

# **An Encounter with the Wilderness: Undermining European Identity in the Works of Joseph Conrad**

Lukáš Havlíček

---

Bachelor's Thesis 2018



**Tomas Bata University in Zlín**  
Faculty of Humanities

---

Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně  
Fakulta humanitních studií  
Ústav moderních jazyků a literatur  
akademický rok: 2017/2018

## **ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE**

(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Lukáš Havlíček**  
Osobní číslo: **H15617**  
Studijní program: **B7310 Filologie**  
Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk pro manažerskou praxi**  
Forma studia: **prezenční**

Téma práce: **Setkání s divočinou: Podkopávání evropské identity v díle Josepha Conrada**

Zásady pro vypracování:

**Shromáždění literárních materiálů k provedení analýzy**  
**Podrobný průzkum daného tématu a odpovídajících materiálů**  
**Rozbor evropské identity na základě literární tvorby Josepha Conrada**  
**Analýza střetu necivilizovaného prostředí s protagonisty děl**  
**Shrnutí výsledků analýzy a vyvození závěru**

Rozsah bakalářské práce:

Rozsah příloh:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná/elektronická**

Seznam odborné literatury:

**Conrad, Joseph. Heart of Darkness. Edited by Owen Knowles. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2007. Literature Online. ProQuest Information and Learning.**

**<<http://literature.proquest.com>>**

**Conrad, Joseph. Lord Jim. Edited by Allan H. Simmons. London: Penguin, 2007. Literature Online. ProQuest Information and Learning. <<http://literature.proquest.com>>**

**Conrad, Joseph. The Nigger of the 'Narcissus': A Tale of the Sea, In the Nigger of the 'Narcissus' and Other Stories. Edited by J. H. Stape and Allan H. Simmons. London: Penguin, 2007. Literature Online. ProQuest Information and Learning.**

**<<http://literature.proquest.com>>**

**Conrad, Joseph. Nostromo: A Tale of the Seaboard. Edited by Véronique Pauly. London: Penguin, 2007. Literature Online. ProQuest Information and Learning.**

**<<http://literature.proquest.com>>**

**Curtin, Philip de Armind. Disease and Empire: The Health of European Troops in the Conquest of Africa. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.**

Vedoucí bakalářské práce:

**Prof. Dr. phil. habil. Ewald Mengel**

Ústav moderních jazyků a literatur

Datum zadání bakalářské práce:

**10. listopadu 2017**

Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce:

**4. května 2018**

Ve Zlíně dne 8. ledna 2018

  
doc. Ing. Anežka Lengalová, Ph.D.  
děkanka

L.S.

  
PhDr. Katarína Nemčoková, Ph.D.  
ředitelka ústavu

# PROHLÁŠENÍ AUTORA BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Beru na vědomí, že

- odevzdáním bakalářské práce souhlasím se zveřejněním své práce podle zákona č. 111/1998 Sb. o vysokých školách a o změně a doplnění dalších zákonů (zákon o vysokých školách), ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, bez ohledu na výsledek obhajoby <sup>1)</sup>;
- beru na vědomí, že bakalářská práce bude uložena v elektronické podobě v univerzitním informačním systému dostupná k nahlédnutí;
- na moji bakalářskou práci se plně vztahuje zákon č. 121/2000 Sb. o právu autorském, o právech souvisejících s právem autorským a o změně některých zákonů (autorský zákon) ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, zejm. § 35 odst. 3 <sup>2)</sup>;
- podle § 60 <sup>3)</sup> odst. 1 autorského zákona má UTB ve Zlíně právo na uzavření licenční smlouvy o užití školního díla v rozsahu § 12 odst. 4 autorského zákona;
- podle § 60 <sup>3)</sup> odst. 2 a 3 mohu užít své dílo – bakalářskou práci - nebo poskytnout licenci k jejímu využití jen s předchozím písemným souhlasem Univerzity Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, která je oprávněna v takovém případě ode mne požadovat přiměřený příspěvek na úhradu nákladů, které byly Univerzitou Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně na vytvoření díla vynaloženy (až do jejich skutečné výše);
- pokud bylo k vypracování bakalářské práce využito softwaru poskytnutého Univerzitou Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně nebo jinými subjekty pouze ke studijním a výzkumným účelům (tj. k nekomerčnímu využití), nelze výsledky bakalářské práce využít ke komerčním účelům.

Prohlašuji, že

- elektronická a tištěná verze bakalářské práce jsou totožné;
- na bakalářské práci jsem pracoval samostatně a použitou literaturu jsem citoval. V případě publikace výsledků budu uveden jako spoluautor.

Ve Zlíně ..... 30.4.2018



1) zákon č. 111/1998 Sb. o vysokých školách a o změně a doplnění dalších zákonů (zákon o vysokých školách), ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, § 47b Zveřejňování závěrečných prací;

(1) Vysoká škola nevydělečně zveřejňuje disertační, diplomové, bakalářské a rigorózní práce, u kterých proběhla obhajoba, včetně posudků oponentů a výsledku obhajoby prostřednictvím databáze kvalifikačních prací, kterou spravuje. Způsob zveřejnění stanoví vnitřní předpis vysoké školy.

(2) *Disertační, diplomové, bakalářské a rigorózní práce odevzdané uchazečem k obhajobě musí být též nejméně pět pracovních dnů před konáním obhajoby zveřejněny k nahlížení veřejnosti v místě určeném vnitřním předpisem vysoké školy nebo není-li tak určeno, v místě pracoviště vysoké školy, kde se má konat obhajoba práce. Každý si může ze zveřejněné práce pořizovat na své náklady výpisy, opisy nebo rozmnoženiny.*

(3) *Platí, že odevzdáním práce autor souhlasí se zveřejněním své práce podle tohoto zákona, bez ohledu na výsledek obhajoby.*

2) *zákon č. 121/2000 Sb. o právu autorském, o právech souvisejících s právem autorským a o změně některých zákonů (autorský zákon) ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, § 35 odst. 3:*

(3) *Do práva autorského také nezasahuje škola nebo školské či vzdělávací zařízení, užije-li nikoli za účelem přímého nebo nepřímého hospodářského nebo obchodního prospěchu k výuce nebo k vlastní potřebě dílo vytvořené žákem nebo studentem ke splnění školních nebo studijních povinností vyplývajících z jeho právního vztahu ke škole nebo školskému či vzdělávacímu zařízení (školní dílo).*

3) *zákon č. 121/2000 Sb. o právu autorském, o právech souvisejících s právem autorským a o změně některých zákonů (autorský zákon) ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, § 60 Školní dílo:*

(1) *Škola nebo školské či vzdělávací zařízení mají za obvyklých podmínek právo na uzavření licenční smlouvy o užití školního díla (§ 35 odst. 3). Odprá-li autor takového díla udělit svolení bez vážného důvodu, mohou se tyto osoby domáhat nahrazení chybnějího projevu jeho vůle u soudu. Ustanovení § 35 odst. 3 zůstává nedotčeno.*

(2) *Není-li sjednáno jinak, může autor školního díla své dílo užit či poskytnout jinému licenci, není-li to v rozporu s oprávněnými zájmy školy nebo školského či vzdělávacího zařízení.*

(3) *Škola nebo školské či vzdělávací zařízení jsou oprávněny požadovat, aby jim autor školního díla z výdělku jim dosaženého v souvislosti s užitím díla či poskytnutím licence podle odstavce 2 přiměřeně přispěl na úhradu nákladů, které na vytvoření díla vynaložily, a to podle okolností až do jejich skutečné výše; přitom se přihlédne k vyšší výdělku dosaženého školou nebo školským či vzdělávacím zařízením z užití školního díla podle odstavce 1.*

## **ABSTRAKT**

Tato bakalářská práce si klade za cíl analyzovat a porovnávat vliv divočiny na evropské kolonizátory ve třech slavných dílech beletrie Josepha Conrada: *Lord Jim*, *Srdce temnoty* a *Nostromo*. Conradova fikce je nepochybně spojena s otázkou imperialismu a jeho vývoje na odlišných místech světa, a proto je předmět imperialismu také neoddělitelnou součástí tematiky této práce. Na bázi analýzy dat provedeného literárního výzkumu skládajícího se ze specifických odborných článků, knih a jiných literárních pramenů, navrhuje tato práce řadu konkrétních případů nedostatků evropské kultury a jejich souvislosti v analyzované fikci. Práce v závěru věří v odhalení jednotlivých druhů slabin a prohřešků vůči civilizaci, které vedou Conradovy kolonizátory a vykořisťovatele k morálnímu a reálnému selhání, zatímco čelí neznámému a neobjevenému.

Klíčová slova: Joseph Conrad, Lord Jim, Srdce temnoty, Nostromo, Evropská indentita, imperialismus, divočina

## **ABSTRACT**

This bachelor thesis aims to analyse and compare the impact of the wilderness upon European colonizers in the fiction of Joseph Conrad by examining three of his famous novels: *Lord Jim*, *Heart of Darkness* and *Nostromo*. Conrad's fiction is undoubtedly associated with the matter of imperialism and its development on various places around the globe, and thus this subject also underlines the theme of this thesis. Considering the analysed data of the literary research comprised of specific journal articles, books and other literary sources, the thesis proposes a number of definite occurrences of European deficiency and its continuity in Conrad's fiction. Ultimately, the thesis hopes to uncover individual types of European drawbacks and transgressions leading Conrad's colonizers and exploiters towards their moral and natural failure while facing the unknown.

Keywords: Joseph Conrad, Lord Jim, Heart of Darkness, Nostromo, European identity, imperialism, wilderness

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Acknowledgements, motto and a declaration of honour saying that the print version of the Bachelor's/Master's thesis and the electronic version of the thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical, worded as follows:

I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's/Master's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

I would like to thank Ewald Mengel, Prof. Dr. phil. habil. for his patient supervision, guidance and support throughout the thesis work.

# CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>I THEORY .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>1 JOSEPH CONRAD .....</b>	<b>12</b>
1.1 THE EARLY EXILE .....	12
1.2 THE POLISH EXPATRIATE .....	13
1.3 THE ADOPTED COUNTRY .....	14
1.4 BEHIND THE WRITING DESK .....	15
1.5 THE MARGINAL MAN .....	16
1.6 CONRAD'S MONSTER.....	17
<b>2 THE FICTION.....</b>	<b>20</b>
2.1 LORD JIM & THE EAST .....	20
2.2 HEART OF DARKNESS & AFRICA .....	21
2.3 NOSTROMO & LATIN AMERICA .....	22
<b>II ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>3 LORD JIM .....</b>	<b>24</b>
3.1 THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE EAST .....	24
3.2 CONRAD'S MARLOW .....	25
3.3 BREAKING THE CODE .....	26
3.4 BEHIND THE LEAP.....	27
3.5 THE IDEALISM .....	28
3.6 THE POWER OF GOSSIPS .....	28
3.7 THE INSTINCT & THE CODE.....	29
3.8 THE EXILE .....	30
3.9 THE FINAL REDEMPTION .....	31
<b>4 HEART OF DARKNESS.....</b>	<b>33</b>
4.1 SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA.....	33
4.2 THE POSSESSION OF A SINGLE MAN .....	33
4.3 ROIS DE BELGES .....	34
4.4 THE ENGLISHNESS .....	35
4.5 THE MISINTERPRETATION .....	36
4.6 THE LACK OF INTEGRITY .....	37
4.7 THE MEGALOMANIA.....	38
4.8 THE TRIAL OF THE JUNGLE .....	40
<b>5 NOSTROMO.....</b>	<b>41</b>



5.1	COSTAGUANA.....	41
5.2	THE SILVER OBSESSION.....	41
5.3	IDEALISM & MEGALOMANIA AGAIN.....	42
5.4	EGOISM & INDIFFERENCE .....	43
5.5	OUR MAN .....	44
	<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>46</b>
	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>49</b>

## INTRODUCTION

The fiction of Joseph Conrad portrays a formation of new colonies accompanied by the clash of various cultural identities. Conrad's cultural diversity and marginality intermingled with his abundant adventurous experiences help to provide a unique and abiding literary testimony. Conrad presents the clash of distinctive cultural realities on a variety of uncharted and remote locations of the world: from conventional Europe to the exotic Malay Archipelago, ruthlessly challenging Africa or unstable, revolutionized Latin America.

Conrad employs the confrontation with the wilderness as the absolute test which explores particular qualities of European colonizers and his wilderness is portrayed in copious forms – as the sea, exotic jungles, isolated islands or solely human cruelty, yet, the purpose of the wilderness remains the same: to test the abilities of its colonizers. Moreover, Conrad's fiction is strongly accompanied by his personal experiences from his maritime service under the British and French Merchant Navy and thus, the wilderness in his fiction is designed from actual experience: he had to pass his own test of the wilderness.

Conrad's fiction has influenced not just other literary works, but also some of the political and cultural affairs and besides, Conrad is one of the first writers ever inquiring into the matter of imperialism, colonialism and forced exploitation of natural resources. Thereupon, Conrad's fiction has been studied and analysed by many literary critics, aiming to decipher not just Conrad's ambiguous approach towards imperialism, but also the significance of his narrative techniques. However, the purpose of this thesis is to identify and analyse individual types of shortcomings and transgressions of European colonizers, and their continuity in Conrad's three novels from his literary major phase set in distant locations around the globe: *Heart of Darkness* (1899), *Lord Jim* (1900) and *Nostramo* (1904).

Consequently, the thesis examines different variations of the wilderness and consequential qualities of its European colonizers in each novel individually. Furthermore, the theoretical part provides an inquiry into Conrad's life and reasons behind his cultural diversity and introduces particular settings and conditions of the analysed novels. Whereas the following chapter of the practical analysis concentrates on the story of *Lord Jim*, interpreting Jim's violation of the code and isolation in Patusan, the second chapter dedicated to *Heart of Darkness* explores Kurtz's megalomania in the Congolese jungle and the last chapter delves into the contrast between human progress and material obsession in *Nostramo*.

## **I. THEORY**

## 1 JOSEPH CONRAD

‘When I grow up I shall go there’, declared the eleven-year-old Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski while enthusiastically gazing through the open map and pointing his finger on the blankest place of the earth’s surface located somewhere in the middle of the African Congo. Although, by that time, young Joseph Conrad – as he is later rather known for this version of his name, could not have an idea about the fact that his childhood map-gazing and his inner desires for distant locations will really find their fulfilment or that especially the Congo is about to become one of the countries that will significantly influence his writing career and his life as a whole. Even despite the fact that Polish schools did not provide the best education in geography at that time, young Conrad found his alternative by indulging himself in the journals of great explorers such as Captain James Cook, Sir Leopold McClintock or David Livingstone and his admiration for distant expeditions and these ‘searches for truth’ were truly exceptional. Consequently, exactly one decade later, the Polish expatriate will find himself working for the French and British Merchant Marine Service on a variety of different ships and positions that will take him to all kinds of voyages to the unfamiliar and exotic lands of South America, East Asia and Central Africa.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.1 The Early Exile

Born on 3 December 1857 in Berdyczów, the formerly Polish part of Ukraine, Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski was the only child of Apollo Korzeniowski and Ewelina Bobrowska. Conrad’s parents were representatives of the szlachta – the Polish kind of upper-class aristocracy. However, this Ukrainian part of Poland was under the Tsarist rule and Conrad’s father was well-known for his devotion to the Polish independence, in addition, he played an important role in many revolutionary activities, and consequently was arrested and sent to exile in Russia together with his wife and young son. Ultimately, the Russian exile proved to be very harsh and brought a lot of suffering for Conrad’s family.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Stape, *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 180, doi: 10.1017/CCOL0521443911.

<sup>2</sup> John G. Peters, *The Cambridge Introduction to Joseph Conrad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1, doi: 10.1017/CBO9780511607264.

The Korzeniowski's devotion for the national independence and patriotic uprising against Russian dominance results not only in the family exile but in the confiscation of their family land as well. Yet, the influence of suffering Polish nation upon Conrad is reflected even in his original name itself – Konrad, which could be linked with the heroic fighter for the freedom from one of Adam Mickiewicz's poems *Konrad Wallenrod*, who is characterised with his dedication to courage, honour and patriotic self-sacrifice.<sup>3</sup>

As a result of the poor and harsh conditions of the Russian exile, both of Conrad's parents contracted tuberculosis. His mother died in 1865 and his father Apollo had to take care of young Conrad by himself and eventually was freed from exile in order to fully take care of his son, who was seriously ill and needed help recovering from his illness and poor health condition. However, Korzeniowski's tuberculosis worsened as well and in May 1869, Poland lost one of their national heroes and revolutionary leaders, leaving his young son an orphan. After his father's death, his uncle Tadeusz Bobrowski took care of young Conrad and became his second father. Unlike his father, Conrad's uncle had more conservative and practical approach to the world, supporting the values of enlightened conservative ethic and strict social discipline and frequently expressed his disapproval of Korzeniowski's radical approach. However, his father's influence and devotion for idealistic and nationalistic values, love for literature and interest in revolutionary politics are all heavily rooted in his son too and therefore, Conrad is caught exactly in the middle, affected in his future life by both – his father and uncle.

## 1.2 The Polish Expatriate

Considering the combination of frustration in exile and loss of his parents that Conrad experiences in his homeland while being immensely influenced by the books of the great explorers, Conrad openly expresses desires to leave the country and pursue a life at sea. Thereupon, at the age of seventeen, Bobrowski finally gives Conrad his consent to move to France, and Conrad thus leaves Poland for good in order to get his maritime training in Marseilles and become a seaman.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, Conrad leaves Poland also for another, more practical reason – being a son of the political prisoner, there is an everlasting threat for possible enlistment to the Russian army. While in the contrast, France stands for a

---

<sup>3</sup> Stape, *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*, 4–5.

<sup>4</sup> Peters, *The Cambridge Introduction to Joseph Conrad*, 1–2.

promising base for many Polish expatriates during the nineteenth-century emigration and Conrad himself soon discovers a cosmopolitan city full of cultural and social thrills. Marseilles thus does not represent just his new home, but also a significant jumping-off point towards his dreams and adventures.

Conrad successfully passes his training and starts to work on French ships, serving as a steward aboard the ship that travels to the Caribbean and South America where he finds an inspiration for the basis of his novel *Nostramo*, but visiting also many other exotic locations that serve as a source of inspiration for his later literary career. Nevertheless, life under the French Marine Service was not that painless and lucrative and Conrad has to struggle for his status aboard, while at the same time also fighting various financial setbacks and his gambling addiction. Conrad returns to Marseilles penniless, loses his money while gambling and evidently is involved in some kind of smuggling activity. Consequently, Conrad shoots himself in the chest, even though, there is not any clear evidence whether he tries to attempt a suicide or mysteriously wounds himself by an accident. However, Conrad's youth is in many cases typical for his irresponsibility with money, which partly also lingers into his future, as he has to often face difficult financial situations throughout his life.

### 1.3 The Adopted Country

In order to rescue himself from a difficult life situation and avoid conscription in the Russian army, Conrad needs to receive a valid passport and therefore has to seek for naturalization elsewhere. Eventually, he joins the British Merchant Marine Service and this moment also marks a significant change in the direction of both, his marine career and the creation of his personal identity. Even though Conrad does not speak any English, he is introduced through the British marine system to the idea of marine brotherhood, fidelity and a tradition that resembles the sacred notion of home.

Furthermore, considering Conrad's personal autobiographies, it is more than apparent that Conrad himself recognizes this period of life as instant adoption by the foreign country, its language and traditions.<sup>5</sup> Over the years while working for the British Marine Service, Conrad studies to become an officer and is given an opportunity to sail on several English ships – encountering new exotic locations in Asia and meeting variety of diverse

---

<sup>5</sup> Stape, *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*, 7–8.

civilizations and cultures. Besides, he continues moving up his career ladder, passing an examination for the first officer aboard and subsequent master certificate, which qualifies him to serve as a captain. Fortunately, Conrad is accepted for British naturalization and finally finds himself a shelter from the danger of enlisting in the Russian army. On his following voyages, Conrad visits various ports in the Malay Archipelago and many other locations in the East, as he is presented with an opportunity to experience this unexplored region for a longer period of time – and this particular experience later becomes another valuable source and inspiration for his fiction writing.<sup>6</sup>

#### 1.4 Behind the Writing Desk

The crucial point of Conrad's sea-career is undoubtedly a visit of the Belgian Congo in 1890. Conrad meets the director of the *Société Belge pour le Commerce du Haut-Congo* in Brussels in order to apply for the position of a steamboat captain on the Congo River and the influence of some of his distant relatives helps him to secure this position. On his voyage up the Congo River, Conrad witnesses all kinds of atrocities, greed and chaos caused by European imperialism and the cruel rule of King Leopold II. Conrad serves as the temporary captain on the *Rois des Belges* while the captain is sick. However, this mentally and physically demanding job in the wilderness of the Congo takes its toll, and after several months of working under the Belgian enterprise, Conrad is left in poor health and mental condition and is eventually sent back to Europe to recover. Without a doubt, Conrad's intensive experience in the Congo has a profound impact on his life and in many ways shapes his perception of civilization and human existence, which is later portrayed in his novels and political essays.

Although Conrad eventually recovers from his mental breakdown caused by the traumatic experiences in Africa, his physical health remains in poor condition. Despite the fact that Conrad accepts several more positions aboard, it is nothing but certain that he has to shift his focus on a new way of life ashore – and that is how his literary career begins. Conrad's sea career lasts almost about twenty years and takes him to all kinds of remote corners of the world, including the Caribbean, East Asia, Africa and Australia – leaving him a rich potential of experiences and memories which are depicted in the form of his

---

<sup>6</sup> Peters, *The Cambridge Introduction to Joseph Conrad*, 2–3.

vivid narratives and fiction writings. Ultimately, Conrad proves his commitment to living on dry British land after many years off-shore by his marriage to Jessie George. Even though they come from completely different backgrounds and despite all of their differences, their marriage appears to be successful and gives Conrad the birth of his two sons, Borys and John.<sup>7</sup>

### 1.5 The Marginal Man

Even if Joseph Conrad perfectly assimilates into the British culture and acquires the English language on such a level that he is considered to be one of the greatest British writers, he never denies his Polish origins. Even though that he is not active in supporting of Polish independence until late in his life, his strong nationalistic feelings make him question the credibility of the occupying powers. Furthermore, Conrad often sympathizes with the colonized native people of exotic countries in his novels, because he himself, belongs to the conquered people.<sup>8</sup>

Nonetheless, Conrad is regularly criticized by some of the Polish intellectuals, including for example Wincenty Lutoslawski, who is the author of the article ‘*The Emigration of Talent*’, in which Lutoslawski accuses Conrad to be an example of expatriate Pole who rather chooses the English language and culture over the Polish one because of its greater financial potential. Consequently, more Polish intellectuals accuse Conrad of betrayal of his homeland, which immensely frustrates Conrad as he is particularly sensitive to such criticism.<sup>9</sup> In fact, throughout his life, Conrad is significantly influenced by Polish, French and English cultures and these cultures create Conrad’s tri-lingual and tri-cultural identity. Conrad would never deny both, his Polish identity and the intensity of influence that his adopted country has upon him – he would identify himself as a marginal man who is living in two worlds, in both of which he is a stranger. However, if Conrad’s loyalty to multiple cultures may, in fact, signify disloyalty to any one of them, his notion of marginal man might also characterize him as a rich individual, who by his ability

---

<sup>7</sup> Peters, *The Cambridge Introduction to Joseph Conrad*, 3–6.

<sup>8</sup> Hunt Hawkins, “Conrad’s Critique of Imperialism in *Heart of Darkness*,” *PMLA* 94, no. 2 (March 1979): 294, JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/461892>.

<sup>9</sup> Peters, *The Cambridge Introduction to Joseph Conrad*, 8.



to cross boundaries is capable of absorbing the best of several worlds and traditions.<sup>10</sup> Conrad was always self-aware of his otherness in his adopted country, born in Poland as Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski and becoming Joseph Conrad in his adult life, ‘the spoiled adopted child of Great Britain and even the Empire’. Nonetheless, it is just his marginality that allows him to develop a strong sensitivity towards complex and organized crimes against humanity while observing the reality from various perspectives.<sup>11</sup>

## 1.6 Conrad’s Monster

In the letters to his companions and close literary friends, Conrad often confides to them his immense fear that his work would lack substance. Moreover, he envisions himself face to face with a monster who threatens to deprive him of his own substance. This monster thus functions as a representation of the ideal vision of literary creation. Conrad is convinced that textuality must be comprised of substance and truth. Hence, if the literary text does not create substance for others, it does not contribute to the substance of its author, and Conrad, more than anything else, desires to create through the visionary power of the text the substance of his own being. Therefore, the monster message is clear: to fail to produce a substance is to lack substance. Yet, Conrad does not strive to create the substance of a merely private vision. – on the contrary, his aim is to direct his substance to the greater public vision. However, while working on one of his most complex stories, *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad apparently fights another wave of depression and his letters to his uncle Tadeusz Bobrowski suggest serious battle against suicide. Evidently, it is writing that rescues Conrad from his suicidal temptations and paradoxically, his monster appears to be at the same time his saviour.<sup>12</sup>

Yet, no other novel than *Under Western Eyes* represents such a trial for Conrad. Particularly for the reason that this novel is personally closer to him than any other work as

---

<sup>10</sup> Stape, *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*, 3–4.

<sup>11</sup> Brigit Maier-Katkin and Daniel Maier-Katkin, “At the Heart of Darkness: Crimes against Humanity and the Banality of Evil,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (2004): 593, JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20069746>.

<sup>12</sup> Marshall W. Alcorn, “The Narcissism of Creation and Interpretation: Agon at the Heart of Darkness,” *In Narcissism and the Literary Libido: Rhetoric, Text and Subjectivity* (New York: NYU Press, 1994), 158–9. JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qfnvz.9>.

this novel occupies with problems of betrayal, revolutionary politics and Russian autocracy – all of the issues that are close to Conrad's personal experience and probably allow him to relive some of his childhood experiences. Eventually, as a result of finishing this novel, Conrad suffers a mental breakdown that lasts for months, even though, not just for the reason of this particularly sensitive issues regarding the novel, but also for its peak of Conrad's extremely demanding artistic creativity.<sup>13</sup>

Consequently, Conrad is not only influenced by important historical events in England, but by all of those happening on the continent. Due to his given years in Poland, France, Russia and the East, Conrad had the advantage of acquiring more expanded insight than most of his literary companions and fellow novelists in England. Since his youth, Conrad is particularly interested in Napoleonic France and he would frequently use this period as his own template for the investigation of the nature of the relationship between the individual and larger political forces.<sup>14</sup> Naturally, if the plot and nature of his novels record the emergence and rise of the West, Conrad also registers its costs – the worldwide shattering of cultural traditions on account of the twentieth-century Western imperialism.<sup>15</sup>

There are various ranges of arguments whether Conrad is an advocate of the English view of imperialism or sceptical to the whole enterprise and a supporter of anti-colonial revolts. Nonetheless, despite the complexity of his work, his texts represent profound studies of the imperial situation and its development on different locations in the world and serve as the proof that imperialism was never so stable and efficient as it appeared to be.<sup>16</sup> Conrad's personal experiences from his maritime service during the nineteenth century do not only enhance his insights and inspirations, but they as well enable him to reflect a great portion of his own autobiography in all of his tales. Without a doubt, everything that an author writes is always to the certain level autobiographical as he always put something of himself into his own work, however, the actual episodes of Conrad's life that help to create

---

<sup>13</sup> Peters, *The Cambridge Introduction to Joseph Conrad*, 13.

<sup>14</sup> Peters, *The Cambridge Introduction to Joseph Conrad*, 19–20.

<sup>15</sup> Josiane Paccaud-Huguet, "How Joseph Conrad Shows Us the Creation of The West," Culture.pl, accessed February 3, 2018, <http://culture.pl/en/article/how-joseph-conrad-shows-us-the-creation-of-the-west>.

<sup>16</sup> Stape, *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*, 179–80.

a great number of his stories are thoroughly traced by his biographers and are admitted by Conrad himself in his own autobiography.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Marialuisa Bignami, "Joseph Conrad, the Malay Archipelago, and the Decadent Hero," *The Review of English Studies* 38, no. 150 (May 1987): 207. JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/515423>.

## 2 THE FICTION

Conrad's literary career could be divided into three main periods: a short early period of Malay fiction ending in 1896 – which signifies his movement from ship's deck to the writing desk, the major phase ending in 1911, and a period of his late fiction and transitional writing ending with his death in 1924. Conrad is fortunate right from the beginning of his writing career by becoming a close friend with other talented writers and intellectuals such as John Galsworthy, Ford Maddox Ford, Stephen Crane, R. B. Cunningham Graham and many more. They offer him not just sincere friendship, but also valuable advice and criticism towards his work. Moreover, Conrad even collaborates with some of them in collective creation. The critical reviews of his first novels are as favourable and positive as any author could hope for and Conrad effortlessly becomes what someone may call a favoured child of the critics. However, the majority of his fiction is still rather appreciated by critics than a general audience, but undoubtedly, the setting of his fresh exotic locations mingled with unique narrative techniques and affluent personal experiences serves as the unforgettable testimony of both, human history and formation of cultural identity.<sup>18</sup>

### 2.1 Lord Jim & The East

Of all the Conrad's Malaya novels, *Lord Jim* is considered to be the most complex and fundamental one as it signifies his first full-length work and the beginning of his artistic maturity and major literary phase. What makes this novel so unparalleled is also the fact that it is based on a real historical event – the abandonment of the ship *Jeddah* and its pilgrims aboard by her English crew, which consequently evoked a significant maritime scandal across the continents, and especially in London in 1880. The novel was serialized in *Blackwood's Magazine* during the years 1899 and 1900 and includes Conrad's own experience from the sea as it is inspired by real-life situations and persons.<sup>19</sup> The novel is divided into two main parts: the first part follows up Jim's leap from the Patna and its immediate consequences while the second part covers Jim's attempt of rehabilitation in the remote island of Patusan. In other words, the first half of the novel is the counter-version of sea-life novel followed by the second half of popular adventure romance: the white man in

---

<sup>18</sup> Stape, *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*, 9–10.

<sup>19</sup> Stape, *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*, 64–5.

the tropics. However, due to the actions of the first half, Patusan is also ruled out to become a typical place for the world of heroic adventures.<sup>20</sup> Conrad intended *Lord Jim* to be only a short story about Jim's abandonment of the Patna and his breaking of moral codes, yet later, he felt a structural need for Patusan material to be present in his story and thus, the novel itself became 'a short story that had got beyond the writer's control'.<sup>21</sup>

## 2.2 Heart of Darkness & Africa

Just like *Lord Jim*, the Congolese novel was first serialized in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1899. The novel immediately aroused substantial controversy and attracted various literary critics during subsequent decades, who criticised the book for its issues regarding feminism and racism. Nonetheless and without a doubt, *Heart of Darkness* proves to be ahead of its times as it implicitly relates to colonial twentieth-century affairs and provides progressive insight into imperialist activities in Africa, while distancing itself from the standards of Victorian literature, beliefs and attitudes. The novel refers to the mistreatment of the Congolese people under the rule of Belgian King Leopold II. and the former *Congo Reform Association* assigns credits to the novel for being 'the most powerful thing ever written on the subject', dealing with issues and concerns that European imperialist powers deliberately choose to ignore.

The story is told as the tale within the tale, told by a British gentleman to other British gentlemen and resembling the social customs of gentlemen's clubs and gatherings at which men would meet to compare and exchange their adventurous experiences.<sup>22</sup> *Heart of Darkness* underlines the conflict of *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, with the difference that a test by the sea is now presented as a test by the African wilderness. In addition, the story begins where *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*<sup>23</sup> ends, in the estuary of the Thames River – the point which represents a gateway to the outside world. However, *Heart of Darkness*

---

<sup>20</sup> Robert Hampson, *Cross-Cultural Encounters in Joseph Conrad's Malay Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 129.

<sup>21</sup> Robert F. Haugh, "The Structure of Lord Jim," *College English* 13, no. 3 (December 1951): 137. JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/372305>.

<sup>22</sup> Stape, *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*, 45–56.

<sup>23</sup> Joseph Conrad, *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus': A Tale of the Sea, In the Nigger of the 'Narcissus' and Other Stories*, ed. Allan H. Simmons (London: Penguin, 2007), Proquest Ebrary <http://literature.proquest.com>.

shifts its focus from defined traditions of fidelity to the matter of a greater scale: the civilization and humanity as such.<sup>24</sup>

### 2.3 Nostromo & Latin America

*Nostromo: A Tale of Seaboard* is universally acknowledged as the most complex of all Conrad's novels. This time, the Western Hemisphere finally grabs Conrad's attention but not groundlessly – the rising imperialism and the flourishing economy of the United States are rightly regarded as one of the reasons why Conrad decided to set the story of *Nostromo* in Latin America. However, *Nostromo* also indicates the first book that Conrad writes from very modest personal experience and thus, he mostly relies on other materials and historical records. At the age of eighteen, Conrad only spent few weeks in Latin America during his voyages to Venezuela and the Caribbean. Nonetheless, despite many demanding and exhausting battles to finish the book, Conrad manages to complete *Nostromo* in 1904. The story is divided into three parts and each individual part tries to depict what lies behind the topic of revolution, history and human progress on the example of multiple plots and characters of old Creole and European families, revolutionists and foreign exploiters who share the same obsession with the silver mine.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Jacques Berthoud, *Joseph Conrad: The Major Phase (British and Irish Authors)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 41–4.

<sup>25</sup> Stape, *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*, 81–2.

## II ANALYSIS

### 3 LORD JIM

#### 3.1 The Encounter with the East

Conrad encounters the Malaysian region at a crucial point of the history of relations between East and West and in the East, Conrad for the first time gets to fully understand the practical meaning of expatriating, betrayal and exile of other Westerners. These Eastern themes occupy Conrad for his whole life and offer him a great number of suggestions which are reflected in his fiction. However, according to certain evidence, Conrad could not gain a deep insight into the Malaysian life. Apparently, while travelling around the Malaysian Archipelago as a seaman, Conrad did not have any significant chance to acquire any intimate Malaysian friends, except shipping clerks, as he only stayed in the region for a few months. Therefore, his Eastern world is rather established on the idea of a sensitive expatriate – one who lives in a foreign country for a certain period of time without looking on himself as one of its nationals. Conrad's information about such individuals is rather based on shore gossips, colonial newspapers or oral stories of other men.

The very central characters of the Malaysian stories are Europeans, principally English and Dutch, as they represent colonial powers of the region at that time. By the portrayal of Malays, Arabs, Eurasians and Chinese, Conrad tries to depict the formation of new societies in the Malaysian region and following consequences of blending of these cultures together. Moreover, Conrad also describes the lawlessness of the area, or in other words, the condition when it is hard to discover whether true laws exist at all.<sup>26</sup> Conrad's Eastern fiction therefore serves as the witness of the actual conditions between colonized people and their colonizers, it depicts the true image of 'white man in the tropics', rather than efficient and benevolent bearers of civilization's torch - the men cut off in the jungle, nostalgic for Europe and drunk on power. While Conrad's depiction of white men in the tropics is relatively unheroic, Conrad also questions the theory of native dependency upon European colonizers and demonstrates that even if the native people are often in dependent

---

<sup>26</sup> Lloyd Fernando, "Conrad's Eastern Expatriates: A New Version of His Outcasts," *PMLA* 94, no. 1 (January 1976): 79–85. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/461397>.



positions, they eventually deprive Europeans of their full dependency and enter into an active revolt.<sup>27</sup>

### 3.2 Conrad's Marlow

Charlie Marlow is the most fundamental of Conrad's characters and a recurring persona in his fiction. Marlow is the voice behind *Youth*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Lord Jim* and *Chance*, although all of four stories are not narrated directly by Marlow but by the unnamed narrator, who like Marlow, has some connection to the sea and passes on the message of Marlow's story-telling. However, it is clear that for Conrad, Marlow means more than just one of his characters or narrators. Marlow could be considered to be Conrad's embodiment in his own fiction, or in other words, his alter ego through which Conrad portrays his insights and challenges his readers to draw their own conclusions. Furthermore, Marlow is also important for Conrad's own identity in terms of his adopted Englishness because Marlow represents the Englishman Conrad would have liked to be.<sup>28</sup>

Another crucial point about Marlow is his colonial perspective as it reveals the gap between foresight and reality. Marlow's narratives serve as an indicator of the fact that the East that European colonists often expected to find eventually betrays them and drives them into delusion, as Marlow claims in one of his passages: "The East spoke to me, but it was in a Western voice". The mutual incomprehension of the unknown, hostile silence and first interracial encounters all contribute to the traumatic experiences and bitter realization that the East pushed for a greater influence, almost colonizing the minds of its colonizers. Consequently, in relation to this point of view, the East becomes either an active force of demobilizing Conrad's protagonists or an implicit force of eliciting desire from them. In addition, Marlow is in some cases as well a witness of the collapse of racial sovereignty and indicates what happen when Europeans lose the superiority that they usurp for themselves. Thus, Marlow helps Conrad to show that European colonizers suffer from their

---

<sup>27</sup> Stape, *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*, 184–9.

<sup>28</sup> Paul Wake, *Conrad's Marlow: Narrative and death in 'Youth', Heart of Darkness, Lord Jim and Chance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 1–2.

own arrogance about other forms of existence and they allow their imagination to ‘soar far above the tree-tops’.<sup>29</sup>

### 3.3 Breaking the Code

In *Lord Jim*, the relationship and friendship between Jim and Marlow is rather intricate and their everlasting bond might seem to be inexplicable at first. However, further investigation of this matter brings its clarification. What actually impresses Marlow about Jim the most lies in his refusal to admit defeat and to accept that his daydreaming evolves into illusion and deception. Besides, at some point, Jim has no choice but to persuade Marlow about the validity of his attitude so he could get an approval of another soul in order to continue being able to believe in himself. Yet, at the same time, Marlow frequently keeps his ambiguous approach towards Jim: as a man who is able to recall the illusion and dreams of his own youth, but also as an experienced man of the sea, who understands the consequences of breaking the code of conduct. Therefore, Marlow provides two different points of view towards Jim – such as ‘one of us’ as Jim is an inseparable member of the community that live by the code. Yet, on the other hand, Marlow is as well aware of what he has done and thus he too realizes that Jim is ‘under a cloud’. Nevertheless, it seems that it is just Jim’s inconceivable moral suffering and the weight of his wrongdoing that pull Marlow towards Jim the most, and by having no choice, Jim completely surrenders himself to Marlow.<sup>30</sup>

In addition, Marlow is also attracted to Jim because he simply reminds him of his younger self and because Jim seems to be a youth ‘of the right sort’, which eventually even magnifies the fact that Jim’s leap from the Patna is, after all, a betrayal of Marlow’s own conception of his youth and profession. Ultimately, the theme of *Lord Jim* is rather about what Jim’s story means to Marlow than what really happens to Jim, and thus Marlow is also the character who learns the most and for whom Jim’s actions have the real significance.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> Christopher Lane, “Almayer’s Defeat: The Trauma of Colonialism in Conrad’s Early Work,” *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 32, no. 3 (1999): 2–21. JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1346154>.

<sup>30</sup> Berthoud, *Joseph Conrad: The Major Phase*, 87–90.

<sup>31</sup> Raymond Gates Malbone, ““How to be”: Marlow’s Quest in *Lord Jim*,” *Twentieth Century Literature* 10, no. 4 (1965): 172. JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/440559>.

### 3.4 Behind the Leap

There are many ways of interpreting Jim's jump from the Patna and understanding what makes him join the rest of the crew in their abandonment of the ship with eight hundred Muslim pilgrims travelling from Singapore to Mecca. Furthermore, it is essential to comprehend what kind of psychological aspect allows this 'youth of the right sort' to perform this irretrievable misconduct that puts him under a cloud for the rest of his life. Still, one of Jim's fundamental characteristics is his imaginative optimism or more precisely, projecting a vision of himself that lacks any basis in reality and leaves him in his own world of illusion and idealistic self-image. Despite the fact that this situation is individual in Jim's case, Conrad intends to prove that it is the ordinary universal condition of youth and a part of youth's ambitions that must eventually fade away before maturity. Therefore, Conrad's target in the story is to demonstrate the contradictory and paradoxical function of imagination – on the one hand, the abundant source of conception beyond reality, yet, on the other, the power which is capable of evoking the state of mere illusion. Thus, in relation to the story, the tendency of self-imagination proves to be rather destructive and devouring more than a creative force of interpretation of the reality that ultimately makes an individual being drunk on himself.

In contrast, according to the evidence provided by the Malay helmsman during the Patna Inquiry, at the moment of the officer's abandonment of the Patna, the helmsman claims that he thought nothing. This proclamation suggests a completely different extreme comparing to Jim's constant imaginative optimism – the absolute failure of imagination by preserving a strict and fully automatic adherence to the code of seamanship and acceptance of things exactly as they are. However, Conrad obliquely indicates that a lack of imagination is as fatal as being constantly caught in its processes. If Jim's jump from the Patna could be considered as a wholly natural impulse deriving from an instinctive gesture to save his own life, simultaneously, it contradicts the societal pressure of the code which requires an individual to forego his own life in the service to others.<sup>32</sup> It is the imagination that gives Jim his vision of heroism, but that at the same time gives him also a vision of fear. Yet, it is not his fear that is responsible for his failure, but the power of his

---

<sup>32</sup> Stape, *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*, 70–3.

imagination and its ability to project a fear with all its consequences. Jim's eventual jump from the Patna is therefore not just an impulsive mistake, but the prolonged habit of self-deception.<sup>33</sup>

### 3.5 The Idealism

During the night of the crisis on the ship, as Jim is on the watch in the immense stillness of a tropical night, he once again starts to indulge himself in those imaginary achievements of his secret life and their usual intoxicating impacts. This divine moment of carrying his soul far away from the actual reality is suddenly interrupted by the fearless boasting of the second engineer, who emerges on board like a grotesque and drunken parody of a heroic dream. Jim's ludicrous moment of complete self-illusion is suddenly disrupted by a sobering jolt of the ship, followed by 'a faint noise as of a thunder, less than a sound, hardly more than a vibration' and the emergency for which Jim was so studiously preparing himself has struck out of the blue. In relation to the following events, while investigating the cause of the damage, Jim's imagination starts to project completely different scenarios. His head is filled with the image of eight hundred passengers struggling in the sea and other possible consequences of the unavoidable tragedy. Eventually, Jim's self-idealization develops into a fatal flaw once tested by an ordeal, first inhibiting him and then preventing him from doing his duty. All of these paralyzing imaginations also in addition intensified by the unimaginable amount of chaos, result in Jim's leap into an everlasting deep hole which unquestionably determines his role as a social outcast. Jim thus fails because he exchanges his real self for an ideal self and on top of that also develops a guarding mechanism which protects this ideal version of himself – while minimizing the distinction between intention and action.<sup>34</sup>

### 3.6 The Power of Gossips

Another crucial matter regarding *Lord Jim*, which might not be so transparent and obvious while reading the story, is the influence of gossip on an individual. Even Conrad's

---

<sup>33</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Lord Jim*, ed. Allan H. Simmons (London: Penguin, 2007), ProQuest Ebrary <http://literature.proquest.com>.

<sup>34</sup> Berthoud, *Joseph Conrad: The Major Phase*, 72–8.

narratives are often produced on the basis of the oral forms of gossips and legends and Jim is also first introduced to the readers through the capacity of community gossips of the South Asian seaports. Furthermore, Jim's failure on the *Patna* establishes its own source of gossip and constructs its own oral community in the Malay region. Marlow describes the European oral community as male after-dinner discourse and the narrative of *Lord Jim* is created by this community as well and gossips habitually occupy its own territory in these after-dinner sessions.

Yet, Jim's story designs a brand new base for the scandal that goes beyond the lines of this professional oral community to a much larger colonial community. The story of the *Patna* is everywhere: it is the major issue of every harbour and ship crew, orally passed from whites to natives and from natives to whites and the whole waterside speaks of nothing else. To the very contrast of gossiping, there is a confession which represents a device that enables Jim to fully trust Marlow and completely give himself up to him by the force of their confidentiality. Nonetheless, after all, the *Patna* incident is a public property, it has the power to burn a man to ashes with shame and it could potentially undermine the European position of authority in their colonies. It can only result in sending Jim to exile from which there is nowhere to go, not even home.<sup>35</sup>

### 3.7 The Instinct & The Code

According to Marlow, the nature of the code of conduct needs to present the unlimited power over natural instincts, it is created and determined by the community, and thus is out of the individual's hands. However, the difference is that Jim's perception of the code is not something that must be obeyed at any cost, but as something to be used. Jim does not focus so much on what it demands as on what it provides – glory at danger overcome. Instead of putting more effort into practising and improving his craft, he rather dreams of events which always makes him be the hero and the best possible example of his profession. The result, however, evokes a counter-productive effect: instead of strengthening him for the service, it demoralizes him. Therefore, the code and the most powerful impulse of our nature – the instinct of self-preservation, face each other when it comes to an ordeal, and courage is what lies between them.

---

<sup>35</sup> Hampson, *Cross-Cultural Encounters in Joseph Conrad's Malay Fiction*, 129–31.

Nevertheless, if the first part of the novel is concerned with an obedience towards this code of conduct, the second part is focused on its implications and a possible redemption by exploring under the sponsorship of the German merchant Stein, from which Marlow decides to seek advice about Jim's despair. Stein is the former soldier and adventurer in the East, who became a trader and entomologist and who, unlike Jim, had a capacity to seize an opportunity when it presented itself. Moreover, Stein is also the character of the story who provides a solution while asking the mythical question of 'how to be'. He realizes that the problem of life is its consciousness, or in other words, the human ability to think, which creates an inescapable loop of situation where man has no other option but entrust himself to his dream. Thus, Stein understands that, ironically, Jim's possible remedy is only the dream itself. Hence, he tries to give Jim his last hope: to provide him with his ideal conception of himself. To achieve this, Stein gives Jim a chance to be rescued by a different ethic – the one that would choose the force of individual vision over the external system of codes and conducts. Consequently, Stein gives Jim the second chance by sending him to Patusan, a remote and unexplored island of the Malaysian Archipelago, where at least, Jim can search for his alleviation.<sup>36</sup>

### 3.8 The Exile

The Patusan episodes of *Lord Jim* are like the antithesis to the Patna affair and their structural simplicity and romantic elements disclose a full development of the story. Patusan thus represents a place where Jim can expiate his sentence of existential isolation while still striving to blindly achieve his dream. When Jim first arrives in Patusan, he finds a place of lawless and isolated self-governing communities, whose universality is underlined by its mixed ethnic composition. There is an intricate political situation of complex alliances and intrigues taking place between Arab and Malay tribes, spiced up by the interventions of new outsiders such as Chinese communities and Western colonialists. Yet, despite this intricate political and cultural situation, Patusan is also a place where Jim discovers love and friendship and consequently finds responsibility.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Berthoud, *Joseph Conrad: The Major Phase*, 70 – 89.

<sup>37</sup> Stape, *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*, 74–6.

However, it would be a mistake to imagine Jim's life in Patusan as the one where a white man goes native. Patusan is not annexed by any of the European colonial powers as Marlow would describe it as a place "of no earthly importance to anybody". Hence, Patusan is simply overrun by anarchy and racial diversity of merchants, labourers and slaves, where Jim's pure individualism serves as a vulnerability that makes him incapable to compete with all of these racial hierarchies. It is the little point on the map, where European capital and Asian labour intermingle and Jim as the agent of middleman Stein is as much immigrant as the Asian peasants who find themselves in there. Even though it would be too false to think about Jim to be the only Westerner in Patusan, as there are other immigrants in the story who find their way to Patusan, but without a doubt, Patusan provides a totally new set of conditions for his imaginative capacity to work upon. This is what underlines the chance that Stein delivered to Jim, a set of new possibilities and challenges opened up by a new and fresh environment where Jim can engage differently.<sup>38</sup>

### 3.9 The Final Redemption

Patusan is supposed to be a place of Jim's personal rehabilitation at first, but on the other hand, Jim's arrival to Patusan also undermines the stabilities of racial identification and causes the ruin of the local community. Moreover, even if Jim achieves his personal greatness, his heroism pushed to its absolute limits is defined rather negatively. Jim is the reason why Doramin – the Malaysian patriarch, loses his son Dain Warris, who was the Patusan's hope of establishing a new dynasty that would put an end to the political instability of the island. Jim's heroic pattern in Patusan requires isolation in order to survive, but once it is disrupted by the unforeseen invasion of another European, Gentleman Brown and his crew, it crumbles down perfectly.<sup>39</sup>

Undoubtedly, Patusan offers Jim all that the world could offer: a place where he is wanted and needed, its people who trust him and rely on him as well as his position of great responsibility and fidelity. Furthermore, Jim gains a brotherly love from prince Dain

---

<sup>38</sup> Sanjay Krishnan, "Seeing the Animal: Colonial Space and Movement in Joseph Conrad's Lord Jim," *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 37, no. 3 (2004): 342–44. JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40267598>.

<sup>39</sup> Jacques Darras, *Joseph Conrad and The West; Signs of Empire* (Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press, 1982), 24–6.

Warris and the heart of Jewel. Besides, Jim's position in this isolated little society is more complex and meaningful than his position on the *Patna* – instead of being just a mate of a ship, his position and authority in Patusan could be compared to the one of prime minister. The crucial difference between these two episodes is that while on *Patna* there was just this abstract sense of duty to the code that guided him, in Patusan, the magnetic bond of humanity plays its role. Jim's heroism in Patusan is driven by sensible attributes such as confidence, fidelity, love and loyalty. However, despite all of these new forms of redemption that Patusan has to offer, some of the old elements of the *Patna* experience still have to remain. These connections to his former life and transgressions are reflected through the senseless ferocity of Gentleman Brown, who offers Jim his last test. The test given before by the sea is now presented and offered to Jim by the evil in human form. Yet, there is one aspect that is common for both of them – they are both sentenced to live in exile and isolation from the world outside, their condemnation just derives from completely opposite actions. For Jim, it is his inability to seize his greatness in there, while for Brown it is his disrespectful implementation of his very evil upon it. Therefore, Brown is his own brother and to give him a chance means to give himself a chance, which eventually results in the defeat of people who tenaciously trust in Jim, and in the death of his dearest friend.

Consequently, the old theme of the *Patna* is presented again and Jim is offered his second jump. However, this time, Jim does not choose to jump. Even despite the fact that Jewel pleads with him to run away and save himself for her in order to be worthy of her trust and love. She speaks of her need for him to jump just like the crew aboard the *Patna* urged on him to jump, but this time, Jim knows 'how to be'. Despite all of his fears and instincts for self-preservation, Jim does not choose to jump. His courage wins over natural instincts and Jim chooses honour which comes hand in hand with death. Thereupon, by choosing so, he consequently manages to finally redeem himself, even though that after all, he still dies for an ideal version of himself.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Haugh, "The Structure of Lord Jim," 138–41.



## 4 HEART OF DARKNESS

### 4.1 Scramble for Africa

In *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad transforms the setting of his story from exotic islands of the East to an even more mysterious and baffling piece of land: Central Africa. Throughout the European history, Africa was considered to be this mysterious and unknown continent in the south and it took some time for Europe to find an incentive to finally explore this land. Yet, suddenly, the nineteenth-century affairs place Africa under the total control of the European powers such as Germany, Italy, Portugal, France and Britain. Every European power wants its piece of this African cake while one individual man, King Leopold II, dominates the very heart of it: the Congo.

Africa would no longer represent just a blank and uncharted space on the map. New lands offering new opportunities attract many explorers and adventurers, David Livingstone being the most celebrated of them. The British missionary-explorer who dedicates his life to the purpose of opening up Africa to Christianity with his twenty years long crusades during which he makes many significant discoveries. However, Livingstone does not manage to finish his primary mission – to reveal the great geographical mystery of Africa by discovering the ancient fountains of Herodotus from which the Nile takes its source. Eventually, this mission is accomplished after his death by Lieutenant Verney Cameron, another British explorer who is in charge of Livingstone's search and rescue party. Cameron becomes the first European to ever cross Central Africa from east to west and tracks a current of the river Lualaba only to find out the opposite of what Livingstone thoroughly believed in: the Lualaba is actually just another part of the river Congo, not the Nile. However, to his surprise, the Congo – due to its size and position would actually serve far better than the Nile to the purpose of bringing commerce and Christianity into the heart of Africa.<sup>41</sup>

### 4.2 The Possession of a Single Man

Cameron's tremendous discovery in Central Africa impresses the whole of Europe, including the Belgium king Leopold II., who swiftly promises to cover the overall expenses of Cameron's expedition. King Leopold is eager to establish a Belgian colony so

---

<sup>41</sup> Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa* (London: Abacus, 1991), chapter 1.

he could find an investment of the surplus capital that Belgium produces and simultaneously establish a merchant navy that Belgium lacks. Consequently, after his failed attempts at obtaining colonies in the east, Leopold has to search for another solution, and he finds it in the land of unspeakable richness.<sup>42</sup>

As a matter of fact, Leopold is a good strategist and his preparedness and strategy for the Berlin Conference in 1885 helps him to acquire much more than just a Belgian colony in Africa. Leopold is given rights to establish his own private colony, as other powers hope to forestall conflict among themselves by assigning the Congo to this relatively weak monarch. Thus, the Congo becomes the possession of a single man. However, managing a private colony proves not to be a simple deal: any colony requires an initial period of financial aids from its mother country in order to establish basic structures of administration, transportation, and communication. Yet, Leopold's Congo lacks this financial backing because the Belgian king exhausted his personal fortune on exploring the land's borders and establishing a military presence. Moreover, in order to face the competition of private traders and gain new sources of revenue, Leopold establishes a set of new taxes which helps to put private merchants out of their business and turns the whole colony into a vast slave plantation. Leopold has neither the capital nor the capability to develop the productivity of the Congo as he pledges to accomplish during the Berlin Conference. Instead, he uses his brute power of forced labour to exploit the country's rich sources of ivory and copal whereas his murderous rule decreases a population of the Congo by three million when finally in 1906, Berlin powers intervene again in order to take over his private country.

### 4.3 Rois de Belges

In *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad judges imperialism by two key criteria: efficiency and idea. According to Conrad, there are many proofs of Leopold's inefficient rule: the failed attempt to build a railway or the absence of a stable currency system are the most obvious ones. However, Conrad judges Leopold also according to his violation of trust as he was unable to improve the moral well-being of the colony. Despite the fact that Conrad spends

---

<sup>42</sup> Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, chapter 1–2.

just six months in Africa due to his illness, his story conveys an insight of African tribal cultures and demonstrates how imperialism affects indigenous cultures.<sup>43</sup>

Conrad's experience in Africa proves to be very intensive and demanding and significantly alters the rest of his life. Conrad set off to Africa in 1890 in order to become captain of the Belgian company riverboat *Rois de Belges* on the Congo River, the same region that he had been dreaming to explore since he was a young boy. Although, he actually never becomes a captain due to several accidents that damaged his steamboat before his arrival. Conrad thus has to travel under another leadership – just like Marlow in the story. Nonetheless, his service for the Belgian company reveals the harsh realities of the nineteenth-century imperialist activities in the African region which consequently result in Conrad's poor physical and psychical conditions, taking him eight years to actually start writing this novel after his return to England. The mission of Conrad's voyage was to find and rescue the sick Belgian agent Georges-Antoine Klein who eventually did not survive the return voyage, and who was apparently a source of inspiration for Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*. Conrad once again portrays his personal experiences and adventures through the character of Charlie Marlow, who is the protagonist and central narrative voice behind the whole story.

#### 4.4 The Englishness

England and a notion of Englishness significantly influence the story which tries to determine the difference among European powers by demonstrating the contrast between colonizing and plundering. As Marlow's moral integrity is tested by the wilderness, he strives to explain his own behaviour in ethical terms, yet he is unable to provide a rational argumentation for his attachment to Kurtz, which is obliquely determined by the power of national character that unconsciously shapes his actions.<sup>44</sup> For some reason, Marlow finds himself to be attached to Kurtz rather than to the Manager of the company, and although he

---

<sup>43</sup> Hawkins, "Conrad's Critique of Imperialism in Heart of Darkness," 289–98.

<sup>44</sup> Pericles Lewis, "'His Sympathies Were in the Right Place': Heart of Darkness and the Discourse of National Character," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 53, no. 2 (1998): 212–13. JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2902984>.

is not able to adequately explain his attachment to Kurtz, one of the possible reasons is the question of nationality. As a matter of fact, Kurtz is half English and he claims to represent liberal English values that might implicitly appeal to Marlow's familiar notion of friendship and brotherhood constituting the basis of his maritime life. Although Marlow never admits that Kurtz's association with England might form an inclination towards him, whenever something appeals to his English nationality, it immediately draws him to Kurtz's side in this definite choice of nightmares.<sup>45</sup>

#### 4.5 The Misinterpretation

The story begins with an implicit suggestion that people who go to Africa are changed by the cruelty of experiences that they have to face in the wilderness. Furthermore, the doctor who evaluates Marlow's health admits that he would not be such a fool to expose himself to the perils which go hand in hand with a journey to any exotic and uncivilized country. Even Marlow's predecessor as a captain of the *Rois de Belges*, the Dane Fersleven, who is referred to be a gentle and quiet man, is exposed to certain mental challenges as he unexpectedly loses his life in anger and indignation. This initial suggestion is proved to be appropriate not just by what happens to Marlow, but primarily, by what happens to Conrad too. However, what makes *Heart of Darkness* such a compelling story is exactly its basis on real memories and events.<sup>46</sup>

Marlow just like other employees of the Company might see Africa as mysterious, strange and obscure, but unlike them, he understands that it is completely real. He realizes that cultural relativity creates the contrast between the vigorous, yet uncivilized native people of Africa and their flaccid invaders. Africans have nothing to search for, and they have nothing to prove, they belong to their land just like their land belongs to them. When Marlow discovers that some men of his crew are cannibals he is not really appalled. He understands a diversity of another cultural reality: what might seem to be absolutely horrifying in Europe is just a factual discovery in the Congo. Thus, Marlow actually feels

---

<sup>45</sup> Lewis, "His Sympathies Were in the Right Place", 216–17.

<sup>46</sup> Brigit Maier-Katkin and Daniel Maier-Katkin, "At the Heart of Darkness: Crimes against Humanity and the Banality of Evil," 6–13.

appreciation for the quality of determination and restraint of the cannibals as they are able to calmly resist their temptation: while their European counterparts do not possess such qualities.

Paradoxically, it is not Africans that Marlow perceives to be unreal, but their European invaders and colonizers. However, their unreality does not originate from the indisputable impact of a culturally and geographically hostile environment, but from their failure to recognize it. Therefore, as a result, they are unable to understand the values that they are supposed to represent, and instead, they believe that the society that sustains them is much stronger and greater than the tribal communities they encounter. Moreover, this misinterpretation of realities implies some sinister repercussions and makes it possible for invaders to treat primitive populations just like exploitative raw material, possibly even less valuable than the ivory they seek. The African jungle thus provides a trial and its results explore what it means to be civilized and why an understanding of civilization is crucial, once it is being tested by another cultural reality accompanied by the wilderness.

#### **4.6 The Lack of Integrity**

Marlow soon develops an unfavourable relationship with the Manager of the Central station and his direct supervisor. The Manager considers himself to be one of the right types of exploiters as he finds himself to have the great advantage of invulnerable physical health and resilience: unlike his rivals, he is capable to withstand tropical fever or any kind of exotic diseases which amongst other threats lurk in the inscrutable African wilderness. Yet, despite his good immunity and physical hardiness, the Manager is not different than other exploiters, and as a matter of fact, Marlow detests him the most. The Manager might be able to keep the routine going, but he lacks any kind of endowment for organizing or leading – barring the one of acquiring the maximum profit for minimum effort.

Unlike the Manager and other Company exploiters, Marlow strives to find an integrity in the work which is impossible to find in the colony. He only finds it in the Chief Accountant of the Lower Station, however, this exception of consistent competence is achieved at the costs of inhuman disengagement. The Chief Accountant might be utterly precise in his ‘correct entries of perfectly correct transactions’ for the Company, yet he remains indifferent towards the destructive consequences of exploitations which take place just outside his door. In order to protect himself from all of these disintegrations, Marlow tries to find fidelity in his work which would finally provide him a hold of his own

identity, as he claims, *'No, I don't like work, no man does – but I like what is in the work, – the chance to find yourself. Your own reality – for yourself, not for others, what no other man can ever know'*.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, he attempts to fully engage to his mission of a riverboat captain, but to his misfortune, he has no such luck and his boat is out of service for a couple of months due to several prior damages.

As Marlow travels deeper and deeper into the jungle under another leadership, he also gets to learn more about Kurtz – the man who is loathed and envied by the whole Company, including the Manager. Kurtz is the chief agent of the Inner Station and is in need of a prompt rescue from the heart of darkness where he was sent to operate from. Kurtz is a real embodiment of success and a representation of European excellence in almost every aspect. He is not just an outstanding ivory collector operating from the middle of the completely remote wilderness, but he also possesses the multiplicity of other talents: as a politician, musician, journalist or a skilful orator. Marlow, during his journey on the river, learns that there is an actual conspiracy against Kurtz designed by the Manager and the enterprise by intentionally delaying Kurtz's rescue mission in the hope that the wilderness itself would finish Kurtz off. Even though that the Manager remains in complete control of events – and thus in control of Kurtz's fate too, it is unavoidable that Marlow eventually finds himself drawn towards the idea of a man who unlike other invaders seems to be equipped with moral ideas of some sort. Kurtz is the contrast of the Manager, he is a man of exceptional talents and cultures who understands how to use his privileges and natural talents in order to thrive even in one of the most challenging and demanding places on Earth.<sup>48</sup>

#### 4.7 The Megalomania

*Heart of Darkness* proposes a moral dilemma reflected in Conrad's own identification with Kurtz, which is subsequently portrayed in Marlow's duality of narration. Even though Marlow grasps Kurtz's intensity of desire, he does not admire it, he only tries to purify it. Yet, Marlow is not just a simple character because he represents Conrad's point of view

---

<sup>47</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, ed. Owen Knowles (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2007), ProQuest Ebrary <http://literature.proquest.com>

<sup>48</sup> Berthoud, *Joseph Conrad: The Major Phase*, 50–60.

and his glimpse into a sense of the story, which is sometimes confusing as it is not easy to find a clear resolution to its conflict of identification. Without doubts, what Marlow finds so impressing about Kurtz is his linguistic proficiency. Kurtz's articulacy compensates for his inner emptiness and undoubtedly helps him to cultivate admiration from others. His speech is capable to achieve a moment of real presence and a glimpse of the truth and therefore is also capable to win obedience even of those wild hearts of the jungle. However, just like Marlow represents more than just a simple character, equally, Kurtz represents more than just his character of extraordinary European ruling in the jungle. He embodies the vision of Conrad's fictional ambitions and on top of that, he creates the substance that Conrad strives to find.<sup>49</sup>

As Marlow infiltrates deeper into the jungle of the Congo together with the Manager and their crew attempting to rescue Kurtz from his own darkness, Marlow's feelings are exposed to certain changes. As Marlow finds himself to be more and more isolated in the African wilderness, he begins to perceive civilization as something that is not just given but as something that has to be achieved. Eventually, this realization is what distinguishes Marlow from Kurtz. If Marlow's disapproval of the exploitation of the primitive is what differentiates him from the Manager, then his refusal to surrender to the primitive is what differentiates him from Kurtz. Moreover, Marlow suggests that 'Kurtz has taken a high seat among the devils of the land' because a man cannot simply abandon his cultural values in order to regain the reality possessed by primitive cultures. Kurtz's abandonment of his own cultural values and of civilization as such makes him fall into the state of self-deception. He is a martyr of his own gifts – especially his gift of speech allowing him to live in the delusion of his God-like position which enables him to commit atrocities like his ferocious raiding excursions for ivory or a decoration of his house with shrunken heads of his victims. After all, Kurtz's attempts to become a god only makes him a devil.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Alcorn, "The Narcissism of Creation and Interpretation: Agon at the Heart of Darkness," 160–170.

<sup>50</sup> Berthoud, *Joseph Conrad: The Major Phase*, 52–5.

#### 4.8 The Trial of the Jungle

Marlow's final stage of his ordeal arrives when he finds out that Kurtz even in his poor health condition left his cabin in order to reunite with his tribesmen. Marlow understands that this is the time when he needs to prove his loyalty to the nightmare of his choice and stop Kurtz from re-joining the wilderness. Consequently, his choice of nightmares does not simply imply just a choice between Kurtz and the Manager but also a choice between the Company's spiteful politics and Kurtz's absolute megalomania and thus, Marlow remains under no illusion. Despite all his gifts and talents, Kurtz is incapable of restraint and thus also fidelity to the values of his profession. When Marlow goes after Kurtz, he pursues the opposite of values he believes in, he pursues his antithesis – while the test of the wilderness comes to confront him.

Kurtz is the creation torn between European fantasies and African lusts and Marlow knows that if he has any chance of bringing him back, he needs to disconnect him from the primitive by appealing to his dreams of greater plans awaiting him in Europe.<sup>51</sup> Marlow's strength derives from his capacity to serve a moral idea and withstand all those challenges and temptations of the wilderness. To prevent Kurtz from returning to the jungle is not just a matter of survival, it is a spiritual victory and a triumphing confirmation of the reality of the civilized against that of the primitive.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, Kurtz's last moments alive help to distinguish a gap between the man he once was and the man he has become, who preserves just enough humanity to cry out in horror. If a man is defined by his own work, then Kurtz's work creates a hell that eventually also destroys him. He betrays the natives and reduces them to poverty and by that, he also betrays the humanity in himself. Nonetheless, by Kurtz's failure, Marlow is capable to learn his own capacity of resisting evil temptation.<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> Berthoud, *Joseph Conrad: The Major Phase*, 55–69.

<sup>53</sup> Lillian Feder, "Marlow's Descent Into Hell," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 9, no. 4 (1955): 287–92. JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3044393>.



## 5 NOSTROMO

### 5.1 Costaguana

Costaguana is Conrad's wholly invented fictional and independent country in Latin America, with Sulaco as the capital city of all political and industrial affairs. In addition, it is also a significant economic colony, even if its leadership is made up of ancestors of old Spanish families, the country fairly depends on foreign investment of American and European investors. The major economic factor of Costaguana is comprised of its affluent silver mine, which significantly influences not just Costaguana's political affairs, but also its foreign commercial interest. Therefore, as the economy of Costaguana is shaped and limited by its foreign capital, the country is also under an indirect political control of foreign investors such as American capitalist Holroyd, who with hidden interest generously invests into the silver mine or his British counterpart Sir John, who arrives to Sulaco to establish a railway line in order to equalize foreign technological progress. Moreover, Sulaco is also a crucial port with its representation of *Oceanic Steam Navigation Company*, which opens the gates of Sulaco to the imperial world. Eventually, due to its intricate situation regarding foreign interest and its indisputable influence, Costaguana is bound to undergo a transition from old Spanish colonialism to new imperialism.<sup>54</sup>

### 5.2 The Silver Obsession

Costaguana represents the kind of human progress which prioritizes material interest over moral principles, as foreign imperialism exploits Costaguana's natural resources. Consequently, a loss of moral principles leads only to corruption, and where is corruption, there is no human betterment. Even if Charles Gould tries to use his silver mine in order to stop the endless revolutions in Costaguana, it only results in another wave of revolutions.<sup>55</sup> However, although the silver mine in San Tomé is surrounded by a mystery which soon turns into a pure obsession, its expansion undoubtedly brings technological development to

---

<sup>54</sup> Nursel İçöz, "Conrad and Ambiguity: Social Commitment and Ideology in Heart of Darkness and Nostromo," *Conradiana* 37, no. 3 (2005): 259–60. Literature Online.

<sup>55</sup> İçöz, *Conrad and Ambiguity*, 260–1.

Costaguana in form of a railroad or a telegraph. Yet, despite the wealth, influence and power that the silver in Costaguana is capable to offer, the worth of silver derives from a simple convention: the human agreement to consider a certain metal precious and therefore use it as a medium of exchange – while its true worth is handled by the foreign investors. In Costaguana, silver becomes a commodity that has its own significance for everyone – for Gould, for the reformers, for the government and for the foreign investors. However, one significant value is common for all of them: a desire. Nevertheless, despite the limitless worth of the silver mine, Costaguanan society together with its foreign investors is doomed to realize that they may learn how to transform and control nature – but can never fully master it.<sup>56</sup>

### 5.3 Idealism & Megalomania Again

Despite the fact that Charles Gould always considered himself to be a true Americano, he grew up in England, where his parents sent him to acquire a proper education. Thus, England and its imperialist tradition help to establish Gould's determination to exploit the silver mine and make a great personal success of it. However, Gould's exploitation requires a personal justification which derives from a strong sense of idealism, but eventually, is weakened by immoral human progress and material interest. Gould's decision to reopen his family mine in Costaguana evolves from the desire to succeed where his father failed.

Moreover, with his silver mine, Gould wants to subvert a long history of revolutions and brutal regimes in Costaguana and finally bring peace and prosperity to his homeland. He endeavours to replace lawlessness with human progress and although his silver mine is operated solely by himself, his mission still depends on foreign capital, which eventually gives foreigners the control of the economy. Consequently, capitalism transforms a man devoted for a public good into a man, who is only obsessed with his silver mine and forgets about his initial purpose to serve the community. The expansion of his mine is accompanied by moral corruption and his pursuit of material interest might secure him

---

<sup>56</sup> Paul B. Armstrong, "The Ontology of Society in Nostromo," In *The Challenge of Bewilderment: Understanding and Representation in James, Conrad, and Ford* (London: Cornell University Press, 1987), 149–86. JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt207g73q.8>.

with political influence, but it only undermines his purpose of social order that he longed to establish.<sup>57</sup> As Gould gradually abandons his humanizing mission, he finds it more and more difficult to be aware of distinctions between his human purposes and his interests in a role of a mining chief. Paradoxically, he becomes what he tried to avoid: his personality is transformed into an absolute political function and Gould starts to acknowledge that his power is far beyond anyone else's reach: he is the king of Sulaco now. He is the one who persuades the landowners to leave their territory for the sake of railway line, he is in charge of all foreign contracts and he arranges Ribiera's presidency. Gould's political success derives from material interests and is thus only achieved by sacrificing every other goal and purpose. Even though his illusions do not allow him to explicitly realize it, he becomes the capitalist to whom action means work, and work means conquest – undoubtedly creating a new world while believing that he is still serving his initial purpose.<sup>58</sup>

Gould remains an idealist to the core, who is not willing to gamble his life for the sake of his ideal but is willing to gamble his life for the sake of others – just like Jim in *Lord Jim* or Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*. What these idealists have in common is that their heroism consists of illusion and unconscious megalomania. However, unlike Kurtz's megalomania in the Congo or Jim's in Patusan, Gould's megalomania in Costaguana goes mostly unnoticed, because it is rather cultural than personal and is well-covered by Gould's faith in the salvation of his country.<sup>59</sup>

#### 5.4 Egoism & Indifference

Costaguana nonetheless attracts more Europeanized participants than just Charles Gould, there is also another complex character and Gould's counterpart: Martin Decoud. Decoud is just like Gould born in Costaguana but raised in Europe, but unlike Gould, he does not seem to believe in any sort of human ideals. On the one hand, he is a sceptic who denies human commitments, but on the other, he is also a revolutionary leader, thus his personality is comprised by many ambiguous and contradictory traits that are difficult to

---

<sup>57</sup> İçöz, *Conrad and Ambiguity*, 261–3.

<sup>58</sup> Berthoud, *Joseph Conrad: The Major Phase*, 104–9.

<sup>59</sup> Joyce Carol Oates, ““The Immense Indifference of Things”: The Tragedy of Conrad's “Nostromo”,” *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 9, no. 1 (1975): 5–12. JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1345022>.

decipher. Despite his strong scepticism and cynicism though, Decoud is a man who values only his desire to be regarded as an important man, more than any external or personal ideal. He yearns to be the one who always understands the true essence of things despite their complexity, he is driven by his egotistical impulses and they also lead him towards his unexpected political involvement in Costaguana.

Although Decoud, in contrast to Gould, might not be blinded by any sort of idealism, he suffers from a different symptom – his dependence upon the reactions of others. Once he loses a contact with the external world on the Great Isabel Island, where he is left to face a complete solitude while waiting for Nostromo to return, he becomes incapable of handling his own emotions.<sup>60</sup> Hence, his fatal end derives from his lack of commitment and belief resulting in his indifference. He is not interested in any material interest, not even in the silver which is entrusted to him for protection on the island, but he does not sustain any moral identity and thus, he is incapable of coping with merely material existence, where his ego has nothing and no one to respond to. Gould might fail to stay true to the nature of his belief, but he understands that having a faith is indispensable – while Decoud does not have any at all, which ensures the failure of his survival while facing a disheartening solitude.<sup>61</sup>

## 5.5 Our Man

In Costaguana, every major character driven by his desire is in one way or another affected by the silver mine, and this applies as well to Gian Battista. Unlike Gould and Decoud, Gian Battista was not born in Costaguana, he is an Italian sailor – but for his role of the man of the people in Sulaco, everybody knows him as Nostromo. However, the novel provides another compelling paradox and the man who is supposed to protect the silver from the revolutionists ends up stealing it. Consequently, just like Decoud is bound to face his fatal solitude, Nostromo is condemned to face his second birth, which arrives in form of a realization of the true significance of his social role and a difference between what he is to himself and what he is to others. Nostromo's identity is ironically based on the fact

---

<sup>60</sup> Harry Marten, "Conrad's Skeptic Reconsidered: A Study of Martin Decoud," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 27, no. 1 (1972): 81–94. JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2933039>.

<sup>61</sup> Berthoud, *Joseph Conrad: The Major Phase*, 109–12.

that he is a possession of others. He is the right hand of Captain Mitchell and Gould, capable of accomplishing every burdensome task they assign to him, but primarily – he is the one being exploited for the sake of idealism and material interests of others. Nostromo starts to distinguish the difference between his own interest and those of others, and once the demands that are made upon him go beyond the bearable limit, the outcome could be only a bitter feeling of betrayal. He becomes aware of the ridiculousness of his situation and at the same time, he is conscious of his solitude, as he does not have anyone to turn to for an advice anymore, not even to his immediate employers or protectors.<sup>62</sup>

Nostromo experiences the challenge of consciousness and thus he can no longer remain the same. If he cannot remain an object of others anymore, he can acquire a self of his own by keeping the material object of others for himself. However, he is under no illusion, he is perfectly aware of his crime, he is just no longer willing to prioritize his integrity for the demands of others. He exchanges his social role of the man of the people with the obsession for the material interest which compensates for his solitude and isolation. Thus, just like Gould, he becomes a slave of the silver – which eventually leads to his unfortunate and accidental death.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Nostromo: A Tale of the Seaboard*, ed. Véronique Pauly (London: Penguin, 2007), ProQuest Ebrary <http://literature.proquest.com>.

<sup>63</sup> Berthoud, *Joseph Conrad: The Major Phase*, 105–33

## CONCLUSION

The goal set in the introduction to the thesis was to identify and examine individual moral shortcomings leading to the failure of European colonizers in Conrad's fiction of his literary major phase: *Heart of Darkness*, *Lord Jim* and *Nostramo*. Moreover, it subsequently explores the formation of new societies and cultural identities portrayed in Conrad's fiction on the basis of his real experiences and personal encounters with a diversity of cultures and communities on a variety of distant locations. In spite of the fact that each of the analysed novels is set in a different continent and thus rests on disparate conditions and circumstances: *Heart of Darkness* in the Congo, *Lord Jim* in the Malay Archipelago and *Nostramo* in a fictional country of Latin America, all of the novels possess one common quality – the presence of specific variation of the wilderness. On that account, the wilderness explores to which extent its exploiters and colonizers are devoted to their moral beliefs and principles, and what particular transgression leads to their moral corruption – often followed by fatal consequences.

Despite all the various ranges of arguments whether Conrad tries to defend or condemn imperialism, his texts undoubtedly represent profound studies of imperialism and its development in different locations around the globe. Furthermore, the literary research significantly contributed to the discovery of various findings on the matter of colonialism, and exploitation, diversity of cultural identities or Conrad's insight into the qualities and deficiencies of European imperialism.

Conrad's innate interest in the conception of cultural identities and revolutionary politics is deeply rooted in him from his childhood in occupied Poland and from the legacy of his parents, who were revolutionary activists sentenced to the Russian exile. In addition, by leaving Poland, Conrad was frequently accused of betraying his homeland, and thus the matters of betrayal and exile, which are repeatedly portrayed in his fiction, are very familiar to him. Throughout his life, Conrad is greatly influenced by many cultures. Nonetheless, England, as his adopted country, affected him the most. Conrad often expresses his adopted Englishness through his *alter ego* and the recurring character of his fiction, Charlie Marlow. However, Conrad's cultural diversity and otherness contribute to form one of his greatest assets – his marginal identity, which enables him to develop a sensitivity towards complex and organized crimes against humanity.

Considering the analyzed fiction, Jim's failure in the exotic East in *Lord Jim* originates in his idealism and imaginative optimism. Jim's actions revolve around projecting a vision

of himself that has no basis in reality and thus leaves him in a bewildering illusionary world. His idealism designs his vision of heroism, but simultaneously delivers a vision of fear – which eventually forces Jim to embrace the instinct of self-preservation over courage and results in a violation of the code of his profession and abandoning the passengers of the ship. The misinterpretation of the code of conduct and the pressure of gossips following this incident determines Jim's position of the social outcast, which proceeds into the isolation and redemption on the island of Patusan, where the wilderness is not presented by the sea, but by the human cruelty of another European invader.

*Heart of Darkness* provides a genuine insight into the misinterpretation of colonial and moral values and its failed recognition of unknown cultural realities which eventually results in the violent exploitation of ivory and other natural resources. Unlike colonized indigenous cultures, African colonizers are unable to resist temptation and lack integrity and fidelity towards their colonialist objective. Kurtz's talents and ideals might distinguish him from other exploiters and help to create the substance that Conrad strives to build in his fiction, but his failure to overcome the temptation of the wilderness results in the abandonment of his humanizing mission and civilization as such – exploiting tribal communities for the sake of material interest.

Costaguana represents a society where inhumanity manages to create a wilderness comprised of endless revolutions and moral corruptions. Charles Gould's initial purpose to serve the community of his homeland is thus transformed into the obsession with the silver mine, his humanizing mission is replaced with the material interest that helps him to gain unintentional political influence resulting in megalomania. In the contrast, Nostromo is willing to replace his social role of the man of the people for the material obsession, while Decoud's egoism and recognition of others is undermined with the isolation and solitude on the island.

Ultimately, there are several recurring shortcomings that European colonizers of the analysed fiction have in common. Jim, Kurtz and Gould are all incurable idealists and their ideal allows them to penetrate into delusion and misinterpretation of the values that they were supposed to represent in the first place. Jim's idealism enables him to break the codes of his profession, while Kurtz's and Gould's idealism results in the moral corruption and the abandonment of their humanizing missions. The wilderness in Conrad's fiction is always associated with a certain state of lawlessness, which together with the delusion of its exploiters create the environment of atrocities and megalomania, even if unintentional – such as that of Jim's in Patusan, Kurtz's in the Congolese jungle or Gould's in Sulaco. The

outcome of their wrongdoings is not just a betrayal of dependent societies and tribal communities, but also a betrayal of European principles, humanity and civilization.

The character of Charlie Marlow in *Lord Jim* and *Heart of Darkness* or Mrs. Gould in *Nostramo* implicitly suggest that the possibility of resisting the temptation of the wilderness lies not just in the faith and dedication to the moral principles of humanity, but also in the interpretation of time and its direct relation with the formation and development of civilization. If European identity, civilization and human progress is supposed to advance side by side, European agents, explorers and colonizers cannot focus on just where a man comes from, but also on where he is going – human identity is not just about uncovering the past but also about defining the future, and thus, at all costs, the civilization must be perceived as a destination to be pursued.



**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Alcorn, Marshall W. "The Narcissism of Creation and Interpretation: Agon at the Heart of Darkness." In *Narcissism and the Literary Libido: Rhetoric, Text, and Subjectivity*, 158-89. New York; London: NYU Press, 1994. JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qfnvz.9>.
- Armstrong, Paul B. "The Ontology of Society in Nostromo." In *The Challenge of Bewilderment: Understanding and Representation in James, Conrad, and Ford*, 149-86. London: Cornell University Press, 1987. JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt207g73q.8>.
- Berthoud, Jacques. *Joseph Conrad: The Major Phase (British and Irish Authors)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.
- Bignami, Marialuisa. "Joseph Conrad, the Malay Archipelago, and the Decadent Hero." *The Review of English Studies* 38, no. 150 (1987): 199-210. JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/515423>.
- Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. Edited by Owen Knowles. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2007. Literature Online. ProQuest Information and Learning. <<http://literature.proquest.com>>
- Conrad, Joseph. *Lord Jim*. Edited by Allan H. Simmons. London: Penguin, 2007. Literature Online. ProQuest Information and Learning. <<http://literature.proquest.com>>
- Conrad, Joseph. *Nostromo: A Tale of the Seaboard*. Edited by Véronique Pauly. London: Penguin, 2007. Literature Online. ProQuest Information and Learning. <<http://literature.proquest.com>>
- Conrad, Joseph. *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus': A Tale of the Sea, In the Nigger of the 'Narcissus' and Other Stories*. Edited by J. H. Stape and Allan H. Simmons. London: Penguin, 2007. Literature Online. ProQuest Information and Learning. <<http://literature.proquest.com>>
- Darras, Jacques. *Joseph Conrad and The West; Signs of Empire*. Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press, 1982.

- Feder, Lillian. "Marlow's Descent Into Hell." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 9, no. 4 (1955): 280–92. JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3044393>.
- Fernando, Lloyd. "Conrad's Eastern Expatriates: A New Version of His Outcasts." *PMLA* 91, no. 1 (1976): 78-90. [www.jstor.org/stable/461397](http://www.jstor.org/stable/461397).
- Hampson, Robert. *Cross-Cultural Encounters in Joseph Conrad's Malay Fiction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000.
- Haugh, Robert F. "The Structure of "Lord Jim"." *College English* 13, no. 3 (1951): 137–41. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/372305>.
- Hawkins, Hunt. "Conrad's Critique of Imperialism in Heart of Darkness." *PMLA* 94, no. 2 (March 1979): 286–99. JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/461892>.
- İçöz, Nursel. "Conrad and Ambiguity: Social Commitment and Ideology in Heart of Darkness and Nostromo." *Conradiana* 37, no. 3 (2005): 245–74. Literature Online. [http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res\\_ver=0.2&res\\_id=xri:lion&rft\\_id=xri:lion:rec:abell:R03654232](http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:rec:abell:R03654232).
- Krishnan, Sanjay. "Seeing the Animal: Colonial Space and Movement in Joseph Conrad's Lord Jim." *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 37, no. 3 (2004): 326–51. JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40267598>.
- Lane, Christopher. "Almayer's Defeat: The Trauma of Colonialism in Conrad's Early Work." *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 32, no. 3 (1999): 401–28. JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1346154>.
- Lewis, Pericles. "'His Sympathies Were in the Right Place': Heart of Darkness and the Discourse of National Character." *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 53, no. 2 (1998): 211–44. JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2902984>.

- Maier-Katkin, Birgit, and Daniel Maier-Katkin. "At the Heart of Darkness: Crimes against Humanity and the Banality of Evil." *Human Rights Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (2004): 584-604. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20069746>.
- Malbone, Raymond Gates. "'How to Be': Marlow's Quest in Lord Jim." *Twentieth Century Literature* 10, no. 4 (1965): 172-80. JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/440559>.
- Marten, Harry. "Conrad's Skeptic Reconsidered: A Study of Martin Decoud." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 27, no. 1 (1972): 81–94. JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2933039>.
- Oates, Joyce Carol. "'The Immense Indifference of Things': The Tragedy of Conrad's 'Nostromo'." *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 9, no. 1 (1975): 5–22. JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1345022>.
- Paccaud-Huguet, Josiane. "How Joseph Conrad Shows Us the Creation of The West." Culture.pl. Accessed February 3, 2018. <http://culture.pl/en/article/how-joseph-conrad-shows-us-the-creation-of-the-west>.
- Pakenham, Thomas. *The Scramble for Africa*. London: Abacus, 1991.
- Peters, John G. *The Cambridge Introduction to Joseph Conrad*. Cambridge Introductions to Literature. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511607264.
- Stape, J. H. *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*. Cambridge Companions to Literature. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. doi:10.1017/CCOL0521443911.
- Wake, Paul. *Conrad's Marlow: Narrative and death in 'Youth', Heart of Darkness, Lord Jim and Chance*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007.