material interests once get a firm footing, and they are bound to impose the conditions on which alone can continue to exist. This is how your money-making is justifiable here in the face of lawlessness and disorder" (*N* 69). These words of Charles Gould to his wife Emilia Gould are historical observations of imperialism. Jean Franco expresses: "*Nostromo* is a penetrating study of European manipulation of the politics of a dependent country" (201).

Obviously, the San Tome Mine reminds us of the Dutch and English East India Company. Holroyd's ambition to "take in hand …continents of the earth" and Charles Gould's justification of profit and business in these far off places are historical truths which have created two unequal worlds. The ambition to control the oil of the Arab world by the

US, the capture of the oil fields in Syria and Iraq by ISIS can be understood by the story of *Nostromo*; the Silver Mine is like the oil fields for which the Monterist rebels are fighting. And the novel was inspired by a real story. In his Author's Note Conrad says: "In 1875 or 1876, when in the West Indies, or rather, in the Gulf of Mexico – for my contacts with the land were short, few, and fleeting – I heard the story of some man who had stolen, single-handed, a whole lightful of silver, somewhere on the Tierra Firme seaboard during the troubles of a revolution" (*N* xxix). But though he was influenced by the theft of silver, his titular hero Nostromo, an Italian, is modelled on an actual sailor named Dominic who was a Creole. But from a postcolonial perspective the theft cannot be called just a silly little act of betrayal, but something which has been conditioned by confusion and fear of the revolution. By betraying Gould who tries to send it to Europe, Nostromo rebels against Gould's, a capitalist's theft of the treasure. Thus, the novel is an anti-colonial resistance narrative too. Truly the novel combines history, imperial politics and individual life to create the semblance of the wholeness of life, as Henry James calls him for this very novel, the "artist of the whole matter" (qtd. in Collits 17). Stephen Ross rightly says that "Conrad's novels show us the concrete particulars of Empire's establishment of a global network of power and control" (188). Conrad has been a keen observer of the historical realities working in different colonized countries during the colonial period and the aftermath leading to neocolonial world order. In the novel *Nostromo*, the presence of the English as entrepreneurs, Americans as financiers, Italians as engineers and French as intellectuals in this country of North America deftly demonstrates a period of transition from a colonial time to a modern one of industrialization, that is, from direct rule to indirect economic dependence on the past colonial masters. Truly, Conrad's work is to use Cedric Watts' phrase "ahead of its time" (44).

Capitalism is blatantly castigated in “The End of the Tether”. Published in 1902 this long short story is centred on an old captain Whalley whose tragic end of life demands sympathy from the reader. His financial ruin, secret business dealings, and hiding the fact of his blindness make the story a subject of moral criticism; but the captain Whalley’s indefatigable love for his daughter brings a tragic pathos. What strikes the postcolonial critic is the protagonist’s loneliness and mistakes in life which have been because of the self-exilic life his daughter was living with her ailing husband. Being sombre but matured in construction, the fiction describes the Eastern ports and seas and exposes the faulty international banking system which ruins individual life. And also the ravages of Western imperialism on the individual life are presented. But the story is suggested to be read by some reviewers who have read the story not as a single piece published in the *Blackwood’s Magazine* but as a companion piece of the other two – “Youth” and “Heart of Darkness” − published in the volume called *Youth: A narrative and Two Other Stories*. If the three stories are considered together, then one could discern Conrad’s attempt to portray three stages of man’s life – youth, middle age and old age. “Youth” depicts the early life of a seaman, Marlow, who is dauntless and strives against natural disorders and survives and reaches to his destination, the desired East, Bangkok. While the crew in the *Palestine* is intrigued by the greed of materialism of the ship owner who knowingly uses his faulty ship, *Heart of Darkness* is a bleak story of Marlow’s experience and discovery of his own self and the self of the human in the context of material greed which is the driving force of colonialism and imperialism. And the last one “The End of the Tether” depicts a seaman, Captain Whalley in his old age financially broken but striving to bring some fortune by investing his last 500 pounds in the ship *Sofala* only to be cheated by its ruined owner Massy. The old age is a burden to the Captain who is watching the slow process of his own blindness and fails in his last

attempt to fulfill his paternal duty to help his daughter Ivy with money. The once successful man, who found out new passages and gave his name to an unknown island, is now alone without any friends and benefactors.

Conrad's pessimism about the approaching old age deepens because of the moral blunders he had seen in the Congo. The failure of colonialism to guarantee the economic solvency and peace for the individual is presented once again. The existential problem of this once successful man is due to the separation from his early life and from relations either through death as that of his wife's or through migration of his daughter to Australia. The story of exile and dislocation is tied to the history of imperialism. Side by side the evil European Massy, the representative of harsh capitalism, is portrayed against a good Malay man who saved the captain earlier. The Dutch man Mr. Van Wyk's tobacco plantation in Borneo which fails to ensure individual happiness is a critique of imperialism too. Like Captain Whalley, Conrad himself was always in need of money and so he put emphasis on money and its necessity for an old man. He seems to question the moral issues as he makes his characters fall in such a situation that compels them to tell lies or take deceptive means in earning, as this captain hides his blindness and takes the job.

Similar is the case with Conrad's very first writing, but the last story to be included in the *Tales of Hearsay*, "The Black Mate" which he wrote in 1986 for the competition of fiction in *Tit-Bits*. A sailor named Bunter, who is a little old man, dyes his hair to get a job. Then one day during a storm his hair loses its colour and reveals his whiteness. But he again tricks his gullible captain by telling the story that he saw a ghost and out of fear he fell on the stairs and suddenly noticed that his hair had turned gray. Whether for survival a man can stoop so low as to eating human flesh as in "Falk" and

hiding blindness as in “The End of the Tether” and “The Black Mate” is really a hard question. Conrad seems to support the common idea that “Necessity knows no law”. The conflict between necessity and morality, like that of Shakespearean conflict between justice and mercy has always haunted Conrad.

Conrad’s skepticism regarding the blessings of banking sector, share market and capitalism is also again deftly sketched in the novel *Chance* through the character of Mr. de Barral who may have influenced R. K. Narayan’s *The Financial Expert*. The rise and fall of successful business entrepreneurs, who become rich with public money and do business with public money but ultimately fail when the public withdraw their money is cynically exposed by Conrad. Mr. de Barral, who had become a very rich man by opening a bank of public money, got ruined when people withdrew their money based on a propaganda. The failure of capitalism is also a theme in *Victory* in which the Tropical Belt Company fails to get established ruining some people who invested money. “The Partner” (1911) also focuses on corruption in the business World that often traps people in the modern banking and insurance system which entangles individuals to corruption. Cloete, an American confidence trickster is the partner of the title. He comes to England and makes his partner George Dunbar engaged in a plot to wreck a ship for insurance money which he will invest in a medicine company. Cloete hires a villain named Stafford who fails in his mission and murders Harry Dunbar, the captain of the ship who is also the brother of George Dunbar. The murdered captain’s wife becomes mentally imbalanced. And Cloete is disappointed. Though the treachery in the business world is portrayed, the story is also a story of how stories are written for magazines. As the story is told by a stevedore and his listener is a professional magazine-writer, Conrad shows the trouble of writing prolifically for magazines.

The gap between promise of capitalism and actuality is immense as capitalism has not guaranteed peace and security to especially old people. “Il Conde” is the story which is set in Naples in Italy. The plight of a seventy year old man who is emotionally attached with the place of Naples is shown. His sense of powerlessness and loss of faith in justice in the society of Naples is emphasized. A European gentleman suffering from rheumatism finds the bay of Naples suitable for his health. In the café near the hotel where he lives he tells this story to the narrator, who is also a boarder of the hotel. During his stay the narrator and the old man are in a good relationship. But when the narrator temporarily leaves the hotel to see one of his ailing friends, the old man is robbed by a young man who is a student and a member of a secret underground organization Camorra. The old man becomes shattered mentally at this robbery though only a small amount of money and a watch were taken from him. But the old man who could shout at the time of hijacking or could inform the police or authority of the hotel did not do so for the fear of being misunderstood and disbelieved by people. But the young desperado again comes to him and threatens him when he sees that the old man has a gold coin which he could not rob. The old man then is forced to leave the much-loved place by a train. The narrator thinks that his departure from the bay of Naples is a kind of suicide. The city is beautiful but not without its evils. The narrator reminds the reader the proverb “See Naples and die.” Critics do not like the story and question the reliability of the narrator. However, the story seems to be a bleak one for it suggests that wherever one goes, one cannot avoid troubles and death.

Associated with modern capitalism, war is always anti-humanitarian and often an investment. It destroys individual life but when transformed into art it becomes romantic or adventurous. “Gasper Ruiz” (1906) is such a tragic romantic tale of adventure, war,

revenge and love written against the background of the war of independence in Chile and Peru. Gasper is unjustly sentenced to death by the Republicans in Chile but he manages to escape the firing squad by luck and is nursed back to life by a young aristocratic woman who is a royalist and who now desires revenge on the Republicans who have ruined her family. Gasper is still chased by the Republicans but an Earthquake saves him, and now he gets the opportunity to save the woman Erminia and the general public during the Earthquake. This act of skill and responsibility brings him pardon and service in the republican forces. Gasper is wedded to the woman and has got a daughter now. But his wife insists on her revenge plan which he attempts now by a body of guerrillas. Though the Spanish troops now withdraw from Chile, he still persists in his war of revenge. As it happens in all revolutions, bloodshed becomes the vocation to some armed people. Gasper becomes one after the revolution. But again when the republicans return to Chile, they capture Gasper's wife and daughter by treachery. Going to rescue his wife and daughter, he breaks his back and dies. And just before his death, his wife Erminia once again professes her love to him. After his death, Erminia, while being escorted to Santiago, throws herself to a chasm and embraces her death. Their only daughter is left behind with the narrator General Santierra who will adopt her as a daughter and will make her his heiress. Conrad's knowledge of the North American history and life-long concern with revolution and its effects on individuals make him engaged with the complex political history. His skepticism on revolution and dislike of totalitarianism and political revolution which we find in *Under Western Eyes*, *Nostromo* and *The Secret Agent* is presented in this story of Gasper in a very sad note of pathos. The story is redeemed in one sense by the strong determination and courage of the great warrior who comes from a peasant family which has been robbed of its small wealth both by the revolutionary republicans and by the Royalists, the supporters of the king of Spain. And

finally the royalist woman Erminia's love for Gasper and her subsequent suicide after the death of Gasper are really heroic in the midst of political hatred and cruelty. Conrad's anti-war, anti-revolutionary and anti-terrorist activities are reflected by the unnamed narrator in this story: "Certain individuals grow into fame through their vices and their virtues, or simply by their actions, which may have a temporary importance; and then they are forgotten. The names of a few leaders alone survive the end of armed strife and are further preserved in history; vanishing from men's active memories, they still exist in books" ("Gaspar Ruiz" 1). Further,

> That long contest, waged for independence on one side and for dominion on the other, developed in the course of years and the vicissitudes of changing fortune, the fierceness and inhumanity of a struggle for life. All feelings of pity and compassion disappeared in the growth of political hatred. And, as is usual in war, the mass of the people, who had the least to gain by the issue, suffered most in their obscure persons and ... humble fortunes". (Gasper Ruiz 1))

As Ernest Hemingway has also said, war, however necessary and justified it may seem to be, is a crime. Truly, war is often an extension of politics which victimizes the common people.

"The Tale" (1917) is another such story which puts a soldier to a moral test during the First World War. Autobiographical in source, the story is based on a conversation between a Commanding Officer and a woman. The woman asks him to tell a story. And the story he tells is one of his war crimes. Driven by a thick fog, the Commanding Officer of a naval base takes shelter in a cove. But there he notices a suspicious vessel under the command of a neutral Northman, who, in view of the Officer, is helping enemy submarines. But finding no proof, he plans to test his conviction, and thus he expels the Northman from the cove and directs him to a false path thinking that he will disobey him

and will reveal his treachery. But the Northman follows the prescribed course and wrecks the ship. The Northman and the whole crew die, and the ship also sinks. In the end the Commanding Officer tells the listening woman that it was he for whom the ship sank with all the people. But he never knew whether the Northman was guilty or not. The moral disaster caused by war is portrayed here. Is it justified to kill a whole lot of people out of mere suspicion? Is really everything fair in war? The moral dilemma is faced by a man in crisis during a war that tests his humanity.

Anarchism

After his Eastern tales, the first story to directly deal with European politics and anarchism is *The Secret Agent* (1907) which is deemed by Leavis and many other Western critics as his masterpiece and a classic. Conrad appears to many as a conservative critic of anarchism and European left politics in this work. Nevertheless, this is a story which retains its international relevance to the present day foreign policies and secret activities of various state embassies in the world. Conrad's concern is with the common men who are often a victim to the national or international politics. When there is the rise of militant and terrorist attacks in the world, this novel can hint at its complexity of reality. The dark and dirty politics of nationalism, the disillusionment of and with the left politicians of Europe, the blindness and limitation of the police and intelligence branch, and the futility and absurd effects of anarchism draw Conrad near to an English or European conservative politician. But his focus on and concern for the ordinary family make him a moral critic. The state or group strategy to put pressure on a government to gain something through anarchist activities and violence against common people which is at present associated with the rise of modern militancy and suicide bombing, actually had its instance in the West. When a

suicide bomb attack is made by any group, the blame in most cases almost automatically falls to a Muslim group, and the name of Islam is aligned with terrorism. And many modern day people think that suicide attack is introduced in the world by the Muslims, although it may have been arguably originated in Europe as this suicide bomb outrage in the novel indicates. The world politics has taken a different turn after Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait and the twin Tower attack. The blame has, of course, been shouldered by a Muslim group, named Al Qayeda. When we do not have any other sources to verify and know the real perpetrators but to rely on International Media, especially the dominant Western Media, and the US government, we fall to the judgement given by the dominant political group. It is not that Al Quyeda may not have done this, but the question is the source and means of knowing the facts. Is only Al Qayeda involved in this attack or any state agencies of some powerful countries also involved? Conrad's *The Secret Agent* seems to imply this dark side of the international affairs.

Based on a real incident in London which Conrad came to know from his friends, the story is a direct address to the dark and dirty areas of the mega city of London. The incident which was known to everybody of Conrad's time was the attempt to blow down the Greenwich Observatory by an abnormal boy, who was an idiot in intelligence in 1894. This bomb outrage destroyed a poor family. Conrad seems to build this ironic tale on the very ruins of this lower-class life contrasted with the dazzle of the metropolis. Verloc and Winnie Verloc live together with the latter's half-witted brother Stevie, who is loved by her sister to an obsessive point. But because of the shelter given to the French anarchists in England, the French embassy designs a plot to blow the Greenwich building to make things appear such that the British Govt. will hold the anarchists responsible for that, and thus the government will banish those French and Russian anarchists. For this, the French

embassy hires Verloc, who tries to employ his brother-in-law Steve, who unluckily dies in the explosion without destroying the building. When Winnie comes to know the cause of the death of her brother, she kills her husband Verloc and tries to escape by a train. But when she finds that she has been robbed of her money and been deserted by the revolutionary comrade Ossipon, she commits suicide drowning herself.

Western critics like Leavis and Cranshaw hail this novel as one of his classic masterpieces because of its realism and ironic style of presentation. Many others have liked the novel for its criticism of anarchism of the left politicians. However, what interests an Eastern reader more is its presentation of, ahead of its time, the dirty international foreign policies that try to keep the neighbouring countries in turmoil to keep its own dominant position intact in the world politics. The international and national espionage is not always bad; but how it victimizes some private lives and becomes a futile activity is nicely presented by Conrad. Razumov in *Under Western Eyes* also becomes a victim of a Russian Intelligence Group that compels him to act as a spy in Geneva and ultimately ruins him. The secret activity of a spy is neither a praiseworthy nor a very demoralizing profession in itself. But when it is motivated to do something wrong for whatever causes, it is evil. Verloc has been in the secret service for about eleven years. He sends information to the French embassy. Thus, the international politics victimizes a man to do activities, which are unpatriotic and deemed acts of betrayal to one's own country. Conrad seems to see the hidden evils of the surface of international politics of nationalism and patriotism, race and religion that endanger the ordinary people's lives. And as terrorist activities and civil wars have increased at present and as the intelligent services of the powerful countries are very active in the world, so *The Secret Agent* is not only a Western novel but a global one. Conrad does not deal with any Eastern character or theme here. But an Eastern reading

champions Conrad for his moral study of the anarchists, policemen, spies and their mixing of public duty and private desires. This novel helps us to question the roots of the rise of terrorism and the war on terror.

Christina Asquith's "Who really blew up the Twin Tower" published in the *The Guardian* raises the question of truth about the attack. The author bases her essay on the group "Scholars for Truth" in America that claims that USA and her allies wanted to expand their own military base and domination into the Middle East, and devised this attack on Twin Tower and the Pentagon. "The attacks of September 11", Jones asserts, "were an 'inside job', puppeteered by the neoconservatives in the White House to justify the occupation of oil-rich Arab countries, inflate military spending and expand Israel (1)." Therefore, the conflict between the USA government reports and the group's reports makes it impossible to find out the truth. Common people tend to go with the State version. But the critic's duty, more so of a postcolonial critic's, a Saidean secular critic's, is to question the dominant view of an incident and to attempt to find out the truth. As in the novel, the British government gives shelter to the French left anarchists who have fled their country to avoid arrest and persecution. These anarchist groups agitate in order to change their society and government policies and to put pressure on the government to accept their demands, they take to violence that often causes harm to general public and their properties. Britain shelters these French anarchists for their own ends to keep France in a state of confusion and problems. In order to stop this support of the British Government for those anarchists, the French embassy orchestrates this plan of bomb outrage in Britain to give an impression that this act of terrorism is the doing of those French anarchists who have been given shelter by Britain. In the same manner, the Christ Church attack in New Zealand, the attack in Srilankan hotels are all terrorist attacks, no

doubt. But are the official version and the media reports regarding those human tragedies the only truth? There is no doubt that there occurred these incidents and the people involved in these attacks are associated with a terrorist group. But who are their leaders? Aren't there any international politics involved in these attacks? If like that in *The Secret Agent,* some of the state intelligence agencies are involved in these attacks, should it not be arguably the concern of a good critic, whose intellectual responsibility in this regard, is nothing but to find out the truth. How is it possible for some individuals to get organized secretly with weapons of destruction in this age of surveillance, radar and advanced intelligence technologies? When all communication systems are under a kind of Orwellian "telescreen", how these attacks are carried out gives rise to the question of who are actually behind these attacks and who gain out of this confusion. Obviously, in the story the secret agent is Verloc, a small shopkeeper. But he is hired as an agent by the French embassy. And Verloc employs his disabled brother-in-law Steve for that terrorist activity. As it is a piece of fiction, the real truth is explored and revealed to the reader. But is the real truth known in reality? Is the real truth explored and made public by the state agencies in reality? Conrad through this novel has presented the other side of the fact of the bomb attack on the Greenwich Observatory Building. The left politicians of Europe were always the suspects of any terrorist attacks in the early twentieth century and the aftermath till the rise of some anarchist or terrorist groups in some of the Muslim countries. Therefore, Conrad's *The Secret Agent* providing insights to the terrorist activities of a group of people and the dark international politics is very much a good read in our present time.

Anarchism is directly addressed in "The Informer", a tale based on anarchist activities written in 1906, just before Conrad started his bigger one *The Secret Agent* on

the same theme. Though small in size, the tale is a complex one in terms of motivation of characters. The narrator, a collector of Chinese bronzes and porcelain, meets a Mr. X who likes to collect bronze and porcelain too but who is also a great revolutionary writer and activist but lives a very luxurious life. When the narrator asks Mr. X about the discrepancy between his way of life and the lives of the proletariat for whom he writes, the latter denies it and tells the story of a young bourgeoisie who lives in London and has given her house in London's Hermione Street to a group of anarchists to make bombs on the top floor and to print propaganda on the basement. Mr. X also informs and claims that not only the proletariat but also the idle and the selfish people support him. Mr. X also realizes that there is an informer in the group in London and he arranges a mock police raid on the building to catch the informer and he becomes successful. During the raid, Comrade Sevrin finds the young girl with whom he is in love in the basement. For her safety he gives himself away; and he later commits suicide when the girl rejects him. Conrad's idea about futility and meaningless activities of the anarchists are obviously understood. His conservative bourgeois mentality is expressed by his contempt of the revolutionary ideas of the left politicians and revolutionaries.

Another dark tale "An Anarchist" is centred on the dark sides of the anarchist activities which do not allow a man to return to normal life. One anarchist action breeds more such activities. The narrator is a lepidopterist, who hears a story from a manager of a company that manufacture meat extract products. The manager, whose name is Mr. Harry Gee, exploits a man who is an escaped convict (an anarchist from Barcelona) who cannot go outside his company for fear of arrest. Thus, by the threat of spreading the news of the convict, he forces him to work in his company. Alongside this story, the narrator learns the true story of Paul, an Engineer who is induced to take part in anarchist

activities, as his indignation on the injustice of the world is fuelled by the anarchists. He is arrested and soon released but his reputation as an anarchist has reached so far and wide that he does not get a job. Thus, he again takes part in bank robbery and is sentenced to prison on St Joseph's island, a place in French Guiana. During a prison uprising, he manages to escape with a loaded revolver and two anarchist companions who row the boat. When he sees a recue vessel, as a way of revenge he kills those two anarchists who dragged him into anarchist activities and who ruined his normal life. Conrad's deep pessimism holds that anarchism leads a man/woman not to freedom but to slavery. These stories dealing with anarchic activities are, according to Anthony Fothergill, "studies of the political, social, and psychological reactions of those living in the ambit of so-called anarchism" ("Connoisseurs of Terror"147). Really, Conrad is not interested in the very acts of anarchism or terrorism but in its effects on individuals and also in "reaction, reflection, interpretation" (Fothergill, "Connoisseurs", 147).

Autocracy and War

Conrad's cynical portrayal of revolution and autocracy is more vivid and direct in *Under Western Eyes* (1910) which is the second of his novels to deal with the themes of revolution, anarchy and justice in the background of an autocratic regime. But unlike *The Secret Agent*, it is more likely a study of the Russian Government and Russian people. It, like his other fictional works, ends tragically. Conrad's protagonist cannot get the status of a hero unless he is tested in a particular situation. The story thus enacts a drama of faith, trust, and betrayal among a few young people, who are pawns, in the larger context, to the hands of the autocratic regime of Russia. The novel is a brilliant piece of Conrad's skeptical ideas about anarchism in the face of the triumph of despotism particularly in

Russia. The novel can be called again a study of the helplessness of individuals against the massive and mighty force of political institution. The sinister effects of liberal politics that induce dreams of change in society are futile to Conrad. The story is concerned with the protagonist Razumov who has written the facts of his life and which are given the shape of a narrative by a language teacher in Geneva. The incident is about the killing of a minister by Victor Haldin, a university student, who after dropping the bomb comes to the room of Razumov who is just his acquaintance. Both of them are students of St. Petersburg University. Haldin, a secret member of a revolutionary group, as a protest to Russian autocracy, misrule and abuse of power of that particular minister de P— , throws the bomb killing the minister as well as some other common people and wounding many. Conrad shows the arguments put forward by the autocrat Government officials and also of the Revolutionists. He also shows the ideas of a very ordinary university student Razumov who does not have any relatives and who is born and brought up as a Russian. Thus, when Haldin comes to Razumov and confesses to murdering the minister and seeks his help to escape, the latter falls into a terrible crisis. Though initially he wants to help him and goes to meet the man of horses, named Zienianitch, who is found drunk, and who is supposed to take Haldin out of the city, he ultimately becomes cynical and afraid to save Haldin. And to protect himself, he informs the police Prince K and thus betrays Haldin, who is executed by the Government. But as a suspect Razumov is used by the Councillor Mikulin as a Russian spy, and Razumov is sent to Geneva among Haldin's mother and sister and other revolutionaries. Razumov falls in love with Haldin's sister, Miss Haldin – Nathalie, caressingly Natalka; and out of this love he confesses to his betrayal of Haldin to her in the presence of other revolutionaries who still let him go though they are very angry. But one of the female revolutionaries makes him deaf by

attacking his ear. Then another woman called Tekla follows Razumov to Russia where she looks after him alone.

When critics are concerned with all these personal and political issues, this Eastern reading finds Conrad's European politics of portrayal of the Eastern Europe. Conrad's lifelong aversion towards the Russian empire is reflected in the novel. As Ukraine was under Russian domination and Conrad had to face the exile in Russia with his own parents who died shortly afterwards, he never liked Russia and altogether the idea of colonialism. But the novel is obviously more than that. It is, as some critics suggest, influenced by Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* though Conrad does not like Dostoyevsky for his very Russianness in his writing. But the triumph of the novel is to my view is its presentation of the futility of rebellion and revolution against a despotic government – be it Russian Tsarist Monarchy, Stalin's Communist Russia or any other despotic regime like that of Saddam Hossain's Iraq, Gaddafi's Libya, Castro's Cuba or Hugo Chavez's Venezuela or Maduro's Venezuela or other despotic regime like that of Myanmar, Argentina, and the middle Eastern monarchies where free thinking and intellectual freedom are suppressed with severe punishment. Through the portrayal of Russian autocracy, Conrad has portrayed the model of autocratic government like that of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four*. But what is to be under scrutiny is this that the Russian autocracy is weighed against Western liberal democracy, that, to a great extent, nurtures individual freedom of speech, thought and a free intellectual culture where criticism against a government is not suppressed with punishment.

Conrad is aware that only brute military power cannot oppress a people. Like Foucault's "theory of power"[22] stated in his *The Will to Knowledge*, Russian autocracy functions because of the people's will. Earlier the kings remained in power not by divine will but by people's will; so is the case with a modern autocrat. Majority people's vain fear and lack of thought and action are responsible for despotism and misrule. The absence of resistance on the part of common people makes the tyranny of the minority possible. Moreover, a section of the common people is involved in the exercise of power being a part of the central power. Conrad is critical of this characteristic of the people. He is sure that only a handful of people like Haldin cannot do anything but invoke further oppression and repression. And this act of terrorism is not justified as it kills the innocent people or forces the government to harass them more. Conrad describes this terrorist activity of the rebels and repressive rule of modern Russia that have become characteristic of some of the African, North-American and Asian countries:

> … the assassination of a prominent statesman – and still more characteristic of the moral corruption of an oppressed society where the nobles aspirations of humanity, the desire of freedom, an ardent patriotism, the love of justice, the sense of pity, and even the fidelity of dimple minds are prostituted to the lusts of hate and fear, the inseparable companions of an uneasy despotism. (*UWE* 7)

This is the reason for which the minister becomes a target of killing. With all the bodyguards, he cannot protect himself. "He was uprooting the tender plant. He had to be stopped. He was a dangerous man – a convinced man. Three more years of his work would have put us back fifty years into bondage" (*UWE* 16). He is killed by Haldin who tells Razumov, "You suppose that I am a terrorist, now − a destructor of what is. But consider the true destroyers are they who destroy the spirit of progress and truth, not the avengers

[22] In his *The Will to Knowledge* Foucault argues that power does not operate from top to bottom or hierarchically , it operates through a network of power relations.

who merely kill the bodies of the persecutor of human dignity" (19). Conrad's sympathy with the cause of revolution is obvious. But what the author wants to show is that the murdered minister would soon be replaced by another new minister who would inflict the same oppression. The Palestine resistance to Israel, the civil wars in Syria, Egypt, Sudan, the Arab conflicts in the middle East, the African conflicts and the Rohingya crisis and many other conflicts in the world can be explained from Conrad's study of autocracy, violent resistance and revolution in this novel. How autocracy persists is clear from the narrator's description of the man (killed with the bomb), Mr. de P—'s activity and policy, as he, being the President of the notorious Repressive Commission, with the exercise of extraordinary powers, "…served the monarchy by imprisoning, exiling, or sending to the gallows men and women, young and old… In his principle of autocracy he was bent on extirpating from the land every vestige of anything that resembled freedom in public institutions; and in his ruthless persecution of the rising generation he seemed to aim at the destruction of the very hope of liberty itself" (*UWE* 7-8).

This Russian minister's activities breed hatred. He truly believes in "the divine right of kingship". He says that "the thought of liberty has never existed in the Act of Creator. From the multitude of men's counsel nothing could come but revolt and disorder; and revolt and disorder in a world created for obedience and stability is sin. It was not Reason but Authority which expressed the Divine Intention. God was the Autocrat of the Universe" (*UWE* 8). Conrad's negative capability of creating characters and contrapuntal views of autocracy are very classic and original. What Conrad shows in the novel is the moral and political corruption which is rampant in Russia, yet he shows the autocrat's perspective as well. As stated earlier, his lack of trust in the power of revolution is due to his parents' suffering under in the Russian domination. The revolutionists try to secretly

protest to overthrow a colonial rule or a despot, but the consequences are tragically far-reaching. Not only the revolutionists endanger their own lives but also the lives of their other family members, relatives, neighbours and other common people. The narrator muses, “The police would very soon find out all about him. They would set about discovering a conspiracy. Everybody Haldin had ever known would be in the greatest danger. Unguarded expressions, little facts in themselves innocent would be counted for crimes” (*UWE* 20). Autocracy is what Russia stands for to the most of the European. Common people take recourse to anarchy or revolution after the Marxist theory of a classless society.

The narrator who is an English man living in Geneva says that the story of Russia is for the Western reader, and he considers Russia as an Eastern country, not exactly belonging to the East, but to the Eastern Europe, while the larger part of Russia is connected with the Western Europe and a smaller part with that of Eastern Europe and the Far East. So, the geographical territory is overlooked by the narrator; rather the characteristics of the government and people, the social and political life of Russia are brought to the front and this way her government and people are shown to be the anti-thesis of Western Europe − a foil. Though he redeems the protagonist from the moral degradation and betrayal through a process of confession and suffering, the future of Russia is dark. Much to this skeptic and cynic portrayal of Russia, the Russian revolution took place in 1917 proving Conrad wrong and threatening the other European governments. But though Conrad was proved wrong for the time being, Stalin’s Russia and Putin’s Russia also have suppressed individual liberty to the extent of despotism. Thus, Russia whose borders face both the West and the East characteristically belongs to the latter, and the Western Europe’s supremacy is subtly recognized. The enigma of the

East is portrayed for the Westerners to foster better understanding of the East and be warned about despotism and its evils. This is why to most Western critics *Under Western Eyes* is a masterpiece of political fiction. Conrad also shows his disapproval of revolution, autocracy and war in his essay "Autocracy and War" (1905) and in *The Rover* (1923). The revolution of the 1789 in France is echoed in the novel *The Rover*. The Reign of Terror is portrayed through the character Scevola and his traumatising method inflicted upon the innocent Arlette.

However, "Prince Roman" is a different one which champions the cause of a revolutionary. Written in 1911 this is the story in which Conrad uses Polish historical materials and reveals his patriotic feelings. Prince Roman Sanguszko, a Polish aristocrat and patriot whom Conrad as a small boy had seen once, becomes the title character of the story. He is the model of good conduct and patriotism. He devotes himself to the sacred cause of Polish independence after the death of his wife by resigning from the Russian service. For this he changes his name to Sergeant Peter. When he is captured and brought to trial, and when his real identity is revealed, one of the sympathetic judges considers that the man deserted and joined the rebels because of his excessive grief at the death of his wife. But Prince Roman denies this and proudly says that he joined the rebels willingly from his own conviction. He is then sent to the life of exile in Siberia for twenty five years. When he returns home, he is deaf and frail, but very much spirited, and he devotes himself to public service. The story has some autobiographical elements. It is a tribute to those who embraced suffering for the independence of Poland. His father himself was exiled in Siberia with his wife and young Conrad. Carrying the blame of betraying his country Poland, Conrad never spoke about the struggle of Poland's independence, which, long suppressed, suddenly sprang with all the indignation against

the oppressor Russian empire and the hypocrisy of European powers. R.B. Cunninghame Graham says in his preface: “Seldom has the hatred of a tyrant expressed itself more venomously than in the marginal note that Conrad quotes. This story lets us see clearly how much his country’s wrongs at the hands of Russian tyrants was on his mind” (xiii). Though Polish romantic heroism is indeed celebrated in the text, it is a tale to be celebrated by Eastern readers whose nations were once under the oppressive Western Empire. The Polish cause is still the cause of many freedom loving people of the world who are still putting resistance to the state domination at the cost of their own blood, and the world powers show their hypocritical indifference to their causes.

Romance and Adventure in the West

While romance in the East was spontaneous, sensuous and full of emotions and passions, it is in the West rational, calculated and metaphysical in a sense. Love in the West flourishes but does not come to fruition in most cases. *Chance* (1914), the author’s first Western novel to deal with “love” and “woman” directly is the first to bring Conrad both financial success and popularity, especially in America. If it is accepted obliquely that the purpose of most writers, if not everybody’s, is to attain fame and earning, Conrad is successful in these respects with *Chance*. In his “Author’s Note” he shows his satisfaction with this novel and criticism and reviews on it: “What makes this book memorable to me … is the response it provoked. The general public responded largely, more largely perhaps than to any other book of mine…by buying a certain number of copies. This gave me a considerable amount of pleasure, because what I always feared most was drifting unconsciously into the position of a writer for a limited coterie…” (Author’s Note, *Chance* viii). The reasons for his success with *Chance* were publicity by press and publishing house

of the book, his subject matter and the already attained fame for his *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, *The Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes*. Though Conrad was by that time already known as an exotic sea tale writer dealing with the things Eastern, he did not gain the confidence of the general reading public who started to find faith in him only when he turned from his Eastern setting to the Western one. *Chance* rather is deceptive in the sense that the story sets out its journey with the Marlow of *Lord Jim* and *Heart of Darkness*. Though a different Marlow, as one of the central narrators, he serves Conrad's narrative method. The novel was a sensation to American readers for its subject of women. Conrad says in his Authors Note that "…it is Flora de Barral who is responsible for this novel which relates, in fact, the story of her life" (Author's Note, *Chance* vii).

After the first part dealing with Powell and Marlow's chance of getting a berth on the Ferndale, the story shows Captain Anthony, Flora and her father de Barral on board the ship. De Barral, after getting a huge success, turns bankrupt, gets arrested and is sent to jail for seven years. His only daughter Flora is then ill-treated by her governess, who covets the wealth of Flora's father. However, Mrs. Fyne gives shelter to Flora out of her conscious feminist concern. Marlow once saw and talked to Flora who often used to walk into the neighbouring mountainous areas alone. She was not even greeted well by Mrs. Fyne's daughters. But one day, Flora is prevented from committing suicide by Captain Anthony, who immediately falls in love with the girl for her very helplessness. After some days she elopes with Captain Anthony, Mrs. Fyne's brother, to London and marries him though she does not love him. It is obvious that the girl wants security for herself as well as for her father who would be released from prison soon.

When Flora's over-possessive father is released from the jail, he comes to stay with them; and out of jealousy he attempts to kill her daughter's husband, Captain Anthony by poisoning. Man proposes but God disposes. He himself by mistake swallows the poisonous drink and dies. Later, after some years it is reported that Captain Anthony also dies of an accident. Flora then marries Powell who after the drowning of Captain Anthony often would visit her. Therefore, it is a romance of a melancholic type, not untypical of Conrad. Why this story became a popular one immediately is understandable from the fact that for the first time Conrad ventured to deal with the subject of woman. While Thomas Moser and Henry James hint at weaknesses in this work of Conrad's late years, Baines and others hail it as a great work of art. Notwithstanding its topical subject and romantic plot, the novel has some sinister overtones that dismantle its romantic episodes. The story begins with the unnamed narrator, Young Powell and Marlow's journey on the *Ferndale* with its one of the shareholders and captain Captain Anthony, his wife Flora and her father de Barral. And the ship is bound for Africa for the shipment of explosives of forty tons of dynamite. The captain and the crew never discuss the necessity and the use of gunpowder. They are not supposed to think of its use against humanity so far away from Europe either for war or for civil war. Marlow who is earlier found in *Heart of Darkness* to comment on the horrors of colonialism or European intervention, remains silent this time focusing only on the story of Flora de Barral. The European business of gun and gunpowder trafficking is not castigated by Conrad. The small and big wars and even civil wars of that time and of the present are somehow orchestrated and exacted by the business of arms. The arms deal of I.10 billion dollars between America and Saudi Arabia in 2018, for example, is a visible proof of the continuation of arms deal of the colonial era. Conrad's use of this gunpowder business as background and setting for such a bleak romantic tale makes us pause to reconsider the purposes and themes of the tale.

Conrad's interest in infatuation and unrequited love finds its fullest expression in the novel *The Arrow of Gold* set in a time of revolution. Published in 1919, the story of the novel dates back to the 1870s, the period Conrad had stayed in Marseilles. Commemorating the events of the civil war in France where the Carlist cause for Don Carlos, the rightful claimant of the throne of Spain, Conrad again projects an autobiographical fiction in which he subordinates the civil war to his own temporary infatuation with and love for a girl named Dona Rita for whom George undertakes the mission of supplying gun powder to the supporters of Don Carlos. The novel shows the sensation of youthful love for a beautiful and gorgeous widowed lady whose husband Henry Allegre was a famous painter who left her a huge fortune. Being a woman without a husband is never an easy go in the world. Different male chivalrous heroes would dream of rescuing this woman from her loneliness and each other's grip. Born with a very painful childhood experience with a boy's love Ortega who ill-treated her, she fell into the snare of Allegre who almost gave her a life of cocooned existence. But the narrator George who resembles Marlow in some respect finally describes her in her various images, creates and recreates her and finally falls in love with her who also reluctantly repays his love with some response. But the mystery of a woman triumphs over rationality. When George and she live together secretly in a cottage for some six months, the former being enraged by an infamy spread by Captain Blunt, one of the suitors of Dona Rita, he challenges him in a duel and is wounded. When he gradually recovers, Rita leaves him and lives alone with her maid the rest of her life. George goes into the sea life again to forget everything. The story has a quixotic nature without being a pure adventure. The mysteries of love and its impossibility in this mundane world are emphasised. Like the failure of the Carlist cause, the love between Rita and George fails for some mysterious reasons. Apart from the business of gunpowder and civil war fought

for a throne, the novel does not have any political implications. Most critics have considered it as one of Conrad's weak novels, for it lacks a well-developed plot.

The story starts in a Carnival time. And the subplot of Dominic with the Café girl is a diversion in the story. The way the story starts gives the reader expectation to find some revolutionary adventurous activities like that of *Under Western Eyes* and *The Secret Agent*. There is an air of detective activities. But to the dismay of the reader, he just tells the story of a handful of supporters of Carlist cause who become affectionately drawn towards Dona Rita than to the revolutionary activity. Conrad's mistrust in the revolution finds its fruition in the novel though the focus is not on revolution. Nevertheless, the background must be considered to form an assessment of the characters entangled in the cause. The failure of the revolution is echoed in the failed relationship between Rita and George. The protagonist George is, in some respects, the young Conrad in Marseilles. As the protagonist's love remains unfulfilled, so is the revolution. Conrad's romance in Europe is thus not based on emotions and passions of love. It is either one-sided as in *Chance* or it is unrequited like that in this novel. Unlike in the Eastern tales, there is no love talk or love relation in the pure sense. The relationship between Mr. and Mrs. Gould, Nostromo and Linda in *Nostromo*, Razumov and Miss Haldin, Razumov and Tekla in *Under Western Eyes*, Mr. and Mrs. Verloc in *The Secret Agent*, Flora and Captain Anthony in *Chance,* the husband and wife in "The Idiots" and "The Return" is also not based on love or romance. Rather people's personal lives and feelings about romance are plagued by political themes – gunpowder, arms, civil war, revolution, capitalistic greed, selfishness and anarchism.

Romance is often accompanied by mediaeval Gothic elements in Conrad. “The Inn of the Two Isles” (1913) is a kind of Gothic story attempted by Conrad. May be the information of such inn which ensnares a traveler may have made Conrad think about the Gothic literature that portrays the evils of witches or of women. The story is set in the northern part of Spain during the Peninsular War. It recounts the experience of horror by a young naval officer, Edgar Byrne, who in search of his friend and guide Tom Corbin stays at an inn which is possessed by two witches and a young devil-woman. In the inn he is suffocated by the movable canopy of his bed but somehow escapes while his old friend cannot. The Western tradition of the Gothic dates back to the medieval age. But this story of Gothic elements is produced in a time of war, perhaps hinting at the horrors of war. The traditional patriarchal image of women as witches is also used in the story against the witchcraft of war. “The Brute: An Indignant Tale” contains the gothic elements too as a supernatural halo overwhelms the story. For, the ship *Ape Family* is the brute ship that is deflowered by the rock because of its un-mindful captain who neglects his duty being preoccupied with the woman passenger. Thus, the devil ship and the woman passenger are presented as evil. The world of sea was full of such Gothic stories during Conrad’s time.

The love between Yanko Gooral and Amy Foster in “Amy Foster” is similar in nature. It is romance and love in the beginning but tragic in the end. In “Tomorrow” also the love and romance between Harry and Bessie Carvil does not grow due to the encroaching modernity. The boy’s love for individual freedom and lack of money, the father’s neurosis developed due to long alienated life and long wait for his son’s return make romance and a happy family impossible. The story is, to some extent, like the story of Amy Foster whose life is tied to the provincial coast of Kent. As Conrad likes adventure and freedom, so is Harry who does not want to marry, for marriage may put an end to his

adventurous life. However, though tragic in the end, the love between Gasper Ruiz and his beloved Erminia that grows in the midst of war and revolution is pathetically romantic.

Modernity

Conrad's presentation of European life is often influenced by elements of modernity. No family life in the fullest sense is portrayed. Either the family is troubled by mysterious forces or fate as in "The Idiots" or by loveless and childless marriages or extramarital affairs as in "The Return" and *Nostromo*. First published in 1896 in the Savoy during Conrad's honeymoon, the story of "The Idiots" is his direct experience of seeing four disabled children born to a peasant family in Brittany. These four children's brain remains underdeveloped; that is why though they are about 16, they behave like little babies and without any understanding or intelligence. Their brains are misshapen. Thus, the story is very pathetic for it raises the question of humanity in its uncertain fateful condition. What would happen to a family or parents who would have children like those in this story? It is unimaginable and unthinkable. Why will such babies be born to certain parents? No definite answer is there. Conrad by looking at these children must have been bewildered about the nature of the universe and the plight of the parents and future of these children. Thus, he makes a very dark story of murder and suicide in the midst of this already tragic condition.

When the narrator travels in Brittany, his driver informs him about these children whose parents are dead and who stay with their grandmother. These children come to the street on the daytime and return home at dusk along with their cattle. Among them three are boys and one is a girl. The narrator muses: "They were an offence to the sunshine, a

reproach to empty heaven, and blight on the concentrated and purposeful vigour of the wild landscape" ("The Idiots" 58). The story is about Jean-Pierre who came back from his military service with his wife Susan to the farm of his parents. Things were very normal and progress was visible in the farm. Villagers also contributed and participated in the work, and all of they were mutually benefited. When the twins were born, the whole family was delighted. And Jean Pierre's father told him that his grandsons would quarrel over the land of the farm. So much joy and expectation of the parents were stopped when they realized that their children were not normal. The husband says to his wife, "We must see … consult people. Don't cry. … They won't all be like that … surely" ("The Idiots" 63)! Then the third child was born and they were hopeful about a normal boy. This child like the first twins "never smiled, never stretched its hands to her, never spoke; never had a glance of recognition for her in its big black eyes …" (64). Pierre would often think, "There were three of them. Three! All alike! Why? Such things did not happen to everybody – to nobody he ever heard of. One yet – it might pass. But three! All three. Forever useless, to be fed while he lived and … What would become of the land when he died" (66)? And the fourth, a girl, also became the same. How could a couple remain in sanity in such a situation? The husband questions God, scolds his wife and hits her; the wife, "the mother of Idiots", in retaliation, in a moment of anger stabs her husband on his throat with a scissor and kills him. Frantically, she comes to take shelter to her mother's residence who also chastises her for sin of killing her own husband. Then the wife in a moment of fury and misery drowns herself.

The story is very tragic but it is based on a true incident in Brittany. Conrad's focus is always on the unusual and tragic. He tests his characters in trying situations. How can a couple live together happily with four disabled children in a human society? Both

husband and wife were performing baptism and mass with the birth of every child and God did not take pity on them. Doubt in God and frustration on faith must come. Must also be questioned the justice of the Provident. Beneath this predestined tragedy of a peasant's family Conrad also shows the pecuniary concern of the husband who wants a sane male child to inherit his farm. He never bothers about what would happen to the children when they grow up. But the story portrays the social picture of that locality as well. As a short story it registers the universal plight of those parents who have got unintelligent and disabled children. Conrad's questioning of the moral justice of the Providence is appealing to our senses, and thought provoking. The story is told in a Maupassant manner as Edward Garnett has suggested. Though Critics and Conrad tried not to give much importance to the story as it is too dark a story, it is to an Eastern reader, like that to Jessie Conrad (Conrad's wife), enthralling and a very tragic story with much human pathos.

Unlike her other stories set in Malaysia or the Congo or a remote village, "The Return" is set in the fashionable London society. The story explores the relationship between a husband and a wife, and the wife's love affair with another man. Though not a serious one in its treatment of the subject matter, it is a much common problem in Western societies from the early modern period to date. After writing a letter to her husband about her love affair with a man, she leaves the house, but again, after some sudden impulses, returns to her husband. Her husband Alvan Hervey, who feels utter loneliness and disgrace at such behavior of the wife leaves the house himself and never returns. Conrad's use of irony is untraditional but pungent. His dramatization of the conflict between female desire and male ego is craftily presented. In an attempt to write something new apart from something Eastern, he has written entirely a London story

highlighting the problems of the bourgeoisie family. The lack of fidelity and trust in marriage relationship, the sexual dissatisfaction or emotional estrangement of the couples questions the moral solidarity of the institution of marriage in the city life. While marital unhappiness, separation and quarrel are a part of the marriage culture, Conrad's "The Return" shows the bleak side of a broken relation that is never to be repaired. This is to some extent a sharp contrast with that of marriage relations in the East. Eastern couples also often get dissatisfied and become unfaithful, but they do not get separated easily. Western people do not discuss the problems of their marriage; they get separated very easily. What often saves a strained relation in the East is the presence of children and elder relatives in the house. Western couples, especially the modern ones, do not get children easily, and they become frustrated with their life, but they do not want to acknowledge it openly and seriously as is evidenced in "Cat in the Rain" by Ernest Hemingway and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* by Edward Albee.

Napoleonic Era and a Claustrophobic Europe

The genuineness about Conrad's skeptic view about war can be questioned if we look at Conrad's nostalgic fascination with the time of Napoleon and the fact that he sets some of his works in that time. The last novel to have been written by Conrad is *The Rover* (1923) which is a tribute to the French revolution and the Napoleonic era in France. This novel like *The Arrow of Gold* is a slow progress novel. Though Conrad was at the height of his fame, reviewers and critics were more censorious than ever before and talked about weaknesses more than the merits of his later novels. However, a few critics, like Sherry and Garnett, like the brevity of the style and also the idea of a man desiring rest after toil. Peyrol is the protagonist who has roamed in the world for about forty years.

His life is quixotic. Having fled his hometown in his boyhood, he takes the shelter in a ship and then becomes a gun runner in the French navy. He has accumulated a vast wealth in coin from his exploits in the Eastern seas mostly through piracy. But he never suffers from any guilty feeling, though he has to keep it secret and hide under his waist: "That plunder had never burdened his conscience. It had merely on occasion oppressed his body" (*The Rover* 34-35). He often considers this hard-won booty his luck. And now he retires to a farmhouse of a village near a town called Toulon where he wants to settle down and rest for the rest of his life. But he cannot take rest for again he is requested to take part in a final mission. The lieutenant Real whose mission is to keep vigilance over the English falls in love with the girl Arlette who is also loved by Peyrol whose feelings for her are complicated, for, Peyrol has developed a kind of fatherly platonic love for her, restraining his erotic feelings and helps Real to pursue her with the thought that the old should give way to the young. More complications arise because of the farmhouse owner's attempt to kill Real and the intruding of the English soldiers who chase Peyrol's boat and ultimately kill him. Peyrol undertakes the mission himself saving Real for the girl. His sacrifice of his own life for the sake of the other is one of the redeeming features of his character and of the novel as well. But too many complications and melodramatic actions of chasing and scuffles hide the novelist's main concern of portraying the idyllic life in the Napoleonic period. Though it captures the English and French conflict, through Peyrol's indifference to revolution and war, Conrad shows his own indifference and aversion too. When the fisherman wants to tell him about the Revolution, Peyrol says, "What's the good of that" (23)? However, the novel also shows the war that often was fought in the colonies between rival European nations as Peyrol reports to the patriot "... I killed her enemies abroad, far away. You were cutting off heads without much

compunction... And I knocked the enemies of the Republic on the head whenever I had them before me without inquiring about the number" (27).

"The Duel" too is a Napoleonic work based on the story of a series of duels between two military men during the year 1810. A hot-tempered southerner from Gascony, Lieutenant Gabriel Florian Feraud wounds a civilian in a duel for which he is confined to quarters by Lieutenant Armand D'Hubert who is an aristocratic Northerner. Then both these lieutenants fight a duel and wound each other. Later they again engage in a formal duel in which D'Hubert is injured. A temporary truce is made between them by D'Hubert's colonel. After some time D'Hubert is promoted to the position of a captain. This promotion lengthens the peaceful truce as he cannot now fight with his subordinate. But when Feraud is promoted to the position of a Captain, he again challenges D'Hubert to a duel and they again fight until their seconds stop them. Again after the battle of Waterloo they spread calumny against each other and again fight with pistols after D'Hubert marries a young girl chosen by his sister. D'Hubert survives two bullets of Feraud but refuses to kill Feraud who tells the former that his wife ran barefooted two miles when she learnt of the duel. Their duel is permanently ended, and D'Hubert secretly arranges an income for Feraud to live the rest of his life. The idyllic life of the Napoleonic era had a charm on Conrad.

Conrad's voice against the oppressor and sympathy for the oppressed is expressed beautifully in "The Warrior's Soul" (1916), a very mature Western short story. War has always played a prominent role in the Western history. Again Conrad's fascination and concern with the Napoleonic war is behind the story. This is a story influenced by the Napoleonic war when Napoleon was retreating from Moscow in 1812. The unwanted tough moral situations a soldier sometimes has to face are brilliantly portrayed. The long-

held view of Conrad as a hater of Russia is challenged here as he portrays a heroic Russain character in the story. An aged Russian officer is the narrator who recalls the story from his war time experience. Tomassov, a subaltern idealistic and very humane soldier, is saved from arrest by de Castel a French gallant officer. But, during the later phase of the war, de Castel, while retreating with other French soldiers, is taken as a prisoner by Tomassov who realizes that the prisoner is none other than the man who saved him once. Now de Castel, in despair by the loss of his courage to fight, pleads to Tomassov to repay his debt by killing him. Tomassov who is very humane now falls in a dilemma and finally shoots de Castel to save him from the latter's mental agony which is supposed to be worse than death. About this story, Cunningham Graham says, "Few stories in the language are as dramatic as "The Warrior's Soul" (xiii). He further comments: "In it he rises above nationality, even his hatred of the hereditary tyrants of his country is forgotten...All Conrad's art, his skill in drawing character, his ear for curious locutions, such as 'simple servants of God' to express country people, are to be found in this amazing tale" (xiv-xv).

Conrad witnessed the Boer war, European war, Russian Revolution and the first World War and includes his perceptions about war in his Western fiction. Life beset with all these political conflicts and wars cannot be idyllic and romantic as it is in the Eastern world. That is why love and romance are not spontaneously dealt with in the Western works; these are threatened by the forces of civil wars, international wars, revolution and anarchy. Individual life in the Western fiction has been conditioned by political turmoil. This gives Conrad's Western fiction a political label which is indeed an important factor to understand Conrad's Eurocentric politics which has given birth to his Western politics against Russia. The two worlds of his fiction, namely Eastern and Western, are so different

in subject matter, but the perspective is largely secular in both; for Conrad's Western fiction seems to deal with a world devoid of Christianity when in reality the early twentieth century mainstream Western life was not that much secular. Secularization of education and literature went hand in hand from the Romantic period to the present one, Shelley and Byron being the prime examples. Hence, Conrad's cynical portrayal of the revolutionaries in *The Secret Agent*, *Nostromo* and *Under Western Eyes* aptly provides ground to align him with conservative bourgeois politics of capitalism that lies behind the rise of secularism which also helped imperialism flourish. Colonial administrators must have understood and measured the difficulty of ruling and exploiting the Eastern non-Christian people with their Christian identity; rather the secular identity and its policy of non-interference into the private religious practices of people helped them manage the colonies better. They often would allow the local custom and laws to govern the native people. This practice of non-interference however is found in the Western history during the Danish invasion of the Anglo-Saxon Britain by Canute in 1016.John Thorn and his co-authors write, "[S]oon after his accession, in a council at Oxford, he publicly re-affirmed the code of Edgar which allowed English and Danes to follow their own laws. And there is no record of any English rebellion in his reign" (Thorn 71).

However, Conrad's new "Westernism" is not a planned propaganda; rather it is historical facts utilized in fiction. Therefore, while Conrad's Eastern world is a colonial world without looking through a colonialist political perspective, his Western world is a political world without looking at it from an imperial historical perspective. In his representation of the Western world, the absence of the colonial history must startle a conscious reader, let alone an Eastern reader. The mainstream life of both worlds has been overshadowed by his Western secular viewpoint. However, the European characters

are the main focus in each world. European characters are present in both worlds but Eastern characters are present only in Eastern fiction. Thus, Conrad's Eastern fiction is wider in scope. It tests Western characters, presents sea life, ships, natural adversities and an exotic multicultural society. It appreciates man's integrity, emotions and passions. It presents moral concerns in a very human world. But his Western fiction is more political and philosophical than that of the Eastern fiction. It is submerged in an aura of Western politics, which prioritizes faith in democracy, scientific materialism and West-European society in opposition to Russian autocracy.

Chapter Five
Conrad under Eastern Eyes

> Conrad, for better or for worse, is an ironic writer through and through.
>
> —J. Hillis Miller: *Foreword, Conrad in the Twenty-First Century*

The aim of this chapter is to critically look at Conrad regarding his dealing with the East. Focusing on the individual works from short fiction to long fiction, this study traces Conrad's willingness of empathetic portrayal of the East and deep love for humanity of the non-Western world. However, the study has also explored issues like exoticization of the East, and the stereotyped and secular representation of the Eastern and non-Western people. This chapter deals with these issues focusing on some of Conrad's Eastern novels and short stories. The author, being Western, has been influenced by the Western secular world-view, and his lack of first-hand experience of contact with the Eastern people makes him succumb to the Orientalized construct of the East. Hugh Clifford writes about the Eastern people in his first two novels:

> The Orientals in both these books, however, are much less successful. To me they are interesting, not because they are really Asiatics, but because they represent the impression scored by Asiatics upon a sensitive, imaginative European mind. Mr. Conrad had seen them and known them, but he had seen as white men see – from the outside. He had never lived into the life of brown people. (16)

Conrad honestly accepted this charge of Clifford. He wrote to him, "Of course I don't know anything about Malays. If I knew only one hundredth part of what you and Frank Swettenham know of Malays I would make everybody sit up" (*PR* , "Author's Note" iv). However, it is inconceivable that Conrad who had stayed for six months in the Malay

region did not have any knowledge. May be, Conrad's remarks are here ironic. But he gives the reply in his *A Personal Record*: "Only in Man's imagination does every truth find an effective and undeniable existence. Imagination, not invention, is the supreme master of art, as of life" (25). In *Joseph Conrad: Text and Context* Brian Spittles also notes that "As a seaman Conrad was able to grasp the circumstances imaginatively, and therefore to extend them into a metaphor of mankind struggling with the hostile elements" (12). Norman Sherry in this connection comes to rescue Conrad: "Conrad has been criticized for his too flamboyant descriptions of tropical nature in those books dealing with the remoter parts of the South-east Asian archipelago. But his fidelity to appearance and likelihood in his descriptions of Singapore and the Lingard settlement suggest that, however, lush and romantic his descriptions may seem, they are, in fact, authentic" (*Eastern World* 194).

Hans van Marle is too hard on Conrad when he points to some errors in Conrad's presentation of the Malay life: "Incidentally it may be that our author is weak in Malay, that he is in error in representing Bali as one kingdom and in describing a prince of Bali as a Brahmin. These blemishes do not detract from the general truthfulness of the book" (32). Lloyd Fernando also cross-checks the facts like a biographer who wants to explore sources of all characters and places of a work of fiction: "What is the grammar of Conrad's facts?... Are Nina and Dain, Hassim and Immada, Belarab and Tenga and their compatriots no more than a company of shadows, providing a backdrop for Western dramas about man's isolation in the universe" (60)? Amar Acheraiou considers Conrad's portrayal of Eastern characters, if not as demeaning, but as stereotypes:

> If Conrad's relation to Eastern territoriality is, as implied in his aesthetics of abstractedness, underpinned by ideological strictures, his depictions of the Malay cultures

> and peoples are also ideologically marked. Rather than being neutral or balanced, then, his representations of the Malay peoples are often stereotypical. As such, they seem to be consonant with the nineteenth-century Western perceptions of the Orientals. Similarly, Conrad's vision of the various Western colonial powers present in the archipelago is not what may be called objective. His critique of European colonialism in particular crystallizes this lack of objectivity, in the sense that this critique is neither radical nor undifferentiated, as might be expected. ("Eastern Geopolitics"13)

Though these critics question the historical accuracy, they applaud Conrad's overall perception, as I think, there is the mark of verisimilitude in his fiction. However, Florence Clemens unlike Clifford says that "Geographically, Conrad's Malaysia is very nearly perfect" (21). She also says, "Correct in the physical background, Conrad's fiction is further strengthened by his accurate knowledge of the complicated pattern of Malaysian life. He recognized the influences which have made the Indies a meeting place of various oriental tenets and of East and West in general" (21) When people confront different culture, they change their behaviour and outlooks to adapt to that particular culture consciously or unconsciously. But when a writer tries to represent this cultural adaptation of characters in novels and describes individuals of different cultures, for the convenience of his/her craft or for simplification, he or she adheres to traditional images of that nation or country to which those characters belong, and this gives rise to stereotyped representation which is often tantamount to misrepresentation. Conrad may not have transcended this type of limitation, but certainly his natural perception of the region as a European is not wholly groundless.

Conrad is not a diehard racist or colonialist; he uses the traditional Western ideas of the Victorian Britain about the East in his portrayal of the East and Africa. He displays rather an ambivalent attitude to political topics, as Brian Spittles is right to assess that "Conrad was never either a consistently straightforward conservative or a convinced

progressive. He judged cases individually, on their merits" (14). Ideologically he resists his own impulse of feeling superior to the other in reality, but in fiction he presents a European's notions. Benita Parry says that Conrad's "East is the consummate figure of the *other*" (Emphasis mine 2). This is why he uses the image of African people as savage for the Eastern people as well, since the European readers would better understand it. In this case Conradian lens acts as a European lens and so regards the natives' different ways of life and manners as savage. In his fiction, there are two types of people; one is the gentleman type like Lingard, Heyst, Charles Gould, and the other is the savage like Babalatchi, Lakamba, the Eastern Rajahs and Eastern/African people. Thus, his savage is the other race only whose complexions are either black or brown. Except for the Chinese, he uses the word "savage" for all— the Malay, the African and the Arab people invariably. But Conrad provides the reader a new space of reading against the grain, as in his African and Eastern fiction, by an ironic method of detachment he has exposed, what Bhabha reads in Conrad "the savagery of civilized man" (*Nation* 61).

The Exotic East

The Exotic East in Conrad is what charmed the British and American readers of his time as well as gave rise to reviews and criticism of his works. While many hailed him as the Kipling of the South East Asia, many also charged him for his portrayal of non-European/non-British people on a par with those of the European. However, the Eastern Eye cannot evade the long-held imperial view of the East. If we look closely at the Malay people in his early Malay fiction, what image of the Malay people do we get, other than the non-human or half-human creatures? Though they are mostly servants to the White people or to the local Raja, they are presented as untrustworthy as Almayer thinks

"Trusting to Malays was poor work" (*AF* 14). Later he says that "It is bad to have to trust a Malay" (*AF* 18). So, the Malays from common servants to the Rajas are invariably deemed savage by the Western characters and narrators of his fiction; they are un-teachable savages, like those of Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, who would never change their ancient savage customs and manner. The narrator calls the commander of Dains' brig "savage-looking Sumatrese" (*AF* 56). Even Lakamba and Dain are called "infernal savages" (*AF 73*) while none of the Western characters, including the Dutch officers are called savages. Even the Malay people do not call any Europeans savage. No Malay people seem gentlemanly to him. Even Dain whom Almayer trusts seems to the narrator "half-savage, untamed, perhaps cruel"; his eyes seem to have "the liquid softness of the almost feminine eye, that general characteristic of the race" (*AF* 55). The Western eye is masculine and hence tries to consider the Eastern eye as feminine. Babalatchi is described in terms of animal imagery: "... the Arab cruising inwardly the wily dog, while Babalatchi ... his chin with its few grey hairs pushed forward, resembling an inquisitive goat" (*AF* 58). And Mrs. Almayer is a savage both to the narrator and her husband in spite of her convent education in Singapore; and it seems the narrator implies that the savage nature cannot be easily enlightened.

However, Conrad has a favourable opinion about the Chinese who are seen as clerks and hence better than the Malays. Even Jim Eng, the opium addict Chinese, is not described in any derogatory terms. But the Malays and the Arabs, that is, the Muslims have been seen as rivals of the Europeans and hence they are portrayed negatively. The degradation of the native through the use of animal imagery and stereotyped images is European construct like that of "the African savage", the idea of which got its sway in the seventeenth and eighteenth century travel and colonial European literature. That very

image in different forms is also ascribed to the Asian or the Eastern people, who are not able "...to display higher emotions or to resist acting upon every desire or impulse" (Milbury-Steen 7). As Milbury-Steen points out Spencer's statement, "...the savage has the mind of a child with the passions of a man" (7). Thus, the Malay natives are deemed cruel, faithless, untrustworthy, cowards and pitiless while the Europeans are projected as faithful, trustworthy, benevolent, enlightened, brave and heroic.

The adopted nameless daughter of Lingard is a savage woman to her European husband, Almayer. The way Mrs. Almayer has been portrayed is based on generalization rooted in Orientalism. All natives are like Mrs. Almayer, un-teachable and incorrigible, opposed to change their Eastern mindset. In *An Outcast of the Islands* Joanna's brother Leonard calls Mr. Willems "You are a savage. Not at all like we, whites" (28). All are savages except the white people. Willems, the Western man, who has so far provided everything to his wife's family of the Portuguese descent, is abandoned by his wife. When he was rich, he was dear to her. But when he has been poor for his own faults though, those very people turn him out of his house and consider him savage. So generally white people do not appear savage to the white but only Willems appears because of his degradation to poverty. The way the old Rajah Omar el Badavi, Lakamba and Babalatchi has been presented is objectionable too. All of them have been depicted as uneducated pirates and immoral ruthless rulers. Omar is called "fearless leader of the Brunei rovers". Babalatchi describes him thus:

> I knew him well when he had slaves, and many wives, and much merchandise, and trading praus, and praus for fighting. Hai—ya! He was a great fighter in the days before the breath of the Merciful put out the light in his eyes. He was a pilgrim, and had many virtues: he was brave, his hand was open, and he was a great robber. For many years he led the men that drank blood on the sea: first in prayer and first in fight! ... Have I not

> watched by his side ships with high masts burning in a straight flame on the calm water? Have I not followed him on dark nights amongst sleeping men that woke up only to die? His sword was swifter than the fire from Heaven, and struck before it flashed. Hai! Tuan! Those were the days and that was a leader.... (*OI* 46)

What is the image of the Eastern Rajah? He is now reduced to the state of a beggar depending on alms of the new Rajah Pataloo and the care of his only surviving daughter Aissa. The Eastern kings do not have history. All rajas seize powers through bloodshed, and they themselves are cutthroats like Lakamba. All Malay rajahs, chiefs, influential Eastern and Arab people have been presented as merciless, immoral people who keep slaves, do slave trades and have many wives. In *Victory* also Conrad talks about a Malay woman, who plays a piano, and is compared with a cannibal by Alex Heyst, the English European gentleman: “It’s certain that this woman who plays the piano is infinitely more disagreeable than a cannibal I have ever had to do with” 72). But Lena, the unfortunate English girl, asks, “How did you come to have anything to do with cannibals” (72)? Heyst says that that is a long tale which the narrator does not tell in the novel. That the presence of cannibals is only in the East or Africa is projected from this kind of portrayal. The East, like Africa, has been presented as a site of savagery and degeneracy for the Westerner. As stated earlier, Conrad’s Eastern characters appear as savages to the West. Mrs. Almayer, Babalatchi, Omar, Lakamba, Aissa, Immada, Karain like the native mistress in *Heart of Darkness* are portrayed as savage people, whereas Lingard, Jim, Stein, Almayer, Willems and Mrs. Traversare delineated as civilised people becoming degenerated or “going native” like Mr. Kurtz in the alien savage surrounding.

An Outcast of the Islands presents Willems’ half-caste European wife’s perception of Aissa as the other: "She, a savage, I, a civilized European, and clever! She that knew no more than a wild animal"(269)! The East is full of savage people and cannibals. On the

other hand, the white people have brought peace, and so they are benevolent and good rulers. Tom Lingard of the Malay trilogy and Jim of *Lord Jim* are presented as saviours. Lingard helps to restore peace in Sambir by checking the power of the ill- intentioned Lakamba, and Jim does the same by restoring peace to Patusan. Tom Lingard, himself a pirate in one sense, is recognized even by the Malays "as the Raja-Laut – the King of the Sea" (*AF* 7). He is romantic and victorious, and he adopts Mrs. Almayer as his daughter after killing her parents and relatives who are termed by him as pirates. It is his view. Whether he is right or wrong does not bother Western readers or critics. And his later attempt to educate the girl in a convent in Singapore and marrying her off with the Dutch Almayer points to his benevolence and European imperial vision. He is never spoken of in any negative terms though he does the trade of gunpowder and stays at brothels. He takes part in the change of rulers in the Malay Archipelago, as the West now takes part in regime changes in Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

During the colonial era, though there was not a single Eastern sea captain or chief mate, there were Eastern names of ships, and sometimes owners were also Eastern, specially Arabs and Chinese, but no captain. Therefore, the driving force of the sea route and trade was the West and hence their supremacy. And because of this they also devised laws and regulations according to their will and for their benefits. If the same thing had been done by Eastern captains on board the *Jeddah* in *Lord Jim*, the reference would have been a more frequent one and the punishment would have been different, whereas Jim was set free, and his failure has been given an epic dimension by the author:

> [Jim] was known successively in Bombay, in Calcutta, in Rangoon, Penang, in Batavia – and in each of these halting-places was just Jim the water-clerk. Afterwards, when his keen perception of the intolerable drove him away for good from seaports and white men, even into the virgin forest, the Malays of the jungle village, where he had elected to

> conceal his deplorable faculty, added a word to the monosyllable of his incognito. They called him Tuan Jim: as one might say – Lord Jim. (4)

Such an ordinary boy who was about to be hanged by the court becomes a hero to the Malay people by concealing his earlier self. Because he is a European, he cannot live as an ordinary servant's life in the East. He must be given a higher place. And he deserves it as he brings peace and restores order to Patusan. But the novel, by presenting the Patusan episode, foreshadows the modern Middle East plagued by internecine conflicts and allowing the Western intervention for restoring order. What we see in Patusan is not different from the Egypt under Hosni Mubarak, Iraq under Saddam Hussein, and Syria under Bashar Al Assad, and Libya under Gaddafi and many other Arab states under various sultans including Saudi Arabia. The conflict over the supremacy among the three different Muslim groups helps Jim to become their saviour and lord temporarily. Rajah Allang who rules the country arbitrarily instead of his nephew, the rightful retarded Sultan, Doramin, the leader of fifty Muslim families, and Sherif Ali, the terrorist are vying for the control of the place keeping the ordinary people in fear and suffering. Stein, Cornelius, Brown and Jim all outsiders take side with one of these groups. Virtually from the narrative point of view, the morally better ruler will be Doramin who dreams to make his son Dain Waris the future ruler of Patusan. Jim who is sent to the palace as Stein's trade representative shows his courage and scrupulosity to take side with Doramin to put a check on the oppressive rule of the Rajah Allang. But because of his lack of political farsightedness, he makes a great mistake to allow a safe exit for the British pirate Gentleman Brown, who betrays him and kills the innocent Doramin's son and other civilians. Jim could flee the wrath of the old Doramin but he faces him with courage to be shot by the angry Doramin, and thus the land of Patusan again falls to the sole arbiter Rajah Allang. One can easily see the resemblance of this story with what has happened and is happening in Afghanistan, Iraq, Egypt, Libya,

Syria and some other corners of the globe. Many of the major cities have been destroyed. The West intervenes to overthrow the dictators like Mollah Omar, Saddam Hussein, Gaddafi, Hosni Mubarak and Bashar. But what has happened to those countries? Has peace been established? Rather, the very opposite has taken place. More disorder and deaths have erupted into these lands causing a human catastrophe. The land of Patusan as like other lands of the East was traversed first by European traders, then missionaries, pirates and finally by European Governments. In *Lord Jim* two the narrator traces the presence of the European in Patusan:

> The seventeenth-century traders went there for pepper, because the passion for pepper seemed to burn like a flame of love in the breast of Dutch and English adventurers about the time of James the First. Where wouldn't they go for pepper! For a bag of pepper they would cut each other's throats without hesitation, and would forswear their souls, of which they were so careful otherwise; the bizarre obstinacy of that desire made them defy death in a thousand shapes – the unknown seas, the loathsome disease; wounds, captivity, hunger, pestilence, and despair. It made them great! By heavens! It made them heroic; and it made them pathetic, too, in their craving for trade with the inflexible death levying its toll on young and old. It seems impossible to believe that mere greed could hold men to such a steadfastness of purpose, to such a blind persistence in endeavor and sacrifice. And indeed those who adventured their persons and lives risked all they had for a slender reward. They left their bones to lie bleaching on distant shores, so that wealth might flow to the living at home. (138)

Conrad tries to explore here the "reckless rage" of the European adventurers' motives and secrets for traveling to distant lands and ports of the world. Truly, we also wonder how the European could think of controlling the other continents even where there were no air communications. The author wonders what could drive those people to take such hazardous journeys and risks of disease and death. Can mere greed drive a man to such end? We can never be sure. The narrator says that it is desire. Is it all? Which people do not have desire? Though everybody has desire and dreams but everybody does not pursue

it at any cost. Conrad glorifies the history of European adventure and tacitly justifies their colonial ambition by presenting the European people as brave and strong with motives more than wealth and power.

The West's idea about the Eastern rule and Orientalized construct of the Eastern ruler helped colonialism function well:

> ...the glory has departed, the Sultan is an imbecile youth with two thumbs on his left hand and an uncertain and beggarly revenue extorted from a miserable population and stolen from him by his many uncles. 'This of course I have from Stein. He gave me their names and a short sketch of the life and character of each. He was as full of information about native states as an official report, but infinitely more amusing. He *had* to know. He traded in so many, and in some districts--as in Patusan, for instance--his firm was the only one to have an agency by special permit from the Dutch authorities. (*LJ* 139)

Should we accept Marlow's version of the Eastern rule and rulers in *Lord Jim* as authentic? Or should we be conscious of the representation politics of Western Orientalism that manufactures reasons to justify imperialism? To the Western people, the stereotyped Eastern rulers are by default oppressors and bad rulers; and Conrad has not shown any good rulers in the East. And how just a trader Stein has accumulated all the knowledge about the past and present history of Patusan is also a part of that empire-building project. Thus, on the one hand, the fascination and love for the natural world of the East for its exotic strangeness, and on the other hand, the stereotyping of the Eastern people, make the East a fantastic site of desire, plunder, and egotism of the West. The trader Stein epitomises the Western travellers-cum-writers who have contributed to the birth of Orientalism in the West. Being just a trader he takes the role of a linguist and gives names to Eastern places, tells stories and history of the people and about the Sultan of Patusan, which the Westerner takes as real without questioning their credibility. The

imperial politics of naming the Eastern places, people and things are noteworthy in the text. Conrad seems to have overlooked their monopoly in business, racism, illegal gun powder trade and meeting prostitutes at hotels in the city. He also seems to have overlooked how the white people have traumatized the natives so that they shudder at the thought of putting any resistance or rebellion against the foreign powers. When Jim arrived in Patusan, the chief of Patusan fears that the Dutch are coming to take their land. The fear of the European is deep-rooted in the natives' minds. A white man always takes control of the situation and takes part in the regime changes as Jim helps Doramin and his son Dain Waris overthrow Sherif Ali, and as Lingard tries to do so in *The Rescue*.

Conrad portrays the natural Malay world in rather a bad light too. The Malay Archipelago is a "miserable swamp" to Almayer (*AF* 17). The tropical islands are often vividly described with blackness and thunderstorm: "... the driving roar, and hiss of heavy rain, the wash of the waves on the tormented river...leaping waters, driving logs, and the big trees bending before a brutal and merciless force"*(AF* 19). The Malay world is called the "tropical nature" with bushes, jungles, river coasts and secret passages and "stifling heat" (*AF* 69, 5). The river Borneo and its coasts and the forest have been described as appealing and sinister to the Western characters. There are long palm trees, nipa trees, banana plantations, the betel nut plants and "mysterious blue sky". The shores of Java are called "poisonous" (*AF* 5). In *Victory* Ricardo says to Lena, "You have been chucked out into this rotten world of 'ypocrites'" (277). The East is thus a strange and exotic place with its primitive forests and savage people. The narrator talks about Wang's people in *Victory* "... there are people who live in trees – savages, no better than animals..." (291). In *Lord Jim* a Borneo island at Java is called Patusan, which is described by the narrator Marlow as an unknown place "... that mankind had never heard of, it being outside the sphere of its

activities, of no earthly importance to anybody ...it was known by name to ... very few in the mercantile world"(133). Further, the narrator says, "Of course I don't know that story; I can only guess that once before Patusan had been used as a grave for some sin, transgression, or misfortune" (*LJ* 134). This is how the Western writersr writes about the East from their limited experiences and perception, often derived from hearsay. The strange lands, trees, forests, animals, birds, streams, rivers, savage people charm the West like a fairy land. No bazaars, no educational centres, no social gatherings or native visions are presented by the narrators in Conrad's Eastern settings. And this place of Patusan is wonderful to the Western traders/travellers for its crop "pepper". But the once-important trade centre is now an insignificant, decaying and unknown place for the bad rule of the present Sultan; and the West deems all sultans incapable of developing and ruling their own lands properly. The East like Patusan is a wilderness to the West. It is also a place of occult practices and superstition. In *Lord Jim* there is the sorcerer called Sura to whom many villagers go, and she says "... the souls of things are more stubborn than the souls of men" (162). And the common people are simple but to Jim these people "... sit up half the night talking bally rot, and the greater the lie the more they seem to like it" (162).

Conrad seems to have championed the whiteness of dress as well. Whenever he describes Almayer, Willems, Lingard and Jim he expresses their white coloured dresses. The Eastern dresses like the red sarongs, sashes and blue turbans the Malay put on are exotic to them. So the settings in which Conrad places his Western characters are attractive to the Western reader for, as a review of the New York Tribune staes, "the indescribable romance of the immemorial East" (qtd. in Moser, ed., 359). Jim, Almayer, Lingard, Willems – all these Westerners not only come to the Orient for career only but also for romance. True, they were adventurous sort of people but they also had come to

the East to escape from their own oppressive Western societies. The other possible reason which Conrad does not provide any clue to is that they may have been forced to work in the colonies as just agents or spies for their respective empires.

When the Western characters have deliberate purposes of coming to and staying in the East, the native people do not seem to have any purposes of their life other than eating, sleeping and taking part in intrigues. Most of them are found to be slaves carrying just orders of their superiors like animals. And most women are indoor women, except Mrs. Almayer, Nina, Taminah and Aissa who are given limited roles. Almost all Eastern characters are shown to be timid and faithless and without any visions of future except the immediate material gain. They seem to be less civilized and incapable of running an organized government. They are territorial and provincial in thoughts and lead almost a sedentary kind of life without travelling to different parts of the land. The Eastern history, tradition and education and religion have been overlooked in such portrayals. We can see the Orientalised East as enchanting but inert and passive as Said talks about it in his *Orientalism*. The West is enchanted by the landscape, sky, plants and rivers, but not by its people. "The Archipelago has a lasting fascination" (*V* 63) whereas the people are deemed half-savage or savage like Mrs Almayer, Paedro or Wang. The empire likes the land of its farthest territories and the cheap labour of the native people, who are termed as "creature with hooked nose and purple black beard" (*V* 67). Wang, the Chinaman, is made to speak a kind of pidgin English and his English shows that he is half human incapable of learning words from the white people he has been living with for some years.

But unlike Almayer, Alex Heyst in *Victory* is enchanted with North Borneo. He never thinks of leaving the place and ultimately dies there. The enchantment lies in the

fact that the nature there is unadulterated; it is away from the maddening crowd and dirt of the European city. It is not like Shakespeare's Forest of Arden that offers only peace and happiness. Rather, the East here is an idyllic place but enticing to the point of destroying the enchanted white people. The gentleman Heyst is tempted by Lena, and his romance with the girl ruins him. Even the Portuguese, the hotel keeper, Schomberg who is always governed by the racist nationalism like "white man for white man ... In this state of moral weakness ...allowed himself to be corrupted" (*V* 93). His idea of civilization is European; the best civilization for an individual to live in is Europe or even European colony: "But even a common desperado would think twice or, more likely, a hundred times, before openly murdering an inoffensive citizen in a civilized, Europe-ruled town" (*V*115). Europe is equivalent to civilization; Christianity is civilization. The infidels, the non-Christians are savages. Ricardo calls Pedro, the ape-like servant: "Aha, dog! ... you murdering brute, you slaughtering savage, you! You infidel, you robber of churches" (*V* 218)! Here Pedro, the half-evolved Darwinian man, is called an infidel, and so all infidels of the world fall into this category of half-human and half-beast. Pedro "...was a Dago of immense strength and of no sense whatever. This combination made him dangerous, and he had to be treated accordingly, in a manner which he could understand. Reasoning was beyond him" (*V* 224). The non-European is so looked as incapable of reasoning, and so severe and inhuman treatment is given to them. The Europeans' belief in racial superiority is shown by the character Jones' speech to Heyst in *Victory*: "...Martin is cleverer than a Chinaman. Do you believe in racial superiority, Mr. Heyst? I do, firmly" (357). In *Victory* the narrator shows Morrison's idea that "Going to Europe was nearly as final as going to Heaven; it removed a man from the world of hazard and adventure" (22). And Almayer always dreams of returning to Amsterdam with his daughter Nina.

The presence of brothels and hotels in Bangkok and Singapore has got historical relation with adventure and travel, since adventurers, like Lingard and Mr Jones, earlier travelled to the East without their wives and families; they needed women, and this gave rise to brothels and hotels with call-girls. Outside these, they had often married the natives temporarily and kept mistresses. They never brought any Eastern brides to Europe during the early ages of empire. Westerners also brought with them their culture of drinking wine and playing billiards to the East. Willems says to Almayer , "You shouldn't drink so much,...You have no head. Never had, as far as I can remember, in the old days in Macassar. You drink too much" (*OI* 62).

Zdaislaw Najder thus considers Conrad as a Western writer. He shows that Conrad uses three cultures in his works: Polish, French and English. From the first he gets the idea of duty, fidelity and honour; from the second, he gets the idea of European history, narrative techniques, revolutionary ideas and intellectuality; and from the last one, the sea, empire, moral ideas and corruption in human beings, individual people's dreams and frustrations and above all the English language and culture. He writes:

> Conrad was Eurocentric in assessing Europe's role overseas. He stressed the hypocrisy and rapaciousness of colonialists and the inadequacy of the white 'civilization' when faced with a completely different culture. In other words, he critically evaluated Europe from an external perspective observing its political influence and watching the behavior of Europeans in 'exotic' countries". (167)

And being a British citizen and having written in the English language, he must reflect the culture of his adopted country and the continent. Daniel R. Schwarz in his *Conrad: Almayer's Folly to Under Western Eyes* states that "Conrad is …particularly important for understanding British culture" (xiii). As a European serving in the imperial British merchant ship, he is supposed to look at Europe and Europe's 'other', that is, the

East and Africa from European perspective. In “Conrad’s Malayan Novels: Problems of Authenticity” D.C.R.A Goonetilleke says, “We noticed that Europeans are usually at the centre of his Malayan novels ... his perspective is European, but it is not distorted” (42).

Secularised East

Conrad seems to have ignored religion and religious identity of the Malays, as he has not treated it seriously. As the archipelago is predominantly a Muslim community and as Eastern people during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were deeply religious in outlook and practice, Conrad has presented the East from a secular vision. In his fiction he makes the Muslims utter secular terms like “Heaven”, “the Most High”, “the Prophet” “the Holy City” (*OI*52), without any definite words like, Allah and Mohammad. When in *An Outcast* Babalatchi talks with Lakamba about Willems, the former says, “The fate of the Believers is written by the hand of the Mighty One, but they who worship many gods are thrown into the world with smooth foreheads,... Let one white man destroy another. The will of the Most High is that they should be fools” (*OI* 60). In reality the Muslims actually take the name of Allah or some other from His ninety nine names other than these words like ‘the Mighty One, the Most High’. These words are usually used by the Protestant Christians who are secular in attitude. In *An Outcast* Babalatchi says to Lakamba, “Verily, our only refuge is with the One, the Mighty, the Redresser of ...” (*OI* 48). An ordinary man like Babalatchi uses these words instead of the word “Allah”. As the Christian in the West uses the secular terms rather than religious terms in their everyday life to dispel their identity of a religious person, Conrad’s Malay people also do the same. Babalatchi says to the old blind Raja Omar about the white people, “They are on every sea; only the wisdom of the Most High knows their number” (*OI* 103). The

European characters are not seen to take the name of Jesus or any saints or mother Mary; but the Malays are found to take the name of Allah frequently. However, Conrad has represented, though fragmentarily, the Muslims more than any other religious groups. He uses the name "Allah" at several places and in several novels; he mentions salaam, veils, charity, hajj; but he does not talk about the daily Muslim practices like daily five-time prayers or their adherence to the "dos" and "don'ts" that are a part of the mainstream Muslim culture.

To Conrad, religion does not appear as a barrier in inter-racial marriages. Mrs. Almayer's religious belief is never talked about in *Almayer's Folly*, so is the case with Dain, the Hindu Brahmin prince who never eats anything for religious reasons in Lakamba's or Almayer's house, but he elopes with Nina, whose religious identity does not come to bother his thoughts. When they fall in love, they never discuss religion. Will the marriage between the half-caste supposedly Christian Nina and the Hindu Dain (the future ruler of Bali) be accepted by the latter's Brahmin father and subjects? To the Brahmin, religious identity of the bride is of paramount importance. But the way Conrad has made this love affair successful is no doubt romantic and successful representation of cross-racial or cross-religious marriage. But is it credible or acceptable to the Hindu? Conrad presents them as secular people like that of the West where religion does not pose a threat to inter-racial marriage. Moreover, Dain never takes the names of his gods or goddesses, and so is Nina who never takes the name of any saint or Jesus. The Malay Archipelago was a place of diverse races with their different religions: the Chineese, the Indian, the Arab and the African; but Conrad has only focused on the Muslims and the Arabs, not on the Hindus and the Buddhists.

Therefore, how far his writings are free from European prejudices is the topic of consideration for a critic. Europe during the late Victorian period when Conrad wrote his first novel was the place of high imperialism. It had an industrial capitalistic economy and its social and political outlook was both Christian and secular. Its philosophical nature was empirical, scientific and pragmatic and the individual life of the metropolitan area was largely secular; families were mostly nuclear. Their mode of living was individualistic but diversified. Conrad brought up in the midst of this European secular tradition that was increasing rapidly with high popularity became a moderate secular in his own individual life as well as in his outlook to the world. Although there was strong conflict between religion and secularism in the beginning, the latter flourished at least to the educated reading class superseding the former. Conversely, Asia was a colony where people mostly lived by religious and spiritual teachings. Its philosophical characteristic was not empirical. The individual life was also religious, and hence not secular. And their family was extended. Eastern life indeed was rooted in family and tradition, whereas the Western life was individual and secular. Therefore, a Western writer's projection of the East, however humane and empathetic it can be, will have a chance of containing and upholding Western prejudices and values. Thus, Conrad falls under the Eastern scrutiny. Though he was born as a Polish Catholic, in his mature years he did not have much earnest faith in any forms of Christianity. The possible reason is that he questioned justice of the Providence for the death of his parents, especially after his father's death. And while living in France he had attempted a suicide and a duel which are deemed anti-Christian activities. However, when he joined the British Merchant service, he came in contact with the Protestant Christians. Hence he developed both a pessimistic and a moderate view of religion. But when he travelled across the East, he saw mostly Muslims

and Buddhists. Thus, it is often stated that he learnt about them not from close contacts but from books. John Lester in his *Conrad and Religion* observes:

> Although his periods of time spent away from England, particularly in the East, clearly enabled him to make some contact with other religions, notably Buddhism and Islam, it seems unlikely that he closely investigated the tenets of these faiths while he was there. Instead, the acquaintance he shows with them in his writings is probably the result of his reading. …there have been suggestions that his knowledge of Buddhism was gained, not from the East, but from the works of Amiel and Schopenhauer. Similarly, much of his information about Islam can be seen to have come out from Sir Richard Burton's account of his pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina; a book which would have shown him that the Faith of Muhammad was experiencing a similar decay to that of Christianity (albeit a more violent one). (12)

From his fiction Conrad's knowledge of Islam apart from Christianity appears prominent than that of other religions. Conrad's portrayal of the Muslims and his treatment of them in his fiction provide clues to his idea and perception of the Muslim rather than the knowledge of Islam. Hugh Clifford accuses that Conrad did not know the Malays fully, so it can be guessed that Conrad did not know much about the Arab people too. And to the European of the nineteenth century, Muslims were known as Mohammedans, that is, the followers of Mohammad. Their idea of a Muslim was based on their idea of an Arab, not all Muslims of other regions. But it is surprising that Conrad does not use the word "Mohammedan" for "Muslim", though the term, a misnomer to the Muslims, is widely applied by the West for the Muslims, who never call themselves Mohammedans as there is no Mohammedanism in the proper sense, since Muslims call themselves the followers of Allah. As Florence Clemens uses the word "Mohammedanism" instead of "Islam" in her "Conrad's Malaysia": "Conrad's books prove his understanding of the leading part Mohammedanism has played in Malay life.... Mohammedanism came to the archipelago from India by way of traders" (22). Further she says, "Mohammedan Malays are

Conrad's chief native characters" (23). But when the West calls Muslims Mohammedans, they try to project their own perception of Jesus. Following Jesus can be following God, but they equate Jesus with God. Similarly following Mohammad is following Allah, but Mohammad is not equal or equivalent to Allah. The Western projection, however, seems to suggest that Muslims pray to Mohammad or to Kaba. Thus, when a writer writes about the other culture, misrepresentation might take place, as Florence Clemens has done calling the Muslims as Mohammedans and Islam as Mohammedanism.

Conrad is a believer whose religious credence is merged with secular outlook. As stated earlier, he uses the words "Most High", "Jove", "Providence" - all secular terms rather than a Christian one like Jesus. Almayer in *An Outcast* questions God:

> ...why such infernal things are ever allowed. Here I am! Done harm to nobody, lived an honest life...a scoundrel like that is born in Rotterdam ...runs away from his wife, and ruins me and my Nina – he ruined me, I tell you and – gets himself shot at last by a poor miserable savage, that knows nothing at all about him really. Where's is the sense of all this? Where is your Providence? Where is the good for anybody in all this? The world's a swindle! A swindle! Why should I suffer? What have I done to be treated so? (367)

Conrad's position is like that of an agnostic or a rebellious believer who wants to know the cause of the misery of a million people. A kind of absurd feeling is also felt by his character Almayer. This is Conrad, a secular man in practice but a believer at heart: "For, their land – like ours – lies under the inscrutable eyes of the Most High. Their hearts – like ours – must endure the load of the gifts from Heaven: the cause of facts and the blessing of illusions, the bitterness of our wisdom and the deceptive consolation of our folly" (Author's Note, *AF* viii). These lines also present a Conrad with two selves: skeptical in attitude and believer in some form of the Creator. His paradoxical or ironic juxtaposition of opposites like blessings of illusion, bitterness of wisdom, and consolation

of follies demonstrate his consciousness of the duality of things. Hence, his portrayal of the East and the West is largely secular as he has ignored those traits of the society which are religious in vision and practice. Arnold Kettele while commenting on the Malay characters Dain Waris and Hassim says, "these young Malayan aristocrats are conceived as Polish rather than Malayan nationalists" (qtd. in Goonetilleke 46). V. S. Pritchett holds the same opinion that Conrad's Malayans "are really transplantations from Polish history" (qtd. in Goonetilleke 46). These critics object to Conrad's transformation of Malayan citizens to Malayan nationalists. And Goonetilleke argues:

> The Malayans were more often submissive to the Europeans than hostile: nor did they feel themselves to be on the same footing with the Europeans. None of them reveals even a semblance of the other basic characteristic of nationalists, a sense of corporate identity. Conrad's Malayans think only in terms of their particular small tribe; although they live on or near the East coast of Borneo, they do not have a conception of belonging to the larger unity, Indonesia. (46)

These two critics, Goonetilleke and Kettle, also show their struggle to find the authentic words to comment on these Eastern characters. As when Kettle says that they are aristocrats, it shows his understanding of the priviledged class as aristocrat; but Goonetilleke says that those Malayan people were not as developed as the Europeans to be considered aristocratic. These two critics while going to comment on Conrad's European perspective have given their responses also from European perspectives. However, some of the Eastern major characters are neither fully colonial constructs nor, as Curles says "dehumanized". Curle states that "The East Indies have, of course, yielded him the fierce Malays and warlike races of those half-savage islands. Such men as Babalatchi ... Dain Maroola, Arsat, Karain, Doramin and Dain Waris ... are representative types of East Indian dwellers. In considering such men, Conrad neither dehumanises nor

Europeanises the Oriental mind" (121). Thus, Conrad has painted a secularised Eastern society from a vague European notion of Eastern life with a humanitarian concern.

However, Conrad's negligence of the ingrained religious life of the natives in the East may have been due to his focus on the racial conflicts, economic interests, universal human passion and tragedy. Moreover, with the modern Western secular viewpoints, Conrad cannot write faithfully every thought, motive and feeling of the other race, whose social, political and personal lives are deeply religious. Thus, though a bit of Islam and Muslim culture often is visible, it is obvious that this is coming from an outsider; and the daily life of the people of the region is absent. Also as the traditional image of a family is absent in the West, Conrad has portrayed the Malay society of Borneo like that of the Western one. The absence of the family is marked by Serajul Islam Chowdhury:

> Organized, well-knit society – with its policemen and butchers – does not exist for Conrad's heroes; there is no proper family life for them; women do not have the prominent part they are given in Hardy, Forster, and Lawrence; children are generally absent. His is an adult world, as much as Jane Austen's whom he failed to appreciate, and who, apparently, was his antithesis. (2)

Chowdhury rightly mentions the fact of the absence of family in Conrad's Eastern fiction too. But partially Conrad was true to the Western characters in the East as the sailors' and the colonists' lives were, to some extent, the same in the East where they had to stay alone in different lands; and thus his heroes, like tragic heroes, are lonely. They suffer from deep alienation and hostility. If they try to live like other native people, they have to face hostile resistance. This is why, as the author shows, they assert their imperial power and live like gods. These are true in cross-cultural settings but even the Western characters are not projected fully for these characters in the midst of their alienations or difficulties do not

take the name of Jesus, Mary, or any saints or God; they do not discuss even the Church or any colonial realities as if they are not aware of the European empire and culture.

The other striking feature, often neglected by both Eastern and Western critics, is the practical benefit of secular principles in the colonies, for it was impossible to make the young and middle-aged people live long in the colonies with a kind of monkish celibacy. Neither these male administrators could take their wives there for some obvious reasons of unsafe life, monotony, tropical heat and obstacles to business, nor could they marry the native girls as it was also discouraged. So what could have been the remedy other than the practice of "concubism", that is, keeping local mistresses as sex-slaves and having children by them as those children were deemed legalized by the colonial law. Andrew Francis demonstrates the historical reality of concubism and its effect on the European trade and commerce. It allured the European men to the colonies alongside the prospect of a career. And the colonial powers wanted to prolong their stay there and so they kept their salaries at a minimum. And thus their secular ways of life helped them accept concubines, and so the natives would not much object to it as their religious ways were not affected by it. Andrew Francis argues:

> Jim's failure to keep faith with his calling echoes doubts surrounding the keeping of faith between European men and indigenous women in relationships which arise from colonization and trade. This is evident particularly in Jewel's family history, which can be read partly through the historical background of concubinage, a major social issue in the Dutch East Indies. (96)

The Western characters neither question the imperial projects nor discuss its visions. But these characters are developed to a certain extent as they are central characters who are tested in the Eastern settings, whereas Eastern characters are not fully developed, nor are

their lives portrayed wholly. They are foils to Westerners whose shattered dreams are dramatized in the exotic East.

Eastern Perspective and Critique of Europe

What the European reader, especially the English reader, thought about Conrad is stated by Norman Page who refers to the weekly magazine Academy's comments on 14 January 1899 "… it was Conrad's 'achievement to have brought the East to our very doors' (136). While Najder suspects Conrad's true knowledge, general readers consider it authentic. The English reader comes to know about the Malay people and culture through Conrad's fiction. An early review of *Lord Jim* by *The Spectator* points out Conrad's Eastern perspective as early as 1900: "Several writers have derived literary inspiration from their sojourn in the Malay Archipelago; but Mr. Conrad, beyond all others, has identified himself with the standpoint of the natives, and translated into glowing words the strange glamour of their landscape" (qtd. in Moser, ed., *LJ* 361).Tamara Wagner traces the Conradian influence on the literature of Southeast Asia: "...Malay fiction became such an ironic reference point throughout literary representations of Southeast Asia....Conradian motifs constitute part of a larger recognition of founding myths including centrally of course the creation and subsequent reshaping of a literary landscape of the region (49)". Terry Collits and Ira Raja though talk about Conrad's European prejudiced idea about the Chinese people in his "Conrad's Chinese: Orientalism, Eurocentrism, Racism", they hold that Conrad "elevates the Chinese servant to the position of becoming the European's most significant "other" (Collits and Raja 249).

When a writer looks at different people with different cultures, a kind of objectification takes place and hence a kind of "otherization" which is of course not free from the subjective will. However, Conrad's successful avoidance of this marginalizing is liked by readers from diverse cultures and nations. In Conrad's Eastern novels and short stories, in spite of the ideological and imperial vision, we find no such big differences of treatment between Eastern and Western characters. Rather, those characters talk from their own perspectives about each other's culture with their own conscious cultural identities, which show the inherent cultural prejudice of both cultures. Therefore, Conrad's secular criticism views the Eastern life from both Eastern and Western perspectives; Eastern perspective in the sense that he politically steps into the shoes of a native politician to criticize the Western colonists in the region, as is shown by the character of Mrs. Almayer, Babalatchi, Aissa, and Karain. And his portrayal of the native from a Western character's point of view is to empathetically present the Western prejudice about the Eastern culture. Almayer's thoughts about the Malay society enable us to know the Western mindset: "She will poison me, thought the poor wretch, well aware of that easy and final manner of solving the social, political, or family problems in Malay life" (*AF* 27). Conrad has displayed the nature of Malay family conflicts and social conflicts in a way that the Western reader might think that it is the practice in the Malay society; it is, as if every conflict had been solved or led to the murder by poison. A few (one or two) incidents are deemed as a custom.

Almayer in *Almayer's Folly* found himself unwelcome in Borneo when he landed from Batavia with his wife, the adopted daughter of Tom Lingard. Though earlier the Dutch and the English were rivals there, this time the Arabs established a trading post. And the narrator's and Almayer's points of view are similar that "…where they [the

Arabs] traded they would be masters and suffer no rival" (24). This is a sharp contrast with the view of Babalatchi, who thinks of European supremacy everywhere. When Almayer is helped by the old Rajah, the blind Omar, the Arabs are helped by Lakamba, the new Rajah. And Almayer considered his rival Arabs as "unscrupulous and resolute" (*AF* 25). The picture of this inter-racial rivalry and internecine conflicts in the Malay Archipelago for the monopoly of trade and political dominance is an attempt by a very truthful observer. Conrad appears to be an impartial political analyst and historian too. But the very first paragraph of his "Author's Note" to *Almayer's Folly* shows his consciousness of the politics of representation, which shows the dubious character of his dealing with the East:

> I AM informed that in criticizing that literature which preys on strange people and prowls in far-off countries under the shade of palms, in the unsheltered glare of sunbeaten beaches, amongst honest cannibals and the most sophisticated pioneers of our glorious virtues, a lady – distinguished in the world of letters – summed up her disapproval of it by saying that the tales it produced were "decivilized." And in that sentence not only the tales but, I apprehend, the strange people and the far-off countries also, are finally condemned in a verdict of contemptuous dislike. (vii)

In this paragraph Conrad's attitude to the other, the non-European is clearly expressed in response to that lady critic who called his novel *Almayer's Folly* "a decivilized tale". And Conrad hints that this remark of that female reader is racist by nature, for it shows her strong dislike also for the non-European people. This was Conrad's contemporary Western world view of the Eastern people exemplified by this lady's criticism. But what may have angered that lady, I think, is not Conrad's portrayal of the Malay people but the European people's lower status and degeneration. Most European readers had glorifying ideas about their people's enterprises in these far-off colonies or settlements like that of Marlow's aunt in *Heart of Darkness*; sure they would not welcome any demeaning portrayal of the

Western adventurers. Neither they would welcome any disparaging comments on the character of the West nor would they welcome literature showing failed people in those places. Conrad is deeply aware of the sensitivity of people of a different culture. His philosophy of humanism lies in his honest acknowledgement of the other people as equal human beings who deserve attention, representation and respect, and in this respect he conforms, to some extent, to Edward Said's secular criticism undermining the traditional, established authoritative position of the dominant Western culture and perspective.

Conrad depicts a multicultural society of Malaysia, as Robert Hampson in his *Cross-Cultural Encounters in Joseph Conrad's Malay Fiction* writes:

> …the Malays are of mixed ethnic background: some having lived in the peninsula…for more than a millennium, others migrating in more recent times from Sumatra, Java, Sulawasi and other Indonesian islands, but they have accepted the Malay language, have assimilated to similar customs and subscribe to the *Muslim faith'* (Hampson's emphasis). This resembles the modern constitutional definition of Malay, which involves speaking Malay, subscribing to Islam and identifying oneself as Malay". (3-4)

Hampson has mentioned the Malay people's different ethnic background, but he has not commented much on any Muslim characters. Masood Ashraf Raja truly exclaims with surprise that critics have overlooked Conrad's Muslim characters:

> …many of Conrad's famous and important works do field an impressive array of Muslim characters. Most of Conrad's Malayan works have Muslim characters, and it is within these characters that one can trace not just the presence of an incipient anti-colonial agency, but also a very plausible counter-discourse to the colonial dicta under various registers of honour, friendship, loyalty and economy. (3)

Raja refers to these Muslim characters in Conrad's Malay works to counter Achebe's charge of racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Like many other moderate critics who stand at the cross-road of pro-Conrad and anti-Conrad position, he deems Conrad as

"imperialist and anti-imperialist, racist and non-racist at the same time" (Raja 3). Like Raja, John McClure overtly identifies Conrad as a writer of colonialists who are isolated in the different lands and have failed to truly live as colonial rulers, except Lingard, Jim and Kurtz, but he also traces the anti-imperial spirit in him: "Of Conrad's fundamental opposition to imperialism there can be no doubt. As he portrays it, imperialism is basically an expansion of capitalist or autocratic drives beyond national boundaries. The nature of these drives is aggressive and exploitative, and their effect is to destroy what is most human in people and their communities" (94). However, to me Conrad does not seem to glorify or undermine either the Europeans or the natives in his criticism of the moral failure of man. This is why all natives are not sketched as submissive people without any subjectivity. Rather, some are presented as agencies of action full of political insights as is evidenced from the Malay Babalatchi's plan to entrap and use Willems to destroy Lingard's influence and Western supremacy over them. He plots with his protector Lakamba: "I know the white men..... In many lands have I seen them; always the slaves of their desires, always ready to give up their strength and their reason into the hands of some woman.... [T]hey who worship many gods are thrown into the world with smooth foreheads.... Let one white man destroy another" (*OI* 60).

Thus, though Conrad is charged by Achebe for not giving voice to the African people, he cannot be charged in the same way for his portrayal of Eastern people who have been given both voices and actions. Dain kills the Dutch officers and betrays Almayer; Mrs. Almayer tries to know the secret passage to a new island and ultimately deserts and ruins Almayer; Aissa kills Willems. Apart from that, Hassim once rescued Tom Lingard, who in turn wanted to help him regain power but failed. Wang in *Victory* also comes to the rescue of Lena finally. These episodes give a new space between the

contrasting binary of self/other, West/East, and civilization/savagery. Conrad's Malay world is thus positioned between the colonial and the colonized making conclusive interpretation impossible. That is why Fredric Jameson rightly says that "even after eighty years, his place is still unstable, undecidable, and his work unclassifiable..." (195).

Conrad has portrayed a partial Malay Muslim society. It is a Muslim society with mixed ethnic background. Conrad had a vision to create some principal Muslim characters as is evidenced from his original title of *An Outcaste of the Islands– Two Vagabonds*, one of which is Willems, and the other is the native Babalatchi. The native Babalatchi appears in three of his important works but does not occupy the central position in any. On the other hand, Willems, Almayer and Lingard are protagonists. Though Alamyer or Willems is not shown as superior to Babalatchi as an integrated character, yet the latter appears as a foil to them. So are Abdullah and other Muslim characters that have not been delineated either as protagonists or confirmed antagonists. In the political intrigues the alliance between Abdullah and Babalatchi, between Omar and Lakamba is portrayed as a native alliance to put resistance to the Western domination. But on the surface, it may appear that the alliance is between two Muslim groups, the Malay and the Arab against the West. While the conflict is not racial or religious, it appears to be so. Only in *The Rescue*, this is different. In this regard John Lester suggests in "Conrad and Islam" that "One role of the Muslims then is to indicate European failings by apparently bigoted but, in reality, perceptive accusations. In their other comments and remarks, they can be found to reflect, in an exaggerated form, the shortcomings of their Christian counterparts" (171).

Malay Muslims want to ward off the Western colonial domination with the help of the Arab people who in turn want to gain trade advantage over the Western people. In these respects, they are not just foils but historically important as a part of the Malay people, and their cultural trait is not distinct, though Masood Raja thinks it so. He reads that "…Babalatchi is relatively a more complex character and he displays more wisdom, tenacity, and strategic insight than his European counterpart….Conrad's treatment of native Muslims is much more complicated than to be simplified under a reductive binary of the native versus the European" (Raja 5). When Norman Sherry states that Conrad met such a real life Babalatchi, then it is surmised that this character is a fusion of the real and another native whom Conrad came to know from a journal. Whether Conrad presents the native versus the European or one of the parties as superior to the other can never be resolved.

The ambivalence however strongly shows Conrad's "negative capability" as a writer. His portrayal of Babalatchi as a man with a mission and strategy who has got knowledge about the West and who detests their domination is one-sided portrayal of the reality. But his acceptance of the West as superior military power which is reflected from his speech that "when we fight you, we die" is problematic. It shows the lack of courage and resistance on the part of the native against the foreign intruder. Frantz Fanon arguably holds this mentality of the black people responsible for their oppressed condition: "It is the white man who creates the Negro. But it is the Negro who creates Negritude" (*A Dying Colonialism* 47). But though there were some uprisings sometimes against the Dutch and the British, the result was really in favour of the Westerner. Thus, this kind of mindset like that of Babalatchi is not wholly unreal. Conrad's political insight is highly realistic, for he shows the source of the essential power of the Western domination, which as Foucault says, is emanated from the invisible like the people's will to accept rather than challenge.

Babaltachi's mind has been dominated by the thought of the superior strength of the West. This cultural defeat of the native is genuinely historical and truly represented by Conrad whose aim is to make a caricature of the European against the simple-minded gullible native Muslim Malays who like many of the modern Muslim countries fight each other in the name of Islam, but whose ulterior motive is political and mercenary.

Despite an incomplete picture, Conrad's presentation of the Malay Muslim culture deserves commendable remarks. He must have been fascinated by the daily Muslim customs of greeting like "salaams", counting beads and prayers and dresses. When Lakamba comes to meet Lingard, the narrator describes him thus: "…his green turban and gold-embroidered jacket shone in the front rank of the decorous throng of Malays coming to greet Lingard on his return from the interior; his salaams were of the lowest, and his hand-shakings of the heartiest, when welcoming the old trader" (*AF* 24). The Malays use colourful sarongs and green turbans. They are a gossiping type of people who notice only the coming and going of the white people, the Arab and the local influential people like the rajas. He takes the name of Allah in *The Shadow Line*: "The charitable man is the friend of Allah" (182). In his *Personal Record* he talks about the chanting of the call for prayer ("azan") by a Muslim into the ear of the newly born baby. As mentioned earlier, he mentions salaam, veils, charity, and haj; he uses the word "Allah" several times in several of his novels. In *Almayer's Folly* it appears while describing Reshid's mind, from Abdullah's mouth "Allah the all Merciful" (45). The "faithful" Ali also says "Merciful Allah" (51). Mahmat, Ali, Babalatchi utter the name of Allah. But at one point Mahmat says "God" (96). Conrad truly demonstrates the Muslim's taking the name of Allah in times of great awe, wonder and danger and also joy. But when Mahmat utters the name God, he shows his secular or Christian idea of God. The Muslim's practice of calling

people of other religions as “Kaffir” is shown also. Babalatchi talks about the dead body of Dain, “Lay him there. He was a Kaffir and the son of a dog, and he was the white man’s friend. He drank the white man’s strong water” (*AF* 104). The racial prejudice is undoubtedly strong among the natives. Dain is of the Hindu faith; that is why Babalatchi calls him a ‘kaffir’ and dog; of course, Dain’s link with the European may have induced Babalatchi more to talk like that. But Conrad’s observation is right. The fickle mindedness of Babalatchi and Mahmat is proved when they call the dead body a kaffir and steal the bangle and the ring from the dead body.

Thus, as stated earlier, the Western lady’s disapproval of Conrad’s Malay tale raises the issue of the legitimacy of the right of a writer to write about an alien or other cultures. Maswood Akhter discusses the politics involved in representation of home by Diaspora writers who are identified by the Western media and academia as, “ethnic writers” “not as writer per se” who do not have the scope/power of “speaking to all humanity,” which “remains a prerogative of the western writers” (“Politics of Right” 97). In response to some of the critics’ hints at the lack of his intimate knowledge of the Malay world, Conrad says in his *A Personal Record*:

> Only in men’s imagination does every truth find an effective and undeniable existence. Imagination, not invention, is the supreme master of art as of life. An imaginative and exact rendering of authentic memories may serve worthily that spirit of piety towards all things human which sanctions the conceptions of the man reviewing his own experience. (25)

This is the dark political side of the adventure stories – stories that were shaped out of sea voyages and sea trades. Conrad shows this naked truth in *Heart of Darkness* when the frame narrator talks about the service of the old river Thames that “...evokes the great spirit of the past upon the lower reaches of the Thames” (*HD* 28):

> The tidal current runs to and fro in its unceasing service, crowded with memories of men and ships it had borne to the rest of home or to the battles of the sea. It had known and served all the men of whom the nation is proud, from Sir Francis Drake to Sir John Franklin, knights all, titled and untitled – the great knights-errant of the sea....the adventurers and the settlers...interlopers of the Eastern trade, and the commissioned generals of the East India fleets. Hunters for gold, or pursuers of fame, they all had gone out on that stream, bearing the sword, and often the torch, messengers of the might within the land.... The dreams of men, the seed of commonwealth, the germs of empire. (*HD* 28-29)

True it is that the sea rovers from Europe became able to control and rule local territories establishing their own administration and trading posts. How they became successful in enslaving the native people is one of the probing subjects in Postcolonial Studies. However, tracing Conrad's own position in this historical process of colonization and domination is one of the aims of this work. *The Rescue* starts thus:

> The shallow sea that foams and murmurs on the shores of the thousand islands, big and little, which make up the Malay Archipelago has been for centuries the scene of adventurous undertakings. The vices and the virtues of our nations have been displayed in the conquest of that region that even to this day has not been robbed of all the mystery and romance of its past – and the race of men who had fought against the Portuguese, the Spaniards, the Dutch and the English, has not been changed by the unavoidable defeat. They have kept to this day their love of liberty, their fanatical devotion to their chiefs, their blind fidelity in friendship and hate – all their lawful and unlawful instincts. Their country of land and water – for the sea was as much their country as the earth of their islands – has fallen a prey to the Western race – the reward of superior strength if not of superior virtue. To-morrow the advancing civilization will obliterate the marks of a long struggle in the accomplishment of its inevitable victory. (3)

Joseph Conrad's power of description and sense of political history are well evidenced in the preceding paragraph, the very first paragraph of the novel *The Rescue.* That Conrad is a great artist is an established fact by great English literature critics all over the world. Yet when a charge is brought against the modern theories of interpretation from

formalism to that of postcolonialism that these modern theories tend to overlook the aesthetic aspects of a literary text, I deem it necessary to focus on the aesthetic aspects of Conrad's texts. This introductory passage along with the setting evokes the greatest reality of history which makes even the setting, theme and characters historically connected. The author has described the seaside settings of the Malay Archipelago which consists of many small islands. These islands are deeply connected with the sea which is the home of the islanders as well. For centuries adventurers visited these islands, and then attempted a conquest of these islands. The idea of conquest of any country, however, is questionable. Conrad's deep study of contrast between the Roman/ancient Empire and the Belgian Empire/the modern Empire shows the realistic but brutal history of colonialism and empire in *Heart of Darkness*:

> They were no colonists; their administration was merely a squeeze ... They were conquerors, and for that you need only brute force – nothing to boat of, when you have it, since your strength is just an accident arising from the weakness of others. They grabbed what they could get for the sake of what was to be got. It was just robbery with violence, aggravated murder ...The conquest of the earth, which mostly means taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretence but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea – something you can set up and bow down before and offer a sacrifice to .... (31-32)

Undoubtedly, it is a blatant satire on every type of conquest and colonialism. Conrad's perspective seems to be lenient towards the fact that the conquest can be excused or acceptable if the conquest brings peace and prosperity in the land. But here he unmasks the hypocrisy of an idea which is a pretext often employed by the colonial powers to legitimise their rule. The absurdity of the history of war and conquest is exposed in the above passages. The idea, the Machiavellian principle of "Justifying the means by the ends" is what the conquerors use to justify their follies of conquest is also nullified. The

colonisers had set causes and redeeming ideas to make their latent desire of, to use Abdul Jan Mohammed's phrases, "overt" and "covert" aspects of colonialism effective and look normal (qtd. in Tim James 110). By covert purpose he suggests the exploitation of the colony's wealth and resources like that of Mr. Kurtz's procuring of ivory; and by overt colonialism he means the imperialist's use of the colonialist discourse of civilizing the savage and providing all benefits of Western progress and culture. But the paradox of the history of colonization is that power is colonial by nature. It wants to colonize everything. It has to be in action, otherwise it will cease to exist. It is in the grip of, to quote Arundhati Roy, "...unacknowledged fear – civilization's fear of nature, men's fear of women, power's fear of powerlessness. Man's subliminal urge to destroy what he could neither subdue nor defy" (308). This is why the once colonized nations would try to appear as colonizers once they attain enough power to do so. Britain which was once a colony of Rome has turned out to be the greatest colonial power in the world colonizing about eighty percent lands of the world from the late nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century before the onslaught of the process of decolonization after the Second World War. The USA which was a British settler colony in the early eighteenth century has now appeared as a modern colonizer. This is, as the Brazillian educator Paulo Freire shows in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, the complex relation between the oppressed and the oppressor: "But almost always, during the initial stage of the struggle, the oppressed instead of striving for liberation, tend themselves to become oppressors ..." (45). Freire reflects the lived experience of the oppressed and projects the pedagogy that would liberate both the oppressed and the oppressor from the yoke of oppression. Conrad is always concerned with the plight of the oppressed – both the native and the European. Thus, his readers come to know about the plight of both the European and the native in

these places – in the colonies. He questions the imperial myth of progress and demonstrates that it has not done any good to the native as well as to the European.

Conrad seems to offer partially a critique of imperialism from a native's point of view. The Western characters in the East like Almayer, Willems, Lingard, and Jim are presented as anti-heroes or declining heroes while the natives Dain, Hissam, Karain, Arsat can be interpreted as heroic characters by an Eastern reader. Corneliuss, Gentelman Brown, Schomberg, Ricardo and Jones are confirmed villains; whereas there are not any native villains. Therefore, Conrad is conscious enough not to betray his superior feeling as a European over that of the Malay, that is, non-European. The European characters like Almayer, Willems, Heyst, Allen, Nostromo, Razumov, the Verloc family have been destroyed by other Europeans. The wicked Europeans in *Victory* and "Because of the Dollars" destroy the European protagonists; the old tourist in "Ill Conde" is victimized by a young European goon; and Almayer and Willems are destroyed by each other. On the other side, no Eastern characters have been portrayed as mindless killers or hijackers like Jones and Ricardo. Thus, Conrad's narrative is a trap for the Western reader. He takes them to those places of the East to defamiliarise and question their preconceived idea of empire.

Conrad's contrapuntal secular criticism of the Western domination and his devaluation of the superiority myth make him a cosmopolitan writer and a global critic. Padmini Mongia sees him from a global perspective and says, "In the mainstream critical tradition, two Conrads have lived this last half-century: the first a Conrad of high literature and of an attendant literary-critical tradition, and the second the Conrad who not only wrote of empire and colony but is associated with the 'third world'" ("Between Men" 98). His works, produced at a critical juncture of transition from the end of

Victorian England to the modern one, engage properly with imperial power and its dominance. Yet his criticism of European colonialism is genuinely advanced enough to give us the ground to call him a transnational writer. This is Conrad's critiquing the European self, his own self. Willems, Kurtz, Layertes and Kayertes, Heyst, Jim, Verloc, Razumov, Nostromo and Marlow enable us to deem Conrad not just as a European but as a critic of Europe. Although he avoids talking about the direct colonial presence in the East without being engaged politically, the failure of the empire to safeguard its individual marginal people shows his concern for himself and the other colonists. The utter loneliness, the tropical heat, the sense of alienation, the feeling of dislocation, the trade rivalries and hostile attitude of the native, mistrust and lack of communication make his Eastern fiction a study of the trials and tribulations of Western characters. And their pitiless condition in the outposts of empire is an affront to the glory of empire. And in his Western stories he is more like Dickens and Hardy than like Kipling and Stevenson. His depiction of the sordid and squalor London in *The Secret Agent*, the conspiracies made by the foreign embassies against each other, autocracy of Russia in *Under Western Eyes*, European brigands in *Victory* and "Ill Conde", failed revolutions in Russia and Spain and in South America in *The Arrow of Gold* and *The Rover*, and the harrowing effects of capitalism and globalism in *Nostromo*, *Victory* and "The End of the Tether" show his concerns with modern economy and politics of the West. His dislike of anarchy, revolution and war is also found in the Western short stories too, as in "The Warrior's Soul" and "The Anarchist". Thus, when he writes about the West, he is in a seriously skeptical mood; conversely, when he writes about the East he is in an adventurous and tragically passionate mood. Conrad has obviously demonstrated the value of humanity, love, simplicity, solidarity, courage and loneliness in his Eastern works.

The white people marginalized both in the colonies and also in Europe have so far been denied any historical significance as a separate socio-cultural class. Most of these settlers were marginalized in their own countries and therefore underprivileged people. Very few British writers have voiced about their plights from their perspectives. What they thought and how they lived in a community of natives have been superseded by the politics of colonialism. These whites are the outcasts of the British and European society. Almayer's parents' stay in Java and his mother's longing for home is an example. Conrad is perhaps the first novelist to portray the reality of these white people who are marginalized in the colonies for their imperial concerns and also in their home countries. They are exploited, as soldiers are exploited in the name of honour, glory and victory. They have often been used as soldiers, as agents of killing and destruction for material interest. Conrad's observation of their lives lends a philosophic aura to the theme of imperialism. Alexia Hannis talks about the deplorable state of the white colonizer: "… the poor whites of the colonies …were denied "true" European status despite their Dutch ancestry" (84). Colonists in the Malay Archipelago failed to adapt themselves to the native society. They did not even create a European society in miniature. These people are very few in number for which they could not establish their community; neither could they get any Western wife who would give them a safe home there. Therefore, they were unwilling subjects marrying against their wills and bound to stay there. Thus, though they were oppressed at heart but they could not tell their tales. The centre is caring to these white natives as long as they can serve their purposes and interest. And they cannot express themselves of their cocooned existence in the colony because of the popular culture which has defined their expected response which is to believe in the narrative of progress and development represented in the literature of empire. This is how discourses of the positive sides of empire have created a culture of what to believe in, what to say

and what to hide. Yet Conrad breaks this taboo of silence against the all progressive and enlightenment philosophy of imperialism by showing the corrosive effects of imperial philosophy on the individuals in his Eastern and African tales.

Postcolonial Conrad

If we begin to consider Conrad in the postcolonial light from the African perspective, Chinua Achebe comes first who bitingly attacks the Western gaze of Africa as "the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization", and calls Conrad "a bloody racist" and seems to disavow *Heart of Darkness* as a great piece of literature urging readers to reject any such works that devalue and misrepresent other cultures. Achebe also writes his trilogy as a counter-discourse to colonial presentation of Africa where he shows his own native version of African life and society. But he uses the English language which is often deemed by many postcolonial writers as a vehicle of colonial administration and oppression. Ngugi writes in his *Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural* Freedoms:

> The modern world is a product of both European imperialism and of the resistance waged against it by the African, Asian and North American peoples. Were we to see the world through the European responses to imperialism of the likes of Rudyard Kipling, Joseph Conrad or Joyce Cary, whose works in terms of themes, or location or attitude assumed the reality and experience of imperialism? Of course, they responded to imperialism from a variety of ideological assumptions and attitudes. But they could never have shifted the centre of vision because they were themselves bound by the European centre of their upbringing and experience. Even when they were aware of the devastating effects of imperialism on the subject peoples as in Conrad's depiction of the dying victims of colonial adventurism in *Heart of Darkness*, they could not free themselves from the Eurocentric basis of their vision. (22)

The above passage contains the ambivalent comments of most of the postcolonial critics who acknowledge Conrad's attraction and influence and his critique of imperialism, but hold him aligned with imperialists, as Ngugi opines, "Conrad always made me uneasy with his inability to see any possibility of redemption arising from the energy of the oppressed. He wrote from the centre of the empire" ("Moving the Centre" 22). Frances B. Sing also charges Conrad with racism arguing that in spite of his attempt to write a critique on imperialism, Conrad held the view of anthropological idea of his time that believed that African people were inferior to the civilized European people. Identifying Marlow as his mouthpiece B. Sing argues in "The Colonialistic Bias of Heart of Darkness" that the story "reveals the limitations of Conrad's notions rather than the existence of a reactionary and racist streak in him" and the story instead of becoming "a clear-cut attack on a vicious system becomes a partial apology for it" "280). How far a writer can write objectively about other culture is a perennial issue. Conrad mostly focuses on the Western characters and their fate and thus shares some of the Western prejudices. Mostly Western characters are central characters, and the Eastern ones are in subordinate roles. Hence, Western character's perspectives are prioritized in his fiction. However, Brantlinger argues that Marlow's views are not Conrad's views and Conrad shows the prevalent European ideas about Africa. He also gives a divided response in *Victorian Literature and Postcolonial Studies*: "Conrad does not debunk the myth of the Dark Continent: Africa is the location of his hell on earth. But at the center of that hell is Kurtz, the would-be civilizer, the embodiment of Europe's highest and noblest values, radiating darkness" (144).

But what should be acknowledged in Conrad is his secular criticism of his Western self, discovery of Europe's darkness, and speaking truth to power to question the

dominant ideology. The moral ambivalence in Europeanism, imperialism and colonization which he points out is pungent. Nobody can shed off his or her racial or national identity so easily; but this is what a writer should try to achieve, and how far can one transcend the racial or national boundary is important. By starting his writing career writing about the East, Conrad has challenged the boundary of English literature and has incorporated the other to add to it. Obviously he is the pioneer of South East Asian, African and North American fiction through his Malay trilogy, *Lord Jim*, *Heart of Darkness*, "An Outpost of Progress" and *Nostromo*. This is why this dissertation finds Conrad's fiction postcolonial in spirit and theme, but colonial in form and structure. When Conrad was writing, it was the heyday of imperialism which appropriated the ideology of patriotism and adventure literature of imperial outposts. That time was less cosmopolitan in nature. It gave rise to extreme nationalism which culminated in the First World War and the subsequent birth of Adolf Hitler. Writers and historians also could not go beyond the popular sentiment of the people for the fear of being outcast or labelled as unpatriotic. Historians started to hide facts and include only the glories when novelists thought of pleasing the audience's taste in order to make their works saleable. But H. W. Boynton says, "Conrad does not pander to public tastes but produces literature (qtd. in Peters 7)." Jonah Raskin in *The Mythology of Imperialism* argues that the late nineteenth and early twentieth century novelists contributed to the imperial domination when Conrad exposes its hypocrisy:

> It was Joseph Conrad – the Pole, the outsider – who battered down the old walls. He set the clock on the time bomb of the twentieth-century revolution in the novel. His first leveled the old house of nineteenth-century fiction. His second ripped asunder the imperial house of modern fiction: Rudyard Kipling's monument to the empire. Kipling's walls hide the truth of imperialism. Conrad broke them down. He dragged the colonial world onto stage center of English fiction. (43)

Hunt Hawkins in "Conrad and Congolese Exploitation" says that "Conrad's personal observation of exploitation in the Congo contributed to the depth of feeling he expressed in his art, and may even have confirmed his motivation to become an artist. His outrage against what he later called 'the vilest scramble of loot that ever disfigured the history of human conscience' made Heart of Darkness one of literature's most powerful statements about imperialism" (99). Kipling, Conrad, Forster, Stevension and Lawrence -all these novelists bear some similarities in presenting life in the colonies of a vast empire. But while Kipling is an imperialist, Conrad is an anti-imperialist. Most English, African, Asian and American critics view Conrad as an anti-imperialist, only with the exception of some postcolonial critics like Chinua Achebe and some other African academicians as mentioned by Martyle Hooper. Conrad is truly the first of the novelists to shake the foundation of the proclaimed idealism of imperialism and colonization. The horrors of colonialism, the ugly faces of the trading posts at the outskirts of Empire have been explored by him. Conrad's unveiling of the inefficacy of imperialism is found from the very beginning of his writing career. In *Almayer's Folly*, *An Outcast of the Islands* and *The Rescue*, we find the failed Europeans.

Conrad's understanding of the racial enmity is historically genuine. He shows the status of a half-caste or non-Western people in the Western society. Almayer very well knows that how her half-caste daughter would be greeted in Amsterdam. He knows she would not be greeted well and would not get a European husband. For this, he sends her to a convent school in Singapore where she cannot stay longer because the Western community there does not accept her. The girl is sent to Mr. Vink's protection and shelter but his family does not keep her long. Mr. Ford says to Almayer:

> ..it is deucedly awkward to have a half-caste girl in the house. There's such a lot of fools about. There was that young fellow from the bank who used to ride to the Vinck bungalow early and late. That old woman thought it was for that Emma of hers. When she found that what he wanted exactly, there was a row, I can tell you. She would not have Nina – not an hour longer – in the house. … She was never happy over there. Those two Vinck girls are no better than dressed-up monkeys. They slighted her. You can't make her white. It's no use you swearing at me. You can't. (*AF* 30)

These lines truly portray the late Victorian European white mentality. Racism and hatred towards the Asian were very much a practice of the then British metropolis culture, and this truism has been held up to mirror. Conrad's purpose is more to show the inside of the general European psyche, especially of the older generation like that of Mrs. Vinck's. Though the young fellow in Singapore liked Nina, the half-caste, more than the European Vink's daughters, he could not become successful because of white racism and jealousy of Mrs. Vinc. It also shows Conrad's apprehension of a changing trend of the hybrid society. The same realization seems to come out of Conrad when he portrays Mr. Kurtz as the best specimen of Europe, who, though an evil agent of an empire tries to get acculturated by taking part in native rites. Conrad's attempt to create something new, to find a different culturally transformed Kurtz in the imperialist Kurtz is something worthy to be noticed.

Chrishtopher GoGwilt points to Conrad's postcolonial treatment of the West. He reads in Conrad's novels the author's perception of the crisis of colonial discourses of the West and doubts the self-representation of Europe and its representation of the other, that is, the East and Africa. In his Malay novels Conrad presents the colonial European people's power and at the same time, plight of staying in the Malay Archipelago. They are found to be involved in the regional or internecine conflicts for the domination of their own places. While some native people are shown hostile to the foreigner, some

others are in a friendly relation to get help from them. And local girls seem to get attracted to them. His short tales of the East pay a kind of tribute to the Malay people as in "Karain" or "The Lagoon" while his long tales examine them in relation to the European people (*Almayer's Folly* and *Lord Jim* for example) who are not shown as superior to the native. Conrad presents the European superiority feeling as baseless vanity. Thus, he obviously falls to the list of the anti-imperialist writers, who can be considered postcolonial for their attempts to dismantle the supremacist tendency of the white Europeans and for their representation of the native culture and people from the native's perspectives. He writes back to the empire, as he shows the colonialists not as benevolent masters but as intruders to the native land. He makes the West appear as the intruder, exploiter, colonialist and a menace to the East. His delineation of the resistant characters - Mrs. Alamyer, Nina, Babalatchi, Dain Maroola, Aissa - gives the postcolonial critics the perspective of postcolonial resistant narrative long before the beginning of formal Postcolonial Criticism. Mrs. Almayer tells her daughter: "Let him [Dain] slay the white men that come to us to trade, with prayers on their lips and loaded guns in their hands. Ah … they are on every sea, and on every shore; and they are very many" (*AF* 56)! Mrs. Almayer's and Babalatchi's remembrance of their glorious past, the time of the pre-colonial Malaysia, is like the present day Postcolonial writers' attempt to dig out the past history of their respective nations. Therefore, though because of the limited vocabulary and European readers Conrad had to use the words "savage" and "cannibals" to refer to the African and Eastern people, Kim Salmons argues that Conrad actually has used those words "to endanger cultural anxiety in the European reader for whom Conrad is writing" (12). He points to Conrad's use of the phrase "honest cannibals" in his Author's Note to *Almayer's Folly* and the cannibals on the steamer in *Heart of Darkness* who exhibit the civilized value of restraint which is lacking in the white pilgrims and in

Mr. Kurtz. Thus, Salmons pointing to Falk who ate human flesh says that “The cannibals in Conrad’s Malay fiction are Europeans... the ‘decivilized’ are not those in far-off countries but white men and Europeans” (12). Therefore, Conrad’s fiction represents a world from a European secular and imperial standpoint which is utterly based on dualistic and contrapuntal visions transcending the topical and jingoistic interests of the very world he represents. Benita Parry rightly says that “he [Conrad] is the artist of ambivalence and the divided mind, a writer who discerned and gave novelistic life to those binary oppositions... Conrad perceived the world dualistically and was preoccupied by the interaction of antagonistic forces.” (3).

Chapter Six
Conclusion

Conrad, Our Contemporary

> Mr. Conrad's books, I say it without fear of contradiction, have no counterparts in the entire range of English literature.
>
> —Hugh Clifford, C.M.G.: "The Genius of Mr. Conrad"

Conrad's works are as morally and aesthetically brilliant as ideologically profound and humane. Though postmodern critics dislike any sort of philosophical propaganda or moral teachings in a work, Richard Curle endorses it partly: "art divorced from ideas soon wears very thin. A novelist's philosophy ... his personality, which is largely the accumulative effect of his outlook, does. The purely moral treatise type of fiction is neither more nor less ridiculous than the type which is wholly concerned with experiments in form" (vii). Conrad, as most critics say, blends idea and form, history and imagination, and envelops his tales with irony, symbols, images, political and philosophical ideas, and experiences of his own life. And whatever he writes about, he brings in it a tragic moral vision. He engages with his readers and makes them wreak meanings from a text as well as judge its actions. Richard Curle writes, "To read Conrad calls for exertion.... The exertion arises from the fact that is imaginative, and requires in his readers a corresponding and increasing effect of the imagination.... And he is a visualiser. To follow him we have to form very definite images" (3). Without being moral, a reader may find it difficult to appreciate his moral tales like "The Secret Sharer", *Lord Jim,* "Falk", "The Warrior's Soul"; without transcending the European jingoism a European reader may find it equally difficult to praise his *Almayer's Folly*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Under Western Eyes*, and *Nostromo*. So are his other short or long tales that test a human character by their

personal, social and political engagements. Hence, Conrad is to the Eastern eye a realist artist whose presentation of the East and the West is at times no doubt Eurocentric, but contrapuntally profound.

Conrad's works thus stimulate the awareness of difference of treatment between the East and the West. His Eastern works introduced new subject matters, new peoples, new territories, the marginalized whites and natives and half-castes; and after one hundred years his works are still new to new generations of readers, and demand new interpretations with new interpretive tools. As it is evident from a careful reading, his works have been judged by critics by the standards of their times as well as by the standard of the time of publication of those works. And this is what makes his works universal and timeless. As Virginia Woolf has said, books are the mirrors of the soul, so is the Conrad oeuvre, the mirror of its own age and society, and the mirror of the soul of the writer, and the soul of mankind too. The story of Almayer is the story of every Western dreamer who did not see the face of success in a colony. When Conrad as a sailor did not fail or gain much in life, he gained something by meditating on those lives of failed Europeans which roused his desire to be a novelist. And it is also the East as a site of Western people's romance, business, career and degeneration which inspired him to be a fiction writer.

Conrad's preference for the alien Eastern life in the beginning of his writing career is due to his uneasiness with his own national identity and also a lack of required experience of British life. For his whole life was nomadic as he always moved in exile from Poland to Russia, France and England, and from England to different parts of the world as a sailor. He is a sailor in the real sense of the term, for he has displayed his love

for and knowledge of sea life, ships, sea weather and Western colonies in the East; he is a sailor par excellence to the human heart as well. This is the early Conrad with the South East Asian setting, and only when he became a complete writer by his engagement with the East, he switched towards writing the Western stories.

However, Conrad's sympathy for the Eastern people is not sufficient to free him from his political bias. And his politics was colonial. He saw life in the colonies; yet he never shows the horrible effects of colonization on the natives fully from the native's perspective as in *Heart of Darkness*. For he believes that Western intervention was natural for the Western people and it brought some kind of development to those places, otherwise those places would have remained unknown and undeveloped. The European people's stay brought a cessation of internecine conflicts and civil war among warring factions of the natives. There was business and the Western business people gained something from the regions. And whatever available sources are there, they have been written by the Western historians and travellers. Therefore, this study finds Conrad's portrayal of the East partly objective and partly imaginative. However, though not fully representative of the Eastern life, whatever portion of life he has focused on for his artistic purpose deserves praise. His contrapuntal presentation of the Eastern characters in connection with the Western ones informs much of his oeuvre. But he is found at ease when he writes about the East and sea life; but he seems to be crafty and struggling when he writes about Western life. His Eastern life is tragically romantic, whereas his Western world is painfully political.

Apart from his creative works, his contribution to theories of art and criticism is amazing. Postcolonial Criticism owes something to Conrad. If Achebe had not written

that absolutely degrading criticism on Conrad, if Edward Said had not written his PhD dissertation on him, Postcolonial Criticism might have taken longer period of time to appear. Gail Fincham and Martyle Hooper point to Achebe's influence on the African writers to whom "His texts evidently are ... monuments to white privilege, his ironic vision a threat to popular revolutionary fervor, his skepticism a confusion and an instrument of ideological control. In this atmosphere postcolonial theory is equated with new forms of appropriation" (xiii). These African writers of new generation forget that Achebe and N'Gugi, two popular novelists, acknowledge their debt to Conrad elsewhere. What objection is directly put forward by these African writers is Conrad's denial of giving Africa a voice, a perspective. But Peter Nazareth brings the same charge against the Africans who have depicted the minority Indians of Africa in their fiction as stereotyped business people exploiting the natives. Truly, Conrad's depiction of Africa is darker; the local customs are "unspeakable". But it is equally true that the ill-treatment the native got from the Belgian traders has been shown to the world by Conrad. And this is enough to spark a fire of revolution against the idea of empire. This is not an armed resistance by the native but the moral and intellectual resistance by the writers like Conrad. And his African fiction can be deemed symbolic in nature, for the absolute muteness of Africa and the native may be interpreted as the hidden cause of colonialism. The natives have to take blame as well for their lack of resistance, which was really a fact for which imperialism could sustain. Thus, Conrad is, as Mary Louise Pratt says one of "the hyphenated white men who are principal architects of the often imperialist internal critique of empire (qtd. in Sewlall 66)." So, if one cannot accept Conrad as a postcolonial writer since he wrote during the colonial period, one should not have any objection to hailing him as an early postcolonial one before the advent of formal academic postcolonialism, and his texts as a passage to postcolonial literature which engages both

Western and non-Western readers and critics. As Fakrul Alam writes, "Conrad's works set in Asia and Africa can now be tied to the discourse of imperialism that was implicit in earlier writers but it is now obvious as well as important to note its relevance after the onset of decolonization, recent developments in theory, and the emergence of oppositional criticism" ("Elective affinities" 4). Alam thinks like Said that "canonical writers are there to be appreciated and analysed endlessly and confronted contrapuntally" ("Confronting the Canon" 696).

Relevance of Conrad Studies Today

Not only regarding imperialism, but also for his treatment of cross-cultural encounters, revolution, globalization and autocracy, Conrad is worth studying at present. This question of his relevance will time and again arise at a time when there appear so many new writers of different nationalities every day. This indeterminate position can only be addressed by the treatment of his subject matters whether they are still relevant in our times or not. If we consider that ours is a postcolonial world with all the anxieties of cross-cultural encounter, then Conrad is a relevant writer. The cultural and racial barriers Almayer, Willems, Aissa, Lingard, and Jim faced in the East are still present in our world as is evident from the recent immigration ban in America, and the Brexit in Britain. The rise of hate crime in the West, the populist ideas of the white supremacists, the extreme form of Chinese and Burmese Buddhist nationalism, the rise of extreme Hinduism and Muslim militants testify to Conrad's relevance in our time. For as early as 1907, Conrad addresses the suicide bomb issue in *The Secret Agent*; he talks about the neocolonial agenda of the USA and globalization process in *Nostromo* in 1904. His blatant criticism of colonialism in *Heart of Darkness* is very much pertinent to our time, as Lawrence

Ware argues that though the case of Belgian King Leopold II's benevolent measures to bring progress to the dark society of the Congo seems to be remote from the present time, it is not so distant as to its theme of Western intervention in some of the Arab countries (Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Egypt and Syria) in the name of establishing democracy and eradicating terrorism. And as discussed earlier the internecine conflicts in the Malay trilogy, "Karain" and *Lord Jim* and the Western intervention in those Malay regions are not also remote in consideration of the present internecine conflicts in the Middle East, Myanmar and Africa and the foreign powers' intervention in these countries. While in the Congo it is ivory, in the Middle-East, as Lawrence Ware says, it is "prospective oil fields rather than stacks of ivory" (329) that allures the West to come to the East. Surely, Conrad's hybrid multicultural society of the early twentieth century anticipates the modern global world as in *Nostromo*. But all the issues of cultural politics and power are presented in Conrad from a very moral standpoint like that of Alec Baldwin who says, "If there is no moral question, there is no reason to write" (*The New York Times*, Interview).

However, M. C. Bradbrook thinks that Conrad's relevance lies in his depiction of a simple Europe before the First World War. She says, "Conrad's work is relevant to-day because it was produced in that simpler Europe which existed before 1914; it was written in the presence of general standards of public sanity to which we never returned in the post-war years" (76). Bradbrook shows Conrad as a good European and shows her own European understanding of his works. It is Conrad's engagement with his contemporary social and political world that has enabled him to influence the subsequent writers of Diaspora, Third World countries and the postcolonial writers and critics. From Achebe and Ngugi to Naipaul, Narayan, Arundhati Roy to Edward Said and many other Eastern, African and Western writers have been influenced by his writing style and themes of human psychology and

political insights. David Miller in "Conrad and Contemporary Writers" has shown the influences of the Conrad oeuvre on many of our contemporary writers: "Conradian echoes are heard elsewhere …Everywhere in writing about certain contemporary themes and topics, with Conrad's 'influence', broadly interpreted, as a supreme commentator on the modern condition and the problems of contemporary life" (163).

Conrad's immigrant life in England, his feeling of foreignness and exilic existence are more relevant today when England is facing the challenge of Brexit at present confirming Conrad's own fear of being driven away from England during his life-time, as Brexit now has made the millions of immigrants in Europe feel the same. That is why Conrad once argued in favour of the choice of a borderless world for the true freedom of human life and movement. Edward Said became a critic of Israel and an advocate for Palestine cause after his study of Conrad. He finds a kind of affinity with Conrad for the latter's experience of exile, dislocation, uncertainty and estrangement which are also reflected in his fiction. In "Between Worlds" he says, "No one could represent the fate of lostness and disorientation better than he did, and no one was more ironic about the effort of trying to replace that condition with new arrangements and accommodations" ("Between Worlds" 554). Thus, Conrad projects the aura of colonial and postcolonial situations of exile in his works. This is why the early Postcolonial authors and Diaspora writers have found courage, legitimacy and models in Conrad's works.

Conrad's melancholic mind, his ironic sensibility, his intense moral standpoint and his contrapuntal world view may have angered some but these very things along with the romantic loneliness, the passionate observation of the ordinary aspects of life and politics, the inclusive anti-racial and anti-colonial outlook have attracted the greater part

of the audience. His moral imagination is not one-sided, neither it is severe in its bite. It is as it is and as it should be from dual perspectives, that is, Eastern and Western. Indeed, Conrad has opened up new modes of fiction of the colonial and the colonized with the new tone of nostalgia. A kind of pathos, a kind of pang for the loss of some dreams, relations and separation is often found in his works. His presentation of Russian autocracy, pessimism about anarchy and revolution are not at all distant ideas in our present world; rather the one party Government in Russia, China, and North Korea and elsewhere, the failure of the Arab Spring movement in Egypt, Libya, the rise of hate crime in Europe and Asia – all these point to Conrad's vehement presence.

Carola M. Kaplan, Peter Mallios and Andrea White discuss the relevance of reading Joseph Conrad in 2005: "Why read Conrad now? … in the moment of the incipient twenty-first century – Conrad's implications are so extensive and plural, so urgent and uncanny, that reading his works has already become a principal strategy of attempting to discern the terms of contemporary existence" (xiii).The Society of Joseph Conrad (USA) arranged a conference entitled "Conrad, Our Contemporary". Therefore, Conrad was called a contemporary in 1970 and 2005, and this study also considers him the same today for, to quote again Carola M. Kaplan, "the themes of global contact, dislocation, homelessness, cultural clash, lost causes, irreconcilable antagonisms, and personal and political failures of vision and compassion so central to Conrad's work" that "have become the title of our headlines and the stuff of our dreams and nightmares even today" (xiv). Peter Lancelot Mallios writes, "Beyond the 'end of history' and 'Third Way' of post-agnostic politics proffered by some in the 1990s, over the threshold of the twenty-first century, worldwide economic, political and military unrest seems again to have become the norm, and again Conrad has seemed urgently with us" (129). Truly, as

Mallios has shown, Conrad has got many moments of reception from the early twentieth century to the present only because Conrad's work occasions the possibility of reinterpretation and "every generation of Conrad's readers has had occasion to remark his works' hauntingly prescient anticipation of so many baseline aspects of twentieth and twenty-first century psychological and political experience" (Mallios 117).

Conrad as a Writer

Conrad is a story teller whose stories are in some measure the stories of us all. When his fictional works address various cotemporary social, racial, political and global issues, his nonfictional and autobiographical works present his ideas of art, literature and criticism. At times Conrad the critic looms larger than Conrad the fiction writer. His essays, prefaces and Author's Notes contain his reflections of art and criticism which are sufficient to prove his critical depth and ambience. His two autobiographical works, *A Personal Record* and *The Mirror of the Sea*, and his letters are often referenced by critics. His prefatory notes titled "Author's Notes" contain some critical insights that help readers understand and interpret literary texts well. Conrad says in his preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, "My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel – it is, before all, to make you see. That – and no more, and it is everything" (x). In *Heart of Darkness* he writes:

> The yarns of seamen have a direct simplicity, the whole meaning of which lies within the shell of a cracked nut. But Marlow was not typical ... and to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that sometimes are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine. (30)

Conrad's preoccupation with the meanings and forms of fiction makes him formulate his own narrative style which recreates a plot of a piece of fiction out of the tales of multiple narrators. He wants to make readers see and feel what the narrator and characters see and feel, and thus make readers intimate and make them involved in the narrative. His early Malay novels are linear in their narrative forms. There is a sequence, and an omniscient narrator narrates the story. But there is a kind of objective detachment from the narrator's side and a subjective involvement from the character's side. This method of the omniscient narrator's dependence upon the subjective narrator has some connection with the setting. For if the settings had not been the East, an alien land and foreign to the English or European reader, Conrad might not have felt the possibility of readers' disbelief. Conrad's use of the multiple narrators and the non-linear narrative in some of his Western works often complicates the plot, but it engages the reader. His impressionistic technique plays with a naïve reader, entrapping the reader with a situational irony which allows him/her to decode the meaning later than at his/her first reading. John Peters says, "Conrad's techniques represent the way human beings obtain knowledge" (*Conrad and Impressionism* 2).

Conrad's fiction appeals to the readers' hearts and penetrates into the very temperament. He writes:

> Fiction – if it at all aspires to be art – appeals to temperament. And in truth it must be like painting, like music, like all art, the appeal of one temperament to all other innumerable temperaments whose subtle and resistless power endows passing events with their true meaning, and creates the moral, the emotional atmosphere of the place and time. (Preface, *NN* ix)

Truly Conrad's fiction always travels with moral visions and undiscovered truth. Mr. Kurtz's final utterance, "The horror! the horror!" is a moral victory, a criticism on his

own past activities – a self-criticism. Like *Heart of Darkness*, all his other novels and short stories can be called a criticism of life and of the world, reminiscent of Arnold's dictum "Art is criticism of life". Perhaps no other finer examples can be shown than his *Heart of Darkness* which is a masterpiece of criticism on imperialism. His *The Nigger of the Narcissus* can be deemed a study of racism like those of his Eastern fiction. And what can be a more fierce visionary critical judgment on capitalism, globalization and revolution than *Nostromo*? What can be a more scathing attack on an autocratic government than *Under Western Eyes*? Hence, Conrad is no doubt an author-intellectual. As a critic and being a European, he has destabilized European centrism. When Edward Said says that Conrad is "uncompromising Eurocentric" and thus generating a critique of Euro-centrism, he vehemently points to the true vocation of an intellectual whose pen truthfully, morally, intellectually and critically represents the reality, and this is what he calls secular criticism.

Conrad is a good critic but first and foremost he is a great artist. Yes, Conrad's greatness as an artist is an acknowledged fact about which critics have never disagreed. James Huneker in "The Genius of Joseph Conrad" calls Conrad "a painter doubled by a psychologist; he is the psychologist of the sea ... knows and records its every pulse-beat" (270). He is one of the finest fiction writers portraying diverse human situations and realities. The individual existence with its joys and sorrows, illusions and disillusions, success and failure, virtues and follies is portrayed by Conrad through a style of his own. His characters dwell in the site of struggle; they live, dream and act and face uncertainties and dilemmas of a moral world. Their life and fate evoke tragic feeling. And his style is unpredictable and ironic. In his stories, readers expect something but they often get something else, more illuminating and shocking than expected. The unexpected thrive in

the end in a kind of gloomy mode in his stories. Neither it is happy in the beginning. The reader never knows what is to come next. But the tone indicates something unpleasant from the start. And the reader whose first language is not English, but who reads, writes, thinks and does research in it must feel like Edward said a kind of affinity with Conrad, who is the lighthouse to the Eastern English literature students, teachers, critics and writers, and who would feel, to quote Said again,"…the loss of home and language in a new setting, a loss that Conrad has the severity to portray as irredeemable, relentlessly anguished, raw, untreatable, always cute" ("Between Worlds" 555). Thus, Conrad is an inspiration for the expatriate, Diaspora, exiled and non-Western writers in English, who want to find meaning in their own dislocations and rootlessness by creating a homeland through writing, as Adorno says "For a man who no longer has a homeland, writing becomes a place to live in" (qtd. in Said, "Between Worlds" 568). Conrad found this home first in the ship and in the Eastern waters, and then in his fiction, arguably first in his Eastern fiction. Truly, the sea, the East and the fiction are welded together to make a home for Conrad the wanderer.

The survival of the works of a writer who wrote one hundred years ago must rely on some intrinsic worth of their own, and it is none other than their capacity to readjust to the new era and new generations. The works which have the potentials to get refashioned by providing new insights and stories never get obsolete. Many of Conrad's works have withstood this test. His Malay trilogy (*Almayer's Folly*, *The Outcast of the Islands* and *The Rescue*), *Heart of Darkness*, *Lord Jim*, *The Secret Agent*, *Nostromo*, *Under Western Eyes*, *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, *Victory*, *The Shadow Line*, "Youth", "Typhoon", "Karain" "The End of the Tethered" - all these works seem to be the works of the present time in their subject matter. Though the Malay novels have not been held classics by

Western critics, in my opinion the first two are his masterpieces. The Western critics do not want to hail those two because of the Eastern perspective provided by Conrad and also because of the portrayal of the unsuccessful Western characters in the East. However, his *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, *The Secret Agent*, *Nostromo*, *The Shadow Line*, "Youth", and "Typhoon" are deemed as artistically masterpieces by many Western critics. Written in 1897 *The Nigger of the Narcissus* immediately won recognition, as Henry James considered it, as "the very finest and strongest picture of the sea and sea-life that our language possesses – the masterpiece in a whole class" (qtd. in Knowles 278). But they even discard *Lord Jim*. However, to an Eastern reader this list can be a different one. By reading his very first novel *Almayer's Folly* Edward Garnett considered him an Eastern writer: "The strangeness of the tropical atmosphere and the poetic realism of this romantic narrative excited my curiosity about the author, who I fancied might have Eastern blood in his vein" (Introduction 2).

His deep insights into the various themes such as loneliness, colonialism, revolution, war, existential crisis, skepticism, modernism have really made his works a world in miniature. Hence his importance is deeply felt in the present global world, as Maya Jasanoff's *The Dawn Watch* shows Conrad as one of the first modern writers "who bring into fore issues of terrorism, globalization" and "the way power operates across continents and races"(n.pag.). The memorable characters like Kurtz, Almayer, Lingard, Nina, Aissa, Taminah, Jim, Nostromo, Amy Foster, Legatt, Rita, Marlow, Verlocs, Falk, Jasper, Freya, Laughing Anne, Peyrol live among us both in the East and the West, for they are both individuals and types with their own eccentricities. They fail, betray, love and hate, but in all of their doings there is struggle. His Eastern tales with both Western and Eastern characters presented with a distinct style and amazing suspense and his use of

places as diverse as India, Malaysia, Australia, Europe, and North America as his settings have made him preeminent as a global fiction-writer. This is what Terry Eagleton hails in Conrad and says that Joseph Conrad has become successful to give culture a different treatment by bringing "to bear on culture a range of experience – of America, Europe, Africa, the East .... It was out of this tension that James and Conrad created their major work; and it was a tension notably absent in the work of their contemporaries" (qtd. in Bhabha, *Nation* 62) Therefore, Conrad the Pole has transcended his Polish origin, Russian nationality, British identity and written extensively about Europe and beyond. He has displayed his utmost endeavour to overcome Western biases and project Eastern perspectives, and he has created some memorable and dignified Eastern characters ─ Nina, Babalatchi, Taminah, Aissa, Karain and Arsad. Conrad has represented the East not for the interest of the empire but indeed for the victims of it with a mission to share the bond of common humanity with them.

Thus, Conrad's Eastern novels, short stories, essays and autobiographical pieces amply display his acknowledged debt to the East. The sense of belonging he felt for the Malay Archipelago, the rich and varied experiences he gathered in his strange conditions and situations in the East, the nostalgia he felt for these places, and the desire and importance he felt for their representations ultimately made Conrad a writer. The bond of humanity that he himself felt and wanted the Western reader to feel for those people in the far-off Eastern places sparked his creative impulse. Truly, the relation between a writer and his or her settings is like an umbilical cord which functions in the background of every work. It is a historically significant fact that he first wrote the Eastern fiction, and attained the fame as a writer, and only after then he wrote his Western stories. The passionate feeling of attachment to a particular place, which even transcends the barrier of

one's citizenship, race and culture, is immensely and influentially creative, and this is best exemplified by the case of Conrad, for whom, undoubtedly, the East has been a flame of writing and a source of fiction, To reiterate, despite his European location and perspective, Joseph Conrad remains to be, to borrow John Tytell's phrase, "a prototypical modern transnational writer" (n.pag.). And that has been possible for his transcendental secular world view that is more than the pursuit of material gain and worldly fame which in Conrad's own words is illuminated: "Efficiency of a practically flawless kind may be reached naturally in the struggle for bread. But there is something beyond—a higher point, a subtle and unmistakable touch of love and pride beyond mere skill; almost an inspiration which gives to all work that finish which is almost art—which is art" (*The Mirror of the Sea* 24).

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