

***‘Slaves of the Successful Century’?***

***Ideas of Identity in Joseph Conrad  
and Alun Lewis***

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January 2010

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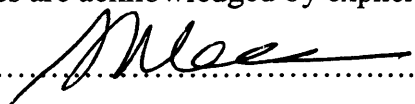
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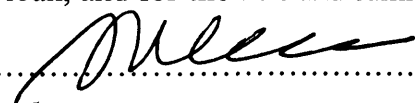
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# SUMMARY

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This thesis is postcolonial in approach, and comparative in method. It examines a number of texts by Joseph Conrad and Alun Lewis, authors who, because of their origins – respectively, Polish and Welsh – were ambivalently associated with the dominant discourse of imperialism. Their occupations – Conrad was a merchant seaman, Lewis an Army officer – implicated them in regimes that regarded them as ‘Other’. Their narratives represent insider-outsider positions that are pertinent to the periods of imperial uncertainty in which they were written: in Conrad’s case, at the *fin-de-siècle*, and in Lewis’s, in the 1930s and 1940s.

The principal stories examined are Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, and Lewis’s ‘The Orange Grove’, both of which have biographical bases. Following a Review of the Critical Field, Chapter 1, ‘Biography and Culture’, discusses the displacements of the authors’ upbringings and subsequent careers, including Conrad’s employment with an imperial trading company in the Congo, and Lewis’s position as a soldier in war-time India, showing how this biographical and colonial context informs the authors’ works.

Chapter 2 begins the comparative analyses, including consideration of texts by other writers. It concerns the potentially ‘enslaving’ effect of pedagogical discourses of Anglicization. Texts by the Welsh-born explorer, Henry M. Stanley, and the Jewish-Welsh writer, Lily Tobias are compared to Conrad’s novella, *The Nigger of the “Narcissus”*, and two stories by Lewis.

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on texts that deconstruct the fixities of imperial and gender identity by means of performative narratives. Through comparisons with stories by Rudyard Kipling, it is demonstrated that *Heart of Darkness* and Lewis’s ‘Indian’ texts increasingly represent complex ‘double narratives’ of empire. These chapters address issues of hybridization, irresolvable identity, and migratory ‘statelessness’, concluding that the writings of Conrad and Lewis illuminate conflictual, modern ideas of identity.

# INTRODUCTION

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Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* was published in book form in 1902; its main setting is the Congo. In the same year, the *Encyclopædia Britannica* summarized the provisions of the International Conference held in Berlin in 1884-85 which formalized the relations of the colonizing European Powers with distant regions of Africa. The *Britannica* emphasizes through the language of control the wide-reaching power of nineteenth-century imperialist discourse. In its entry for 'Congo Free State', it records that:

[a] Conventional Basin of the Congo was *defined* [and in this Basin] it was *declared* that "the trade of all nations shall *enjoy complete freedom*." Freedom of navigation of the Congo and all its affluents was also *secured*, and differential dues on vessels and merchandise was *forbidden*. Trade monopolies were *prohibited*, and provisions made for *civilizing the natives*.<sup>1</sup>

According to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, the Congo is outside the 'all nations' regime; its 'state' needs to be defined, and, thus, its natives need to be 'civilized' so that European trade can thrive. However, some individuals involved in the 'civilizing' process, then and later, themselves lacked definition. Joseph Conrad and Alun Lewis are cases in point. Their origins were marginal to empire. Conrad was a Polish émigré, exiled by the effects of Russian imperialism. He found a 'home' in Britain through his career in the imperialist trade of the British Merchant Marine. Subsequently naturalized as British, he had, perhaps, benefited from assimilation to a stable society; yet, he was often regarded as 'alien'.<sup>2</sup> Lewis, the Welsh poet and short story writer, was a British Army officer in the Second World War, but also a native of a 'peripheral' country that had experienced a history of internal

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<sup>1</sup> *The New Volumes of the Encyclopædia Britannica Comprising, in Combination with the Existing Volumes of the Ninth Edition, the Tenth Edition of that Work* (London and Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black; New York: The Encyclopædia Britannica Company, 1902), Volume III, forming Volume XXVII of the Complete Work, pp. 200-207 (p. 201); (my emphasis).

<sup>2</sup> Norman Sherry has noted the way in which some critical reviews that were contemporaneous to Conrad's writings emphasized the author's 'foreignness'; see Norman Sherry (ed.), *Conrad: The Critical Heritage* (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1973), pp. 25-26. An unsigned review in *The Times Literary Supplement* of 20 September 1907 concerns Conrad's novel, *The Secret Agent* (1907); in the review he is described as 'this alien of genius'; *ibid.*, pp. 184-185.

colonization,<sup>3</sup> and he too was made to feel ‘alien’ by fellow officers. However, Wales’s position *vis-à-vis* British colonialism is fraught with paradox, for it could be argued that the nation had benefited from centralizing social improvements that developed from imperialist commerce. A similar argument was put forward to justify the European powers’ ‘freedom’ to trade in the Congo, a freedom that had the consequence of enslaving the native population.

It is the context of Wales as a nation, with a culture and language that distinguishes it from other ‘peripheral’ British regions,<sup>4</sup> which renders the idea of social improvement particularly complex. As Ned Thomas has argued, the introduction of ‘better’ facilities, such as Anglicizing education systems, impinged on ‘a special kind of [national] consciousness’; the particularities of a ‘shared’ Welsh past were thus made subaltern to the British perspective.<sup>5</sup> The effects of social change were significant in terms of the relationship of the Welsh to British imperialism and will be discussed in Chapter 1, ‘Biography and Culture’.

As, in the twentieth century, colonial power began to wane, the inconsistencies in the case for imperialism became more noticeable. The poet Idris Davies, a contemporary of Lewis, bore witness in his work to the decline on the home front during the Depression. He conveys vividly the idea that the effects of internal colonization were as prohibitively ‘defining’ as those described by the *Encyclopædia Britannica* in respect of the Congo. In his poem, ‘Gwalia Deserta’ (1938), the speaker depicts the human consequences that arose when the industry which had been introduced to Wales in a ‘beneficial’ process became redundant:

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<sup>3</sup> Michael Hechter, in *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), sets out a social ‘model’ which he terms ‘*internal colonialism*’, and relates it to Wales. In this model, the ‘core [...] dominate[s] the periphery [and] exploit[s] it materially’, resulting in inequities of ‘resources and power’; see pp. 8-10; (original emphasis). Wales, as peripheral to the imperial ‘core’ in London, may thus be regarded as an example of the model in that its natural resources, coal, for instance, were so exploited. As Chris Williams notes, ‘Welsh economists, historians and sociologists have found Hechter’s analysis unconvincing’: alternative terms, such as ‘dependent periphery’, have been suggested as more relevant to Wales (see Chris Williams, ‘Problematizing Wales: An Exploration in Historiography and Postcoloniality’, in *Postcolonial Wales*, ed. Jane Aaron and Chris Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005, p. 8). Further research is required in respect of the way in which the idea of Wales as an internal colony is represented in literature, although that is not the purpose of this thesis.

<sup>4</sup> It could be argued that people in regions of England – Lancashire and Tyneside, for instance – also experienced, through industrialization, the effects of internal colonization.

<sup>5</sup> Ned Thomas, *The Welsh Extremist: A Culture in Crisis* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1971), pp. 13-14.

I stood in the ruins of Dowlais  
 And sighed for the lovers destroyed  
 And the landscape of Gwalia stained for all time  
 By the bloody hands of progress.  
 I saw the ghosts of the slaves of the Successful Century  
 Marching on the ridges of the sunset  
 And wandering among the derelict furnaces.<sup>6</sup>

‘Gwalia Deserta’ details the crippling effects of unemployment and the neglect of the victims by those at the political centre – the ‘Commissioners’ who ‘depart with their papers’<sup>7</sup> at the beginning of the poem. However, the speaker complicates this issue with the idea that the local politicians, secular and spiritual, are also culpable: ‘[m]y fathers [...] sold the fern and flower [for] a hovel and a tankard’, while the ‘white deacons dream of Gilead [as] the unemployed stare at winter trees’.<sup>8</sup> Thus, ‘success’ is sought not only by the colonizers, but also by the colonized, the latter effectively subscribing to a form of self-enslavement.

Through a comparison of Conrad’s and Lewis’s biographies and a selection of texts written by them, I propose to examine their ambivalence in respect of colonization. In particular, I consider the degree to which those texts reflect the position of being ‘slaves of the Successful Century’, to echo Idris Davies’s term. I adopt this quotation as the title of my thesis to suggest that the idea of ‘enslavement’ may be considered in ideological and cultural contexts. I will discuss the notion that Conrad’s and Lewis’s texts illuminate the position of being tied to ‘beneficial’ imperial processes which became dominant in the nineteenth century, the ‘Successful Century’, whilst simultaneously being outside those processes.

There are two key texts which provide a basis for my literary comparisons. The first is Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1902). Its main narrator, Marlow, is employed within the imperial system to take a steamer up the Congo River and into the jungle, echoing Conrad’s own experience in 1890. Edward Said suggests that ‘the colonialism that turned [Conrad], a

<sup>6</sup> Idris Davies, ‘Gwalia Deserta’, in *The Complete Poems of Idris Davies*, ed. Dafydd Johnston (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1994), pp. 3-20 (p. 13, Part XXII, ll. 1-7).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. 3, (Part I, l. 1).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, (Part II, ll. 1-7 and Part I, ll. 3-4).

Polish expatriate, into an [imperial] employee' gave him a 'persistent residual sense of his own exilic marginality'.<sup>9</sup> Unlike Conrad, Marlow is English; however, his status as an imperialist is conditioned by his criticism of the destructive commercial practices that he witnesses in Africa. His experience and his relationship to that most complex of colonialists, Mr. Kurtz, facilitates a privileged double perspective that is especially relevant to the time at which *Heart of Darkness* was written –the turning point of the *fin-de-siècle*.

In the case of Lewis, I examine a number of his texts, most of which were written after he enlisted in 1940, but my analyses build towards an examination of what is often regarded as his most significant story – 'The Orange Grove' (1948). Set in India and written some fifty years after *Heart of Darkness*, this is a story 'by a Welshman [who is] in the colonising army but not [...] part of the English class/caste system'.<sup>10</sup> The main character, Staff-Captain Beale, undertakes a reconnaissance mission into the Indian jungle. In similar fashion to Conrad, Lewis uses his personal experiences to inform Beale's narrative, particularly in the sense of a partial detachment from his identity as an imperial soldier. Like Conrad, Lewis's experience occurs at points of transition for imperialism: the global crisis of the Second World War, and the burgeoning independence movement in 1940s India. However, as I will demonstrate, even before serving in India, Lewis's stories and poems provide insights regarding ambivalent notions of identity. This aspect of his writing is crucial to the comparison between his texts and those of Conrad.

Both writers were part of the process of a defining imperial regime, but were also distanced from its enslaving discourses. The effects of their situations were hybridizing: they were insiders-outsiders who moved back and forth between social and political positions, and the negotiation that was required in this process influenced the creative processes of their literary forms, narrative strategies and themes. My aim is not to suggest that Conrad's and

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<sup>9</sup> Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* ([1993] London: Vintage, 1994), pp. 25-27.

<sup>10</sup> Tony Brown, personal communication with the author, 8 June 2000.

Lewis's experiences were the same, for comparison often highlights both similarity and difference. This makes it a particularly apt method for considering the kind of world that 'Gwalia Deserta' describes, in which 'beneficial' and destructive processes go hand-in-hand in cultural production. In this context, my critical base is postcolonial, principally the theory of Homi K. Bhabha, since it focuses on representations of plurality, rather than universalism.<sup>11</sup>

In terms of the comparative approach, Susan Bassnett notes that

[as] soon as we start to consider [generalized categories] we enter a labyrinth of corridors, with mirrors that reflect or distort, doors that have never been opened [...]. The comparatist is drawn into the labyrinth, for it offers an infinite wealth of altered perceptions [...] innovative connections [and] possibilities.<sup>12</sup>

This thesis will examine the possibilities in points of similarity between Conrad's and Lewis's writings, but also where such comparison reveals discrepancies. It will consider what can be drawn from the comparison in relation to issues of identity and cultural positioning, bearing in mind that these authors were from different ethnicities and cultures and that their texts were written some two generations apart.

Following a Review of the Critical Field, Chapter 1, 'Biography and Culture', suggests why Conrad's and Lewis's backgrounds are significant in relation to their writings, particularly considering their similar experiences of displacement and exile.

Chapter 2, 'Civilizing the Natives: Anglicization', examines the shaping influence of Englishness on Conrad and Lewis. The discussion revolves around Bhabha's notion of 'pedagogical' narratives – those which identify norms in which one can have faith. It begins by examining *Through the Dark Continent* (1878) by the explorer, Henry M. Stanley.

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<sup>11</sup> The term 'postcolonial' in this essay is used in relation to the methods of reading across fixed forms and cultural boundaries, from which emerge 'complex discourses which deconstruct and reimagine personal, cultural and national identities' (Kirsti Bohata, *Postcolonialism Revisited* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), p. 2). This is distinct from the hyphenated term, 'post-colonial,' that is used to denote an historical period that follows colonization or empire. However, the two terms are often closely associated with each other.

<sup>12</sup> Susan Bassnett, *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), p. 86.

Although from marginalized origins in Wales, Stanley is an exemplar of a writer who disposes of his original identity so as to achieve imperial 'success'. His writing is compared with Conrad's in respect of the latter's story, *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* (1897), which may be regarded as celebrating English values. Although comparisons between Stanley and Conrad have been explored previously, the thesis proceeds to offer new analyses, namely between their narrative positions and those represented in Alun Lewis's stories, 'Almost a Gentleman', and 'They Came' (both 1942), in which issues of contingency are more prevalent. The comparative base of the chapter is extended to include the story 'Glasshouses' (1921), by the Welsh-born Jewish writer Lily Tobias – a polemicist of cultural distinctiveness, but one who is aware of the cultural pressures operating on marginalized races.

Chapter 3, 'Deconstructing Identity: The Subaltern View', examines narratives that illuminate the inter-relation between 'pedagogical' and 'performative' influences on identity. Part 1 discusses imperial identity, initially through analyses of two stories by Rudyard Kipling, who was regarded as a 'laureate' of Empire:<sup>13</sup> 'Slaves of the Lamp (Part II)' (1897) and 'A Sahibs' War' (1901). These texts are compared with *Heart of Darkness*, and Lewis's stories, 'The Raid', and 'Ward "O"3(b)' (both 1948). It might be assumed that Kipling's stories would be pedagogical, and Conrad's and Lewis's more performative, but the comparison demonstrates a more complex inter-relationship. Part 2, mainly deploying the theory of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, offers gender-based criticism in relation to Conrad's and Lewis's writing in a similar inter-relational context. In this Part, the comparison is between *Heart of Darkness*, and stories by Kipling and Lewis – respectively, 'Without

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<sup>13</sup> Kipling was described by W. D. Howells, the American novelist and critic, as 'the laureate of that larger England whose wreath it is not for any prime minister to bestow; but wherever the English tongue is written or spoken, those who are native to it may claim a share in his recognition. He stands for the empire of that language which grows more and more the only English empire which has a common history and a common destiny'; see W. D. Howells, 'The Laureate of the Larger England', *McClure's Magazine* (March 1897), in Roger Lancelyn Green (ed.), *Kipling: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Limited, 1971), p. 195.



'Benefit of Clergy' (1890), and 'The Housekeeper' (1942). The analysis of something as fundamental to identity as gender, particularly through issues surrounding public and private roles that were once regarded as separate and fixed, offers substantial evidence to indicate that identity is, in practice, more fluid in nature.

Chapter 4, 'Cultural Traffics: Hybridization', deals principally with a comparison of *Heart of Darkness* and 'The Orange Grove'. Such a comparison has been conducted briefly by Kirsti Bohata,<sup>14</sup> but this thesis expands on her ideas regarding hybridity, while developing the gender-based criticism in Chapter 3. The comparison is widened to include Conrad's story, 'The Secret Sharer' (1912), and Lewis's poem, 'The Jungle' (1945): both of these texts shed light on the impact of the hybridization process in terms of deformation and displacement of colonial ideology, as described in Bhabha's theory. This chapter also considers the apparent influence of *The Tempest* on 'The Jungle'. Shakespeare's text offers a fascinating perspective on colonization, empire and hybrid identity. It indicates that political displacement and cultural self-questioning were of as much concern in the early years of British imperial expansionism as in the periods in which Conrad and Lewis were writing.

The 'Conclusion' suggests the way in which the texts examined illuminate ideas of identity in the context of Conrad and Lewis as, respectively, marginalized and displaced Polish and Welsh writers. Despite the time-span of over sixty years since the publication of the latest of their texts referred to in this thesis, their writings are relevant to modern notions of political, economic and cultural displacement. Given the political changes of the last decade which have led to some devolution of power to a Welsh governing body, it is also suggested that the texts offer insights into the nature of cultural production in Wales, including issues of Welsh identity in particular.

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<sup>14</sup> See Review of the Critical Field, pp. 29-30.

# REVIEW OF THE CRITICAL FIELD

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The sheer volume of Conrad criticism makes it necessary to limit the scope of this review. It therefore focuses on criticism of *Heart of Darkness* as being indicative of approaches to Conrad's position on imperial identity. In relation to Lewis, it concentrates on criticism of 'The Orange Grove' and its associated texts, and analyses of Welsh post-colonial debates.

## Joseph Conrad: *Heart of Darkness* (1902)

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*Heart of Darkness* was first published in *Blackwood's Magazine* in three instalments in 1899.<sup>1</sup>

It was revised for inclusion in *Youth: A Narrative and Two Other Stories* (1902). Initial reviews of the story's later publication were generally favourable. Edward Garnett notes its artistic qualities and declares it to be a 'psychological masterpiece'; he also astutely comments on the complex inter-relational nature of its narrative:

the art of [the story] lies in the relation of the things of the spirit to the things of the flesh, of the invisible life to the visible [...] [of the] infinite shades of the white man's uneasy, disconcerted, and fantastic relations with the exploited barbarism of Africa.<sup>2</sup>

In another review, John Masefield notes Conrad's 'fine writing', but criticizes the story for not being 'direct [and] effective'; its inter-relational nature forms 'a cobweb abounding in gold threads', yet lacks a 'central character'.<sup>3</sup> These reviews are important in that they identify features of the text that would later be made the subject of more wide-ranging examinations.

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<sup>1</sup> The story was published in *Blackwood's Magazine*, or 'Maga', between February and April 1899. Although noted for its conservative credentials, 'Maga' was influential, publishing, among others, Shelley, Coleridge and, later, George Eliot. Robert Hampson observes that the typical *Blackwood's* story was univocal, relatively simple in narrative form, and would have remained within the discourse of imperialism; see Robert Hampson, 'Conrad and the Idea of Empire' (1989), in *Under Postcolonial Eyes: Joseph Conrad After Empire*, ed. Gail Fincham and Myrtle Hooper (Rondebosch: University of Cape Town Press, 1996), pp. 65-76. The magazine was read by British imperialists across the globe, and although Conrad was delighted to be writing for such an audience, *Heart of Darkness* works against its readers' expectations.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Garnett, unsigned review, *Academy and Literature*, 6 December 1902, in Sherry (ed.), *Conrad: The Critical Heritage*, p. 132. Garnett was a friend of Conrad and a literary adviser.

<sup>3</sup> John Masefield, *Speaker*, 31 January 1903, in *ibid.*, p. 142.

In early criticism of Conrad's work, there is a tendency to categorize him as a writer of sea-tales, and, following his death in 1924, there was a period of uncertainty regarding his literary reputation. However, by the 1940s his status had become assured. In *The Great Tradition* (1948), F. R. Leavis describes Conrad as 'among the very greatest novelists'<sup>4</sup>, and describes *Heart of Darkness* as an instance of the 'art of vivid essential record'.<sup>5</sup> Although commenting on Conrad's 'supererogatory insistence on [the] "inconceivable mystery"'<sup>6</sup> of Marlow's experiences, Leavis, amongst others, established the story as a canonical text.

During the late 1950s, a thread of criticism developed that regarded the narrative of *Heart of Darkness* as a psychological quest. The purpose of Marlow's journey into the African jungle is to locate Kurtz, a successful imperial trader who has 'gone native'. Beyond central control, Kurtz raids the country for ivory, and indulges in 'primitive' and 'savage' practices. Thomas Moser, in *Joseph Conrad: Achievement and Decline* (1957), adopts a Freudian approach: for Marlow, the journey towards the renegade Kurtz is 'like traveling [...] into the subconscious'; the jungle imagery stands for 'the truth, the darkness, the evil, the death which lies within us, which we must recognize in order to be truly alive.'<sup>7</sup>

In his influential book, *Conrad the Novelist* (1958), Albert J. Guerard applies the psychoanalytical approach to the author's experiences: the story represents 'Conrad's longest journey into self',<sup>8</sup> and Marlow's narrative confronts 'an entity within'.<sup>9</sup> Guerard is explicit about his analytical base: Marlow travels towards his double – the 'Freudian id [or] Jungian shadow',<sup>10</sup> figured by the 'evil' Kurtz. Guerard highlights a 'collision' between 'the

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<sup>4</sup> F. R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition: George Eliot; Henry James; Joseph Conrad* ([1948] London: Chatto and Windus, 1973), p. 226.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Moser, *Joseph Conrad: Achievement and Decline* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 80.

<sup>8</sup> Albert J. Guerard, *Conrad the Novelist* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 33.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* Frantz Fanon, a pioneer of postcolonial analysis and himself a psychiatrist, notes the importance of approaches to the inner self: he observes: 'I should help my patient to become *conscious* of his unconscious [...] to take cognizance of a possibility of existence'; see Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. by Charles

adventurous Conrad and Conrad the moralist';<sup>11</sup> Marlow's identification with his double thus recognizes a crucial issue for this thesis, namely 'the guilt of complicity'.<sup>12</sup> In this analysis, Marlow moves between 'civilizing' idealism, and the commercial rapacity which supports its façade. Although the 1950s' trend for psychological analysis is limited in respect of cultural considerations, Guerard also comments on the relevance of *Heart of Darkness* to his own times:

Conrad was reacting to the humanitarian pretenses of [the] looters precisely as the novelist today reacts to the moralisms of cold-war propaganda. Then it was ivory that poured from the heart of darkness; now it is uranium. Conrad recognized [that] deception is most sinister when it becomes self-deception.<sup>13</sup>

Guerard perceives the way in which the story is relevant to historical periods other than its own, and prepares the ground for more complex cultural criticism.

At the same time as Guerard associates *Heart of Darkness* with Conrad's own 'journey', there begins a trend for studies of Conrad's life in relation to his writings. The first of these was *Joseph Conrad: A Critical Biography* (1959) by Jocelyn Baines, described by Allan H. Simmons, in *Joseph Conrad* (2006), as 'the first properly researched biography'.<sup>14</sup> This trend continues to the present day, with *Joseph Conrad: A Chronicle* (1983) by Zdzisław Najder<sup>15</sup> setting the scholarly standard. I will refer to Najder's research in Chapter 1.

During the 1960s the critical trend shifts towards the political approach hinted at by Guerard. Eloise Knapp Hay, in *The Political Novels of Joseph Conrad* (1963), notes Guerard's identification of the conflict expressed in *Heart of Darkness* – between 'adventure' and 'morality'. However, she takes the view that Marlow's journey is significant in relation to

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Lam Markmann ([1952] London: Pluto Press, 1986), p. 100; (original emphasis). Such approaches, whilst recognizing the insidious affects of colonialism, are, however, influenced by binary oppositions.

<sup>11</sup> Guerard, *Conrad the Novelist*, p. 38.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>14</sup> Allan H. Simmons, *Joseph Conrad* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 225; see Jocelyn Baines, *Joseph Conrad: A Critical Biography* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1959).

<sup>15</sup> Zdzisław Najder, *Joseph Conrad: A Chronicle*, trans. by Halina Carroll-Najder (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983).

‘a more serious collision’, between ‘Conrad the British subject and Conrad the moralist’,<sup>16</sup> and that this idea is particularly relevant in respect of imperialist looting. Where Guerard identifies Marlow closely with Conrad, Hay’s use of the term ‘British subject’ distances the author from his narrator: Marlow and Kurtz are representatives of imperialism as an idea. They are, after all, employed by a Belgian company which profits from the ‘civilizing’ principles espoused by the International Conference of 1884-85. However, the idea of Conrad being distanced is questionable: his involvement with imperialism through his merchant service career makes the ‘guilt of complicity’ powerfully relevant.

The canonical status accorded to *Heart of Darkness* by Western critics ensured a benign response to its anti-imperialist theme into the 1970s. Cedric Watts, in *Conrad’s Heart of Darkness* (1977), for example, suggests that it ‘serves the cause of truth dialectically, by offering a sceptical questioning [of] European imperialism.’<sup>17</sup> Chinua Achebe’s provocative essay, ‘An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*’ (1977), is a critical turning point. Its post-colonial perspective is vigorously challenging. Achebe attacks Conrad for displaying the psychological need ‘to set Africa up as a place of negations at once remote and vaguely familiar’.<sup>18</sup> He objects to Conrad’s foregrounding of binary oppositions in which Africa represents ‘the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization’,<sup>19</sup> an ‘Other’ in which the West is tested.

Achebe disputes the idea, as suggested by Hay, that Conrad is distanced from Marlow’s narration; he asserts that Marlow ‘enjoy[s] Conrad’s complete confidence – a feeling reinforced by the close similarities between their careers’,<sup>20</sup> and this is particularly relevant for the biographical element of this thesis since Marlow’s river journey is derived

<sup>16</sup> Eloise Knapp Hay, *The Political Novels of Joseph Conrad* ([1963] London: The University of Chicago Press Ltd., 1981), p. 147.

<sup>17</sup> Cedric Watts, *Conrad’s Heart of Darkness* (Milan: U. Mursia Editore, 1977), p. 67.

<sup>18</sup> Chinua Achebe, ‘An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*’, *The Massachusetts Review*, Volume 18 (1977), 782-794 (p. 783).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 787.

from Conrad's own experience. As the journey begins, Marlow's narration invokes racist stereotypes: Africans "'howled [and] made horrid faces, but what thrilled you was just the thought of [your] remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. Ugly.'" <sup>21</sup> Achebe suggests that notions of a bond with this 'Other' are 'well-nigh intolerable.' <sup>22</sup> For him, *Heart of Darkness* is shot through with imperialist ideology and serves the 'dehumanization [of] Africans'; <sup>23</sup> famously, Achebe asserts that 'Conrad was a bloody racist.' <sup>24</sup>

Watts offers a predictable defence: Conrad deploys 'the convention of doubly oblique narration, which tends to generate ambiguities'; <sup>25</sup> in postcolonial terms, Watts notes the consensus of non-European critics that Conrad was 'ambivalent on racial matters'. <sup>26</sup> However, he quotes C. P. Sarvan, who concludes that Conrad was subject "'to the infection of the beliefs and attitudes of his age, but he was ahead of his time in trying to break free"' <sup>27</sup>. The word 'infection' is intriguing in the context of Conrad's Polish origins. Stepping outside this review's chronology, Christopher GoGwilt, in *The Invention of the West: Joseph Conrad and the Double-Mapping of Europe and Empire* (1995), notes that in nineteenth-century Orientalist discourses which attempted West-East divisions of Europe, Slavs were categorised as Eastern, a 'confusion of Russian and Polish culture'. <sup>28</sup> Poland's history was one of dependency on Russia and partitioning by adjacent powers, and Conrad was thus sensitive to the relationship of 'The West' to subaltern cultures. He was 'infected' by stereotypically racist perspectives, whilst also having experience of being 'othered' by such attitudes.

<sup>21</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* in Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness: A Norton Critical Edition*, ed. Paul B. Armstrong ([1902] London: W. W. Norton & Company Ltd., 2006), pp. 3-77 (p. 36). All further references are to this edition and are given in the text, abbreviated, where necessary, as *HD*.

<sup>22</sup> Achebe, 'An Image of Africa', p. 788.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*; Achebe later moderated 'bloody' to 'thoroughgoing'; see Dennis Walder, *Post-Colonial Literatures in English: History, Language, Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1998), p. 15, including note 16.

<sup>25</sup> Cedric Watts, 'Introduction' to *Heart of Darkness and Other Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. xxii.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*: Watts refers to C. P. Sarvan, 'Racism and the *Heart of Darkness*', *The International Fiction Review*, Volume 7 (1980), 6-10.

<sup>28</sup> Christopher GoGwilt, *The Invention of the West: Joseph Conrad and the Double-Mapping of Europe and Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 27.

Achebe's approach was instrumental in undermining the perceived anti-imperial theme of *Heart of Darkness*. However, he adheres to the notion that a text can have one primary meaning. From the late 1970s, post-structuralist and deconstructionist theorists engaged with the idea that no text may be read definitively and truthfully. The basis of this critical trend is the Saussurean theory that the language which forms a text is part of a system of differences with no positive terms, and with only arbitrary links between the signifier and the signified. Perry Meisel may be taken to exemplify this approach in his book, *The Myth of the Modern* (1978). Meisel refers to Guerard's Freudian analysis, the journey towards 'an entity within' the self, assumed to be Kurtz, and considers that Marlow's narrative demonstrates the contradictoriness of this notion. Meisel comments that Guerard's reading

presupposes some kind of direct link between words and things, not only in Conrad, but also [in] Freud as well. It is Freud, however, who draws our attention to language as an oppositional or differential mechanism as early as 1910, well before the notion receives its official introduction [with] the publication in 1916 of Ferdinand de Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale*.<sup>29</sup>

Meisel illustrates his argument by discussing the moment when Marlow reaches the supposed 'entity'. When Marlow arrives at Kurtz's jungle compound, Kurtz has disappeared; although he meets him, soon afterwards Kurtz dies. Meisel takes Guerard's observation on these events, 'a part of himself has vanished',<sup>30</sup> to be 'language somehow divided against itself, stipulating the presence of meaning on the one hand, while noting the withdrawal of its ground on the other'; he suggests that Guerard's assumption that Marlow can learn from his experience is the very notion that Marlow is 'forced to overcome.'<sup>31</sup>

For Meisel, a key incident is Marlow's discovery that the house which Kurtz occupies is surrounded with the severed heads of natives who have rebelled against his authority. According to Marlow, the heads "showed that Mr. Kurtz lacked restraint [...], that there was

<sup>29</sup> Perry Meisel, *The Myth of the Modern: A Study in British Literature and Criticism after 1850* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 237-238.

<sup>30</sup> Guerard, *Conrad the Novelist*, p. 41.

<sup>31</sup> Meisel, *The Myth of the Modern*, pp. 236-37. This criticism focuses on the text's absence of centrality and directness, features that were regarded by Masefield to fail effective narrative; see p. 8 above.

something wanting in him – some small matter [which] could not be found” (*HD*, p. 57). Meisel emphasizes the ambiguity of Marlow’s language: ‘wanting’, for instance, may mean the absence of morality or the presence of desire. The definitions are systemically related, but do not designate subjects and objects; rather, they suggest that ‘meaning is a lateral event within language.’<sup>32</sup> Meisel regards the ‘matter’ of Marlow’s narrative as naturally ‘recessive’; linear narrative is rendered inadequate since meanings recur ‘ad infinitum.’<sup>33</sup>

The historical moments at which Conrad and Lewis were writing, respectively the *fin-de-siècle*, and the Second World War, were periods of exceptional uncertainty. In this context Meisel’s assertion that ‘recession [is] the book’s active epistemological principle’<sup>34</sup> is key. The idea of meaning in relation to issues of cultural identity is revealed to be multiple, changeable and potentially irresolvable.

In the midst of Achebe’s destabilizing attack and the advent of deconstructionist criticism, *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century* (1979) by the distinguished scholar Ian Watt, appears to be an anachronism. Watt’s approach is historical and biographical. However, his analyses are not necessarily incompatible with Meisel’s decentring views, and I intend to draw upon the insights achieved by both approaches. Watt observes that Conrad’s texts are not directly autobiographical, but that they are better comprehended through an appreciation of the ‘complicated relationship [...] between their sources in personal experience and [fiction]’.<sup>35</sup> He quotes Conrad: “my point of view is English, from which the conclusion should not be drawn that I have become an Englishman [...]. *Homo duplex* has in my case more than one meaning.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240.

<sup>35</sup> Ian Watt, *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century* ([1979] London: Chatto & Windus, 1980), p. ix.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24 (my emphasis). Watt quotes from a statement made by Conrad in 1903; see Zdzisław Najder, *Conrad’s Polish Background: Letters to and from Polish Friends*, trans. by Halina Carroll (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 240.



Watt suggests that Conrad's ideological summa is contained in his statement that the idea in *Heart of Darkness* is '[t]he criminality of inefficiency and pure selfishness when tackling the civilizing work in Africa',<sup>37</sup> but that he is keen, at least initially, to assert 'efficient' British values.<sup>38</sup> However, Conrad realized that this efficiency entailed 'killing and enslaving the native population', and he was thus opposed to Western expansion, 'if only because of what had happened to [Poland]'.<sup>39</sup> Watt supports this specific reference to Conrad's ideological conflicts by noting the general *fin-de-siècle* anxiety caused by the growing competition between European nations for shares in colonial territories. *Heart of Darkness*, through Marlow's shifting narrative, expresses that period's growing feeling of tension between old and new orders, 'marked by a note of apocalyptic gloom.'<sup>40</sup> As Marlow says about his feelings when his journey begins, "I expected the wretched [steamboat] to give up every moment. It was like watching the last flickers of a life'" (*HD*, p. 38).

Watt's analysis of Conrad's celebrated narrative technique suggests something in common with Meisel's approach. A 'frame' narrator opens the story, and, before Marlow takes control of the narrative, he describes the manner in which Marlow relates his experiences:

to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that, sometimes, are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine.

(p. 5)

In Meisel's view, such a narrative style 'discards the notion of meaning as a core or "kernel" without reservation, setting up a more problematic definition that plays on the meanings of

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<sup>37</sup> Watt, *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 148.

<sup>38</sup> Marlow obtains his appointment as captain of a steamboat to go upriver in the Congo at a trading company's offices in Brussels. While he waits in the offices, he notes a multi-coloured map on the wall denoting the territories belonging to European nations: "[t]here was a vast amount of red [denoting British territory] – good to see at any time because one knows that some real work is done in there"; see *HD*, p. 10.

<sup>39</sup> Watt, *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 158.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

“spectral illumination”<sup>41</sup> thus, in such twentieth-century Modernist terms, meaning is typically without positive terms. Watt takes the same passage to support his historical approach. He focuses on the influence of late nineteenth-century Symbolist and Impressionist techniques on Conrad’s form, and suggests that they reflect ‘the general ideological crisis’ of the era.<sup>42</sup> Meaning, in such an analysis, is larger than its narrative vehicle, the effect of which is to convey indeterminacy.

Watt identifies Conrad’s device of ‘delayed decoding’; this effect highlights ‘the gap between impression and understanding; the delay in bridging the gap enacts the disjunction between the event and the observer’s trailing understanding’.<sup>43</sup> He cites the example of Marlow’s confused impression of an attack by natives upon his steamer. Marlow first describes sticks flying towards him; after the event he decodes the impression: “‘Arrows, by Jove!’” (*HD*, p. 44). The device conveys the ‘*relativism* of the impressionist attitude’,<sup>44</sup> a concept which assists in understanding Meisel’s ‘decentring’ arguments. Watt reminds us that ‘the typical seaman’s yarn’ is “‘centripetal’”: a conventional story encloses the ‘kernel of truth [and we] seek inside’ for meaning.<sup>45</sup> Marlow’s narratives are “‘centrifugal’”: truth resides ‘outside *in the unseen*’.<sup>46</sup> Although Meisel and Watt use radically different frameworks, both widen the critical field and prepare the way for further hermeneutic readings.

Criticism in the 1980s focused on the multiplicity of meanings which *Heart of Darkness* is capable of generating. In *Reading for the Plot* (1984), Peter Brooks emphasises the significance of Conrad’s poly-vocal narrative technique:

<sup>41</sup> Meisel, *The Myth of the Modern*, p. 240.

<sup>42</sup> Watt, *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 168.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 175-77.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179; (my emphasis).

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.

<sup>46</sup> Watt quotes from Conrad’s unpublished manuscript of *Heart of Darkness*, in *ibid.*; (original emphasis).

a first narrator introduces Marlow and has the last word after Marlow has fallen silent; and embedded within Marlow's tale is apparently another, Kurtz's, which never quite gets told – as perhaps Marlow's does not quite either, for the frame structure here is characterized by notable uncertainties.<sup>47</sup>

The story ends where it begins, on board the *Nellie*, a cruising yawl anchored in the moving current of the Thames, where a group of men – Marlow's colleagues and 'listeners' – hear his tale of his journey up-river. According to Brooks, Marlow's discourse is dialogic: '(in Mikhail Bakhtin's terms) "double-voiced."' <sup>48</sup> He tells, at least, his own story, and that of Kurtz. Brooks suggests that the various narrative voices, including that of the first 'frame' narrator, speak within a communal structure: 'language forms the basis of social organization [as] a system of difference [which] polices individuality by making it part of a transindividual, intersubjective system: precisely what we call society': <sup>49</sup> meaning is 'located in the interstices of story and frame, born of the relationship between tellers and listeners.' <sup>50</sup> Brooks implies that Conrad uses Marlow to distance himself from the narrative and this assumption, of course, differs from Achebe's approach. However, Marlow has a relationship to both story and frame. He is detached and, to recall Guerard, complicit. Questions then arise regarding the implications of this position for Marlow's imperial identity. He sees the imperial system breaking down into looting and oppression, yet he depends on that system for his livelihood.

Analyses such as that of Peter Brooks point towards the ambivalence in Conrad's narratives. In *Conrad and Imperialism* (1983), Benita Parry focuses on this feature of his

<sup>47</sup> Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* ([1984] Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 239.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 249. The influential cultural theorist Mikhail Bakhtin glosses 'dialogism': 'everything means, is understood, as part of a greater whole – there is constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others'; see M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist ([1981] Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), p. 426.

<sup>49</sup> Brooks, *Reading for the Plot*, p. 251.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 260.

writing through what she terms his 'contrapuntal discourse',<sup>51</sup> in which, as Marlow's position illustrates, ideologies undercut or supplement one another. Parry is interested in the contesting doctrines, 'cultural systems' and 'epistemological suppositions' which are 'manifest in [Conrad's] historical articulations and forms.'<sup>52</sup> She suggests that the narrative of *Heart of Darkness* accurately represents '[t]he Manichaeism of the imperialist imagination which perceived a world of warring moral forces, incompatible social modes and antagonistic values.'<sup>53</sup>

Parry's discussion of competing 'cultural systems' displays some similarity with the ideas of Fredric Jameson, set out in his essay 'Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism' (1986). Jameson comments that 'the western realist and modernist novel' is inextricably linked to 'capitalist culture' in which there is a 'radical split between the private and the public, between the poetic and the political'.<sup>54</sup> In other words, for reasons of economic efficiency, capitalist culture enforces a separation of the private psychological and the public political realms, and this is reflected in literature. In the Third World, 'the relations between [such categories] are wholly different'; so, Third World texts, even those with a 'private' element, 'necessarily project a political dimension in the form of a national allegory'.<sup>55</sup>

*Heart of Darkness* has a relationship to its Third World setting, and this is informed by Conrad's ambiguous West/East origins which distance him from a Western realist approach. Marlow's journey towards Kurtz may be read allegorically in terms of 'antagonistic' private and public values. Marlow comes face-to-face with the capitalist

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<sup>51</sup> Benita Parry, *Conrad and Imperialism: Ideological Boundaries and Visionary Frontiers* (London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1983), p. 2.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21. The inter-relational nature of the text was identified by Edward Garnett in his review, although not in Parry's terms; see p. 8 above.

<sup>54</sup> Fredric Jameson, 'Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism', *Social Text*, Volume 15 (1986), 65-88 (p. 69).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

looting of which he is a part. The confrontation, in narrative terms, will pose the question of whether or not the outcome is generically allegorical – a defining narrative, that is. However, Parry's approach suggests that allegorical meanings must not be considered in isolation; *Heart of Darkness* should be read dialogically through 'unorthodox and unexpected conjunctions' which emphasize 'incompatible meanings'.<sup>56</sup> At the farthest point of Marlow's journey, Kurtz is revealed to represent the "pulsating stream of light, or the deceitful flow from [the] darkness" (*HD*, p. 47). In this thesis, my interest is in the relationship between such disparate ideas of identity.

Dialogic readings may reveal gender issues not immediately visible in apparently masculine texts such as Conrad's. Nina Pelikan Straus's influential essay, 'The Exclusion of the Intended from Secret Sharing in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*' (1987), brings the text into the field of feminist criticism. Earlier critics read Conrad's female characters, Kurtz's fiancée, his 'Intended' for example, as symbols. Marlow returns from Africa and visits her to tell her about Kurtz's fate. He is compelled to lie about the real horror of the imperial project, and this was regarded by critics as a means of protecting the pure world of 'home' for which the woman stands. Hay, for example, notes the political consequences of the lie: 'the knowledge of Kurtz [is] killed [so that the] world of the Intended will remain intact'; Hay extends the Intended's signification through the image of her house – 'a good image for the "house" of all Europe'<sup>57</sup> which must also be protected. In such an analysis, the Intended always stands for something else: she is excluded from personal identity. Straus makes the point that such 'othering' is as a 'result of gender identification'<sup>58</sup> and epistemological denial:

[t]he guarding of secret knowledge is thus the undisclosed theme of *Heart of Darkness* [...]. Marlow's protectiveness [keeps the] woman/intended mute [...]. She

<sup>56</sup> Parry, *Conrad and Imperialism*, pp. 38-39.

<sup>57</sup> Hay, *The Political Novels*, p. 151. In many of the texts examined in this thesis, 'houses' will come to represent more than mere domestic dwellings.

<sup>58</sup> Nina Pelikan Straus, 'The Exclusion of the Intended from Secret Sharing in *Heart of Darkness*', *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, Volume 20, No. 2 (Winter 1987), 123-137 (p. 134).

lacks that one distinguishing feature of the beloved, which is that she is absolutely individual to the one who loves her. The Intended is thus thrice voided or erased: her name is never spoken by Kurtz, by Marlow, or by Conrad; and it is determined that it will never be spoken by Conrad's commentators.<sup>59</sup>

Straus draws on the cultural theory of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. In her essay, 'Imperialism and Sexual Difference' (1986), Spivak deconstructs the 'trope [of] the male of the white race as a norm'.<sup>60</sup> Marlow's lie determines the Intended as 'Other' to his social group; she is a sign rather than a subject; in Spivak's terms, he performs an 'emptying out [because] a sign means something other than itself whereas a person is self-proximate'.<sup>61</sup>

Johanna M. Smith, in her essay "'Too Beautiful Altogether': Patriarchal Ideology in *Heart of Darkness*' (1989) extends Straus's focus on individual gender issues into the wider political arena considered by Spivak. Smith suggests that a feminist approach 'can interrogate its complex interrelation [of] patriarchal and imperialist ideologies'.<sup>62</sup> She observes that the way in which Marlow narrates female characters (his aunt, for instance, who secures his appointment as a steamboat captain, and the African woman who is Kurtz's mistress) is a 'manful effort to shore up the nineteenth-century ideology of separate spheres'.<sup>63</sup> Through a dialogic reading of these spheres, 'a gap opens between the imperialism visible to Marlow and the patriarchal attitude [...] unseen by him because it seems natural'.<sup>64</sup>

Bette London, in *The Appropriated Voice* (1990), continues the kind of approach adopted by Parry regarding narrative as a 'struggle [between] competing voices',<sup>65</sup> and discusses issues in *Heart of Darkness* in respect of masculine voices functioning in an

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Imperialism and Sexual Difference', *The Oxford Literary Review*, Volume 8 (1986), 225-240 (p. 225).

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.

<sup>62</sup> Johanna M. Smith, "'Too Beautiful Altogether': Patriarchal Ideology in *Heart of Darkness*", in *Heart of Darkness: A Case Study in Contemporary Criticism*, ed. Ross C. Murfin (New York: Bedford Books, 1989), pp. 179-198 (pp. 179-180).

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 189.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183.

<sup>65</sup> Bette London, *The Appropriated Voice: Narrative Authority in Conrad, Forster, and Woolf* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1990), p. 5.

exclusionary way. More recently, Carola M. Kaplan, in 'Beyond Gender' (2005), has suggested that female characters in the story, especially the African woman, are more complex and have a wider significance than merely to represent the effects of exclusionary cultural forces. They also compete within the 'struggle', and perform key roles to the extent that Marlow's 'life is bordered and its course largely determined by powerful women'.<sup>66</sup> The way in which an inter-relational gendered imperialist discourse operates in *Heart of Darkness* is a fruitful area for discussion and will be examined in this thesis.

The idea of approaching *Heart of Darkness* through a range of inter-relational dialogues within cultural systems feeds through to postcolonial criticism of the 1990s. At the forefront of this movement is Edward Said's major study, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993). It provides a foundation for this thesis in its assertion that '[c]ulture and the aesthetic forms it contains derive from historical experience'.<sup>67</sup> Said describes an interactive *process*: cultural experiences, he claims, are 'oddly hybrid'; they 'assume more "foreign" elements, alterities, differences, than they consciously exclude'.<sup>68</sup> These contradictions challenge 'the politics of identity as given' and show 'how all representations are construct[s]'.<sup>69</sup> As a Western-educated Arab, Said empathises with other ambivalently-positioned writers: as he observes, belonging 'to both sides of the imperial divide enables you to understand them more easily'.<sup>70</sup>

Said's analysis, like Watt's, points to the idea that *Heart of Darkness* contributes to the cultural debate 'through formal devices'; a 'self-consciously circular narrative [draws]

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<sup>66</sup> Carola M. Kaplan, 'Beyond Gender: Deconstructions of Masculinity and Femininity from "Karain" to *Under Western Eyes*', in *Conrad in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Carola M. Kaplan, Peter Mallios and Andrea White (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), pp. 267-279 (p. 269). The fact that Marlow's aunt secures him his job as a steamboat captain indicates her importance in his story: as I will suggest in Chapters 3 and 4, she has a continuing significance throughout the narrative.

<sup>67</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. xxiv.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 380.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxx.

attention to [itself as] artificial', and 'dislocations in the narrator's language'<sup>71</sup> offer opportunities to deconstruct both imperialist and ant-imperialist positions. He echoes Parry in identifying that any representation of culture or identity is a hybrid composition: 'the cultural archive' must be read 'not univocally but *contrapuntally*, with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts.'<sup>72</sup> Said draws together threads from earlier critical fields: deconstructionist and feminist approaches, for example, reveal multiple facets in texts which previously were considered to follow a single ideological path.

Said's inter-relational approach informs Homi K. Bhabha's influential postcolonial text, *The Location of Culture* (1994). Bhabha's emphasis is on cultural hybridization. Although in his book-length series of essays he touches on only a few aspects of *Heart of Darkness*, he notes 'the long shadow cast' by the story 'on the world of postcolonial studies'.<sup>73</sup> According to Bhabha, its influence is

a double symptom of pedagogical anxiety: a necessary caution against generalizing the contingencies and contours of local circumstance, at the very moment at which a transnational, 'migrant' knowledge of the world is most urgently needed.<sup>74</sup>

In terms of the formal narrative devices used by Conrad and Lewis, my examination of their texts is informed by Bhabha's theory regarding the way in which identity 'emerges within a range of discourses as a double narrative movement':

[i]n the production of the nation as narration there is a split between the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative. It is through this process of splitting that the conceptual ambivalence of modern society becomes the site of *writing the nation*.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59; (original emphasis).

<sup>73</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* ([1994] Abingdon: Routledge Classics, 2004), p. 306.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 208-209; (original emphasis). David Huddart comments that in the 'narration' of national identity 'there is a pedagogical dimension that foregrounds total sociological facts'; see *Homi K. Bhabha* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), p. 121. The *OED* defines a pedagogue as a 'schoolmaster, a teacher; *esp.* a strict, dogmatic, or pedantic one'; and '[s]omething that serves to teach; a source of instruction or guidance ([c]hiefly with reference to St Paul's use [of the term in] Galatians 3:24).' Galatians 3:24 reads: '[w]herefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith'. Imperialism, for instance, was fashioned as a discourse, or an organizing principle, in which one could entrust one's *faith*. Huddart, of course,



The idea of a 'migratory' inter-action of a 'pedagogical', fixed ideology with the 'performative', something which is more elusive and challenging, is crucial to the ambivalent identities which develop in the texts examined in this thesis.

Paul B. Armstrong, in his essay, '*Heart of Darkness* and the Epistemology of Cultural Differences' (1996), considers the text in the multidimensional context that Bhabha discusses – one which is appropriate to the twenty-first century. Armstrong reads the story as a 'heteroglossic rendering of cultural differences without any attempt to synthesize them.'<sup>76</sup> In this analysis, Conrad's 'strategically ambiguous' narrative assists in understanding 'otherness [through] an ongoing reciprocity between knower and known'; in the process, 'each comments on, corrects, and replies to the other's representations in a never-ending shifting of positions.'<sup>77</sup> Achebe's 'act of writing back to Conrad'<sup>78</sup> could be considered within that hybridizing postcolonial exchange: Armstrong's view of Marlow's reaction to a repelling *kinship* with the 'ugly' is that it furthers an epistemological project: '[t]he first step toward engaging [with] another culture is to recognize that one's own is riven with contingency.'<sup>79</sup>

*Heart of Darkness* continues to be pertinent to the latest postcolonial studies, and to issues of hybridity. Tom Henthorne, in *Conrad's Trojan Horses* (2008), suggests that Conrad's narrative technique is 'based on [Bakhtin's] theory of "intentional hybridity"' rather than the more "organic" development of a hybridized position, as espoused by Bhabha.<sup>80</sup>

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notes Bhabha's identification of the elusive 'performative' dimension which complicates the 'pedagogical'; each influences the other. In everyday terms, the interaction is demonstrated in the relationship between fixed statements of political policy and their more variable implementation in the real world.

<sup>76</sup> Paul B. Armstrong, '*Heart of Darkness* and the Epistemology of Cultural Differences', in *Under Postcolonial Eyes*, ed. Fincham and Hooper, pp. 21-41 (p. 21). Bakhtin glosses the term *heteroglossia*: '[t]he base condition governing the operation of meaning in any utterance [...]. At any given time [...] there will be a set of conditions – social, historical, meteorological, physiological – that will insure that a word uttered in that place and at that time will have a meaning different than it would have under any other conditions; all utterances are heteroglot in that they are functions of a matrix of forces impossible to recoup and therefore impossible to resolve'; see M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 428.

<sup>77</sup> Armstrong, 'Epistemology of Cultural Differences', p. 22.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.* p. 28.

<sup>80</sup> Tom Henthorne, *Conrad's Trojan Horses: Imperialism, Hybridity, & the Postcolonial Aesthetic* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2008), p. 9.

The idea of a ‘migratory’ inter-action of a ‘pedagogical’, fixed ideology with the ‘performative’, something which is more elusive and challenging, is crucial to the ambivalent identities which develop in the texts examined in this thesis.

Paul B. Armstrong, in his essay, ‘*Heart of Darkness* and the Epistemology of Cultural Differences’ (1996), considers the text in the multidimensional context that Bhabha discusses – one which is appropriate to the twenty-first century. Armstrong reads the story as a ‘heteroglossic rendering of cultural differences without any attempt to synthesize them.’<sup>76</sup> In this analysis, Conrad’s ‘strategically ambiguous’ narrative assists in understanding ‘otherness [through] an ongoing reciprocity between knower and known’; in the process, ‘each comments on, corrects, and replies to the other’s representations in a never-ending shifting of positions.’<sup>77</sup> Achebe’s ‘act of writing back to Conrad’<sup>78</sup> could be considered within that hybridizing postcolonial exchange: Armstrong’s view of Marlow’s reaction to a repelling kinship with the ‘ugly’ is that it furthers an epistemological project: ‘[t]he first step toward engaging [with] another culture is to recognize that one’s own is riven with contingency.’<sup>79</sup>

*Heart of Darkness* continues to be pertinent to the latest postcolonial studies, and to issues of hybridity. Tom Henthorne, in *Conrad’s Trojan Horses* (2008), suggests that Conrad’s narrative technique is ‘based on [Bakhtin’s] theory of “intentional hybridity”’ rather than the more “organic” development of a hybridized position, as espoused by Bhabha.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Paul B. Armstrong, ‘*Heart of Darkness* and the Epistemology of Cultural Differences’, in *Under Postcolonial Eyes*, ed. Fincham and Hooper, pp. 21-41 (p. 21). Bakhtin glosses the term *heteroglossia*: ‘[t]he base condition governing the operation of meaning in any utterance [...]. At any given time [...] there will be a set of conditions – social, historical, meteorological, physiological – that will insure that a word uttered in that place and at that time will have a meaning different than it would have under any other conditions; all utterances are heteroglot in that they are functions of a matrix of forces impossible to recoup and therefore impossible to resolve’; see M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 428.

<sup>77</sup> Armstrong, ‘Epistemology of Cultural Differences’, p. 22.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.* p. 28.

<sup>80</sup> Tom Henthorne, *Conrad’s Trojan Horses: Imperialism, Hybridity, & the Postcolonial Aesthetic* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2008), p. 9.

According to Henthorne, Conrad's purpose is to 'unmask'<sup>81</sup> imperialist ideologies which he seeks to criticize. As I will suggest in Chapter 4, this appears to be a deterministic and thus reductive analysis. Armstrong's position regarding *Heart of Darkness*, that the text makes 'dialogue' between cultures 'thinkable',<sup>82</sup> is a more appropriate argument to be explored in this thesis, since such an approach sheds light on the 'contingent', hybridizing experience of the 'migrant' that Bhabha rightly suggests is relevant to the modern world.

### Alun Lewis: 'The Orange Grove' (1948) and the Welsh Postcolonial Debate

In the context of Lewis's Welsh origins, fluid notions of contingency, hybridity and migrancy are key to the comparison between his texts and those of Joseph Conrad. Kirsti Bohata, in 'Hybridity and Assimilation', an essay in *Nations and Relations* (2000), notes that the dialogic experiences suggested by Armstrong to be enriching, are in reality more complex. In Wales, the hybridity that results is 'often discussed in terms of degrees of anglicization, loss of Welshness, annihilation of identity.'<sup>83</sup> However, Bohata identifies an alternative position which follows Bhabha's analysis of the 'disrupting and challenging' nature of the 'interstices between cultures [that constitute] a highly productive "third space."'<sup>84</sup> In this space, binary oppositions, such as those formed by regarding Conrad's texts as *either* imperialist *or* anti-imperialist, are acknowledged, yet those polarities are disregarded; the 'Third Space' brings the two positions together to form new and multiple meanings.

Linda Adams's essay, 'Fieldwork: The Case of Broadsheets and the Welsh Anthropologist' (1999), examines connections between anthropology and early twentieth-century Welsh writing in English, and is an example of the postcolonial approach: it draws on

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>82</sup> Armstrong, 'Epistemology of Cultural Differences', p. 33.

<sup>83</sup> Kirsti Bohata, 'Beyond Authenticity? Hybridity and Assimilation in Welsh Writing in English', in *Nations and Relations: Writing Across the British Isles*, ed. Tony Brown and Russell Stephens (Cardiff: New Welsh Review, 2000), pp. 89-121 (p. 89).

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101; Bohata refers to Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, pp. 53-56. This analysis displays a similarity with Peter Brooks's view that in *Heart of Darkness* meaning is 'located in the interstices of story and frame'; see p. 17 above.

Lewis's poem 'The Sentry' (1942) to illuminate an interstitial position created by exchanges between polarities:

I have begun to die  
And the guns' implacable silence  
Is my black interim, my youth and age,  
In the flower of fury, the folded poppy,  
Night.<sup>85</sup>

'The Sentry' was written while Lewis was undergoing Army basic training. The 'interim' figure of the sentry is, according to Adams, a 'motif [that] implies boundaries, the defence of values, anxiety [...] [h]e is responsible for defining kinship, deciding who belongs and who is alien. He inhabits a liminal realm in space and time.'<sup>86</sup> Adams captures the soldier's hybridized sense of negative and positive. The exchange between 'anxiety' and 'responsibility' denotes the challenging potential represented by the 'flower of fury' that is formed in the 'Third Space'.

In contrast to the contemporary cultural focus, early criticism of the writing of Alun Lewis concentrates on his work from 'A Human Standpoint', as the English critic John Lehmann titles his 1952 essay. This term uses Lewis's own words contained in a letter written during his Army service in India. Lewis describes himself 'going native [and] reasoning [from] a human standpoint';<sup>87</sup> he longs for the sincerity and integrity that is denied to the soldier in 'The Sentry'. Lehmann views 'The Orange Grove' in much the same way as Guerard treats *Heart of Darkness*, as a psychological journey that reflects Lewis's imaginative response to India: the 'value[s] which he had accepted in his youth, in England

<sup>85</sup> Alun Lewis, 'The Sentry', in Alun Lewis, *Collected Poems*, ed. Cary Archard (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press Ltd., 1994), p. 28, ll. 17-21. All further references to Lewis's poems are to this edition and are given in the text.

<sup>86</sup> Linda Adams, 'Fieldwork: The Case of Broadsheds and the Welsh Anthropologist', *Welsh Writing in English*, Volume 5 (1999), 51-85 (p. 67).

<sup>87</sup> John Lehmann, 'A Human Standpoint', in John Lehmann, *The Open Night* (London: Longmans Green and Co. Ltd., 1952), pp. 109-116 (p. 111). Lewis's letter was written on 11 October 1943, and was published in *In the Green Tree* (1948). This volume of short stories and letters has been republished in the Library of Wales series (Cardigan: Parthian, 2006); see p. 55; letter 33.

[sic], seemed [to lose] their meaning'.<sup>88</sup> The main theme of 'The Orange Grove' concerns the efficient English officer, Staff-Captain Beale, becoming lost on a mission into the Indian jungle. Lehmann considers that his rescue by and alliance with a gypsy tribe has a core meaning: it realizes the longed-for integrated community. Although Beale ends the story in *terra incognita*, Lehmann attaches no significance to this liminality: from his Anglo-centric position he regards the story as carrying universal meaning in terms of the 'journey in'.

The Welsh critic John Stuart Williams, in his essay, 'The Short Stories of Alun Lewis' (1964), focuses on the blurring of narrative forms and content in Lewis's texts: 'the short story may have the same sort of genesis as the lyric poem [...]. They are both crystallizations of experience'.<sup>89</sup> Lewis was known primarily as a poet, and John Stuart Williams's identification of a duality of form is an early suggestion of internal division. He also identifies a recurring 'doubling' motif – 'the 'landless soldier' – that 'serves not only as a symbol of the paradoxical alienation of the individual in the mass but also as a chorus figure'.<sup>90</sup>

Beale is representative of the 'landless soldier', and although it is anachronistic to attribute a deconstructionist approach to John Stuart Williams's 1960s criticism, his analysis displays similarities with the features of that critical movement in relation to *Heart of Darkness*. An example of the narrative shifts in 'The Orange Grove' illustrates the connection. The opening sentence is solid and clear: Beale's 'truck slowed down [and he] leaned out to read the signpost.'<sup>91</sup> Later, when Beale is lost in the jungle, his narrative changes to become contingent on the surrounding environment, a condition which is conveyed through language, tone and heavy punctuation: '[d]riving was tricky [...] the tyres tended to skid, the road wound up and down the ghats' (p. 223). Beale begins as part of a

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>89</sup> John Stuart Williams, 'The Short Stories of Alun Lewis', *The Anglo-Welsh Review*, Volume 14, No. 34 (Winter, 1964-1965), 16-25 (p. 16).

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>91</sup> Alun Lewis, 'The Orange Grove', in Alun Lewis, *Collected Stories*, ed. Cary Archard (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, 1990), p. 213. All further references to Lewis's stories are to this edition and are given in the text, abbreviated, where necessary, as CS.

structured imperial army: signs (literally) have identifiable meanings; later, as he ‘recedes’ into the fluid jungle environment, fixities dissolve and his experience, like Marlow’s, begins to lack ‘positive terms’.

John Stuart Williams concludes his essay with a statement which suggests that Lewis’s texts, like Conrad’s, are inherently suitable to be considered within the decentring approach adopted by such critics as Perry Meisel: Lewis’s ‘concern with alienation reflects the situation of the English-speaking Welshman who carries the tension of two worlds within himself.’<sup>92</sup>

In a 1970 essay, ‘The Poetry of Darkness: Alun Lewis’s Indian Experience’, John Davies discusses some of the poems Lewis wrote around the same time as ‘The Orange Grove’. Although published in *The Anglo-Welsh Review*, the essay, in contrast to John Stuart Williams’s, pays little regard to the tensions of Lewis’s identity. Davies focuses rather on ‘the poet’s consistent effort to attain wholeness, integrity, oneness.’<sup>93</sup> He comments on the autobiographical nature of the poems, such as ‘Holi’ (1945): in ‘one of Lewis’s rare attempts to *sustain* an evocation of Indian life, he is too much of an outsider [to bring] conviction’.<sup>94</sup> He takes the poem’s organized quatrains and consistent rhyme scheme to indicate Lewis’s stance as the ‘slightly horrified intruder’:<sup>95</sup>

The village is growing fertile,  
The bankrupt peasant feels the wheat  
Spring green within his stony loins,  
All night the sweating drumsticks beat.<sup>96</sup>

Davies thinks that Lewis perceives ‘a threat to his own [individual] identity’; his journey in was ‘self-revealing but inconclusive’.<sup>97</sup> So, in the context of Bhabha’s theory, no

<sup>92</sup> John Stuart Williams, ‘The Short Stories of Alun Lewis’, p. 24.

<sup>93</sup> John Davies, ‘The Poetry of Darkness: Alun Lewis’s Indian Experience’, *The Anglo-Welsh Review*, No. 43 (1970), 176-183 (pp. 176-177).

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178; (original emphasis).

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>96</sup> ‘Holi,’ in Lewis, *Collected Poems*, p. 132, ll. 1-4.

<sup>97</sup> John Davies, ‘The Poetry of Darkness’, p. 182.

potentially creative 'Third Space' is formed. In ignoring the formal tensions in 'Holi', Davies's criticism is exposed as essentialist. In my view, the fact that the poem's schematic approach clashes with the fertile, sweating imagery suggests the kind of 'struggle' of voices that Bette London has identified, and makes the poem the more multivalent. The very inconclusiveness which this struggle represents is integral to Lewis's life, and offers an opportunity for examining in a new cultural context the multiple meanings which may be attributed to his most important texts – for instance, the last poem that he wrote, 'The Jungle' (1945), which, in Chapter 4, will be analyzed in conjunction with 'The Orange Grove'. However, Lewis criticism during the 1970s and 1980s follows a biographical, psychological approach. Universalizing themes of the 'self' tend to dominate.

*Alun Lewis: A Life* (1984), a critical biography by John Pikoulis, is the only extant book-length work on Lewis. It provides a comprehensive analysis of the factors that influenced Lewis's life, along with technical aspects of his work; it has been influential and may be likened to Watt's *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century* in the way it approaches the author's work. Pikoulis's views will be integral to my considerations, although he does not frame Lewis's work in a postcolonial context. Commenting on the storyline of 'The Orange Grove', Beale's gradual immersion in the jungle environment, Pikoulis sees him becoming 'lost in the universal cycle'.<sup>98</sup> The end of the story, the point at which Beale joins the gypsy tribe, is then seen as a transcendence in which the self 'sheds [its] worldly burdens'.<sup>99</sup> Although Pikoulis refers to the political backdrop of Beale's journey – 'the atmosphere tense [with] the aftermath of Ghandi and Nehru's arrest [for] their anti-British "Quit India" campaign'<sup>100</sup> – the implications for Beale as a colonial soldier are secondary. However, the

<sup>98</sup> John Pikoulis, *Alun Lewis: A Life* ([1984] Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press Ltd., 1991), p. 168.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 168.

idea of shedding a fixed state in which he is 'burdened' will become an important consideration.

In 'Hybridity and Assimilation', Kirsti Bohata relates postcolonial concepts of hybridization and 'the "systemic doubleness" of Welsh fiction'<sup>101</sup> to Lewis's writing, in turn bringing issues of his imperial identity to the fore. Thus, in Lewis's Indian stories

[his] hybrid status as a Welsh/British man [is] ever present and yet it is precisely his sense of being a perpetual outsider which seems to enable some of the more interesting and perceptive responses to colonial India as well as the ambiguous position of the Welsh in the British imperial project.<sup>102</sup>

Bohata draws parallels between 'The Orange Grove' and *Heart of Darkness* and returns to the psychological 'journey in': both Beale and Kurtz 'go native'. She agrees with the view that *Heart of Darkness* contains inherently racist tendencies, reiterating the same *fin-de-siècle* anxiety identified by Watt. There, 'going native' represents degeneration, and a fear of this may be detectable in both texts.<sup>103</sup> For Bohata, the lack of resolution in 'The Orange Grove' indicates an uncertainty about hybridity: the story is 'deeply symbolic rather than realistic.'<sup>104</sup> She considers that Lewis idealizes the gypsies, and thus any fusion with them could not be authentic. In terms of shedding 'worldly burdens' to move to a new life, as Pikoulis puts it, Bohata does not consider that the idea of a transcendence of political concerns is tenable: the ending 'works to obscure the humanity of the Indian population and their rootedness in the history and politics of colonial India', and underwrites 'the imperialistic notion of universality, [which] serves to impose a culturally-specific ideal in the guise of a universal "truth" or norm.'<sup>105</sup>

<sup>101</sup> M. Wynn Thomas, 'Introduction' to *Nations and Relations*, ed. Tony Brown and Russell Stephens, p. iii. The term 'systemic doubleness' is drawn from Christopher Whyte's essay 'Fictions and Poetics in Contemporary Scotland', in *Nations and Relations*, pp. 56-70 (p. 62).

<sup>102</sup> Bohata, 'Hybridity and Assimilation', p. 102.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 107-108.



‘The Orange Grove’ also contains instances where gender-specific ‘norms’ influence the narrative. The gypsy tribes-women, for example, are represented as traditional symbols of fertility: ‘[t]he babies sat on their parents’ heads, the women unwound their saris and put them in a bundle on their crowns, the water touched their breasts’ (p. 223). There are further examples of restrictive ‘de-personalizing’ narratives within the story, and, given that there is little sustained criticism of gender issues in Lewis’s writing, I propose to examine this issue in more detail.

Bohata concludes that ‘Lewis’s response to colonialism in India is highly ambivalent. His dual-nationality or hybridity seems to allow him a perspective from which he can criticize the imperial army [and] to sympathize with the Indians’, but he is also ‘capable of expressing viewpoints which are complicit with imperialism.’<sup>106</sup> This analysis is similar to Watt’s view of Conrad, whose texts, Watt suggests, ‘contain as many “imperialisms” and “colonialisms” as there are particular cases.’<sup>107</sup> Although noting the parallels between ‘The Orange Grove’ and *Heart of Darkness*, Bohata fears that within the restricted space that she has available any further discussion of that subject risks simplification; my intention is to develop her premise that Lewis expresses criticism of imperialism, but that this works alongside a complicity with its ideology. This will involve an examination of the parallels with *Heart of Darkness* in the context of a migration between cultural positions.

Another essay in *Nations and Relations*, ‘Colonial Wales and Fractured Language’ (2000), jointly written by M. Wynn Thomas and Tony Brown, suggests an area in which literary parallels between Conrad and Lewis might be drawn. Thomas notes in Lewis the capacity to represent Indian realities in a way that differs from discriminatory colonial practices. He refers to the story ‘The Raid’ (1948) as ‘a masterly study in language – of the

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<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>107</sup> Watt, *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 158.

clipped foreign accents and distorting discourses of colonialism.’<sup>108</sup> The story’s main character, Selden, leads a platoon ordered to arrest an Indian terrorist who has killed three soldiers. The narrative overlays the Commanding Officer’s description of Selden, “[d]amn good fellow”, with Selden’s ‘grotesque sentence’<sup>109</sup> to an informer, “‘Tairo a minute while I bolo my phaltan and then we’ll jao jillo’” (CS, pp. 187-189). Dialogue between a soldier and the terrorist is synergized: “‘What did you do it for mate?’ [...] the chap said very quietly, “For my country.” Chalky said, “Everybody says that. Beats me” (p. 191). The opposing worlds of colonizer and colonized are brought together: ‘[i]mperialism is nationalism writ large; and so anti-colonial nationalism [is] born of the very image of that which it means to resist.’<sup>110</sup> Thomas considers that the story’s ambivalence is ‘influenced by Lewis’s own divided sense of national identity’, and sheds light on ‘the idea of Wales as a colony.’<sup>111</sup> Such questions of nationalism are pursued by this thesis, particularly through ideas of ambivalence and distortion, as they are discussed in ‘Colonial Wales’.

Tony Brown notes in ‘The Raid’ not only ‘distorting discourses’ between Selden and Indians, but also internal distortions within Selden’s first-person narrative. In the story’s opening lines Selden mixes Indian army slang: ‘charwallah’; a colloquialism: ‘nipped’; and a combination of formal and informal language: ‘cautionary peep’ (p. 185). These exemplify Selden’s *heteroglossic* registers, a feature of his narrative which is comparable to Marlow’s. The latter’s use of masculine adventurer’s language, such as “‘By Jove””, alongside a more philosophical pronouncement, Kurtz as “‘the pulsating stream of light”” (HD, p. 47), raises interesting parallels and poses intriguing questions regarding identity. As Peter Brooks has

<sup>108</sup> M. Wynn Thomas and Tony Brown, ‘Colonial Wales and Fractured Language’, in *Nations and Relations*, ed. Tony Brown and Russell Stephens, pp. 71-78 (p. 73).

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 74-75.

suggested, ‘language forms the basis of social organization’;<sup>112</sup> the different voices which form the *heteroglossia* are thus vital to personal and national identity as ‘narration’.

In relation to the question of identity, Thomas suggests that Lewis felt that ‘to consolidate [the Welsh dimension of his personality] might mean becoming involved with an anti-colonial Welsh nationalism about which he had deep misgivings.’<sup>113</sup> He sees the Indian struggle highlighting ‘tensions within [Lewis] between Welshness and a Britishness the dominant – even definitive – English version of which [is] alien to him.’<sup>114</sup> The idea of a ‘definitive’ national identity returns us to the way in which the *Encyclopædia Britannica* describes the aims of the International Conference of 1884-85 regarding the Congo. The interaction of colonizing and defining forces with subaltern peoples, and the hybridizing positions that may ensue, will be explored in the context of Conrad’s and Lewis’s writings.

In ‘Alun Lewis and the Politics of Empire’ (2003), John Pikoulis takes issue with the ‘assumption’ in ‘Colonial Wales’ that Wales ‘is a colonized nation’.<sup>115</sup> He disputes the assertion that ‘Britishness and Welshness are antithetical’, a view which ‘runs counter to that held by [the majority of] Welsh people that Welshness and Britishness are problematic only according to personal conviction’.<sup>116</sup> Instead, according to Pikoulis, focus should be on Bhabha’s “‘national, anti-nationalist histories of the ‘people’”<sup>117</sup> in which hybridity is accepted as integral to modern life. In respect of Lewis’s ‘personal conviction[s]’, Pikoulis’s position is more in accord with Bohata’s opinion that Lewis is ‘a perpetual outsider’ referred to earlier in this chapter.<sup>118</sup> Pikoulis emphasizes that such a status is relevant to Lewis’s position “‘in England or Britain as well as Wales’”, since he “‘resisted definition by any

<sup>112</sup> See p. 17 above.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75

<sup>115</sup> John Pikoulis, ‘Alun Lewis and the Politics of Empire’, *Welsh Writing in English*, Volume 8 (2003), 157-175 (p. 160).

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160. Pikoulis cites Kirsti Bohata’s reference to Bhabha’s ‘anti-nationalist histories’ in ‘Hybridity and Assimilation’, p. 101; see Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 56.

<sup>118</sup> Bohata, ‘Hybridity and Assimilation’, p. 102.

nationalism”'.<sup>119</sup> Yet, within her analysis Bohata describes Lewis as ‘a Welsh/British man’ as well as being an ‘outsider’;<sup>120</sup> he may resist definition, but he has a relationship with several different nationalities.

The debate generated within *Nations and Relations* represents the complexities of Welsh culture. Bohata’s *Postcolonialism Revisited* (2004) is a major contribution to that debate. Her view in respect of approaching Welsh writing in English using postcolonial theoretical tools is significant:

[t]he wide appeal of postcolonialism is surely due in no small part to [a] concern with shifting identity, with ‘re-membering’ the self, and is of immediate relevance to and for a nation such as Wales, which has relied in recent centuries on a fairly self-conscious imagining of nation.<sup>121</sup>

Bohata notes ‘a lexicon of fragmentation, dislocation, loss, exile’<sup>122</sup> in Welsh Writing in English. She locates Lewis’s writing within

postcolonial ideas of hybridity and duality, where [his] Welsh-British identity, his education and his experiences as [a soldier] in India [are] seen as inflecting his writing and providing him with a complex, uncomfortable yet privileged perspective.<sup>123</sup>

The ideas of complexity and multiplicity in this passage make clearer the suggestion in ‘Hybridity and Assimilation’ that Lewis’s cultural position created a narrative agency regarding the imperial process. As in the case of Conrad, it is the inter-relational, ‘migrant’ aspect of Lewis’s writing that is worthy of further exploration.

In *Postcolonialism Revisited*, Bohata provides a literary means through which the tensions involved in an inter-relational process can be explored. She cites Bill Ashcroft’s description of texts ‘acting metonymically to suggest the cultural and possibly linguistic

<sup>119</sup> Pikoulis, ‘Politics of Empire’, p. 161; Pikoulis refers to Bohata, ‘Hybridity and Assimilation’, p. 102.

<sup>120</sup> Bohata, ‘Hybridity and Assimilation’, p. 102.

<sup>121</sup> Bohata, *Postcolonialism Revisited*, p. 2.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

difference [through] “devices of otherness”,<sup>124</sup> for example, using non-English words in a text or ‘code-switching’. This is defined as ‘the grammatical/syntactical disruption of one language by another’.<sup>125</sup> As Thomas and Brown have shown, Lewis’s texts involve the use of code-switching, the effect of which creates a *heteroglossic*, fractured narrative. The Indian Army slang that features in ‘The Raid’ reflects the influences of an alien environment, but ‘Colonial Wales’ notes that code-switching also occurs in texts written while Lewis was in Wales. In ‘The Mountain over Aberdare’ (1942), the speaker observes

[t]he drab streets strung across the cwm,  
Derelict workings, tips of slag  
[...]  
And children scrutting for the coal  
That winter dole cannot purvey.<sup>126</sup>

The Welsh word, ‘cwm’, sits alongside a colloquialism, ‘scrutting’, but, as Brown points out, the term ‘purvey’ comes from ‘a different area of Lewis’s consciousness [and] registers [his] education in a culture very different to that of his native valley.’<sup>127</sup>

Bohata outlines three literary uses of code-switching: ““extrinsic””, to provide ‘local colour’; ““organic””, to express cultural difference because words are glossed; and ““political””, ‘to discomfort the reader [with] an apparently uncrossable cultural boundary’ because no glossing takes place.<sup>128</sup> Political deployments are of greatest interest in postcolonial terms, in the context of ““an “overlap” of language”” across cultures creating a ‘palimpsest, where we glimpse [an] “original” language and culture through the overlay of a

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106. Bohata refers to Bill Ashcroft, ‘Is That The Congo? Language as Metonymy in the Post-Colonial Text’, *World Literature Written in English*, Volume 29, No. 2 (1989), 3-10 (p. 5).

<sup>125</sup> Bohata, *Postcolonialism Revisited*, p. 108.

<sup>126</sup> Alun Lewis, ‘The Mountain over Aberdare’, in Lewis, *Collected Poems*, p. 87, ll. 6-10.

<sup>127</sup> Thomas and Brown, ‘Colonial Wales’, p. 87.

<sup>128</sup> Bohata, *Postcolonialism Revisited*, pp. 117-118. Bohata refers to Elizabeth Gordon and Mark Williams, ‘Raids on the Articulate: Code-Switching, Style-Shifting, and Post-Colonial Writing’, *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, Volume 33, No. 2 (1998), pp. 75-96.

colonial [...] language.’<sup>129</sup> In ‘The Mountain over Aberdare’, no glossing is provided: the fracturing effect of its code-switching may thus be read as political.

The complex effects of code-switching in Lewis’s texts may be likened to Conrad’s ‘double-voiced’ strategies, and the ‘dislocations’ in his narratives, as Said puts it. In this thesis, the potential effects of these strategies and techniques will be considered in relation to texts by other writers – Kipling, for example. A key question will relate to narrative outcomes. Is there one voice that prevails and overwrites ‘Others’ in the manner of, thinking back to terms of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*,<sup>130</sup> the prohibitively defining imperial discourse? Or do hybridized identities emerge from poly-vocal strategies, and, if so, does this outcome result in an ‘annihilation of identity’ or in something more enabling?

The debate surrounding the Welsh post-colonial situation is open-ended. In *A Hundred Years of Fiction* (2004), Stephen Knight reads ‘Welsh fiction in English to understand how the literature of a *colony*, in the language of the *colonizer*, has been affected by its situation, how authors respond, consciously and unconsciously, to the *constraints* of their situation’.<sup>131</sup> Knight’s language is politically charged, and he anticipates dissent from ‘people [who] are too comfortable with colonization to even identify it’.<sup>132</sup> He discusses the effects on Lewis of cultural flux. In the story ‘They Came’ (1942), a Welsh soldier contemplates the idea that ‘[n]one of us are ourselves now [...] neither what we were, nor what we will be’ (CS, p. 169). Knight takes the soldier’s concluding words, “[m]y life belongs to the world” (p. 176), to be Lewis’s, standing on the cusp of change at the Second World War, as does Conrad at the *fin-de-siècle*.

<sup>129</sup> Bohata, *Postcolonialism Revisited*, p. 118. Bohata refers to Bill Ashcroft, ‘Is that the Congo?’, p. 4; see note 124 above.

<sup>130</sup> See p. 1 above.

<sup>131</sup> Stephen Knight, *A Hundred Years of Fiction* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), p. xiii; (my emphases).

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

Knight attributes postcolonial significance to the ending of 'The Orange Grove', in which Beale 'finds himself stripped of English authority', and is merged with the gypsy tribe 'whom he finally feels to be in some way like his own ancestors, the nomadic Celts'.<sup>133</sup> This places Lewis in one of Knight's key movements in 'Welsh fiction in English', namely, writers with 'a sense of integrational independence'.<sup>134</sup> If Beale does experience transcendence, as is suggested by other critics, Knight regards it to be political – 'strongly rooted in Wales'.<sup>135</sup> Here, it is possible to see the kind of 'national allegory' envisaged by Jameson, stemming from Lewis's identification with the values of a more primitive, pre-capitalist society. It may indicate a cultural 're-centring' which, as Knight suggests, integrates 'Anglicized Wales with aspects of Cymraeg [Welsh-speaking] Wales'.<sup>136</sup> Lewis's work then represents a freeing from colonial 'constraints' and a move towards a 'wider' Wales.<sup>137</sup> In Knight's view, '[t]he voices of Wales have not been silenced; forms of communality have been reimagined, against what seem like overwhelming odds.'<sup>138</sup>

Knight's consistent identification of a colonial foundation to Welsh writers' texts has been contested as historically unsound. Dai Smith, for example, in an outraged review of *A Hundred Years of Fiction* in the *New Welsh Review*, 'Psycho-colonialism' (2004), poses as a confused Welsh 'Valleys' working-class reader of Knight's book:

[t]his book done my 'ead in. I knows now that if I 'ad 'ad or ever got back Cymraeg [...] it'd all be different and I could be integrated so as to become independent. Only I can't get my 'ead round that, see.<sup>139</sup>

The bizarre opening to Dai Smith's article suggests that ordinary Welsh people would not recognize Knight's point of view, a position not dissimilar to John Pikoulis's in his rejection

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 119 and 126.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>139</sup> Dai Smith, 'Psycho-colonialism', *New Welsh Review*, No. 66 (Winter 2004), 22-29 (p. 22).

of the idea of a colonial Wales. Smith shifts into academic mode to promote an anti-nationalist perspective. He notes the effectiveness of 'post-colonialism as a tool in the definition of [cultural] perceptions'; the relationship may not entail the vicious subjugation seen in Conrad's view of Africa, for economic and social dominance is equally relevant; however, he argues that such an approach is 'strongest as a guide to cultural behaviour and artistic expression if it can stand directly in line of [an] undeniable colonial past'.<sup>140</sup> He asserts that that colonial history 'never happened to [Welsh] people'.<sup>141</sup> In doing so, he ignores the most obvious signs of colonization in Wales: for example, 'the notorious "Blue Books" report on Education in Wales of 1847 [which] addressed itself, as the empire did in so many locations, to the morals and education of the natives'.<sup>142</sup> This report led to an English-only education policy, a factor seen by Bohata as influential in Lewis's complex identity. As the *Encyclopædia Britannica* might have reported, 'provisions [were] made for civilizing the [Welsh]'.<sup>143</sup>

Dai Smith's position may be interestingly contrasted with that of the half-Welsh and half-Afro-Caribbean writer, Charlotte Williams. In *Sugar and Slate* (2002), she is 'compelled to go back in time'<sup>143</sup> and think about Richard Pennant, a nineteenth-century slate baron who created his north Wales industrial empire on a fortune made from the West Indian sugar trade. To her, the colonial parallels are striking:

[o]ut of the profits of slave labour in one Empire, he built another on near-slave labour [...]. The shared plight of the factory slaves at home and the plantation slaves elsewhere had an echo right across Wales with the quarrymen, the iron smelters, the black faced miners, all knew what it meant to be robbed, beaten down, have their language, their culture, name and place stolen from them – what it was to be enslaved.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>142</sup> Knight, *A Hundred Years of Fiction*, p. 7.

<sup>143</sup> Charlotte Williams, *Sugar and Slate* (Aberystwyth: Planet, 2002), p. 174.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*



The significance of such a view for this thesis is that Charlotte Williams, like Alun Lewis, might also claim an ‘uncomfortable yet privileged perspective’<sup>145</sup> of Empire, peculiar to the insider-outsider. It is significant that her view accords with that of the native Idris Davies: both perceive an enslavement arising from the ‘successful’ commercial colonizing of Wales.

Bohata’s response to Knight’s book and Smith’s rejoinder, “‘Psycho-colonialism’ Revisited’ (2005), is most productive since it re-focuses the debate on ‘literature and literary criticism.’<sup>146</sup> Her view is that discussions of Welsh writing in English do not depend on proof that Wales was a colony:

postcolonialism [...] offers its most exciting [...] insights into literature [when] it forms part of a dialectic – a discursive and exploratory critique rather than the espousing of over-rigid and ultimately reductive models.<sup>147</sup>

This passage is influenced by Bhabha’s theory of the ‘discursive’ nature of the ‘Third Space’,<sup>148</sup> to which Bohata refers in ‘Hybridity and Assimilation’. In “‘Psycho-colonialism’ Revisited’, she also draws on Declan Kiberd’s analysis of Irish identity to support her view that the Welsh could be simultaneously imperial *and* counter-imperial. It is the dialectic between two positions, contained, as Kiberd puts it, in ‘one and the same gesture’,<sup>149</sup> which offers the most exciting insights. Welsh people are affected by English cultural imperialism, yet have their own role in a colonizing project. This notion recalls the comments of Ned Thomas. In his pioneering post-colonial text, *The Welsh Extremist* (1971), he observes that such duality is a matter of modern necessity: ‘hardly any of us lives in the Welsh culture alone. Although up to a point alienated from the English culture, we profit by it to reach out for ideas to a wider world’.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> See p. 33 above.

<sup>146</sup> Kirsti Bohata, “‘Psycho-colonialism’ Revisited’, *New Welsh Review*, No. 69 (Autumn 2005), 31-39 (p. 31).

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>148</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 55.

<sup>149</sup> Bohata, “‘Psycho-colonialism’ Revisited’, p. 35; see Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* ([1995] London: Vintage, 1996), p. 330.

<sup>150</sup> Ned Thomas, *The Welsh Extremist*, p. 116.

Lewis, like Beale, and Conrad, like Marlow, are complicit with the imperial world: the way in which these writers construct and represent that complex, 'migrant' relationship 'illustrat[es] the importance of moving beyond and inside the [homogenizing] categories of colonial, imperial, post-colonial', and provide opportunities to examine the 'foundations of hegemonic, subaltern *and* hybrid cultures.'<sup>151</sup>

The critical approaches outlined in this review suggest comparable aspects of Conrad's and Lewis's work: the significance of a fictional imperialist 'journey-in' which is informed by the psychological and cultural indeterminacy of the author's own position; and the ways in which narrative form is deployed to convey the contradictoriness and recursiveness of a displaced position. However, the inter-relational, multiple meanings that may then be revealed in terms of identity point to what Susan Bassnett has suggested to be significant in the comparative approach – the 'altered perceptions' of and 'innovative connections'<sup>152</sup> between the selected texts. Chapter 1 now surveys the biographical and cultural influences on Conrad and Lewis which contribute to the multiple narrative perspectives that are a feature of their writing.

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<sup>151</sup> Bohata, "'Psycho-colonialism" Revisited', pp. 35-38; (my emphasis).

<sup>152</sup> See p. 5 above.

# CHAPTER 1

## BIOGRAPHY AND CULTURE

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Ian Watt has suggested that although Conrad's fiction is not straightforwardly autobiographical, his writings are 'illuminated by an understanding of the inordinate difficulty of his life', and, as I note above, reflect the 'complicated relationship [...] between their sources in personal experience and [fiction]'.<sup>1</sup> In a similar context, Alun Lewis introduces his first volume of stories, *The Last Inspection* (1942), by commenting that the stories are '[w]ritten out of immediate experience [...] rather personal observations than detached composition'.<sup>2</sup> Each text written by Conrad and Lewis and examined in this thesis has a relation to the authors' lives and cultural environments. I have noted the biographical bases of the two principal texts. Two other examples are: in *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*, the merchant vessel's voyage, although dramatized, follows a journey that Conrad actually undertook; in Lewis's case, the 1930s Welsh mining village setting of 'The Housekeeper' is also the location and era in which he grew up.

Comprehensive biographies of Conrad and Lewis are readily available. In Conrad's case, there are many, and, as I have commented, *Joseph Conrad: A Chronicle* (1983) by Zdzisław Najder sets the scholarly standard. John Pikoulis's *A Life* (1984) stands alone in respect of Lewis, but is nonetheless authoritative. In this chapter, therefore, I provide brief details of the writers' upbringings, and then concentrate on their engagements with imperialism.

Some fifty years separate the writing of *Heart of Darkness* and 'The Orange Grove'. The primacy of the European colonizing nations had been eroded during that period, but the

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<sup>1</sup> Watt, *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century*, p. ix; see p. 14 above.

<sup>2</sup> Alun Lewis, 'Author's Note' to *The Last Inspection* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1942), p. 5.

competition between those powers, fostered in the resolutions of the International Conference of 1884-85, remained equally dangerous. J. A. Hobson's influential economic and political analysis, *Imperialism: A Study*, was published in 1902, as was the book form of *Heart of Darkness*; Hobson's text was republished in 1938, at the beginning of Lewis's writing career. In the later edition, Hobson discusses 'issues as they presented themselves at the opening of the century' and notes that the

chief perils and disturbances associated with the aggressive nationalism of [1938], though [...] accelerated by the Great War and the Bad Peace, were all latent and discernible in the world of a generation [previous], and find their economic, political and moral roots in the foreign policy of [...] advanced industrial nations.<sup>3</sup>

In examining the biographies of Conrad and Lewis, my concern is to identify the significant 'disturbances', or, in Bhabha's terms, 'displacements',<sup>4</sup> which influenced their lives.

## Joseph Conrad

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In 1901, Conrad wrote 'Amy Foster', a short story set in England. Its narrative indicts the way in which 'civilized' races behave towards the 'Other', and is generally regarded to contain an autobiographical element.<sup>5</sup> The main character, Yanko, is an immigrant from Europe who is assimilated into an English village community, eventually marrying the eponymous Amy. However, the English narrator voices a communal view that emphasises the émigré's liminality: '[he] was different: like a man transplanted into another planet'.<sup>6</sup> The story ends tragically when the fever-stricken Yanko cries out for water in his own language and pushes Amy beyond the limits of her tolerance: 'her fear of that strange man'<sup>7</sup> causes her to flee with their new-born baby, leaving Yanko to die. Conrad, writing to Henry-Durand Davray, explained the theme: '[the] story of an Austro-Polish highlander [in England]. Idea:

<sup>3</sup> J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* ([1902] London: Unwin Hyman Ltd., 1988), p. 44.

<sup>4</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Paul Kirschner, 'Introduction' to Joseph Conrad, *Typhoon and Other Stories* (London: Penguin, 1992), p. 18.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Typhoon and Other Stories* ([1903] London: Penguin, 1992), p. 155.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

the essential difference of the races. A dismal story.’<sup>8</sup> By the time Conrad wrote ‘Amy Foster’ he had been settled in England for some five years, and was himself married to an Englishwoman.<sup>9</sup> Evidently, he still felt the complex effects of cultural displacement. However, these issues had affected his life long before arriving in England.

Conrad was born on 3 December 1857 and named Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski. In *Conrad’s Polish Background* (1964), Najder confirms his birthplace was ‘Berdyeczów (Ukrainian Berdichev) in Podolia’ and his parents were ‘Apollo Korzeniowski, a writer and journalist, and Ewa Bobrowska, both members of the Polish landowning nobility [the *szlachta*]’.<sup>10</sup> Najder then provides some background to Poland’s complex cultural history:

Podolia, Volhynia, and the Ukraine were the old provinces of what was then called Ruthenia and is now commonly called the Ukraine. Until 1793 Ruthenia formed part of the United Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania. Her inhabitants were mainly Ukrainians (or Ruthenians), but most of the landowners were Polish.<sup>11</sup>

Poland was partitioned in 1772, 1793 and 1795 by neighbouring Russia, Prussia and Austria. As Geoffrey Galt Harpham has commented, the nation, in a ‘huge step backwards for modernity, [was] consumed [by] the victory of despotism and empire over [Europe’s most tolerant] republican government.’<sup>12</sup> The *szlachta* was ‘the reigning cultural force’ in Polish society; its members advocated ‘lofty and adventurous ideals of honour and duty’<sup>13</sup> over materialism, and an element of democracy had been extended to ‘about ten per cent of the

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<sup>8</sup> Conrad to Henry-Durand Davray, 2 April 1902, in *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad, Volume 2, 1898 – 1902*, ed. Frederick R. Karl and Laurence Davies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 401-402. Davray was a French translator of Conrad’s work.

<sup>9</sup> Conrad married Jessie George on 24 March 1896.

<sup>10</sup> Najder, *Conrad’s Polish Background*, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *One of Us: The Mastery of Joseph Conrad* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 14-15.

<sup>13</sup> Najder, *Conrad’s Polish Background*, pp. 2-3; Najder notes a complicating factor in understanding Polish culture: the term *szlachta* has no convenient English translation or social equivalent because there was no distinction in Poland between the nobility and the gentry; every member of the *szlachta* was legally equal.

population.’<sup>14</sup> Partition resulted in suppression of these liberalisms, particularly by the Russians. Members of the *szlachta* were active in insurrections in 1794 and 1830 and the effect on the Korzeniowskis was the confiscation of most of their estates.

Apollo’s and Ewa’s politics reflected two opposing Polish outlooks – idealism and pragmatism: ‘[t]he Korzeniowskis were ardent [nationalists]’; the Bobrowskis sought ‘appeasement’ and preservation of Polishness within the Russian Empire.<sup>15</sup> However, Poland’s history makes definitions of nationalism necessarily complex. In his essay, ‘The Fate of Lubomierz: Memory and History in Poland’ (1994), Alun Gwynedd Jones points out that in the late nineteenth century two incompatible strands of nationalism developed, but both were in ‘response to Partition.’<sup>16</sup> These two strands were advocated by opposing politicians – Roman Dmowski and Józef Piłsudski:<sup>17</sup> ‘Dmowski talked of kinship and blood’ and privileged ideas of race and belonging; Piłsudski regarded ‘diversity’ to be the source of ‘national vitality.’<sup>18</sup> The latter approach may be seen as a solution to the charge that ‘oligarchic anarchy’<sup>19</sup> had resulted from the intolerance of the *szlachta*, and Poland had thus contributed to its own downfall. Najder suggests that ‘nationalists’, such as Apollo, actually favoured the ‘restoration of [a] multi-ethnic Poland’, in which ‘a free and democratic’ culture prevailed.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Harpham, *One of Us*, p. 14. Harpham points out that in this Polish democracy there were ‘more formally ‘active citizens’ than nineteenth century France or than England before [...] universal suffrage.’

<sup>15</sup> Najder, *Conrad’s Polish Background*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>16</sup> Alun Gwynedd Jones, ‘The Fate of Lubomierz: Memory and History in Poland’, in *Nation and Community*, ed. David Sullivan (Coleg Harlech Occasional Papers, 1994), pp. 60-72 (p. 63).

<sup>17</sup> Dmowski was an intellectual influenced by Darwinism; he came from the urban bourgeoisie and believed its opportunities for advancement had been hindered by competition from its non-Polish neighbours. Piłsudski was a member of the ‘minor aristocracy, a caste resentful of its exclusion from power by foreign-born administrators’; see Alun Gwynedd Jones, ‘The Fate of Lubomierz’, p. 61.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>19</sup> Harpham, *One of Us*, p. 29.

<sup>20</sup> Zdzisław Najder, ‘Joseph Conrad’s parents’, in Zdzisław Najder, *Conrad in Perspective: Essays on Art and Fidelity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 18-43 (pp. 26-27).

The subtleties of Polish nationalism would have been irrelevant to imperial forces, and in 1861 Apollo's opposition to the Russian regime resulted in his six-month imprisonment. Apollo and Ewa were sentenced to 'settlement in a distant province of the Empire',<sup>21</sup> leaving in May 1862, and Conrad's formative years, to the age of eleven, are marked by recurring displacements. The location of the family's exile, originally in Perm, changed a further three times. Conrad's mother died when he was aged seven, and his father when he was eleven. If Poland's political displacements are significant for national character, then the Korzeniowski family's experience doubles that pattern: displacements within displacements, so to speak.

As an orphan, Conrad came under the managing influence of his uncle, Tadeusz Bobrowski. Owen Knowles suggests that this created a 'further sense of transplantation.'<sup>22</sup> A sense of uprootedness followed Conrad into adulthood, but his relationship with Tadeusz was his 'first major exercise in forging an identity from irreconcilable opposites';<sup>23</sup> in this case, the clash between Tadeusz's 'practical, conservative approach', and the 'revolutionary [patriotic] fervour'<sup>24</sup> that Conrad had witnessed in his father. In 1872, in the interests of Conrad's safety, Tadeusz attempted to secure him Austrian citizenship. The application failed and this meant that Conrad, as a convict's son, 'could not stay indefinitely in ethnic Poland without risking [...] 25 years of military service in the Russian army.'<sup>25</sup>

Biographers suggest that the danger of conscription caused the next far-reaching change in Conrad's life – his move, in 1874, at the age of seventeen, to France to become a seaman. However, for Conrad, typically, there was another consideration: the enticement of

<sup>21</sup> Najder, *Conrad's Polish Background*, p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> Owen Knowles, 'Conrad's life', in *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*, ed. J. H. Stape (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 1-24 (p. 6). This image echoes how Conrad describes Yanko's experience in 'Amy Foster' – 'like a man transplanted into another planet'; see p. 41 above.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Najder, *Conrad's Polish Background*, p. 12.

adventure. Andrea White refers to Conrad's oft-quoted recollection of his thoughts as a nine-year-old while looking at 'the blank space' on a map of Africa, 'representing the unsolved mystery of that continent' – "[w]hen I grow up I shall go *there*";<sup>26</sup> she suggests that this kind of aspiration was not uncommon 'for mid-century Europeans stirred by the myriad reports of adventure and exploration [from] colonial outposts',<sup>27</sup> such as those from David Livingstone and Henry M. Stanley in Africa. Conrad also read complementary adventure fiction – Frederick Marryat's novels, for example:<sup>28</sup> as White notes, 'frequent immersions in that writer' formed part of Conrad's 'resolve to go to sea'.<sup>29</sup>

The commencement of Conrad's new career coincided with a cultural change as the aggressive foreign policy of industrialized nations replaced an era of unfettered market forces. The global economic climate from 1875 was deflationary, and this caused an increasingly ruthless mode of commerce. E. J. Hobsbawm, in *The Age of Empire: 1875 – 1914* (1987), describes this period as one of 'profound identity crisis and transformation', in which 'moral foundation[s] crumbled under [the] contradictions [of cultural] advance' as liberalism moved towards its 'strange death'.<sup>30</sup> Where earlier colonial expansion had 'seemed relatively unproblematic [because] the triumphs were so striking',<sup>31</sup> now the inequities of the 'domination over [...] a world of dark skins in remote places'<sup>32</sup> became more noticeable and

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<sup>26</sup> Joseph Conrad, *A Personal Record* ([1912] Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 13; (original emphasis).

<sup>27</sup> Andrea White, 'Conrad and imperialism', in *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*, ed. J. H. Stape, pp. 179-202 (p. 180).

<sup>28</sup> Frederick Marryat (1792–1848) was a naval officer and the author of sea-faring adventure stories, many of which derived from his own experience. *Peter Simple* (1834) and *Mr. Midshipman Easy* (1836) are two of his best-known novels.

<sup>29</sup> Andrea White, *Joseph Conrad and the Adventure Tradition: Constructing and deconstructing the imperial subject* ([1993] Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 58.

<sup>30</sup> E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire: 1875 – 1914* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), p. 10.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.



less excusable. Conrad's sea-faring career, initially on French merchant vessels,<sup>33</sup> moved his own displaced experience into a global environment that was itself in turmoil.

The young Conrad's experiences in France, whilst initially filled with the excitement of freedom, created yet further displacements. As Najder observes, Conrad obtained work on merchant ships, but it 'transpired that as a foreigner and a Russian subject he had no right to serve on French vessels without permission from the Russian consul.'<sup>34</sup> He was financially irresponsible and had to be bailed out by Tadeusz (who had financed his venture in the first place). These setbacks produced, as Najder puts it, 'an acute crisis in self-confidence' that plunged him into a depression which may have led him to attempt to take his own life.<sup>35</sup> Allan H. Simmons is more sceptical, and notes that the suicide attempt, which failed, is 'now thought to [have been] deliberately botched [...] in order to extract money from his uncle.'<sup>36</sup> Tadeusz realized that Conrad's difficulties had to be alleviated: thus, "it was decided that he should join the English [*sic*] Merchant Marine."<sup>37</sup>

Conrad obtained work with the British Merchant Service in 1878. Knowles points out that this was 'another sharp change in direction'; but it was one that would lead to him seeking 'an identity' within the traditions of the Service that he could 'associate with the idea of home [...] fidelity and solidarity, a hierarchical society, and a code of time-honoured traditions and working truths.'<sup>38</sup> However, Knowles also notes that this association with 'home' and with

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<sup>33</sup> Conrad's first sea voyage, on 15 December 1874, was as a passenger on the *Mont Blanc* which sailed from Marseilles to Martinique, a French colony that produced sugar and coffee. He subsequently served as an apprentice and then obtained his first paid work in July 1876 as a steward on the *Saint Antoine* sailing to South American ports and colonies in the Virgin Islands. This ship was engaged in the typical imperial trading commodities of coal, wood and sugar; see Najder, *A Chronicle*, pp. 39-44.

<sup>34</sup> Najder, *A Chronicle*, p. 47.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53. Conrad suffered a gunshot wound to his chest, the circumstances of which are not clear. Najder comments that the bullet went through the chest muscle or between the ribs: either Conrad 'placed the revolver badly and the bullet went almost parallel to his body, or the suicide was simulated and he never intended to take his own life.'

<sup>36</sup> Simmons, *Joseph Conrad*, p. 5.

<sup>37</sup> Letter from Tadeusz Bobrowski to Stefan Buszczyński, 24 March 1879, quoted in Najder, *A Chronicle*, p. 53.

<sup>38</sup> Knowles, 'Conrad's Life', p. 8.

adopted British traditions ‘seems to have encouraged in him [the habits of] the hybrid “marginal man” who [...] needs self-consciously to fashion an identity from a medley of competing demands and allegiances.’<sup>39</sup> These comments encourage consideration of this key period of change in Conrad’s life in a ‘migratory’ postcolonial context. The idea that Conrad’s identity was ‘fashioned’ by competing demands provides a biographical basis to the way in which critics such as Benita Parry and Paul B. Armstrong read his fictional narratives as a ‘heteroglossic rendering of cultural differences’, none of which are reconciled.<sup>40</sup> The circumstances of Conrad’s ‘British’ working life also exemplify Bhabha’s ‘double narrative movement’ between the pedagogical and the performative.<sup>41</sup> The theory becomes clearer by application to Conrad’s situation in England. The national values that he saw epitomised in the Merchant Service are pedagogical – they form a paradigmatic code of conduct. What happens in the recursive performative environment is different: everyday practice pulls away from centred values, but always has a relation to them. As ‘Amy Foster’ illustrates, codes of conduct fail when confronted with difference. In the story, Yanko is assimilated into English cultural life, as was Conrad.<sup>42</sup> However, the eventual emphasis on the negative effects of Yanko’s alterity reveals a social double narrative that illuminates Conrad’s own hybridized experience. It leaves him in-between cultures and in tune with the sense of ‘identity crisis’ that characterizes ‘progressive’ imperialist nations in the late nineteenth century.

Conrad’s double narrative in relation to ‘home’ is evidenced in his letters to Polish compatriots. In 1883, he writes to Stefan Buszczyński, a Polish patriot: ‘I always remember what you said when I was leaving Cracow: [...] wherever you may sail you are sailing towards

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> See pp. 17-23 above.

<sup>41</sup> See p. 22 above.

<sup>42</sup> Conrad was granted British citizenship on 19 August 1886, and passed his examination for Ordinary Master of the British merchant marine on 10 November 1886; see Najder, *A Chronicle*, p. xix.

Poland!';<sup>43</sup> in 1885, to Spiridion Kliszczewski, a fellow émigré settled in Cardiff, he expresses a more performative viewpoint: 'in a free and hospitable land even the most persecuted of our race may find relative [happiness]. When speaking, writing or thinking in English the word Home always means for me the hospitable shores of Great Britain.'<sup>44</sup> Conrad is, naturally, tailoring his letters: the Polish patriot would empathize with a longing for one's birthplace, whereas the émigré would recognise a more ambivalent position. The later correspondence reveals the marginal man: happiness is relative. Britain as 'home' is conditional on Conrad conducting his life through the medium of English.

The double narrative movement that results from competing demands is critical in Conrad's development as a writer. Alun Gwynedd Jones's identification of a split in Polish nationalist thought, between 'kinship' and 'diversity', points towards an inherent complexity which Adam Michnik, the Polish political writer, sees in positive dialogic terms: interviewed in 1994, he comments, 'there is a common Polish identity which is pluralistic and heterogeneous; this is our strength, we have it in our genes.'<sup>45</sup> Something more fluid than a dual identity exists naturally in Conrad, which, as Najder suggests, enabled 'him to see problems which escaped many writers more tightly entangled in the prevailing social conditions.'<sup>46</sup> This became especially important as his career progressed in the imperial British Merchant Service.

In the period up to 1889, Conrad was engaged on ships trading between 'home' ports and colonies such as India and South Africa in traditional imperial commodities, for example

<sup>43</sup> Conrad to Stefan Buszczyński, 14 August 1883, in *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad, Volume 1, 1861-1897*, ed. Frederick R. Karl and Laurence Davies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 7-8. Buszczyński was a poet, dramatist, literary critic, journalist and historian and a close friend of Conrad's father.

<sup>44</sup> Conrad to Spiridion Kliszczewski, 13 October 1885, in *ibid.*, p. 12. Kliszczewski was the son of a watchmaker who had settled in Britain after the failure of the 1830-1 insurrection in Poland.

<sup>45</sup> Adam Michnik and Jürgen Habermas, "More Humility, Fewer Illusions" – A Talk between Adam Michnik and Jürgen Habermas', trans. by Rodney Livingstone, *The New York Review of Books*, 24 March 1994. Available at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2293> [accessed 10 January 2007].

<sup>46</sup> Najder, *Conrad's Polish Background*, p. 31.

wool and coal.<sup>47</sup> Although the economic trend at this time was deflationary, there was a concurrent developing need for food, raw materials and investment, as indicated by the resolution of the International Conference of 1884-85. The convergence of these opposing trends resulted in the emergence of 'new imperialism', in which protectionism and military expansion contributed to the transformational global environment. Conrad must have been reminded of the aggressive imperialism to which Poland had been subject. In 1885, he writes, '[e]vents are casting shadows [...] deep enough to suggest the lurid light of battlefields somewhere in the near future.'<sup>48</sup>

Conrad's service during the years 1887-88 on the steamer *Vidar* appears to have prompted his sense of foreboding. On previous voyages, his view of the colonial 'exchange' had always been that of 'the privileged European [keeping] his distance.'<sup>49</sup> The *Vidar*, in contrast, journeyed up-river in Borneo to trading stations where the double narrative of imperial idealism became apparent:

he saw men [...] drunk on power [and] racial superiority [...]. The disjunction between the routine business of imperial trade – of benefit, purportedly, to all concerned – and its actual conditions engaged him profoundly.<sup>50</sup>

Conrad's 'constructed' status as a British merchant seaman enables him to see these ideological discrepancies more clearly. He is also able to see the problematic nature of his own identity. A letter written to Karol Zagórski in May 1890 contains a self-portrait: 'a Polish nobleman, cased in British tar! What a concoction!'<sup>51</sup> In this exchange, the word 'cased'

<sup>47</sup> Najder gives an account of Conrad's voyages in his chapter 'The Red Ensign' in *A Chronicle*; wool and coal were two of the main products of colonial Wales, and Cardiff was one of the largest imperial ports in Britain; see pp. 54–93.

<sup>48</sup> Conrad to Spiridion Kliszczewski, 13 October 1885, in *Collected Letters, Volume 1*, ed. Karl and Davies, p. 12.

<sup>49</sup> White, 'Conrad and imperialism', p. 184.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Conrad to Karol Zagórski, 22 May 1890, in *Collected Letters, Volume 1*, ed. Karl and Davies, p. 52.

implies containment: natural Polish liberalism is restrained by expediency, to fit his adopted Britishness.

Harpham suggests that the idea of what is 'contained' is crucial for Conrad's later writing: Kurtz, for example, is considered by Marlow to be "hollow at the core" (*HD*, p. 58). In my view, his 'cased' image is important biographical evidence: the young 'Polish nobleman' was contained by Russian imperialism, just as his nation's growth was curtailed by Partition. As Harpham notes, this 'negation' is crucial to an understanding of the man and the writer: Conrad 'endlessly constructs forms of containment [...] Europeans within jungles [for example]', but 'he never places anything substantial at the very center.'<sup>52</sup> This decentring influences Conrad's attitude to issues of race. By the time he was working as a British seaman, European imperial rule 'extended to nearly two-third of the Earth's land surface, and Britain's empire accounted for much of those holdings.'<sup>53</sup> A great part of this empire entailed, to recall Hobsbawm's words, 'domination over [...] a world of dark skins', so the idea of his being covered with 'black tar' implies an affinity with those obviously marked as racially 'Other'. As 'Amy Foster' tends to confirm, this conflicts with his 'purpose' of centring himself in English life.

1890 is commonly regarded by Conrad's biographers as *the* turning point in his moral outlook: Najder organizes the chapters of *A Chronicle* by time periods, 1886 – 1890 for example, but devotes a whole chapter to this single and singular year. Having completed his first voyage as captain in the summer of 1889,<sup>54</sup> Conrad, like many others, was unemployed. He began to write, and extended his search for employment to Brussels. The Société Belge pour le Commerce du Haut-Congo considered him suitable for engagement as a captain to

<sup>52</sup> Harpham, *One of Us*, p. 59.

<sup>53</sup> White, 'Conrad and imperialism', p. 180.

<sup>54</sup> Conrad's first captaincy was on the *Otago* bound for Australia.

work on its steamboats on the Congo River. Economic necessity was a governing factor in Conrad accepting an offer of employment, but Najder suggests that his interest in exploration had been 'revived by a wave of sensational news about the African interior, connected [with] Stanley's expedition in search of Emin Pasha.'<sup>55</sup>

No immediate vacancy was available in the Congo, and Conrad's eventual employment there had to be hastened by the intervention of his Aunt Poradowska.<sup>56</sup> As the reality of working in Africa drew closer, Conrad's letters reveal a divided view about his future. Writing to Karol Zagórski, he appears to be the eager imperialist gathering his ritualistic paraphernalia: 'I dashed full tilt to Brussels! If you had only seen all the tin boxes and revolvers, the high boots and the tender farewells.'<sup>57</sup> This is the same letter in which he refers to his 'concocted' self, and a letter written a few weeks later to his 'Aunt' reveals another aspect to his character:

if one could unburden oneself of one's heart [and] obtain a whole new set of things, life would become perfectly diverting. As this is impossible, life [is] abominably sad! [...] I now look down two avenues [...] you follow one, I the other [...]. 'The absent one' will be my official name in the future.<sup>58</sup>

Here Conrad may be writing to his 'Aunt' for effect, and with a 'dash of flirtatiousness': as a Polish émigré in Brussels, she was 'no stranger [to] liminal conditions.'<sup>59</sup> These extracts from his letters are indicative of the two sides of Conrad the adventurer: he presents himself with a masculine bluster to Zagórski, and with a sensitive introspection to his 'Aunt'. They demonstrate real and contradictory elements of his self.

<sup>55</sup> Najder, *A Chronicle*, p. 117; Eduard Schnitzer, known as Emin Pasha, the governor of Sudan, had appealed for help following the Mahdist uprising which had engulfed General Gordon in 1885. Stanley was chosen to lead the rescue mission by William Mackinnon, chairman of the British India Steam Navigation Company. Stanley's account of the venture, *In Darkest Africa*, was published in 1890.

<sup>56</sup> Marguerite Poradowska of Brussels was married to Aleksander Poradowski, the first cousin of Conrad's maternal grandmother and was referred to by Conrad as 'Aunt', although no blood relationship existed. In *Heart of Darkness*, women are central to Marlow's efforts to obtain employment; this is also true for Conrad.

<sup>57</sup> Conrad to Karol Zagórski, 22 May 1890, in *Collected Letters, Volume 1*, ed. Karl and Davies, p. 52.

<sup>58</sup> Conrad to Marguerite Poradowska, 18 June 1890, in *ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

<sup>59</sup> Laurence Davies, 'Introduction' to *ibid.*, pp. li-lii.

The Société which employed Conrad was itself full of contradictions. Its commercial activities were centred in the Congo Free State, a region which was ruled by King Leopold II of Belgium, one of the main beneficiaries of the Berlin Conference of 1884-5. His publicized aim was to 'bring civilization [to] pierce the darkness which envelop[ed] entire populations.'<sup>60</sup> Work went on behind the Société's civilizing façade to monopolize State trading activities so as to exploit the Congo's natural resources, such as rubber and ivory. A letter from Tadeusz Bobrowski, written at the time of Conrad's arrival in the Congo in June 1890, suggests that Conrad was sceptical of Leopold's pedagogical public position: '[y]ou are probably looking [at] the "civilizing" (confound it) affair in the machinery of which you are a cog – before you feel able to acquire and express your own opinion.'<sup>61</sup> In July 1890, Tadeusz implies that Conrad had become disillusioned about his employment: 'let us live in hope [...] for without it even the wisest of men couldn't survive!'<sup>62</sup> These letters reveal the 'concocted' civilizing imperialist who is also the emotional 'absentee'. They reveal Conrad's state of mind in June 1890 as he set out for Matadi, 'the most distant navigable place on the lower reaches of the Congo.'<sup>63</sup> He was by no means the conventional 'cog' in the imperial machine.

Conrad kept a record of his journey, later published as 'The Congo Diary' (1978). From Matadi he travelled overland to Kinshasa to commence his duties as a steamer captain. The diary details the scenes of imperial disorder which would later be portrayed in *Heart of Darkness* and other stories, such as 'An Outpost of Progress' (1897).<sup>64</sup> On 3 July, he '[m]et an officer of the State inspecting; a few minutes afterwards saw [...] the dead body of a

<sup>60</sup> Translated in Najder, *A Chronicle* (see p. 123), from the original French in Baines, *Joseph Conrad* (see p. 107). Baines cites Professor Jean Bruhat quoting the *Compte Rendu* of the sessions of 12, 13, 14 September 1876 of the Conférence Géographique Africaine à Bruxelles in *Les Politiques d'Expansion Impériale*, 1949, p. 78.

<sup>61</sup> Tadeusz Bobrowski to Conrad, 12/24 June 1890, in Najder, *Conrad's Polish Background*, pp. 128-129.

<sup>62</sup> Tadeusz Bobrowski to Conrad, 10/22 July 1890, in *ibid.*, pp. 130-131.

<sup>63</sup> Najder, *A Chronicle*, p. 126.

<sup>64</sup> 'An Outpost of Progress' appeared in *Cosmopolis* in June – July 1897, and then in *Tales of Unrest* (1898), Conrad's first published collection of short stories. In the story, two colonialists at an isolated trading station descend into chaos and savagery, thus undermining notions of imperial progress and 'civilization'.

Backongo. Shot? Horrid smell.’<sup>65</sup> The dead body had evidently been there some time, so State inspections were not frequent or, alternatively, decomposing bodies were not a matter for concern. Conrad emphasizes the inefficiency and casual disregard for the indigenous population, yet he concurrently adopts a position which would be typical of an ‘officer of the State’: ‘three women of whom one albino passed our camp. Horrid chalky white and pink blotches [...] very Negroid and ugly.’<sup>66</sup> These observations fit with the prevailing nineteenth-century European attitude towards Africans as ‘Other’. The philosopher Hegel, for example, concludes that ‘the negroes’ are ‘animal [in] savagery and lawlessness’, with ‘nothing consonant with humanity [in their] character.’<sup>67</sup> The overland journey revealed occasional instances where Europeans were trying to bring ‘consonance’, but these result from individual rather than corporate endeavour: at the Mission at Sutili, there was a ‘[h]ospitable reception by Mrs Comber [...] the whole establishment eminently civilized [compared with the] tumble-down hovels [of the] State and Company.’<sup>68</sup> The diary shows Conrad to be capable of both criticizing imperialism and displaying its racist tropes. This may well be an indication of an inherited trait: Najder notes that although Conrad’s father accepted that multi-ethnic communities have positive cultural benefits, he also expressed nationalist views regarding race and belonging.

The Company Manager at Kinshasa, Camille Delcommune, was waiting for Conrad’s arrival to go up-river in the steamboat, the *Roi des Belges*. Delcommune was evidently conscious of racial difference; Conrad wrote to his ‘Aunt’: ‘[t]he manager is a common ivory dealer with base instincts who [...] detests the English, and out here I am naturally regarded as

<sup>65</sup> Joseph Conrad, ‘The Congo Diary’, in Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness with The Congo Diary and Up-River Book*, ed. Zdzisław Najder ([1978] London: Hesperus Press Ltd., 2002), p. 103.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction: Reason in History*, trans. by H. B. Nisbet ([1830] Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1975), p. 177.

<sup>68</sup> Conrad, ‘The Congo Diary’, pp. 106-107.



such [...] [e]verything is repellent to me [...] men above all. And I am repellent to them.’<sup>69</sup>

Conrad’s view of ordinary subjects in Africa is that they are ‘black savages [and] white slaves (of whom I am one)’:<sup>70</sup> the only gainer from imperialism is the ‘banker who rules the roost.’<sup>71</sup>

These comments combine two significant themes: first, Conrad again associates himself with the racially oppressed; second, he asserts that culpability for that oppression rests at the head of corporate imperialism, from which Conrad was becoming increasingly isolated. If there was a civilizing mission, then its merits were displayed only through individual responsibility, such as that evidenced at the Mission at Sutili.

On 3 August 1890, the *Roi des Belges* left Kinshasa on her way up the Congo River, with Conrad making notes on navigation: it ‘covered more than a thousand miles in twenty-eight days.’<sup>72</sup> A month later, the steamer reached the administrative centre, Stanley Falls. Conrad describes this place as ‘the very spot’ which had inspired his ‘boyish boast’<sup>73</sup> to go to Africa. Instead of finding ‘romance and adventure’ there, he found only the ‘ruthless competition for trade and power’ demanded by ‘new imperialism’: it was a westernized organization ‘superimposed on the omnipresent density of tropical nature.’<sup>74</sup> This appears to have been a notional journey’s end, the place where Conrad’s personal feelings of ‘repellence’ are matched by the incongruousness of the imperial presence: ‘there was no shadowy friend to stand by me [...] only the unholy recollection of a prosaic newspaper “stunt” and the distasteful knowledge of the vilest scramble for loot that ever disfigured the history of human

<sup>69</sup> Conrad to Marguerite Poradowska, 26 September 1890, in *Collected Letters, Volume 1*, ed. Karl and Davies, p. 62.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> Najder, *A Chronicle*, p. 134.

<sup>73</sup> Joseph Conrad, ‘Geography and Some Explorers’, in Joseph Conrad, *Last Essays in Tales of Hearsay and Last Essays* ([1924] London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1955), pp. 1-21 (p. 17).

<sup>74</sup> Najder, *A Chronicle*, p. 136.

conscience'.<sup>75</sup> Here his boyhood aspirations and the excitement of imperial purpose were finally lost, along with his honourable Polish core – the 'shadowy friend', perhaps.

The newspaper 'stunt' is often taken as a reference to the publicity devoted to Stanley's discovery of Livingstone on behalf of the *New York Herald* in 1871.<sup>76</sup> However, Conrad's association of the 'stunt' with the 'scramble for loot', makes it more likely, as Stephen Donovan suggests, that the cause of his outrage was Stanley's second African expedition (1874-77), sponsored by the *Herald* and the *Daily Telegraph*. This later expedition was 'violent and controversial' in its disregard for indigenous peoples, and Stanley flagrantly publicized his exploits in *Through the Dark Continent* (1878).<sup>77</sup>

Stanley's personal position represents the dichotomy of the 'The Age of Empire': he is the celebrated imperial explorer and the ruthless colonizer. I note in the Introduction that Stanley's origins were marginal,<sup>78</sup> and, as is the case for Conrad, this complicates the way in which he represents himself in public. Andrea White has examined the 'shaping discourses',<sup>79</sup> which influenced Conrad's attitudes, and the writings of explorers such as Stanley, along with adventure fiction, were powerful influences in this respect. It is significant that in 1890, a most remarkable year in Conrad's life, Stanley, who had been Leopold's Chief Agent in the Congo for five years, 'was being enthusiastically received [...] by the King [and] *Through the Dark*

<sup>75</sup> Conrad, 'Geography and Some Explorers', p. 17.

<sup>76</sup> Stanley's accounts of his expedition to find Livingstone were criticized by the Royal Geographical Society on the basis of sensationalism. His book, *How I Found Livingstone* (1872), was nevertheless a bestseller.

<sup>77</sup> Stephen Donovan, 'Conrad's Unholy Recollection', *Notes and Queries* (March 2002), 82-84 (p. 82).

<sup>78</sup> Stanley was born John Rowlands in Denbigh, north Wales, on 28 January 1841, the illegitimate son of a butcher's daughter; his father's identity was somewhat undecided. He was cared for by his extended family until 1847, but because of financial difficulties he was then sent to the workhouse at St. Asaph. After escaping from the workhouse, his life was characterized by a desire for self-publicity through dangerous exploits. In *Through the Dark Continent*, he demonstrates a zealotry for doing his duty as a colonizer so as to prove his worth. In later life he was assimilated to the centre of the English imperial world, being elected as M.P. for North Lambeth in 1895, and knighted in 1899.

<sup>79</sup> White, *Adventure Tradition*; see pp. 100-115.

*Continent* [...] was enjoying a revival'.<sup>80</sup> Hence, Stanley's text offers itself for comparison with Conrad's *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*, a story that also entails 'shaping discourses', and I discuss these texts in Chapter 2.

Conrad's adventure briefly gathered pace as he took command of the *Roi des Belges*, but by October 1890 his journey had ended, in continual fever as the steamer proceeded deeper into the jungle interior. By early 1891 he had returned, disillusioned, to Europe. He had seen again, and more graphically, the gap between the ideal of 'civilizing the natives', as publicized by imperialists such as Stanley, and what was actually done in its name: 'villages burnt in order to force the natives to work', for instance, motivated by 'the desire for a quick gain'.<sup>81</sup> This imperial hollowness, of course, influenced Conrad's writing. However, like Stanley, he was an employee of a colonial power, and thus may also be considered to be morally hollow. This complex dilemma was a major departure from the ideals of honesty and integrity that he saw in the British seaman's profession, and had implications for his cultural integration in England.

Conrad based himself in England from 1891 and completed his last merchant marine voyage in 1894. He began to progress his literary career, the major phase of which commenced in 1897 with *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*.<sup>82</sup> Knowles comments that this story reveals 'Conrad's 'in-between' position'; his depiction of the crewmen aboard the "*Narcissus*" 'implicitly affirms some of the deepest spiritual ties that had brought him to England', but his 'version of social and political England' attempts to 'strike the right chord'.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109. Coincidentally, both Stanley and Conrad left their extended families at the age of seventeen, with desires to fill Africa's 'blank spaces'.

<sup>81</sup> Najder, *A Chronicle*, p. 140.

<sup>82</sup> *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* appeared in serial form in the pro-imperialist journal the *New Review* between August and December 1897; it concerns the voyage of the *Narcissus*, during which a sea-storm tests its community of crewmen. See Chapter 2 of this thesis regarding the novella's placing for the English market.

<sup>83</sup> Knowles, 'Conrad's life', p. 11.

with his home readership. His association with *Blackwood's Magazine*<sup>84</sup> marks a development of this 'negotiat[ion]' with his English cultural identity and audience.<sup>85</sup> Major works such as *Heart of Darkness* and 'Youth' (1898)<sup>86</sup> appear from this period, as does Conrad's 'go-between', Marlow. Simmons suggests that Marlow 'brings an Englishman's perspective to bear on Conrad's colonial fiction',<sup>87</sup> but he also reflects the author's ambiguities: Marlow, for instance, has to confront his own role in European expansionism.

In the 1890s, the drive for imperial power, as Hobsbawm has argued, resulted in a growing tendency for 'people to identify themselves emotionally with "their nation"'.<sup>88</sup> However, a writer who was perceived as being especially in tune with Britain's imperial world, Rudyard Kipling, signals an ominous warning about such a political shift. In his poem, 'Recessional' (1897), he traces a move from a complacent dominance, through which 'we' are 'drunk with sight of power',<sup>89</sup> to the historical reality that such hegemony is always conditional and likely to be overwritten:

God of our fathers, known of old,  
 Lord of our far-flung battle line,  
 Beneath whose awful Hand we hold  
 Dominion over palm and pine –  
 Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,  
 Lest we forget – lest we forget!

[...]

<sup>84</sup> See p. 8 above.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13; (my emphasis).

<sup>86</sup> 'Youth' appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* in September 1898 and is the first published text to use Marlow as a narrator. It describes the voyage of the *Judea*, during which its cargo of coal catches fire; as in the case of the sea-storm which affects the *Narcissus*, the event tests the character of the *Judea*'s English crewmen.

<sup>87</sup> Allan H. Simmons, 'The Art of Englishness: Identity and Representation in Conrad's Early Career', *The Conradian*, Volume 29, No. 1 (Spring 2004), 1-26 (p. 21).

<sup>88</sup> Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire*, pp. 142-143.

<sup>89</sup> Rudyard Kipling, 'Recessional', in *The Oxford Book of English Verse*, ed. Christopher Ricks ([1897] Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 532-533 (p. 533, l. 19). 'Recessional' focuses on the same 'drunkenness' that Conrad had witnessed in Borneo and the Congo.

Far-called, our navies melt away;  
 On dune and headland sinks the fire:  
 Lo, all our pomp of yesterday  
 Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!  
 Judge of Nations, spare us yet,  
 Lest we forget – lest we forget!<sup>90</sup>

Kipling conveys the dangers in the political expectation to move ever outward and upward – ‘far-called’, as he puts it. The confrontational atmosphere of global politics had undermined such a momentum: a higher moral authority had to prevail if disaster was to be averted. He warns that morality must temper the superiority gained through scientific and technological progress: ‘for heathen heart that puts her trust / In reeking tube and iron shard, / All valiant dust that builds on dust’.<sup>91</sup>

Conrad’s supposed alignment with English values, as suggested in *The Nigger of the “Narcissus”*, conflicted with the growing anxiety concerning imperial expansion. ‘Recessional’, published in the same year as the novella, 1897, illustrates a trend of questioning central values, both within the Establishment and in subaltern dominions. Roger Casement’s<sup>92</sup> ‘Congo Report’, presented to Parliament in 1903, was commissioned by The House of Commons and exposed, through the first-hand accounts, Belgian exploitation. There was also a corresponding wider desire for self-determination, exemplified by a move towards Indian independence. Niall Ferguson discusses the latter in terms of the darkening *fin-de-siècle* mood: ‘without India Britain would [have dropped] from being “the greatest power in the world” to being “third rate”’.<sup>93</sup> The way in which the Empire could survive was

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 532-533, ll. 1-6 and 13-18. In the Ancient World, Nineveh and Tyre were, respectively, the capital of the Assyrian empire, and a major commercial city in Phoenicia. Both were subject to attacks by rival empires that resulted in their demise.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 533, ll. 25-27.

<sup>92</sup> Casement, who was Irish, had recently been appointed British consul to the Congo when he was commissioned to investigate colonial abuse. Conrad met Casement in the Congo and they renewed their friendship in London.

<sup>93</sup> Niall Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* ([2003] London: Penguin Books, 2004), p. 219. Ferguson attributes these remarks to Lord Curzon, Conservative politician and Viceroy of India, 1899 – 1905.

perceived to be through a yet further move outward: 'a new generation of imperialists [believed] it would have to expand in new directions.'<sup>94</sup> As twentieth-century history showed, that expansionism would create, as Conrad and Kipling had feared, yet more 'reeking tube and iron shard'.

In the uncertain climate of the *fin-de-siècle*, Conrad shows himself to be capable of adopting multiple political positions. He expresses moral concerns about imperialism, for instance in the letter in which he anxiously anticipates 'the lurid light of battlefields',<sup>95</sup> and displays allegiance to a pre-dominant imperial nation – England. As I will propose in Chapter 2, *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*, through its 'double narrative movement', illustrates its author's 'migrant' situation. The novella simultaneously espouses English moral values and subtly conveys the idea that those values have been eroded. In *Heart of Darkness*, similarly, Marlow espouses imperialist beliefs, only to offer opportunities for them to be reinterpreted.

The flux which resulted from *fin-de-siècle* economics and nationalist policies coincided with the period in which Conrad established himself as a writer. His upbringing made him sensitive to the ways in which imperialist ideals, including those which were 'English', could fail in their execution. Yet, he subscribed to such ideals where he perceived liberty, integrity and honesty to be endangered, and he reflected these supposedly 'innate [and] national',<sup>96</sup> 'English' qualities in his writing. The 'interstices – the overlap[s] and displacement[s]'<sup>97</sup> – between the two positions form a hybridized identity which sheds light on the imperial experience as 'a cultural traffic', rather than a one-way process.<sup>98</sup> For Conrad, identity, it seems, was a matter of careful manoeuvring.

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 220.

<sup>95</sup> See p. 49 above.

<sup>96</sup> Simmons, 'The Art of Englishness', p. 5.

<sup>97</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 2.

<sup>98</sup> Simmons, 'The Art of Englishness', p. 24.

## Alun Lewis

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Lewis's upbringing was, like Conrad's, influenced by 'cultural traffics'. Born on 1 July 1915 in Cwmaman in the south Wales coalfield, his childhood, in contrast to Conrad's, was reasonably comfortable. However, the Lewis family were no exception to the economic flux that affected Wales at the end of the nineteenth century. In the 1880s, his paternal grandfather had moved from Pembrokeshire to the economic prosperity of south-east Wales to become a collier. At the end of the nineteenth century, the idea of modern Wales as an 'internal colony' becomes pronounced. There was a huge inward movement of people, and the character of the region was transformed from a predominantly rural to an industrialized society as demand for coal leaped.<sup>99</sup>

The principal cause of change in Wales was technological advancement in running the Empire, for example steam-powered naval fleets. Stephen Knight notes that an 'upheaval under the forces of colonial capitalism' occurred: '[m]en and their families flooded in to create one of the industrial world's most dramatic boom areas.'<sup>100</sup> Most of the immigrants were English. They were attracted by the well-paid but often dangerous jobs, a driving force which also caused an internal shift in Welsh culture: 'men and women poured from west and north Wales into "the works"',<sup>101</sup> as well as to provide ancillary services. Lewis's grandfather was one who took advantage of the better economic conditions.

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<sup>99</sup> Neil Evans suggests that the process of industrialization that took place in Wales in the nineteenth century fixed a 'structure of values in which the culture of the core has a much higher prestige than [the] peripheral culture.' According to Evans, the term 'internal colonialism', as used by Hechter, 'amounts to little more than this'; see 'Internal Colonialism? Colonization, Economic Development and Political Mobilization in Wales, Scotland and Ireland', in *Regions, Nations and European Integration: Remaking the Celtic Periphery*, ed. Graham Day and Gareth Rees (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1991), pp. 235-264 (p. 257). Although, as I note in the Introduction, the term 'internal colony' may not stand the scrutiny of an economic argument, the effects of such a status on Welsh individuals and on cultural identity cannot, as this chapter will show, be described as 'little'.

<sup>100</sup> Knight, *A Hundred Years of Fiction*, p. 52.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

The involvement of Welsh industry in imperial projects was nothing new. The iron industry around Merthyr, for instance, had been working for and profiting from the munitions trade since the 1750s.<sup>102</sup> However, the difference a hundred and fifty years later was the huge influx of non-Welsh people, reflected in the dramatic increase in the numbers of people working in its main industry, coal-mining: in 1880 there were 69,000 colliers; by 1921, this figure had risen to 271,000.<sup>103</sup>

In his polemical historical and social analysis, *When Was Wales?* (1985), Gwyn A. Williams makes a comparison which highlights the telling cultural effects of the incursion:

The rhythms of industry finally displaced those of agriculture in [Welsh] life [...] the country had become, alongside Lancashire, one of the first truly industrial societies in the world, and *like* Lancashire, it *nested* at the heart of an imperial economy.<sup>104</sup>

The alignment with and likening of Wales to an English region suggests that a Welsh cultural heritage was assimilated, perhaps willingly, into the imperial world (hence the use of the word ‘nesting’). It may be argued that a positive hybridization thus occurs: although writing a decade earlier than Bhabha, Gwyn A. Williams’s language is similar in tone to the postcolonial theorist’s views on ‘overlap[ping],’<sup>105</sup> cultural experiences – mutually beneficial mergings. Both writers acknowledge the potential in ‘displacement’; but this word may also mean ‘banishment’. At the time the Lewis family established itself in south-east Wales the region is at a boundary between old and new – an ‘ambivalent’ place, as Bhabha puts it,

<sup>102</sup> Dai Smith, *Wales: A Question for History* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press Ltd., 1999), p. 60.

<sup>103</sup> Knight, *A Hundred Years of Fiction*, p. 53. Knight refers to Chris Williams, *Capitalism, Community and Conflict: The South Wales Coalfield, 1898 – 1947* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998), p. 21.

<sup>104</sup> Gwyn A. Williams, *When Was Wales?: A History of the Welsh* ([1985] Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), p. 201; (my emphasis).

<sup>105</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 2.



'from which *something begins* [and] "organic" ethnic communities [are] in a profound process of redefinition.'<sup>106</sup>

In its community, Lewis's family had a strong sense of responsibility; Lewis's father, Tom, was a schoolteacher; his mother, Gwladys, was 'a devoted Liberal [who was regarded] as an intellectual and a feminist, ahead of her time.'<sup>107</sup> There were, nevertheless, opposing parental influences that were thought to be 'at the root of [a] conflict' in Lewis:<sup>108</sup> 'Mother [is] much more of a social reformer than [Daddy]. He's inclined to the domestic [...] I've got a bit of both in me.'<sup>109</sup> The kind of inherent tensions which existed in Conrad also existed in Lewis: in neither case were they reconciled.

The family's social place became more significant in the south Wales of the 1920s. Economic prosperity continued until 1921, but from then 'the change was sudden'.<sup>110</sup> An increase in competition from better-equipped industrialized countries caused unprofitable pits to be closed: unemployment and poverty increased dramatically.<sup>111</sup> Since Tom Lewis was a teacher, the family were protected from the deprivation which was the norm for the schoolchildren with whom Lewis 'played in the streets [or] climbed the tips'.<sup>112</sup> John Lehmann confirms that Lewis's childhood was 'unusually happy',<sup>113</sup> but quotes from Gwladys's

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<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7; (original emphasis). In *When Was Wales?*, Gwyn A. Williams indicates that Wales has always been a place of change: around A.D. 43 various tribes were fighting Roman colonizers: 'from these peoples emerged the human matrix of the Welsh people [...]. There was no such place as "Wales" [... it] exists only because the Welsh invented it'; see p. 2. In terms of 'redefinition', Gwyn A. Williams identifies 927 as the date when English influence became significant. In responding to Viking raids, 'Welsh and English had to fight side by side [...]. There were cultural exchanges [and] Welsh kings made formal submission to the king of England [...]. The realities of fewness and fragility have their own logic. *Wales*, as a political entity, comes into existence as a junior partner in a *Britain* run by England'; see p. 58; (original emphasis).

<sup>107</sup> Pikoulis, *A Life*, p. 13.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36; Pikoulis notes that this was observed by a girlfriend of Lewis when he was twenty.

<sup>109</sup> Alun Lewis, *Letters to My Wife*, ed. Gweno Lewis (Bridgend: Seren Books, 1989), pp. 73-4.

<sup>110</sup> Knight, *A Hundred Years of Fiction*, p. 59.

<sup>111</sup> Knight notes that the decrease in demand was largely attributable to changes in the technology that ran the imperial world, for example naval fleets converting from steam power to oil; unemployment, which in 1921 was only 2%, reached 20% in 1929; see *ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

<sup>112</sup> Pikoulis, *A Life*, p. 18.

<sup>113</sup> Lehmann, *The Open Night*, p. 110.

recollections of the depressed economic conditions: “[m]oney was never sufficient to supply all our family’s needs, [and] scholarships had to be the order of the day”<sup>114</sup> for educational advancement.

Lewis’s happy existence was to be severely affected by one of the scholarships to which Gwladys refers. Her outward-looking influence pushed him towards a place at Cowbridge Grammar School, a ‘boarding school with public school affiliations [which] accentuated his separation from Cwmaman’.<sup>115</sup> He began attending the school in 1926, the year of the General Strike.<sup>116</sup> Lewis experienced a sense of ‘exile’, coupled with ‘profound social guilt’<sup>117</sup> as a public schoolboy when his home community was experiencing acute hardship. These feelings occurred at a particularly impressionable time, as he moved from childhood to adolescence, and it is significant that depressed Welsh communities are represented with a degree of empathy in several of his mature stories – ‘The Housekeeper’, for instance.

Lewis’s feelings of difference related to a community which, since industrialization, had itself become ever more displaced. Like Conrad, his personal position was set within a wider environmental disturbance caused by imperialist economics. The effect on Welsh cultural life is captured in Charlotte Williams’s portrayal of communities which appeared to have benefitted from improved social conditions, but had actually been ‘enslaved’,<sup>118</sup> and then disposed of for financial expediency. She focuses on the performative effect of cultural change, particularly regarding the Welsh language.

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<sup>114</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>115</sup> Pikoulis, *A Life*, p. 22.

<sup>116</sup> In response to a slump in demand for British coal, mine owners demanded pay cuts; trouble was averted by a Government subsidy, but when this was withdrawn in April 1926 the T.U.C. declared a General Strike. This collapsed after nine days, but the miners continued their strike until late autumn of that year.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22-27.

<sup>118</sup> See p. 37 above.

The imperial education system in Britain imposed English as its only medium; through this ‘civilizing’ strategy, employers could communicate efficiently with their workforce. Charlotte Williams uses a visual record to demonstrate the consequences for Welsh-speaking Wales: her great-grandparents were grocers in Bethesda in the nineteenth century when the Penrhyn ‘slate quarries were thriving’:

I have a photograph [of] the shop [with] a cornucopia of goods on display; buckets, brushes [...] quarrymen’s tea, rice, tins of salmon, sugar from the Demerara. Shelves with ornaments and crockery and fine things.<sup>119</sup>

Previously, the town’s inhabitants had ‘lived their lives entirely through the Welsh language’, but English was ‘the language of the overseer [and] of the slate masters’: it therefore kept the grocery store profitable, and thus indigenous ‘language and culture’<sup>120</sup> began to disappear. By the time Charlotte Williams’s grandparents inherited the shop in the early 1900s, the quarry was experiencing a three-year strike<sup>121</sup> which threw the community ‘into a slump from which it never recovered’; the ‘English power system’ had no interest in the community, only in the quarry, and so ‘the [grocery] business quickly fell into difficulty’; without the supportive local infrastructure, ‘the family was pauperized.’<sup>122</sup> Running through this portrayal is the same principle that had engaged Conrad so profoundly: the ‘disjunction between the routine business of imperial trade – of benefit, purportedly, to all concerned – and its actual conditions’.<sup>123</sup>

Charlotte Williams’s identification of the importance of language to illustrate the imposition of an ideological strategy may be extended to ‘taught’ ideas in general. The

<sup>119</sup> Charlotte Williams, *Sugar and Slate*, pp. 172-173.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>121</sup> The strike at the Penrhyn quarry lasted from April 1900 to November 1903, and was caused by the banning of the collection of union payments in the workplace. It ended without resolution and therefore in victory for Lord Penrhyn, the owner.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

<sup>123</sup> See p. 49 above.

grammar school system, of which Lewis was now part, was an influential Anglicizing agent. Ned Thomas suggests that the manipulation of historical perspective for pedagogical purposes is an example of the effect: '[a]t school the Welshman has seen history through British eyes. He has probably not read much at all about his own country's past.'<sup>124</sup> The civilizing mission for Welsh 'natives' was prohibitive in its Anglicizing agenda and destabilizing in its communal advancements. In Lewis's formative years a palimpsest effect is present which offers a parallel with Conrad's background. Conrad's letters to his Polish compatriots indicated that when he was 'speaking, writing or thinking in English'<sup>125</sup> the idea of 'home' meant Britain, yet he always retained a cultural tie to Poland. Such duality is also present in Lewis's cultural environment, and may, in its interstices, present opportunities; but, as Gwyn A. Williams suggests, the dangers in the exchange were real: the resulting '*schizophrenia* threatens to extinguish not simply a Welsh nation but a Welsh people itself as an historic entity.'<sup>126</sup>

Lewis's public school environment at Cowbridge appears to confirm what Gwyn A. Williams suggests about cultural extinguishment. Stephen Knight observes that scholarships aimed students 'towards being [members] of the colonial elite';<sup>127</sup> these colonialists would have been the class of administrators who were responsible for suppressing strikes such as that of 1926, as well as those journeying to more distant outposts of empire. However, this 'trajectory' that Lewis was following, including his later university career, was disrupted by 'strong literary instincts [and] a sense of social responsibility',<sup>128</sup> and it was during his educational career that he began writing poems and stories. Lewis graduated with a degree in

<sup>124</sup> Ned Thomas, *The Welsh Extremist*, p. 14.

<sup>125</sup> See p. 48 above.

<sup>126</sup> Gwyn A. Williams, *When Was Wales?*, p. 236; see p. 24 above in respect of Kirsti Bohata's observations regarding 'annihilation of identity'.

<sup>127</sup> Knight, *A Hundred Years of Fiction*, p. 125.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.* Social responsibility was a Lewis family trait.

History from Aberystwyth in 1935 and completed an M.A. in Medieval History at Manchester in 1937; this career broadened his perspective but heightened feelings of self-division and displacement. Returning home after ten years he tried teaching and journalism, but his real desire was for a writing career. However, as John Pikoulis points out, there were cultural difficulties:

[f]or the Welsh, literature was the activity of *y werin*, the people, and related to the democratic expression [...] through *eisteddfodau*. Not being Welsh-speaking, [Lewis] could not share in that. For writers like him, the first generation of Welshmen brought up to speak English [there] were not [the] social resources which might have allowed them to make their careers.<sup>129</sup>

There were authors whose writing had responded to the industrialization of south Wales and its economic decline – Lewis Jones,<sup>130</sup> for example. Although, through his home, Alun Lewis had a connection to these ‘industrial’ writers, he was not of this world, as he was not of *y werin*. There was a class difference: thanks to his father’s employment as a teacher, the family had remained financially stable during the Depression, and his educational path distinguished him from those whose writing was saying most about what was happening to Wales. In terms of social disruption, there is a contrast with Conrad’s feelings when he began to write: Knowles notes how Conrad strove for ‘Englishness’, attempting to become something which, nationally, was alien to him. For Lewis, his dilemma concerned the difficulties of re-assimilation into *his own* nation.

The 1930s cultural environment to which Lewis had returned was one of ‘dismantlement’; in those areas that were dependent on imperial investment the Depression

<sup>129</sup> Pikoulis, *A Life*, p. 37.

<sup>130</sup> Lewis Jones (1897 – 1939) was a collier from the age of twelve. He became a full-time worker of the National Unemployed Workers’ Movement and led hunger marches during the 1930s from Wales to London. *Cwmardy* (1937) and *We Live* (1939) were written out of his experiences.

was fiercest.<sup>131</sup> Glyn Jones, who was working in Cardiff at the time, captures graphically the extreme disjunctions in imperial 'benefits'. He recalls watching

Wales becoming shabbier, poorer and more desperate [...]. The remembrance of one boy, cowed and wan, decently dressed in clothing which, although clean and neatly darned by his mother, had obviously been originally bought for someone else, has always represented for me an image of the heartbreak of that period.<sup>132</sup>

In this 'one boy' is personified a 'double narrative movement' – a shift from social inclusion to exclusion. Ironically, '[t]his boy's father was an unemployed cinema violinist who walked endlessly about the district [in] suppressed rage, bewilderment and frustration.'<sup>133</sup> He and his family are social hybrids: created as by-products of the industrialization, they are now denied the social agency that they may have had in a pre-industrialized community.

The cultural fractures widen in the demographic flux of the 1930s. The migratory traffic of people into the industrial region now commenced its outward movement, driven by economic necessity: 'about half a million' left the 'devastated south [...] the centre of imperial Wales.'<sup>134</sup> Lewis's distanced view is sensitive to this cultural phenomenon: the narrative of an early story, 'The Housekeeper', written in 1938/9,<sup>135</sup> is focalized through Myfanwy, the wife of an unemployed collier. It details graphically and psychologically the effects of its characters' ties to a redundant mining village, when coupled with an overriding need to move away. I examine the story in Chapter 3, and will suggest that the narrative expresses empathy with the plight of the village inhabitants, and demonstrates an underlying

<sup>131</sup> Gwyn A. Williams, *When Was Wales?*, p. 252. Williams notes the example of Merthyr, in which unemployment stood at 69%: most of 'the adult male population was surplus to the needs of existing' employers.

<sup>132</sup> Glyn Jones, *The Dragon has Two Tongues* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1968), p. 32. Glyn Jones was born in Merthyr in 1905 and experienced firsthand the cultural changes of the 1920s and 1930s.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> Gwyn A. Williams, *When Was Wales?*, p. 253.

<sup>135</sup> Pikoulis, *A Life*, pp. 60-61; the story was published in *The Last Inspection*.

communal culpability<sup>136</sup> for its degeneration. This situation is analogous to the way in which the short-sightedness of the Polish *szlachta* contributed to the partitioning of Conrad's homeland. It may be concluded that both communities are over-reliant on old ways, the effect of which is, to adopt Charlotte Williams's terms, cultural pauperization.

Rearmament in 1939 brought economic improvement to Wales, but through the catastrophic displacement of the Second World War. Despite the lessons of the previous decade, a dependence on and complicity with imperialism was reiterated. Glyn Jones emphasizes the paradox:

how, I asked myself, was the desperate plight of those around me to be improved by war, which was more likely to [...] destroy them and their community. I was quite wrong. [The] unemployed miners [...] were cheerful [...]. The men, after years of unemployment, had been promised jobs [in] an arms factory.<sup>137</sup>

Lewis, along with millions of others who joined the armed forces, was directly affected by the political situation of 1939. After much soul-searching about the moral implications of the war, he enlisted in May 1940.<sup>138</sup>

Lewis underwent basic training with the Royal Engineers at Longmoor. The rigours of Army life were a shock to his system, but a stimulus to his writing. One of his best-known poems from this period conveys a depressing sense of indeterminacy. In 'All Day It Has Rained' (1942), the soldier-recruits camped in a grey hinterland 'on the edge of the moors' find no 'refuge from the skirmishing fine rain' that '[p]ossesses [them] entirely, the twilight

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<sup>136</sup> This theme is present throughout Myfanwy's focalized narrative in 'The Housekeeper', and I examine Lewis's use of a gendered perspective in Chapter 3.

<sup>137</sup> Glyn Jones, *The Dragon Has Two Tongues*, pp. 32-3.

<sup>138</sup> In 1938, Lewis wrote two articles for *The Aberdare Leader*: 'If War Comes – Will I Fight?' (24 September) and 'Munich and Peace' (29 October). The first captures his dilemma: '[w]hen the loss so greatly outweighs the gain, I cannot see that one is justified in enlisting [...] it is the duty of the individual to keep the light of reason burning in his mind, not use it as a torch with which to spread the universal conflagration of war'; nevertheless, in response to aggressive nationalism, his 'reaction is to challenge the bully'; see Alun Lewis, *A Miscellany of His Writings*, ed. John Pikoulis (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, 1982), pp. 70 and 81-85.

and the rain.’<sup>139</sup> At this time, Lewis appears to be more conscious of his Welshness and how it mingles with his ‘Army’ self; he wrote to his parents:

[i]t rained all the weekend, but [we] had a fire in my bunk [...]. I was able to ‘kip’ [a friend] down [for] the two nights [...] met Dickie Mills [...] he hit it off a treat (excuse the Welsh).<sup>140</sup>

The combination of the Army slang, ‘kip’, with the apology for the Anglo-Welsh colloquialism, ‘hit it off a treat’, suggests an awareness of a dislocating shift between cultural positions.<sup>141</sup> This conflicted with his ‘educated’ self so it may have been something of which his parents would have disapproved. In a more positive vein, he wrote to them, ‘I’ve started to learn Welsh [...] there are heaps of things in Wales I want to discover.’<sup>142</sup>

Lewis’s interim position in the Army seems to have been a catalyst not only for his writing, but also for a desire to connect publicly to Welsh culture, perhaps to reverse the displacements of his earlier life. There is evidence of this in his involvement in a literary and artistic project, ‘The Caseg Broadsheets’, with Brenda Chamberlain and John Petts<sup>143</sup> in early 1941. Its purpose was to publish cheaply-priced ‘broadsheets like the chapbooks pedlars used to sell, each with a ballad and a woodcut illustration.’<sup>144</sup> To Chamberlain he wrote:

I wonder when you will turn to the quarry, the pit, the slum street [for] your composition [...]. For in this world *the people* are as profound and as enduring [as] the great Carneddau. And those who understand ‘Art’ must learn through Art to understand the people. I am learning so much in the ranks.<sup>145</sup>

As Linda Adams has noted, the project’s contributors, such as Lewis and Dylan Thomas, were cultural exiles: ‘anglophone products of the English grammar [school] system

<sup>139</sup> ‘All Day It Has Rained’, in Lewis, *Collected Poems*, p. 23, ll.1-24.

<sup>140</sup> Lewis to his parents, undated letter, in ‘Alun Lewis Papers’, National Library of Wales, MS. 20, letter 22.

<sup>141</sup> Examples of such linguistic shifts are evident in Lewis’s stories: see Review of the Critical Field, pp. 30-32.

<sup>142</sup> Lewis to his parents, undated letter, in *ibid.*, MS. 20, letter 24.

<sup>143</sup> Brenda Chamberlain was a writer and painter, originally from Bangor, north Wales; she and Petts, an artist and craftsman, were married and lived in Llanllechid in the rural margins of the mountains above Bethesda.

<sup>144</sup> Pikoulis, *A Life*, p. 102.

<sup>145</sup> Lewis to Brenda Chamberlain, 21 February 1941, in ‘Alun Lewis Papers’, MS. 24, letter 1; (original emphasis). The Carneddau is a mountain range in Snowdonia.



which alienated so many of the Welsh'.<sup>146</sup> One of the poems that Lewis contributed was 'Raiders' Dawn' (1942); its phrase, '[s]oftly the civilized / Centuries fall', suggests a cultural extinguishment, which is exacerbated by a physical destruction:

And the lovers waking  
From the night –  
Eternity's masters,  
Slaves of Time –  
Recognize only  
The drifting white  
Fall of small faces  
In pits of lime.<sup>147</sup>

The poem's final image, 'Blue necklace left / On a charred chair / Tells that Beauty / Was startled there' (ll. 13-16), invokes a feeling of something timeless that the destruction cannot touch.

The language of 'Raiders' Dawn' echoes that of Idris Davies's 'Gwalia Deserta'. As I note in the Introduction, Davies records the way in which industrial redundancy affected Welsh people. He precedes Lewis in juxtaposing the fertile image of 'lovers' with images of destruction: 'I stood in the ruins of Dowlais / And sighed for the lovers destroyed'.<sup>148</sup> Lewis's idea of 'lovers' as 'Slaves of Time', of the 'civilised Centuries', echoes Davies's image of 'slaves of The Successful Century'. By reading the 'civilised' and 'Successful' time periods to represent the industrial boom period of the nineteenth century, Lewis's image of 'pits' of lime takes on the more culturally-specific meaning of defunct Welsh collieries. The deathly 'small faces' are thus the innocent lovers, denied cultural agency, by, as Davies puts it, the colonizing 'vandals out of Hell'.<sup>149</sup> However, the lovers in 'Raiders' Dawn' are both 'masters' and 'slaves'. This juxtaposition serves to further the ideas of a self-destructive complicity with

<sup>146</sup> Adams, 'Fieldwork', p. 67.

<sup>147</sup> 'Raiders' Dawn', in Lewis, *Collected Poems*, p. 22, ll. 5-12.

<sup>148</sup> See p. 3 above.

<sup>149</sup> Idris Davies, 'Gwalia Deserta', p. 13, Part XXIII, l. 2.

imperialism that were hinted at by Glyn Jones; as I will show, these ideas are also present in 'The Housekeeper'.

Although Lewis was drawing closer to ordinary Welsh life, a posting to an officers' training course, on which he was the only Welshman, pulled him in the opposite direction.<sup>150</sup> The complications of class which had affected him on his return to Wales after his university career now returned, and were exacerbated by notions of isolation: his nationality made him feel alien, a sensation that Conrad had experienced following his exile from Poland.

Lewis's solution to the problem of alienation was to attach himself increasingly to moral principles – '[h]umility [...] integrity and willingness to endure',<sup>151</sup> – that he witnessed in 'the people', *y werin*. This suggests a further parallel with Conrad, in his association with the values of ordinary seamen in the British Merchant Service and, as in Conrad's experience, such egalitarianism compromised Lewis's relationship with the imperial officer class. Being in-between both groups gave him a sharpened political perspective: 'it's time each of us made up our minds what we're fighting for [...] there are many things I don't want to keep in England & the colonies: and many things without which I wouldn't want to keep myself.'<sup>152</sup>

The tensions created in Lewis were brought to the fore when in November 1941 he was posted, as a Second Lieutenant, to the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion, the South Wales Borderers. The battalion was recruited mainly from the south Wales valleys, 'colliers, mostly'.<sup>153</sup> Lewis must have sensed a belonging, but he was again displaced, now by his officer rank. At least, that was the

<sup>150</sup> Pikoulis, *A Life*, p. 108. The course was in Heysham, Lancashire at the Officer Cadet Training Unit (O.C.T.U.); Lewis arrived there on 11 July 1941, five days after marrying Gweno Ellis, a teacher in Mountain Ash and 'a native of Aberystwyth'; see *ibid.*, p. 62. Lewis's story 'Almost a Gentleman' (1942) is set in an O.C.T.U.; it is examined in Chapter 2.

<sup>151</sup> Lewis to Robert Graves, 4 November 1941, in *A Miscellany*, ed. Pikoulis, p. 134; (original emphasis). Graves had given a radio talk during which he had quoted from Lewis's poem 'The Soldier' (1942) to illustrate how different, in his opinion, Second World War poets felt from their First World War counterparts: 'But leisurely my fellow soldiers stroll among the trees. / The cheapest dance-song utters all they feel'; see Lewis, *Collected Poems*, p. 26, ll. 13-14.

<sup>152</sup> Lewis to his parents, undated letter, in 'Alun Lewis Papers', MS. 20, letter 65.

<sup>153</sup> Pikoulis, *A Life*, p. 117.

role he had to assume. The senior officers quickly saw through the façade: Captain O. A. Evans, the Company Commander, thought him to be a “‘village idiot with a drawling Welsh accent [...] alien to the refinements expected of an officer.’”<sup>154</sup> Evans later revised his opinion, but Lewis was evidently ‘Other’. To convey the strength of his alienation he describes the officers’ world as his ‘little Dachau’, and wishes he could be ‘among the men in their cold tin huts’.<sup>155</sup> However, Lewis’s desire for the familiarity of his fellow soldiers would soon be changed forever: his position as an officer placed him on the cusp of a momentous outward movement as the Battalion was posted overseas.

The Borderers embarked for India in October 1942. Lewis anticipated the experience as a ‘widen[ing] [...] between the solid and the fluid’:<sup>156</sup> it was a turning point similar in significance to Conrad’s Congo experience, and against it Lewis’s feelings of alterity in England paled into insignificance. His first impressions of the sub-continent were not stereotypical:

[India is] an amazing country [...] it takes the film off the white man’s eyes & he sees the most elemental & primitive existence going on about him [...] the peasants in their villages of mud [...] no shops, or coal or roads or *anything at all* [...]. I’ve found an eternal fascination in it.<sup>157</sup>

Lewis’s recognition of ‘humility’ in the peasants’ existence associates their way of life with his declared ideological values. A respect for their ‘elemental’ integrity distinguishes his outlook from that expected of colonizers, and can be traced back to his association with the community of the Welsh ‘people’.

<sup>154</sup> Evans’s remarks are taken from a letter to John Pikoulis, quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> Lewis to Gweno, 8 March 1942, in Lewis, *Letters to My Wife*, ed. Gweno Lewis, p. 198. Although the full extent of the atrocities at the Dachau Concentration Camp did not become apparent until well after Lewis wrote this letter, in the 1930s its name was synonymous with extreme forms of oppression.

<sup>156</sup> Lewis to Gweno, 27 October 1942, in *ibid.*, p. 257.

<sup>157</sup> Lewis to his parents, undated letter, in ‘Alun Lewis Papers’, MS. 21, letter 6; (original emphasis).

In January 1943, Lewis injured his jaw playing football. After operations to repair his injury, he spent six weeks recovering in the hospital at Poona. He now had time for personal reflection and this prompted some of his most intriguing work. The poem 'In Hospital: Poona (1)' (1945) summons up 'the whole of Wales / Glid[ing] within the parish of my care', but then 'ten thousand miles of daylight'<sup>158</sup> detach the speaker from home. He recalls 'the great mountains, Dafydd and Llewelyn / Plynlimmon, Cader Idris and Eryri', but 'also the small nameless mining valley / Whose slopes are scratched with streets and sprawling graves' (ll. 9-10 & 16-17). Glyn Jones's 'one [Welsh] boy'<sup>159</sup> comes to mind, anonymous and in begged shoes. Lewis maps out a process of migratory cultural disturbance – from a mythical Welsh world, into the decay of the colonized industrial town, and on to what, in principle, is its equivalent in India.

'In Hospital: Poona (2)' (1945) describes an impoverishment which could relate to either colony:

[...] the barefooted peasants winding back,  
 Sad withered loins in hanging dirty folds,  
 Mute sweepings from the disappointed streets,  
 Old shrunk tribes the starving dusk enfolds.<sup>160</sup>

The imperial burden on the 'barefooted peasants' traverses back and forth between India and Wales. The second poem, however, moves to a productive liminal position. In the unfamiliar world of India, the 'mind [...] sheds the stippled scales of ancient dreams' in favour of a recurring 'hope that has no food / But lives amongst the evil and the good, / Biding its time amongst the lives that fail' (ll. 21-22 & 25-27) – a mutual but unrealized human potential. The restrictions of the mythical and colonial past must be lost, but time-honoured values, such as hopeful humility, retained. This position is, of course, morally and spiritually optimistic.

<sup>158</sup> 'In Hospital: Poona (1)', in Lewis, *Collected Poems*, p. 140, ll. 9-10 & 21.

<sup>159</sup> See p. 67 above.

<sup>160</sup> 'In Hospital: Poona (2)', in Lewis, *Collected Poems*, p. 141, ll. 4-7.

However, the transitional, decentring approach – involving an inter-relational descent to the depths *and* a vision for the future – fits with Bhabha's productive interstitial theory. Such an approach has profound implications for Lewis's Indian texts, such as 'The Orange Grove' – those which will be examined in Chapter 4.

After leaving the hospital, Lewis took up duties as an Intelligence Officer, a role which involved reconnaissance missions into the jungle. During the spring of 1943, he exulted in the opportunities which the job offered. His reference points, however, tend to be regressive: 'I had a little trip [into] the mountains [to] a village *as lofty as Snowdon*.'<sup>161</sup> The imperial adventurer is also detectable, a Conrad enthusing over his explorer's equipment, perhaps: the job involved 'plenty of pamphlets & maps & charts [...] just like Boy's Own!'<sup>162</sup> It is tempting to read this ironically, but Lewis found the 'interesting, exciting and independent'<sup>163</sup> duties attractive. He began to distance himself from westernized references: returning 'from a 3-day "voyage into the unknown"', he likens himself to 'an old boy of the Roaring Forties', but '[l]ooking for roads instead of gold.'<sup>164</sup> The suggestion of self-searching leaves Lewis open to the kind of criticism levelled at Conrad by Achebe: that India is a backdrop for Lewis's examination of his own psychological condition. The following self-analysis reveals that such criticism may be valid, to an extent, but that his situation is more complex; in Bhabha's terms, he is 'think[ing] beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and focus[ing] on those moments [...] that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences'<sup>165</sup>:

I can't ever grow used to the idea that [India] is ours. I feel utterly strange here [...]. Some villages are friendly, others cold and reserved: I don't know why. But I'm glad of the experience. The world is much larger than England, isn't it? *I'll never be just English or just Welsh again!*<sup>166</sup>

<sup>161</sup> Lewis to his parents, 9 March 1943, in 'Alun Lewis Papers', MS. 21, letter 12; (my emphasis).

<sup>162</sup> Lewis to his parents, undated, in *ibid.*, letter 14.

<sup>163</sup> Lewis to his parents, undated, in *ibid.*, letter 19.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 2.

<sup>166</sup> Lewis, *In the Green Tree*, p. 28; 7 April 1943, letter 13; (my emphasis).

The excitement is, in imperial terms, conventional; his retention of an original Welsh identity whilst realising that he has undergone imperial Anglicization and is now experiencing yet another mutation signifies an unusually dialogic view.

As Lewis's experience of the reconnaissance missions develops, they cease to be simply 'exciting'; they become 'colossal'.<sup>167</sup> The change led him to the writing of 'The Orange Grove':

it was such a liberation [...]. We saw tribes of gypsies [and] rivers in flood [...] jungle tribesmen slipping through the trees [...]. My mind stayed in its proper place, my imagination was content to watch the Marco Polo wonders of ordinary life.<sup>168</sup>

In the 'utter disconnectedness',<sup>169</sup> the duality of the 'marginal man', locked in from his childhood, now becomes pronounced: his intelligence and his Army training constrain him, but his imagination pulls him towards 'another world'.<sup>170</sup> In a letter to Brenda Chamberlain, he describes the exchange in recursive, performative terms:

[I]f life moves and moves and I change and change. [India is] infinitely more wasteful, vaster, fundamental, and tragic than the closed and highly organised world I left. Its poverty is deeper [...] its people more various and simple [...]. I no longer think the Indians guiltless. I think they're getting what they deserve, and I feel no compunction about being here as a soldier, for I'm sure that it's in India's interests [...]. There is a vast field for human effort here [in] the simple necessities of life – food, health, schooling, housing [...] if I were a young Indian I should wish for nothing except to serve my country. As I am not [I] observe in a detached but warm way the flux and reflux of it all and it profoundly affects [the] things I wish to write. I think you'll understand [if] you read 'The Orange Grove'.<sup>171</sup>

John Pikoulis has pointed out that Lewis, like Conrad, often tailors his letters to suit the views of their recipients: his letters to his parents, for instance, 'are not where he usually expresses his deepest thoughts'.<sup>172</sup> However, in this letter, Lewis was writing not to members of his

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43; 18 June 1943, letter 21.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42–43.

<sup>169</sup> Lewis to his parents, 8 June 1943, in 'Alun Lewis Papers', MS. 21, letter 26.

<sup>170</sup> Lewis to his parents, 8 June 1943, in *ibid.*, letter 27.

<sup>171</sup> Lewis to Brenda Chamberlain, 3 October 1943, in *ibid.*, MS. 24, letter 3.

<sup>172</sup> Pikoulis, 'Politics of Empire', p. 157.

family, who may have been pleased by its socialist leanings, but to Chamberlain, a fellow 'artist' and someone who was interested in genuine integrity.<sup>173</sup> Although Lewis was moving towards 'another world', he realizes that that world has a political relationship to the colonized worlds of India and Wales where the 'necessities of life' require urgent action. His 'warm' understanding, from his interstitial position, of the 'flux and reflux' of these worlds indicates another cultural shift in operation: his original Welsh experience is overwritten by the Indian political situation. The first 'narrative' is superseded, but it remains visible and relevant.

The letter to Chamberlain may also be regarded as conventionally imperialist: Lewis knows what is best for India. Kirsti Bohata has identified such an attitude elsewhere in his correspondence: Indians at the Bombay Cricket Club are 'odd'; if India were westernized, 'growing into a maturity such as we have at home, then [he would] enjoy all that *is* enjoyable [there].'<sup>174</sup> When Lewis looks closely at imperial India, with its 'decaying houses and bad smells,' we might conclude, to borrow his own words, that his 'gaze' is that of 'a stranger looking at the customs of [the "Other"]'.<sup>175</sup>

In a letter to his parents written about six weeks after he wrote to Chamberlain, Lewis makes a link to his Welsh origins and reiterates his position as a 'stranger' there, as well as in India:

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<sup>173</sup> Chamberlain's biography shows some similarity with Lewis's colonial 'trajectory'. Born in Bangor in 1912, she was educated at a preparatory school and at Bangor County School for Girls. On leaving school, Chamberlain spent six months in Copenhagen where she explored the independent style of living that distinguished the remainder of her life. In 1931, she won a place at the Royal Academy Schools in London, where she met John Petts. They later married and returned to Wales to live in a pair of disused drovers' cottages in Snowdonia. As Kate Holman, in *Brenda Chamberlain* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), puts it, '[b]oth were fiercely idealistic and determined to earn their living by their art'; detached from the everyday world, they were 'considered eccentric'; see pp. 3-4. Her unconventionality steered her away from the colonial trajectory, and she preferred to live the isolated artist's life. Chamberlain was often frustrated in her artistic aims; prone to bouts of depression, she suffered a nervous breakdown in 1969, and took her own life in 1971.

<sup>174</sup> Bohata, 'Hybridity and Assimilation', p.108; Bohata refers to Lewis's letter of 9 May 1943, in Lewis, *In the Green Tree*, p. 34, letter 16; (original emphasis).

<sup>175</sup> Lewis, *In the Green Tree*, pp. 35-6; 9 May 1943, letter 16. Lewis's comments bring to mind John Davies's suggestion that Lewis's reaction to India was that of the 'slightly horrified intruder'; see p. 27 above.

I regret my lack of Welsh very deeply: I really will learn it when I come back home again [and] I shall always tackle my writing through Welsh life [...] *but* I must get to grips with the details of life as I haven't yet done: the law, the police, the insurance, the hospitals, the unemployment exchanges, the slums.<sup>176</sup>

This letter has been much discussed by Lewis's critics. Knight takes it to be a 'commitment to his origins';<sup>177</sup> M. Wynn Thomas sees ambivalence: 'someone caught between a British identity and a Welsh identity.'<sup>178</sup> Pikoulis suggests that this passage represents 'what he imagined [his parents] wanted to hear',<sup>179</sup> and that Lewis knew there was no going back. Lewis had by now been expressing a wish to learn Welsh for over three years so it is probable that the stress of the letter is on 'regret' rather than intent. The way in which he conditions his position is significant: he is willing to re-educate himself, 'but' he first has to understand 'the details' of his home life. The trajectory which Lewis was following meant that immersing himself in the 'detail' of Wales, rather than its ideals, was the very thing which he was least likely to do. His letter, in fact, proceeds to confirm a kind of natural displacement: 'I've always enclosed myself in an impalpable circle of seclusion ... for the aloneness that is somehow essential [to] grow at all.'<sup>180</sup> As in Conrad's case, this disengagement enables a different outlook from that of writers who were 'more tightly entangled' in, or tied to, fixed or national ideologies.<sup>181</sup> However, such a freeing, by definition, results in instability.

Pikoulis makes it clear that during the latter part of 1943, Lewis was depressed:<sup>182</sup> in December of that year he tells Gweno that he writes so as 'to throw the defeatism off: but it wins in the end [...] I rarely do it without finding myself out. It's the person who deludes himself who is the whited sepulchre'.<sup>183</sup> The 'delusion' may indicate his feelings about

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57; 23 November 1943, letter 35; (my emphasis).

<sup>177</sup> Knight, *A Hundred Years of Fiction*, p. 125.

<sup>178</sup> Thomas and Brown, 'Colonial Wales', p. 72.

<sup>179</sup> Pikoulis, 'Politics of Empire', p. 157.

<sup>180</sup> Lewis, *In the Green Tree*, p. 57; 23 November 1943, letter 35.

<sup>181</sup> See p. 48 above.

<sup>182</sup> See Pikoulis's chapter 'Waiting for the Pistol', in *A Life*, pp. 198-233.

<sup>183</sup> Lewis, *In the Green Tree*, p. 60; 22 December 1943; letter 38.



declaring an affinity with his Welsh roots whilst knowing that he could never return home. The same letter emphasises that he was concerned about 'integrity', a quality that he values more than 'anything else'.<sup>184</sup> In this context, the term 'whited sepulchre' is interesting: it is exactly how Marlow describes Brussels, the imperial centre in *Heart of Darkness*<sup>185</sup> and, by implication, anyone complicit in imperialism. This may be coincidental, but it sums up the ideological difference Lewis saw between 'civilized', imperial India<sup>186</sup> and the jungle-peasant communities he encountered on his later journeys. In terms of his psychological condition at this time, he recognizes, to recall Paul B. Armstrong's words, that his own cultural position is 'riven with contingency.'<sup>187</sup>

Two weeks later Lewis wrote from a jungle camp and described the kind of cross-cultural empathy that he saw as a solution to the divisions created in him by his allegiance to 'home' and his role as an imperial officer:

I could hear the villagers at their orisons [and] I wished to be away among them and of them, for in the hyper-civilised world [I've] never been able to accept or discover a religion as simple and natural as I need. [But] here was a rhythm of many universes and real truths [...]. At the end they cut a coconut in half, putting half before God and cutting the other half into pieces like communion [...]. And one of them came out and politely offered Jack and me a piece each [...]. [I feel] glad to find, if only for a few days, a humanity that imperialism and snobbery haven't spoiled.<sup>188</sup>

Here Lewis finds the plurality and hybridity of 'many universes' with 'room for people of different origins', to recall the ideal of a multi-ethnic society which had been present in Conrad's upbringing. The jungle-peasants' 'humanity' is the 'Beauty' in 'Raider's Dawn', the salvation for the enslaved faces in the 'pits of lime.' However, in day-to-day life Lewis remains suspended between 'this absurdly unreal little Elysium' and his Army routine – 'the

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>185</sup> See *HD*, p. 9. The term comes from Matthew 23:27 and relates to someone who is professedly righteous but inwardly wicked; a hypocrite.

<sup>186</sup> The kind of 'Indian' life which he saw at the Cricket Club, for instance.

<sup>187</sup> See p. 23 above.

<sup>188</sup> Lewis, *In the Green Tree*, pp. 65-66; 9 January 1944, letter 40.

wheel turns and we turn with it.’<sup>189</sup> Any joining of the two is likely to be ‘only for a few days’ – as colonizers, the soldiers cannot fit in, neither in the jungle, nor at ‘home’;<sup>190</sup> Lewis now felt ‘that another phase’ of his life was ‘ending’ and that ‘the climacteric [was] near.’<sup>191</sup>

On 13 February 1944, the Borderers left Poona for Calcutta en-route to Burma. Four days later, Lewis wrote to Gweno sensing ‘the end of something and [...] the beginning of something else;’ he was ‘writing out of clarity of spirit and letting Life have a chance.’<sup>192</sup> This sounds positive, but contrary emotions are concisely captured by a comment made in transit: ‘[h]ere I am, nowhere in particular.’<sup>193</sup> These remarks are significant for the ambiguous sense of ‘freeing’ with which ‘The Orange Grove’ ends, and his last, and, perhaps, most insightful poem in respect of moving to ‘another world’, ‘The Jungle’ (1945). In Burma the Borderers were held in reserve; on 5 March 1944 Lewis was found with a gunshot wound to the temple: his pistol was in his hand. He died that day, aged twenty-eight.

## Conclusion

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Conrad’s and Lewis’s biographies are comparable in the sense that the environments in which they developed as writers featured migrant ‘cultural traffic’ caused by significant displacements, respectively, the ‘new imperialism’ of the nineteenth-century *fin-de-siècle*, and the economic and political crises of the 1930s and 1940s. Bhabha makes an observation about the end of the twentieth century that is relevant to the earlier periods: ‘in the *fin-de-*

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<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>190</sup> On 21 November 1943, Lewis had written to Gweno telling her how he had been impressed by Verrier Elwin’s book, *Leaves from the Jungle*. Elwin was a missionary living among the hill tribes of Bengal. He expresses a desire to meet Elwin: ‘[i]t would be a profound experience – like seeing a bit of God and being unable to commit myself to his service’; see *ibid.*, p. 56; letter 34. *Leaves from the Jungle* ([1936] Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) asks the question: ‘[h]as the primitive any message for the modern world, or should we try to bring him [...] into the main streams of civilization?’ Elwin comments that ‘the primitive has a real message for our sophisticated modern world which is once again threatened with disintegration as a result of its passion for possessions’; all quotations are from p. 27 of the 1992 edition. Lewis’s feeling that he was ‘unable to commit’ to this ‘home’, perhaps because of the complications within him, is significant.

<sup>191</sup> Lewis, *In the Green Tree*, p. 66; 9 January 1944, letter 40.

<sup>192</sup> Lewis to Gweno, 17 February 1944, in Lewis, *Letters to My Wife*, ed. Gweno Lewis, p. 422.

<sup>193</sup> Lewis to Gweno, 20 February 1944, in *ibid.*, p. 423.

*siècle*, we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity [...]. [For] in the “beyond” [there is] an exploratory, restless movement [...] hither and thither, back and forth’; those aware of the decentring nature of this ‘traffic’ are also sensitive to ‘new signs of identity [in] domains of difference’ where ‘collective experiences of *nationness*, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated.’<sup>194</sup>

The flux of conflicting forces – the ‘restless movement’ – that affected Conrad and Lewis had a hybridizing effect on them: their political and social positions determined them as imperial, yet their personal beliefs and backgrounds categorized them as ‘Other’. They exemplify the way in which diverse and complex personal identities contribute to the idea of ‘nationness’. Neither subscribed to single points of view; consequently, they understood that there were other ‘lives and cultures [...] inescapably *continuous with their own*.’<sup>195</sup> Both, however, may be regarded as having a *schizophrenic* identity: within them, the imperial and the ‘Other’ were never reconciled. Both espoused and, perhaps, idealized similar moral values, for example integrity and humility above economic and material gain, and saw these qualities in ‘communities’ which were not imperialist in nature: for Conrad, in honourable ordinary seamen; for Lewis, in ‘the people’ and in the jungle-peasants.

Despite their sensitivity to difference, Conrad and Lewis could express stereotypical imperialist views; the ways in which this is reflected in their narratives is examined further in Chapter 2. Tim Middleton argues that in Conrad’s ‘English’ perspective there may be evidence of Bhabha’s concept of the ‘menace of mimicry’<sup>196</sup> which ‘problematizes the signs

<sup>194</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 2.

<sup>195</sup> Harpham, *One of Us*, p. 51; (original emphasis).

<sup>196</sup> Tim Middleton, *Joseph Conrad* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), p. 19.

of racial and cultural priority' so as to marginalize and mock colonial authority.<sup>197</sup> In other words, the values of an adopted culture are imitated 'in order to critique them.'<sup>198</sup> In connecting this idea to Lewis's outlook on imperial India, something ambivalent emerges, 'almost the same, *but not quite* [...] [a] "partial" presence'; Anglicization, in both writers, 'is *emphatically* not to be English.'<sup>199</sup> On the one hand, this fits with the notion of fluid creativity – in the 'Third Space'<sup>200</sup> they are perpetually in dialogue between cultures, and in negotiation between the 'pedagogical' and 'performative'. On the other hand, such oscillation may result in frustration and confusion, and it is significant that depression and suicide (or, in Conrad's case, the possibility of attempted suicide) were a feature of both their lives.

If Conrad and Lewis are emphatically not English, then this may also mean that they are emphatically neither, respectively, Polish nor Welsh. Geoffrey Galt Harpham interestingly takes this idea a stage further: Conrad and, by implication, Lewis, were in the 'comprehensive but incoherent position of being *both* Same and Other.'<sup>201</sup> The question for this thesis is whether the recurring migration between different elements of an identity, or the simultaneous existence of several contingent identities, was an enriching experience, or if it left these writers where Lewis found himself at the end of his life, 'nowhere in particular.' This phrase of Lewis's indicates a continuing search for identity, and it is with one of the complicating influences on that search that I begin my examination of the selected texts – the 'civilizing' effects of Anglicization.

<sup>197</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 125.

<sup>198</sup> Middleton, *Joseph Conrad*, p. 19.

<sup>199</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, pp. 123-125; (original emphasis).

<sup>200</sup> See p. 24 above.

<sup>201</sup> Harpham, *One of Us*, p. 50; (original emphasis).

## CHAPTER 2

# CIVILIZING THE NATIVES: ANGLICIZATION

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Texts such as *Heart of Darkness* and ‘The Orange Grove’ are infused by ‘the contingencies and contours’ of, respectively, Conrad’s and Lewis’s personal experiences – the profound displacements that were the focus of Chapter 1. However, it could be argued that some of their earlier writings reflect the authors’ need for a defined identity, and the idea that this is achievable by Anglicization. Such a desire for stability would be an understandable response to the displacements that they had undergone, but would also suggest that their narratives work against their marginalized Polish and Welsh origins, and display evidence of what Andrea White has termed ‘shaping discourses’.<sup>1</sup>

As I note above, White argues that one of the discourses that shaped Conrad’s careers as a seaman and an author was that formulated in the published accounts of imperialist explorers. She identifies *Through the Dark Continent*, by Henry M. Stanley, as an example, and notes that, although it was published in 1878, the book was enjoying renewed popularity in 1890 when Conrad was embarking on his own journey to the ‘Dark Continent’. The word ‘shaping’ recalls the way in which the aims of the International Conference of 1884-85 were set out by the *Encyclopædia Britannica* – to ‘define’ and thus ‘civilize the natives’ of the Congo. Such discourses espoused essentialist ideals in which people could have faith – in Bhabha’s terms, they were ‘pedagogical’ in respect of the construction of identity,<sup>2</sup> and particularly attractive to those in positions of uncertainty.

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 55 above.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 22 above.

For the comparative purposes of this chapter, I will take *Through the Dark Continent* as a paradigm of pedagogical discourse. In the narrative of that text and in other writings, Stanley represents himself as a civilizing agent. This strategy works towards the securing of his place in the English imperial world, and the rejection of his Welsh origins. Stanley thus presents himself as a writer for comparison with Conrad and Lewis in three respects: first, his career, like theirs, entailed significant cultural displacement and consequent changes in identity: it led him from his childhood in a Welsh workhouse, through a series of notable ventures,<sup>3</sup> to a position where he was regarded as one of *the* most representative figures of nineteenth-century imperialism;<sup>4</sup> second, the genre in which he writes influenced Conrad's career, and *Through the Dark Continent* was in the public eye at a key moment in Conrad's life; and third, as an 'exiled' Welsh-born writer, Stanley's narrative strategy may shed light on Lewis's texts, since both men found themselves in positions of cultural dislocation.

*Through the Dark Continent* will be compared with texts from the early parts of Conrad's and Lewis's literary careers. These are: Conrad's novella, *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*; and Lewis's stories 'Almost a Gentleman' and 'They Came'. The comparison considers the degree to which Conrad and Lewis, as non-English 'natives', adopt centralizing narrative strategies that are similar to Stanley's. So as to develop the chapter's comparative base, I also examine the story, 'Glasshouses', by Lily Tobias. As a Welsh-born Jew, Tobias offers a valuable insight to the pressures to conform to 'central' narratives. Jasmine Donahaye

<sup>3</sup> See notes 55 and 78 to Chapter 1.

<sup>4</sup> As Conrad was en-route to the Congo in May and June 1890, playing the role of an imperial adventurer, Stanley was being honoured at The American Testimonial Banquet, at The Portman Rooms, London, '[i]n recognition of his Heroic Achievements in the cause of Humanity, Science & Civilization'. The event was held on 30 May 1890, the same year as *In Darkest Africa*, Stanley's account of his expedition to rescue Emin Pasha, was published. The programme is available at <http://www.archive.org/details/americantestimonial00londiala> ; [accessed 13 June 2007]. Robert Hampson comments that *In Darkest Africa* may have influenced Conrad's writing; see 'Conrad and the Idea of Empire', pp. 72-73. Hampson refers to the suggestion that Conrad drew upon incidents that took place during Stanley's expedition for certain details in 'An Outpost of Progress' and *Heart of Darkness*; see Norman Sherry, *Conrad's Western World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 130-131 and 119-121.

has argued that ‘the pressure to assimilate and to become Anglicized’<sup>5</sup> is as onerous for Welsh people as for Jews: the idea of a shared racial difference has led to a ‘Welsh identification with the Jews’<sup>6</sup> through a common sense of cultural exclusion. The social positioning of characters in Tobias’s story sheds light specifically on Lewis’s story ‘Almost a Gentleman’, since the latter concerns discrimination regarding a Jewish soldier, and, more generally, on the effect of authoritative narratives on marginalized races.

The focus of this chapter will be on the fictional texts’ engagement with the shaping discourse of a ‘civilized’, Anglicized norm in relation to a perceived deficient ‘Other’, as that relationship is formalized by Stanley’s narrative.

### Henry M. Stanley: *Through the Dark Continent* (1878)

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In order to indicate why Stanley’s ‘factual’ narration in *Through the Dark Continent* serves pedagogical purposes, I propose to add briefly to his biographical details noted in Chapter 1.

An extract from one of Stanley’s letters, quoted in the Editor’s Preface to his *Autobiography* suggests the way in which he viewed his career:

imagine yourself in personal view of all the poor boys in these islands, English, Scotch, Welsh, and Irish, and [...] our Colonies; regarding them as we regard those in schools we visit in Lambeth, or at Cadoxton, we should see [...] thousands [to] whom [we wish to] say something that would encourage them in their careers.

[...] Not all who hear are influenced by precept, and not all who see change because of example. [But] there must be a goodly number of boys who are penetrable, and it is for these [...] that I would care to leave a truthful record of my life [so as] to teach some lessons.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Jasmine Donahaye, “‘A dislocation called a blessing’: three Welsh-Jewish perspectives”, *Welsh Writing in English: A Yearbook of Critical Essays*, Volume 7 (2001-2), 154-173 (p. 156). Lily Tobias (1887 – 1984) was born and grew up in Ystalyfera to Yiddish-speaking parents. She began writing articles and stories for *Llais Llafur/Labour Voice*, *The Socialist Review* and *The Zionist Review*. Donahaye discusses ‘Welsh philosemitism’ (see p. 154) in relation to Tobias, Leo Abse and Dannie Abse (Tobias’s nephews). ‘Glasshouses’ is one of Tobias’s early stories, collected in *The Nationalists and Other Goluth Studies* (London: C. W. Daniel Ltd., 1921).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>7</sup> Henry M. Stanley, *The Autobiography of Sir Henry Morton Stanley: The Making of a 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Explorer* ([1909] Santa Barbara: The Narrative Press, 2001), Editor’s Preface, pp. 1-2. The words are taken from Stanley’s letter to his wife, dated 30 November 1893. Stanley married Dorothy Tennant of Cadoxton, Glamorgan on 12 July 1890 in Westminster Abbey. The *Autobiography* comprises an ‘Introduction’ and nine chapters written by Stanley; the remaining seventeen chapters were edited and compiled by Dorothy Stanley from Stanley’s journals, notes and letters: she links these documents together to form a narrative, interspersed with editorial comment.

The Editor of the *Autobiography* was Stanley's wife, Dorothy, and the book was published after his death in 1904. The Preface establishes Stanley's life as a 'precept' – a 'rule for conduct', as the *OED* defines the word. Dorothy Stanley notes that the young Stanley was himself governed by strong cultural forces. As she asserts: the 'denials of [his] early years [...] were shaping [him for] great work'; he wished 'to obliterate the stigma of pauperism [so] that, when he had achieved fame', he would be recognized as someone of 'real nobility of character'.<sup>8</sup> *Through the Dark Continent* is an exemplar of the way in which Stanley uses narrative to support such a change in identity.

The denials to which Dorothy Stanley refers are Stanley's illegitimate birth in 1841 in the north Wales town of Denbigh, and workhouse upbringing in nearby St. Asaph. During this time he came to regard himself as the 'British outcast',<sup>9</sup> a feeling that was to strengthen. He later emigrated to America and was effectively adopted by a New Orleans merchant, Henry Hope Stanley, whose name he assumed. He subsequently took up journalism, and, between 1869 and 1871, undertook an assignment for the *New York Herald* to search for Livingstone in Africa. This expedition made Stanley's international reputation and signalled his emergence as a writer. *How I Found Livingstone* (1872) was a bestseller, but in London the English Establishment was sceptical. Members of the Royal Geographical Society were disbelieving of his achievements, and there were allegations that he 'lacked the credentials of either a gentleman or a scientist'.<sup>10</sup>

The allegations made concerning Stanley's 'credentials' would be a feature of his early public life. They put us in mind of his childhood sensitivity to being the 'outcast', always the exile from his home. However, Stanley regarded his departure from Wales as a relief. This point of view is illustrated in two contrasting perspectives contained in the *Autobiography*: one

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, Editor's Preface, pp. 2-3.

<sup>9</sup> Stanley, *Autobiography*, p. 20.

<sup>10</sup> Felix Driver, 'Stanley, Sir Henry Morton (1841–1904)', in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Available at <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36247> ; [accessed 27 September 2007].



of his insular homeland; the other of the opportunity available over the border with England, in Liverpool. The first view is that which Stanley recalls after freeing himself from the workhouse in 1856,<sup>11</sup> and then travelling to his aunt's home in the north Wales village of Tremeirchion. He remembers that its inhabitants were:

all exceedingly proud [...] they despised all foreigners [and had a] prejudice born of ignorance [...] which knew nothing of the broad, sunny lands beyond the fog-damp Vale [of Clwyd].<sup>12</sup>

He then generalizes:

[t]he North-Welsh are a compound of opposites [...] sensible in business, but not enterprising; [...] industrious and thrifty, but not rich; [they] waste their spare time in [the] malice, ill-nature, and filthy or idle gossip [of] vacuous minds.<sup>13</sup>

Nearby Liverpool, however, is presented through an outward-looking perspective as the place where Stanley's 'future was shaped.'<sup>14</sup> An uncle suggests that he might obtain work in the city. He is taken there, and 'Wales recede[s] from view'.<sup>15</sup>

In Liverpool Stanley is drawn towards the imperial romance of the 'magnificent ships' in the Docks:

[s]uch broad and long-reaching extent of decks, such girth of hulk and dizzy height of masts! What an atmosphere of distant regions, suggestive of spicy Ind [...] coloured grain, bales of silk [...] hogsheads, barrels [rising] up as high as the shed-roof [...] it was grand to see the gathered freight from all parts of the world under English roofs.<sup>16</sup>

The exclamatory tone and accumulative language, 'long-reaching [...] dizzy height', stresses the contrast with the 'fog-damp' Vale of Clwyd. Correspondingly, the people employed on the

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<sup>11</sup> In the *Autobiography*, Stanley dramatically recalls his escape: '[I] possessed myself of [his teacher's cane] and struck him', running away towards 'the tides of joyous intercourse [which] lay beyond the gates'; see pp. 41-42. This event has been exposed by recent biographers as 'a fantasy': see, for example, Tim Jeal, *Stanley: The Impossible Life of Africa's Greatest Explorer* (London: Faber & Faber, 2007), p. 24.

<sup>12</sup> Stanley, *Autobiography*, p. 59.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59-61. Emyr Wyn Jones considers these remarks, not surprisingly, 'gratuitously offensive' and points out that the region was 'one of the most important cultural centres in Wales'; see Emyr Wyn Jones, *Sir Henry M. Stanley: The Enigma* (Denbigh: Gee, 1989), pp. 33-34. The area is also noted for the beauty of its landscape. Stanley's representation tends to reflect his own displacement.

<sup>14</sup> Stanley, *Autobiography*, p. 62.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.

ships are the opposite of the indeterminate, 'vacuous' north-Welsh; they are purposefully engaged within a productive hierarchy:

[t]here were real Liverpool boys [...] prodigies of practical wisdom [who] pointed out to me certain stern-faced men [...] as the captains [...] men of unlimited energy and potent voices as the mates, or officers, who [carried out] their superior's commands; and the jerseyed workmen in the rigging [displayed] strength, daring, and defiance.<sup>17</sup>

The 1850s, during which Stanley began work, was, as Hobsbawm has observed, a period of 'unproblematic' imperial expansion. The qualities which Stanley sees represented in the workers in the Liverpool dockyards denote hard work, and a compliance with duty through a centralized command structure. They constitute a shaping narrative of identity that suits the enterprising *zeitgeist*. Although his decision to leave Britain for America in 1858 at the age of seventeen<sup>18</sup> suggests a capacity for self-determination, Stanley was to adhere to such a progressive imperialist narrative throughout his life.

The contrast between Stanley's Welsh home and what is available to him in the wider imperial world, notably that represented 'under English roofs', sheds light on his later attitude towards any 'Other', including his own family, that does not conform to hegemonic ideas of progress. This feature of his writing is illustrated in his account of a brief visit to Wales, when he was twenty-one. After working in the commercial world of New Orleans, Stanley served on both sides in the American Civil War. In 1862, he was invalided out and returned to his mother. However, she had married, and had become more respectable.<sup>19</sup> Despite Stanley's 'pride' in showing 'what manliness [he] had acquired',<sup>20</sup> he was quickly asked to leave; the illegitimate outsider was not welcome. However, such 'rebuffs' produced in him, as Dorothy Stanley puts

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>18</sup> In the Liverpool dockyards Stanley found his future direction, taking up the offer of a job as a cabin-boy on an American packet boat bound for New Orleans.

<sup>19</sup> Lucy M. Jones and Ivor Wynne Jones, *H. M. Stanley and Wales* (Hawarden: Flintshire County Record Office, 1972), p. 17: booklet produced in conjunction with an exhibition about Stanley, held at the St. Asaph Cathedral Museum, 25 – 30 September 1972. Stanley's mother had married Robert Jones, the father of two of her children.

<sup>20</sup> Stanley, *Autobiography*, p. 224.

it, a strong 'self-command', and a determination to 'rebound towards the world of vigorous action';<sup>21</sup> the Welsh world, by implication, is thus suggested to be unyieldingly static.

After working briefly in the merchant service, Stanley returned to America where he later became a newspaper correspondent, a job which developed into exploration. The latter role fulfilled what Dorothy Stanley sees as his destiny: to be 'a maker of events.'<sup>22</sup> Stanley, in a letter written in 1869, emphasizes his active fashioning of an archetypal imperial identity; he explains how he is achieving success:

[h]ow have I done this? By intense application to duty, by self-denial, which means I have denied myself all pleasures, so that I might do my duty thoroughly, and exceed it [...]. I am so much my own master, that I am master over my own passions [...] my future promotion to distinction hangs upon [doing my duty] [...]. I have nothing to fall back on but energy, and much hopefulness.<sup>23</sup>

This is his defining declaration: there is no thought of a home to fall back on, only the repeated notion of succeeding by doing one's duty. The passage recalls Stanley's admiration for the disciplined strength which he perceived in the seamen in the Liverpool dockyards, and displays a set of concerns which are shared with Conrad. These concerns echo the 'code' of the British Merchant Marine: the 'time-honoured traditions and working truths'<sup>24</sup> of the hierarchical world of imperialism – duty to the common good.

In *Through the Dark Continent*, Stanley projects the ideal of duty, in cultural and imperial terms, onto his account of his 1874–77 expedition. This complicates his role as a factual narrator. The 1988 republication celebrates his 'major role' in 'assembling the

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225; Editor's intervention. At this point (Chapter 10) begins Dorothy Stanley's use of Stanley's journals, notes and letters, interspersed with her editorial commentary.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226. Dorothy Stanley notes that there 'is nothing to show just how or why he became a newspaper correspondent', yet this career led directly to what made him famous. The task of finding Livingstone in central Africa was as a result of Stanley's employment with the *New York Herald*.

<sup>23</sup> Letter of June 1869, written to a friend; quoted in *ibid.*, p. 254.

<sup>24</sup> See p. 46 above. In the story 'Youth', a 'crew of Liverpool hard cases' endeavour to save an ailing merchant ship, the *Judea*, from being lost. Although they fail, they have in them 'the right stuff', a devotion to duty; see Joseph Conrad, 'Youth: A Narrative', in *Heart of Darkness and Other Tales*, ed. Cedric Watts ([1898] [1902] Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 86–87.

fragmented [...] knowledge of [the territory] into a coherent picture.’<sup>25</sup> As Stanley, after leaving Wales, single-mindedly fashions his own life around central ideals, so the ‘Other’ of Africa is formalized through conventional modes of representation. However, in considering Stanley’s narrative, it is important to remember the degree to which he was criticised for the violent suppression of indigenous tribes during the expedition. The disapproval of Stanley’s methods indicates that he thinks as the Welsh outsider who is seeking acceptance – the same outsider who, six years earlier, was considered by the English Establishment to be lacking the qualities of a gentleman. He prefaces *Through the Dark Continent* with an acknowledgment that his ‘conduct [had] not been understood’; the book thus serves a corrective purpose, as a ‘simple record of [his] daily actions’ (p. ix). Nevertheless, in compensating for his conduct, his narrative over-stresses the conventions of the progressive discourse, with the aim of bolstering his tenuous social position. As I will show, Stanley constructs his ‘factual’ account for the purpose of fashioning a particular identity.<sup>26</sup>

The supposed narrative form of Stanley’s book declares itself in the title of Chapter One, ‘Explanation’. What inspires him is what inspires Conrad, and Marlow: his mission is to fill the ‘white blank’ of Africa ‘to the advantage of science, humanity, and civilisation’;<sup>27</sup> his method is to ‘map, lay out, and describe’ (pp. 2-3). Illustrations and precise data suggest the

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<sup>25</sup> Publicity material for Henry M. Stanley, *Through the Dark Continent or, The Sources of the Nile Around the Great Lakes of Equatorial Africa and Down the Livingstone River to the Atlantic Ocean: in Two Volumes* ([1878] New York: Dover Publications, 1988). All further references are to *Volume 1* of this edition and are given in the text, abbreviated, where necessary, as *DC*; references to *Volume 2* are contained in footnotes.

<sup>26</sup> Andrea White notes that ‘factual’ accounts of journeys of exploration were ‘shaped in large part by official thought and prevailing ideology’; such narratives, in turn, ‘shaped the attitudes of [their] readers’; see White, *Adventure Tradition*, p. 11. In Stanley’s case, he also uses the prevailing imperial discourse to shape his own identity.

<sup>27</sup> The American Testimonial Banquet honoured Stanley’s achievements in precisely these three realms. When the expedition is deep into the interior, Stanley addresses his officers: “[n]ow look at this, the latest chart [of] this region. It is a blank, perfectly white”; like Conrad, Stanley is ‘charm[ed]’ by the ‘enormous void’ – the ‘singular fascination’ for him is to see it ‘filled [with] the most wonderful pictures of towns, villages, rivers, countries, and tribes’; see *Through the Dark Continent, Volume Two*, p. 152. Stanley wishes to impose order on the unknown, or, as Conrad might have put it, the unknowable.

organizing form of a report.<sup>28</sup> However, Stanley occasionally deviates into imaginative representation. At Zanzibar, a stopping-off point,<sup>29</sup> he personifies the ‘verdant shores’ where ‘[p]alms raise their feathery heads [and] trees loom up [from] the warm heaving bosom of the island’ (p. 23). Such feminized language creates the sensation that the expedition members are being seduced by an alluring Mother Nature. However, this diversion serves only to prepare the way for a re-assertion of a shaping binary discourse: at the moment of the expedition’s departure, Stanley reports that ‘[t]hick shadows fall [...] as we glide away through the dying light towards The Dark Continent’ (p. 54). The conventional diminishing light and increasing dark imagery marks boundaries between civilization and the ‘Other’, the latter being subtly introduced through the feminized narrative. Stanley, himself an ‘Other’, thus sets the foundations of a ‘simple record’ which will, in fact, persuasively support an ideological ‘Sameness’.<sup>30</sup>

Stanley recruited hundreds of indigenous bearers for the journey. He judges them to be ‘fixed deeply in barbarism’ (p. 38). His ‘sacred’ duty is to help ‘the negro’ to understand his ‘moral powers rightly’ (pp. 38-39). He draws up a ‘covenant’ in which he undertakes to ‘act like a “father and mother”’ to the natives; this imperial exchange requires the natives to ‘do their duty’, and respect Stanley’s instructions (pp. 51-52). To his sponsors, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The New York Herald*, he writes: ‘[w]hat [a] harvest ripe for the sickle of civilisation!’, ‘saviour[s] of Africa’ such as he, should be ‘practical Christian tutor[s]’ guiding the ‘Other’

<sup>28</sup> The publicity material for the 1988 edition refers to ‘[p]refaces. Appendixes. Total of 149 black and white illustrations. Tables. Foldout map. Total of 960 pp.’

<sup>29</sup> Zanzibar is an archipelago off the coast of East Africa. At the time of Stanley’s visit it had been a Portuguese colony since 1503, but had been subject to many other cultural influences – Persian, Arab and African, for example. Important for the spice trade, Zanzibar became a British colony in 1890.

<sup>30</sup> The form and narrative style of *Through the Dark Continent* presents a comparison with Marlow’s impression of Kurtz’s report for the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs – “vibrating with eloquence, but too highly strung”, he comments. Stanley’s presentation of the initial stages of the expedition strikes us now, as Marlow is struck by Kurtz’s “opening paragraphs”, as “ominous, in the light of later information”; see *HD*, pp. 49-50. The blurring of light and dark, civilized and savage, and fact and ideology will be examined further in Chapter 3 in connection with texts which deconstruct the civilizing mission.

towards the norm of the 'white race' (p. 164).<sup>31</sup> However, as the expedition proceeds and is challenged by hostile tribes, Stanley becomes less the 'tutor' and more the wielder of the 'sickle'.

In his account of violent confrontations at Bumbireh Island on Lake Victoria, Stanley asserts a 'precept' that civilizing the natives entails calculated prohibitive action. On the expedition's first visit to Bumbireh it had been attacked. Returning three months later,<sup>32</sup> Stanley plans an act of 'justice which, according to all laws human and divine, savage and civilized, demands that blood shall atone for blood' (p. 226).<sup>33</sup> In his sub-section, 'The Work of Punishment', he describes his response to an attack: 'a volley was fired into [the natives], which quite crushed their courage', and confirms his purpose as 'chastisement' (p. 229).

The punishment that Stanley meted out caused outrage in Britain. Felix Driver notes that Stanley's newspaper reports of the second Bumbireh incident, rather than justifying his actions, gloried in the 'entic[ing] of the natives' to their deaths: 'at least forty-two were slaughtered'.<sup>34</sup> However, as Tim Jeal has argued, a more significant cause of outrage 'was that [Stanley] had written openly about killing Africans'; these things were done, but not 'advertised',<sup>35</sup> at least, not by 'gentlemen'. Here is the 'outcast', who publicizes his compulsion to excel so as to erase his marginalized status. However, Stanley's Welsh workhouse upbringing betrays him: in pursuit of cultural acceptance at the English centre, he ignores received wisdom regarding 'proper' conduct.

<sup>31</sup> Letters of 14 April 1875.

<sup>32</sup> Jeal, *Stanley*, pp. 221-222; Stanley's expedition was at Bumbireh in May and August 1875.

<sup>33</sup> Stanley's notion of justice is explicitly Old Testament – 'an eye for an eye' – a symptom, perhaps, of his workhouse education.

<sup>34</sup> Felix Driver, 'Henry Morton Stanley and his Critics: Geography, Exploration and Empire', *Past and Present*, No. 133 (1991), 134-166 (p. 150). Driver quotes from the *Saturday Review*, 16 February 1878.

<sup>35</sup> Jeal, *Stanley*, p. 224. Jeal refers to the comments of Charles 'Chinese' Gordon and notes that '[i]n China, Gordon's [Army] had committed a string of atrocities, and in the Sudan he and his subordinates had killed numerous members of the Bari tribe without ever saying a word.' Jeal observes that Stanley in contrast, not only reported, but also 'exaggerated' the number of natives killed; 'in his diary the figure given was thirty three.' Jeal sees exaggeration as a consistent trait in Stanley, attributable to a 'psychological need to prove that no one ever got the better of him'; see *ibid.*, pp. 222-224.

As if the dispensing of fierce ‘justice’ were insufficient to prove his qualities, Stanley goes on to re-assert the Christian ethics which he had earlier espoused in his ‘covenant’ with the natives. He achieves this through a narrative strategy that appropriates African voices to his own paternalist discourse. For instance, when he meets Ungomirwa, the king of Ubagwé, the king reportedly asks Stanley’s tribesmen why they are part of the expedition; ‘they’ reply in impossibly convenient language:

“[t]he white people know everything. They are better than the black people in heart [...]. We carry his goods for him, and he bestows a father’s care on his black children. Let Ungomirwa make friends with the white man, and do as he says, and it will be good for [his] land”.

(DC, p. 390)

In support of such pedagogical ideals of European morality, Stanley persistently takes the opportunity to present the image of white men as bringers of light, even in death. One of his officers later drowns: the natives who find him are ‘attracted by something gleaming on the water [...] [the] face of a white man.’<sup>36</sup> Stanley’s strategy exemplifies what Bhabha terms ‘iteration’.<sup>37</sup> This is, in effect, a shaping device that Stanley uses to ‘articulate’ natives to the completeness of the white hegemony; however, Bhabha points out that this very ‘repetition of [‘Sameness’] can in fact be its own displacement’.<sup>38</sup>

Declan Kiberd has noted the way in which ‘displacement’ occurs during the repetitious process of creating the ‘gleaming’ identity to which ‘Others’ should aspire. Although referring to the Irish colonial situation, Kiberd’s analysis of the typical imperialist’s persona establishes a telling principle: paradoxically, ‘their polished surface [evidenced] their premature self-closure which left them at once incomplete and *finished*. [It] indicated a person immune to

<sup>36</sup> Stanley, *Through the Dark Continent, Volume Two*, pp. 312-316; (the officer was Frank Pocock).

<sup>37</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 38; (original emphasis). Bhabha identifies the tendency for political movements to ‘iterate’ their principles so as to ‘articulate antagonistic and oppositional elements’.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195.

self-doubt and therefore incapable of development.’<sup>39</sup> This principle of displacement is well-illustrated by another instance of Stanley’s appropriation of African voices. Almost at the end of the expedition, Stanley and his party are at the point of starvation, but he nevertheless guides everyone to the safety of the coastal region. The natives thank Stanley for his efforts: “‘[v]erily, our master has found the sea [...]. God be praised for ever [that] we shall see white people to-morrow, and our wars and troubles will be over.’”<sup>40</sup> In the light of history, this iterative statement is, for Africans, highly ironic.

The complexities entailed in sustaining an image of perfect ‘Sameness’ have implications for Stanley’s representation of himself as a ‘precept’ – a shaper of ‘Others’. He displays essential pedagogic qualities: for aggressive natives he is the uncompromising imperialist enforcer; for those more amenable to ‘civilized’ ways, the faith-inspiring teacher. But, towards the end of the nineteenth century, public perception was that the enforcement of imperialist policy had all but displaced its moral dimension.<sup>41</sup> This may account for the tone of Stanley’s Preface to the 1899 edition of *Through the Dark Continent*, in which he strives to secure his status as the pioneer of ‘remarkable progress’ (p. xi). The Preface is contemporaneous with the publication of *Heart of Darkness* in serial form and, since both Stanley and Conrad were employees of the company established by King Leopold to exploit the Congo, may be read in opposition to the novella’s perspective. In the *Autobiography*, Dorothy Stanley portrays her husband as the epitome of a dutiful imperialist; his purpose in the Congo was to further a grand shaping discourse: ‘the betterment of mankind’; his aim was ‘as

<sup>39</sup> Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, p. 119; (original emphasis). The ‘gleaming’ imperial identity would thus be seen as the product of iterative strategies – a repetitive ‘polishing’.

<sup>40</sup> Stanley, *Through the Dark Continent, Volume Two*, p. 355. This ‘quotation’ is contained within a letter that Stanley sent to Messrs. A. da Motta Veiga and J. W. Harrison of Boma on the Congo River, merchants who dispatched supplies to Stanley’s ailing party. The letter, amongst others, is included within his narrative and acts as an authenticating device.

<sup>41</sup> See p. 58 above regarding Roger Casement’s ‘Congo Report’ of 1903.



*pure* [...] as Livingstone's. But, as a means, he looked not alone to the efforts of isolated missionaries, but to the influx of great tides of beneficent activities.'<sup>42</sup>

The Preface is self-congratulatory. 'Betterment' rests on European commercial technology – the 'beneficent activities.' For example, Stanley had made 'zealous efforts' to 'induce capitalists' to build railways, 'knowing [that] they were the best instruments [for the] social elevation of the dark peoples' (p. xix); here is a colonizer who is 'immune to self-doubt'. In his narrative, there is no hint of the *fin-de-siècle* anxiety about the imperial mission. Where *Heart of Darkness* represents a more 'developed' view of colonialism through its identification of the corrosive effects of social 'advancement' – native workers are "[b]rought from all the recesses of the coast" to work on construction projects, where "they sickened, became inefficient, and were allowed to [die]" (*HD*, p. 17) – Stanley is silent on this performative aspect of the natives' 'elevation'. Instead, he emphasizes commercial gains: the Congo Railway 'today' is 'fully employed in traffic, and the 500-franc shares are worth 1700 francs' (*DC*, p. xix).

The Preface expresses a wish that Britain becomes involved in the colonizing work in Africa, and admonishes its Government for a failure to exploit the continent's resources. However, the narrative shifts from a discussion of 'British' policy to 'England's affairs' (pp. xiv-xv). During his career, Stanley had frequently been referred to as an Anglo-American, but when his adventuring days were over he settled in London and was re-naturalized as a British citizen. At the time of writing the Preface, Stanley had become the M.P. for North Lambeth: he had attained his place in the English metropolis, and now had a social status to preserve. In an election campaign in 1892 he had promoted the 'spread [of] the British Empire', but it was 'we

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<sup>42</sup> Stanley, *Autobiography*, p. 346; (my emphasis). In the grand narrative of Stanley's career, 'purity' and whiteness are strategically complementary.

Englishmen' who had 'the greatest destiny [of] any race'.<sup>43</sup> Through the manner in which Stanley prefaces its later publication, the narrative of *Through the Dark Continent* is shown to support his aim to become an 'Englishman'.

Stanley's Welsh origins had now truly 'receded from view.' Writing to his wife in 1891, he confirms his desire to draw the Welsh towards the central discourse of progress that is espoused in *Through the Dark Continent* and its later Preface. Considering his wife's suggestion that he accept an invitation to preside at the forthcoming National Eisteddfod, he confides:

[t]he Eisteddfod [is] for the purpose of exciting interest in the Welsh nationality and language [but I] recommend Welshmen to turn their attention to a closer study of the English language, literature, and characteristics, for it is only by that training that they can hope to compete with their English brothers for glory, honour, and prosperity [...]. [For what] *is* Cambria, *alone*? [...] what hope for her, separate and distinct from her big sister Britannia, or rather Anglia?<sup>44</sup>

The desire for a 'civilized' white rule that Stanley attributes to African natives is now recommended to the Welsh, but in the form of an English hegemony. He asserts that Welsh 'natives' must be trained to be like the English, and thus confirms that he wishes to 'obliterate' the idea of himself as a marginalized 'Other'.

Earlier in the *Autobiography*, Stanley refers to African pigmies as 'a degenerate stock of ordinary humanity'; he stresses the 'Otherness' of 'the little people' and declares in more general ideological terms that 'tribes and nations are subject to the same influences as families.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 466. Stanley was the Liberal-Unionist candidate for North Lambeth in the election of 1892, but was not elected. This speech of 21 June 1892 is careful to associate the prosperity of England with what can taken to be an English Empire. It is ironic that as Stanley was striving to place himself within a predominantly English Parliament, another Welsh Liberal, David Lloyd George (1863-1945), was rising to political prominence. A matter of ten years or so after Stanley's death, Lloyd George, as President of the Board of Trade (1906), Chancellor of the Exchequer (1908), and Prime Minister (1916), would give English politics a distinctly Welsh face.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 454-455; (original emphasis). Stanley declined the invitation to preside at the Eisteddfod.



If confined strictly to itself, even a nation must, in time, deteriorate.’<sup>45</sup> ‘Ordinary human’ status is thus achievable only by moving towards pedagogical notions of ‘Sameness’, and ultimately, for Stanley, that journey concludes with Anglicization. In these terms, he represents his identity as shaped and ‘finished’, and the way in which he defines himself through narrative offers a model against which the texts of other writers from marginalized origins may be analyzed in respect of public positioning. I now propose to examine how Stanley’s writings shed light on Conrad’s narrative in *The Nigger of the “Narcissus”*, a novella that was published as Conrad began to forge a literary career in his adopted English homeland.

### Joseph Conrad: *The Nigger of the “Narcissus”* (1897)

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Tim Middleton notes that the publication of *The Nigger of the “Narcissus”* was ‘carefully’ aimed at the ‘English literary market.’<sup>46</sup> This cultural positioning indicates the effect on Conrad of a shaping discourse determined by the English Establishment, similar to that which I have examined in relation to Stanley. Conrad’s artistic aims in writing *The Nigger of the “Narcissus”* were: ‘to get [at] the *essence* of life’;<sup>47</sup> and to ‘enshrine [his sea-faring] chums in a *decent edifice*.’<sup>48</sup> These declarations suggest a substantial pedagogical construction. Conrad’s ‘chums’ were part of the British Merchant Service, and, as Allan H. Simmons observes, his close association with the service’s traditions of duty ‘strikes [a] national chord.’<sup>49</sup> However, Simmons also notes an identification with a more particular nationalism: in Conrad’s sea

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 383-384. Stanley’s reference to a woman as ‘possibly the ugliest little mortal that was ever in my camp’ recalls Conrad’s description of the ‘Negroid and ugly’ women whom he saw on his journey through the Congo; see p. 53 above.

<sup>46</sup> Middleton, *Joseph Conrad*, pp. 31-32; Middleton notes that the novella was first published in serial form between August and December 1897 in the *New Review*, ‘an influential pro-imperialist journal [read by] a particular literary circle with an appetite for tales of men and empire.’

<sup>47</sup> Conrad to Helen Watson, 27 January 1897, in *Collected Letters, Volume 1*, ed. Karl and Davies, p. 334; (my emphasis). Conrad also needed to earn a living by writing.

<sup>48</sup> Conrad to Edward Garnett, 25 October 1896, in *ibid.*, p. 309; (my emphasis). Conrad described the ships and the men with whom he served as ‘the ultimate shapers of my character [and] convictions’; see Joseph Conrad, ‘Author’s Note’ to *The Mirror of the Sea* ([1909] London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1950), p. x.

<sup>49</sup> Simmons, *Joseph Conrad*, p. 11.

fiction there is ‘an assertion of identity with various traditions of Englishness.’<sup>50</sup> It is not appropriate to suggest that this represents a cultural shift exactly comparable to that of Stanley’s. The latter’s desire to erase his Welshness effectively to become English presents a complication of the more general idea of Britishness, as that term carries meaning for natives of the U.K.<sup>51</sup> Such specific internal differences of nationality would not necessarily have been apparent to the Polish Conrad. However, the narrative form of *The Nigger of the “Narcissus”*, although more complex than that of *Through the Dark Continent*, may be read as ultimately privileging fixed notions of Englishness over a disruptive ‘Other’.

In *The Nigger of the “Narcissus”*, the eponymous merchant ship sails home from the distant imperial port of Bombay to the English metropolis, London;<sup>52</sup> during the journey, a storm tests the character of the crewmen. Chapter I begins with the bringing together of that crew – the ship’s community. Baker, the English chief mate, orders, “‘bring a good lamp here. I want to muster our crowd’” (*NN*, p. 5). The men have reported to the ship in Bombay harbour amidst the disorientating ‘babble of Eastern language’ of Asiatic traders; ironically, the seamen’s own ‘babble’, their ‘voices humm[ing]’ (p. 5), perpetuates a recursive incoherence until the character of Old Singleton becomes visible. He is a keystone in Conrad’s ‘edifice.’ An omniscient narrator distinguishes him as

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>51</sup> Norman Davies points out that the editors of the *OED*, through the dictionary’s definition of ‘England’, consider ‘both “English” and “British”, like “nation” and “state”’, to be synonyms and that all four terms are coterminous with the ‘southern part of Great Britain’; see Norman Davies, *The Isles: A History* (London: Macmillan, 1999), pp. xxx-xxxi. It is reasonable to conclude that, like the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, the *OED* might be used as an instrument of Empire. See also p. 32 above: as John Pikoulis suggests, there is a point of view that disputes the assertion that ‘Britishness and Welshness are antithetical’; however, Stanley positions himself so that Welshness is antithetical to both Britishness and Englishness.

<sup>52</sup> Conrad had sailed on a vessel named *Narcissus*, from Bombay to Dunkirk, in 1884. The novella’s action in general ‘follows the facts of the historical voyage [...]. The creative method is [...] characteristically personal without being directly autobiographical’; see Ian Watt, *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 91-93. Unlike Stanley, Conrad does not ‘explain’: we are never told the nature of the ship’s cargo, for example. Although we take the *Narcissus* to be English, it is not until page 127 of 136 that this fact is reasonably explicit – as the ship speeds ‘to its nest’ in London. However, a complex industrialized colonial history is hinted at: ‘she was born in the thundering peal of hammers [on] the banks of the Clyde. [The] sombre steam gives birth to things of beauty that float away into the sunshine’; see Joseph Conrad, *The Nigger of the “Narcissus” and Other Stories*, ed. J. H. Stape and Allan H. Simmons (London: Penguin Classics, 2007), p. 41. All further references are to this edition and are given in the text, abbreviated, where necessary, as *NN*.

the oldest able seaman in the ship, sat apart on the deck right under the lamps [...] tattooed like a cannibal chief all over his powerful chest [...]. Between the blue and red patterns his white skin gleamed like satin; his bare back was propped against [the bowsprit] [...] he resembled a learned and savage patriarch, the incarnation of barbarian wisdom serene in the blasphemous turmoil of the world.<sup>53</sup>

(p. 7)

Singleton is metaphorically associated with light, as is Baker. His bare back bodily fuses with the ship, and the semiotic red, white and blue skin colorations, suggesting the Union Jack, centre him in a 'gleaming' Englishness. Such a polished image in Stanley's texts would confirm a completeness to counter the 'babble' of the 'Other', in the same way that he sets the industry of the Liverpool seamen against the 'vacuity' of the Welsh; here, although Singleton is 'learned,' he is simultaneously 'savage', a primitive 'Other'. In contrast to Stanley's shaping, binary 'precepts', this passage is *heteroglossic*; in Bakhtinian terms, Conrad's '*double-voiced*'<sup>54</sup> form brings oppositions together within one sentence and within one character.

Bruce Henricksen has focused positively on the novella's multiple narrative voices.<sup>55</sup>

In the eulogy to Singleton, another narrator's voice is glimpsed within the omniscient perspective:

Singleton [...] who in the last forty-five years had lived (as *we* had calculated from his papers) no more than forty months ashore [...] sat *unmoved* in the clash of voices [...] lost in [a *profound*] absorption [...]. He breathed *regularly*.

(p. 8; my emphasis)

The use of 'we' introduces the communal narrator who will re-emerge later. His choric view indicates that Singleton, suggested by the omniscient narrator to be an 'Other', maintains a civilized *calm, thoughtful order*. The omniscient narrator then introduces 'another new hand', Donkin, by describing his squalor: 'as if he had been cuffed, kicked, rolled in the mud'; and

<sup>53</sup> Singleton's 'wisdom' may be interpreted in the same context as the Liverpool boys' 'practical wisdom' which points Stanley towards the exemplary officers and men working on the ships in the Dock. It represents an understanding of the requirement to 'serve' and 'do'.

<sup>54</sup> Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 324; (original emphasis).

<sup>55</sup> Bruce Henricksen, *Nomadic Voices: Conrad and the Subject of Narrative* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press; 1992), pp. 27-29. Jakob Lothe gives a full account of the novella's different narrative modes in 'Variations of Narrative in *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*', *Conradiana*, Volume 16, No. 3 (1984), 215-224.

characterizing his type: '[t]hey all knew him [...] the man that cannot steer [...] [t]he man who can't do most things and won't do the rest' (pp. 10-11). Although his degradation is juxtaposed with Singleton's integrity, Donkin's request to the crewmen for replacement clothing appeals to their sense of 'Same': responding to the crew's lukewarm welcome, he snarls, "[a]re you men or a lot of 'artless canny-bals?'" (p. 11). To be a 'man', in Donkin's definition, one must be of his society, not Singleton's 'tribe'. Thus, at this early point in the narrative, it is questionable what constitutes Baker's definition of '*our* crowd', his community.

Of the crewmen who are introduced, only Donkin need declare his nationality: "I ham a Henglishman, I ham" (p. 12). The corrupted dialect in which the narrator reports this speech, and the scene in which the crewmen throw him clothes, represents 'Same' and 'Other' in one: 'the white skin of his limbs showed his human kinship through the black fantasy of his rags'; some 'trousers, heavy with tar stains, struck him on the shoulder' (p. 12). Although the trousers are donated generously, their stains mark Donkin and match his own 'blackness'. The narrator has identified Donkin's humanity, but now suggests his animalism: he 'pawed around [and] looked about for more'; Singleton, who does not donate clothes, is 'unheeding' of the crew's 'sentimental pity' (p. 12). Thus, the 'human' Donkin mimics an animal, and the previously centred Singleton distances himself: the idea of duality earlier established linguistically is repeated in characterization. Unlike *Through the Dark Continent*, which is governed by an emphasis of difference, Conrad's narrator permits the hierarchical sites of 'Same' and 'Other' – those of insider and outsider – constantly to rotate.<sup>56</sup>

Authority is asserted by the boatswain's order for the men to muster. The omniscient narrative then moves in a positive direction by foregrounding the cohesive conduct required to

<sup>56</sup> The idea of Donkin being marked by tar stains is an echo of Conrad's description of himself when he became a member of the Merchant Service; the 'concoction' of a Polish nobleman 'cased in British tar'. As I note above (see p. 49), this biographical detail may indicate Conrad's affinity with the 'Other'; in the novella, the Englishman Donkin is also a 'concoction' – part seaman, part animal – as is the negro, Wait. Both are outside the novella's idea of Englishness.

move the *Narcissus* out of its transitional location in the harbour to fulfil its commercial purpose. As the men respond, the contrast between Donkin's dog-like 'yelp[ing]' and Singleton's 'tall and fatherly' (pp. 13-14) appearance clarifies who, for this specific purpose, the narrator considers to be 'Other'.

The command structure is evident on the *Narcissus*, but what the narrator espouses most is a shaping discourse: namely, the willingness to serve and to do one's duty, as valued by Stanley and, in Conrad's narrative, through English seamen such as Singleton. Donkin's negative response to that position – "[i]f that's the way of this ship, we'll `ave to change hall that ..." (p. 13) – represents the performative behaviour of his group. The two positions exemplify what Henricksen describes as 'the historical shift' between two social formations: 'Gemeinschaft (community)' and 'Gesellschaft (society)'.<sup>57</sup> The former is hierarchical and membership is 'obligatory and presumed to be "natural"' – as shaping, indeed, as Stanley's white Anglicized position; the latter is horizontal and 'membership [...] is optional and in a sense "cultural."' <sup>58</sup> 'Old' Singleton unselfishly fulfils his duty to the community: he has faith in a pedagogical form of social structure. Donkin, the modern 'Henglishman', dissents from that 'norm'. However, as Henricksen points out, 'the ideal [...] "gemeinschaft" may never have existed'; rather, it is a 'constructed ideological position from which to critique the present.'<sup>59</sup>

Although the novella is *heteroglossic* in its various narrative voices, the position that Singleton represents is intended to establish an ideological opposition to that of Donkin. The entrance of the Negro, James Wait, presents more difficulty. William W. Bonney notes Wait's 'strange influence'<sup>60</sup> on the 'muster' sequence, even before he arrives:

<sup>57</sup> Henricksen, *Nomadic Voices*, p. 29.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>60</sup> William W. Bonney, *Thorns & Arabesques: Contexts for Conrad's Fiction* (Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), p. 164.

the blackness of the water was streaked with trails of light [...] *similar* to filaments that float rooted to the shore. Rows of other lights stood away in straight lines *as if* drawn up on parade [...] sombre hills arched high their black spines, on which [the] point of a star *resembled* a spark.<sup>61</sup>

(*NN*, p. 14)

According to Bonney, this passage prefigures the liminal qualities 'visible in Wait's face':<sup>62</sup>

[h]is head was away up in the shadows [...]. The whites of his eyes and teeth gleamed distinctly, but the face was indistinguishable [...]. The nigger was calm, cool, towering, superb. [His face was] pathetic and brutal: the tragic, the mysterious, the repulsive mask of a nigger's soul.

(*NN*, pp. 16-17)

Bonney suggests that 'Wait and the night evade the narrator's ability to understand them directly. Consequently, he [alters] his perceptual mode through simile [all founded on] the confusing interpenetration of lights and reflections.'<sup>63</sup> This analysis supports the idea of 'gleaming' definition and 'mysterious' difference: 'Same' and 'Other' are contingent within one identity, as is the case in Singleton. The narrator repeats the racial homogenization seen in Stanley's texts, and in Conrad's Congo diaries, but his mingling of contemplative qualities, 'calm, cool', with clichéd physical attributes, 'towering, superb', adds a complexity to the community; as Wait says, "I belong to the ship" (p. 16). In Stanley's writing it is clear who 'holds' the light and who is condemned to the dark. Wait brings both metaphors to the ship and, in a sense, he 'completes' the crew. However, the narrator also rehearses a racial trope: 'civilized' culture has a sinister, primitive 'Other' which, when engaged, will reveal something defining about itself.<sup>64</sup> As Miriam Marcus observes, the novella 'participates in [such] polarised

<sup>61</sup> Emphasis of the narrator's use of simile is in Bonney.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> This concept is discussed by Edward Said in *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978).



stereotyping as an example of cultural production',<sup>65</sup> and this has implications for its 'English' community and the associated shaping discourse of duty.

The narrative strategy of the muster scene negotiates several degrees of indeterminacy and culminates in the clearly-defined form of Singleton's regulation and industry: '[a] breeze was coming [...] Singleton stepped forward': he commands the ship – "'You ... hold!'" (pp. 22-23). Firmly controlled, the *Narcissus* can depart. With the sails set, 'the ship [becomes] a high and lonely pyramid, gliding, all shining and white' (p. 24). Heading home, it achieves a mythical, 'glossy' and idealized identity,<sup>66</sup> 'like a small planet', a complete entity, dutifully, as Stanley might have put it, 'guided by the courage of high endeavour' (pp. 25-26).

At the point at which the ship is put to work and the men undertake their duties, the communal narrator begins to play a pedagogical role, the purpose of which is illuminated by reference to Conrad's famous Preface to the novella. Conrad suggests that 'art' must 'attempt to find in its forms [and] in the facts of life, what of each is [...] essential'.<sup>67</sup> The omniscient and communal narrators' eulogizing of Singleton are such essentializations; he personifies the enduring 'solidarity [...] which binds together all humanity'<sup>68</sup> – the novella's touchstone. Having organized its community, the novella tests it against the 'Otherness' of Wait, closely associated with the approaching storm.

Wait declares that he is ill and retires to his cabin. He may 'belong to the ship', but, in this liminal position, he is a sinister drain on the crew's resources: 'a black mist emanated from him; a subtle and dismal influence', and the community views him 'like a sick tyrant overawing

<sup>65</sup> Miriam Marcus, 'Writing, Race, and Illness In *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*', *The Conradian*, Volume 23, No. 1 (Spring 1998), 37-50 (p. 42).

<sup>66</sup> To echo the kind of language used by Kiberd; see pp. 92-93 above.

<sup>67</sup> Joseph Conrad, 'Preface to *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*', in Joseph Conrad, *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*: *A Norton Critical Edition*, ed. Robert Kimborough ([1897] New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979), pp. 145-167 (p.145).

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

[...] abject but untrustworthy slaves' (pp. 29-30). Wait's enslaving 'influence', as his voice suggests, is 'hollow and loud' (p. 30), and this notion is connected to one of Conrad's enduring themes: what is now at the centre of a social formation is empty. Marcus notes that the crew's 'ambivalent reaction to his illness is constantly linked to his colour.'<sup>69</sup> In Singleton and Donkin, the characteristics of 'Same' and 'Other' rotate, but those characteristics are, nevertheless, visibly defined. Wait, contrastingly, causes uncertainty: he represents a 'performative' dimension that disrupts the shaping discourse of community. Where Stanley resolves uncertainty, for instance by appropriating African 'Others' to the dominant discourse with which he wishes to be associated, *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* allows 'antagonistic values',<sup>70</sup> to inter-act: '[r]acial prejudice is rarely uttered without a qualifier'.<sup>71</sup> So, as Wait deteriorates, a sick-bay is fitted out: the crew are 'delighted to have him removed from the forecastle', yet they still 'attend[] him' (p. 39). The question of Wait's insider-outsider cultural status is in the recurring process of *debate*.

The storm functions as a crisis point in the debate:

[a] big, foaming sea [made] for the ship [...] it looked as mischievous and discomposing as a madman with an axe [...] the watch below [...] scrambled aft on all fours [...] then, groaning, they rolled in a confused mass.

(pp. 46-47)

The psychopathic personification of the storm visualizes the cyclical forces that operate within communities to 'discompose' civilized order. Stanley's narratives foreground imperial centrality; here, the storm functions to further the centrifugal motion instigated by Wait. The *Narcissus* lurches over and the crewmen watch as their 'home' disintegrates. Denis Murphy suggests why geometric terminology is appropriate for the historical and cultural narratives:

<sup>69</sup> Marcus, 'Writing, Race, and Illness', p. 43.

<sup>70</sup> See p. 18 above.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

[t]he force of the wind and waves [and] the added weight of the water which has entered the ship both conspire to keep her over – but not to turn her over completely. The ship [is at] a point of precarious equilibrium [because of an altered] center of gravity.<sup>72</sup>

Although Murphy does not discuss the play on the name 'Wait' and 'weight', the idea of a destabilizing force 'entering' the ship suggests that the event was foreshadowed by Wait's arrival. The narrative now offers a resolution, a 'lesson', which restores centripetal motion. The ship is '[h]eld down at an angle [...] off the perpendicular'<sup>73</sup> ordinarily figured by the ship's masts. Those masts are dragging the ship downward and the crewmen, urged on by Donkin, want the captain, Allistoun, to secure their safety by cutting the masts, thus righting the ship. However, in terms of the community, an English imperial trading one at that, it would then become 'a free-floating derelict.'<sup>74</sup> Allistoun imposes his 'natural' right to reject the idea; Singleton 'st[icks] to the wheel', and Donkin is silenced by an anonymous 'blow over the mouth' (NN, p. 49). In Bhabha's terms, the community is in an interstice, shifting 'back and forth' between formal order and disruptive anxiety. In such a moment is identity fashioned.

Communal strength is evidenced, paradoxically, in the rescue of Wait from his cabin, where he has been trapped in the debris created by the ship lurching over. The crewmen's moral *obligation* demonstrates solidarity, but, in practice, they work in an irrational way to aid someone who is potentially damaging. During the rescue scene, there is 'an influx', as Jakob Lothe puts it, 'of *we*, *us* and *our*',<sup>75</sup> signifiers that 'iterate' communal values. The use of active verbs, 'we flew [...] we tore [...] we tugged', supports these signifiers by portraying the men coherently 'in a body'; Wait, contrastingly, is stereotypically passive and malevolent, 'like a

<sup>72</sup> Denis Murphy, 'Seamanship in Chapter Three of *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*', in Conrad, *The Nigger of the "Narcissus": A Norton Critical Edition*, pp. 135-141 (pp. 138-139).

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>75</sup> Lothe, 'Variations of Narrative', p. 217; (original emphasis).

bladder full of gas' (NN, pp. 57-58).<sup>76</sup> He is dragged, head first, through a tiny hole in the debris. Guerard reads this symbolically: the crewmen assist 'the rebirth of evil'.<sup>77</sup> This psychological approach identifies a compulsion to 'descend beneath full consciousness to something "lower"',<sup>78</sup> but equally significant is that during the rescue the men believe 'that the ship had made up her mind to turn over at last. But she didn't' (p. 57).

It could be said that the storm functions in the same way as the Bumbireh Island incident in *Through the Dark Continent*: both create transitional moments in which identity is formed. The *Narcissus* unites with the 'body' of men. The crewmen's conduct at Wait's 'rebirth' – '[we] passed him [tenderly] from hand to hand' – suggests a selfless caring; to echo Stanley, they are 'precepts' who shape a particular identity: this is 'the kind of men [...] we [were]' (pp. 58-59). However, in Stanley's conflict at Bumbireh Island there is a clear-cut and oppositional resolution; in Conrad's story, he permits a debate to take place.

The debate that goes on around Wait suggests that his 'rebirth' represents the assimilation of his primitive 'Other' into the community, despite his 'evil'. William Deresiewicz suggests that the 'moral beauty' of the rescue implies a 'community that cuts across [...] cultural difference [and foregrounds] "an essential and generic social bond"'.<sup>79</sup> However, in the aftermath an ideological 'enslavement' to social order is re-established.<sup>80</sup> The captain is still 'holding the ship up'; Donkin still agitates; Singleton still '[hangs] on by the wheel' until Allistoun gives the order to "'[w]ear ship [...]. Lay on your backs and haul!'" (pp.

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<sup>76</sup> In connection with this kind of stereotyping, Marcus refers to Jeremy Hawthorn's *Joseph Conrad: Narrative Technique and Ideological Commitment* (London: Arnold, 1992); Hawthorn discusses contradictory views in Victorian constructions of marginalized groups: 'the negro is seen to [be] lazy yet capable of working "like a nigger"' ; see p. 124.

<sup>77</sup> Guerard, *Conrad the Novelist*, p. 112.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>79</sup> William Deresiewicz, 'Conrad's impasse: *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* and the invention of Marlow', *Conradiana*, Volume 38, No. 3 (Fall 2006), 205-223 (pp. 209-210). Deresiewicz quotes from Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New York: Aldine Publishing, 1969).

<sup>80</sup> Conrad admired the idea of hierarchical order in the English system; he saw a similar system destroyed in his Polish homeland.

59-68).<sup>81</sup> This manoeuvre rights the ship and vindicates Allistoun's decision not to cut the masts. It demonstrates 'essential and generic' qualities, but, contrary to Deresiewicz's argument, stresses compliance with an obligatory hierarchy, the significance of which is signalled by *Narcissus* now 'fleeing for her life [through] clear sunshine (p. 71).'<sup>82</sup> In turn, the ship is 're-born'. Her journey to England resumes as it began, with monolithic and monologic Singleton 'alone by the helm'; his individual responsibility is to do his duty, and thus re-assert the shaping discourse of communal stability: '[h]e steered with care' (p. 71).

As the *Narcissus* makes for home, favourable winds desert her. During this becalmed period, Wait dies and is buried at sea 'under the folds of the Union Jack' (p. 125). The covering with the flag implies his integration into a civilized national identity, an event that optimistically coincides with a breeze which springs up to propel the ship. The 'we' narrator offers an alternative perspective: 'his death, like the death of an old belief, shook the foundations of our society. A common bond was gone; [the] bond of a sentimental lie' (p. 123). After his death, the crewmen 're-other' Wait: he 'didn't back us up, as a shipmate should' (p. 123). Their behaviour at this point illustrates Marcus's view that the text is 'reluctant to face itself with Wait's colour', and that the iteration of 'multiple pronouns' to suggest communal values actually reveals cultural displacement: Wait is the 'catalyst around which [the crewmen] uneasily and unwillingly converge and contradict themselves.'<sup>83</sup> Their 'reluctance' suggests that the 'old belief' of *Gemeinschaft* may have always been the 'sentimental lie'; for the omniscient narrator's monologic aims, Wait's death is strategically damaging: '[d]oubt survived [him]' (p. 123). This centrifugal motion must be regulated: the oscillating narrative must be re-centred by the ship's return to London.

<sup>81</sup> 'Wearing ship' is 'an order to change the ship's *tack* by coming about so that the wind passes astern'; see *NN*, Glossary of Nautical Terms, p. 465; (original emphasis).

<sup>82</sup> The editors note that the word "clear" is 'idiosyncratic, derived from the influence of Polish "*jasne*" or French "*clair*", both translated into English as "clear" but connoting "brightness" or "luminousness", as English does not'; see Notes to *NN*, p. 439.

<sup>83</sup> Marcus, 'Writing, Race, and Illness', p. 41.

Robert Eric Livingston regards the novella's theme as one of 'imminent fragmentation and restored control'.<sup>84</sup> In this sense, its strategy echoes that of Stanley's narratives, in which the threat of 'Otherness' is suppressed by a repetitive imperialist discourse. Thus, once she is in the reaches of the Thames, the *Narcissus* is transfigured as the unifying 'mother of fleets and nations!' (p. 128). The visionary rhetoric of this idea 'sets in motion a totalizing allegory', which, by its generic nature, is ultimately 'constraining':<sup>85</sup> 'a swarm of strange men [...] took possession of her' (p. 130). The voyage ends.

As the crewmen are paid off, the community dies. 'One by one' they arrive at the 'pay-table' where the clerk's impatient, echoing voice reduces their honourable vocation to the lowest common denominator: "[m]oney right? Sign the release. There – there" (p. 133). The hollowness of Wait's voice has followed them home. Singleton is mocked for his inability to write and departs. Donkin, in contrast, 'appear[s] [...] at home': for him, the pay-office symbolizes a competitive *Gesellschaft* in which he and the clerk discuss financial matters, 'dropping h's against one another as if for a wager' (p. 134). This transaction *confirms* that the linguistic corruption by which Donkin first identifies his nationality also signifies a cultural corruption – "I'm goin' ter `ave a job hashore" (p. 134). Donkin invites the other crewmen to join his 'prosperous' faction for a drink; they decline and thus consign themselves to the past.

In the context of the crew's attachment to an English ideal, Seamus Heaney's essay 'Englands of the Mind' (1980) offers a view which is relevant to the novella's closing and, perhaps, definitive perspective. Although Heaney analyzes writers of the later 1950s generation,<sup>86</sup> he identifies a principle which may be applied to *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*:

<sup>84</sup> Robert Eric Livingston, 'Seeing Through Reading: Class, Race and Literary Authority in Joseph Conrad's *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*', *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, Volume 26, No. 2 (Winter 1993), 133-150 (p. 137).

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 138-139.

<sup>86</sup> Seamus Heaney, 'Englands of the Mind', in Seamus Heaney, *Preoccupations: Selected Prose 1968-1978* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), pp. 150-169. Heaney's essay concerns the tendency of Ted Hughes, Geoffrey Hill and Philip Larkin to imply in their poetry 'continuity with another England, there and then' and relate it to the 'here and now'; see p. 150.

Conrad displays a desire 'to preserve indigenous traditions [...] to perceive [a] continuity of communal ways, and a confirmation of an identity which is threatened'.<sup>87</sup> As the crewmen stand near the Tower of London, a traditional symbol of regulation and national identity, they hesitate, in a 'hazy light'; a new narrator emerges: 'I stopped to take my last look at [them]' (NN, pp. 134-5). This appears to be the 'we' narrator, now offering his personal view. The crewmen 'sway' before the Royal Mint, and head for 'the Black Horse, where men [...] dispense [illusions] to the paid off crews of southern-going ships' (p. 135). Faced with these modern symbols of national wealth and commerce, and the falseness of, presumably, the imperial adventure, the crew are defined as 'creatures of another kind' (p. 135). Their ancient 'wisdom' has weathered the sea-storm, but now it is outweighed by the 'blasphemous turmoil'; it is an anachronism in the 'merciless [and] cruel [...] roar of the town' (p. 135).

In response to the modernity, the 'I' narrator fashions *his* 'England of the Mind' – as 'shining' and mythical as the *Narcissus* in full sail:

[t]he dark knot of seamen drifted in the sunshine [...] the stones of the Tower gleam[ed] [...] as if remembering [the] fighting prototypes of these men [and their] victories [...]. And to the right of the dark group the stained front of the Mint, cleansed by the flood of light, stood out for a moment, dazzling and white, like a marble palace in a fairy tale.

(p. 136)

This narrator conceives of 'gleaming' 'narratives of originary and initial subjectivities';<sup>88</sup> the darkening processes symbolized in the pay negotiations, are purified. Significant for what follows in *Heart of Darkness*, we are invited to remember the civilizing spirit of early imperialists who brought home English 'victories'. Assuming that there is a portion of Conrad in the 'I' narrator, it is revealing how much he aligns himself with the allegorical meaning which emerges as the ship returns to London.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

<sup>88</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 2.

The outcome of the narrative debate may be taken as an iteration of 'a conservative grand narrative'.<sup>89</sup> As Stanley's discourse leads his readers towards a specific ideology, so Conrad manipulates perspective through similar techniques. Both men were, after all, employees of companies which espoused imperialist 'grand narratives'. However, Conrad's moral anxiety regarding such monologism, which would also be voiced in *Heart of Darkness*, displaces the celebratory 'English' narrative of *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*. The 'dazzling [...] marble palace' which the narrator imagines warns of the dangers of 'premature self-closure,' since few would rely on something constructed in the 'light' of a 'fairy tale.'

Stanley and Conrad use their narratives in the pursuit of cultural approval. However, Tim Middleton suggests that the idealizing nationalist traits in *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* obscure a double purpose: its narrative 'perhaps tells us more about Conrad's desire to receive critical approbation than it does about his politics.'<sup>90</sup> The 'truth' of the crew's assimilative attitude to Wait is that it offers no more meaning than to iterate the community's *own* worth and to insist on 'obligatory' membership. Their pity for Wait represents a self-satisfying 'sentimental' belief in community, exercised 'against their will',<sup>91</sup> because of his colour. Thus, they are enslaved to a supposedly 'civilized' version of English 'Sameness', which is compromised in the context of the pay-off in London. The novella's strategy, then, is not pedagogically shaping, but, through its 'mimicry' of a 'love of the [S]ame',<sup>92</sup> performatively testing: this is hinted at *before* the 'pay-off' – in fact, immediately the *Narcissus* enters the Thames. The ship has become a symbol of English 'community', but on her return home the

<sup>89</sup> Henricksen, *Nomadic Voices*, p. 26.

<sup>90</sup> Tim Middleton, 'From Menace to Mimicry: Conrad and Late-Victorian Masculinity', in *Imperial Desire: Dissident Sexualities and Colonial Literature*, ed. Philip Holden and Richard J. Ruppel (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), pp. 135-151 (p. 145). Middleton's essay concerns itself with issues of male identity; here, I am applying its general principle of a double purpose of mimicry and menace.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147. As Marcus says, the crew 'unwillingly' converge around Wait.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136. Middleton points out that 'self-absorption is [...] central to narcissism and Conrad's novel[la] showed how narcissism disrupted a culture's apparently clear-cut social hierarchies'; see Middleton, *Joseph Conrad*, p. 34.



omniscient narrator describes her as 'freighted with dross and with jewels' (*NN*, p. 128). At the point at which he establishes a 'totalizing [national] allegory', he repeats the kind of *double-voiced discourse* deployed earlier in respect of ideology and character, and this undermines the 'careful' public positioning of the novella.

Both Stanley and Conrad are keen to strengthen their uncertain positions in the English metropolis. In its double-voicedness, *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* represents Conrad's variable perspective – that of the exiled Pole. Ideas of duty, 'race and belonging', and cultural diversity inherited from his father exist on board the English trading ship. However, the nation to which that ship returns seems unwelcoming of anything but self-serving conduct, one of the anxieties which had developed regarding the 'new imperialist' culture at the *fin-de-siècle*. The subtle double-voicedness that exists in *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* points towards Marlow's more prevalent double narrative in *Heart of Darkness*, and, given Conrad's marginalized and migratory Polish background, encourages consideration in the context of the African-American literary criticism of Henry Louis Gates Jr. His analysis of the vernacular tradition of 'Signifying' describes voices that speak of the dominant discourse, 'but almost always [...] with a distinct and resonant accent'.<sup>93</sup> This accent is that of the 'Other', understood by those in tune with the subaltern viewpoint. It is possible to take from Conrad's story a narrative that celebrates a 'continuist' form of English identity, and one that expresses the feelings of recursive displacement in someone who finds little of the honourable seaman's code, or 'wisdom', in contemporary England.<sup>94</sup> Gates's criticism will be pertinent not only to

<sup>93</sup> Henry Louis Gates Jr., *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* ([1988] New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. xxiii. The *OED* defines the word 'signify' in terms of African-American slang: 'to make insulting remarks or insinuations'. This definition is clarified by reference to *Down Beat* 7 (March 1968), 38/3 as 'making a series of pointed but oblique remarks apparently addressed to no one in particular, but unmistakable in intention in [...] a close-knit circle.' See also p. 14 above in respect of Conrad's comments about his 'Englishness': 'my point of view is English, from which the conclusion should not be drawn that I have become an Englishman [...]. *Homo duplex* has in my case more than one meaning.'

<sup>94</sup> The story 'Amy Foster', written four years after *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*, concerns similar issues; see pp. 41-42 above.

*Heart of Darkness*, but also to the texts of Lewis and other writers that are examined in this thesis.

In contrast to the ideas expressed in Conrad's complex narrative, Stanley represents identity as straightforward and resolved. In *Through the Dark Continent*, he integrates accounts of violent oppression of African 'Others', and a subtle appropriation of their purportedly co-operative voices, within the imperial ideal of the 'betterment of mankind'. As Tim Jeal has noted, imperialists' narratives did not usually account for all of their colonizing methods in this manner. Thus, Stanley's comprehensive approach may be seen as an over-compensation for feelings that he is not quite part of the dominant civilizing discourse – the feelings of the Welsh-British 'outcast' who seeks 'promotion to distinction'.

The significance of Stanley's iterative technique, considering his Welsh origin, is that its very repetition emphasizes his 'Otherness'. One might suggest that Conrad's creation of an 'edifice' for his English shipmates is similarly iterative, yet he applies checks and balances that acknowledge his own displacements. In Conrad's experience, public and national positions of certainty are always 'riven with contingency', and the comparison of his narrative strategy with Stanley's indicates the way in which factual or seemingly celebratory texts may actually distort what they appear to be.

I now propose to examine issues of cultural displacement in stories written by Alun Lewis and Lily Tobias. They, like Stanley, are Welsh 'Others' in positions of uncertainty as a consequence of forceful shaping discourses, and in the selected stories there is recognition of both iterative and contingent narratives.

## Alun Lewis: 'Almost a Gentleman' (1942)

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As Stephen Knight has observed, Alun Lewis's public school and university education set him on a 'trajectory' away from his Welsh origin 'towards colonial respectability';<sup>95</sup> this suggests a shaping of his identity by cultural discourses of 'Sameness' akin to those which influenced Stanley and Conrad. Lewis's enlistment in the Army in 1940 and subsequent posting to an Officer Cadet Training Unit<sup>96</sup> furthered his outward movement. The story 'Almost a Gentleman' concerns trainees in just such a Unit: it emphasises the importance of 'developing the officer mentality' (CS, p. 43), as Lewis's narrator puts it. The organizing discourse of Englishness is a key influence on that development, and during the story the narrator demonstrates that he has 'carefully' constructed a 'Sameness' which maintains his place in an English cadet group. In this respect, the story has the potential to display a set of concerns regarding social positioning which are shared with those contained in Stanley's and Conrad's narratives.

'Almost a Gentleman' has an evident biographical basis that relates to Lewis's 'trajectory'. However, as John Pikoulis notes, Lewis's posting to the O.C.T.U. was

the first time [he] had been separated from "the common soldier" – the Welsh soldier, too, for he was the only Welshman on the course – and his reaction was characteristic. He thought his lot were decent but with the wrong ideas in their heads. The atmosphere filled him with unease.<sup>97</sup>

The story begins with the narrator's description of the visit of 'his lot' to a music-hall in celebration of their passing out: 'we were good friends' (p. 43), he comments. A 'patter merchant[]' performs an act called 'Almost a Gentleman'<sup>98</sup> and this makes one of the group, David, whisper to the narrator the comment, "poor old Burton", a reference to a Jewish cadet

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<sup>95</sup> Knight, *A Hundred Years of Fiction*, p. 125.

<sup>96</sup> Lewis began his training in July 1941.

<sup>97</sup> Pikoulis, *A Life*, p. 108.

<sup>98</sup> In the story, the act is performed by Billy Bennett. He was, in real life, William Bennett (1887-1942), a comedian and 'cod-monologist' in the inter-war years who was billed as 'almost a gentleman'.

who has been expelled; the narrator laughs, but then he feels 'ashamed' (p. 43). This suggests an 'uneasy' affinity with Burton, the Jewish 'Other', and indicates the psychologically-divided nature of the insider-outsider. The emotion of shame prompts him to recall Burton's story.

David's willingness to 'whisper' to the narrator the joke about Burton indicates that the narrator appears to have been assimilated to the 'we' position. In contrast, Burton's attempts at assimilation are initially regarded with ambivalence: he is seen to have 'hitched himself onto our crowd', but nevertheless 'we liked him quite a lot' (p. 44). This group position – they see Burton as an 'Other', yet still include him – recalls attitudes experienced by Stanley: his lack of 'credentials' to be regarded as 'one of us' were evident, but he eventually became part of the Establishment. Conrad, in respect of the crewmen of the *Narcissus*, dramatizes a similar situation: they see the illness of Wait – an 'Other' – as a burden, but they rescue him from danger. As I have suggested, the crewmen display this inclusive attitude because they want to validate their own morality: to show 'the kind of men' they were.<sup>99</sup> Lewis's narrator suggests that self-gratification also motivates the cadets; Burton 'evidently considered us worth supporting' (p. 44).

In association with the theme of social inclusion, Kathleen Devine has suggested some 'immediately obvious'<sup>100</sup> similarities between the story and Siegfried Sassoon's account of G. Vivian-Simpson, a character in his autobiographical novel set during the First World War, *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man* (1928). Vivian-Simpson has 'social pretensions'<sup>101</sup> to be an officer; previously an 'obscure bank clerk in Liverpool', he is soon found to be 'unreliable and a complete cad.'<sup>102</sup> However, the class-positioning in Sassoon's narrative devalues Vivian-

<sup>99</sup> See p. 105 above.

<sup>100</sup> Kathleen Devine, 'Alun Lewis's "Almost a Gentleman"', *The Anglo-Welsh Review*, No. 67 (1980), 79-84 (p. 79).

<sup>101</sup> Siegfried Sassoon, *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man* ([1928] London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1954), p. 266.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

Simpson, who, the story suggests, is at fault for attempting to infiltrate the officers' group.<sup>103</sup>

Lewis's narrator does not wholly follow this superior class-attitude; moreover, Burton is Jewish, whereas Vivian-Simpson is English.<sup>104</sup> Although Devine accepts that racial difference influences Lewis's narrator, she concerns herself more with Burton's lack of "integrity": he does not 'assert his [true] value', and thus Lewis cannot sympathize with his character.<sup>105</sup> This analysis does not pay enough regard to the narrator's anxious narrative positioning regarding inclusion and his complex expression of shame. It is on those aspects of the story that I propose to concentrate, relative to Burton's 'Otherness'.

In introducing Burton, the narrator's register suggests the shaping discourse of the English officer:

[h]e was a beefy six-footer with black curly hair, [and a] hooked nose [...] he had an active critical faculty and a roving surface intelligence. He resented the inaugural homilies we received about developing the officer mentality, [and] made facetious remarks *sotto voce* on the theme of democracy.

(p. 43)

This passage is deterministic in the sense that it stereotypes the 'hooked nose[d]' Burton. Its display of vocabulary – 'inaugural homilies', for example – also guides our view of the narrator as one of the officer-class, as does his admonishment of Burton's facetiousness. However, his recollection of a group discussion 'about imperialism' hints that the narrator also has an outsider's objectivity: 'I was suggesting that a century ago Britain was bored with her

<sup>103</sup> Devine, "Almost a Gentleman", p. 80.

<sup>104</sup> The connection between Lewis's and Sassoon's stories points towards a biographical link. The half-Jewish Sassoon was 'an uncertain Englishman'; see Max Egremont, *Siegfried Sassoon: A Biography* (London: Picador, 2005), p. x. Sassoon's family on his father's side were wealthy Jewish traders who had been established in London since 1858. His grandfather's fortune had gradually been diluted through his descendants' avoidance of business in favour of 'becom[ing] aristocratic Englishmen'; (*ibid.*, p. 3). His mother's side were English land-owning farmers from Cheshire. When his father 'abandon[ed]' the family, his mother, '[in] revenge [...] brought [her son] up almost as if the Sassoons did not exist [and] to be as English as her Cheshire ancestors'; (*ibid.*, pp. 9-10). Like Lewis, Sassoon first enlisted in the Army (in 1914) in the ranks, seemingly in denial of the direction that his 'career' had taken him; only later, feeling that the war was slipping past him, did he accept a commission in the Royal Welch Fusiliers, a regiment that contained a mixture of English and Welsh soldiers. Egremont notes that the narrator of *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man*, George Sherston, is 'Sassoon with almost all the unusual, [perhaps] the most interesting, bits left out [...] without [amongst other things] the Jewishness'; (*ibid.*, p. 334). One might say that Lewis's narrator also seeks to 'leave out' his most interesting aspects.

<sup>105</sup> Devine, "Almost a Gentleman", p. 84.

colonies and only the Nonconformists [at] the Colonial Office felt any interest in the Empire [because] they wanted to spread the Christian gospel to the natives' (p. 43). The narrator appears to have once been a 'native', and so detects in Burton an awkwardness in contributing to the discussion. He relates Burton's iterations of conformity, which, as in Stanley's case, appear to over-compensate for a perceived deficiency in his own identity: "I think the British are awfully decent. Still, don't let's talk about it. It's unEnglish" (pp. 43-44). Britishness is, unspokenly, Englishness. The narrator identifies Burton's 'real meaning' before another 'chap' remarks, "[w]e've been jolly good to the Jews, too" (p. 44). This reveals to the group that Burton is racially 'Other', as, indeed, Lewis was considered by his superiors to be 'alien'.<sup>106</sup>

The narrator and Burton realize that a centring in Englishness is vital to their well-being. Both operate a 'double-voiced' strategy, but only the narrator negotiates it successfully, in public, that is. He expresses the group perspective regarding Burton in definitive anti-Semitic terms: he re-iterates, '[o]f course, the hooked nose'; and other 'obvious' characteristics are 'laziness' and 'greed' (p. 44). Such positioning displays similarities with the polarising traits of the omniscient narrator in *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*. However, as in Conrad's novella, racial prejudice is usually qualified, and the narrator makes his readers aware that he dissents from the 'normal' view in his annoyance at the 'arrogant Britisher type[s]' (p. 44)<sup>107</sup> who taunt Burton about his uncivilized appetite for food.

The narrator is equally annoyed at Burton's endurance of the insults, and this supports Devine's idea that Burton lacks 'integrity'. However, in the cycle of contingent viewpoints, the narrator classifies Burton's behaviour in racist terms – he was 'as patient as Shylock on the Rialto' (p. 44). The specific 'anti-Semitic' discourse, as Carrie Anne Jadud has suggested, is

<sup>106</sup> Pikoulis, *A Life*, p. 117.

<sup>107</sup> Those cadets with the 'public school ways and B.B.C. accents', as the narrator puts it; see CS, p. 44.

‘uncomfortable’.<sup>108</sup> This feeling stems from the narrator’s personal selection of an offensive analogy, rather than his mere echoing of a public view. In this sense, his discourse bears comparison with Stanley’s in that the ‘Other’ is portrayed as somehow deficient, as well as that of *The Nigger of the “Narcissus”* in that the crewmen’s reaction to Wait is conditioned by his colour. The pre-dominant impression made on the reader is that the narrator’s reaction to Burton is shaped by an attitude to difference that must conform to that of the social group in which he finds himself: in effect, he iterates a public view in the same manner as Stanley.

Despite his conformity, the narrator is himself occupying an ‘uncomfortable’ position: he, too, is concealing his difference by ‘acting’ the role of an officer-class cadet. However, this goes unnoticed by the other cadets. Burton’s ‘act’, however, is fatally flawed: his language is reduced to ‘catchphrases’; “[w]hat we want is to get blitz-conscious”, he says (p. 45). This ‘mimicry’ represents a threat: the Company Commander assesses Burton’s performance and warns him that he is likely to fail the course. The cadets’ inclusive attitude then disappears: they themselves have to fit in with those who control their futures.

The cadets ‘other’ Burton, as, after his death, James Wait was ‘othered’; Wait was perceived as a symbol of bad luck and as having failed as a ‘shipmate’. In Conrad’s story, the crewmen’s change of attitude coincides with an anxious period of becalming. Once they disengage themselves from Wait, they can complete their voyage. So it is with the cadets’ attitude to Burton’s Jewishness: at the point of becoming officers, they dissociate themselves from him. In both stories, the dominant group restores ‘Sameness’ to their respective ‘communities’.

Burton does fail the course: two final tests which the cadets undertake are not even assessed. What ‘perplexes’ the narrator is ‘how they found him out. He was so plausible in public’ (p. 46). ‘They’ pre-define English qualities: assimilation to their pedagogical racial

<sup>108</sup> Carrie Anne Jadud, ‘The Fragile Universe of Self: The Other and Identity in the Writing of Alun Lewis’ (PhD thesis: Bangor, School of English, University of Wales, 2006), p. 79. To modern readers, the race prejudice expressed in *The Nigger of the “Narcissus”* is also ‘uncomfortable’.

group is facilitated only with approved cultural ‘credentials’, as Stanley and Conrad had found.<sup>109</sup> In Lewis’s story, to be *almost* a gentleman signifies that one is not quite English, not quite ‘Same’. This is what worries the narrator most. To the end, he maintains his narrative double-voicedness: his words of farewell to Burton, “‘it’s rotten luck’”, iterates the typical cadet’s language, but his inner thoughts – ‘they’d made a good soldier into a bad one in five minutes; still, that was their pigeon’ (p. 46) – distances him from ‘their’ homogenizing ideology. This detachment is emphasised in his final thought: ‘[b]ut how did they know [Burton] had the soul of an underdog? this mute inglorious Dreyfus?’ (p. 46).

As Devine notes, the words ‘mute inglorious’ echo lines from Thomas Gray’s ‘Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard’ (1751):

Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,  
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.<sup>110</sup>

Gray’s canonical English poem suggests that people of uncertain origins have a worth, unseen to those in power. The narrator’s utilization of a telling quotation from the poem is an instance of ‘repetition, with a signal difference’,<sup>111</sup> as Henry Louis Gates Jr. puts it. In a comparable manner to that which I suggest above regarding Conrad’s ‘English’ double-voicedness, Lewis’s narrator ‘signifies’ to his readers his innate understanding of a minority cultural position and links that theme to Dreyfus, the Jewish officer in the French Army, who in 1894 was famously convicted of treason on evidence manufactured by anti-Semites. In terms of his ‘shame’ at laughing at Burton’s attempted assimilation, the connection is as relevant to the narrator as it is to Burton.

<sup>109</sup> Stanley was specifically criticized for not displaying the ‘credentials’ of a gentleman; in Conrad’s case, his ‘relationship to [England] was a complex one [...] he retained a keen sense of being regarded as an outsider’; see Middleton, *Joseph Conrad*, p. 18.

<sup>110</sup> Thomas Gray, ‘Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard’, in *The Oxford Book of English Verse*, ed. Christopher Ricks, pp. 278-282 (p. 279, ll. 59-60).

<sup>111</sup> Gates., *The Signifying Monkey*, p. 51.



The Jewish cadet is subject to two antagonistic cultural forces: he feels the weight of the 'history of his people',<sup>112</sup> and, simultaneously, a compulsion to conform to the 'civilizing' discourses of Englishness. The narrator has in him the same determination to conform,<sup>113</sup> but it is his recursive, 'uncomfortable' questioning which is consciously placed at the end of the story. It is not merely Burton's 'underdog' status and lack of integrity which finally concern him. Also an underdog, he must be 'mute' about his history, for he too may yet be found out. In his shame, this insider-outsider recognizes the doubleness of his own seemingly polished, 'civilized' identity. His iteration of a shaping English discourse ultimately exposes *his* lack of individual integrity, humanity and consequent 'unease' in abandoning someone who is culturally a kindred spirit. The narrative strategy of the story points to its author's marginalized Welsh origins as much as Stanley's repetitive techniques point to his. In both cases a contingent narrative compromises the fashioning of a 'totalizing' identity: in Lewis's text, this appears to be a deliberate strategy; in Stanley's it is unwitting.

'Almost a Gentleman' indicates Lewis's awareness, at a particular moment of change in his life, of the conflicting cultural tensions experienced by marginalized peoples. As M. Wynn Thomas has commented, Lewis found 'dominant' and 'definitive' nationalisms 'alien' to his nature.<sup>114</sup> However, he was also faced with difficulties caused by his colonial 'trajectory', in the sense that he could not re-assimilate himself wholly to his own Welsh community. The comparison of the story's narrative strategy with those of Stanley and Conrad sheds light on the nature of the manoeuvrings and manipulations of perspective that all three writers found necessary in their construction of a public identity. What emerges is particularly informative in respect of the tensions present in a Welsh cultural context, and I now propose to extend the

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<sup>112</sup> Devine. "'Almost a Gentleman'", p. 83.

<sup>113</sup> The narrator's tendency to conform to the Establishment position is suggested by his capacity to quote from Gray's canonical poem.

<sup>114</sup> See p. 32 above.

comparisons to the narrative of 'Glasshouses' by Lily Tobias, through her Welsh-Jewish perspective on assimilation and Anglicization.

Tobias's positioning is relevant to the question of whether the racially-motivated 'othering' in the texts by Stanley and Conrad is legitimately comparable to the 'othering' of the Welsh. As a Jewish writer, she takes account of the 'history of [her] people' in that they have been subject to an extreme shaping discourse of discrimination. In this respect, her stories reflect her position as an important 'native informant'<sup>115</sup> with a right to speak on issues of assimilation in both Jewish and Welsh cultural contexts.

### Lily Tobias: 'Glasshouses' (1921)

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The story 'Glasshouses' offers intriguing parallels with 'Almost a Gentleman', although Tobias deploys a polemical style which is distinct from Lewis's. Jasmine Donahaye points out that Tobias represents the confused identities which result from Anglicization and the 'contrary draw of Zionism, which provides an opportunity for pride rather than *shame* in cultural distinctiveness',<sup>116</sup> and this idea illuminates the dilemmas which face Burton and Lewis's narrator.

The narrative of 'Glasshouses' is focalized through Sheba Newman,<sup>117</sup> a Welsh-born Jew who dutifully observes the Hebrew traditions espoused by her parents, but sees no meaning in their ceremonies. Sheba is a shop assistant: Ben Zacuttu, a poverty-stricken immigrant Jewish glazier arrives to buy glass, but without enough money for the one-and-eightpence worth which he needs. The exchange between Sheba and Zacuttu begins

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<sup>115</sup> 'Native informant' is an ethnological term that will be contextualized in Chapter 3 in relation to the subaltern voice; see Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward A History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 4. I do not use this term in relation to the 'native voices' in *Through the Dark Continent* since they speak only for Stanley's point of view.

<sup>116</sup> Donahaye, "'A dislocation'", pp. 155-156; (my emphasis). See note 5 to p. 84 above for Tobias's biographical background.

<sup>117</sup> Tobias's texts offer opportunities for examinations of gender-based issues, although that is not the purpose of this chapter.

stereotypically by ‘othering’ Zacuttu through his grimy appearance and poor command of English:

“That’ll be one-and-eightpence,” [Sheba] said, watching with distaste his dirty fingers strap the glass into his dirtier crate.

He silently handed her a shilling and a sixpenny-piece.

“I said one-and-eight,” she repeated haughtily. Not that Sheba was built that way [...]. Already Ben’s dejected look had pierced her defences.

“De man he tawld me eight’n’pence,” he argued feebly.<sup>118</sup>

Sheba, motivated by pity, makes up the shortfall. The money is paid to the cashier, Miss Howells, and Sheba tells her that she is contributing the twopence required to complete the transaction. Her response, “‘for that greasy old Jew?’”, causes Sheba to blush, and Miss Howells’s half-apology, “‘I forgot you were one – no, I don’t mean that exactly [...] there’s such a difference, somehow’” (p. 31), is racially discriminating. Zacuttu is ‘Other’; Sheba is not ‘exactly’ a Jew, but, like Burton, she is classified through degrees of ‘difference’; Miss Howells, a Welsh native, considers herself to be normal. As Donahaye observes, ‘Miss Howells represents the anglicized Welsh anti-Semite’;<sup>119</sup> however, she is prepared to associate with some Jews. After Zacuttu leaves, she tells Sheba she is “‘going out [with] a Jew boy [...] one of the nice ones!’” (p. 31).

The story’s opening exchanges display a provisional toleration of difference similar to that exercised with regard to Wait and Burton in, respectively, Conrad’s and Lewis’s texts. The criteria of acceptance are defined through dialogue between social strata: the characters are part of a *Gesellschaft* that serves only the specific interests of its members. In this context, Tobias directly links Jewishness and Welshness, whereas in ‘Almost a Gentleman’ the connection is implied by Lewis’s background. The link is evidenced when Zacuttu’s son arrives at the shop with a note requesting more glass. The glass-cutter cannot ‘decipher the markings’ and thinks them to be written in Hebrew. Sheba offers assistance: “‘Hebrew? [...]. Nonsense – more like

<sup>118</sup> Lily Tobias, *The Nationalists and Other Goluth Stories*, p. 29. All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

<sup>119</sup> Jasmine Donahaye, ‘Jewish Writing in Wales’ (PhD thesis, University of Wales, Swansea, 2004), p. 185.

Welsh””; the glass-cutter responds, “Double-Dutch, you mean” (p. 32). At first, Sheba laughs at the remark, much as Lewis’s narrator enjoys the joke about Burton. However, as in ‘Almost a Gentleman’, Sheba’s participation in this social ‘norm’ begins to produce a more complex cultural narrative:

[s]he offered to prove by office documents that far more un-English epistles had been written by customers of native stock. “This [letter] for instance,” she said [...].

“Deer Syr, – Hav you got any wast Glass bi you somewar would be sutabl for grenhouses I am wantin to do som repairs [...] [please] send a man out to see the meshurments ...

“Christmas H. Jones,  
“Market Gardener.”

(p. 32)

Miss Howells confirms, from a ‘native’ perspective, a principle of ‘othering’ anything ‘un-English’: “Christmas H. Jones [...] ? He’s my uncle [...] An awful old josser. Daresay he writes Welsh well enough” (p. 33). Sheba asks Miss Howells if she speaks Welsh to her uncle; her response renders Jones alien: “[d]on’t know a word of it [...] I very seldom see the old stick – except when I go [to his orchard] for fruit [...] but we don’t get much out of him, mean thing!” (p. 33). As Sheba has partly disengaged herself from her Jewishness, yet remains drawn to it through her pity for Zacuttu, so Miss Howells is dislocated from Welshness, but is still tenuously related to it. However, both women participate in an iterative discourse that is formed by a pressure to ‘mimic English attitudes.’<sup>120</sup> As Stanley denigrates Welsh culture because of its ‘ignorance’ and ‘thriftiness’, so Zacuttu’s ‘dirtiness’ and poor command of English, and Jones’s ‘illiteracy’ and ‘meanness’, are projected, respectively, onto Jewish and Welsh ethnic cultures to render them uncivilized. Sheba prohibits any ideas of assimilation to Welsh culture, since this would represent a double marginalization. Her explanatory statement, “Hebrew [...] like Welsh”, yokes the two cultures together as “Nonsense”.

<sup>120</sup> Donahaye, “A dislocation”, p. 156.

When Sheba attends the synagogue, she feels attracted by an ‘ancient [and] immutable’ discourse: ‘the reiterated praise of God and appeals for restoring Zion’; but the very fixedness of that discourse renders it ‘remote from reality’ (pp. 36-37).<sup>121</sup> Sheba hovers between allegiances to tradition, and forward-thinking assimilation to the local community. Like the narrator in ‘Almost a Gentleman’, she imagines that the assimilated position negotiates the tensions of cultural difference most effectively.

At the synagogue, Sheba has the opportunity to approach Mrs Knacker, head of the local Benevolent Society, with a request to help Zacuttu. Sheba’s mother studies Mrs Knacker’s ‘fashions’, and in this respect Mrs Knacker is a ‘model well worthy [of] imitation’ (p. 38). However, this matriarch regards herself as a ‘precept’ in more significant cultural terms. Sheba visits Mrs Knacker at her home to pursue her charitable request. In her view, the house represents an alternative to the ‘unreal’ synagogue: ‘[t]he furniture [had] the general air of saying “All’s solid and genuine”’ (p. 39).

The Society has helped the Zacuttus previously, and Mrs Knacker’s opinion on this issue reinforces Sheba’s thoughts about the superseding of original ties with present-day demands to negotiate one’s position. The Zacuttus are

“Roumanian refugee[s] [in] a shocking state [...]. Driven out by a pogrom or riot [...]. We have to do our duty by them, it’s true; [but] Christian people here don’t like it, and we often hear disagreeable things.”<sup>122</sup>

(p. 40)

In Mrs Knacker’s terms, ‘we’ are the element of the Jewish *Gesellschaft* which has made efforts “‘to become respectable”’ (p. 42): her Anglicized language, unlike Zacuttu’s and Jones’s, does not betray her origins. This is also true of Mrs Knacker’s family: one of her sons

<sup>121</sup> Sheba’s parents faithfully attend the synagogue, and support the Zionist movement which seeks to establish a separate Jewish state in Palestine.

<sup>122</sup> In 2009, Romanian migrants in Belfast were subject to similar racist persecution.

briefly enters while she is out of the room: he wears ‘a fashionable hat’, and speaks with an exaggerated middle-class register:

“[h]ow d’ye do, Miss Newman? [...]. I say! I’m sorry about those beggars [...]. Mother’s bark is worse than her bite. Shouldn’t be surprised if she sends [them] a thumping gift [...]. Anyway, I’ll speak to her later on, if you like –”

(p. 41)

The son’s personal characteristics support the idea that Mrs Knacker leads a trend towards profitable assimilation: ‘the securing of well-dowered, irreproachably Anglicised mates for several Knacker sons proved the success of the lady’s methods’ (p. 42). These ‘methods’ indicate an iterative re-shaping of the family identity through cultural transactions, symbolized by the purchase of contemporary clothes and home furnishings. As Donahaye observes, where ‘Welshness and Jewishness are presented [...] as essentialist ethnicities’, Englishness is ‘a social identity [...] tenuously available for hire’ in a ‘*civic*’<sup>123</sup> capacity. Mrs Knacker is a paradigm for aspiring Jews; for her, assimilation means respectability, and respectability means Anglicization.

Sheba leaves Mrs Knacker’s home without securing the charitable donation, but through the son’s intervention, the “thumping gift” is duly delivered. However, the issue of ‘respectability’ nags at Sheba and she devises a plan by which Zacuttu can obtain employment, thus elevating his social standing from a position of dependency. This is to be achieved by requesting Christmas Jones to engage Zacuttu to repair his glasshouses. She discusses the plan with ‘the young Knacker’ who asks if she is habitually so generous. Her reply confirms her interstitiality, but also acknowledges the effect of a shaping discourse that is potentially more ‘immutable’ than that of Zionism:

<sup>123</sup> Donahaye, ‘Jewish Writing in Wales’, p. 173 (original emphasis). Ben Zucuttu’s cultural and economic positions determine his exclusion from the ‘transactional’ civic realm, as denoted by his failure to make the right payment for the glass that he needs to carry out his trade.

“I’ve never bothered, I’m afraid [...]. I hated having anything to do with that kind of Jew [...]. I don’t know whether you feel quite as I do. You see, I’m a sort of ‘twixt and ‘tween, my father being partly foreign – if you’re all English you can’t mind quite so much.”

(p. 44)

Sheba reveals a complicity with the ‘dominant [English] class’ since it appears to be ‘natural and normal’.<sup>124</sup> Despite being aware of the ‘history of [her] people’ – the ‘pogroms’, for instance – she begins to reject her connections to those origins in favour of improved social positioning. However, after her encounter with Jones, Sheba wavers from this position. She visits him at his home, Ty Sion Gardens, where she receives the following welcome:

“[m]erch anwyl, [*sic*] [...] proud I am to meet you, for sure. Why, I do love the Jews, indeed I do. You are the people of the Book, and the Lord will show His wonders through you yet. You have got a big job in front of you, my gell [...]. The return to Zion”.

(p. 46)

Jones’s evangelism shakes Sheba’s confidence in Anglicization. It re-emphasises her liminality, and the idea that ‘Welsh and Jewish social tensions [are] interrelated and contiguous’.<sup>125</sup>

she had heard something of a Zionist society to which only the unfashionable belonged. But [she] had never doubted that [the Knackers] stood for the right attitude [...]. To emulate [the] Goyim as much as possible, while retaining some ineradicable old Hebrew customs that [...] should not show too marked a line of cleavage [...]. But here was a Goy who desired the cleavage.

(p. 46)

In the texts by Stanley, Conrad, and Lewis, signs of ‘Otherness’, or marks of ‘cleavage’, are identifiers, respectively, of degeneracy, evil, and inefficiency. Stanley suggests that to be considered as part of ‘ordinary humanity’ one must subscribe to a central English discourse – the idea of becoming ‘respectable’, in pedagogical terms. Conrad’s and Lewis’s narratives convey the idea that there is a shamefulness in marginalized peoples complying with that discourse, but pragmatism is likely to prevail. Only Tobias, in her polemical style, argues

<sup>124</sup> Bohata, *Postcolonialism Revisited*, p. 20.

<sup>125</sup> Donahaye, ‘Jewish Writing in Wales’, p. 186.

against assimilation: she suggests that humanitarian qualities are most evident in marginalized, ‘un-English’ peoples, such as Jones. Unsupported by positive action, Jones’s position could be dismissed as unrealistic. Instead, Jones agrees to employ Zacuttu: he recognizes ‘Zacuttu’s misfortunes, particularly those suffered as a persecuted Jew’ (p. 47).

The fact that Jones needs someone to repair his glasshouses is a less-than-subtle suggestion that the story’s theme concerns the fragility of marginalized national identities. It also admonishes those advocates of assimilation not to ‘throw stones’ at others, since their own positions are equally fragile. Jones’s impassioned speech to Sheba and the practical manner in which he assists Zacuttu reveals what Donahaye has recently identified to be the positiveness of his ‘millenarian beliefs’.<sup>126</sup> The Welsh and Jewish peoples are linked through the cultural fragility of the two men. Jones believes that this situation will be rectified by a spiritual and national renewal, and such a regenerative process brings to the fore the cultural distinctiveness which is suppressed by the narrator of Lewis’s story.

The events at Ty Sion present Sheba with three options: to sympathize with the Zionist ideal of national autonomy; to maintain her contingent ‘twixt and ‘tween’ situation; or to reposition herself with the Anglicized Knacker family, particularly the son.<sup>127</sup> We now know him as ‘Simmy’, and Sheba is beginning a relationship with him. Yet, the ideal of a single identity appeals to her: “‘since I’ve asked about the Zionists [...] there seems to be more sense [in] keeping separate’”, she says; the Knacker family takes a more practical view, one which Stanley would have understood. Simmy confirms their centripetal movement: “‘as we live with

<sup>126</sup> Jasmine Donahaye, ‘By Whom Shall She Arise? For She is Small’, in *The Jew in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture: Between the East End and East Africa*, ed. Eitan Bar-Yosef and Nadia Valman (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 161-182 (pp. 176-177).

<sup>127</sup> Sheba’s dilemma illustrates what Grahame Davies identifies as one of Tobias’s main themes: ‘the tension between assimilation and affirmation.’ He describes subscription to the ‘ideal of Zionism’ as requiring ‘an act of faith’; in that case, we can view assimilation to an Anglicized society and affirmation of Zionism to be a clash between two irreconcilable pedagogies; see Grahame Davies, ‘Welsh and Jewish: Responses to Wales by Jewish Writers’, *Culture and the State*, Volume 3 (2004), 211-223 (p. 214).



the Goyim, we must act similar to make `em like us and respect us” (p. 48). But Sheba does not accept that an ‘act’ can earn respect.

The narrator is keen to mock those who ‘act’ to erase their identity – Miss Howells, for instance. She has been ‘going out’ with Simmy before Sheba:

“I’ve finished with Simmy,” said Miss Howells [...] “After all, he’s only a beastly Jew.”

[...]

“Pawnbrokers indeed! Made their money [on] the backs of *our* poor people.”<sup>128</sup>

(p. 48; original emphasis)

Miss Howells’s Welshness is, for her, ‘a stigmatised identity, a disability to be cast off’<sup>129</sup> so as to facilitate social agency. Tobias strategically sets her insensitivity against the attitude of her uncle, Christmas Jones. He exercises individual responsibility in his ‘large-hearted and open-minded’<sup>130</sup> racial tolerance. However, Tobias does not suggest that the separatism entailed in Jones’s millenarianism holds any convenient solutions to difficulties of social positioning. She echoes Jones’s pride in identity: “I can see that if there was a Jewish country, one wouldn’t have to worry”; but qualifies this idea with a double-voicedness that ‘signifies’ to her racial group the tensions involved in assimilation: “[a]s it is – isn’t it frightfully difficult being Jews?” (p. 49). Simmy’s response, “[n]ot always” (p. 49), suggests a solution: if one ‘acts’ well enough it is simply a question of time before assimilation takes place.<sup>131</sup> Nevertheless, within that process, original cultural characteristics must be subjugated: ideological enslavement to shaping, pedagogical discourses must occur.

Simmy begins to persuade Sheba that difficulties of assimilation are surmountable, and he ‘venture[s] to press her hand’ (p. 49). The story does not reveal if that ‘venture’ is agreeable

<sup>128</sup> Simmy is the ‘nice’ ‘Jew boy’ to whom Miss Howells refers at the start of the story.

<sup>129</sup> Donahaye, ‘Jewish Writing in Wales’, p. 187.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.

<sup>131</sup> Simmy’s exaggerated English speech, and Miss Howells’s dismissive attitude towards him suggest that his ‘act’ is by no means perfect. Tobias intends readers to find his accent somewhat ridiculous. In a similar vein, ‘Almost a Gentleman’, through its music hall opening, establishes ‘acting’ as false and open to ridicule.

to Sheba. She faces the duality of a potentially enriching future or being 'pressed', so to speak, to comply with an 'act', in the repetition of which she is likely to find falseness, shame and displacement. In 'Almost a Gentleman', Lewis's narrator accepts the risks which such a venture entails: the story suggests that he is from a marginalized background, but that his narrative 'act' is accomplished enough to traverse cultural gaps. However, his shame at laughing at Burton and his anxiety about being found out indicates the 'parallel dishonesties and losses that are common to both Welsh and Jewish'<sup>132</sup> identity as original 'narratives' are overwritten. The comparison between the two stories suggests that, in principle, the effect of the social and psychological 'othering' faced by the Welsh characters may validly be perceived as *culturally* significant, and considered alongside the more overtly oppressive instances of racial 'othering' evidenced in texts such as Stanley's.<sup>133</sup>

The stories of Lewis and Tobias emphasize the painful choices which their characters must face as social identity changes. They strategically foreground contingency and interconnectedness, and undermine 'primary conceptual and organizational'<sup>134</sup> discourses. The characters interest us precisely because they lack 'integrity', in the senses of both a lack of honesty and of completeness, and the spaces in which they operate are complicated by division and sub-division. In public, characters re-act to and inter-act with dominating Anglicized voices, the very iteration of which causes displacement. Thus, behind the scenes they reveal anxious feelings of compromise and loss.

Lewis's and Tobias's stories show Welsh and Jewish identities to be comparatively fragile, and marked by recurring social re-positioning. However, Lewis's story 'They Came', to be examined next, follows a strategy in which a re-positioning towards Anglicization, although becoming increasingly deterministic for the main character, Taffy, is represented in a

<sup>132</sup> Donahaye, 'Jewish Writing in Wales', p. 192.

<sup>133</sup> As I note in the Review of the Critical Field, Fanon identifies the harmful effects of psychological 'othering'; (see note 10 to p. 9 above).

<sup>134</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 2.

more positive manner. The story describes the kind of complex 'trajectory' towards respectability that Lewis himself was following, and its narrative negotiates both the centralizing shaping discourse and a contingent Welsh position to suggest a way forward.

### Alun Lewis: 'They Came' (1942)

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'They Came' begins with 'Taffy', a Second World War soldier, returning from his home in Wales to the Hampshire village where he is billeted. The story's title derives from his recollection of the arrival of enemy bombers that carry out a raid in which his home is destroyed and his wife killed, events which are disclosed part-way through the story. Although 'Glasshouses' and 'Almost a Gentleman' deal with distressing dislocations, the level of disturbance in Taffy's experience is that of trauma. The events leading to that trauma are not directly biographical, but, as in each of the texts analyzed thus far, 'They Came' is influenced by a discourse of social place – one that was pertinent to Lewis's personal position at the time the story was written.

An omniscient narrator begins Taffy's story, but as he walks to his billet there are footsteps behind him, and the narrative slips into his anxious focalization. His first thoughts of 'they' carry an ominous cultural significance:

[s]omeone was following him [...] [their] footsteps stayed behind, keeping a mocking interval. He couldn't stop himself listening to them, but he refused to look back [...]. After a while they seemed to come trotting [out] of the Welsh mining village, the colliers gambling in the quarry [...] the college where he had [...] slacked in poverty [...]. They were the footsteps of the heavy-jawed deacon of Zion, with his white grocer's apron and his hairy nostrils sniffing out corruption.

But that was silly, he knew [...]. These footsteps were natural and English, the postman's perhaps .... But still they followed him, and the dark gods wrestling in him in the mining valley pricked up their goatly ears at the sound of the pimping feet.<sup>135</sup>

(CS, p. 166)

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<sup>135</sup> In Idris Davies's 'Gwalia Deserta', the speaker appeals to 'Dark gods of all our days / [to] have mercy upon us;' this implies a history of complicity with 'the high priests / [w]ho deal in blood and gold' – the political leaders at the 'core' of the internal colonization process that has affected Wales; see 'Gwalia Deserta', pp. 7-8, (Part XV, ll. 1-2 and 15-16). The term 'high priests' may also, in turn, make readers think back to the Nonconformist 'white deacons' (see *ibid.*, (Part I, l. 3)) who dream while their community disintegrates; see p. 3 above.

This is a pointedly negative view of industrialized Wales, characterized by redundancy and darkness. 'They' are here represented by the 'heavy-jawed' grocer-deacon, who figures a narrative of regulation; 'dark gods' are present in Taffy's own consciousness *and* in his home environment.<sup>136</sup>

The use of the term 'deacon of Zion' recalls the Welsh nationalist context in Tobias's writing. The word Zion, or the Welsh, Sion, featured in the names of many Welsh chapels in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and Tobias uses 'Ty Sion' as the name of Christmas Jones's home as one of several suggestions of his nationalist leanings. Donahaye notes the

tradition of identification with the Jews which [has] its most potent expression among Nonconformists. [In] this tradition [there is] a sense of *election* that positions the Welsh as the moral inheritors of the chosen people [and] lay at the heart of the Welsh Nonconformist national self-definition [...]. Such an identification was given a new, political and apparently secular impetus with the rise of Zionism.<sup>137</sup>

Where, previously, 'cultural Zionists' had constructed 'careful arguments about nationalisms within nationalisms', moderation was 'increasingly abandoned after 1917 with the apparent promise of a national homeland and the growing dominance of political Zionism.'<sup>138</sup> The deacon's frightening image suggests someone to whom a tolerant 'nationalism within nationalism' would be anathema. Instead of Tobias's 'pride [in] cultural distinctiveness', as tolerantly displayed by Christmas Jones, the deacon suppresses any debasements of culturally-acceptable beliefs.

<sup>136</sup> The *OED* supplies one of the definitions of the verb 'to pimp' as, in 'Welsh English', to 'spy on lovers; to engage in voyeurism.' This suggests a connection to the 'lovers' in 'Raiders' Dawn', who are both 'masters' and 'Slaves'; see pp. 70-71 above. In the language used in the opening of 'They Came', the narrator emphasizes the idea of a destructive self-regulation.

<sup>137</sup> Donahaye, "'A dislocation'", pp. 154-155; (original emphasis). Michael Hechter notes that 'the proliferation of Nonconformity in the Welsh countryside' was politically-based; the Anglican Church was 'uninterested in acculturating the Welsh masses' because of the high incidence in the early nineteenth century of 'monolingual Welsh-speakers'. Nonconformity thus responded to a cultural demand: its 'linkage with Welsh nationality was already evident in the early 1800s'; see Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*, pp. 182-183.

<sup>138</sup> Donahaye, 'Jewish Writing in Wales', p. 229. In 1917, the British Government, through its Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour, had declared in favour of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

Although there are no direct connections between Zion and Zionism<sup>139</sup> in 'They Came', there is a strong expression of distaste for a restrictive and secular 'national self-definition', the kind that Sheba Newman considers harmful for her future. There is a literary precedent for associating the religious zealousness of the 'deacon of Zion' with a pernicious political power. This is found in the writings of Caradoc Evans, particularly his collections of stories, *My People* (1915) and *Capel Sion* (1916). Evans's stories caused outrage amongst the Welsh establishment when they were first published. They detail the cultural position of Welsh Nonconformist chapels: power is vested in the deacons and the ministers, who are concerned to preserve the status quo. In the story 'The Pillars of Sion' (1916), the character Amos Penparc is just such a deacon – he has 'riches [...] above any man', and his 'piety is established'.<sup>140</sup> Despite being shown to have seduced and made pregnant a mentally-disabled woman, his political control continues undiminished.

Caradoc Evans's authorial aim was to warn of the kind of self-imposed, but abnormally confining, political regime that Taffy carries with him as an iterated memory of home – something to which he cannot 'stop himself' paying regard. In this sense, the idea of 'they' who follow him and harm him in a psychological way is as displacing as the more evidently destructive notion of 'they' who have come to bomb his home. Contrastingly, the person following him at the beginning of the story appears to be benign – 'natural and English', and as welcome and civilized as the postman bringing letters.<sup>141</sup> In his initial discourse, the Welsh are strategically 'othered', as they are in Stanley's writings. However, Taffy's thoughts of home will become less oppositional as he seeks a way forward from his traumatized condition.

<sup>139</sup> 'Zion', in Nonconformist terminology, along with 'Bethel' and 'Ebenezer', denotes 'heaven as the final home of believers', and a 'hallowed' place of worship. 'Zionism' is a nationalist movement 'concerned chiefly with the development of the State of Israel' (*OED*).

<sup>140</sup> Caradoc Evans, *Capel Sion* ([1916] Bridgend: Seren, 2002), p. 44.

<sup>141</sup> The footsteps are later revealed to be those of the barmaid from the local hotel – one of the 'ordinary' people of the English village.

Taffy arrives at his billet and then goes to the local hotel where he meets his fellow soldiers, all of whom are English. He projects his own uncertainties onto his colleagues: '[n]one of us are ourselves now [...] neither what we were, nor what we will be' (p. 169), he thinks. Yet, when Taffy leaves the hotel to take up guard duty,<sup>142</sup> he meets Nobby Sherraton, a positive and clearly-defined Londoner. Nobby is purposeful: he 'had done a lot of demolition and rescue work'; and has clear vision: 'good blue eyes under tiny lids' (p. 172). In this English character, there is a sense of the ethical behaviour that Stanley and Conrad admired in merchant seamen: with Nobby, Taffy does not have 'to pretend' (p. 173).

The two soldiers have an important shared working-class background. Taffy is drawn towards an idealized 'natural' *Gemeinschaft*: '[f]undamentally, they shared the same humanity, the unspoken humanity of comradeship, [of] sharing what they had', and this thought empowers him to express '[s]omething absolute' (p. 173) about the severance entailed in the bombing of his home and the death of his wife. Yet, as he recalls the carnage caused by the more obviously destructive 'they', Taffy 'go[es] back' emotionally to the 'sing-song rhythm and the broad accent of his home' (p. 174). This reversion decodes his earlier Anglicized narrative as something that he has adopted as an English soldier, and exposes a perspective which works against the 'absolute' loss. These shifts suggest that at this point Taffy performatively exemplifies the 'comprehensive but incoherent' cultural position of the migrant, in which the 'Same' and the 'Other' are in rotation.

Taffy's speech variation occurs in his description of the conduct of his fellow-villagers during the raid on his home. The old couple with whom he and his wife are lodging become 'hysteric[al]' about their personal possessions: "'[m]y chickens,' the old man was blubbing all the time. He's got an allotment up on the voel, see?"' (pp. 173-174). The use of the unglossed word 'voel' (hill), and the Welsh-English idiom, 'see', linguistically assist in

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<sup>142</sup> As in Lewis's poem, 'The Sentry', Taffy finds himself in a liminal, but potentially productive, position; see p. 25 above.

suggesting the allotment as a separate site of self-interest,<sup>143</sup> an idea which is at odds with thoughts of 'sharing'. At the moment that Taffy has, subconsciously, returned home, he finds there something distasteful which hardens his view of Wales. During the raid, Taffy discovers his wife at the point of death; he sets this event in the symbolically national terms of 'the fallen house': "[t]ook her home, see, Nobby. Only the home was on fire" (p. 175).<sup>144</sup> All that escapes the finality of the destruction is the distanced allotment.

The scene of destruction is, naturally, a crisis point. In this anxious narrative interstice, similar in significance, psychologically, to the storm for the *Narcissus*, Taffy must decide "[w]hat's it all for?"; Nobby's English idiom directs him: "[y]ou're here, aincher, now" (p. 175). He suggests that Taffy and his wife can "belong to each other for keeps", and that Taffy can progress onwards; a shaping, but potentially positive resolution to the 'incoherence' is emphasized: 'with a gathering force [his] uncertainty came together' (p. 175).

The inter-action between Nobby and Taffy creates a sense of opportunity: a freeing from 'the pimping feet' which belong to the first manifestation of 'they' in Taffy's narrative. The story is now resumed by the omniscient narrator, who affirms a productive future:

[b]elow [Taffy] the valleys widened into rich arable lakes on which the moonlight and the mist lay like skeins which spiders spin round their eggs. Beyond the pools another chain of downland lay across the valleys, and beyond those hills the coast.

(p. 176)

The vocabulary of this passage emphasises fertility. Its imagery of soft mist overlaying 'skeins' and a 'chain' of land, suggests linkages between an ancient, perhaps mythical place, and what lies in front of him in the 'beyond'. Later, when Lewis wrote the poem 'In Hospital: Poona (1)' while stationed in India, he would express similar ideas of linkages to an ancient and

<sup>143</sup> In 'The Housekeeper', the allotment where a sow is kept is also distanced from the village community; see Chapter Three.

<sup>144</sup> 'Raiders' Dawn' also suggests that cultural destruction incorporates the domestic in the image of the 'Blue necklace left / On a charred chair'; see Lewis, *Collected Poems*, p. 22, ll. 13-14.

specifically Welsh world.<sup>145</sup> That poem conveys feelings of dislocation, but in 'They Came' the mood of the concluding narrative is soothing. The feeling of intolerance in Taffy's opening recollection of his Welsh village, in which 'national self-definition' is immutable, is glossed over. However, the narrator realizes that Taffy, because of his trauma, must have something concrete to which he can attach himself, and proceeds to construct a more secure position. This is set in the 'natural' world and, as Ian Hamilton suggests, is a vision of 'all that is worth loving; of England, of humanity':<sup>146</sup>

[n]ow over his head the darkness was in full leaf, drifted with the purity of pines, the calm and infinite darkness of an English night [...]. And the warm scent of resin about him and of birds and of all small creatures moving in the loose mould in the ferns like fingers of velvet.

(p. 176)

This 'darkness' is intended to be unfamiliar to Taffy, but it centres him in 'calm' English normality – a civilized 'respectability', perhaps – something akin to the warmth of the 'unspoken humanity' represented by Nobby. In its 'fullness', this world is far distanced from backward-facing, intolerant Wales.

The narrative strategy in 'They Came' sets England and Wales as polar opposites – positive and negative. 'Shining' imagery, akin to that used by Stanley and Conrad, supports a representation of completeness. In the 'pure' English night, above 'glinting' rooftops, Taffy moves outwards, in the direction of public acceptability: "[m]y life belongs to the world," he [says]. "I will do what I can" (p. 176). His 'civic' role is being shaped by iterated ideas of Englishness as natural and normal, as is suggested in Stanley's and, to an extent, Conrad's narratives.

<sup>145</sup> See pp. 73-74 above.

<sup>146</sup> Ian Hamilton, *Alun Lewis: Selected Poetry and Prose* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1966), p. 27. It is somewhat predictable that Hamilton and John Lehmann (see pp. 25-26 above), as English critics, pick out a valuing of Englishness in Lewis's early texts.



'They Came' was written in the period in which Lewis was increasingly attaching himself to the humanitarian values of 'the people',<sup>147</sup> specifically the Welsh people. Yet, what is implied through Taffy's 'trajectory' is a 'primary orientation towards England', the cultural feature that Donahaye notes in respect of Lily Tobias's Jewish and Welsh characters.<sup>148</sup> It is a similar social positioning to that adopted by the crew of the *Narcissus*, and the narrator in 'Almost a Gentleman'. However, the traumatic loss of Taffy's wife and home place an individual responsibility on him, and, privately, he retains meaning in Welsh life. This meaning is suggested in his final exchange with Nobby, which occurs immediately before the narrator immerses Taffy in English 'purity'. Like Sheba Newman's concluding exchange with the Anglicized Simmy, the dialogue between Taffy and Nobby, placed where it is, creates a complex identity that develops both a longing for a lost 'home' *and* a need to move away. Taffy asks Nobby if he really believes that he and his wife can 'belong to each other':

"Yes. For you and `er, I do. It wouldn't be true for me [but] for you two it is," [Nobby replied].

[...]

"I knew it was so, really," [Taffy] said. "Only I was afraid I was fooling myself."

He smiled, and moved his feet, pressing on them [...] as if testing them after an illness.

"I'm all right now, Nobby. Thank you, boy."

(p. 175)

Taffy is measuring his psychological capacity to progress out of the liminality caused by his trauma. His exchange with Nobby merges his adopted Anglicized language – "I knew it was so" – and his own 'sing-song' register – the idiomatic "[t]hank you, *boy*." He takes that vernacular Welsh voice with him into the 'beyond'. 'There', as Bhabha puts it, exists 'a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction', which creates an awareness of the diverse realities of 'identity in the modern world.'<sup>149</sup>

<sup>147</sup> See p. 69 above.

<sup>148</sup> Donahaye, 'Jewish Writing in Wales', p. 182.

<sup>149</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 2.

In Taffy's case, his recuperated self has native cultural and emotional foundations. Such an identity – that of the insider-outsider – exemplifies what Stephen Knight terms 'a combination of integration and independence',<sup>150</sup> through an open acknowledgement of the kind of public and private positions exemplified in 'Almost a Gentleman' and 'Glasshouses'. The narrative of 'They Came' recognizes the positive effects of the double-voicedness of competing discourses. It integrates the iterative discourse of Englishness with the contingent narrative of home to suggest that such a fusion comprehends best national and individual futures. Where Stanley's iterative strategy unconsciously reveals his displacement, Lewis's recognizes a similar cultural effect and engages with it: in effect, he 'repeats' the dominant discourse, but with a 'signal difference'.<sup>151</sup> This positioning not only reflects Lewis's social place as a Welsh-English soldier, but also suits the point of global anxiety and flux at which 'They Came' takes place. As the narrator comments, '[a]nd farther still the violence [was] growing in the sky'; Taffy will "do what [he] can" (p. 176) in that turbulent beyond.

## Conclusion

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In *Through the Dark Continent*, Stanley's narrative creates a 'precept' that supports his positioning within a central, 'civilized' English society. However, his over-emphasis on an identity that represents the complete imperialist indicates an ideological 'enslavement' to shaping discourses which espouse notions of social progressiveness, the iterative form of which ultimately serves to reveal his displacement.<sup>152</sup> In *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*, Conrad's representations of Englishness may provide social meaning in terms of an idealized community. Yet, the text's double-voicedness facilitates subversive readings based on its mythical and allegorical tendencies. Its dialogism speaks for the complex narrative

<sup>150</sup> Knight, *A Hundred Years of Fiction*, p. 120. Knight uses this term generally, in respect of 'Welsh writers working in English'.

<sup>151</sup> Gates, *The Signifying Monkey*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>152</sup> The final seal of approval was denied to Stanley: on his death in 1904, his wish to be buried at Westminster Abbey was refused by the dean, 'apparently due to his mixed reputation'; see Driver, 'Stanley, Sir Henry Morton (1841-1904)'.

manoeuvrings of the insider-outsider, a position that is also represented in Lewis's 'Almost a Gentleman'. In the latter story, there is a pedagogical dimension in so far as Englishness is identified as a shaping force: by comparison with Tobias's story, 'Glasshouses', Welsh and Jewish characters alike are shown to face tensions in assimilation to what they, in a similar way to Stanley, see as a more forward-thinking and beneficial culture. The choices and alternatives that these characters have to negotiate do not entail matters of clear and 'finished' definition: contingent considerations are ever-present, resulting in persistently shifting notions of identity.

In Stanley's 'factual' writings, and Lewis's fictional texts, Welshness is both implied to be 'Other' and specified as such. This narrative feature echoes the discriminatory principles applied to more obvious 'Others' – in *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*, for instance. In 'They Came', Taffy yearns for change from that Welsh 'Other', and assimilation to a civilized Englishness appeals to him. However, the symbols of his wife and home, now lost, strengthen his emotional attachment to an 'original' Welsh community which he considers worth recovering, and work against the reactionary mood which dominates his home village.

Taffy represents a different *public* position from that of the narrator of 'Almost a Gentleman', who, it appears, conceals his origins. Taffy engages with the public realm as a distinctly Welsh person, and this engagement counters the damage caused by both forms of 'they' in his story. The English world and the global conflict in which he is engaged are both *active* environments.<sup>153</sup> Taffy's identity is formed by a sense of native belonging and an involvement with external challenges. This position is represented by his loving recollection of a conversation with his wife on the day he was called up: "[i]n coming and in going you are mine; now [and] then for ever"; yet, in the 'now', he says, "[m]y life belongs to the world" (p. 176). Taffy is undergoing a hybridization, and this enables him to move outwards with a

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<sup>153</sup> Dorothy Stanley makes the point that Stanley 'rebound[ed]' from what he perceived to be a static Welsh environment to an active wider world; see p. 88 above.

fuller understanding of his cultural situation. Such a ‘migrant’ knowledge will be increasingly relevant to the complex identities of characters in the texts examined in subsequent chapters of this thesis – Marlow, in *Heart of Darkness*, for instance.

Where Stanley persistently sets the disturbances of his formative years in the past, Conrad and Lewis allow competing values to inter-relate within fluid narrative strategies. The stories which are examined in this chapter, bearing in mind their connections to the authors’ own experiences, suggest that, like Stanley, these writers are capable of adopting an Anglicized perspective and writing against their marginalized origins. To echo Susan Bassnett’s terms, the comparison ‘distorts’ how we might perceive Conrad and Lewis as, respectively, Polish and Welsh natives. However, the very fact that they are natives of marginalized countries infuses their texts with a subtle double-voicedness, with a sense of the vernacular that indicates an awareness of the effects of turbulent change. The identities which are fashioned therein indicate a shared understanding that their positions are not resolvable, and a shared concern with a resulting oscillation between opportunity and indeterminacy.<sup>154</sup> In Knight’s terms, such an exchange, entailing varying elements of ‘integration and independence’, is ‘not a simple process’.<sup>155</sup> This idea of complex recursiveness will inform the way in which I propose to examine Conrad’s and Lewis’s later texts – those that reflect journeys during which the performative becomes more prominent and complicates our perception of shaping discourses.

<sup>154</sup> See p. 81 above: depression and suicide were features of both Conrad’s and Lewis’s lives.

<sup>155</sup> Knight, *A Hundred Years of Fiction*, p. 119; (my emphasis).

## CHAPTER 3

# DECONSTRUCTING IDENTITY: THE SUBALTERN VIEW

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In Alun Lewis's story, 'They Came', part of Taffy 'belongs to the world', the world of soldiering, and part of him acknowledges the individual responsibilities of a Welsh identity. The story conveys not only an air of anticipation that precedes Lewis's own posting to India, but also the uncertainties of the time in which it was written. Similarly, *Heart of Darkness*, which I discuss in this chapter, reflects both Joseph Conrad's personal experience of a potentially rewarding journey to the 'beyond' of Africa, and *fin-de-siècle* anxieties regarding imperialist expansion; the story is influenced by the viewpoint of the Pole operating within the English literary Establishment. In both writers there is a sense of spatial and cultural movement from the pedagogical – represented by civilized, stable 'norms' – to a disturbing and variable process of inter-relation with the performative. At the intersection of the two begins the 'site of writing' identity, to recall Bhabha's terms.<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter, so as to convey the fluid nature of the intersection that Bhabha describes, I intend to draw on notions of interstitiality in T. S. Eliot's poem, 'The Hollow Men' (1925). Its epigraph, '*Mistah Kurtz – he dead*', alludes to *Heart of Darkness*, and a theme of section V of the poem points us towards the position of Kurtz, Marlow, and characters in the other stories in this thesis; 'The Hollow Men' sheds light on the consequences of operating between fixed ideologies and their execution in the real world:

Between the idea  
And the reality  
Between the motion  
And the act  
Falls the Shadow

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 22 above.

[...]

Between the potency  
And the existence  
Between the essence  
And the descent  
Falls the Shadow.<sup>2</sup>

The poem's form is repetitious and its language indicates a sense of the interim. The effect that this combination creates is relevant to the governing theme of my analyses in this chapter, in which I propose to examine the displacing nature of the performative, particularly through representations of subaltern perspectives in the narrative strategies of texts by Conrad and Lewis. As their characters move into regions of the 'beyond', a heightened uncertainty develops, the 'shadow' that Eliot's poem imagines. A deconstruction of fixed standards of conduct is necessary in order to move forward. In Part 1 of the chapter, I consider the effect of that situation on narrative positions in the general context of imperial identity; Part 2 examines the importance of gender issues within that identity.

## PART 1: IMPERIAL IDENTITY

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The texts to be examined in this Part are Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and two of Lewis's Indian stories from the collection *In the Green Tree* (1948),<sup>3</sup> 'The Raid' and 'Ward "O"3(b)', each of which illuminates their author's dislocating journeys. I begin, though, by examining, for comparative purposes, two stories by Rudyard Kipling. David Gilmour, in *The Long Recessional* (2002), observes that by the range of his 'experience [Kipling] made himself [...] 'the *unofficial* laureate of the British Empire.'<sup>4</sup> Like Conrad and Lewis, he had first-hand experience of imperialism *in operation*: born in India but schooled in England, he worked in

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<sup>2</sup> T. S. Eliot, 'The Hollow Men', in T. S. Eliot, *Collected Poems 1909 – 1962* ([1963] London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1990), pp. 91-92, ll. 72-88.

<sup>3</sup> See note 87 of Review of the Critical Field for publication details.

<sup>4</sup> David Gilmour, *The Long Recessional: The Imperial Life of Rudyard Kipling* (London: John Murray Ltd., 2002), pp. x-xi; (my emphasis).

the sub-continent as a journalist and travelled extensively, before returning to settle in England.

The notion of Kipling as a 'laureate' suggests that his viewpoint would be that of a pedagogue. However, like Conrad and Lewis, his position on the running of the Empire can be ambivalent,<sup>5</sup> and his complex narrative strategies often represent subaltern perspectives.<sup>6</sup> Edward Said observes that Kipling was 'slightly apart from the great central strand [of English letters] [...] appreciated but never fully canonized.'<sup>7</sup> This comment suggests an insider-outsider's positioning, and points to the suitability of Kipling's writings as a starting point for analyzing the relationship between the pedagogical and the performative. Two such texts are 'Slaves of the Lamp (Part II)',<sup>8</sup> and 'A Sahibs' War',<sup>9</sup> published four years apart, in 1897 and 1901 respectively, these stories indicate Kipling's increasing recognition of the significance of the performative.

### Rudyard Kipling: 'Slaves of the Lamp (Part II)' (1897)

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'Slaves of the Lamp (Part II)' concerns the character A. L. Corkran. Better known as 'Stalky', Corkran is an Army officer operating in the 'beyond' of imperial India. He represents the kind of energetic colonial 'do-er' admired by Stanley and Conrad: he has the 'right stuff', and it is evident that Kipling holds him in high regard. The story concludes the collection entitled *Stalky & Co.* (1899). Although Kipling describes *Stalky & Co.* as a 'valuable collection of

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<sup>5</sup> The poem 'Recessional' demonstrates this trait; see pp. 57-58 above. See also note 13 to p. 6 above: W. D. Howells's description of Kipling as 'the laureate of that larger England whose wreath it is not for any prime minister to bestow' hints at the author's status as an 'unofficial laureate of the British Empire.'

<sup>6</sup> Andrew Rutherford refers to one of Kipling's 'artistic strengths' as 'the 'ability to project himself imaginatively into other minds, into representatives of what might seem alien humanity'; see 'Introduction' to Rudyard Kipling, *Selected Stories*, ed. Andrew Rutherford (London: Penguin Books, 1987), p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 161.

<sup>8</sup> 'Slaves of the Lamp (Part II)' was first published in *Cosmopolis* in May 1897; it was collected in *Stalky & Co.* in 1899 and again in *The Complete Stalky & Co.* in 1929. All quotations are taken from Rudyard Kipling, *The Complete Stalky & Co.*, ed. Isabel Quigley ([1929] [1987] Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>9</sup> 'A Sahibs' War' was first published in *The Windsor Magazine* in December 1901 and collected in *Traffics and Discoveries* in 1904; all quotations are taken from Rudyard Kipling, *War Stories and Poems*, ed. Andrew Rutherford ([1990] Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

tracts'<sup>10</sup> for boys, the narratives oppose publicly-approved conduct. The collection is prefaced by an untitled poem which begins:

‘Let us now praise famous men’ –  
Men of little showing –  
For their work continueth,  
And their work continueth,  
Broad and deep continueth,  
Greater than their knowing!’<sup>11</sup>

In the poem’s last stanza, the men become ‘[g]reat beyond their knowing’ (l. 78), and so Kipling suggests a fluidity of identity rather than an iteration of ‘Sameness’. The stories in the collection, except for ‘Slaves of the Lamp (Part II)’, are set in a public school and thus suggest themselves to be part of a shaping discourse – the school-story genre. Peter Hunt observes that in the genre ‘adults were in control [of] the narrative.’<sup>12</sup> Texts such as Thomas Hughes’s *Tom Brown’s Schooldays* (1857) set the generic agenda in foregrounding the conventional ‘upright hero,’ and ‘codes of conduct [which had] implications for life *after* school, especially in the context of building an empire.’<sup>13</sup>

*Stalky & Co.* describes, amongst other things, the institutionalized training of empire-builders: the ‘school prepare[s] boys for the Army’.<sup>14</sup> The stories focus on a tight-knit group of fifteen-year-olds – Stalky, Beetle, M’Turk, Dick Four, and Tertius – earlier and younger versions of the cadets in ‘Almost a Gentleman’, perhaps. The governing narrator is Beetle,

<sup>10</sup> Rudyard Kipling, *Something of Myself: For My Friends Known and Unknown* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1964), p. 136.

<sup>11</sup> Rudyard Kipling, *The Complete Stalky & Co.*, p. 5, ll. 1-6; (original italics). We might make a comparison, in principle, with Stanley’s ‘lessons’ for boys; see p. 84 above. However, unlike Kipling’s ‘men of little showing’, Stanley always required visible proof of his civilizing work.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Hunt, *Children’s Literature: An Anthology 1801 – 1902* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2001), p. xiii.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p.139; (original emphasis). Hunt comments that by the end of the nineteenth century the genre had become more flexible: where novelists like Hughes privileged moral integrity, later writers introduced an element of ‘ambiguity’, the antithesis of what was needed to run the Empire; see p. xiii; (original emphasis).

<sup>14</sup> Rudyard Kipling, ‘Stalky’, in *The Complete Stalky & Co.*, p. 13.



who is generally taken to be a fictional representation of Kipling.<sup>15</sup> Despite these controlling factors, there is a fluid relationship between a shaping discourse and a performative sub-text. As Robert F. Moss has argued, the stories' complex moral values 'are precisely those which are never [...] referred to'.<sup>16</sup> In the inter-action, they move towards the kind of deconstructive narrative represented in *Heart of Darkness* and Lewis's Indian stories.

Kipling's narratives emphasize the way in which the boys' education develops initiative and wiliness, or 'stalkiness'.<sup>17</sup> These qualities are evidenced through practical jokes and the disruption of authority. The key learning experience is to keep invisible actions that would be perceived in public to be reprehensible, thus presenting an unimpeachable impression.

The boys perform roles, and this provides them with the opportunity to fashion their own identities. Stephen Greenblatt has commented that 'self-fashioning [may] suggest hypocrisy or deception, an adherence to mere outward ceremony [and] representation of one's nature or intention in [manners] speech or actions.'<sup>18</sup> These issues of representation will become problematic in Conrad's and Lewis's texts as imperialists recognize the ambivalence of their individual positions.

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<sup>15</sup> See Isabel Quigley, 'Introduction' to *The Complete Stalky & Co.*, p. xxvii.

<sup>16</sup> Robert F. Moss, 'Kipling's Theory of Education in *Stalky & Co.*', *The Kipling Journal*, No. 200 (December 1976), 12-17 (p. 12).

<sup>17</sup> In the story, 'Stalky', Beetle explains that "'stalkiness" was the one virtue which Corkran toiled after'. The boys' 'school vocabulary' defines this term as 'well-considered' and 'wily'; see *The Complete Stalky & Co.*, p. 13. These definitions convey the two levels of activity for which the boys are being trained: the strategic and political working hand-in-hand with the operational and covert.

<sup>18</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 3. Greenblatt observes that self-fashioning is normally the province 'of parents and teachers'; related to *Stalky & Co.*, this idea indicates the extent of the boys' movement between pedagogical and performative arenas.

Greenblatt's notion of 'ceremony' is illustrated in the story 'Slaves of the Lamp (Part I)',<sup>19</sup> in which Stalky demonstrates his outwardly 'unimpeachable' character. In the story's plot, the boys are subjected to the vindictiveness of a schoolmaster, King. Stalky devises a ruse by which he exacts revenge: this involves causing damage to King's study, but, thanks to Stalky's stage-management, blame is attached to a bystander. Beetle celebrates the fact that there is not "a shadow of evidence"<sup>20</sup> of Stalky's actions. The boys' achieve their aims, but, in contrast to Stanley's failure to observe rules of 'proper' conduct, they do not 'advertise' their success.

The principles of conduct that are established in Kipling's school-based stories are transferred to the boys' adult narratives in 'Slaves of the Lamp (Part II)'. This story takes place fifteen years on, at a reunion of the main characters, most of whom have become soldiers in India. Stalky, however, is absent. The primary narrator is again Beetle; he sets the boys' friendship in the dialogic context of the quickly-changing imperial world through the theatrical metaphor of 'scene-shifting':

[t]here were sixty years of mixed work [between] us, and since we had met one another in the quick scene-shifting of India – a dinner, camp, or a race-meeting here; a dak-bungalow or railway station up country somewhere else – we had never quite lost touch.<sup>21</sup>

A rootlessness is suggested by the gap between 'here' and 'somewhere else', and the use of the *heteroglossic* 'dak-bungalow'.<sup>22</sup> Beetle notes the discrepancy between the idea of colonial

<sup>19</sup> 'Slaves of the Lamp (Part I)' was first published in *Cosmopolis* in April 1897. Its title story refers to the performance of the pantomime, 'Aladdin', by the main characters of the Stalky stories. It also points towards their roles as carriers of imperial light in later life.

<sup>20</sup> Rudyard Kipling, 'Slaves of the Lamp (Part I)', in *The Complete Stalky & Co.*, p. 68.

<sup>21</sup> Rudyard Kipling, 'Slaves of the Lamp (Part II)', in *The Complete Stalky & Co.*, p. 280. All further references to this story are given in the text.

<sup>22</sup> A dak-bungalow is an Indian rest-house, built for travellers. The imagery in this passage is of transience, but 'dak' is not italicised or glossed, which suggests that the word is part of a familiar language. In 'The Orange Grove', Alun Lewis also uses the image of the 'dak bungalow'; in that story, the term is explained: '[t]hese bungalows are scattered all over India [...] they are quiet and remote, tended [only by] some silent old Moslem'; see *CS*, p. 213. In contrast to Kipling's narrator, Lewis's intends the word to signify a place of danger, for at one of these bungalows Staff-Captain Beale's driver is murdered, and his journey into the unknown begins.

soldiering and its reality in the disorientating immensity of India, a notion that becomes more prevalent in Lewis's representation of 'the landless soldier'.<sup>23</sup> Which of Kipling's 'boys' is best equipped to deal with that dislocation is made clear in Dick Four's narration of an incident in which Stalky "pulled us through" (p. 282).

Dick's narration is a framed tale, similar to Marlow's narration in *Heart of Darkness*, in which multiple oral voices tell Stalky's story: he begins:

"[you remember] the Khye-Kheen-Mâlôt expedition [...] Well, both tribes [came in and] vowed all sorts of things [...]. On the strength of those tuppenny-ha'penny treaties [the] Government, being a fool, as usual, began road-makin'".

(p. 282)

The tribes' acquiescence is a cover for guerrilla activity which disrupts the civilizing construction works. Soldiers such as Stalky, Dick and Tertius command Indian Army troops guarding the works. In the skirmishes against the guerrillas, Stalky becomes detached; Dick and Tertius conduct a search and find him in a fort in which they all become trapped by guerrilla activity. The way in which Stalky 'pulls them through' is to practice the wiliness for which school life prepared him, as exemplified in his covert actions against King, the schoolmaster. This entails secretly leaving the fort and killing a Khye-Kheen fighter – "I abolished him – *privatim* – scragged him" (p. 287) – and leaving a Mâlôt mark on his chest.<sup>24</sup> The Khye-Kheens assume that the Mâlôts have carried out the killing; the two tribes then fight amongst themselves.

Stalky's activities facilitate the British escape. Thus, the narrative may appear to celebrate imperialism's dependency on the performative dimension beneath 'outward

<sup>23</sup> See p. 26 above.

<sup>24</sup> This is an act of revenge: one of Stalky's officers, Everett, was earlier killed by the Mâlôts; not only was he 'shot through the temple, but the Mâlôts had left their mark on him [...] a rummy sickle-shaped cut on the chest'; see *The Complete Stalky & Co.*, p. 284. Stalky's 'eye for an eye' justice has an Old Testament quality, reminiscent of Stanley's 'blood for blood' approach.

ceremony'. However, Stalky's relationship with the Sikh troops under his command points towards the danger in his unorthodox methods. Dick reminds his listeners "how Rutton Singh grabbed [Stalky's] boots and grovelled" (p. 287) in admiration, and the linguistic sign with which Stalky and his troops leave the British to go further into enemy territory is a corrupting mix of English and Urdu: "Kubbadar! Tumbleinga!" (p. 289). This phrase is glossed in the text as 'Look out, you'll fall!' and Dick now hints that this warning is a verbal representation of a centrifugal motion towards wider cultural corruption: "and they tumbleingaed over the black edge of nothing" (p. 289) – 'beyond their knowing', as Kipling's poem puts it.

Stalky's linguistic mix of English and Urdu is an interesting example of 'organic' code-switching, which Kirsti Bohata has stressed as significant for writers who are influenced by multiple cultures.<sup>25</sup> In other instances of linguistic variation – the Latin '*privatim*', for example – Kipling's code-switching may be seen as 'political' – to understand it one has to be familiar with Stalky's culture. The glossing of the warning, 'you'll fall', is pointedly deconstructive: Kipling suggests that the nature of Stalky's potential in the 'beyond' may differ from his readers' expectations.<sup>26</sup>

Stalky's first-person voice now disappears: his performative actions have released him from the frame and framed tales. His story becomes available instead through a letter he has written, received by Dick back at base. The epistolary variation in turn gives Stalky's narration a pedagogical authority – it is dated, from a set location, "Fort Everett", and signed, "A. L. Corkran" (p. 293). However, it shows Stalky pushing into the unknown; in a disturbingly similar way to Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*, he fashions his own authority: "I

<sup>25</sup> See pp. 34-35 above. To recap, 'organic' code-switching expresses cultural difference because words are glossed; un-glossed 'political' code-switching presents un-crossable boundaries to those unable to understand the code.

<sup>26</sup> Reader expectation was also a consideration in the publication of *Heart of Darkness* in the conservative *Blackwood's Magazine*.

have extended my road to the end of the Mâlot country [and] I am making some treaties””; he is ‘writing’ his own identity, “[a]fter the manner of a king” (pp. 293-294).<sup>27</sup>

Stalky has sent a ‘report’ which encapsulates the multi-dimensional nature of imperialism: “so well reasoned,” but it reveals that Stalky has done “everything [...] except strikin’ coins in his own image” (p. 294).<sup>28</sup> Reading the report, Tertius realizes the danger for Stalky and sends him a communication urging his return. Stalky comes back and is half-heartedly reprimanded by the officers who are “holdin’ the reins of Empire” (p. 295).<sup>29</sup> Stalky is thus connected to these officers’ authority; his individual performative actions are part of the shaping discourse to which they belong, and so he is allowed to drift back to his Sikh troops. M’Turk now speaks, recalling how he later

“stumbled slap on Stalky in a Sikh village; sitting on the one chair of state with half the population grovellin’ before him [and] a garland o’ flowers round his neck.”

(p. 296)

As Rutton Singh had earlier ‘grovelled’, now ‘half the population’ do likewise. This confirms, in terms of race supremacy, Dick’s fears in his earlier hint of a moral ‘fall’, and anticipates the kind of dilemma faced by the characters in Conrad’s and Lewis’s texts, who are more enquiring of their imperial roles. Stalky’s position puts him between the essence of imperial power, and its moral failings.

<sup>27</sup> In Kipling’s story, ‘The Man who would be King’ (1888), two ex-soldiers, Daniel Dravot and Peachey Carnehan, set out for Kafiristan, a remote region of Afghanistan. They ‘extend their road’ to a place where “a man [can] come into his own.” Dravot becomes a God-like King, but his long-term aim is to connect his performative actions with the pedagogical: “[w]hen everything was shipshape, I’d hand over the crown [to] Queen Victoria on my knees”. When he takes a Queen, Dravot begins a process which reveals his human status; deprived of his God-like position, he is killed by the indigenous population. Carnehan survives to bring back the story; see Rudyard Kipling, *Selected Stories*, ed. Andrew Rutherford (London: Penguin Books, 1987), pp. 111-140. The tale, framed by a journalist-narrator, evidently Kipling, is told through Carnehan’s voice. His role is similar to Marlow’s in *Heart of Darkness*: in both cases, a narrator describes his own implication in a moral ‘fall’.

<sup>28</sup> Stalky’s ‘report’ may be regarded in similar terms to Kurtz’s report for the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs, and Stanley’s ‘factual’ accounts of his expeditions.

<sup>29</sup> Stalky is “sent up for his wiggin” and is spared; he later asks for “shootin’-leave”, and this is quickly approved.

'New imperialism' demands expansionism and Stalky supplies it. Beetle concludes the story: "'India's full of Stalkies – Cheltenham and Haileybury and Marlborough chaps – [...] and the surprises will begin when there is a really big row on'" (p. 296). He is prophetic: it is the policy-makers who will be surprised: "'[t]he gentlemen who go to the front in first-class carriages. Just imagine Stalky let loose [with] a reasonable prospect of loot. Consider it quietly'" (p. 296). This view recognizes Stalky's excesses, which 'gentlemen' who understand proper conduct do not 'advertise', and the story may be read as a warning of the political aggression that would implode in the apocalyptic events of 1914. The iterative discourse that Stalky's performative role covertly enforces cannot, in effect, be repeated exactly without it causing its own displacement.

Beetle acknowledges his role in the iteration: "'[a]in't I responsible for the whole thing?'" (pp. 296-297). His narrative strategy in this story, unlike the discourse of the school-story genre to which it purports to belong, is designed to allow Stalky to operate unhindered in the 'beyond'. However, his evident admiration for Stalky is conditioned by the ambivalent ending of 'Slaves of the Lamp (Part II)', in that it points to the duplicity of those in the public realm who benefit from the 'performances' of 'Stalkys' whilst ignoring their methods. Indeed, a comparison might be drawn with Stanley, who could be said to have received tacit approval of similar practices through his eventual acceptance by the Establishment. In contrast, Kipling, as a *popular* author,<sup>30</sup> through his alter-ego, Beetle, assumes narrative responsibility for Stalky in the public realm. That popularity, and his status as a 'laureate' of Empire, places him in an ambivalent cultural position, particularly as *fin-de-siècle* anxiety grew through crises such as the Boer War (1899-1902). In the story 'A Sahibs' War', set during that conflict, Kipling expresses stronger criticism of those running the Empire, but through a narrative voice that presents itself as that of an 'Other'.

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<sup>30</sup> Kipling is regarded as 'the most popular writer in English' in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century; see Andrew Rutherford, 'General Preface', in *The Complete Stalky & Co.*, p. vii.

## Rudyard Kipling: 'A Sahibs' War' (1901)

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The story of 'A Sahibs' War' is told by a British Army trooper, Umr Singh. He is a Sikh, and speaks no English, so his narrative is portrayed as a translation, as though it were an oral account by a 'Sahib [...] [b]orn and bred in Hind'.<sup>31</sup> As Cicely Palser Havelly observes, this 'interlocutor' is taken to be 'Kipling himself', who 'speaks [Singh's] vernacular'.<sup>32</sup> Although Kipling is noted for his artistic representation of minority views, the use of Singh's subaltern voice may be analyzed in terms of what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak refers to as a "native informant" whose voice is 'crucially needed [and] foreclosed'.<sup>33</sup> Spivak suggests that such a 'native' voice is 'a blank', thus implying that it has impartial credibility; yet, because of that quality, it is capable of generating 'a text of cultural identity that only the West [could] inscribe'.<sup>34</sup> In this sense, Kipling's 'translation' could be viewed as an appropriation, the purpose of which is to inscribe on Singh an identity that allows the author to express views that undermine the shaping discourse.

The Boer War presented opportunities for expressing controversial views. As Andrew Rutherford points out, the '*casus belli* was the Boer treatment [of] British immigrants [...] but the basic issue [was] British hegemony in Southern Africa'.<sup>35</sup> However, access to mining rights was also threatened and the war was largely promulgated for commercial reasons, rather than representing all-encompassing 'British' concerns. In that context, 'A Sahibs' War'

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<sup>31</sup> Kipling, 'A Sahibs' War', in *War Stories and Poems*, p. 164. All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

<sup>32</sup> Cicely Palser Havelly, 'Reflections on Kipling's Compellingly Unpleasant Story', *The Kipling Journal*, No. 272 (December 1994), 12-22 (p. 12).

<sup>33</sup> Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, p. 4; (my emphasis); see note 115 to Chapter 2.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> Andrew Rutherford, 'Introduction' to Kipling, *War Stories and Poems*, p. xvi. Alfred Austin's poem, 'To Arms!' (1899), invokes a national fervour: 'From English hamlet, Irish hill, / Welsh hearths, and Scottish byres, / They throng to show that they are still / Sons worthy of their sires'; see *Empire Writing: An Anthology of Colonial Literature 1870-1918*, ed. Elleke Boehmer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 276, ll. 13-16. The poem is presumptuous in its idea of the Irish, Welsh and Scots 'thronging' to enlist. That the reality was somewhat different is suggested by the Welsh writer Kate Roberts's *Feet in Chains* ([1936] Bridgend: Seren, 2002), in which characters in a north Wales slate-quarrying community 'fiercely debate[] such questions [as] the war in South Africa', but there is no further action. The narrator recalls how schoolchildren were made to march to celebrate the relief of Mafeking, 'but it had not meant anything to them'; see pp. 58 and 141.

demonstrates a questioning of the validity of the imperial project, including its rigid policies, comparable with that in Conrad's and Lewis's texts.

Singh begins his 'narration' by explaining his position, negotiating the restricted South African rail network, en-route to India: the 'translator' retains Singh's *heteroglossic* speech and phonetics, thus implying native credibility:

Pass? Pass? Pass? I have one pass already, allowing me to go by the *rêl* from Kroonstadt to Eshtellenbosch [...]. I am a – trooper of the Gurgaon Rissala (cavalry regiment) [...]. Is there *any* Sahib on this train who will interpret [...] God be thanked, here is such a Sahib! [...] I am – I *was* – servant to Kurban Sahib, now dead [...]. Do not let him herd me with these black Kaffirs! [...]. Yes, I will [wait] till the Heaven-born has explained the matter to the young Lieutenant-Sahib who does not understand our tongue.<sup>36</sup>

(p. 163; original emphasis)

This passage sets the story's tone and theme. Singh is proudly associated with Empire, but in an era when officials understood soldiers like him. He is racially discriminating: he will not be homogenized with 'Others', the 'black Kaffirs'.<sup>37</sup> Narrative control is evident: the 'translator' intervenes to explain, in parenthesis, Singh's vernacular – 'Gurgaon Rissala' – '(cavalry regiment)', for instance – and the narrative becomes more complex through the strategic use of this parenthetical voice alongside Singh's. At the beginning of the story, this strategy appears to clarify; as it develops, the purpose will become more subtly ideological.

Singh tells his and Kurban's (or Corbyn's) stories. By means of an iterative discourse, the Sikh portrays Corbyn as an English hero: '[y]oung – of a reddish face – with blue eyes'; born in India, as a child he had been dressed 'all in white' (p. 164).<sup>38</sup> Like Stalky, he is a true imperialist, but his Indian birthplace and association with Singh appear to have compromised him; he has some of Stalky's operational virtues, but none of his wiliness: he is 'keen-eyed,

<sup>36</sup> Eshtellenbosch' is Singh's pronunciation of Stellenbosch, the name of a South African town.

<sup>37</sup> 'Kaffirs' refers to the region's indigenous population. As Havelly observes, the story renders these peoples 'of no account'; see 'Kipling's Compellingly Unpleasant Story', p. 16.

<sup>38</sup> This use of semiotics to denote a connection to the Union Jack is similar in technique to Conrad's description of Singleton in *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*; see p. 98 above.



jestful, and careless' (p. 165). 'Carelessness' on the part of imperialists appears to be the norm in this war:

[t]here were many box-wallahs [in] Yunasbagh (Johannesburg), and they sent news [how] big guns were hauled up and down the streets to keep Sahibs in order.

(p. 165)

Corbyn's voice suggests that the Empire will fight for its position, but that "[t]here is no haste" (p. 165). His casualness provides the opportunity for the political point to be strengthened, first by Singh: '[h]ere he spoke the truth', and then by Singh's agreement with an authorial view: '[q]uite so. [This war] is for Hind [...]. Ye cannot in one place rule and in another bear service' (p. 165). This exchange implies a complicity between the colonized 'Other' and his colonizer, overseen by the 'translator'. Singh emphasizes the folly of Government policy in not mobilizing Indian troops, such as Corbyn's regiment, because the Boer War was supposedly between white races: '[we] could have done it all so gently' (p. 166; original emphasis).<sup>39</sup>

Corbyn and Singh become involved in the war, but unofficially. They arrive in 'Eshtellenbosch' disguised as servants and Singh is appointed to command other subalterns, 'Hubshis [...] filth unspeakable' (pp. 167-168).<sup>40</sup> As a subaltern, Singh's right to voice such racism, similar to that expressed in the writings of Stanley and Conrad, would have been questionable. This complicates a public perception of his right to speak on imperial issues, such as the views he puts forward on the Australian troops with whom he and Corbyn join up. The Australians are courageous and ruthless fighters – proper soldiers, according to Singh, and his narrative follows a strategy similar to that of the Stalky stories in that their

<sup>39</sup> The confidence expressed in Singh's words, '[w]e could have done it all so gently', harks back to the Stalky stories. In 'Stalky', the narrator suggests that the skill required to carry out the ruses that prepare the boys for their later imperial lives are vested in a particular type of person: '[w]e could have managed it', says M'Turk as he observes the joke of another group of boys going disastrously wrong; see Kipling, *The Complete Stalky & Co.*, p. 11. In relation to the 'whites-only war', imperialist ethics dictated that black troops should not fire on whites. In a letter to *The Kipling Journal*, Shamus O. D. Wade, Secretary of the Commonwealth Forces History Trust, points out that during the war 'more and more black soldiers were involved', but later a 'process of re-writing history began'; see *The Kipling Journal*, No. 272 (December 1994), pp. 53-55.

<sup>40</sup> 'Hubshis' has previously been translated as 'niggers'; see Kipling, *War Stories and Poems*, p. 166.

'performance' is identified as more important than adherence to institutionalized policy. Now, however, it is these subaltern colonials who are the most effective imperialists. The Australians have a 'national language' which rings true in their own dialect, in Singh's voice, and the 'translated' narratives: '[t]hey said on all occasions, "No fee-ah," which in our tongue means *Durro Mut* (Do not be afraid)'; Singh projects this onto their national identity: 'we called them the *Durro Muts*' (p. 169).

The glossing of the text suggests an 'organic' code-switching that allows access to Singh's genuine narrative. However, the evident inscription of Singh's voice creates problems of credibility. These are demonstrated in his account of an incident at a Boer farmhouse in which Corbyn dies. Singh's excited narrative, mixing a *heteroglossia* of Oriental languages with Afrikaans within an English 'translation', is disorientating:

[we] came to a house [with] a nullah, which they call a donga, behind it, and an old sangar of piled stones, which they call a kraal, before it. Two thorn bushes grew on either side of the door, like babul bushes.

(p. 173)

This is believably Singh's voice: in Spivak's terms, his voice is 'needed' to authenticate the text. But, the statement that follows has an inscribed ideological cohesion; as Havelly argues, it is designed to render 'the moral basis of [the Boers'] cause [...] invisible'.<sup>41</sup>

[t]here was an old man [with a wart] in the verandah [and] a fat woman, with the eyes of a swine and the jowl of a swine; and a tall young man deprived of understanding. His head was hairless, no larger than an orange, and the pits of his nostrils were eaten away by a disease.

(p. 173)

Although not denoted by parenthesis, this Anglicized narration has the same 'explanatory' intent as the translator's earlier, more obvious, interventions. It is dehumanizing propaganda that 'forecloses' on impartiality. Readers may accept the propaganda and distance themselves

<sup>41</sup> Havelly, 'Kipling's Compellingly Unpleasant Story', p. 16. The Boers believed that South Africa should be theirs by right because of longer settlement.

from it because it purports to be Singh's: the story's structure has prepared for his iterative discrimination – through his reference to 'Others' as 'filth', for instance. Where the *heteroglossic* narrative could indicate diverse meanings, here, through the influence of the 'translator', the effect is monologic. However, the identity of the person to whom the single view belongs is obscured: in Greenblatt's terms, the 'intentions' which represent imperial 'nature' are thus strategically confused, whereas in *Stalky & Co.* they are clear. This in itself is a comment on the change that has occurred in imperial identity, the cause of which is suggested in the story's action.

The Boers have planned an ambush. Corbyn realizes this too late and is killed. Singh attributes his death not only to Boer deceit, but also to a failure in Corbyn's 'performance': he does 'not cover the [Boers] with his rifle. That was not his custom' (p. 174). Corbyn's careless practice denotes an unwillingness to change – a failure at the 'sharp end' of imperialism, so to speak. It indicates a distorting shift in Kipling's writing that offers a means by which the views expressed in his stories may be compared with those in the texts of Conrad and Lewis.

Singh and Sikandar Khan, a Pathan,<sup>42</sup> escape from the ambush, but later return to kill the Boers, the anticipation of which is described with relish: a Boer woman 'paw[s]' at Singh's feet and 'howl[s]' (p. 176). However, 'the spirit' of Corbyn appears to them, 'beyond the light of the lamp'; his statement, "[n]o. It is a Sahibs' war" (p. 177), forces them to leave. In conventional imperialist narratives, such as Stanley's, for example, to hold the light denotes what Declan Kiberd calls a 'glossy confident surface'<sup>43</sup> and suggests moral probity. In 'A Sahibs' War' it is the 'Other', Khan, who '[bears] out the lamp' for the killings to take place. Corbyn's ghostly iteration, 'and a third time he said, "No. It is a Sahibs' war"' (p. 177), coincides with a wind which extinguishes the light. In this 'beyond', in this shadowy place,

<sup>42</sup> Singh has also racially abused Khan, referring to him as *Sag* (dog); he likens Pathans, to 'vultures [who] always follow the slaughter'; see Kipling, *War Stories and Poems*, pp. 167-169.

<sup>43</sup> Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, p. 119.

there is a confirmation of what is suggested earlier in the story's admiration of the Australian troops – that subalterns are the only ones willing and able to enforce authority. Imperial identity is 're-written' in terms of diminishment: all that remains is the falseness of its 'outward ceremony'. This displacement is stated in clearer fashion than the hint of anxiety regarding Stalky's activities at the end of 'Slaves of the Lamp (Part II)'. As Conrad's and Lewis's texts will show, the cumulative effect would increase from the 'moment of transit' occurring at the *fin-de-siècle*.

It is Singh's voice that concludes the story by expressing sensations of a voiding of the imperial world around him: all is '[e]mpty, Sahib – all empty!' (p. 180). The narrative strategy, however, is Kipling's, and it serves his politics: thus Singh, as an individual, is 'foreclosed'. The polemic expressed is the opinion that performative imperialism, embodied in Stalky, once worked hand-in-hand with the pedagogical and *may* have been beneficially 'civilizing',<sup>44</sup> now, in the discrepancy 'between the motion and the act', the authority of that idea is lost.

Kipling's position as imperialism's 'laureate' suggests that his readers would expect him to promote its ideas. The narrative strategy in the Stalky stories takes responsibility for this position, but hints at the author's anxieties about the exercise of power. In 'A Sahib's War', Kipling's anxieties increase and are formalized to emphasize management failings. This results in an over-stressing of racial superiority in a manner that recalls Stanley's eagerness to comply with conventional imperialist narrative modes. Kipling's iteration of these issues through the 'inscription' of Singh's subaltern voice undoubtedly complicates his narrative, since Singh's native voice is also appropriated to narrate 'the unthinkable'<sup>45</sup> about imperial identity – that it has become insubstantial, hence the need for 'slavish' bolstering.

<sup>44</sup> Kipling's example of road-making in 'Slaves of the Lamp (Part II)' denotes civilizing work.

<sup>45</sup> Havely, 'Kipling's Compellingly Unpleasant Story', p. 15. The appropriation of a subaltern voice operates in a Welsh context in Amy Dillwyn's novel, *The Rebecca Rioter* (1880). As Katie Gramich points out, Dillwyn was from a wealthy family, but she uses the working-class voice of her character, Evan Williams, to express views

Kipling negotiates between two positions. His ambivalence sheds light on Conrad's and Lewis's narrative strategies, for they too assume roles that support imperial ideals, yet, they use that positioning to reveal contingent and disruptive performative practices in which they play a part. As an example of the way in which this positioning affects narrative form, I propose to examine next Conrad's strategy in Part I of *Heart of Darkness*, bearing in mind that the story was written, like 'A Sahibs' War', at the height of *fin-de-siècle* anxiety.

### Joseph Conrad: *Heart of Darkness* (1902)

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In Part I of *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow narrates his journey to the point at which he becomes curious as to how Kurtz, the model imperialist, puts into practice his moral ideas. Marlow is thus faced with a situation similar to that of Kipling's stories: he is interested both in beliefs and the reality of their implementation.

A 'frame' narrator begins the story on '[t]he *Nellie*, a cruising yawl', as he and the 'listeners' wait for the 'turn of the tide':

[t]he Sea-reach of the Thames stretched before us like the beginning of an interminable waterway. In the offing the sea and the sky were welded together without a joint [and] the tanned sails of the barges drifting up with the tide seemed to stand still in red clusters [...]. The air was dark above Gravesend, and farther back still seemed condensed into a mournful gloom brooding motionless over the biggest, and the greatest, town on earth.

(*HD*, p. 3)

The narrator's cinematic panning between background and foreground combines with the language of endlessness and compression to establish a meditative mood. His eye moves off to the horizon and is then 'clustered' into the sails before moving upwards to the 'gloom

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contrary to those of her class; the narrative is, in effect, a form of ventriloquism. Williams is a 'rioter' protesting against the taxation of rural communities in south-west Wales in the 1830s. The narrative purports to be Williams's, but it is framed by a governing narrator, Morganwg, who supposedly fashions his story for publication. Williams is bi-lingual, but his natural tongue is Welsh: the narrative, like that of 'A Sahibs' War', may thus be seen as a political 'translation'. Although Williams kills an official in an attack on a tollgate, his actions are presented, through the narrator's educated voice, as those of a freedom fighter. As Kipling appropriates Singh's voice to express complex political opinions, so Dillwyn uses Williams's voice both to accept that he is an uncivilized 'Other', and to deconstruct the principles that classify him as such. See Amy Dillwyn, *The Rebecca Rioter*, ed. Katie Gramich ([1880] Dinas Powys: Honno, 2001).

brooding' over London. The term 'gloom brooding', or its inversion, 'brooding gloom', appears five times in the first three pages to evoke an atmosphere heavy with anticipation. The initial narrative is recursive rather than iterative; repeated words displace rather than reinforce ideas; and the overall effect is to suggest a process in which opposites merge.

As if to correct the narrative uncertainty, the frame narrator 'evoke[s] the great spirit of the past' – 'Sir Francis Drake to Sir John Franklin [...] great knights-errant of the sea' (p. 4) – heroic adventurers who began their momentous journeys on the Thames. Yet, as the frame narrator proceeds, he deconstructs the authority with which he has associated himself. These heroes were, in reality, '[h]unters for gold [...] bearing the sword, and often the torch, messengers of might within the land' (p. 5). The bearers of civilizing light also carry with them destructive fire: imperial ideals are illusory,<sup>46</sup> mere 'dreams of men' (p. 5) rooted in base instincts of 'might'. Now, at the heart of the British Empire, '[t]he sun set[s]' (p. 5): enter Marlow.

The words of Marlow's narrative are relayed as reported speech: "[a]nd this also," said Marlow suddenly, "has been one of the dark places of the earth"" (p. 5).<sup>47</sup> We are launched laterally into the middle of a disconcerting subsidiary 'framed' narrative, the language and tone of which implies the story's unsayable, 'extralinguistic' nature.<sup>48</sup> Faith in iterated narratives may not be assumed: knowledge, Marlow suggests, is subject to a process that renders it conditional, at best. Thus, darkness becomes part of London's identity.

The frame narrator returns to explain that Marlow is a seaman and a wanderer: he is not of the Establishment. He describes Marlow's narrative strategy in performative terms:

<sup>46</sup> As seafaring crews, such as that of the *Narcissus*, are 'dispense[d] [...] illusions'; see p. 108 above. Lewis also uses the image of the torch to indicate double standards; see note 138 to Chapter 1.

<sup>47</sup> Marlow's use of 'and' and 'also' suggests that he has been talking to the other listeners, separated from the frame narrator, and that his tale is part of a more all-pervading narrative of darkness.

<sup>48</sup> Brooks, *Reading for the Plot*, p. 251.

to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel [within] the shell of a cracked nut [...] but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that, sometimes, are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine.

(p. 5)

Marlow's meaning, then, is subaltern to centripetal, iterative discourses; it is 'like' something else, a halo, manifested only 'sometimes' through another indeterminate phenomenon: 'spectral [...] moonshine.' Marlow understands meaning as 'elusive, [...] ephemeral and constantly open to contestation.'<sup>49</sup> Thus, as a narrator, he must be allowed to operate under the same conditions created by Kipling for Stalky: he is related to the pedagogical 'frame' (in the story, and in the sense of imperial institutions), but he must also have free 'rein' to get to the end of his journey, as Stalky travels 'beyond [...] knowing'. Marlow's narrative freedom is more pronounced than Stalky's: the latter's narrators play a large part in forming his story, but Marlow's framing narrator is mainly a 'listener', as Marlow talks and talks.

Meisel's view of Marlow's technique as Modernist in approach – typically multiple, changeable and recessionary<sup>50</sup> – supports the idea that his narrative is intentionally indeterminate. However, as Marlow gives a history lesson to set against the narrator's, Meisel's view is only partly confirmed. In describing London's darkness, Marlow talks about "when the Romans first came here, nineteen hundred years ago – the other day .... Light came out of this river since [but] it is like a running blaze" (p. 5). He imagines how a Roman colonizer would have felt, "going up this river", lost in a "wilderness"; his story is analeptic, but he generalizes by hinting at qualities needed by modern imperialists, like himself: "[t]hey were men enough to face the darkness"; his argument follows the frame narrator's initial recursiveness: "darkness" was here in Roman times and "yesterday" (p. 6). The shifting chronology and the suggestion that progress is transient render the narrative

<sup>49</sup> Kirsti Bohata, personal communication with the author, 14 December 2007.

<sup>50</sup> See p. 14 above; this kind of narrative contrasts with Stanley's attempts to define.

devoid of 'positive terms'. It is performative. However, Marlow's next speech asserts modern imperialism's pedagogical ideals: "[m]ind [...] what saves us is efficiency"; Marlow, like the 'we' narrator in *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*, invokes a redeeming British morality: "not a sentimental pretence, [but] an unselfish belief in the idea – something you can set up, and bow down before" (pp. 6-7).<sup>51</sup> Marlow iterates faith in the received wisdom of the civilizing mission – efficiency and duty for the common good. For the moment, Marlow is the 'upright hero' of the school-story genre; his meaning remains 'inside the shell', within the shaping discourse of an imperial adventure tale.

Once Marlow has established historical precedents for imperial ventures, he moves on to tell of his journey to the Congo. This begins in Brussels,<sup>52</sup> and his narrative takes on an ironic outer meaning to undermine the 'idea' that from a European base imperialism created a 'reality' of 'beneficent activity', as Stanley puts it. Marlow's sponsor in obtaining employment as a steamboat captain is his aunt, and this fosters notions of a familial foundation for his activities which, in the same way as the families of the boys in *Stalky & Co.* send their sons to school to be 'prepared' for the Army, effectively approves his imperialist venture. However, unlike Stalky, Marlow comes to realize the power of such ideas in fashioning for him an identity for which he is ill-equipped:

"I had been represented [as] an exceptional and gifted creature [...]. Something like an emissary of light [...] a lower sort of apostle. [My aunt] talked about 'weaning those ignorant millions from their horrid ways,' [but] I ventured to hint that the Company was run for profit."<sup>53</sup>

(p. 12)

<sup>51</sup> Marlow's faith in British imperialism is evidenced by his reference to "vast amount of red" on the map in the Brussels office where he receives his appointment to go to the Congo – "good to see at any time because one knows that some real work is done in there"; see *HD*, p. 10. The red on the map is a potent symbol of authority, but, to recall Eliot's words, Marlow will find that there is a discrepancy between 'the potency' and 'the existence'.

<sup>52</sup> Although Brussels is never named, Marlow's journey follows Conrad's own path to the Congo.

<sup>53</sup> Conrad's Aunt Poradowska was instrumental in hastening his appointment to Société Belge pour le Commerce du Haut-Congo; see p. 51 above.



Marlow is both an 'emissary' for the imperial idea, and an employee of a trading company that operates commercially. He is between the 'idea' and the 'reality', and, in that inter-relation of the pedagogical and the performative, he illustrates the theme of this chapter. As in the case of Corbyn in 'A Sahibs' War', Marlow's identity is contestable. His iterated discourse of 'efficiency' now sounds sinister – more to do with maximizing profit – and at the moment of his appointment to "The Company" his identity is displaced: he feels himself to be "an impostor" (p. 13).<sup>54</sup>

Marlow sets sail to take up his duties in Africa.<sup>55</sup> He projects his personal anxieties onto that distant location: "featureless, as if still in the making" (p. 13). When he arrives at the Company Station, he finds that received imperialist wisdom regarding the development of that 'blank' land is also displaced. If one is influenced by Stanley's account of 'civilizing' progress in the Congo, as Conrad seems to have been, company stations were sites of industry. They were places that organized 'construction' projects and provided 'employment'.<sup>56</sup> Kipling's reference to road-making in 'Slaves of the Lamp (Part II)' represents a similarly progressive programme. Marlow linguistically deconstructs that view:

"A heavy and dull detonation shook the ground, a puff of smoke came out of the cliff [...]. No change appeared on [the rock]. They were building a railway. The cliff was not in the way of anything, but this objectless blasting was all the work going on."<sup>57</sup>

(p. 15)

The 'work' Marlow sees at the Company Station reduces his central belief in efficiency to a debilitating cycle that produces 'no change', and its social effect forces

<sup>54</sup> Marlow's thoughts of being an 'impostor' could be considered in the similar way to Alun Lewis's narrator in 'Almost a Gentleman', and Lily Tobias's Anglicized characters, in the context of 'acting' a role that leads to a false identity.

<sup>55</sup> Like Brussels, Africa and the Congo are not named in the story.

<sup>56</sup> Stanley, *DC*, 'Preface to the Edition of 1899', p. xix.

<sup>57</sup> Adam Hochschild notes the story's 'precise and detailed [...] description' of the 'work' in the Congo; scenes such as Marlow describes are 'a record of what Conrad himself saw'; see Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa* ([1998] London: Pan Books, 2006), pp. 143-144. Conrad's view of the coming of railways to the Congo is at odds with Stanley's idealistic position.

Marlow to re-evaluate his identity. As Kipling self-reflexively identifies his creation of the ungovernable Stalky, so Marlow narrates his own monstrous imperial 'production' of colonized workers which brings to a sharp point the frame narrator's panoramic sweep of imperial history:

"Six black men advanced in a file toiling up the path [...]. Black rags were wound round their loins and the short ends behind wagged to and fro like tails [and] all were connected together with a chain [...]. [T]he eyes stared stonily uphill [with the] deathlike indifference of unhappy savages."<sup>58</sup>

(pp. 15-16)

This passage is, of course, stereotypical racial 'othering': these animal-like 'savages' stand for the 'ignorant millions' that imperialism should be educating. In contrast to the covert propagandist racism in 'A Sahibs' War', where Singh's subaltern voice could be conveniently dismissed, Marlow acknowledges his individual culpability. Although he is appalled by such scenes, he sees that he perpetuates the Africans' degradation: the chain-gang is supervised by a promoted "savage"; on seeing Marlow, this man is cautious, but then "seem[s] to take [him] into partnership in his exalted trust" (p. 16).<sup>59</sup> The 'exaltation' of Marlow sets him up as a pedagogical figure: "[a]fter all," he says, "I also was a part of the great cause of these high and just proceedings" (p. 16).

Marlow's "partnership" with the African supervisor, an oppressor of his own people, illustrates the ethical gap between the seen morality, the "great cause", and its performative reality, the ironically "just proceedings", but, simultaneously, connects the two. The illustration that Marlow provides is key to understanding the narrative strategy developed through his voice, and is central to the argument that I put forward in this chapter. It concerns

<sup>58</sup> As Dorothy Stanley says, the colonists' activities in the Congo provide 'material for whoever studies the relations, actual and possible, between civilised and savage men'; see Stanley, *Autobiography*, p. 349. Conrad illustrates the discrepancy between the actual and the possible.

<sup>59</sup> Marlow's position, appalled at his own capacity for 'othering', reflects Conrad's complex views on race. He also is capable of displaying an affinity with 'Others' and expressing stereotypically discriminating views; see Chapter 2.

complicity of the individual with the organization, a notion that is illuminated by the rhetorical question that concludes Kipling's Stalky stories "[a]in't I responsible for the whole thing?" Marlow's narrative of the performance of his duties as a 'cog' in the imperial machine effectively 'serves the colonial effort his discourse otherwise exposes.'<sup>60</sup> This notion of simultaneity is the very idea which presents the texts of Joseph Conrad and Alun Lewis as particularly illuminating in the context of complex, modern identity.

Conrad's strategy differs somewhat from Kipling's. In both of Kipling's stories examined in this chapter, he keeps faith with the shaping imperial discourse, as distinct from those who execute its policies. He displays an ambivalence that is more in respect of the 'gentlemen' in 'first class' who fail to manage Stalky and his like; they are culpable for imperial failings, rather than their agents. Conrad, as someone who is more distinctly both inside and outside the Establishment, uses Marlow to make plain his own guilt, both as one who believes in the ideal and as one who puts it in to practice. This inter-action works against Achebe's reductive view that the story's dehumanization of Africans calls into question only 'the very humanity of black people'.<sup>61</sup> The black men in the chain-gang connect the two dimensions of Marlow's identity in a hellish continuum – the "gloomy circle of some Inferno" (*HD*, p. 16)<sup>62</sup> – thus, in turn, he questions his own humanity, and begins to see identity as 'a *project*', a 'process'<sup>63</sup> which is open to challenge and negotiation.

The condition of the Company Station is represented by Marlow through repeating images of the exchange between the pedagogical and the performative. The Company's chief accountant, for example, is a "miracle" of orderliness – "white cuffs [...] snowy trousers"; he has fashioned for himself, and, significantly, "his books, which were in apple-pie order"

<sup>60</sup> Henricksen, *Nomadic Voices*, p. 59.

<sup>61</sup> Achebe, 'An Image of Africa', p. 790.

<sup>62</sup> Several critics have interpreted Marlow's journey as a 'version of the traditional descent into hell, such as that in the sixth book of Virgil's *Aeneid*, and in Dante's *Inferno*'; see Ian Watt, *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 190-191. Ideas of 'descent' will figure more prominently in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

<sup>63</sup> Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, p. 120; (original emphasis).

(p. 18), a replica of his working life at home. He exemplifies Bhabha's notion of 'Signs Taken for Wonders': a narrative of 'the triumph of the colonialist moment' in 'the sign of appropriate representation'.<sup>64</sup> However, it is not possible for the accountant to replicate that 'Sameness' in the colonies: 'the institution [in] the wilds is also an *Entstellung*, a process of displacement, distortion' which *in effect* creates 'darkness'<sup>65</sup> alongside itself. This analysis complements Bhabha's identification of the damaging effects of iteration, and the consequences of both strategies are visible all around the accountant. Marlow sees that

"[e]verything else in the Station was in a muddle – heads, things, buildings. Caravans. Strings of dusty niggers [...] arrived and departed: a stream of manufactured goods, rubbishy cottons, beads, and brass-wire set into the depths of darkness and in return came a precious trickle of ivory."

(p. 18)

As Stalky's first-person voice disappears the further he moves from the imperial centre, so Marlow's language of imperial exchange begins to lose its definition, and, in proto-Modernist manner, descends into random sequential images – "heads, things" – and dislocated symbols – "caravans." In the term "dusty niggers", he reiterates his earlier racial stereotyping, although the black men's appearance in "strings" gives them a perverse coherence amidst the disorganization. This scene inverts an 'original' imperial narrative and illustrates its relationship with the performative. The accountant's insistence on an orderly 'Sameness' instigates the insidious double-voicedness of the colonialist discourse. The idea of flows of European-manufactured "rubbish" is uttered in the same breath as its opposite – "precious" ivory. It is via this commodity that Kurtz's status as the premier Company agent is revealed to Marlow, the seaman and 'wanderer'.

<sup>64</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 149. 'Signs Taken for Wonders' is the title of Chapter 6 of Bhabha's book; it echoes T. S. Eliot's poem 'Gerontion' (1920).

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* Stalky's corrupt mixing of Urdu and English, "Kubbadar! Tumbleinga!" (as interpreted and re-repeated by Dick Four), is a similar instance of an *Entstellung*, given that he utters the phrase as he departs to create his own distorting empire; see p. 145 above.

According to the accountant, Kurtz's financial contribution is "“very remarkable [...] Sends in as much ivory as all the others put together”" (p. 19). This view is processed through Marlow's recollection, within the frame narration, and introduces levels of uncertainty about Kurtz's identity. The effect is heightened by the accountant giving his account of the intentions of those distanced from the proceedings: "“he will go far, very far,’ he began again. ‘He will be a somebody in the Administration before long. They, above [...] mean him to be’" (p. 19).

The accountant's narrative obliquely conveys a recursive pattern. Kurtz has already gone far, into the interior; there, in the 'beyond', he is allowed free rein, yet he is tied to institutions. Complicity is again raised as a central concern: 'they' 'mean' him to do whatever he feels necessary to promote the cause, as Kipling's imperial officers tacitly approve Stalky's conduct. Personal agency is thus inextricably tied to colonial power. The cycle continues: Kurtz is *meant* to bring his experience back to the centre,<sup>66</sup> but the uncertain narrative renders that cultural partnership questionable.

Marlow's narrative of his time at the Central Station, including what he recalls being told about Kurtz, illustrates an important thread that runs through the texts examined in this Part. The actions of out-posted imperialists like Stalky were clearly approved of at home; this approval now becomes less certain for Marlow, a situation which would worsen for Lewis's characters fifty years later. Where these imperial 'do-ers' were once 'immune to self-doubt' and 'confident',<sup>67</sup> in their centrality, they are now displaced and become subaltern. The 'Administration', nevertheless, needs to reinforce its position<sup>68</sup> and imperial officers must negotiate between its outmoded ideas and their degenerative reality. Their identities begin to

<sup>66</sup> Stanley is a model for what is intended for Kurtz: his election as M.P. for Lambeth in 1895, and his knighthood in 1899 follow the pattern of bringing imperialist experience back home.

<sup>67</sup> Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, p. 119.

<sup>68</sup> As Stanley reinforces the certainties of imperial 'progress' in his Preface to the re-publication of *Through the Dark Continent*.

be 'written' in that shadowy intersection of the pedagogical and the performative, and Marlow's recollections of impressions and conversations convey the uncertain manner in which that writing takes place.

As an imperial employee, Marlow has no alternative but to do his duty. He now describes his overland march to the Central Station where he is to assume command of his steamer. *Blackwood's* readers might have expected a progressive tone as Marlow establishes himself at the centre of business: he instead heightens the extralinguistic deconstruction. The following passage builds on the strategy used to represent the muddled Company Station by dispensing with conventional syntax in favour of a series of recurring actions, sensations and inversions:

"[d]ay after day [...]. *Camp, cook, sleep, strike camp, march* [...] the tremor of far-off drums, *sinking, swelling, a tremor vast, faint; a sound weird* [...] perhaps with as profound a meaning as the sound of bells in a Christian country. Once a white man [appeared.] Was looking after the upkeep of the road, he declared. Can't say I saw any road or any upkeep."

(p.20; my emphasis)

Marlow's contradictory state of mind is evidenced on the one hand by his prejudice in suggesting that "profound meaning" is a Christian standard, and, on the other, by allowing the "far-off drums" of another culture also to have significance. Achebe suggests that such instances exemplify that for 'Conrad things (and persons) being in their place is of the utmost importance.'<sup>69</sup> However, in this passage, Marlow's technique nullifies assertions of Western cultural stability: where the road-making which Stalky 'extend[s] to the end of the Mâlot country' imposes 'civilization' on uncharted territory, in imperial Africa the same symbol is

<sup>69</sup> Achebe, 'An Image of Africa', p. 785. This view is not wholly supported by the narrative of *Heart of Darkness*. The story's opening, for instance, displaces London as an imperial centre by associating it with darkness and gloom.

inverted: in the dislocation, white men and the infrastructures that support their 'confident' identity, are merely an appearance:<sup>70</sup> there once was a road – now there is none.

At the Central Station Marlow is confronted by what is now a familiar scene of chaos. His complex thoughts of the 'work' there are conveyed by a *heteroglossic* register which juxtaposes the typically imperialist "By Jove!" with the incredulous "I've never seen anything so unreal in my life" (p.23). He finds his steamer wrecked and this event triggers Marlow's iteration of a shaping imperial discourse: he immediately begins work to effect repairs: "[i]n that way only [could I] keep my hold on the redeeming facts of life" (p. 23).

As Marlow works, he continues to expose the deceptive nature of imperial ceremony: "the philanthropic pretence of [the] show" (p. 24). This is followed through by symbolic means to the identity which is being fashioned for Kurtz, an identity that will become more significant as Marlow's journey progresses: Marlow talks to an unnamed agent and notices a

"sketch in oils [painted by Kurtz] representing a woman draped and blindfolded carrying a lighted torch. The background was sombre – almost black [...] and the effect of the torchlight on the face was sinister."

(p. 25)

The image of blind justice carrying light into the darkness seems conventional; however, the exposure of a sinister *effect* repeats the frame narrator's suggestion that celebrated imperialists operated with a double purpose, carrying both 'light' and 'fire'. This idea reverberates and multiplies, from an 'original' narrative, through Marlow's and Kurtz's, and on to the agent's view: Kurtz "is an emissary of pity, and science, and progress, and devil knows what else" (p. 25). Kurtz, then, appears to be aware that the imperial idea itself, rather than its mere execution, is an *Entstellung*.

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<sup>70</sup> As the accountant's pristine clothing could give only the superficial appearance of order.

The agent assumes that Marlow is morally affiliated to Kurtz: after all, both have now been referred to as imperial ‘emissaries’. Anticipating Kurtz’s inevitable promotion, he says to Marlow: ““[y]ou are of the new gang – the gang of virtue. The same people who sent him specially also recommended you”” (p. 25). Marlow conveniently lets this public elevation continue. However, he now suggests that in this “instant” of allowing the agent to believe what he liked, in this interstice between honesty and deception, he had become “as much of a pretence” (p. 27) as the other agents. Within a short time he admits to having denied the imperial idea which, in his opening speech, he holds against “pretence”. The displacing effect of the repetition of the word ‘pretence’ then seeps outwards through Marlow’s address to his listeners in which he questions his own narrative and its governing frame:

“I did not see [Kurtz at the time]. He was just a word for me [...]. Do you see him? Do you see the story? Do you see anything? [...] Of course in this you fellows see more than I could then. You see me, whom you know ....”

(p. 27)

Marlow’s voice trails off in uncertainty. We realize that we do not know him nor should we trust him to give a factual narration: more is seen now than “[he] could then.” This differs from the narrative creation of the adult Stalky, who, because of his subterfuge, could also be seen as an imperial ‘pretence’. Kipling asserts Stalky’s identity: it is clearly ‘written’ because his author and his narrators know his true nature. In *Heart of Darkness*, indeterminate identities are allowed to emerge, in the manner of Marlow’s ‘spectral’, interpretive narrative, through multiple suggestions and suppositions – constructs made from the words of anonymous accountants and agents.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> By the nature of their duties, accountants and agents handle the affairs of others without necessarily having full knowledge of their employers’ motivations, particularly in corporate bodies such as imperial trading companies.



Marlow's narrative strategy indicates, as Henricksen suggests, the mediated nature of meaning, 'occurring in the space between discourse and audience'.<sup>72</sup> This notion presents a comparison with the relationship between Singh's vernacular and the parenthetical 'translated' narration in 'A Sahibs' War'. Henricksen refers to the Bakhtinian idea that each 'utterance [is] only a link in a chain and none can be studied outside the chain',<sup>73</sup> and in this sense both stories have levels of narration which collude with each other for very different purposes than those in *Stalky & Co.* The frame narrator in *Heart of Darkness* is alert to the interaction:

I listened on the watch [for] the word that would give me the clue to the faint uneasiness inspired by [Marlow's] narrative that seemed to shape itself without human lips in the heavy night-air of the river.

(p. 27)

Marlow immediately provides 'the word'. His story jumps back to the agent's anxiety about Kurtz's and Marlow's imperial credentials: "'I let him run on [and] think what he pleased about the powers that were behind me. I did! And there was *nothing* behind me!'" (p. 28; my emphasis).<sup>74</sup>

In a complex and intentionally confusing instance of subaltern double-voicedness, Marlow simultaneously asserts imperial authority *and* deconstructs its ongoing narrative. In the terms of Henry Louis Gates Jr., Marlow 'repeats' the notion that a powerful Administration exists; he also exists as an individual agent to further the aims of that institution. However, he 'signifies' both ideas with a different meaning: 'one speech act determines the internal structure of another, the second affecting the voice of the first by absence, by difference.'<sup>75</sup> In 'A Sahibs' War', Singh's imperial discourse perpetuates the

<sup>72</sup> Henricksen, *Nomadic Voices*, p. 50.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.* Henricksen refers to Bakhtin's *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, trans. by Vern W. McGee (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), pp. 60-102. Bakhtin's analysis emphasises that narratives are processes in which meaning is variable. The *OED* supplies various definitions of the word 'process' (in the sense of 'verbal processes'), one of which is 'a narration, a narrative; an account; a story; [...] a discourse or treatise of any kind.'

<sup>74</sup> See p. 50 above regarding Conrad's tendency to create characters with 'nothing' at their core.

<sup>75</sup> Gates, *The Signifying Monkey*, p. 111.

'idea', but shows only the 'ceremony' to remain in existence. For Marlow, *everything* is "“empty”"<sup>76</sup> – the idea of power and the reality of those who execute it – there is *nothing* of substance behind the institution and its agents, yet both exist and operate in the most influential fashion. Most importantly, Marlow includes himself in the doubleness: thus, he is as culpable as the African slave-guard, the accountant, and Kurtz.

Marlow's double-voicedness is present within his iteration of a 'redeeming' faith in the Victorian work ethic involved in his determined efforts to repair the steamer – "[w]hat I really wanted was rivets, by Heaven! Rivets!" (p. 28). Using this device, he attempts to re-fashion his credentials as an imperial narrator. "“We shall have rivets!”" (p. 29), he recalls insisting to a foreman on the repair works, and in doing so, confirms his desire to repeat Kurtz's journey – to 'go far' into the beyond. Brooks suggests that Marlow's narrative 'attaches itself to another story, seeking there its authority'.<sup>77</sup> This implies a 'reining' within a discourse of 'Sameness'. However, such persistent iteration brings about its own displacement. Consequently, the challenge for Marlow is to bring *his* narrative agency to compete with Kurtz's – as he has said, there is *nothing* to prevent him doing this. His narrative is as important as his predecessor's, but, as the later stages of the story will show, it always has a relationship to Kurtz's 'original' journey.

Marlow concludes Part I of the story by summing up the way in which its frame and framed narrations, its 'inner' and 'outer' meanings, are bound together as a process of exchange within one investigation of seen and unseen moralities which Marlow, as the insider-outsider, is peculiarly placed to conduct. Just as Kipling's narratives concern themselves with the process by which the pedagogical imperial discourse relates to its performative execution, so does Conrad's: as Marlow says,

<sup>76</sup> See p. 153 above.

<sup>77</sup> Brooks, *Reading for the Plot*, p. 245; Brooks suggests that Marlow 'repeats a journey already taken', just as Kurtz repeats the journey of the Roman colonizer in Marlow's opening narrative.

“[s]till, I was curious to see whether this man who had come out equipped with moral ideas of some sort would climb to the top after all and how he would set about his work when there.”

(p. 31)

Marlow, as he moves closer to Kurtz and to his own ‘beyond’, will have good cause to be equally curious about himself,<sup>78</sup> as he, in common with all of the principal characters in the texts examined in this chapter, ‘comes out’ from a home environment, with its shaping beliefs, to a dislocating alien place. However, in an interim created by that spatial migration, there exists the potential for individual identity to develop: to echo Alun Lewis’s thoughts of his journey to India, these characters experience a ‘widen[ing] [between] the solid and the fluid’,<sup>79</sup> and it is on the two selected stories from his collection, *In the Green Tree*, which I now propose to focus.

### Alun Lewis: ‘The Raid’ (1948)

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In his poem ‘The Mahratta Ghats’ (1945), written during the same period as the stories of *In the Green Tree*, Lewis surveys an Indian landscape in which ‘[d]ark peasants drag the sun upon their backs’: the deadening effect of a sun that never sets has ‘exhausted’<sup>80</sup> the environment. In Kipling’s discourse, imperialists ‘[s]erve and love the lands they rule’,<sup>81</sup> and imperialism expands its authority – ‘extend[s] its road’. In ‘The Mahratta Ghats’ the limit of the ‘road’ is reached:

Who is it climbs the summit of the road?  
 Only the beggar bumming his dark load.  
 Who was it cried to see the falling star?  
 Only the landless soldier lost in war.

<sup>78</sup> As Marlow says at the start of his tale, the journey was “the culminating point of my experience. It seemed somehow to throw a kind of light on everything about me – and into my thoughts”; see *HD*, p. 7.

<sup>79</sup> See p. 72 above.

<sup>80</sup> ‘The Mahratta Ghats’, in Lewis, *Collected Poems*, p. 131, ll. 1-6.

<sup>81</sup> Kipling, untitled poem, in *The Complete Stalky & Co.*, p. 6, l. 59.

And did a thousand years go by in vain?  
And does another thousand start again? <sup>82</sup>

(ll. 22-27)

Conventionally positive images of light burden the peasant and the soldier alike: both are beggared in a tortuous cycle that now turns to recession. <sup>83</sup>

Critics have made much of the symbolic psychological significance of the 'landless soldier' in terms of individual experience. <sup>84</sup> The idea of landlessness also illustrates the dangerous nature of the performative. In Kipling's and Conrad's narratives the capacity still exists for 'land' to become a 'civilized' place through an iteration of imperial practices. By the time Lewis was writing about India, the process of displacement – the sense of turning 'something' into 'nothing' that is implicit in Corbyn's story and explicit in Marlow's – is now brought to a conclusion. Thus, the challenges facing those imperial officers 'equipped with moral ideas' are as relevant to Lewis's stories as to those written by Kipling and Conrad. At a time of global disarray, the opportunities for a development of identity presented to Lewis's characters are, perhaps, even more enticing than they were fifty or so years earlier.

In 'The Raid', a war-time Army officer, Selden, is given a job that, in microcosm, represents an effort to re-assert a collapsing imperial authority in India. Previously a 'bank clerk in Civvy Street' (CS, p. 187), he is ambivalent about his position. Consequently, he tries to fashion a purposeful identity as he begins his first-person narrative – '[m]y platoon and I were on training that morning' – although his next sentence, '[w]e've been on training every morning for the last three years, for that matter' (p. 185) sardonically undermines imperial strategy.

<sup>82</sup> In 'The Hollow Men', the speaker maps out a 'dead land' where 'stone images / Are raised, here they receive / The supplication of a dead man's hand / Under the twinkle of a fading star'; see T. S. Eliot, *Collected Poems*, p. 90, ll. 39-44. Both poems illuminate the idea of a discrepancy between the pedagogical and the performative.

<sup>83</sup> 'Lest we forget', as Kipling puts it. See pp. 57-58 above.

<sup>84</sup> See p. 26 above.

As Tony Brown has observed,<sup>85</sup> Selden's narrative displays an insecurity through various registers which deviate from the 'my platoon' approach. However, much like the narrator in 'Almost a Gentleman', Selden has to fashion a secure 'Army' identity through self-conscious 'outward ceremony'.<sup>86</sup> As he meets the officers who will brief him on his mission to go into the jungle and capture a terrorist bomber, he salutes and 'brace[s]' himself: '[s]elf-defence is always the first instinct, self-suspicion the second' (p. 185), he thinks, as though about to be found out. Selden's compliance with 'pretence' is evident. For the moment, though, he simply responds to the orders of the apparently efficient Commanding Officer, the 'C.O':

"[h]ere's your objective, Selden [...]. Route: track south of Morje [...]. Work it out [on] the map and set your compass before you march off. Strike the secondary road below this group of huts here, 247568 [and] work up the canal to the village [...]. Government has a paid agent in the village who will meet you [at] 06.00 hours."

(p. 185)

The senior officer's positive language, precise instructions and reference points suggest the shaping discourse of an imperial adventure story.<sup>87</sup> However, an informal conversation between the C.O. and Selden is as revealing in terms of *heteroglossia* as Selden's insecure registers. The C.O. falls into Kiplingesque school-story *argot* in encouraging Selden to capture the bomber: "[s]talk him good and proper", and Selden's attempts to display a 'Sameness' by sharing in the idiom, "I'll give you a good show, sir" (p. 186). The pretence is ironically exposed by the C.O.'s remarks to the D.A.P.M.<sup>88</sup> in justifying his decision to select Selden for the mission: Selden is a "[b]loody good shot [...]. Shot six mallard with me last Sunday" (p. 186). Selden's selection for the role of imperial

<sup>85</sup> See p. 31 above.

<sup>86</sup> Coincidentally, Selden has the same pre-war occupation of bank clerk as the 'unreliable' G. Vivian-Simpson in Sassoon's *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man*; see p. 113 above.

<sup>87</sup> The fiction of the conventional imperial adventure story 'often came equipped with the same appurtenances of fact' as the more report-like accounts of explorers such as Stanley; see White, *Adventure Tradition*, p. 42.

<sup>88</sup> The C.O. is talking to the Deputy Assistant Provost Marshal.

enforcer is based not on organizational, ideological or military credentials, but on his ability to shoot ducks.<sup>89</sup> He is pleased that he fits in to the 'show': '[c]omes of shooting those six mallard' (p. 186), he thinks. Like Marlow, the ordinary seaman, Selden, the bank clerk, is acting a part: he realizes himself to be an 'impostor'.<sup>90</sup>

While the narrative is concerned with Selden's relationship with his seniors, it operates at the level of a humorous attack on the officer-class. As the platoon marches into the jungle, there is a change in the narrative strategy. This is signalled by evidence of a different voice – that of Selden's inner consciousness – and his register shifts from the colloquial 'I was a bit worked up' to convey a sense of moving to a different plane – '[I] began to enjoy [the] freedom and deep still peace that informs the night out in the tropics' (p. 188).

Selden's apparent enjoyment of the 'Other' jungle environment presents difficulties. As Achebe might suggest, Selden appropriates the native place as a kind of mental playground. As the platoon ascends a hill, he looks down on the 'clusters of fires in the villages' below and comments:

[e]ither a festival or a funeral, obviously. I could hear the drums beating [...] it was very clear and echoing, made my flesh creep. You feel so out of it in India somehow [...] very white and different. I don't know [...]. I'd have said that valley *hated* us that night, on those rocky crests. Queer.

(p. 188; original emphasis.)

In similar fashion to Marlow's reading of the African drumming during his march, Selden realises that the drumming which he hears has a profound ceremonial cultural significance. The throw-away remark, 'obviously', undermines the insight: as Marlow assumes too much in

<sup>89</sup> Selden, as an ill-equipped 'enforcer', is interestingly compared with Corbyn in 'A Sahibs' War'. Both are out of place in the role in contrast to the ruthless Australians, Sikhs and Pathans in Kipling's story.

<sup>90</sup> The narrator in 'Almost a Gentleman' is also an 'impostor'. Although the exact details of his origins are not revealed, it is evident that he understands what it means to be a racial outsider in a predominantly English Army. However, 'it is plain that [Selden] is English'; (see Pikoulis, 'Politics of Empire', p. 163); class issues thus appear to be more prevalent in Selden's case. In the story 'Ward "O"3(b)', examined in this chapter, race and class issues are brought together through the Welsh collier's son, Lieut. Anthony Weston.

likening the meaning of the drumming in the Congo to that of a Christian ceremony, so does Selden, here in India. In doing so, he realizes his own culpability, and thus begins to follow a similar epistemological path to Marlow – one which distances them from Stalky's imperious presumption that he can act like 'a king'. Rather, Selden is 'out of it' in this environment.

Selden senses that he cannot really 'enjoy' his feelings of freedom because of his alienation. In another similarity to Marlow, he recognizes his own cultural difference. The 'very white[ness]' of the British soldiers is an *Entstellung*, a distorting performative presence which creates the same narrative effect as that of Stanley's iteration of whiteness as a shining symbol of civilization in the wilderness. In Selden's experience, the soldiers' difference, *their* 'Otherness', generates 'hate'. In his interior monologue, this deconstructing effect is transferred through 'extralinguistic'<sup>91</sup> means into the physical world: sound, for instance, is both 'clear' and 'echoing'; nothing in this 'shadow' region, to recall Eliot's words, has positive terms. Selden's 'obvious' readings of the situation quickly change, as the now confusing external environment imposes itself ominously on his inner consciousness – as he says, 'I don't know [...] Queer.'

The platoon nears its objective, and Selden becomes increasingly anxious. This feeling is heightened when he meets the Indian informer and his narrative authority is further diminished. As M. Wynn Thomas has argued, the presence of the Indian emphasizes the potential for the imperial exchange to be 'repeatedly misconstrued, misrepresented and mistranslated.'<sup>92</sup> Remembering that Selden has spent three years training for this operational moment, the 'grotesque'<sup>93</sup> dialogue between the two men confirms that the preparation represents only a token effort, at least in terms of efficient communication with other 'cogs' in the process:

<sup>91</sup> In the manner in which Brooks suggests the narrative in *Heart of Darkness* functions; see p. 155 above.

<sup>92</sup> Thomas and Brown, 'Colonial Wales', p. 73.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

“Officer sahib huzzoor,” [the informer] said. “Mai Sarkar ko dost hai,” or something. And he said the name of the man I was after, which was the password. “Achiba,” I said, meaning good show. “Tairo a minute while I bolo my phaltan and then we’ll jao jillo.” He got the idea.

(p. 189)

Selden’s face-to-face exchange with the informer continues the effect of the soldiers’ *Entstellung* in their position high above the jungle, transposing it to the everyday performative arena. The only information that Selden hears is the mission password, and his response demonstrates the clichéd pretence of imperial communication: in the ‘good show’, the ‘natives’ need get only the generalized ‘idea’.<sup>94</sup>

Selden’s exchange with the informer also illustrates, by comparison with the implications of Stalky’s misconception, ‘Tumbleinga!’, that imperial identity is iterated through recurring manners and conduct in the public realm. Over time, attempts to replicate the imperial ‘show’ render that identity elusive, a theme which is reflected in Selden’s seemingly casual linguistic code-switching. His glossing of ‘Achiba’, as ‘good show’, is an instance of ‘organic’ code-switching similar in intent to Kipling’s translations of Indian vocabulary so that readers are led in a particular ideological direction. In this glossing, Selden gives readers access to the most stereotypical of exchanges; the remainder of his communication, “‘bolo my phaltan’”, for instance, is not glossed, and thus may be regarded as intentional ‘political’ code-switching. Selden identifies clearly a shaping discourse in which readers would normally have faith – the ‘show’ in which he plays his part; but he obscures the contingent detail of day-to-day communication. This strategy suggests that the fundamentals of human contact between colonizer and colonized are garbled and confused. Selden locates himself somewhere in-between the two realms.

<sup>94</sup> The idea of information as an imperial management ‘tool’, so to speak, is ironized by Selden’s inability to communicate.



The platoon reaches the village where the terrorist is hiding, but the narrative ends in anticlimax. The Indian simply surrenders. Selden takes him to be a student and his English speech confirms this: he has been educated in the language of his oppressors, but his reproduction of it hints at mimicry: “[h]ave you got a smoke upon you?” (p. 190), he asks. As an imperial ‘product’, he is a better inter-racial communicator than Selden, and his plaintive “[p]lease [...] I have nothing” (p. 190) speaks in opposition to Selden’s earlier garbled dialogue. The fact that the terrorist speaks English improves, for obvious reasons, the clarity of Selden’s approach: “I’m taking you to Poona,” [he says]. “You killed three of our men;” the bomber’s response, “three men died? Did I [do that?] It’s dreadful” (p. 191), sets up the story’s conclusion which, in effect, repeats the deconstructive lessons of ‘A Sahibs’ War’ and *Heart of Darkness*. In ‘The Raid’, each side in the imperial exchange has ‘nothing’ behind them in terms of guiding principles. Neither has any agency: Selden is playing a seemingly inconsequential part in the procedure of imperial enforcement, and the bomber has participated in random violence, rather than a concerted national campaign. As John Pikoulis observes, Selden is ‘the bomber’s “other” and exists with him in the same moment’; the pedagogical and the performative are fused – both emerge ‘as bundles of contradiction’.<sup>95</sup>

By the end of the story, everything has become ‘mere ceremony’ – a reality which is projected onto a national plane through the dialogue between the bomber and the bemused and disinterested ordinary soldiers in Selden’s platoon:

“What did you do it for, mate?” [Bottomley asks.]  
 After a long silence the chap said very quietly, “For my country.”  
 Chalky said, “Everybody says that. Beats me.” Then we heard the trucks, and  
 Chalky said, “We ought to be there in time for breakfast, boys.”

(p. 191)

<sup>95</sup> Pikoulis, ‘Politics of Empire’, p. 164.

Chalky's words echo the bomber's thoughts of 'nothingness' and this draws each side together in a 'gloomy circle', as Marlow puts it. In the Indian political arena, the soldiers' and the bomber's words are destined to recur endlessly in a deconstructive 'performance' until something breaks the cycle. National, imperial and individual identity, meantime, becomes increasingly contradictory and indeterminate.

### Alun Lewis: 'Ward "O"3(b)' (1948)

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The narrative path in 'The Raid' tracks from the pedagogical, controlling world of the Army officers to the performative, displacing Indian jungle. The story's conclusion offers a perspective which is at odds with that of Kipling's stories in their suggestion that imperialism can serve a wider beneficial purpose.<sup>96</sup> Nevertheless, Selden completes his mission by returning to base with the terrorist, and thus re-establishes his complicity with the officers' discourse. However, that shaping influence, along with issues of nationality, becomes more explicitly problematic in 'Ward "O"3(b)'. Part I of this story begins, as does 'The Raid', in precise and authoritative fashion when the narrator introduces the men in the hospital ward in India – the subjects of the story:

[a]t the time of which I am writing, autumn 1942, Ward 'O'3(b) [was] occupied by Captain A.G. Brownlow-Grace, Lieut.-Quartermaster Withers, Lieut. Giles Moncrieff and Lieut. Anthony Weston.

(CS, p. 197)

Withers suffers with malaria; the others have critical injuries; Brownlow-Grace, for example, has lost an arm in combat; they wait to appear before medical boards which will determine their futures.

Part II of the story takes on a performative aspect that undermines the authoritative opening. We are now with the men in autumn 1942 and further shifts occur as the narrative

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<sup>96</sup> The same case, indeed, which Stanley's narratives forcefully iterated.

flows in and out of Brownlow-Grace's free indirect discourse: 'Moncrieff [had] asked him questions about hunting, fishing and shooting [and] about Burma [...] if he'd been afraid to die. What a shocker, Brownlow-Grace thought [...]. He hadn't given death two thoughts' (pp. 198-199). He touches on his battle experience and expresses a consequential sense of abandonment: 'nobody came to see him [...]. He was the only officer to come out alive. He felt ashamed' (p. 199).

Brownlow-Grace's alienating experience is not understood by those at home: he had written 'telling them he'd had his arm off. [His fiancée's reply] sounded as if she were thrilled [...]. He didn't care so much nowadays what she [was] feeling' (p. 199). His 'hunting, fishing and shooting' background suggests that he is part of the same class-based process of sponsorship that sent Stalky, Corbyn, Marlow and Kurtz to be imperialists.<sup>97</sup> However, 'home' in 'Ward "O"3(b)' is a different place from that to which Kurtz, say, is 'meant' to return for a successful future. Brownlow-Grace's shame at his existence suggests that he perceives himself to be part of a distorting process symbolized by his mutilation. Mirrored in his fiancée's 'inappropriate' reaction to his injuries is an anxiety about his own 'inappropriateness,' or 'Otherness', at home.<sup>98</sup> For Brownlow-Grace, the conduct of people at the imperial base has become meaningless – 'mere outward ceremony'. It is he who first expresses the key dilemma of the story, and, in terms of his future relationship with pedagogical principles, he goes some way towards accounting for the shift in narrative strategy on which this chapter concentrates: "I don't want to go back 'home'", Brownlow-Grace says to the theatre nurse, 'laying sardonic stress on the last word' (p. 201). Like Marlow, he has 'nothing' behind him; his 'country', to recall the language of the ordinary soldiers in 'The Raid', is a place that contains no meaning for him.

<sup>97</sup> The same class-based 'officer' attitude that approves of Selden's duck shooting prowess in 'The Raid'.

<sup>98</sup> Brownlow-Grace's psychological condition typifies the guilt experienced by survivors of tragic events. His position is 'inappropriate' in terms of an *Entstellung*; see pp. 161 above.

Brownlow-Grace's provocative statement causes a narrative break. Part III follows a different strategy by slipping into a poetic voice which comes from Lieut. Weston's inner self, and this shift relegates the narrator to the background. The effect is similar to that of the shift to Selden's consciousness in 'The Raid', but is more disconcerting because the catalyst is the pathological detailing of Weston's bodily mutilation by a tank-mine: '[h]is jaw and shoulder-bone had been shattered, a great clod of flesh torn out of neck and thigh, baring his windpipe and epiglottis and exposing his lung and femoral artery' (p. 202). The extended insight into Weston's near-death experience on the operating table which follows, although mediated by the narrator, suggests that the trauma has also caused a 'baring' of his consciousness:

his three operations [had] exhausted the blood in his veins; most of it was someone else's blood, anyway [and] although he had recovered very rapidly, his living self seemed overshadowed by the death trauma [...]. There had been a complete annihilation, a complete obscuring; into which light had gradually dawned. And this light grew unbearably white, the glare of the sun on a vast expanse of snow, and in its unbounded voids he had moved without identity [...]. And then some mutation had taken place and he became aware of [a] pain that [was] polluted, [where] black eruptions disturbed the whiteness [...]. From it he desired wildly to return to the timeless void.

(p. 202)

The tenor of this voice opposes Brownlow-Grace's, in which death was not given 'two thoughts'. As John Pikoulis observes, the passage reveals a metaphysical theme: to 'one suffering all the tribulations of wartime life, the calm of the dark is a light that is deeply attractive'; where hope is normally associated with a fight for life, Weston has 'progress[ed]' to the stage where 'it comes with an annihilation'.<sup>99</sup>

Weston's injuries make a release desirable, but in terms of this soldier's imperial self, it is significant that his move into a void-like shadowy state has caused an 'obscuring' of his 'identity'. Most of his blood is now 'somebody else's'; his core being has been displaced, leaving him in frightening state of indeterminacy, the same condition, indeed, as Brownlow-

<sup>99</sup> Pikoulis, *A Life*, p. 154.

Grace experiences. The form in which this is expressed – a dense stream-of-consciousness-like narrative – suggests that although Weston has been ‘opened up’, what is inside complicates the clear ‘writing’ of his identity. To return to Meisel’s form of analysis, Weston’s ‘ground – his objecthood – cannot be located’,<sup>100</sup> and this idea becomes more pointed by the fact that Weston has been mutilated in training: by the repeated practices of his own imperial regime.

The shifting from the pedagogical to the performative, hinted at by Kipling in ‘Slaves of the Lamp (Part II)’, and developed in *Heart of Darkness*, is now expressed in the most paradoxical manner. In Weston’s narrative, white and light imagery, iterated by Stanley to denote a completeness of identity, becomes ‘unbearable’. The glare of the sun, recalling the imagery in ‘The Mahratta Ghats’, is intensified by a snowy whiteness, and now reflects back on Weston to create a ‘timeless’ void, a suspension. Thoughts of an escape are more painful than the indeterminacy. But, the situation is to become yet more paradoxical. In the flux, ‘the soft irresistible waves [that] surged up darkly through the interstices of life’ (pp. 202-203),<sup>101</sup> Weston also finds a double-voiced<sup>102</sup> attraction: the imperial regime that almost annihilated him offers a way of development and forward movement.

The narrator now resumes the story: ‘two and a half months later’ (p. 203), Weston is introduced into the dialogue with the other soldiers. Moncrieff, who has fought in Burma,

<sup>100</sup> Meisel, *The Myth of the Modern*, p. 239. This comment is made in relation to Kurtz.

<sup>101</sup> The theme of voiding in Weston’s narrative is echoed in Lewis’s poem ‘In Hospital: Poona (2)’: ‘from the polished ward where men lie ill / Thought rubs clean through the frayed cloth of the will, / Piercing the slow estrangement of disease, / And breaks into a state of blinding light / Where Now is a salt pillar, still and white, / And there are no familiar words or features’; see Lewis, *Collected Poems*, p. 141, ll. 12-17. As I say above, it is significant that in ‘Part (I)’ of the poem the speaker has looked back with affection to the ancient world of Wales, ‘the great mountains, Dafydd and Llewellyn’ (*ibid.*, p. 140, l. 13.), but in ‘Part (2)’ ‘sheds the stippled scales of ancient dreams’; *ibid.*, p. 141, l. 22. As Lewis says in his letters, ‘I’ll never be just English or just Welsh again!’; see p. 74 above: he is expressing a liminal state from which he may be able to move on, but he does not yet know how.

<sup>102</sup> Gates suggests that the kind of stream-of-consciousness narrative deployed to indicate Weston’s condition may be regarded as free indirect discourse which, in turn, could indicate a division of identity. However, he also suggests that such devices are indicators of a ‘developing but discontinuous self’; it is in this latter context of enablement that I am situating Weston’s narrative; see Gates, *The Signifying Monkey*, p. 209.

proposes to Weston that to re-establish his domestic relationships back in Britain he should tell those at home that he was wounded in Burma rather than in training – a feigning of imperial purpose. These sentiments are a world away from those of ‘Slaves of the Lamp (Part II)’, where imperial soldiers’ deeds are celebrated at a reunion. Weston is not interested in lying, but nor is he interested in re-forming personal relationships. Brownlow-Grace’s feelings of abandonment are repeated by these two soldiers: their exchanges with the imperial centre have been terminated. Weston’s inter-relational position is with India, not Britain. In response to Moncrieff’s questioning about what there is for Weston at home, he answers,

“[w]e’re soldiers [and] I’m going in where you left off. I want to have a look at Burma. *And I don’t want to see England.*”

(p. 205; original emphasis)

Moncrieff agrees with Weston’s rejection of “‘England.’” Their statements conclude Part III and structurally reinforce Brownlow-Grace’s feelings of exile at the end of Part II. In a similar way to ‘A Sahibs’ War’ and *Heart of Darkness*, the soldiers’ ‘utterances’ cannot be studied ‘outside [a narrative] chain’: there are multiple voices but, for the moment, they are bound together by their feelings of displacement and mutual desire to deconstruct the idea of home. The pedagogical ‘pretence’ into which these soldiers have entered is over, and an epistemological journey, or ‘*project*’, akin to Marlow’s is about to begin.

Part IV moves on to the key dialogue between Brownlow-Grace and Weston, in which it becomes apparent that they are from opposing social worlds. Brownlow-Grace identifies in Weston an inner trauma that he supposes has its foundation in feelings of abandonment similar to his own, despite their class difference: “[a]ny fool can see something’s eating you up” (p. 206). Weston responds by talking about the difficulties which his background presents for his colonial ‘trajectory’:

“Look. I didn’t start with the same things as you. You had a pram and a private school [...]. My father was a collier [...]. He got rheumatism and nystagmus and then the dole and then parish relief [...]. I used to watch the wheel of the pit spin round [and] then from 1926 on I watched it not turning round at all, and I can’t ever get that wheel out of my mind [...]. I just missed the wheel sucking me down the shaft. I got a scholarship to the county school. I don’t know when I started rebelling. Against that wheel in my head.”<sup>103</sup>

(p. 207)

Weston elaborates on the move away from his apparently Welsh working-class roots. He had begun moving towards Brownlow-Grace’s world – that of the ‘[trained] rigid’ (p. 206) imperialist. His compulsion, however, is to detach himself from the stability of either position, which is represented by the inevitable “soften[ing] up” when the motivation for rebellion, the enslaving “wheel whirring in your head” (p. 208), goes away. When that occurs, all that remains, according to Weston, is a place of domestic ‘Sameness’ – “flowers on the table and a piano she plays sometimes” (p. 208). This is the same ‘pretence’ which Marlow mocks in his aunt’s beliefs, and from which the soldiers in ‘Ward “O”3(b)’ seem especially alienated, a situation that is re-affirmed in Part V of the story which reveals the decisions of the medical board for some of the soldiers. Brownlow-Grace, for instance, is discharged, but he simply fades out of the narrative. Moncrieff remains in the Army, but the narrative does not divulge Weston’s fate. Pikoulis suggests that this is because ‘his is an inner destiny’, but that it is apparent that he is ‘heading back to the war’.<sup>104</sup>

By the end of the story the omniscient narrator has all but disappeared, and the final perspective is provided by Weston, who is at once an officer and a collier’s son; an ‘R.A.C man’ (p. 197)<sup>105</sup> who has yet to put his own ‘ideas’ into practice. The sense of ‘integration and independence’ which Taffy, in ‘They Came’, experiences at home now recurs in Weston,

<sup>103</sup> Brownlow-Grace’s and Weston’s biographical details are interchangeable with Lewis’s, in some respects. The former’s ‘private school’ background repeats Lewis’s childhood circumstances, as does the experience of Weston’s scholarship. The collier father and suggested experience of a depressed environment are more generalised representations of a culture to which Lewis was both attached and from which he was separate.

<sup>104</sup> Pikoulis, *A Life*, pp. 154-155.

<sup>105</sup> Weston serves in The Royal Armoured Corps.

in India. He has a responsibility to hold on to his Welsh origins, yet he must move on. As Stalky and Marlow, within their narrative frames, are given freedom to travel their respective 'roads', so, by re-accessing Weston's consciousness and updating his psychological condition, 'Ward "O"3(b)' fulfils the same strategy. Moncrieff and he

sat on the circular ledge [of the garden pool] [...]. Circles of water lapped softly outwards, outwards, till they touched the edge of the pool [and] lapped again inwards, inwards. [Weston] felt the ripples surging [...] like a series of temptations in the wilderness. And he felt glad to-night, feeling some small salient gained [when] the men whom he was with were losing ground along the whole front to the darkness that there is.

(p. 212)

Brownlow-Grace, however much he protests, will probably be drawn back to 'nothingness' in England. He is an example of the men who are 'losing ground' to the 'wheel', through an iterative cycle of 'darkness', as Marlow perceives it. But Weston begins to progress. Remaining in India, he is at an imperial periphery: a sense of complicity with the governing regime still exists, but now the relationships are more elusive than those in, say, Kipling's stories. The pedagogical and the performative are less able to be identified, and thus an opportunity is presented, suggested by the repeating 'outwards, outwards [...] inwards, inwards' motion in the pool. The 'ledges' which he and Moncrieff inhabit, both physical and metaphorical, are the insecure places of a migratory process – outposts from which one can be 'tempted' to explore unknown and challenging cultures in the complex 'hither and thither' flux which Bhabha's notion of 'the beyond' describes.<sup>106</sup>

Two aspects of Weston distinguish him as suited to the move further into the beyond. First, his imaginative capacity, exemplified in the poetic narrative of his near-death experience, is not hindered by iterative principles and allows him to sense the significance of the moment at the pool. Second, his social identity is located inside and outside both his

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<sup>106</sup> See p. 80 above.



Welsh origins and his position as an imperial Army officer. This positioning furthers a process of hybridization that existed in him before his trauma because of the ‘profound process of redefinition’<sup>107</sup> that has occurred in his Welsh home environment – an echoing of Lewis’s own experience. In considering Weston’s dislocations, we might liken him to Marlow, the ‘seaman and wanderer’ who is promoted to the world of imperial agents: as the latter understands the way in which meaning may not be restricted, ‘inside like a kernel’, so Weston begins to realize the importance of the paradox imagined in his trauma. However, in comparing the two characters, it is important to note, particularly in the context of Marlow’s narration in the latter parts of *Heart of Darkness*, that he returns home to the imperial base, whereas Weston may not. Although Weston commits himself to the almost-defunct governing regime, agency for him is to be sought elsewhere – in the ‘irresistible’ turbulent ‘interstices of life’.

Just as Marlow’s epistemological journey begins at a moment that focuses his curiosity on the intersection between Kurtz’s ideas and the reality of their execution, so, at a similar juncture, does Weston’s. He has declared his intention to ‘have a look at Burma’, and this wilderness now entices him as an inter-relational place of exchange. His psychological ‘mutation’ was at once attractive and frightening. Now, contemplating the future, he senses ‘gladness’ and the uncertainty which is reflected in Moncrieff’s ‘inarticulate eyes’; nevertheless the contradiction of emotions represents his future fragmentary condition: as Weston says, “[w]e’d better go now” (p. 212). The question for Weston in his urge to go will be the same one which Marlow, while he is in the Congo, ponders about Kurtz: ‘how [would he] set about his work when there[?]’;<sup>108</sup> ‘there’ for Kurtz and Marlow is the African

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<sup>107</sup> See pp. 61-62 above.

<sup>108</sup> See p. 168 above.

interior; for Weston, it is figured by Burma. For those following that path, there is a perpetual questioning: are their individual identities 'capable of development'?<sup>109</sup>

## PART 2: GENDER IDENTITY

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The stories examined in Part 1 of this chapter follow an historical path that leads to an increasingly deconstructed imperial identity. The narratives concern imperial officers, whether in the Army or in commerce. The holding of such an office brings with it a conventional notion of masculine authority. Thus, in the stories' spatial dislocations to the beyond, the development of identity may be seen to be limited by narrative strategies that iterate organizational 'singularities [of] "gender"',<sup>110</sup> as Bhabha puts it. The authors were, after all, products of upbringings that were oriented in the masculine.<sup>111</sup>

In this Part, I propose to examine the way in which Conrad, Kipling, and Lewis represent gender roles, in the context of what Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar call the profound 'social metamorphoses brought about by [the] changing dynamics of sex relations'<sup>112</sup> in the late nineteenth century. This cultural displacement was not, as had been supposed, a "marginal curiosity", rather, "it permeate[d] everything."<sup>113</sup> Thus, in terms of the questioning caused by the uncertainties of the performative, purportedly subaltern gender issues are central to the 'site of writing' identity, and operate to disrupt singular narrative positions.

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<sup>109</sup> Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, p. 119.

<sup>110</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 2.

<sup>111</sup> An orientation influenced by essentially masculine institutions such as the public school, the Army, and the merchant service.

<sup>112</sup> Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century, Volume 1: The War of the Words* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 21.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid*; Gilbert and Gubar quote from Theodore Roszak, 'The Hard and the Soft: the Force of Feminism in Modern Times', in *Masculine/Feminine: Readings in Sexual Mythology and the Liberation of Women*, ed. Betty Roszak and Theodore Roszak (New York: Harper, 1969), pp. 87-104 (p. 88).

In keeping with my general approach, namely to examine texts that represent the crisis of the nineteenth-century *fin-de-siècle* and compare them with examples of those written during the turbulence of the late 1930s and early 1940s, the narratives to be examined are: Part I of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, in which gender relations are distanced; Kipling's story, 'Without Benefit of Clergy',<sup>114</sup> which concerns a secret, un-formalized 'marriage' between an English civil servant and an Indian woman; and Lewis's story, 'The Housekeeper', in which the main characters are formally husband and wife. Although 'The Housekeeper', written in 1938-39, deviates from the chronological path that follows Lewis's move into the beyond, it is an important text in that it indicates his capacity for negotiating fixed positions before a more dislocating experience in India took place.

The guiding critical framework for this Part will be, principally, ideas from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's essays, 'Imperialism and Sexual Difference' (1986),<sup>115</sup> and 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1988),<sup>116</sup> and her extended analysis, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (1999).<sup>117</sup> My aim will be to offer, through consideration of the impact of gender issues on narrative strategy, altered perceptions of the intersection of the pedagogical and the performative in the three selected writers' texts. I begin, though, with a brief summary of the deconstructive nature of changing gender roles at the *fin-de-siècle*.

Elaine Showalter has commented on the sense of 'apocalypse' that marked the late nineteenth century when 'laws that governed sexual identity and behaviour seemed to be breaking down.'<sup>118</sup> '[T]ypical' cultural responses were to fear 'degeneration' and to long for

<sup>114</sup> 'Without Benefit of Clergy' was first published in *Macmillan's Magazine* and *Harper's Weekly* in June 1890. It was collected in *Life's Handicap* (1891).

<sup>115</sup> See note 60 to Review of the Critical Field.

<sup>116</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (eds), *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader* ([1988] Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), pp. 66-111.

<sup>117</sup> See note 115 to Chapter 2.

<sup>118</sup> Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin-de-Siècle* ([1991] London: Virago, 1996), p. 3.

‘controls around the definition of gender, as well as race, class, and nationality’.<sup>119</sup> Conrad, for instance, associates himself with a supposedly stable ideal of English male identity in the bonding together of the crewmen of the “*Narcissus*” to triumph over danger. Such a controlling narrative strategy may be seen as a symptom of what Showalter identifies as a ‘crisis of identity for men’ created by a realization that masculinity, like “‘femininity’”, is a socially-constructed role.<sup>120</sup>

Lyn Pykett has noted that one of the anxieties of a perceived ‘crisis in civilization’<sup>121</sup> related to the power of ‘the female as primitive and pre- or non-rational’, but that in the crisis emerged an opportunity for women.<sup>122</sup> The ‘typical’ fearful responses to change identified by Showalter may then be attributed to the male Establishment. It follows that the principle of degeneration as a trope in literature is a pedagogical construction deployed by male writers. This iterative device served to defend the male position against what Linda Dowling, in the title of her essay ‘The Decadent and the New Woman of the 1890s’ (1979), identifies as two ‘profound threat[s] to established culture’, which acted as progressive agents for change.<sup>123</sup>

Dowling links the Decadent and the New Woman as two models that represented the pursuance of a ‘hegira towards a more fully realized selfhood’<sup>124</sup> through challenges to gender definition. The New Woman ideas of ‘equality and self-development’<sup>125</sup> will be particularly relevant to texts examined in this Part, and one way in which *fin-de-siècle* literary men responded to those challenges was by espousing hierarchical roles in the genre of the quest

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>121</sup> Lyn Pykett, ‘Introduction’ to *Reading Fin de Siècle Fictions*, ed. Lyn Pykett (Harlow: Longman Critical Readers, 1996), p. 2.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>123</sup> Linda Dowling, ‘The Decadent and the New Woman in the 1890s’, in *Reading Fin de Siècle Fictions*, ed. Lyn Pykett, pp. 47-63 (pp. 47-48).

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

romance. As ‘quests’ that appeal predominantly to males,<sup>126</sup> each of the texts by Stanley, Kipling and Conrad considered thus far, provides an opportunity for men to be ‘bonded and rejuvenated’ by escaping the confines of society ‘to explore their secret selves in [a “primitive”] space.’<sup>127</sup>

Robert Fraser has examined the tendency for male quest writers to set their stories in ‘remote parts of the globe in which European women were not welcome’, and to emphasize ‘feats of endurance calculated to boost masculine self-esteem.’<sup>128</sup> The revival of the genre that had its origins in Classical literature was, in fact, influenced by ‘the way in which the male Victorian mind adjusted both to the pressures of colonial expansion, and to various stresses within [*fin-de-siècle*] British society.’<sup>129</sup> The narrative strategy of *Heart of Darkness*, as an example of a ‘quest romance’, reflects the stresses of imperial identity, and its opening suggests that the narrators will iterate a male status quo by ‘consolidat[ing],’<sup>130</sup> patriarchal values. I now propose to examine the way in which the story’s gendered strategy is executed, and whether it is applied consistently.

### Joseph Conrad: *Heart of Darkness* (1902)

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Marlow, through his frame narrator, tells of his journey to the Congo to a group of male professionals – ‘The Lawyer [...]. The Accountant [and the] Director’: as the narrator says,

<sup>126</sup> ‘Little boys who read will become big boys who rule’; see Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy*, p. 80. H. Rider Haggard’s novel, *King Solomon’s Mines* ([1885] Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), exemplifies this point. Haggard’s dedicates the novel ‘to all the big and little boys who read it’; see p. 3. Showalter goes on to discuss Kipling’s *The Man Who Would be King* (1888) and *Heart of Darkness* as other examples of ‘quest romances’.

<sup>127</sup> Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy*, p. 81.

<sup>128</sup> Robert Fraser, *Victorian Quest Romance: Stevenson, Haggard, Kipling, and Conan Doyle* (Plymouth: Northcote House Publishers Ltd., 1998), p. 3.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2. Fraser comments that tales describing groups of men departing for unknown destinations ‘are as old as the art of storytelling itself’; see p. 5. He cites ‘Jason and the Argonauts’ as an example.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8. Stanley’s *Autobiography* has the same aim.

[b]etween us there was as I have already said somewhere, the bond of the sea. Besides holding our hearts together through long periods of separation it had the effect of making us tolerant of each other's yarns – and even convictions.

(*HD*, p. 3)

These men hold together because of mutually agreeable 'convictions.' This bonding suggests that a pedagogical re-construction of fixed values takes place, values that have been described previously. In the first of Conrad's stories to feature Marlow, 'Youth' (1898), the same group listen to Marlow's account of his first voyage to the East, twenty-two years earlier, on a merchant ship, the *Judea*. On the voyage, the ship catches fire and is abandoned, but Marlow celebrates the hard lessons of the journey as "the good old time."<sup>131</sup> The narrator of 'Youth', however, creates an historical ambiguity: good times have 'passed unseen [...] with the romance of illusions',<sup>132</sup> he says. The 'truth' in Marlow's fond memories needs to be iterated to 'rejuvenate' it. His story-telling may thus be regarded as an instance of what Spivak calls the 'politically interested figuration [of] the privileged male of the white race as a norm'; it constitutes a trope through which the masculine voice must assume primacy in epistemological terms, a fragile construction that needs to be 'shored up'.<sup>133</sup>

The intersection of the framing and framed narratives in *Heart of Darkness* forms a space in which men's stories are mediated and interpreted by other men. The space holds 'the great spirit of the [imperial] past' (p. 4), but Marlow now is more world-weary than in 'Youth', and the narrator sounds a note of caution: this tale is about 'one of Marlow's inconclusive experiences' (p. 7). In the company of men, though, Marlow must at least begin his story by asserting the significance of what *he* learned on his journey to the Congo:

"to understand [what happened] you ought to know how I got out there [...] how I went up that river to the place where I first met the poor chap [...]. It [was] the

<sup>131</sup> Conrad, *Heart of Darkness and Other Tales*, p. 99. See note 24 to Chapter 2.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> Spivak, 'Imperialism and Sexual Difference', pp. 225-226.

culminating point of my experience. It seemed somehow to throw a kind of light on everything about me – and into my thoughts.”

(p. 7)

In Marlow's account, the first words 'spoken' by other characters relate to gender. Searching for work as a ship's captain, he begins “to worry [the] men” of an imperial trading company who respond only with platitudes – ““My dear fellow’ – and [do] nothing” (p. 8). The alternative tack which Marlow chooses is revealing in terms of his distancing attitude towards women, and his relationship with the key narrative idea of 'home' – the domestic base in Europe:

“I, Charlie Marlow, set the women to work – to get a job! Heavens! [...]. I had an aunt, a dear enthusiastic soul. She wrote: ‘It will be delightful. I am ready to do anything, anything for you. It is a glorious idea. I know the wife of a very high personage in the Administration and also a man who has lots of influence with,’ etc. etc.”

(p. 8)

In his male narrative space, the clubbable<sup>134</sup> “Charlie” stereotypes “the women” as ‘Other’. The notion of *an* unnamed aunt being able to obtain work for him is, apparently, ridiculous. Nevertheless, that is what happens: Marlow is dependent on “dear” women to sponsor his adventuring, thus conforming to the cultural norm identified by Spivak that ‘woman [must] be understood *as* unlike [masculine truth] and yet *with* reference to it.’<sup>135</sup> He repeats orally the words of the aunt's letter to him, appropriating her voice ‘*as*’ ‘Other’, ‘yet *with* reference to’ his pedagogical terms: she will do “anything” for the imperial ideal. Women, then, are compliant with men and seek to justify their expansionist quests. This notion complies with what Dowling calls the ‘conviction that woman was the inspiration and guardian of civilization’,<sup>136</sup> or the civilizing mission. However, Marlow does not want to

<sup>134</sup> Quest romance writers, such as H. Rider Haggard, were ‘intensely clubbable’; see Fraser, *Victorian Quest Romance*, p. 1.

<sup>135</sup> Spivak, ‘Imperialism and Sexual Difference’, p. 225; (original emphasis).

<sup>136</sup> Dowling, ‘The Decadent and the New Woman’, p. 51.

imply dependency on the aunt, or that she is intruding on his masculine sphere: he thus allows her words to drift away in the 'babble' of "etc. etc."<sup>137</sup>

The denial of language silences the aunt: Marlow needs only that part of her letter that suits him. The truth is that the aunt shows signs of operating with the kind of agency to which the New Woman aspired: she ventures into the world of the Administration and influences its decisions, albeit by the proxy device of a feminine social network. Marlow must keep this truth hidden – her womanly manner 'speaks' only to influence proceedings for him, the privileged male: "[s]he was determined to make no end of fuss to get me appointed" (p. 8).

To assist in examining Marlow's strategy in representing gender, I propose to introduce two analytical terms from Marxist theory that Spivak deploys in 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' These are *vertreten*: to 'represent', as in "speaking for" [...] in politics', and *darstellen*: to "re-present", as in 'art or philosophy'; Spivak suggests that the two senses of 'representation' and 're-representation' are 'related but irreducibly discontinuous.'<sup>138</sup>

Marlow's repetition of the words of the aunt's letter is an instance of *vertreten*: he publicly speaks her words, drawing this New Woman into the male sphere. The narrative frame in which he encloses her voice, however, functions as *darstellen*: he artfully re-presents her words as those of a "dear soul" who makes a "fuss"; her idealism, which is similar to his own,<sup>139</sup> is shown to be easily-disregarded as so many *etceteras*. In a few sentences, Marlow illustrates the intersection between 'representation' and 're-representation' and its intrinsic discontinuity. Where the frame narrator permits Marlow endless narrative freedom to undertake his journey, Marlow's strategy regarding his aunt is to imply that

<sup>137</sup> Like the disorientating 'babble' of 'Other' voices which surrounds the seamen arriving to work on the *Narcissus*, perhaps; see p. 97 above.

<sup>138</sup> Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', p. 70.

<sup>139</sup> See p. 157 above. The aunt's reference to the 'glorious idea' echoes Marlow's 'belief' in the efficiency of the imperial 'idea'.



restrictive 'gender norms' should be 'regulated and reinforced.'<sup>140</sup> However, since Marlow gets his appointment, he actually appears tied to the feminine and the domestic. Where he 'declar[es] opposition' there is in fact 'complicity'.<sup>141</sup>

The configuration of complicity now revealed in Marlow's narrative inverts that evidenced in other texts, 'A Sahibs' War', for instance, in which the subaltern is portrayed as compliant with the dominant party. In Marlow's case, the masculine becomes subaltern to the feminine, and, as if to deny this embarrassing notion, Marlow describes his rush to the Company offices to "show myself to my employers and sign the contract" (p. 9). This urgent need to re-establish himself in the society of men, in turn, objectifies him. Spivak notes that 'objectifi[cation]' is a consequence of the kind of 'staging' that *darstellen* requires.<sup>142</sup> This idea recalls the 'acting' of a role to achieve a certain identity, as discussed in Chapter 2. In Marlow's case, he homogenizes himself as a male 'norm', both in the narrative time of his journey and now, as he re-signs his masculinity before his male audience.

Marlow's iteration of his masculinity is persistently displaced by and made contingent to the actions of women. On his arrival at the Company offices, he is faced with "[t]wo women [...] knitting black wool"; one of them ushers him through the "ceremonies" (p. 10) of a vetting process – a medical check, for instance. Like Marlow's aunt, these women are silent narrative subalterns; they are 'utilized [by] way of the[ir] careful invocation'<sup>143</sup> as mythologized signs of the border between the safe domesticity and the dangerous world of adventure:

"[t]wo youths [...] were being piloted over and [the older of the two women] threw at them [a] glance of unconcerned wisdom. She seemed to know all about them and about me too [...]. She seemed uncanny and fateful. Often far away there I thought of these two, guarding the door of Darkness, knitting black wool as for a warm pall, one

<sup>140</sup> Lyn Pykett, 'Introduction' to *Reading Fin de Siècle Fictions*, ed. Lyn Pykett, p. 8.

<sup>141</sup> Spivak, 'Imperialism and Sexual Difference', p. 226.

<sup>142</sup> Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', p. 73.

<sup>143</sup> Spivak, 'Imperialism and Sexual Difference', p. 226.

introducing, introducing continuously to the unknown, the other scrutinising the cheery and foolish faces with unconcerned old eyes.”

(p. 11)

Lillian Feder, in ‘Marlow’s Descent into Hell’ (1955), an essay which compares *Heart of Darkness* and the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, suggests that these women ‘symbolize the fates, [who] know the secrets of the heart of darkness’; the ‘two women guard the way to hell.’<sup>144</sup> However, the idea of ‘guarding’ is more associated with protecting the Company’s interests than preventing access to ‘hell.’

The knitters are mechanical objects within a process of iteration, ‘introducing, introducing’ men into what Marlow will come to realize is a hellish system.<sup>145</sup> The fact that this imperial process is endlessly repeated indicates a meaninglessness in their ‘unconcerned’ performative action; this causes an ‘uncanny’ corruption to seep backwards into the sanctity of the ‘house’, as Marlow calls the Company offices. On his way to the medical examination, Marlow notices that “‘the house was as still as a house in a city of the dead’”, a city which he likens to a “‘whited sepulchre’” (pp. 9-10). This term is taken from St. Mark’s Gospel (23: 27-28) – ‘[w]oe unto you [...] hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are full of dead men’s bones’. In Marlow’s pedagogical allusion, the signification that distinguishes between feminine domesticity and masculine adventure is deconstructed: he implicates both genders in a corrupt governing regime.<sup>146</sup>

Marlow’s final interview with his aunt before embarkation demonstrates that the masculine and feminine realms are inextricably linked through representational strategies.

<sup>144</sup> Lillian Feder, ‘Marlow’s Descent into Hell’, *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, Volume 9, No. 4 (March 1955), 280-292 (p. 283).

<sup>145</sup> See pp. 160-161 above regarding Marlow’s feelings when he arrives in the Congo – that the imperial system has created an ‘Inferno’.

<sup>146</sup> The reciprocal effect symbolized by the ‘knitters’ was expressed by Conrad in a letter of 20 December 1897 to R.B. Cunninghame Graham: he describes the existence of ‘a machine’ which ‘knits us in [and] knits us out’; see *Collected Letters, Volume 1*, ed. Karl and Davies, p. 425. Cedric Watts points out that the image of the knitters recalls *A Tale of Two Cities*, in which Madame Defarge ‘knits with the steadfastness of Fate’; see Notes to Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness and Other Tales*, p. 205. Defarge is one of the ‘knitting-wom[en] of the sisterhood’ who attend the Guillotine: the women, ‘never faltering or pausing in their work’, count as prisoners’ heads are cut off; see Charles Dickens *A Tale of Two Cities* ([1859] London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd., 1911), p. 434.

The interview is framed by the domestic – the ‘preserving ideal’<sup>147</sup> of ‘home and hearth’. It takes place in the aunt’s drawing-room, where the two take tea by the fireside. As I discussed in Part 1 of this chapter, Marlow discovers that his aunt’s efforts to gain him employment have “‘represented”” him to be “[s]omething like an emissary of light”” (p. 12). In Stanley’s writing, such *darstellen* was the basis of the figure of the ‘beneficial’ patriarchal imperialist, when, in fact, the predominant motivation behind that figure was ruthlessly commercial. The discrepancy between the ‘idea’ and the ‘reality’ leads Marlow to practice a similar deception in terms of gender identity:

“[i]t’s queer how out of touch with truth women are! They live in a world of their own and there had never been anything like it [and] if they were to set it up it would go to pieces before the first sunset. Some confounded fact we men have been living contentedly with ever since the day of creation would start up and knock the whole thing over.”

(pp. 12-13)

Women, according to Marlow’s ‘re-presentation’, are detached from masculine ‘truth’. However, this notion depends on which ‘truth’ is being discussed: the aunt aligns herself with the pedagogical principle that the civilizing mission is a force for good: the idea is sound, and she signifies Marlow, the unemployed ordinary seaman – a subaltern – as part of that mission so as to find him work. Marlow’s own approaches for work, to “‘the men””, fail, perhaps because of his ‘inconclusive’ demeanour: one wonders, then, who is most politically naive – Marlow or his aunt? One sentence of the aunt’s reported speech, implied by Marlow to ‘speak for’ her naivety, actually points to a ‘truth’ about identity, masculine or feminine, which will be epistemologically significant on Marlow’s journey: ““[y]ou forget, dear Charlie, that the labourer is worthy of his hire”” (p. 12).

The aunt’s address to Marlow as ‘Charlie’ attaches her to the ‘clubbable’ man, re-telling *her* story to his listeners. In this reciprocal narrative process, her voice speaks of

<sup>147</sup> Dowling, ‘The Decadent and the New Woman’, p. 52.

Marlow's responsibility as a 'self-proximate [...] person'<sup>148</sup> to determine his individual conduct: he must be 'worthy' of his self. As Marlow deploys Biblical allusions, so does the aunt. Her reference to 'worthiness' uses words taken from Luke 10:7; Stanley, in *The Congo and the Founding of Its Free State* (1885),<sup>149</sup> deploys the same quotation. The idea is pedagogical, but Marlow knows it to be distanced from reality, and his narrative mocks the aunt's position by signifying her as a political innocent. This is an instance of what Spivak terms 'epistemic violence' which relegates the aunt's 'truth' on the "hierarchy" of knowledge.<sup>150</sup> But, this strategy will rebound on Marlow: the question of individual responsibility, or 'worthiness', will be exactly what challenges *him* as he is drawn closer to Kurtz's rapacious colonialism. The sentence is the only instance of direct speech by the aunt and, as such, draws attention to itself as a structurally ironic 'privileging of voice-consciousness' over Marlow's systematic signification:<sup>151</sup> it is Marlow, rather than this New Woman, who will need to strive for self-development. *Her* words will, on his journey up the Congo River, 'speak for' the gap between the 'idea' and the 'reality'.

Marlow ends his account of the interview by re-presenting the aunt as even more anonymous and clichéd through an alienating narrative strategy that inverts the usually creative effect of free indirect discourse: "I got embraced, told to wear flannel, be sure to write often and so on – and I left" (p. 13). The final effect of Marlow's expression, "and so on", repeats his earlier use of "etc., etc."; this iteration, combined with the distancing effect of his passive voice – "I got embraced" – silences the woman's account of her contribution to his imperial mission. Marlow's reduction to cliché of the feminine notion of 'writing

<sup>148</sup> Spivak, 'Imperialism and Sexual Difference', p. 226.

<sup>149</sup> See Henry M. Stanley, *The Congo and the Founding of its Free State: A Story of Work and Exploration* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington: 1885), p. xiv. Stanley comments, somewhat typically, that 'every labourer is worthy of his hire, but only the conspicuously meritorious deserve special commendation'.

<sup>150</sup> Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', p. 76; Spivak refers to Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972-77*, trans. by Colin Gordon et al. (Pantheon: New York, 1980), p. 82.

<sup>151</sup> Spivak, 'Imperialism and Sexual Difference', p. 227.

home' is a further structural irony. The Stalky stories illustrate that 'successful' imperialists retain a strong relationship with the authorizing idea at the domestic base. Marlow seems determined to lose that contact with that place, to pursue a singular 'quest' to explore his masculine self. His departure from his aunt is the very point at which he feels that he is "an impostor" (p. 13). The word 'impostor' may be read in terms of imperial identity,<sup>152</sup> but it may equally relate to gender: thus, to his male listeners, Marlow must 're-present' the illusion of self-reliance to defend his own gendered position.<sup>153</sup>

When Marlow reaches the displacing, 'primitive space' of the Congo, gender-specific difficulties continue to disrupt the consistency of his narrative. Showalter notes that in the separation of masculinity and femininity into spheres, 'men found their part of the equation as difficult to sustain as women did theirs'.<sup>154</sup> Men were required to maintain a norm of system-driven operational 'efficiency', and the ambiguities of this role are evident in the Manager at the Central Station. Marlow describes how he reaches him after his disorientating march through the jungle; he recalls him as

"a common trader [...] nothing more. He was obeyed, yet he inspired neither love nor fear, nor even respect [...] he had no learning, and no intelligence. His position had come to him – why? Perhaps because [...] he could keep the routine going – that's all. But he [was] great by this little thing that it was impossible to tell what could control such a man [...]. Perhaps there was nothing within him."

(pp. 21-22)

The Manager is depersonalized to the degree that he is simply a function of an iterative system; lacking any personal agency, his qualities are the opposite of those that enabled Stalky to be a successful imperialist. The Manager is prototypically modern in his

<sup>152</sup> See p. 158 above.

<sup>153</sup> At the end of *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow continues to engage in 'epistemic violence' when he returns to Brussels to convey the news of Kurtz's death to 'The Intended', Kurtz's fiancée. She is desperate to learn the truth about the circumstances of his death – "You know!" she cried [...] "Yes, I know," says Marlow. Yet, in terms of truthful storytelling, he remains an impostor: Kurtz's "end", he says, "was in every way worthy of his life." The Intended is thus barred from learning the real 'horror' that her husband-to-be experienced; see *HD*, pp. 75-77. Just as the aunt's entitlement to knowledge is violated at the start of the story, so is the Intended's at the conclusion. For Marlow, both must be kept, hierarchically, at a subaltern level. 'Worthiness' is again set in ironic and ambivalent terms. (The interview with the Intended is discussed in Chapter 4).

<sup>154</sup> Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy*, p. 9.

displacement, and Marlow 're-presents' a voiding of his character in a similar narrative manner to that used in relation to the aunt. He speaks only on behalf of the system and Marlow's 're-presentation' is as deterministically reductive of the male role as it is of the aunt's: "[h]e began to speak as soon as he saw me. I had been very long on the road [...]. Had to start without me. The up-river stations had to be relieved [...] *and so on, and so on*" (p. 22; my emphasis). The Manager's response to the 'primitive' space is to perpetuate 'routine' and so disregard its relationship to people.

Before Marlow can assist in relieving Kurtz's Inner Station, he has to repair the wrecked steamer that he will eventually command. As I discuss above, this opportunity to replace himself in the pedagogical world of work is important in terms of imperial identity. It also assists, "[b]y Jove!" (p. 23), in 'shoring up' the increasingly fragile image of masculinity figured by the Manager. As Marlow assesses the repairs, he talks with the Company agent who believes Marlow has influential friends in the Administration. But, now, in his narration to his listeners, he rejects a connection to that male realm of power; rather, he recalls that at his in-between position, in the 'beyond' of Africa, "there was nothing behind me!" (p. 28). This statement recalls the feelings of the soldiers in Lewis's Indian stories and is fundamental to my continuing argument about migratory relationships between a fixed base and the 'beyond'. In *Heart of Darkness*, it not only suggests a diminution of imperial power, but also comments on Marlow's position as a male adventurer: he has already identified, somewhat anxiously, that the Manager, as a man, has "nothing within him." The agent, whose voice is reported by Marlow in a more complete form than either the aunt's or the Manager's, warns him in clear language of the need for mutuality – a 'holding together':<sup>155</sup> "[n]o man – you apprehend me? – no man here bears a charmed life" (p. 28). This instance

<sup>155</sup> 'Holding together' is the very purpose of the group of men that gathers onboard the *Nellie* to listen to each other's stories.

of *vertreten* 'speaks for' male imperial identity: the agent's voice reveals that identity to be unsustainable.

Of course, the word 'man' in the agent's warning could refer to humanity in general, but with his words in mind, Marlow turns immediately to what he calls "my influential friend" (p. 29). At one level of the narrative, this 'friend' is his "ruined tin-pot steam-boat"; however, Marlow's language indicates a subtle double-voicedness that reveals his debt to the subaltern, to the feminine base at home:

"[s]he rang under my feet like an empty Huntley & Palmer [*sic*] biscuit-tin [...]. I had expended enough hard work on her to make me love her. No influential friend would have served me better. She had given me a chance to come out a bit – to find out what I could do."<sup>156</sup>

(p. 29)

It is, of course, common to refer to nautical vessels as feminine. However, the 'utilization'<sup>157</sup> of the domestic image of the Huntley & Palmers biscuit-tin,<sup>158</sup> when coupled with thought of a loved and 'influential' friend, puts readers in mind of Marlow's aunt. Conrad himself had an 'aunt', Marguerite Poradowska, who had 'exerted her influence'<sup>159</sup> to get him work in the Congo, and Marlow uses the word 'influence' or 'influential' regarding his aunt's role twice previously in his narrative.<sup>160</sup>

The effect of domestic and feminine imagery contained in Marlow's story-telling illustrates an imaginative gendered intersection between 'representation' and 're-presentation'. In the early passages of Part I, he 'speaks for' men, yet the artistic effect of his

<sup>156</sup> Conrad omits the 's' in 'Palmers'.

<sup>157</sup> Gates, *The Signifying Monkey*, p. 110.

<sup>158</sup> There are, of course, meanings other than domestic associated with the Huntley & Palmers image: the company was one of the most famous nineteenth-century exporters of British goods and the image could also represent expansionist trade. In either reading, it represents an imperial base under Marlow's 'feet'.

<sup>159</sup> Part I of Marlow's story contains autobiographical connections to Conrad's own journey to the Congo. Marguerite Poradowska was not Conrad's aunt, but he referred to her as such; see note 56 to Chapter 1. Although Marlow attempts to distance himself from *his* aunt, Conrad corresponded extensively with Poradowska. His letters to her were 'affectionate, direct [and] well-nigh intimate'; see Najder, *A Chronicle*, p. 122; this may suggest why Marlow 'loves' his 'influential friend'.

<sup>160</sup> See *HD*, pp. 8 and 25.

later narrative suggests that his voice is, in Gilbert and Gubar's terms, 'permeated' by the 'changing dynamics' of gender relations; in turn, this changes the dynamics of his narrative strategy through an oblique acknowledgment of a feminine influence on imperialists' careers. Marlow's listeners are faced with two organizing categories – two governing voices – which are related and 'discontinuous', and this contributes to the inconclusiveness of his experience. It is Marlow's personal connection to *his* aunt – the New Woman – which provides him with the chance, through the masculine idea of work, to enter a more sinister, performative dimension. In this 'primitive' space, Marlow sets himself a task: to ““find yourself. Your own reality [...] what no other man can ever know. They can only see the mere show, and never tell what it really means”” (p. 29). His quest is to investigate if he, as a man, is, in his *aunt's* words, ““worthy of his hire””: in pursuing that quest, he enters a site in which he may attain the agency to 'write' his own identity.

As Marlow's journey proceeds further towards Kurtz, gender issues will increase the difficulties of his epistemological challenge.<sup>161</sup> However, it is his negotiation between his pedagogical masculine narrative and the purportedly subaltern feminine discourse which will begin to disrupt his preconceptions. That cultural displacement takes him closer to the primitive performative arena in which Kurtz operates. This situation indicates a continuing slippage in Marlow's narrative authority, a position that is interestingly contrasted with Kipling's strategy in his story, 'Without Benefit of Clergy'. In the latter text, a similar cultural movement occurs, but it is more formally regulated.

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<sup>161</sup> These issues, particularly those raised as Marlow moves closer to 'primitivism', will be examined in the next chapter.



## Rudyard Kipling: 'Without Benefit of Clergy' (1890)

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In Kipling's story, an English civil servant, John Holden, has entered into a clandestine relationship with Ameera, an Indian 'woman of sixteen [bought] from her mother'.<sup>162</sup> Although the couple have a 'contract' which is soon to be strengthened by the birth of their first child, they have not been joined by the authority of a church ceremony. The narrative illustrates a situation somewhere between Marlow's, who appears to have no interest in marriage, and the formal union that exists in Alun Lewis's 'The Housekeeper'. I propose to consider the story in terms of 'representation' and 're-presentation' of the gender and race issues, both of which complicate Holden's quest to embrace the 'primitive'.

The story functions principally through an inter-relation between the direct speech of Holden and Ameera and omniscient narration, but its initial strategy privileges Holden's point of view through 'careful invocation' of the subaltern woman's role. The story's opening dialogue between Ameera and Holden is designed to show that Holden has achieved a superiority which contrasts with the hierarchical nature of the administrator's working life. Although Holden's words, about the imminent birth, open the narrative, Ameera's speech dominates; however, she speaks of his masculine needs:

"But if it be a girl?"

"Lord of my life, it cannot be. I have prayed for [a] man-child that shall grow into a man [and] then thou wilt never weary of me, thy slave."

"Since when hast thou been a slave, my queen?"

"Since the beginning – till this mercy came to me. How could I be sure of thy love when I knew I had been bought with silver?"

"Nay, that was the dowry. I paid it to thy mother."

(p. 213)

This passage suggests that Ameera 'represents' herself, but she speaks to soothe Holden's masculine anxieties. In respect of her class, race and culture, she is 'Other' – a 'slave'; in

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<sup>162</sup> Rudyard Kipling, 'Without Benefit of Clergy', in Kipling, *Selected Stories*, p. 214. All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

gender terms, her voice repeats the trope of the male norm, fulfilling Holden's requirement to reproduce and consolidate himself in this region of the 'beyond' to which he has now come.<sup>163</sup>

In Spivak's terms, Ameera is 'unlike' Holden, yet must always act 'with reference to' him. The story appropriates her voice to 're-present' Indian women as inevitably dependent and willingly subaltern. Holden defends the imperial male position through the idea that native matriarchy is complicit in the subjugation. This is a key narrative strategy, the principle of which I have suggested is integral to the texts in this chapter: it is evident in 'A Sahibs' War', for instance, in Umr Singh's supposed complicity in the 'translated' narrative, and in Marlow's realization that he is part of the 'great cause' of imperialism, despite his awareness of its damaging practices. In Kipling's story, Ameera's mother has sold her, as imperialists might sell slaves, and, in Ameera's words, "'sits upon [the money] like a hen'" (p. 213). In the same kind of complex interplay between *vertreten* and *darstellen* evidenced in Marlow's narrative, 'Without Benefit of Clergy' both supports a patriarchal pedagogy and introduces, through Ameera's voice, the idea of a 'discontinuous', performative co-operation with a corrupt governing regime.

Ameera – the poor, Indian child-woman – like Umr Singh, may be regarded as a 'native informant'. Her voice, in Spivak's terms, is 'crucially needed' and 'foreclosed.' Unlike Singh's 'translated' voice, and the framing technique in *Heart of Darkness*, this narrative suggests that Ameera is allowed to 'speak for' herself, thereby implying a *heteroglossic* authenticity. However, Ameera's voice speaks *about* Holden's imperial position, and this supports Benita Parry's argument that Kipling's fictions are monologic: when Indians do speak, 'they are the mouthpieces of a ventriloquist [who] projects his

<sup>163</sup> The archaic language in which both Holden and Ameera speak, using the Biblical 'thou' and 'thy', rather than 'you' and 'your', supports the idea of repeating pedagogical requirements.

account of a grateful native dependency.’<sup>164</sup> The strategy is comparable with Conrad’s: masculine values largely go unquestioned. Ameerah, like Marlow’s aunt, is always subject to gendered mediation.

Spivak explains the notion of ‘foreclosure’ in psycho-analytical terms by reference to the writings of Freud and Lacan. It involves a process comprising two complementary operations: the ‘introduction into the subject, and [the] expulsion from the subject’ by which the significance of ‘affect’, or human feeling, is rejected.<sup>165</sup> In ‘Without Benefit of Clergy’, these operations are exemplified by a strategy in which an omniscient narrator manoeuvres the story towards Holden’s point of view: having introduced Ameerah as a speaking ‘subject’, she is now ‘expelled’ from the inter-relational life which that status facilitates.<sup>166</sup> This is achieved in two ways: first, by iterating the ruthlessness of the mother’s commodification of Ameerah – ‘being left without money, [she] would have sold Ameerah shrieking to the Prince of Darkness if the price had been sufficient’ (p. 214); second, by describing Holden’s construction of a domestic place which ‘shores up’ a figuration of masculinity:

[f]or her, and the withered hag her mother, he had [rented] a little house overlooking the great red-walled city, and [that] house was to him his home. Anyone could enter his bachelor’s bungalow [but in] the house in the city [with] the big wooden gate [...] bolted behind him he was king in his own territory, with Ameerah for queen. And there was going to be added to this kingdom a third person whose arrival Holden felt inclined to resent. It interfered with his perfect happiness.

(p. 214)

In the rented house, Holden is ‘king’. Ameerah is closeted and objectified – an adjunct on whom Holden inscribes his desired ‘self’; she stands ‘for [a] queen.’ The presence of other

<sup>164</sup> Benita Parry, ‘The Content and Discontents of Kipling’s Imperialism’, in *Reading Fin de Siècle Fictions*, ed. Lyn Pykett, pp. 210-222 (p. 212). See note 45 above regarding a comparable narrative ‘ventriloquism’ in Amy Dillwyn’s *The Rebecca Rieter*.

<sup>165</sup> Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>166</sup> In ‘A Sahibs’ War’, Singh has a subject status to the degree that he is not ‘expelled’ from the inter-relational life of the story; he is more *utilized* for a political purpose within that life.

subjects, the unborn 'third person', and the mother, who is forgotten in that numerical equation, are resented.

Duty, for a short time, takes Holden away from his happiness to work in another region. The narrator highlights the 'drawbacks of [Holden's] double life' (p. 214): he has a responsibility for the hidden, colonized realm of domesticity and maternity, but must give priority to the imperial world of Government and work. The doubleness does not lead to a development of Holden's identity, or any inter-relation between the two places. Rather, the characters act as signs – warnings which form part of the 'discourse of degeneration' which iterates fears that 'institutions, culture, and racial stock were declining.'<sup>167</sup> There is an urge for fixity that functions in the same manner as the barriers between genders that Marlow unsuccessfully attempts to sustain, and the story 're-presents' the dangers inherent in such a 'transgression' through Holden's anxieties about 'duty'.

While Holden is working away from home,

he pictured to himself the death of Ameera. In consequence his work for the State was not of first-rate quality [...]. The fortnight ended without a sign from his home, and, torn to pieces by his anxieties, Holden returned to be swallowed up for two precious hours by a dinner at the club, wherein [...] voices [told] him how execrably he had performed [his] duties.

(p. 215)

In the narrative shift to the male world of work – the place in which Marlow seeks comfort – Ameera is reduced to a 'sign' of 'his home'. Moreover, her image becomes deathly, as though the identities created in 'the house' are unsustainable. In contrast, and as if to illustrate the 'discontinuousness' between the narrative arenas, the 'precious' ideals of duty and the club are set in the concrete official language of the 'consequences' of sub-standard work. With his colleagues' censorious voices ringing in his head, Holden flees 'home' to find

<sup>167</sup> Pykett, 'Introduction' to *Reading Fin de Siècle Fictions*, ed. Lyn Pykett, p. 16.

that Ameera is well and has given birth; in response to his question, “[w]ho is there?”, her mother answers in language which hints at a *heteroglossic* narrative by suggesting that these ‘native informants’ have achieved ‘subject’ status: “[w]e be two women and – the – man – thy – son” (p. 215).

Despite the mother’s assertion of their gendered ‘voice-consciousness’, her statement regarding “thy son” continues their deferential gendered position. At this point, Holden finds himself symbolically ‘[o]n the threshold’ (p. 215) of what has been transformed into the native women’s place. With the arrival of the child, the nature of this place becomes more self-contained – more oppositional. Once inside, Holden is faced with complex issues related to gender and culture. Ameera speaks of “a bond and a heel-rope [*peecharee*] between us now”, and this suggests that his male role will become more domesticated, and the imperial implications of their relationship more public: the “man-child [shall be a] trooper of the Queen” (p. 216).<sup>168</sup> For Holden, the imperial man, this is disturbing, and he senses a personal degeneration, signified by the child. His authority becomes less tenable: as he leaves, he offers Ameera’s mother money to feed the child: the ‘chink of silver roused Ameera. “I am his mother, and no hireling”’ (p. 217), she says, perhaps indicating that a process of self-development is occurring for each of them.

Holden leaves with a temporary feeling of ease in the knowledge that his family is safe. This feeling is short-lived: Pir Khan, the old watchman, congratulates him on the birth and ‘thrust[s] into Holden’s hands the hilt of a sabre worn many years ago when [the old man] served the Queen in the police’ (p. 217). At Khan’s insistence, Holden sacrifices a goat to protect the new-born child from fate. This primitive ritual, which is bound to the domestic

<sup>168</sup> In this exchange, Holden calls Ameera ‘*bachari* [little woman]’. The ‘code-switching’, in which each character speaks the other’s language, alternately placed in main speech and parenthetical translation, supports the idea of cultural mingling. As the translated words would be unlikely to be part of ordinary dialogue, the narrator’s intervention for the gender-related language shows its importance in the text.

and the maternal, gives Holden feelings of exultation. The narrative quickly conditions this joy. His feelings, instead, become ‘permeated’ with the *fin-de-siècle* anxieties about ‘female power, and the female as pre- or non-rational.’ He senses that a significant and regressive change has occurred: “‘I never felt like this in my life [...]. I’ll go to the club and pull myself together’” (p. 217),<sup>169</sup> he thinks.

In the ‘civilized,’ all-male space of the club, Holden can ‘re-sign’ himself as ‘the privileged male of the white race’ – as does Marlow in the signing of his contract with ‘the men’. Narrative authority now rests entirely with male voices; Holden sings loudly:

“In Baltimore a-walking, a lady I did meet!  
[With her babe on her arm as she came down the street]  
[...]  
And if it be a girl she shall wear a wedding-ring,  
And if it be a boy he shall fight for his king,  
With his dirk, and his cap, and his little jacket blue,  
*He shall walk the quarter-deck [as his daddy used to do!]*”<sup>170</sup>

(p. 218; original emphasis).

The song not only re-asserts gendered roles, but also suggests that Holden’s son could grow up to be an imperial officer.<sup>171</sup> This idea ignores the ‘in-between’ reality of Holden’s ‘marriage’, and his loud singing symbolizes how dangerously indiscreet he has become. He has arrived at the club direct from killing the goat; the club secretary, with alarm, points to some blood on Holden’s boots, but Holden casually disregards what is in fact a warning. Retiring later to his bungalow, he ‘remained awake for the greater part of the night’, but his ‘dreams were pleasant ones’ (p. 218). This opposition ‘represents’ the ‘discordance of

<sup>169</sup> The primitive, the maternal, and the imperial are joined in this episode through Pir Khan having ‘served the Queen’.

<sup>170</sup> This song is a sea shanty written by William E. Henley (1849 – 1903), ‘O, Falmouth is a Fine Town’. Henley was a conservative and imperialist writer; he was also the editor of the *New Review*, and a publisher of Conrad’s work.

<sup>171</sup> The song, as a literary device, makes the assertion as prominent in the narrative as Holden’s voice appears in the club.

[Holden's] two lives', as Jeffrey Meyers comments:<sup>172</sup> the public anxiety caused by his conduct both inter-relates to and conflicts with the illicit pleasures of domesticity.

The story moves on six weeks, and, over that time, Ameera's assertive position has reverted to an objectified state. The narrator re-directs the point of view towards Holden's primary position: Ameera's visual appearance 'empties' her fragile 'native' self, to be overlaid by a sense of consolidation as imperial property:

[s]he was dressed in jade-green muslin as befitted a daughter of the [Islamic] Faith, and from shoulder to elbow and elbow to wrist ran bracelets of silver tied with floss silk [and] certain heavy gold bracelets that had no part in her country's ornaments, but, since they were Holden's gift and fastened with a cunning European snap, delighted her immensely.

(p. 219)

The symbols of Ameera's faith, in which she was once entwined, are now outweighed by Holden's incongruous gifts which, although bought with love, foreclose on her individual self. Their 'embrace', as Parry comments, 'becomes enmeshed with the colonialist appetite for possession and control.'<sup>173</sup> The idea that Ameera may be moving 'towards a more fully realized selfhood' is quickly closed off by this 'epistemic violence' which denies her relationship an existence in public. The notion of Ameera's 'delight' again portrays native complicity. Just as Marlow believes that he can write his own identity by obscuring performative issues, so does Holden. Both men will find that their cultural positions, as they relate to gender and race, will prevent that 'writing' being a simple process.

The story now shifts forward to the point at which the child, called Tota,<sup>174</sup> can speak. In response to Holden's reference to him as a 'spark', the small boy answers, '*Hum' park nahin hai. Hum admi hai* [I am no spark, but a man]' (p. 223). Tota appears to be linguistically assertive enough to make his way in the outside world, but not, evidently,

<sup>172</sup> Jeffrey Meyers, 'Thoughts on "Without Benefit of Clergy"', *The Kipling Journal*, No. 172 (December 1969), 8-12 (p. 9).

<sup>173</sup> Parry, 'Content and Discontents', p. 215.

<sup>174</sup> Holden suggests that the child is named Tota, "'for that is likest [an] English name'" (p. 220).

without some ‘translation’. This presents too many cultural complications for Holden’s white imperialist narrative, and Tota’s life is ‘taken away as many things are taken away in India – suddenly and without warning’ (p. 223) by fever.

Although Holden and Ameerah grieve for their loss, Holden finds solace in the male world of business. As, in a time of uncertainty, Marlow is re-assuringly engaged by purposeful work, so is Holden. However, both Holden and Ameerah are effectively foreclosed because they breach rules relating to the ‘singularities’ of gender and race: ‘[h]e could not declare his pain. He had neither help, comfort, nor sympathy’; she is trapped inside her sphere, inside ‘the hell of self-questioning reproach’ (p. 224). As they gradually re-affirm their love, the narrator adopts a strategy that fixes gendered roles in the system, as, indeed does Marlow. The strategy confirms whose feelings are to be attended to first:

life became a little easier for Holden [and] work repaid him by filling up his mind [...]. Ameerah sat alone in the house and brooded, but grew happier when she understood that Holden was more at ease, according to the custom of women.

(p. 225)

The couple resolve to continue their relationship in secret, as if to suggest that by ‘shoring up’ a patriarchal narrative their breach of race boundaries can be overlooked. The story now assumes a different narrative perspective, and moves outwards into the harsher political and Natural worlds. Ominously juxtaposed with the re-establishment of Holden’s and Ameerah’s love, is the information conveyed by the Deputy Commissioner that:

“[there’s] cholera all along the north [...]. The spring crops are short [and] nobody seems to know where the rains are [...] it seems to me that Nature’s going to audit her accounts with a big red pencil this summer.”<sup>175</sup>

(p. 226)

<sup>175</sup> The ‘big red pencil’ as an image of imperial regulation opposes the idea created by Conrad’s use of the “red” on the colonial map of Africa to denote “real work [being] done” by the British; see *HD*, p. 10. However, to an imperialist, what follows for Holden and Ameerah may well represent ‘real’ work.



The notion of an 'audit', an official regulatory examination conducted by a 'natural' imperial environment, realizes the sense of foreboding which has infused Holden and Ameerah's story. The fact that their relationship cannot be considered 'natural' – it must be hidden, as, in *Heart of Darkness* other failings in imperial practice are hidden in the African jungle – has grave implications for Ameerah. The cholera outbreak strikes their region, and the English colonial administrators send their wives to the hill-stations. Holden offers to send Ameerah away, but she devotedly refuses to leave: "[w]here thou art, I am" (p. 228), she says. Nature's 'audit' deems that this act is punished: Ameerah contracts cholera and dies. As Parry puts it, 'reason and order [demand] that the poesy of illicit crossings is disrupted by the prose of censure.'<sup>176</sup> In gender terms, this harsh narrative is reflected in a continuing signification, even as her last few breaths are expelled: the 'first drops of rain began to fall [and Holden] could hear shouts of joy in the parched city' (p. 229). Ameerah ends her story as she began it: she is an object, now commodified in a process of exchange that saves the city, but 'empties' her of individuality. This notion is cruelly re-iterated by her mother: immediately after Ameerah's death, she argues with Holden about which items of their furniture she can take for herself: 'in her anxiety to take stock of the house-fittings [she] forgot to mourn' (p. 230).

The conclusion of the story iterates an imperial pedagogy. The sense of a 'natural' correction in Ameerah's death is carried through to 'home and hearth':

the rains had torn down the mud pillars of the gateway, and the heavy wooden gate that had guarded [Holden's] life hung lazily from one hinge. [It was] as if the house had been untenanted for thirty years instead of three days.

(p. 231)

For Holden, the lessons of his experience are put to him in stark, pedagogical terms through two events which 'speak for' each side of the cultural divide. First, a telegram arrives; this systematic imperial sign spells out in an automaton-like voice what his 'only' consideration

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<sup>176</sup> Parry, 'Content and Discontents', p. 219.

should be: “Ricketts, Myndonie. Dying. Holden relieve. Immediate” (p. 231).<sup>177</sup> Governed by this ‘prosaic’ narrative of business, he must carry out his duty. Second, Holden meets the Indian landlord of the rented house who appears to have known the circumstances of his tenant’s ‘marriage’: viewing the condition of the building after the ‘cleansing’ rains and deciding whether or not to re-let it to Holden,

Durga Dass was silent for some time. “You shall not take it on, *sahib*,” he said. “When I was a young man I also – but today I am a member of the Municipality [...]. I will have it pulled down [and] the Municipality shall make a road across [from] the burning-ghaut to the city wall, so that no man may say where this house stood.”

(p. 231)

The property, as a metonym for breaches of cultural norms, must be ‘foreclosed’ by the Municipality – in Marlow’s terms, by the authority of the ‘Administration’. ‘No man’ may see where this place of ‘social metamorphoses’,<sup>178</sup> existed. In terms of *darstellen*, the story strategically ‘re-presents’ the views of the colonized Indians, Ameera’s mother and Durga Dass, to suggest that they benefit from the regulatory political environment: each is intent on removing evidence of wrong-doing, whilst also protecting their own interests.<sup>179</sup> Ultimately, ‘Nature’ and the imperial regime rationalize the re-definitions of an ‘in-between’ reality: a more consistent idea of the ‘house’ is restored to propriety, within the ‘city wall’.

Holden’s ‘quest’ to find his secret self in the ‘primitive’ beyond culminates only in a reinforcement of the singularities of his public self. However, Kipling may allow Holden to glimpse a displacing performative situation, as, indeed, Marlow’s narrative subtly acknowledges his reliance on a subaltern feminine influence. In response to the landlord’s suggestion that “‘this place’” will be available for re-letting, Holden says, “[t]hen I will keep

<sup>177</sup> In another of Kipling’s stories of 1890, ‘The Head of the District’, ‘Ricketts of Myndonie’ is one of a number of colonial administrators who are remembered as having died of fever; see Kipling, *Selected Stories*, p. 165.

<sup>178</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *No Man’s Land, Volume 1*, p. 21.

<sup>179</sup> One assumes that Durga Dass will sell to the Municipality the land where his property stood so that the road can be constructed.

it on while I am away” (p. 231). This proposal is rejected by the landlord’s pedagogical “[y]ou shall not”, but one is left wondering if gender and race identity in Holden’s next ‘house’ may be more migratory, more ‘capable of development’,<sup>180</sup> at another time and in another place.

Holden’s story deconstructs the figure of the confident imperialist officer. Like Marlow, he has a private need to attach himself to the domestic realm which, in public, he must foreclose. Whether, in future, this attachment will be as culturally ‘discontinuous’ as his relationship with Ameera remains open to question. In that relationship, Holden reveals the ‘inadmissible desires, misgivings and perceptions which are concealed in [imperialist] discourse’<sup>181</sup> – the same perceptions of inter-relatedness with the subaltern that Marlow’s narrative reveals, and will become more prevalent as his journey to Kurtz’s ‘beyond’ proceeds. In both instances, a development of identity is demanded so that the damaging effect of the repetitious ‘epistemic violence’ of the pedagogical narratives is countered.

One might expect Alun Lewis’s story, ‘The Housekeeper’, written some two generations later than Conrad’s and Kipling’s texts, to display evidence of cultural progression. The social liberations of the First World War had impacted dramatically on conventional roles, but by the 1930s, when the story is set, there was a pressure to re-formalize restrictive gender boundaries.<sup>182</sup> Although the story’s ‘home’ environment of a Welsh mining village suggests a contrast with the exotic ‘quest romance’ of the earlier stories, it nevertheless provides an opportunity to examine the kind of gender representations deployed in that genre.

<sup>180</sup> Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, p. 119.

<sup>181</sup> Parry, ‘Content and Discontents’, p. 222.

<sup>182</sup> The Equal Franchise Act, for example, which allowed women, like men, to vote at the age of twenty-one, did not become law until 1928.

## Alun Lewis: 'The Housekeeper' (1942)

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'The Housekeeper' differs from Conrad's and Kipling's texts in its narrative form. The story 'represents' gender issues mainly from inside the feminine consciousness, from the individual, subaltern perspective of Myfanwy, who lives in Wales in the poverty of the Depression.

Myfanwy spends much of her time on domestic and family responsibilities. This entails 'normal' household tasks, such as washing and cleaning, and looking after Penry, her husband, who is an unemployed collier; Jackie and Mervyn, their two small sons; and 'Granny', her mother-in-law. Lewis's choice of the word 'housekeeper', rather than 'housewife', suggests a sense of employment. This notion appears to consolidate gender roles, but a narrative strategy that privileges her perspective ensures an inter-relation with a discourse beyond that which determines the woman as the keeper of 'home and hearth'.<sup>183</sup>

The story opens with a third-person narrator, but one who is intimate with its characters. It begins with a child's perspective:

Mervyn walked sulkily into the kitchen, hanging his head [...].

"Granny won't let me go out through the front door, Mam," he grumbled.

Myfanwy put down the floorcloth and straightened her back. She was kneeling on a piece of sacking and washing the kitchen floor [...].

"Never mind, bach," she said. "Go out the back way instead."

[...]

"She's waiting for dad to come back," Myfanwy said ...

"Well, has she *got* to sit in the doorway for that? Oh Mam," – vexation made the child almost inarticulate – "why does she live with us?"

"Because she's your daddy's mother, that's why," Myfanwy said.

(CS, p. 94; original emphasis)

Myfanwy is subservient to the matriarchal Granny. In turn, and in a pedagogical manner, Granny privileges the patriarchal male 'norm'; nothing must interfere with Penry's return.

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<sup>183</sup> In 'The Housekeeper', the image of the 'house' functions in more meaningful ways than simply as a residence, as it functions in *Heart of Darkness* and 'Without Benefit of Clergy'.

In the narrative of 'The Housekeeper', *heteroglossic* voices of 'native informants' are allowed to 'represent' themselves, in the manner of *vertreten*, but their voices display elements of *darstellen* through their deployment within a politicized narrative. This suggests a manipulation comparable to Conrad's and Kipling's techniques, but to different ends. When Penry arrives home, patriarchal and matriarchal statements are immediately devalued by the people who 'represent' them:

"Did you get the money alright?" Granny quavered.  
 "Course I did Mam," Penry answered. "They always pay the dole, gal, on the dot."  
 "And my pension? My five shillings?" the old woman pursued.  
 "Aye, and your five bob," he laughed.  
 "Let me see it, then," she said thirstily.

(pp. 94-95)

Penry, once the productive collier, is now reduced to collecting handouts. Granny, 'thirstily' grasping, declares that she intends to "keep [her pension for herself] from now on" (p. 96). Both are complicit in an iteration of regulatory social practices; Myfanwy, to a point, has to be compliant – otherwise, the form of 'the house', both as a place of residence and a symbol of cultural identity, disintegrates. However, as the narrative begins to privilege her speech, Myfanwy expresses a desire for displacement. In response to Granny's greed, she begins to 'de-sign' her housekeeper self, in attitude, actions, and words:

Myfanwy laughed, her face was wild with scorn and anger. She untied her apron strings and pulled the soaking apron over her head.

"Well, manage for yourselves, then," she said. "I'm going."

(p. 96)

Myfanwy asserts a right for women to speak in the kind of sustained way which, when exercised in *Heart of Darkness* and 'Without Benefit of Clergy',<sup>184</sup> is subsumed by

<sup>184</sup> As exercised by Marlow's aunt's advice to him about ethical behaviour, and Ameerah's assertion that she is 'no hireling'.

male voices. She also displays a desire to leave her closeted domesticity and move into the public sphere – what is, for her, a region of the ‘beyond’. Such ‘New Woman’ desires were hinted at by Marlow’s aunt’s activities in obtaining him employment, and in Ameera’s wish to see her son as an imperial soldier. As those desires were, respectively, obscured and denied, Myfanwy’s movement is hindered by Penry; he decides to take the children out on the mountainside while at the same time visiting the allotment where he keeps a sow which is about to farrow. This leads into an artistic ‘re-presentation’ of the public masculine role. Myfanwy tells him that they need coal; this collier is now further degraded by scavenging on the tip for the commodity from which he once earned an income.

Penry’s situation is akin to that described in Lewis’s poem, ‘The Mountain over Aberdare’, in which the speaker sees ‘children scrutting [for] coal’<sup>185</sup> on slag-heaps. The idea of productivity is thus mutated, by systematic economic forces, into a primitive rat-like activity. For Penry, this lasts “‘all day’” (p. 97), as would a shift at the pit.<sup>186</sup> Like the Manager in *Heart of Darkness*, who is a function of the imperial system, Penry is also ‘produced’ by the same regime. For different reasons, both men are ‘at risk’,<sup>187</sup> and where Conrad and Kipling advocate the positive effects of work to counter degeneration, Penry cannot seek similar solace. He has outlived his purpose. In this masculine void, Myfanwy assumes the freedom of a thinking, feeling, ‘self-proximate’ person:

<sup>185</sup> ‘The Mountain over Aberdare’, in Lewis, *Collected Poems*, p. 87, l. 9.

<sup>186</sup> David Jones’s poem concerning his experiences in the First World War trenches, *In Parenthesis* ([1937] London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1963), was published shortly before ‘The Housekeeper’ was written. It uses the colloquial word ‘scrut’ in the following terms: ‘you can hear the rat of no-man’s-land / rut-out intricacies / weasel-out his patient workings, / scrut, scrut, sscrut’; see p. 54. The attribution of the rat-like activity to men, whether in war-time or in the Depression, signifies a systematic degradation.

<sup>187</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *No Man’s Land: Volume 1*, p. 46. Gilbert and Gubar refer to a state of nervousness created by prevailing cultural conditions which place men ‘at risk’. Two examples are the Depression and the Second World War.

Myfanwy watched her husband stir the boiler [to prepare the sow's food]. He sat hunched over the fire, his eyes following the circling swirl of the brown liquid. As he stirred a warm dirty smell came from the boiler. Myfanwy shuddered.

(p. 97)

'The Housekeeper' inverts the hierarchical social positioning of the *fin-de-siècle* stories. In terms of the narrative, Myfanwy begins the 'hegira towards a more fully realized selfhood', perceived to be the goal for the New Woman. Penry follows a contrary trajectory that causes a blurring of gender roles: the narration uses *her* eyes to fix him as an object; his eyes follow only the 'circling swirl' of downward motion.

Myfanwy is determined not to allow Penry to leave the house without a challenge to her entrapment, and to Granny's pernicious behaviour. Her marriage implies a legal status which is absent in 'Without Benefit of Clergy', but she is, like Ameera, the Indian peasant, other people's property:

"Well, why don't you say anything [to Granny]?" she asked.  
 [...]  
 "She can't help it," [Penry] said sullenly. "She's old."  
 "And I'm young," Myfanwy said. "Can't you see that? [...] She's sucking my blood. [And you] don't worry as long as you've got your allotment and the sow drops regular –"  
 [...]  
 "It's no use creating; you ought to know that by this time."  
 "Yes," she said [...] "I know it's no use. I wish to God I was dead."<sup>188</sup>

(p. 97)

However, Myfanwy contests the epistemic control and commodification that Ameera accepts. She expresses in 're-presentational' terms the wasting she *feels* from the process of exchange: her 'blood' is being drained to keep Granny and Penry alive.<sup>189</sup> In Spivak's mode of analysis, where Ameera, the 'native informant', is introduced into subject status and then

<sup>188</sup> The word 'creating', as used by Penry, is similar in gendered effect to Marlow's suggestion that his aunt makes "no end of fuss" on his behalf.

<sup>189</sup> Lewis also uses the image of an exchange of blood in 'Ward "O"3(b)': in that story, Weston's blood is drained and replaced by 'someone else's'. In both cases, there is a core displacement.

foreclosed, Myfanwy fights to retain her subjectivity. In her 're-presentation', the importance of human feeling is made public.

'The Housekeeper' is a story that is concerned with Myfanwy's developing consciousness: with what she *sees*, *says*, and *learns*. As Penry goes to his allotment, having seemingly forgotten to take the children with him, Myfanwy goes into the garden to play with them. This partial freeing coincides with the emergence of her 'voice-consciousness'. What she sees in this liminal, semi-public place is key in terms of a post-colonial subaltern view:

[t]he back garden was about four yards wide [...]. It was fenced off from the gardens of the next door houses by a hotch-potch barrier of old zinc sheeting, rusted iron bedsteads, and tin advertisements of Colman's Mustard and Brooke Bond's Tea [...] the tarred felting [on the shed] hung over in flapping folds like the crippled wing of a black vulture [...]. Next door up had a line of washing out – long workmen's pants pegged up by the legs, the wind blowing through the holes where the darning had given way, a pair of patched sheets, three tiny frayed vests – flapping and beating in the gusty weather.

(p. 98)

Through Myfanwy's consciousness, denoted by the housekeeper's eye for domestic detail, this passage identifies symbols of lack, caused by the distortions of internal colonization – an implied fencing off by the double narrative of the supposedly beneficial trading houses, such as Brooke Bond, being introduced into the 'native' culture. She understands the poignant way in which, now that the colonization process is over, a communal poverty seeps down to the children, figured in the 'tiny frayed vests'. Myfanwy 'speaks for' the way in which her world has 'been abandoned by the imperial culture that constructed [it]'.<sup>190</sup> She touches the masculine part of that world through the everyday realism of the workmen's clothes, but she does not act 'with reference to' its hegemonic position. In contrast to the 'translated' and mediated nature of native and female voices in

<sup>190</sup> Knight, *A Hundred Years of Fiction*, p. 120.



Conrad's and Kipling's stories, this narrative facilitates Myfanwy's 'self-proximate', performative view. In the liminal space of the back garden, she begins to develop an agency to 'write' her own identity in a way that is absent in the subaltern characterizations in the other authors' texts.

Myfanwy's self-development is denoted by her poetic 're-presentation' of what John Pikoulis refers to as 'a deficiency repeated'<sup>191</sup> throughout the passage. The felting on the shed flaps ominously, vulture-like. This is a 'dramatic' reminder that the family's poverty has been caused by the cultural effects of the 'pit being idle for six years', and the feel of deconstruction is echoed in 'the "flapping" of the clothesline'.<sup>192</sup> The formal symmetry of Myfanwy's thoughts conveys the notion of a pattern of 'dismantlement',<sup>193</sup> seeping from the industrial to the domestic, from the masculine to the feminine, in a recursive cycle.

As Myfanwy talks to her sons, she considers their future, particularly Jackie's; there is a long struggle ahead to keep him in education, which may secure him a better life. She realizes, however, that

[y]ou just couldn't tell what would come to him – whether he'd win loose from here and live, really live, somewhere else away from it all, or whether it was asking too much of his little body [...]. Penry said he ought to come out of school and work in the allotment for a bit; it would do him more good.

(p. 99)

The passage ends with a reminder that Myfanwy's 'voice-consciousness' is, through the utilization of free indirect discourse, being facilitated: as the boys rush off with their pocket-money, the detached 'framing' voice returns: Jackie gives in to Mervyn's cries to spend their money: "Oh alright," Jackie [says], with *querulous resignation*' (p. 99; my emphasis).

<sup>191</sup> John Pikoulis, 'A Journey through the Spirit's Geography: The Short Stories of Alun Lewis', in *'Fire Green as Grass': Studies of the Creative Impulse in Anglo-Welsh Poetry and Short Stories of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Belinda Humfrey (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1995), pp. 82-95 (p. 83).

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>193</sup> See pp. 66-67 above regarding Gwyn A. Williams's comment concerning the 'dismantlement' of Wales.

Myfanwy's thoughts about her children contain no vernacular language or code-switching; she has used the affectionate word 'bach' in the story's opening dialogue, but such a slippage is not repeated. The story, then, in a Bakhtinian sense, deploys several inter-relational colluding narratives, as does *Heart of Darkness*. In 'The Housekeeper', omniscient narration fuses with Myfanwy's *vertreten* and *darstellen* to convey her cultural position. Spivak has observed that these techniques are 'irreducibly discontinuous', and this poses an interesting question for Myfanwy's discourse. Although she indicates Penry's position on Jackie's education, she takes his words and 're-presents' them to suggest that he is short-sighted in wanting to remove Jackie from school to work in the allotment. Myfanwy's narrative appropriates Penry's voice,<sup>194</sup> 'it would do him more good', and re-cycles it in ironic fashion so as to continue an undermining of established ways. It may be the case that making the allotment more productive would benefit Jackie in the long run – he might be better fed – but this is not explored.

The questions, then, are: does Lewis, by adopting the collusive narrative form, appropriate and thus foreclose Myfanwy's voice so as to detach himself from the values of a community which he had effectively left behind? This would be a negative act of 'ventriloquism', akin to what Parry has suggested regarding Kipling's treatment of 'native' voices. Or, does he 'inhabit' her character sufficiently to 'represent' the views of women in that community? Pikoulis has suggested that Myfanwy's 'reaction[s]' are 'very much Alun Lewis's, compassionate but nonetheless anxious to escape',<sup>195</sup> but the story's positioning on maternity prompts other considerations:

[s]he was glad she had the children, although she knew it would be better for them if they hadn't been born. She hadn't intended having any; before their marriage she had told Penry that she wouldn't have any until he got a job somewhere – Slough or

<sup>194</sup> The expression, 'it would do him more good', is typical of the abrupt way Penry speaks in arguments with Myfanwy; for example, "[s]he can't help it [...]. She's old", in respect of Granny; see p. 212 above.

<sup>195</sup> Pikoulis, 'Spirit's Geography', p. 83.

Dagenham or anywhere – but Jackie was already forming inside her when she said it; and their marriage had to be hurried up. And now the children were repeating her own first days. It was like being caught in a winding belt in the colliery, going round and round, never getting loose ....

(pp. 100-101)

This is a performative view which rejects notions of the maternal role; such a view may only rightfully be voiced by Myfanwy, and *is* voiced for sound practical reasons.

Where, in Conrad's and Kipling's stories, figurations of femininity are 'carefully invoked' in support of political aims, Myfanwy's gendered position is formed by what takes place 'inside her'. No 'invocation' is necessary because her individual position develops freely from her 'pre-rational' self. This is a self that not only re-defines female roles, but also encroaches on the masculine narrative space of the colliery. Her likening of her domestic life to being caught in its machinery is an expression of the effects of internal colonialism as an emotional and psychological communal experience. It is as pervasive for women as it was for men, and the way in which Myfanwy's voice conveys this notion indicates the direction that her narrative will follow.

It is her very rationality, however, that shows Penry overriding her wish to delay having children to be defective. Nevertheless, the patriarchal view has been 'consolidated', and the consequence is a systematic iterative process of childbirth which, in the encircling imagery of her narrative, inevitably leads to self-destruction. In Myfanwy there is an interchange between 'affect' and reason which defies gendered tropes. Her epistemological 'quest' begins with the glimpse of a 'Third Space', a migratory place between 'somewhere [and] anywhere', where the chance to develop her identity may be pursued. However, their 'hurried up' marriage has trapped her in the redundant community: hope, it seems, can only be handed to the next generation.

Myfanwy's narrative is foreclosed by a realistic portrayal of her socio-economic situation, rather than through appropriation. Her voice, unlike Ameera's, adds a *heteroglossic* authenticity to the story. However, in another respect, she resembles Ameera, in that her gender role requires adherence to degenerating pedagogical ideologies; they both see the future only through what their offspring might achieve. In different ways, both women fear 'death' because their families cannot partake of life in the imperial world: Ameera for reasons of race; Myfanwy because the idea of 'Slough or Dagenham', where work exists, is, too culturally-distant to be meaningful.<sup>196</sup> However, Myfanwy works to counter the ideological narratives that restrict her. She makes a transition from an essentially domestic character to become an analyzer of the public realm, the national realm, perhaps. She leaves her house and climbs up the nearby mountain, from which she looks down on the village and the local inhabitants carrying out their day-to-day lives. Her free indirect discourse now develops to the degree where, in the terms of Henry Louis Gates Jr., it 'assumes control over the text's narration'.<sup>197</sup>

[w]hat sort of life was this? House work [...] child-bearing [...] looking bleakly ahead, narrowly, timidly. Ever since the pit closed down it had gone on changelessly, a gradual decline [...]. [Penry] had his allotment, his pigs and his chickens; he had his old mother, his wife and his children. And he'd always lived there, from the day of his birth. It's hard to leave the place if you've never left it before.<sup>198</sup>

(pp. 101-102)

At this point, Myfanwy's epistemological 'project' becomes apparent. Her future role is not to refer to or be complicit with patriarchal narratives, but to 'permeate' and disrupt them:

<sup>196</sup> Like the soldiers in the later stories, 'The Raid' and 'Ward "O"3(b)', Myfanwy is caught between a failing regime and an indeterminate future.

<sup>197</sup> Gates, *The Signifying Monkey*, p. 186.

<sup>198</sup> Dorothy Stanley's thoughts of Wales as a static place come to mind while reading this passage; see p. 88 above. In terms of Lewis's thoughts, the passage also reflects an anxiety about 'escape'.

[i]t's no good. I must say, deep inside me, "I accept; I have accepted" [...] so that the children will have something real and durable to cling to. I have never been a mother to them; when they sucked my milk they sucked at my soul, at my restless fears. I must settle down in my soul.

(p. 102).

Inside, Myfanwy actually rejects everything she says she 'accepts' about 'settling down'. Her earlier rhetorical question, '[w]hat sort of life was this?', shows her to be a 'restless', sentient person, when all around her hold her to a predetermined narrative which she had mentally rejected years before. Hers is more an ongoing *process* of re-definition, rather than a seeking of an outcome. Where female characters like Ameera seemingly accept gendered roles as signs of subalternity, the changing gender dynamics of Myfanwy's 'text' causes it to be, 'bivocal', representing 'the theme of the developing but discontinuous self.'<sup>199</sup>

The consideration of Myfanwy's situation within 'discontinuous' terms, bearing in mind her anxieties about her gender role, position her as the 'New Woman', moving in the direction of 'selfhood'. Her situation is pertinent to my discussion of both imperial identity and gender identity: it is the interstitial negotiation *towards* future change that is performatively enlivening. As part of her negotiation, she 're-presents' the political realm so as to challenge its iterative practices. In terms of narrative agency, her subaltern 'voice-consciousness' is worthy to be considered at the same level as a conventional authoritative narrator's voice.<sup>200</sup>

<sup>199</sup> Gates, *The Signifying Monkey*, pp. 208-209. Gates's comments are part of his discussion of 'Speakerly Texts', in which subaltern voices are shown to be on a path towards 'becoming [...] speaking subject[s]'; see p. 207. Spivak also emphasizes the significance of discontinuity: see p. 189 above.

<sup>200</sup> The facilitative technique in 'The Housekeeper' offers an interesting comparison with the narrative strategy adopted by Jean Rhys in *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966). Rhys, of half-Welsh and half-Creole descent, writes a history of Antoinette Cosway, who, in *Jane Eyre* (1847) was Rochester's first wife. Rhys's novel is set in the West Indies. It is poly-vocal, and 'represents' the Creole Antoinette, the English Rochester, and marginalized black characters. Antoinette tells her story in the first-person, but the voices of other 'native informants' intrude. For example, Antoinette establishes social positioning through an account of her childhood, playing with the local children: '[s]oon Tia was my friend [...]. She had [very] black eyes'; Tia's voice is introduced in reported speech: 'she bet [me] that I couldn't turn a somersault under water "like you say you can"'; Antoinette accuses Tia of cheating on the bet: "[k]eep the money then, you cheating nigger", she says. Antoinette's voice then

As Myfanwy continues her walk on the mountainside, she reaches Penry's allotment. At this place, matriarchal and patriarchal images that are key to the story's politics are brought together in her thoughts about Penry's precious sow – 'more disgusting than the malicious old woman who sat [by] the kitchen fire' (p. 103). The allotment is as much a symbol of a grasping pedagogy as Granny's determination to keep her portion of the money that Penry brings home.<sup>201</sup> It is

surrounded by a huge stone wall, two feet thick. When [Myfanwy] was small she [believed that] the walls [...] must enclose something precious beyond words. The men who went inside seemed to her to be demigods, passing in and out of Eden. There was still something unreal about the thick walls, and about the white hens strutting outside, [and] about the intolerant cockerels with their rusty-red neck feathers.<sup>202</sup>

(p. 103)

Here is Myfanwy's view of the male-dominated space which is so clearly established in Conrad's and Kipling's stories – a place of 'bonding and rejuvenation', which is inaccessible to the 'hens' outside. As her earlier narrative encroached on the male world of work, in associating herself with an entrapment within the colliery machinery, she now encroaches on a more private, recreational space. She portrays the men within this walled world as degenerate: the 'rusty-red' feathers of the nearby cockerels 'signify' the now collapsed internal colony to which the men are willingly tied,<sup>203</sup> an idea that subtly echoes Idris Davies's 'Gwalia Deserta' in its theme of the 'fathers'' culpability.

To Myfanwy, the allotment is 'unreal', mythical. It 're-presents' the discrepancy between the 'idea' and the 'reality', between the durable construction she had dreamed of for

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incorporates Tia's register and locates it at the same authoritative level as her own: '[t]hat's not what she hear, she said. She hear all we poor [...] nothing but white nigger now, and black nigger better than white nigger'; see Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* ([1966] London: Penguin, 2000), pp. 20-21. Tia's voice is utilized so as to convey accurately the public perception of Antoinette's position. As Andrea Ashworth notes, this technique amounts to a 'telling ventriloquism'; see 'Introduction' to *ibid.*, p. xiii. In both Rhys's and Lewis's texts, subaltern voices are enabled, rather than appropriated.

<sup>201</sup> The figure of the allotment may also be read negatively in 'They Came'.

<sup>202</sup> The mythical image of Eden may suggest a male-only 'paradise', or an unreal place where 'woman' is created 'with reference' to 'man'.

<sup>203</sup> The idea of 'signifying' here is used in the sense that Gates uses the word – to indicate a 'hidden polemic' understood best by members of a particular social group; see pp. 110-111 above.

her children, and what has been built inside, where the pig-sty is 'like a little tarred ark, hastily constructed after the deluge', from 'wood scavenged from the pit' (p. 103). The 'shoring' of this metonym for masculinity is failing fast: as *Heart of Darkness* portrayed men in an era of imperial expansion to be systematized, so, at a time of decline, the same degenerative processing has run its course to a devastating conclusion.

The imagery 're-presented' inside the construction contains a more potent gendered narrative:

the sow lay very still, breathing heavily, waiting. Then it jerked its trotters, writhing convulsively and squealing, squealing [...]. At last [her] squealing ended [and she] died with the litter inside her.

(pp. 103-104)

For Myfanwy, this is a site of interstitial opportunity – a dangerous performative moment of contesting imagery. The real death imagines the wished-for death of Granny, the 'malicious old sow'; Myfanwy experiences a sense of freeing, but also acknowledges the simultaneous death of a safe future.<sup>204</sup> However, as Holden, at the end of 'Without Benefit of Clergy', is offered a glimpse of opportunity, so is Myfanwy. The question is the same for both of them: will they be able to accept the challenge ahead – to write their own unmediated identity?

The death of the sow also foreshadows the death of Penry, as a man. His response to the situation is wholly negative: '[i]t was the first time [Myfanwy] had seen Penry cry' (p. 104). As a patriarch, he is 'foreclosed', whereas Myfanwy is shown to be self-reliant in a way that is not permitted to the women in Conrad's and Kipling's stories: she carries on family life by taking the children to the cinema. In Lewis's own terms, she 'endures'.<sup>205</sup>

<sup>204</sup> In James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* ([1916] Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), Stephen Dedalus refers to the backward-looking tendencies of Irish nationalism in similar self-destructive terms: 'Ireland is the old sow that eats her farrow', he says; see p. 171. Weston, in 'Ward "O"3(b)', expresses the same contesting feelings of destruction and opportunity.

<sup>205</sup> See p. 71 above.

Where 'Without Benefit of Clergy' reinstates a powerful cultural pedagogy in the symbols of the landlord and the Municipality that rationalize Holden's transgressive house, the narrative strategy of 'The Housekeeper' reverses that movement. However, its ending is more ambivalent. As Myfanwy watches the faces of the characters projected onto the cinema screen, they seem 'to stretch for miles, like faces in the convex mirror of a spoon' (p. 105). The 'convex' effect suggests the potentiality of an outward curve, or trajectory to the beyond, but the idea of a reflection in the blurred surface of a spoon 're-presents' a performative process of displacement, an *Entstellung*, associated with the domestic. However, this distortion is created by Myfanwy's interpretative vision, not imposed by the censure of cultural ideology.

Myfanwy's story ends in a tumult of emotions that responds to the contesting imagery of the sow's death. A 're-signing' to the domestic seems inevitable, but she again rejects her thoughts of simply 'settling down':

she had [to] bite her lips to keep back the words that surged through the gorge of her throat.

"I won't accept," the words beat, "I won't, I won't ..."

(p. 105)

Myfanwy is caught between the recursive, rhythmic beating of her voice urging her to break free and a compelling need to conform for the sake of her children – to be rational, as, indeed, Holden's 'urges' are rationalized. It is unclear whether her words are actually spoken or whether they remain inside her head. As 'the national anthem' (p. 105) begins, it seems that the requirement for cultural conformity has halted her metamorphosis, and that her words of resistance are muted. However, this is a 'moment of transit' in which, in Bhabha's terms, a new identity is 'initiate[d]'.<sup>206</sup> The 'national anthem' signals Myfanwy's return to 'the house', iterating that place as a site of cultural regulation. But it is she who positions her

<sup>206</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 2; (my emphasis).



family at the beginning of a performative process of emergence and development that hints at the way in which national and cultural fixities should change: “[c]ome on, little husband,” she [says] to Jackie. “Bed’s the place for you. It’s nearly time for school” (p. 105).

‘The Housekeeper’ is problematic in terms of Myfanwy as a ‘native informant’. Her subaltern voice is ‘crucially needed’ by the narrative to contest the kind of patriarchal voices that prevail in *Heart of Darkness* and ‘Without Benefit of Clergy’. However, in the public realm she is ultimately foreclosed by gendered ‘norms’. As is the case with Marlow’s aunt, who works to ensure Marlow gets the employment he wants, Myfanwy concerns herself with Jackie’s future. Nevertheless, in both Conrad’s and Lewis’s stories women display a resilience and begin to assert their agency in the public realm.

Myfanwy’s narrative, particularly in its development through free indirect discourse, values discontinuity. Her ‘inconclusive experience’, like Marlow’s, is, in itself, a liberating epistemological project – characteristically performative in its unfinished and fragmentary nature.

## Conclusion

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The stories by Conrad and Lewis which are examined in this chapter, whether from the perspective of imperial or gender identity, represent a changing relationship between the pedagogical and the performative. In each story, there is a displacement – spatial, psychological, or both – to a ‘beyond’, and in this event identity is deconstructed. The performative ‘permeates’ everything, distorting the fixities of established ideas. Iterative narrative strategies are contingent to and inter-relational with subaltern perspectives, and in the process that occurs a new but fluid reality prevails. Even Kipling, the ‘laureate of Empire’, has to negotiate the authority established in the Stalky stories as imperialists such as Corbyn and Holden fail to adhere to organizing discourses.

Despite Kipling's acknowledgement of a performative *fin-de-siècle* discourse, the balance, for him, must swing back to a position of imperial authority. This shift is firmly established through the critique of military narrow-mindedness in 'A Sahibs' War', and the regulatory gender and race narratives in 'Without Benefit of Clergy'. Conrad's strategic use of Marlow's voice, in contrast, concerns itself with the significance of a continuing epistemological journey. Although Marlow moves away from the imperial base, he is also complicit with the iterative discourse of the 'Administration', as are Kipling's characters. This is supported by an insistence in both writers' texts on the acquiescence of subaltern 'Others' towards dominant cultural forces. Issues of gender identity illustrate this point: women are seen to encourage men in their pedagogical 'missions', and are thus complicit in their own oppression. However, that discourse entails warnings regarding moral conduct and 'worthiness' which will echo through the imperialist characters' journeys. They experience a recurring feeling that they have 'nothing' behind them in terms of guiding principles, and this imposes upon them a sense of liminality. In such a situation, the capacity to negotiate and develop one's cultural positioning is a prerequisite.

In the period between the *fin-de-siècle* and the 1930s and 1940s settings of Lewis's texts, the influence of the performative on narrative becomes more pronounced. The comparison of Lewis's stories with those of Conrad and Kipling demonstrates that the soldiers in 'The Raid' and 'Ward "O"3(b)', and Myfanwy, in 'The Housekeeper', are affected by heightened concerns about their 'landlessness' and subalternity. The mutually beneficial relationship between the pedagogical and the performative that enables Stalky's imperial success is rejected; the positive feelings of 'integration and independence' experienced in 'They Came' have become more ambiguous. 'Home', representing a comforting national 'narrative' to which Stalky, Kurtz and, perhaps, Taffy, are expected to return, is now a place of disillusion. In the Second World War location in India, the situation

is equally alienating: the soldiers there form an *Entstellung* by their cultural essence, their whiteness, a position that is comparable to the way in which Marlow feels about his presence in Africa. In the very place where they have a governing responsibility, they cause a displacement by way of their authoritative 'Sameness'. Myfanwy develops a narrative in 'The Housekeeper' that sheds light on the situation at 'home'. For her, patriarchal and matriarchal 'Sameness' has broken down. The comparison of her story with Conrad's and Kipling's texts within a degenerative Welsh social context enables the potential to read Lewis's story through postcolonial notions of multiplicity, and in the context of Myfanwy's environment as a post-colonial setting.

The strategy of privileging Myfanwy's 'bivocal' free indirect discourse to the degree where her subaltern voice asserts itself over the omniscient narrator indicates Lewis's capacity to write about the migratory cultural positions that would inform his later Indian stories. Myfanwy is in the process of becoming free from her narrator's control; where there is intervention, it is to facilitate, rather than to mediate, or, as is the case for Umr Singh, to 'translate'. The deconstructive effect of her voice illuminates the key strategy of Conrad's and Lewis's texts: it initiates a new cultural project that moves *towards* agency and self-realization. The changing dynamics of her gendered position 'speak for' the development of a self-proximate person – the very quality Marlow must seek in his own "reality".

Myfanwy's complex and turbulent position, also evidenced in Anthony Weston in 'Ward "O"3(b)' and Marlow, is a 're-presentation' of a furthering of a journey to the 'beyond'. A comparison of the narrative strategies and voices in their stories with those in Kipling's texts, in which movement reverts towards regulation, sheds new light on their identities; it shows them to be *at once* 'Same' and 'Other'. It is important that this concept is not limited by the idea that Conrad and Lewis merely represent divided individual and national selves. The initiation that has occurred in their characters is a hybridization: there

begins a process of freeing from a 'finished' identity to match their freeing from narrative control. They are cultural and national products of their time and place, but they are simultaneously displaced from those governing locations to a potentially enlivening 'Third Space'. For each of them, a disorientating road forward opens up – whether this is seen from the perspective of an imperial officer or a housekeeper in a Welsh mining village. The direction that they take is represented, in principle, by Marlow's steamboat journey into the interior of the Congo, and by Lewis's character, Staff-Captain Beale, as he drives into the Indian jungle in 'The Orange Grove'. As I will show, they enter sites of enablement in which they are offered the opportunity to 'write' identity – to write themselves 'into being',<sup>207</sup> but in the most complex and far-reaching manner.

The shared concern in Conrad's and Lewis's stories is that identity is represented as in development. The pedagogical *and* the performative co-exist as contestable and 'discontinuous' forces. In Chapter 4, I propose to focus on the remaining Parts of *Heart of Darkness*, and 'The Orange Grove', in relation to the *process* that is integral to the hybridizing negotiation between the two cultural positions: in summary, on the exchange between the 'idea' and the 'reality', and between the 'essence' and the 'descent'.

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<sup>207</sup> Gates, *The Signifying Monkey*, p. 245.

## CHAPTER 4

# CULTURAL TRAFFICS: HYBRIDIZATION

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The texts examined in Chapter 3 illuminate the idea that identity is perpetually fluctuating, and always in development. The very nature of the journeys undertaken by the characters in the two principal texts on which this thesis focuses – Marlow in *Heart of Darkness* and Beale in ‘The Orange Grove’ – take that performative idea forward, towards the issue of an emerging hybridization. This chapter examines the implications of that movement in the principal texts. In this process, I propose to draw comparisons with Conrad’s story, ‘The Secret Sharer’ (1912), and Lewis’s poem, ‘The Jungle’ (1945), for these texts too revolve around complex and ambiguous notions of changing identity. Furthermore, each text entails a narrative of ‘descent’ from a defined and regulated idea of civilized existence towards the fluid and unbounded realm of the primitive.

The four texts are better understood through Bhabha’s writings regarding the potentially productive ‘Third Space’.<sup>1</sup> His theory points to the destabilizing effect on narrative of the transitional situations found in the selected texts:

[t]he pact of interpretation is never simply an act of communication between the I and the You [...]. The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilized [through a] Third Space [which] though unrepresentable in itself [...] constitutes the discursive conditions [that] ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 24 above.

<sup>2</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, pp. 53-55. In an interview with Jonathan Rutherford, published in 1990, Bhabha comments: ‘for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which a third emerges, rather [it is] the “third space” which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority [which] are inadequately understood through received wisdom’; see ‘The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha’, in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), pp. 207-221 (p. 211).

Using similar terminology to that deployed in Spivak's analysis of the relationship between the representational modes of *vertreten* and *darstellen*, Bhabha goes on to suggest that individuals 'who initiate the productive instability' of cultural change are 'bearers of a hybrid identity [...] caught in the *discontinuous* time of translation and negotiation'.<sup>3</sup> However, hybridity is not always regarded so positively. Robert J. C. Young sets out an alternative argument. He suggests that hybridity reinforces polarity: it is a marker of 'a new stability', rather than of 'social fluidity'; according to Young, hybridity emphasizes 'Otherness' because '[f]ixity' is sought in times of 'disruption'.<sup>4</sup>

Young's analysis informs Tom Henthorne's *Conrad's Trojan Horses* (2008), in which the Bakhtinian concepts of "intentional hybridity" and 'organic, "unconscious hybridization"'<sup>5</sup> are contrasted. Henthorne focuses on the former in Conrad's texts, in the sense that 'dominating ideologies [are contested] even as [they are given] voice'; one voice thus 'unmask[s] another'.<sup>6</sup> In this respect, Henthorne asserts that 'Conrad uses literature' instrumentally: 'to change the way people think and act.'<sup>7</sup> As he makes his case, Henthorne notes Bhabha's concentration on organic, performative issues: Bhabha suggests that

[h]ybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination. It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back on the eye of power.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55; (my emphasis).

<sup>4</sup> Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* ([1995] Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Tom Henthorne, *Conrad's Trojan Horses*, p. 20. Henthorne refers to M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 358-359.

<sup>6</sup> Tom Henthorne, *Conrad's Trojan Horses*, p. 20.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27. Henthorne refers to Alan Sinfield, *Literature, Politics, and Culture in Postwar Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 35-37.

<sup>8</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, pp. 159-160.

According to Bhabha, the effect of these reimplications is that the emerging hybridization articulates an 'ambivalent space',<sup>9</sup> and this idea supports his notion of a fertile, discontinuous 'Third Space'. Henthorne considers that this process – where 'colonial discourse [...] reproduces traces of what it attempts to contain'<sup>10</sup> – is of secondary importance since it is governed by the colonizer's position, and thus relegates the subaltern's point of view. In terms of this thesis, Henthorne's approach is reductive: to regard Conrad's texts as instrumental – primarily representing the subaltern perspective – glosses over his shifting narrative positions.

Conrad and, indeed, Lewis articulate an 'ambivalent space': their characters are at once governed by national and imperial ideology and policy, and capable of making a transition to a position in the 'beyond', to something more 'unrepresentable'. Young himself recognizes that such a complex is 'culturally productive' – 'pregnant with potential', as Bakhtin puts it.<sup>11</sup> My guiding concern in this chapter is not with the writers' formation of the 'concrete social dimension'<sup>12</sup> in the hybrid. It is rather with the recursive *process* of *hybridization* represented in their texts, and how this is negotiated by the characters therein. I begin by examining the way in which, in *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow's experience of travelling deeper into the jungle in the Congo and closer to the ambiguous figure of Kurtz exemplifies the process.

### Joseph Conrad: *Heart of Darkness* (1902)

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In Part I of *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow's narrative of imperial practices at the Central Station questions the 'civilizing' principles of the 'Administration'. Thus, he wonders how an exceptional colonizer like Kurtz copes with the moral dilemmas presented by the assumed European superiority in Africa. It is worth recalling Achebe's observation regarding the

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>10</sup> Henthorne, *Conrad's Trojan Horses*, p. 19.

<sup>11</sup> M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 358-359, quoted in Young, *Colonial Desire*, p. 21

<sup>12</sup> Young, *Colonial Desire*, pp. 20-21.

'close similarities' between Marlow's and Conrad's experiences: Marlow's psychological condition and attitudes are revealing of Conrad's own position as he too undertook a steamboat journey up-river. In Marlow's case, Part II of his story narrates such a journey, with the Station Manager, a native crew, and a few colonialists, to find Kurtz, "'the lone white man'" who has "'turn[ed] his back [on] headquarters'" (*HD*, p. 32).

Marlow's river-journey prompts him to widen his questioning to a philosophical realm through expressions of temporal and spatial discontinuity:

"[g]oing up that river was like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world [...]. There was no joy in the brilliance of the sunshine [...]. You lost your way [and] somewhere – far away – in another existence perhaps [...] the reality – the reality I tell you – fades. The inner truth is hidden – luckily, luckily."

(pp. 33-34)

Perry Meisel observes that this passage typifies Marlow's decentring technique: '[e]ven the origin of the world [is] a set of possible "beginnings" none of which [has] priority.'<sup>13</sup> Marlow undermines the imperial ideology that supports the authority of the 'Administration' through notions of plurality and inversions of conventional signification: the light of the sun brings "'no joy'", and the basis of meaning is rendered elusive. His disorientated narrative exemplifies what Bette London has suggested about the diminution of authoritative 'voice' in early twentieth-century fiction, to the degree where narration becomes a 'struggle [between] competing voices [...] between political power [and] individual autonomy'.<sup>14</sup> Meaning is thus intimated and developed by narrative interchanges, creating the process of hybridization that is the theme of this chapter.

Marlow's impressions of Kurtz have been constructed by just such an interchange – between authority and the subaltern. Various third-party voices have reported what Kurtz has done and said. Naturally, then, Kurtz's character is subject to political *Darstellung*: he is both

<sup>13</sup> Meisel, *The Myth of the Modern*, p. 240.

<sup>14</sup> London, *The Appropriated Voice*, p. 5.



the ““remarkable”” (p. 19) imperial emissary *and* someone who has ““stolen more ivory than all the other agents”” (p. 47). In Marlow’s consciousness, Kurtz is simultaneously ““the pulsating stream of light [and] the deceitful flow from the heart of an impenetrable darkness”” (p. 47). This performative mixture puts mediation at the heart of Marlow’s narrative, as Bruce Henricksen has noted;<sup>15</sup> it is truly a ‘struggle’, since he speaks not only for himself, and, by implication, for Conrad, but also for the third-party voices that have an opinion about Kurtz. The complex that this interaction creates renders his task of writing himself and Kurtz ‘into being’ a particularly contestable one. In the place of that challenging position, Marlow seeks Kurtz’s ‘*pure voice*’.<sup>16</sup>

Marlow’s role as an investigator is made more problematic because ‘concrete’ evidence of Kurtz’s voice is itself discontinuous. Marlow ‘re-presents’ Kurtz’s report for the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs as an interchange between the pedagogical and the performative:

“[h]e began with the argument that we whites [...] ‘must necessarily appear to them [savages] in the nature of [a] deity,’ and so on, and so on. ‘By the simple exercise of our will we can exert a power for good practically unbounded,’ etc. etc. [But, Kurtz’s footnote] may be regarded as the exposition of a method [...] ‘Exterminate all the brutes!’”

(p. 50)

Marlow’s mediating ““and so on””<sup>17</sup> displaces the ““power for good”” and relegates it to rhetoric, while the exclamatory ““Exterminate!”” leaps from his narrative. The interchange is thus skewed towards Kurtz’s abuse of power. Yet, Marlow does not categorize Kurtz; like other imperialists examined in this thesis, Stalky for instance, ““he was not common”” (p. 50).

As the steamboat approaches Kurtz’s Inner Station, two striking visual figures emerge to ‘speak for’ Kurtz’s un-commonness, and add to the narrative’s hybridizing effects. The

<sup>15</sup> See p. 166 above.

<sup>16</sup> London, *The Appropriated Voice*, p. 7; (my emphasis).

<sup>17</sup> This technique is similar to the devaluing manner in which Marlow recounts his aunt’s speech; see pp. 188-189 above.

first seems to Marlow to be incongruously decorative: “near the house [there were] half a dozen slim posts [...] ornamented with round carved balls” (p. 52). Marlow offers no more information: some significance is intimated, but otherwise the narrative progresses.

The second figure is a devotee of Kurtz. He is Russian, but a “[b]rother sailor” who has served “in English ships” (p. 53). Marlow imagines him as a hybrid; with patched clothes and “an open countenance like sunshine and shadow”, he looks “like a harlequin” (pp. 52-53). The Russian is a valuable link in an ongoing narrative process: he speaks of Kurtz’s current position, and edges Marlow closer to Kurtz’s own voice. His encourages Marlow to see an over-riding purpose in his journey:

“[d]on’t you talk with Mr. Kurtz?” [Marlow] said. “You don’t talk with that man – you listen to him,” [the Russian] exclaimed [...] “when one is young one must see things, gather experience, ideas, enlarge the mind.”

(p. 53)

That this complex man is Russian suggests that Conrad, through Marlow, is commenting on the kind of nationally-driven imperialism that Conrad had experienced during his formative years. The Russian admires the similarly dominant and seemingly pedagogical Kurtz. Yet, the Russian’s hybridizing voice emphasizes that in this ‘primitive’ and disorientating jungle ‘one’, imperialists in general, must also embrace different and enlarging *ideas*, over and above the discriminating *idea* with which Marlow’s narration began.

As Meisel notes, the harlequin-like patchwork figure ‘resembles’ the multi-coloured colonial map of Africa that Marlow first sees in the Company offices in Brussels.<sup>18</sup> The Russian stands for multi-faceted colonialism, as does Kurtz: “[a]ll Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz”, as Marlow comments (p. 49). These two notions, mapping and making, convey fixity, but such groundedness is modified and mediated by Marlow’s ‘re-

<sup>18</sup> Meisel, *The Myth of the Modern*, p. 240. The name Harlequin is said to derive from, amongst other things, a character in French passion plays, Hellequin (from the Italian, Arlecchino). Interestingly for the critical thread relating to Marlow’s ‘descent’, Hellequin is an emissary of the Devil, who chases the damned souls of evil people to Hell.

presentation' of the jungle environment. Kurtz, for instance, has undergone an individual 'enlargement' that may be regarded as politically instrumental for imperialism in general. As Marlow's narrative moves into its final Part, the first figure at the Station, the "“carved balls”", is brought together with the Russian to make this point.

The two figures are bound together through Marlow's impressionistic narrative. The Russian's reported dialogue opens Part III by providing information for Marlow's own 'enlargement'. He confirms that, despite Kurtz pillaging the country for ivory, the native tribes-people "“adored him”" (p. 56). Marlow appropriates the Russian's speech to support his assertion that Kurtz is uncommon; he reports that the Russian considers that Kurtz is not "“an ordinary man”" (p. 56). Marlow then puts his own interpretation on events: "“[e]vidently the appetite for more ivory had got the better of the – what shall I say – less material aspirations”" (p. 57).

Where a pedagogical imperialist like Stanley repeatedly indulges the pretence that imperial commerce also benefits indigenous peoples, Marlow, by revealing the significance of the "“carved balls”", suggests that Kurtz is aware of a severe imbalance:

“a nearer view [of the balls made] me throw my head back [...]. These round knobs were not ornamental but symbolic [...]. They would have been even more impressive, those heads on stakes, if their faces had not been turned to the house. Only one [was] facing my way.”

(p. 57)

This passage exemplifies the impressionistic device of 'delayed decoding', as analyzed by Watt.<sup>19</sup> Marlow discloses that the 'balls' are the severed heads of native rebels some five pages on from when he first recalls seeing them. Delayed decoding contributes to narrative hybridization since, as Watt suggests, 'it combines the forward temporal progression of the mind, as it receives messages from the outside world, with the much slower reflexive process

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<sup>19</sup> See p. 16 above.

of making out their meaning'; its simultaneity conveys 'the precarious nature of the process of interpretation.'<sup>20</sup> The process emphasizes the fact that Marlow's journey is epistemological. To this point, everything he learns about Kurtz is processed through mediating and hybridizing discourses: by received imperial wisdom, and various opinions that Kurtz is 'uncommon' and/or dangerous. In turn, Marlow mediates for his listeners by, as Henthorne suggests, 'intentionally' unmasking the 'ornamental' façade of the imperial mission.

Readers have been prepared for Marlow's revelations: the heads supply confirmation of Kurtz's declared urge to 'exterminate'. However, within Marlow's narrative presentation, two cultural positions are brought into contact: namely, that of the European hegemony, and the primitive natives who 'adore' Kurtz as a representative of that imperial power. This combination suggests a more 'organic' hybridization process, in which Marlow suggests that Kurtz has developed an awareness of the contestable meaning of his situation. Marlow conveys this notion by stressing that "'only'" one of the severed rebel heads face outwards from the imperial "'house";<sup>21</sup> the remainder stare at Kurtz.

The strategy through which Marlow's 're-presents' the native rebels' heads is central to the argument in this chapter, namely that meaning and identity is open to migratory traffics of discursive negotiation, and the subtleties of 're-presentation'. Marlow thinks that the heads show "'that there was something wanting'" in Kurtz, that he was "'hollow at the core'" (pp. 57-58). Meisel suggests that Marlow's use of the word 'wanting' – simultaneously indicating both absence and presence – makes his narrative 'lateral'.<sup>22</sup> Marlow's delayed decoding supports this idea. His description of the heads as "'symbolic'", in the sense that they demonstrate one idea, but stand for another, intimates that Kurtz lacks self-control, but may also suggest that Kurtz knows that he is morally culpable: Kurtz appears to be in debate with

<sup>20</sup> Watt, *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 175-179.

<sup>21</sup> The word 'house' here connotes more than simply a dwelling, as it does in 'A Sahibs' War', for instance.

<sup>22</sup> Meisel, *The Myth of the Modern*, pp. 237-238; see p. 14 above.

what the heads 'represent'. Marlow subtly implies this possibility when he says that the heads "would have been even more impressive" had they faced outwards, but their positioning is actually designed to impress on Kurtz.

In Bhabha's terms, the heads turn Kurtz's imperial 'gaze' back on his self and 'reimplicate' the 'demands of colonial power' in the horror of his epistemological journey. Rather than drawing fixed boundaries of meaning by simply announcing Kurtz's violent superiority to outsiders, the heads symbolize his struggle: he is moving back and forth between those who 'adore' him and those who rebel against him. The single outward-facing head laterally declares that struggle and, rather than repelling Marlow, draws him towards Kurtz's apparent position. However, readers must remember that at this stage Marlow's information is still being negotiated through the Russian's ideas of enlargement. All three characters are in ambivalent positions of narrative interchange: it is not possible to pinpoint 'the "matter" or ground'<sup>23</sup> of one voice. Everything that is said, or is reported to have been said, requires revaluation. Still Marlow waits for Kurtz's 'pure voice', as do his readers.

Marlow is undergoing a process of organic hybridization. Where, previously, his story-telling merely inverts conventional markers of civilization and primitivism, he now renders such ideas as interchangeable; the severed heads are "only a savage sight", he thinks, where he seems

"to have been transported into some lightless region of subtle horrors, where pure, uncomplicated savagery was a positive relief, being something that had a right to exist – obviously – in the sunshine."

(p. 58)

Marlow is perpetually in a position of "subtle" inconclusiveness regarding Kurtz. Is Kurtz's ascendancy over the natives – "the chiefs came every day to see him [but they] would crawl"

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238.

(p. 58)<sup>24</sup> – caused by adoration or fear? As Marlow’s conversation with the Russian ends, the question, in a manner that is typical of the texts examined in this chapter, goes unanswered.

The thematic, imagistic, and linguistic interchange which has developed thus far has brought the historical narrative and Marlow’s consciousness closer to the ‘unrepresentable’ ‘Third Space’ in which there is ‘no primordial unity’. Kurtz’s physical entry to Marlow’s narrative hastens this development:

“[s]uddenly [a] group of men appeared, as though they had come up from the ground [...] in a compact body bearing an improvised stretcher [...]. [Then] streams of human beings [with] wild glances and savage movements, were poured into the clearing by the dark-faced and pensive forest.”

(p. 59)

The particular group of natives that carries the ailing Kurtz is both organized, they serve Kurtz in a ‘body’, *and* random – they emerge from the earth. The mass of natives then arrive as amorphous streams; savage but human, they are controlled by Kurtz *and* by a thoughtful and “‘dark-faced’” forest. Despite Marlow’s reliance on a ‘pure’ primordial realm, these groups of primitives successively move his displacement to new levels.

‘The Administration’ is now brought together with Kurtz and his devotees. The space which this creates could simply be regarded as a ‘lateral’ confrontation of ideological opposites: the imperialists have arrived to ‘rein in’ the degenerate employee. However, Marlow has brought Kurtz’s correspondence and, as he reads it, Marlow hears him speak for the first time:

“looking straight in my face [he] said, ‘I am glad.’ Somebody had been writing to him about me. These special recommendations were turning up again.”

(p. 60)

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<sup>24</sup> The notion of ‘crawling’ recalls the Indian natives who ‘grovel’ at the feet of the king-like Stalky in ‘Slaves of the Lamp, Part II’; see p. 146 above.

Marlow's special qualities seem to suggest to Kurtz that Marlow is capable of assessing the multiplicities of his position. However, that situation is complicated by the introduction to the space of the unsettling figure of a native tribes-woman – Kurtz's mistress. As Marianna Torgovnick argues, '[t]hat African woman [is] the crux of *Heart of Darkness* [...] she is the representative "native," the only one fully individualized [...]. She is, the text insists, the symbol of Africa.'<sup>25</sup> Marlow is fascinated:

"[she] carried her head high [...] she had [...] innumerable necklaces [that] glittered and trembled at every step [...]. She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent; there was something ominous and stately in her deliberate progress."

(p. 60)

Marlow has cause to consider in depth this woman's image. Torgovnick's observations could be read to suggest that 'the text' fixes her as a cultural sign or symbol. In narrative terms, she actually constitutes the central point in an impressionistic pattern that runs through Marlow's story. She connects Kurtz's sketch, which Marlow saw at the Central Station,<sup>26</sup> and the later narrative. The woman in the sketch is also 'stately', and she too has the ambiguous qualities of light and dark associated with the African woman. These qualities, in turn, anticipate the same ambiguities in Kurtz's 'Intended', which Marlow sees when he visits her on his return from Africa.<sup>27</sup>

Kurtz's sketch 're-presents' a multi-dimensional woman, and this idea has undermined Marlow's intrinsic discriminatory gender values. Marlow's 're-presentation' of the African woman indicates his developing but still flawed understanding: she is individualized in her "deliberate progress"; dignified in her majestic demeanour; *and* she functions as a trope of primitivism. Marlow perceives her as a complex: at once self-proximate, commanding, and emptied of personal qualities. This hybridization within Marlow's consciousness suggests that

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<sup>25</sup> Marianna Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 154-155.

<sup>26</sup> See p. 164 above.

<sup>27</sup> I will elucidate this point when I discuss their meeting later in this chapter.

the woman holds an ideologically subversive negotiating position. Marlow, the idealistic but questioning imperialist, and Kurtz, who has 'turned his back' on civilization, are attracted to her. Thus, she brings the oppositions of the 'Administration' and the degenerate into the developing 'Third Space' to suggest a process of cultural redefinition beyond that caused by a lateral interchange between fixed ideas.

Marlow's 're-presentation' of the subaltern African woman works against hierarchical systems of thought, particularly those that fix women in a passive role. The idea that the woman performs an active role stems from the debate that I have suggested emerges from the image of the inward-facing severed heads. The Russian informs Marlow that, as well as having an implied sexual relationship with Kurtz, the woman converses with him on her own terms. Carola M. Kaplan argues that the woman has political power: her position 'wins Kurtz entrée to her tribe; she is apparently the leader of a polyandrous female warrior culture, [the] soul of the all-powerful female wilderness'.<sup>28</sup> There is, then, a sense of mutuality and 'reimplication' between inhabitants of two different places and leaders of two different cultures. However, that enabling and racially-tolerant negotiating position seems to have been precarious; Marlow suggests that the Russian's more inflexible imperialist influence has intervened. He recalls the Russian's speech:

"I had been risking my life [to] keep her out of the house. She got in one day [and] talked like a fury to Kurtz for an hour pointing at me now and then."

(p. 61)

The ideas of 'facing' and 'talking' are vital to arguments surrounding migratory cultural traffics and processes of mediation. As the severed heads face Kurtz's house, so the African woman faces imperialism; Marlow recalls that

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<sup>28</sup> Kaplan, 'Beyond Gender', p. 269.



“[s]he came abreast of the steamer, stood still, and faced us [...]. Her face had a tragic and fierce aspect [...]. She looked at us all as if her life had depended upon the unswerving steadiness of her glance.”

(p. 60-61)

The woman appeals for communication. Her steadiness re-emphasizes her dignified cultural status, but, through Marlow's mediating narrative, the hierarchies of imperialism are shown to prevail. She walks away into the “dusk of the thickets”, back to the dark jungle, and all that Marlow recalls seeing of her is the whites of “her eyes gleam[ing] back” (p. 61) at him with an accusing gaze. Although the woman has a voice, it cannot be conveyed in the manner of *vertreten*: this textual privilege is denied her by Marlow and the Russian. In Spivak's terms, she is a ‘native informant’, and, as such, is key to the imperial and gender fixities of Marlow's narrative. The woman's gleaming eyes reflect back to him the distortions and failings of the imperial gaze and tell him as much about his personal position as do his aunt's comments regarding ‘worthiness’. In the case of both women, Marlow comes to realize that it is he who ‘forecloses’ on their voices.

As Bette London suggests, Marlow

works to bar women from the text [...] the native woman [...] remains positioned in the narrative as the ideological counterpart – and opposite – of white, European womanhood [and this] exclusive definition reflects political realities: the appropriation of gender to racial ideologies.<sup>29</sup>

In the potentially fertile ‘Third Space’ created on the bank of the jungle river, Marlow shows the monologic discourse of imperialism to dominate. It expresses what Young, referring to the African woman, calls an ‘obsessi[on] about [...] invasion of identities’; specifically, a fear of ‘the imbrication’ of ‘two cultures within each other’.<sup>30</sup> The inauthenticities of ‘gender

<sup>29</sup> London, *The Appropriated Voice*, p. 37.

<sup>30</sup> Young, *Colonial Desire*, p. 2.

[...] culture and race'<sup>31</sup> are the very things that concern the 'Administration'. Its intervention to re-assert order offers a comparison with the conclusion of 'Without Benefit of Clergy', in which the imbrication of Holden and Ameera is perceived as damaging to Holden's role as an imperial official. Kaplan suggests that the entrée which the African woman has allowed Kurtz has, in principle, had the same effect: 'she is a kind of succubus that has made Kurtz her concubine and thereby drained him of vitality'; this draining 'threatens the patriarchal and ostensibly monogamous structure of the society from which he has emigrated.'<sup>32</sup> In both stories, the gendered cultural interchange creates a mutual agency, yet it must be terminated, and 'normality' reinstated.

The idea of corrective measures prevailing is emphasized by Marlow's juxtaposition of the Russian's mythological allusion to the woman 'talk[ing] like a fury', with the re-introduction of Kurtz's voice. This savage Fury, like her ancient predecessors, is attributed with a desire to punish Kurtz for cultural transgressions: gender regulation is thus suggested to support imperial and national regulation. Marlow's 're-presentation' of the woman as 'tragic' suggests that his narrative works against the Russian's version of events: it is the Russian who fears cultural instability, and Marlow conveys the idea that Kurtz is aware of the surrounding duplicity that the Russian's narrative intimates. The 'Administration' is about to implement its corrective strategy and Kurtz addresses the Manager in a furious manner, suggesting that his views are aligned with the woman's:

“[s]ave me – save the ivory, you mean [...]. Save *me!* [...] You are interrupting my plans now [but] I'll carry my ideas out yet [...]. I'll show you what can be done. You and your little peddling notions – you are interfering with me.”

(p. 61)

Marlow's 're-presentation' of Kurtz's speech suggests that his ideas exceed 'peddling' commercial considerations, and move into the realm of a mutually beneficial cultural

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Carola M. Kaplan, 'Colonizers, Cannibals, and the Horror of Good Intentions in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*', *Studies in Short Fiction*, Volume 34, No. 3 (Summer 1997), 323-333 (p. 329).

‘entrée’ to the African tribe. Marlow’s interpretation is vital to the discontinuous narrative *process* that Kurtz’s character is undergoing, and this is critical to the question that Marlow has asked himself: how would Kurtz “‘set about his work[?]’”<sup>33</sup> In response to the Manager’s assertion that Kurtz’s ‘method is unsound’, Marlow suggests that there is a developing hybridization of himself and the supposed degenerate:

“‘I think Mr. Kurtz is a remarkable man,’ I said with emphasis. [The Manager] said very quietly, ‘He *was*,’ and turned his back on me. My hour of favour was over; I found myself lumped along with Kurtz as a partisan of methods for which the time was not ripe. I was unsound.”

(p. 62; original emphasis)

Ideologically, Kurtz holds elements of past, present and future in one identity: Marlow regards him as ‘remarkable’ now, repeating the description of Kurtz which he first heard before travelling up-river; the Manager views him as someone whose trading days are over – only his reputation remains. Marlow, however, appropriates these imperial views and reads them ‘anew’. He suggests that Kurtz’s methods are in development: the time for them is “‘not ripe.’” The word ‘remarkable’ is thus re-defined: in the future, his methods may be ‘ripe’; his discourse may be understood then, but for now, like the African woman’s voice, it is beyond the singular conception of the ‘Administration’. Kurtz is still in negotiation with imperialism and the primitive.

Kurtz’s association with ‘savagery’ is taken, pedagogically, to indicate that he is “‘hollow at the core’” (p. 58). This absence of core identity, as I have noted, is one of Conrad’s principal themes. As Watt observes, ‘Kurtz’s inner hollowness affords no base from which to resolve the conflict between [...] two forces – atavism and “progress” – which possess him’; Kurtz’s ‘conflict’ is a ‘dialectic’.<sup>34</sup> The question that Watt’s argument poses is: should a resolution be sought, or should the ‘ambivalent space’ that the dialectic creates be

<sup>33</sup> See p. 168 above.

<sup>34</sup> Watt, *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 233-234.

permitted to develop? The manner in which Marlow deals with issues of resolution and development of identity will offer a benchmark for the comparative basis of this chapter.

The discussion with the Manager ends, and Marlow sleeps. He wakes to find that Kurtz has disappeared into the jungle. He conducts a search and finds him collapsed, at the point of death. Kurtz's journey ends – he is 'reined in' by the Administration. At this point, "the foundations of [Marlow's] intimacy" with Kurtz are laid, "to endure – to endure – even to the end – even beyond" (p. 65). In the merged position that the two men have reached, Marlow is handed the task of returning to the imperial centre with the memory of someone in whom 'exclusionary markers'<sup>35</sup> have been effaced. At the conclusion of his journey, he will report back to the 'Administration' how Kurtz "had set about his work" (p. 31). However, as the steamboat party, having rescued Kurtz, begin their return river-journey, the 'beyond' throws out a final challenge to Marlow's capacity to report or, indeed, to narrate to his listeners in conventional, historical terms:

"[a] crowd [...] flowed out of the woods again [...] they shouted periodically together strings of amazing words [and the woman] put out her hands, shouted something, and all that wild mob took up the shout in a roaring chorus of articulated, rapid, breathless utterance."

'Do you understand this?' [Marlow asks Kurtz.]

[...]

'Do I not?' he said slowly".

(pp. 66-67)

Kurtz's double-speak, "[d]o I not [understand]", is as confusing to Marlow as the sounds made by the crowd. As the colonialists disperse the natives with the threat of rifle-fire, "[o]nly the barbarous and superb woman did not so much as flinch and stretched tragically her bare arms after us over the *sombre* and *glittering* river' (p. 67; my emphasis). The woman re-states her appeal to Kurtz in an assertion of the feminine power that has been developing beneath Marlow's narrative. In the terms of Hélène Cixous, her emotions are made to

<sup>35</sup> Charlotte Williams, "I Going away, I Going home": Mixed-"Race", Movement and Identity', in *Devolving Identities: Feminist Readings in Home and Belonging*, ed. Lynne Pearce (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 179-195 (p. 194); cited in Bohata, *Postcolonialism Revisited*, p. 26.

‘materialize carnally’; she ‘conveys meaning with her body’ through what is, in imperial terms, ‘unmanageable’<sup>36</sup> communication. For Marlow, her actions develop narrative meaning regarding both the dark imperial ‘Other’ and its shining, complete public identity. His reading of this woman embodies the double narrative movement that this thesis has been tracing since examining Stanley as its opposite – as the archetypal pedagogical narrator.

The woman’s shout is not in a linguistic form that Marlow can record. However, it demands attention by turning imperial power back on itself, particularly as the sound is taken up by the mob and translated into an “‘articulated’” and compelling utterance. Now, the woman does not merely face the imperialists, she reaches out her arms, as if to implicate two opposites in an ‘unrepresentable’, unspeakable ‘pact’. Through her ‘voice-cry’,<sup>37</sup> Marlow, rather than objectifying her, elevates her as an affected subject who ‘represents’ the dialogue that the dominant discourse destroys. He allows *this* subaltern to ‘speak’; her unflinching political position is enunciated by the very ferocity of the colonialists’ reply, as she is obscured by gun-smoke and the slaughter begins. As is often the case in the public narrative of *Heart of Darkness*, the ‘Administration’ forecloses on the subaltern.<sup>38</sup>

The steamboat begins its journey home. Marlow recalls how “‘the brown current ran swiftly out of the heart of darkness [...]. And Kurtz’s life was running swiftly too, ebbing, ebbing out of his heart into the sea of inexorable time’” (p. 67). Marlow now establishes a number of linkages in the narrative. The dirty river water in the outpost of empire flows back towards the gloomy atmosphere on the Thames where the *Nellie* is anchored. Marlow expresses the nature of his journey in terms of the hellish descent that critics such as Lillian

<sup>36</sup> Hélène Cixous, ‘Sorties: Out and Out: Attacks/Ways Out/Forays’, in Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, *The Newly Born Woman*, trans. by Betsy Wing, *Theory and History of Literature*, Volume 24 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), p. 92.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>38</sup> Foreclosure in this instance operates in an analogous manner to that in ‘Without Benefit of Clergy’.

Feder have suggested is key to the story.<sup>39</sup> He feels himself to be ““numbered with the dead””, an ““unforeseen partnership”” (p. 67) forged through his connection with Kurtz, the dark idea of which he now brings back to the imperial base.

There is another linkage that is equally significant: with the woman’s ‘shout’ before her death. This shout foreshadows Kurtz’s last words as he struggles with his own death. Marlow ‘represents’ his dying moments:

“[it] was as though a veil had been rent. I saw on that ivory face the expression of sombre pride, of ruthless power, of craven terror – of an intense and hopeless despair. Did he live his life again in every detail of desire, temptation, and surrender during that supreme moment of complete knowledge? [...] he cried out twice, a cry that was no more than a breath:  
‘The horror! The horror!’”

(p. 69)

As the woman’s shout was silenced, Kurtz’s cry is reported by Marlow to be merely a whisper – ‘The horror! The horror!’ These words, Kurtz’s most famous, are often taken to represent a realization of the barbarity of his power. However, the idea that ““a veil had been rent”” in Kurtz suggests that Marlow now sees that the public perception of Kurtz as a despot has become the ““complete knowledge””; the view of the ‘Administration’ prevails in the form of an iterative palimpsest. That completeness reveals Kurtz’s ““despair””, as he is also ‘foreclosed’ with the utmost indignity: the next day the colonialists ““buried something in a muddy hole”” (p. 69). Kurtz’s recursive epistemological process ends: he is overwritten, along with the African woman and their cultural ‘imbrication’.

After recounting Kurtz’s death, Marlow modifies the dominant discourse so as to restore the multiple, hybridizing meanings that his reference to a torn veil suggests; he ‘represents’ Kurtz as a man of ideas:

<sup>39</sup> In *The Nigger of the “Narcissus”*, the crewmen also descend to ‘something “lower”’, as Guerard puts it, in order to rescue the ‘evil’ James Wait. This act, which associates the men with something primitive, strengthens the community onboard the ship in terms of its diversity. The English seaman, Singleton, is also associated with ‘barbarian’ primitiveness; ‘order’, however, is reinstated by the naval command structure.

“Kurtz was a remarkable man. He had something to say. He said it. Since I peeped over the edge myself, I understand better the meaning of his stare [...]. He had summed up – he had judged. ‘The horror!’ [...] it had the appalling face of a glimpsed truth – the strange commingling of desire and hate [...]. True, [he] had stepped over the edge, while I had been permitted to draw back [...] perhaps all the wisdom, and all truth, and all sincerity, are just compressed into that inappreciable moment of time in which we step over the threshold of the invisible. Perhaps.”

(p. 70)

Marlow gives his listeners his reading of Kurtz’s situation: Kurtz was remarkable because of his propensity to ‘speak’ without regulatory confines. His vocabulary locates Kurtz in the ‘unrepresentable’ potential of the ‘Third Space’ that the process of *hybridization* creates. The “‘inappreciable moment’” in space and time – the very instant of realization that, in ‘Ward “O”3(b)’, Weston experiences at the hospital pool – “‘perhaps’”, enables agency and develops migratory cultural traffics, even if these interchanges make individuals painfully aware of their flaws. In Bhabha’s terms, Kurtz’s displacement is ‘inadequately understood through received wisdom’;<sup>40</sup> the very fact that Kurtz now has been forced to ‘sum up’ negates the idea that identity is a process of continuing development – such an understanding is ‘outside the shell’. The horror, in epistemological terms, is that there is nothing new to say; all that remains is to “‘live again’” what has gone before – to ‘re-present’ the ‘Sameness’ that the Russian appears to require.

According to Marlow, Kurtz has stayed true to his ideas of cultural fluidity: his death rejects re-assimilation to the centre. Bette London suggests that *Heart of Darkness* ‘speak[s] [its] desire for [a] voice unmediated by compromising accents.’<sup>41</sup> Marlow finds such a voice in Kurtz: this imperialist *par excellence* acknowledges his own descent to primitive ‘savagery’, when other imperialists deny theirs. It is *this* idea of a ‘pure voice’ which causes Marlow to tell his listeners that he has “‘remained loyal to Kurtz’” (*HD*, p. 70). In one sense, this voice answers Marlow’s question about how the ‘exceptional’ Kurtz coped with the

<sup>40</sup> See note 2 to this chapter.

<sup>41</sup> London, *The Appropriated Voice*, p. 6.

moral dilemma of colonialism; in another, it presents him with yet more questions: how can someone so savage also inspire the devotion of those over whom he wields power?

Marlow's loyalty towards Kurtz's complexity will test to the limit the powers of *his* voice as he returns to Brussels and Kurtz's 'Intended'. The manner in which Marlow writes Kurtz's identity will now, as he has previously suggested of his story, shed light on his own identity; it offers, in addition, an insight into Conrad's state of mind as he returned from his own traumatizing journey to the Congo and, in 1891, made London his base. At that time, Conrad retained a direct involvement with imperial trade. He made his living as a merchant seaman for the next three years, but, as I note in Chapter 1, that shaping discourse was now conditioned by the brutal reality of experience. Conrad's writing career in England was just ahead of him. He is thus faced, in principle, with the same dilemma as Marlow: how to exist at the centre of an imperial environment whilst remaining true to his knowledge of the perverse way in which a core idea translates to the colonies.

In Marlow's narration, the 'Intended', Kurtz's fiancée, is a 're-presentation' of an imperial homeland, the core of the 'Administration'. As his narrative is located still in Africa, Marlow thinks forward to his visit to her; he introduces her as a gendered trope: "a soul as translucently pure as a cliff of crystal" (p. 70). In contrast to the alluring fusion of sombreness and "glitter" in the African woman, and the complexities of Kurtz's 'pure voice', the European woman is initially conceived as one-dimensional. The contrast suggests the *fin-de-siècle* anxieties that revolved around what Lyn Pykett has related to 'female power [as] primitive and pre- or non-rational'.<sup>42</sup> In those terms, the African woman's hybridity signifies an 'omnipresent',<sup>43</sup> atavistic deformation flowing into an imperial place, along with

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<sup>42</sup> See p. 185 above.

<sup>43</sup> See p. 54 above; according to Najder, Conrad's impressions of the jungle were of an 'omnipresent density of tropical nature' on which imperial order 'superimpose[s]' itself.



the brown river water on which Marlow begins his journey home. The Intended, for him, is a contrary, passive figure of containment.<sup>44</sup>

Marlow's return to the province of European women brings him centripetally to an idea of clear definition that indicates the way in which he will deal with issues of resolution. As Kaplan suggests, the ambiguous power of the "'savage' woman in her sexual otherness' is subdued: 'the text supplants her with [the] Intended'.<sup>45</sup> This subduing is part of Marlow's strategy, and, correspondingly, he appears to desire narrative control over Kurtz through a reiteration of their joining in death: to 'surrender personally all that remained of him with me [to] oblivion' (p. 72). Yet, as he approaches the Intended's house,

"[Kurtz] lived then before me [...] *a shadow darker than the shadow of night, and draped nobly in the folds of a gorgeous eloquence*. The vision seemed to enter the house with me [along with] the wild crowd of obedient worshippers, the *gloom* of the forests, the *glitter* of the reach between the murky bends".

(p. 73; my emphasis)

Kurtz's hybridized condition, as Marlow perceived it while he was in Africa, re-imposes itself on his consciousness. However, as he reaches the solid 'mahogany door' of the house, the events in Africa are 're-presented' with the more "'terrifying simplicity [of Kurtz's] vile desires"; he recalls Kurtz's voice: "'[it] is a difficult case [...]. I want no more than justice'" (p. 73). The thought of having to 'represent' the difficulty of the whispered cry, "'The horror! The horror!'", which now recurs in Marlow's mind, and the unrepresentable discursive conditions of Africa, is too much for him. Thus, he focuses only on effacing what, conventionally, are Kurtz's unpalatable 'desires' and inauthenticities.

<sup>44</sup> In 'Professions for Women', Virginia Woolf describes a female figure from whose control she had to free herself in order to publish her writings – 'The Angel in the House' who sacrifices herself to family life: '[a]bove all [she] was pure'. Woolf declares, '[h]ad I not killed her she would have killed me [...]. For, as I found, [...] you cannot even review a novel without [...] expressing what you think to be the truth about human relations, morality, sex. And all these questions, according to the Angel in the House, cannot be dealt with freely and openly by women.' As Marlow's interview will show, true 'human relations' are not the province of the Intended. All quotations are from 'Professions for Women', in Virginia Woolf, *The Death of the Moth and other Essays* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1942, pp. 149-154 (pp. 150-151)). Unlike Marlow's aunt, the Intended operates solely in the domestic realm.

<sup>45</sup> Kaplan, 'Colonizers, Cannibals', p. 329.

To add to Marlow's difficulties, his story must be 'simplified' because he believes that the Intended, as a pure woman, is "“out of touch with truth”";<sup>46</sup> with her "“fair hair”", and a "“pure brow”", she signifies "“fidelity [and] belief”" (pp. 73-74). She is naturally static and complete – detached from the fertile 'pregnancy' of the jungle wilderness, and domestic society. However, Marlow's re-imagines both her house and her visual appearance in the culturally hybridized manner of Africa and its people: he sees a "“grand piano [with] dark gleams”", and the woman's face is "“surrounded by an ashy halo from which [...] dark eyes”" (pp. 73-74) face him. In this respect, Bruce R. Stark has noted her significance in narrative terms. Stark, following the critical trend to which I have been referring, identifies the allusive nature of Marlow's journey in that he follows a descending path through 'a single Infernal System' of inner and outer circles; he suggests 'that the Intended's house is the innermost point of the inner circle', an idea which is echoed in Kurtz's 'house' in the jungle, and that she represents 'the chief figure of the whole system.'<sup>47</sup> This assessment emphasizes a tropological signification, but her place within a system suggests an interconnectedness: as I have previously suggested, systemically, women are 'at the heart of the matter'<sup>48</sup> in Marlow's narrative.

Stark analyzes the similarities in the 'verbal pattern[s]'<sup>49</sup> in Marlow's descriptions of the feminized African environment and those portraying the Intended's house. This simultaneity emphasizes the discontinuous nature of Marlow's final narrative passages. It holds together in his consciousness Kurtz's performative realm *and* the 'Administration's

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<sup>46</sup> As Marlow's aunt was "“out of touch”". See p. 192 above.

<sup>47</sup> Bruce R. Stark, 'Kurtz's Intended: The Heart of *Heart of Darkness*', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, Volume 16, No. 3 (1974), 535-555 (pp. 535-536).

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 545. Kaplan suggests that the women in the novella operate in a different, but nonetheless deterministic, fashion: Marlow's life is 'determined by powerful women – his aunt and the Intended [...]. And Kurtz's own life is framed and partly determined by two women, his Intended [and] the African woman'; see 'Beyond Gender', p. 269.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 536.

regulatory practices, embodied in the Intended. As in Marlow's 're-presentation' of the jungle wilderness, time and space are collapsed:

"[for the Intended, Kurtz] had died only yesterday. And by Jove, the impression was so powerful that for me too he seemed to have died only yesterday [...]. She said [...] 'I have survived' – while my strained ears seemed to hear distinctly, mingled with her tone of despairing regret, the summing-up whisper of his eternal condemnation."

(p. 74)

Kurtz's despairing "summing-up" is "mingled" with the Intended's conventionally stoical "despairing regret". In this transaction, the potential of the African 'Third Space' to create innovative narrative agency is 're-presented'. Here at the imperial centre, Marlow *could* truthfully narrate the meaning which is mobilized between the two forms of despair; as he has argued in the light of his experience in the Congo, there is "nothing behind" him, in terms of a governing morality, to prevent him from being honest.<sup>50</sup> Yet, as Marlow's narrative proceeds, his anxieties about the public perception of Kurtz cause him to "draw back", as he puts it earlier, into double-voicedness. The imperialist aspect of his character, as intimated by his exclamation, "by Jove", now plays a more deterministic role.

The Intended is expecting some degree of authority from Marlow: "'[y]ou knew him well [...]. And you admired him!'" (p. 74), she says. Although Marlow gives her a voice, it is needy and dependent on him to say soothing things. Their reported speech is mingled, as though they have mutual thought processes, and Marlow iterates her statements to the extent that his second utterance has a distorting palimpsest effect:

"'He was a remarkable man,' [Marlow says]. 'It was impossible not to ...'  
 'Love him,' she finished eagerly, silencing me into an appalled dumbness [...].  
 'I had all his noble confidence. I knew him best.'  
 'You knew him best,' [Marlow] repeated."

(p. 74)

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<sup>50</sup> See p. 166 above.

The word 'remarkable' now, for the Intended, has a meaning that overwrites Marlow's use of it when he described Kurtz's capacity for having "something to say." It simply means that Kurtz was an admirable imperialist, and this change uncovers the word's first meaning, as it was used by a Company agent to praise Kurtz's commercial abilities.

The semantic trafficking in Marlow's narrative corrupts the interchange and overwrites, for the "best", Kurtz's radical tendencies. As if in response to Marlow's strategy, Kurtz now begins to dominate Marlow's consciousness. Marlow thinks of the complex interactions of dark and light in Africa now being transferred to the Intended – the 'innermost point' of imperialism: "[b]y the last gleams of twilight I could see the glitter of her eyes full of tears – of tears that would not fall" (p. 75). In a corresponding joining, the mourning figure of the Intended now begins to merge with the "tragic" image of the wild woman. Through an 'infernal' reproductive process, she now turns the dominant colonial identity back on itself at the innermost point of Empire:

"[the Intended] put out her arms, as if after a retreating figure, stretching them black and with clasped pale hands [...]. I shall see her [...] a tragic and familiar Shade resembling in this gesture another one [...] stretching bare brown arms over the glitter of the infernal stream, the stream of darkness."

(p. 76)

Just as the African woman's shout forms a linkage with Kurtz's deathly cry as he begins to return home, so her Shade-like gesture reaches now towards the Intended, and back again to Kurtz. This migratory interaction suggests that the Intended *could* be empowered by association with the forcefulness of the African woman's non-rational knowledge, as, indeed, Marlow is empowered by a similar sharing with Kurtz. This suggests that women in the novella are not auxiliary 'objects of exchange within a patriarchal kinship system.'<sup>51</sup> Their function is more than to prove the value of male relationships, as may be suggested of Marlow's

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<sup>51</sup> Kaplan, 'Beyond Gender', p. 268.

positioning within his 'quest' narrative; the traffics in the Intended's house are between cultures and genders. However, as imperialism 'superimposes'<sup>52</sup> itself on such mutuality in Africa, so, through his narrative control, Marlow renders powerless its potential in Europe.

The particular controlling technique which Marlow deploys is that of allegory, which, as I discussed in relation to *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*, is generically limiting. In *Heart of Darkness*, the characters' personal, gendered stories provide evidence for what Fredric Jameson has suggested about the nature of 'third-world texts':

even those which are seemingly private [...] necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegory: *the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public [...] culture and society.*<sup>53</sup>

The Intended imagines the intensely private moment of Kurtz's death, and, in Jameson's allegorical context, Marlow re-introduces to the story the idea of 'worthy' conduct:

"She said suddenly very low, 'He died as he lived.'  
'His end,' said I with dull anger [...] 'was in every way worthy of his life.'"

(p. 76)

Marlow's aunt had spoken of the grand narrative notion of 'worthiness' before Marlow left on his quest to Africa: "'[y]ou forget, dear Charlie, that the labourer is worthy of his hire'"; then, Marlow had 're-presented' the idea ironically, as a pedagogical cliché which is valued only by women.<sup>54</sup> Marlow now repeats the idea, but in the knowledge of its true meaning – that Kurtz's 'worthiness' was denoted by his negotiation with 'ignorant' peoples, and the recognition of his failings in this respect. However, in the repetition of the word, Marlow appropriates its meaning and re-voices it so that, in terms of cultural propriety, the

<sup>52</sup> See note 43 to this chapter.

<sup>53</sup> Jameson, 'Third-World Literature', p. 69; (original emphasis); see pp. 18-19 above. Peter Nazareth associates Conrad with Third World writers because, unlike some First World writers (Kipling, perhaps), 'Conrad does not make sense to persons belonging to monolithic societies, communities whose world-view is so secure that nothing is permitted [to] change it'; see Peter Nazareth, 'Out of Darkness: Conrad and Other Third World Writers', *Conradiana*, Volume 14, No. 3 (1982), 173-187 (p. 174).

<sup>54</sup> See p. 192 above.

Intended hears what she should hear. The aunt's voice was emptied out by Marlow's irony; now, similarly, his own voice trails off into nothing: "I heard his very last words ...." (p. 76). I have suggested that Marlow's ironizing of his aunt's sentiments would rebound on him, and this now occurs, not only regarding his role as an imperialist in the colonies, but also as a narrator who brings the colonial story home. Marlow's first irony prepares for the later revealing of his failings as a truthful public storyteller.<sup>55</sup>

In a way which is typical of allegory, the potential of Africa's 'Other' is 'immobilized'<sup>56</sup> by Marlow. His semantic manoeuvrings determine that the complex issues that arise during the interview with the Intended are resolved by received wisdom. He allows her to speak and hear only within the perceived authenticities of the British national frame in which he narrates.<sup>57</sup> The idea that Kurtz 'died as he lived' is, to her, a noble concept: it is as though he died serving the cause of civilization – serving her, in effect. This idea actually immobilizes Kurtz in the same way as he himself feared his life was reduced – to be lived again "in every detail". In relation to the various marginalized, 'embattled situations' – of gender, culture, and race – Marlow's public narrative closes off all paths towards synergy and agency.

Marlow's restrictive, discriminatory strategy is escalated in the 'epistemic violence' of his 'lie' to the Intended. In response to her appeal to know Kurtz's last word, which other participants in the narrative know to be 'horror!', Marlow keeps it secret: his "last word [was] – your name" (p. 77). His final word to the Intended, his 'summing-up,' acts as a palimpsest: Kurtz's truth is effaced, and 'superimposed' with a legitimate version – one which mirrors the "faith that was in [the Intended]" (p. 75). Marlow can 'represent' Kurtz in his narration to his male listeners, but in the Intended's home – the place of public regulation – Kurtz's words

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<sup>55</sup> J. Hillis Miller comments that 'Marlow's discourse is ironic'; he clarifies this statement by going on to say: 'to describe something as ironic hollows it out, prepares its removal for the sake of perceiving something hidden behind it'; see J. Hillis Miller, 'Foreword' to *Conrad in the Twenty-First Century*, p. 7.

<sup>56</sup> Straus, 'The Exclusion of the Intended', p. 129.

<sup>57</sup> Although Marlow's interview with the Intended takes place in Brussels, its re-telling is located in a British, or English, context in London.

become, as Peter Brooks argues, ‘unspeakable’; Marlow, instead of ‘speaking’, “pull[s] [himself] together” (p. 76) to ‘re-weave [a] seamless web of signification.’<sup>58</sup> In allegorical terms, Marlow’s conduct regarding a private individual moment constitutes complete images of Kurtz, the Intended and himself, in terms of the cultures and societies in which they must exist.

The gap between masculine and feminine knowledge is regulated within the final dramatic passage. The potential enlargements that have developed in the narrative become as ‘unspeakable’ as Kurtz’s pact with the primitive African ‘Other’. Instead of grasping the opportunity to write himself and Kurtz ‘into being’, Marlow’s ‘lie’ effectively ‘writ[es] over the traces of otherness imprinted on [his] voice’; he merely ‘conforms to the voice his culture writes for him’<sup>59</sup> by reinstating what has been displaced. His conduct towards Kurtz’s African mistress is, in principle, the ‘Same’ as that of the ‘Administration’ and the Russian. Marlow’s behaviour, in turn, produces a voice for the Intended – “[s]he was sure” in her understanding of Kurtz’s identity (p. 77); here is a subaltern who is denied the agency of ‘speaking for’ herself.

In the *public* realm, the dialectical difficulties presented to Marlow have been resolved by a stabilizing of his and the Intended’s identity. This resolution is particularly masculine: as Hélène Cixous suggests, the male ‘journey is the return to the native land, the *Heimweh* Freud speaks of [...] to come back to the point of departure to appropriate it for himself and to die there.’<sup>60</sup> In *private*, Marlow is still experiencing a ‘discontinuous’ migratory process that takes him back to Kurtz: “[w]ould [the heavens] have fallen, I wonder, if I had rendered Kurtz that justice which was his due?” (p. 77). This instance of Marlow’s double-voicedness, in Gates’s terms, repeats with a ‘signal difference’ Kurtz’s position of simultaneity - “the pulsating

<sup>58</sup> Brooks, *Reading for the Plot*, p. 255.

<sup>59</sup> London, *The Appropriated Voice*, p. 50. The ‘imprints’ of ‘Otherness’ on Marlow’s voice are illustrated generally in his hybridized ‘re-presentations’ of light and dark imagery, and particularly in the vocabulary of his assessment of Kurtz as ‘remarkable’ for operating outside regulatory confines.

<sup>60</sup> Cixous, ‘Sorties’, p. 93. *Heimweh* conveys the notion of homesickness.

stream of light [and] the deceitful flow from the heart of an impenetrable darkness.”<sup>61</sup> The ‘difference’ is that Marlow has had the opportunity to exercise individual responsibility and tell the story of the discontinuous nature of imperialism at its innermost point of his ‘native land’, whereas Kurtz cannot. Yet, he rejects that opportunity in favour of the corporate position.

Marlow ceases his narrative; the frame narrator returns to ‘sum up’. Between the opening of the novella and its end, ideals of faith, fidelity and justice have been persistently revised. However, the narrator seems to iterate his initial thoughts about the river Thames: at the opening, in the ‘brilliance’ and the ‘gloom’ of the sunset, ‘the old river [...] after ages of good service [...] spread out in the tranquil *dignity* of a waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth’ (p. 4; my emphasis). After Marlow’s narrative, the ‘intentional hybridity’ conveyed by this imagery is clear: it prepares for Marlow’s own ambiguous interchanges between the sombreness and the “glitter” in Africa. The narrator’s closing remarks confirm Marlow’s exposure of imperial falseness; all is now dark:

[t]he offing was barred by a black bank of clouds, and the tranquil waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth flowed sombre under an overcast sky – seemed to lead into the heart of an immense darkness.

(p. 77)

The dirty African river has flowed into the British imperial waterway: pollution is now present in both, but this passage contains a more ‘organic’ merging. The narrator omits an important word from his original imagery in which he instilled the ‘tranquil waterway’ with ‘dignity’; in the later overwriting of the image of the Thames – a symbol of the ‘Same’ – that quality is lost.

The absence in the narrator’s discourse is significant for Marlow’s story-telling, in the sense of the *OED* definition of ‘dignity’ being ‘the quality of being *worthy* or honourable’. In the narrator’s subtle omission lies another ‘repetition with a signal difference’. Its double-voicedness renders Marlow an ‘unworthy’ narrator: his interview with the Intended overwrites

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<sup>61</sup> See p. 230 above.



the imposing dignity of the African woman; the truth of Kurtz's imperial identity dies in a muddy hole in the jungle; for the very quality which Marlow's aunt had urged him to display is, at the end, lost. As Marlow has said, his journey was a "“culminating point”" (p. 7). In narrative terms, he has 'summed-up'. Marlow is empowered by the productive instability of Kurtz and Africa, but he decides, in public, to re-present '[f]ixity'.<sup>62</sup> The 'Administration' thus enslaves its subalterns and its own narrator, Marlow.

Marlow's narrative decision-making governs the communicative process in *Heart of Darkness*. Nina Pelikan Straus suggests that he is 'often presented as one who, after Kurtz's death [...] carries the psychic load [of] his secret sharer in order [to deliver] its remains to the Intended'; however, this role is compromised by his decision to reveal the secrets of his experience 'only to those "man" enough to take it.'<sup>63</sup> Given the 'similarities' between Marlow's and Conrad's careers, this dilemma regarding revealing openly and unconditionally the facts about the corporate façade of imperialism that he found so distasteful speaks volumes about the author's own political manoeuvrings, such as those examined in this thesis in respect of *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*. As Ian Watt has commented, Conrad's 'novels contain as many 'imperialisms' and 'colonialisms' as there are particular cases.'<sup>64</sup>

Straus's comments allude to Conrad's story, 'The Secret Sharer',<sup>65</sup> published in 1912. The decade or so between the publication of this story and *Heart of Darkness* appears not to have changed Conrad's positioning, for there are themes common to the two texts. I now propose to compare their narratives, with a view to establishing connections that illuminate the notion of public and private narrative strategies.

<sup>62</sup> Young, *Colonial Desire*, p. 4.

<sup>63</sup> Straus, 'The Exclusion of the Intended', p. 131.

<sup>64</sup> See p. 30 above.

<sup>65</sup> 'The Secret Sharer' was written in 1909/10 and published in *Twixt Land and Sea* (1912).

## Joseph Conrad: 'The Secret Sharer' (1912)

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The narrative of 'The Secret Sharer' is similar to that of *Heart of Darkness* in the following respects: the story is told by an officer in the British Merchant Service; he recalls conversations in which information about seemingly immoral deeds is shared, but then decides to restrict that information in the public arena; and, through a psychological merging, the story 'throws light' not only on its characters, but also on the narrator.

J. Hillis Miller goes to some lengths to identify the multiple meanings that may derive from the term 'secret sharer'.<sup>66</sup> However, for the purposes of this chapter, his suggestion that it indicates participation in a 'secret which cannot be revealed but nevertheless imposes a pitiless obligation'<sup>67</sup> on its carrier is important in the consideration of Marlow's, and indeed Conrad's narrative positioning. This notion suggests the enactment of the process of hybridization: the carrier is perpetually nagged by the moral implications of the secret, which, in turn, contributes to the carrier's identity, as does the person who has shared it.

The young sea-captain who narrates 'The Secret Sharer' recalls his first command, preparing for his ship's homeward journey from Siam. This is a transitional moment for the ship and the captain-narrator,<sup>68</sup> as exemplified in his thoughts about his professional and personal situations:

[the crew] had been together for eighteen months or so, and [I was] the only stranger on board [...]. But [I was] somewhat of a stranger to myself [...] untried as yet by a position of the fullest responsibility [...]. I wondered how far I should turn out faithful to that ideal conception of one's own personality every man sets up for himself secretly.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Miller poses the question: '[w]hat is a secret sharer? A secret *sharer*? A *secret* sharer? A different meaning arises depending on which word is stressed'; see J. Hillis Miller, 'Sharing Secrets', in Joseph Conrad, 'The Secret Sharer', ed. Daniel R. Schwarz ([1912] Boston: Bedford Books, 1997), pp. 232-252 (p. 238); (original emphases).

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239.

<sup>68</sup> That neither the ship nor its captain is named in the story contributes to a mood of uncertainty.

<sup>69</sup> Joseph Conrad, 'The Secret Sharer', ed. Daniel R. Schwarz, p. 26. All further quotations are from this edition and given in the text, abbreviated, where necessary, as *SS*.

The captain-narrator wonders, as Marlow wonders about Kurtz, how his 'ideals' will stand up when tested. He anticipates a 'struggle' between individual voices – how '*I* should turn out' – and political power – 'every man's' situation. The struggle will be between *vertreten* and *darstellen* – what other voices he allows into the writing of his 'personality'. The challenge that story-telling presents to Marlow is also presented to the captain-narrator: will his narrative responsibility be 'enlarging' or limited by pedagogical ideals? Will it 'shed light' on him alone, or on everything 'about him'?

While the captain-narrator ponders issues of identity, his chief mate talks about a vessel anchored nearby: 'the Liverpool ship *Sephora* with a cargo of coal [from] Cardiff' (p. 26). The *Sephora* has clear imperial credentials, and her entrance into the story counters the captain-narrator's feelings of insecurity. In an echo of the narrative technique of *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*, he advocates the fixed idealism of the seaman's code:

I rejoiced in the great security of the sea as compared with the unrest of the land, [in] an elementary moral beauty [invested] by the absolute [...] singleness of its purpose.

The riding-light in the fore-rigging burned with a clear untroubled, as if symbolic, flame, confident and bright in the mysterious shades of the night.

(p. 28)

This passage suggests a need to reproduce the 'pure voice' of a shining and complete identity. As Bonnie Kime Scott argues, the captain-narrator assumes 'a sense of [patriarchal] manhood that is narrowly controlled and alien to much of what goes on around him.'<sup>70</sup> The constancy of his outlook is subverted by an apparent lack of discipline onboard his ship: he notices that a 'rope side-ladder [had] not been hauled in' (p. 28). He then realizes that it is he who has failed – procedures were not followed because 'I had myself peremptorily dismissed my officers

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<sup>70</sup> Bonnie Kime Scott, 'Engendered Intimacies in Conrad's "The Secret Sharer"', in *ibid.*, pp. 197-210 (p. 203).

from duty' (p. 28). This secret will nag at him: his secure veneer actually denotes incompleteness.<sup>71</sup>

The captain-narrator's inefficiency leads to the moment of narrative displacement. As he attempts to retrieve the ladder,

[t]he side of the ship made an opaque belt of shadow on the darkling glassy shimmer of the sea [and] a faint flash of phosphorescent light, which seemed to issue suddenly from the naked body of a man, flickered in the sleeping water [...] the sea-lightning played about his limbs at every stir; and he appeared in it ghastly, silvery, fish-like.

(pp. 28-29)

This imaginative 're-presentation' disrupts the 'absolute' values of the sea. The ambiguous light and dark of the ship and the shifting fluid environment write 'into being' a mysterious, elemental man. Yet he speaks directly and unambiguously:

"I suppose your captain's turned in?"

"I am sure he isn't," I said.

[...]

"Look here, my man. Could you call him out quietly?"

I thought the time had come to declare myself.

"I am the captain."

I heard a "By Jove!" whispered at the level of the water [...].

"My name's Leggatt."

(p. 29; original emphasis)

Leggatt confidently identifies himself in the language of the colonialist. The captain-narrator, in contrast, is hesitant to 'declare' himself, but he considers Leggatt to have a 'good voice', and its 'self-possession [induces] a corresponding state' in him (p. 30). He thus allows him to climb the ladder. Scott's gendered criticism suggests why the captain-narrator is drawn to Leggatt who, she suggests, 'ascends via a cord from the [fluid environment] of the sea'; she notes the scene's 'maternal' metaphors and how 'the captain looks [Leggatt] over as [a]

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<sup>71</sup> As Declan Kiberd has suggested is typical of imperialists (see pp. 92-93 above), although the idea of veneers of 'completeness' may be equally revealing in other contexts – gender, for instance.

parent might a newborn, commenting on [his] likeness to himself.’<sup>72</sup> The captain-narrator brings forth a hybrid creature – part primitive, part civilized, a condition that reflects his own inconstancy.

An immediate process of merging begins: Leggatt dons a ‘sleeping suit of the same grey-stripe pattern as the one which [the captain-narrator is] wearing’ and follows him ‘like [his] double’ (p. 30). Unlike the enigmatic revelations about Kurtz’s circumstances, Leggatt’s story is readily communicated in his own voice. He is the *Sephora*’s mate, and he admits to having “‘killed a man’” (p. 31). The captain-narrator quickly empathizes, as might a parent:<sup>73</sup> “[f]it of temper,” he suggests; psychologically, he moves closer to Leggatt: ‘as though I had been faced by my own reflection in the depths of a sombre and immense mirror’ (p. 31). This mediation, which suggests that a killing can be explained away, indicates that the captain-narrator may have something morally ‘sombre’ in his past which is now re-surfacing to ‘gaze’ back at him. Both men are, after all, bound together as “‘Conway boy[s]’” (p. 31):<sup>74</sup> like Kurtz, they have been raised for the morally-ambiguous duties of command. In their inherent understanding of this position lies the comparative basis of the story and *Heart of Darkness*: in what way will meaning and identity be produced? Will resolution be sought, or will a discursive trafficking of conditions prevail?

Leggatt points out the danger in the failure of duty “‘where there are no means of legal repression’” (p. 31), but Leggatt is part of the *Sephora*’s command structure that naturally seeks resolution. He must, therefore, justify his actions; the captain-narrator allows Leggatt to ‘speak for’ himself about the killing:

<sup>72</sup> Scott, ‘Engendering Intimacies’, p. 205.

<sup>73</sup> Scott suggests that the captain’s attitude is specifically maternal, rather than generally parental.

<sup>74</sup> H.M.S. Conway was a training ship anchored at Liverpool. It provided education, on a fee-paying basis, for trainee officers in the British Merchant Marine. Hence, it catered for a reasonably affluent section of society. Leggatt’s father, for example, is a parson, and Leggatt is keen to inform the captain-narrator of this fact.

“[i]t happened while we were setting a reefed foresail [...]. The only sail we had left to keep the ship running [...]. He gave me some of his cursed insolence at the sheet [...] [he] was half crazed [so I] felled him like an ox. He up and at me. We closed just as an awful sea made for the ship [...]. I had him by the throat, and went on shaking him like a rat”.

(p. 32)

Leggatt’s language recalls that used to describe the crisis of the sea-storm in *The Nigger of the ‘Narcissus’*: the idea of ‘an awful sea’ purposefully ‘making’ for the ship emphasizes a communal test. Unless the men work together to set the sail, the ship will be lost; the crazed crewman fails and Leggatt deals with him summarily, and in a physically primitive fashion. Where, for the *Narcissus*, the narrative proves the strength of a hierarchical community that comes to embody an idealistic ‘mother of fleets and nations’,<sup>75</sup> Leggatt’s account communicates the opposite. Following the killing, the crewmen behave like “‘lunatics’”; Leggatt includes the *Sephora*’s captain, Archbold, in this description, evidently through third-hand information: “‘I understand that the skipper, too, started raving’” (p. 32). Leggatt ‘represents’ chaos – the same absence of order and presence of ‘savagery’ that Marlow sees at Kurtz’s Inner Station, except that on the *Sephora* ‘legal’ restraints are available. These resolving measures are, seemingly, applied only to him, just as the ‘Administration’ singles out Kurtz’s ‘primitive’ conduct and ignores their own:<sup>76</sup> Leggatt is held in his cabin.

The captain-narrator now decides to hide Leggatt in his quarters, repeating the idea that Leggatt’s story should be ‘locked away’ suggested by his restraining aboard the *Sephora*. In private, Leggatt continues with his interpretation of events, recalling a conversation with Archbold, in which he sets up his defence:

<sup>75</sup> See p. 107 above.

<sup>76</sup> The ‘Administration’ commits crimes that are the equal of Kurtz’s, but these go unpunished.

“[y]ou know, that foresail saved the ship [...]. And it was I that managed to set it for him [...]. I asked him right away to leave my cabin door unlocked at night while the ship was going through Sunda Straits.”

(p. 34)

Leggatt's 're-presentation', facilitated by the captain-narrator, mobilizes two positions and ensures, in Bhabha's terms, that a key symbol of culture is 'read anew'; namely, the crime of murder. Leggatt has saved the ship so that the crewmen can survive – a worthy act of 'elementary moral beauty', one might say.<sup>77</sup> He implies that the captain-narrator to whom he now 're-presents' this evidence has a special understanding of his circumstances – “you know”. The discursive conditions created by these cultural traffics question the 'absolute' convention that murder may never be tolerated. Leggatt's initiation of these conditions implies a hybridizing position: “[a]m I a murdering brute? Do I look it? By Jove!” (p. 35). Kurtz and Marlow ask the same questions of themselves, and the implications for them personally, and as imperialists, are morally far-reaching: can I, personally, justify killing? Are my actions any different from those of the 'Administration'?

The 'Administration', in the form of Archbold, is 're-presented' as ineffective:

“[h]e was afraid of the men, and also of that old second mate of his [and] his steward [...]. Those two old chaps ran the ship. Devil only knows what the skipper wasn't afraid of [...] of what the law would do to him”.

(p. 35)

In his account of Archbold's refusal to allow a means of escape, Leggatt appropriates his voice, ironically to stress his weakness as a mariner and a man: “[t]his thing must take its course. I represent the law here” (p. 35). Through Leggatt's narrative, a second 'symbol of

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<sup>77</sup> Peter Nazareth suggests that 'The Secret Sharer' concerns 'the concept of the good guy *in* instead of *versus* the bad guy.' He quotes from an unpublished essay by Ngugi wa Thiong'o on the significance of the story: “the soul of the individual is a complexity with many sides; the side turned to the light and the side turned to the darkness; the 'criminal' self which also can be the basis of great actions, and the other more conscious self, the more ordinary day-to-day self which we turn to other people”; see Nazareth, 'Out of the Darkness', p. 175; (original emphases).

culture', 'the law', is brought into an ambivalent space and 'revaluated'. Archbold is portrayed as a pedagogical figurehead, but one who, operationally, is a failure because he cannot understand the validity of Leggatt's actions; as Straus has argued, such complex 'truths' in Conrad's stories may be told only to those 'man enough'.<sup>78</sup> Such is the case with Marlow and his listeners, and the ambivalent positions in which these men find themselves offer a more general comparison with Kipling's privileging of morally-ambiguous imperial 'do-ers', such as Stalky. Such characters have the 'right stuff' to run an Empire in which identity must be fashioned and re-fashioned for political expediency.

Leggatt goes on to tell of his escape from the *Sephora*, and the captain-narrator notes that his story-telling has an uncertain quality: '[t]here was something that made comment impossible in his narrative, or perhaps in himself' (p. 36). The mutualizing of these two men fashions something 'unrepresentable in itself', something which is creatively discontinuous and enabling in terms of communication. This notion is, naturally, emphasized by the fact that Leggatt's voice is contained within the captain-narrator's narrative: '[a]nd I told him a little about myself' (p. 37), the captain-narrator confirms. Leggatt reciprocates: "'I was glad to talk a little to somebody that didn't belong to the *Sephora*'" (pp. 37-38), as, indeed, the captain-narrator does not 'belong' to his ship. They are simultaneously attached to and dislocated from their imperial roles: insiders who are outside. In this sense, Leggatt is 'glad' to talk to the captain in the same way that Kurtz is 'glad' that Marlow arrives at his Station. Both 'Same' and 'Other', they are caught in processes of hybridization.

As Kurtz confronts himself with the painful consequences of his transgressive 'Otherness', so does the captain-narrator, who now begins to 'bear the psychic load' of the person he calls 'the secret sharer of my life' (p. 40). This 'secret sharer' is, obviously,

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<sup>78</sup> Leggatt suggests that Archbold's manliness is in question not only through his general lack of authority, but also because he is afraid of his wife: "'yes! she's on board'"; see SS, p. 35.



Leggatt, but his words also suggest that the captain's own secret self has been unmasked and 'represented' by Leggatt. In this sense, his error in leaving the ship's ladder over the side reimplicates him with his repressed 'Other'. Part I of the narrative ends at a psychic crisis point: '[a]nybody would have taken him for me' (p. 41).

Part II extends the moment of crisis through the arrival of Archbold, who is searching for Leggatt. The captain-narrator indicates immediately that he is to 're-present' Archbold in a way which suits Leggatt's story and, thus, his own desire to 'write' identity: a 'spiritless tenacity was his main characteristic, I judged'; his and Leggatt's legal statuses are inverted: Archbold speaks 'in the manner of a criminal making [a] confession' (p. 41).<sup>79</sup> The effects of this instance of *darstellen* merge the captain-narrator and Leggatt in one narrative purpose. Archbold tells 'his tale'; he claims to have given the all-important order to set the top-sail; he also puts his side of the murder incident, but the captain decides that it is 'not worth while to record that version' (p. 42). In the interests of Leggatt's defence, Archbold's voice, the voice of imperial authority,<sup>80</sup> is foreclosed, at least on the subject of the 'murder', and their conversation ends inconclusively.

Archbold intends to report back to his owners that Leggatt has committed suicide. Just as the true voice of Kurtz is never returned to the 'innermost circle' of imperialism, so Leggatt's voice will be conveniently silenced. The captain-narrator interjects: "[u]nless you manage to recover him [...] alive" (p. 43). Archbold does not respond and, so the 'recovery' of Leggatt's story becomes the captain-narrator's responsibility: he remains loyal to Leggatt, as Marlow remains loyal to Kurtz. The dilemma for the narrators of both stories is to decide if anyone, really, wants these men to be recovered and returned to the public arena. The

<sup>79</sup> Archbold's 'spiritless tenacity' recalls the qualities of the Manager at the Central Station in *Heart of Darkness*: Marlow suggests that he "could keep the routine going – that's all"; see p. 194 above.

<sup>80</sup> Archbold is a "shipmaster"; he has commanded the *Sephora* for fifteen years, and served in the merchant marine for thirty seven years; see *SS*, pp. 42-43.

‘psychic load’ that this places on the captain-narrator indicates the testing nature of the hybridization which he is undergoing; it is an ‘organic’ trafficking of competing cultural voices, rather than the ‘intentional’ unmasking of identity.

Archbold leaves and Leggatt immediately overwrites Archbold’s version of the setting of the topsail:

“I assure you he never gave the order [...] after the maintopsail blew away, [he] whimpered about our last hope [...]. I just took it into my own hands [...] – But what’s the use of telling you? *You* know! ...”

(p. 47; original emphasis)

The captain-narrator’s recollection of this final appeal repeats and stresses the hybridizing nature of the two men’s ‘pact of interpretation’. In this ‘Third Space’, “*you* know”; *you’re* the same as me. The captain-narrator responds with new realization of what the process is creating:

“I quite understand” [...]. The same strung-up force which had given twenty-four men a chance, at least, for their lives, had, in a sort of recoil, crushed an unworthy mutinous existence.

(p. 43)

The understanding is an enablement: the captain-narrator appreciates a complex interchange – the discontinuous negotiation between opposites that was understood by Marlow to operate within Kurtz. In ‘The Secret Sharer’, as in *Heart of Darkness*, characters, narrators, and readers develop understanding through ‘re-presentational’ exchanges, and the re-telling of versions of events. In Bhabha’s terms, ‘communication’ is never ‘simply [between] the I and the You’: in these stories, those two entities occupy the same space. For the captain-narrator, this entails an ideological ambivalence: he should, perpetually, ‘weigh the merits’ (p. 43) of each position; but duty calls; the ship is about to commence its homeward journey.

The ship's journey home progresses, but evidently Leggatt will not return with it. As is the case for Marlow and Kurtz, the captain-narrator and Leggatt foresee problems related to the 'Administration'. In Leggatt's case, he is anxious about the capacity of a British institution, the judge and jury system, to understand a person whose 'exclusionary markers' have been effaced. As he says,

"you don't see me coming back to explain [things] to an old fellow in a wig and twelve respectable tradesmen, do you? What can they know whether I am guilty or not – or of *what* I am guilty, either? [...]. What does the Bible say? 'Driven off the face of the earth.' Very well. I am off the face of the earth now."<sup>81</sup>

(p. 52; original emphasis)

The language that Leggatt uses in this passage is similar in tone to Marlow's thoughts about Kurtz, who "had kicked himself loose of the earth" (*HD*, p. 66). In both cases, the idea of someone who is conventionally 'unsound' sheds light on a narrator: the captain-narrator must understand things 'which were not fit for the world to hear' (*SS*, p. 52), as Marlow must understand things for "which the time was not ripe." Each narrator is enlarged by considering issues which are 'inadequately understood through received wisdom'; but this places on them an unforgiving responsibility that arises from the sharing of knowledge and identity: they must decide how much of what they have understood to reveal in their 'native land', and to whom.

Leggatt now plans his escape into 'uncharted regions' of 'Cochin-China' (p. 54).<sup>82</sup> As Marlow emphasizes the importance of 'facing' and of human interchange, so the captain-narrator, at his parting from Leggatt, feels the same:

[o]ur eyes met [...] our glances still mingled [...]. I saw myself wandering barefooted, [...] the sun beating [down]. I snatched off my floppy hat [and put it on his head].

<sup>81</sup> Leggatt's words derive from Genesis 4:13-14 which narrates Cain's 'driving out' as a punishment for killing his brother.

<sup>82</sup> Cochin-China is a name used for the southern regions of Vietnam.

Our hands met gropingly, lingered united in a steady, motionless clasp for a second.<sup>83</sup>

(p. 56)

The captain-narrator agrees to undertake the dangerous manoeuvre of running the ship, at dead slow speed, close to the shore until Leggatt can flee into the uncharted 'beyond'. The captain is so unfamiliar with his ship that he cannot tell if it is moving at all. He looks over the side for a reference point and sees 'a white object floating [on] the black water. A phosphorescent flash passed under it' (p. 59). He realizes that the object is his floppy hat; it acts as a saving marker by which he can detect motion, and an indication that his 'other self' (p. 59) has left the ship. The recursive image of the 'phosphorescent flash' in the darkness, first seen before Leggatt boards the ship, now signals a cultural hybridization: psychologically and materially, part of the captain goes with Leggatt to go into the beyond, into the elemental, primitive world from whence he came; in a 'reimplicating', migratory motion, a part of Leggatt returns to the ship and saves its imperial trading venture.

The captain-narrator now feels 'the perfect communion of a seaman with his first command' (p. 59). Scott suggests that this resolves the story's complex issues of identity through the idea of a professional agency that she extends in gender terms: Leggatt's departure allows him to play 'the role of [a] self-possessed, commanding, solitary [man]',<sup>84</sup> someone with a 'pure voice', perhaps. However, once the discontinuous moment, denoted by the 'phosphorescent flash', is lost and he achieves command, a hellish gloom consumes his thoughts:

I [made] out, on the very edge of a darkness thrown by a towering black mass like the very gateway of Erebus – yes, I [glimpsed] my white hat left behind to mark the spot where [my] secret sharer [...] as though he were my second self, had lowered

<sup>83</sup> Scott has noted the 'intimate relationship' that the captain-narrator has with Leggatt, and suggests that 'this homosexual configuration provides another way of engendering the story'; see 'Engendered Intimacies', pp. 206-208.

<sup>84</sup> Scott, 'Engendered Intimacies', p. 207.

himself into the water to take his punishment: a free man, a proud swimmer striking out for a new destiny.<sup>85</sup>

(pp. 59-60)

From the captain-narrator's position of authority, his subaltern self must be allowed to swim free from his public, British self; the merged captain-Leggatt 'lowers' himself, and is 'punished' for his uncivilized transgressions. But, the captain-narrator must also be a 'sharer' in the secrets which have been revealed in the narrative interchanges. This discursive position actually enables him to assume his professional responsibilities with an enlarged view of himself and the world around him.

Like Marlow, the captain-narrator carries with him secrets that are unpalatable in the public realm. When he returns home, the form of identity that he 'writes' is likely to be as resolving, enslaving and thus unworthy as Marlow's: his other self will continue to gaze back at him in his position of authority.

The idea of carrying other selves, or, indeed, 'Otherness', illuminates not only Marlow's ambivalent position at the conclusion of *Heart of Darkness*, but also the narrative of Alun Lewis's story, 'The Orange Grove'. The stories examined in this chapter shed light on Conrad's and Lewis's experiences of imperialism, and on cultural production in the modern world. The characters encounter a discontinuous hybridizing of selves in displacing, 'unrepresentable' environments – the perpetually 'restless' migratory experience of, respectively, the marginalized Polish and Welsh writer that demands consideration beyond the potentially resolving trope of 'divided identity'. At issue is, rather, the revaluation of the assumed boundaries of individual and national identity. In that more complex context, I now propose to examine 'The Orange Grove', and Lewis's poem, 'The Jungle': these texts indicate that the two writers have shared concerns regarding hybridization.

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<sup>85</sup> The captain-narrator's thoughts of Erebus, the mythological, primeval god of darkness, and the name of a dark region between Earth and Hades, denotes his anxiety about his journey as a moral descent.

## Alun Lewis: 'The Orange Grove' (1948)

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Kirsti Bohata has noted the similarity between 'The Orange Grove', and *Heart of Darkness*, in terms of "the journey in" and "going native".<sup>86</sup> In both texts, imperialists undergo, in the jungle, a process of dislocation that forces them to re-consider how pre-conceived ideologies measure up when they are 'divested of the trappings of western civilization.'<sup>87</sup> Like the captain-narrator of 'The Secret Sharer', each must question and re-question received codes of conduct.

The protagonist of 'The Orange Grove', Staff-Captain Beale, is an orderly and organized English officer.<sup>88</sup> With his driver, he is on a reconnaissance mission in India at a time of nationalist unrest.<sup>89</sup> The story's atmosphere is similar to that of 'The Raid': the soldiers feel alienated in an environment which is part of the Empire:

[t]he grey truck slowed down at a crossroads and the Army officer leaned out to read the signpost. *Indians Only*, the sign pointing to the native town read. *Dak Bungalow* straight on. "Thank God," said Staff-Captain Beale. "Go ahead, driver" [...]. To-night they'd [...] sleep dry under a roof, and heat up some bully on the Tommy cooker. Bloody good.

(CS, p. 213)

Although a distanced third-person narrator begins the story, his voice is immediately hybridized by competing voices. As soon as Beale speaks, the distanced perspective merges into the present of his experience through free indirect discourse: he feels '[b]loody good' about being able to sleep in the dry bungalow. In this story, as in Conrad's texts, the 'writing' of identity will be a complex issue.

As Marlow feels temporally and spatially displaced on his journey up-river, so Lewis's narrator conveys a similar environmental position for Beale:

[dak] bungalows are scattered all over India on the endless roads and travellers may sleep there, cook their food, and pass on [...] they are quiet and remote, tended for the

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<sup>86</sup> Bohata, 'Hybridity and Assimilation', p. 105; see pp. 29-30 above.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> The narrator of the story notes that Beale's 'Pending basket was always empty'; see CS, p. 216.

<sup>89</sup> See pp. 74-75 above regarding Lewis's reconnaissance journeys into the Indian jungle.

Government only by some old khansama or chowkey, usually a slippered and silent old Moslem.

(p. 213)

The creation of this ambivalent space, at once secure and 'scattered', is assisted by code-switching: the term '*Dak Bungalow*' is glossed, but 'khansama' and 'chowkey' are only partially explained. The infrastructure that exists, the 'endless' roads for instance, merely emphasizes discontinuity. "[R]eality [...] fades",<sup>90</sup> as Marlow puts it; "[w]hat day is it?", says Beale (p. 213).

The narrator increases the atmosphere of alienation through the 're-presentation' of two 'natural' figures. This technique is similar in form to Marlow's use of figures, such as the Russian 'harlequin', to disrupt a linear narrative. In 'The Orange Grove', the first of these figures is the bungalow's caretaker. Beale discovers him

squatting amongst the flies by the well. He was a wizened yellow-skinned old man in a soiled dhoti. Across his left breast was a plaster, loose and dripping with pus, a permanent discharge it seemed.

(p. 213)

The caretaker's illness, taken to be T.B., disgusts the soldiers, and this part of the narrative 'intentionally' unmasks the naivety of imperialists who are ill-prepared for such primitive cultural conditions.<sup>91</sup>

The second figure 're-presents', through Beale's imaginative perspective, the caretaker's natural environment; it projects the Indian's illness onto an approaching storm:

[Beale] looked out [at] the fulgurous inflammation among the grey anchorages of cloud, the hot creeping prescience of the monsoon.

"I don't like it to-night," he said. "It's eerie; I can't breathe or think."

(p. 213)

<sup>90</sup> See p. 229 above.

<sup>91</sup> Beale's lack of preparation is suggested by his carrying of tokens of Western orderliness: for instance, a 'leather writing-pad', and 'all the letters he'd received from home'; see CS, p. 214. In a letter written home at the beginning of his time in India, Lewis describes himself as a 'fussy little officer sahib with a hundred unimportant jobs on his mind'; see Lewis, *In the Green Tree*, p. 20; 26 December 1942, letter 8.

The poetic language, ‘fulgurous’, for instance, introduces a third voice – beyond omniscient narration and free indirect speech – that furthers the process of hybridization. The image of the caretaker’s pus-filled wound is associated with the sky, suggesting an inflammation which subverts the stability implied in the ‘anchorage of cloud’. In another technique familiar from Conrad’s texts – in Marlow’s description of the “‘dark-faced’” jungle, for instance – Beale personifies the natural phenomenon of the monsoon and attributes it with a knowledge of his predicament. This knowledge, in turn, seeps back to the caretaker via the interchange between the ‘dripping’ of his wound and the ‘creeping’ of the storm. The third voice displaces the hierarchical oppositions of the individual and political situations, and conveys Beale’s subconscious realization of the complex ambivalence of his position. In the context of this chapter’s theme of hybridization, it assists in locating the story in a discursive narrative arena in which Beale’s normal bodily and cognitive functioning is disrupted.

M. Wynn Thomas has noted the ‘central significance’ of the story’s political dimension in respect of the ‘brooding violence’ of the nationalist “‘Quit India’” campaign.<sup>92</sup> The narrative, indeed, shifts into documentary mode to confirm the situation by the narrator listing a series of events: ‘lines had been cut [...] oil tanks unsuccessfully attacked’ (p. 214). However, whether any aspect of the story is ‘central’ to Beale is debatable. The narrative is torn between involving the soldiers in the violence and detaching them from it: at the bungalow, it is seemingly secure enough to cook food and for Beale to recall in depth an earlier conversation with the unnamed Welsh soldier who is his driver.

Beale’s conversation is recalled in the driver’s voice, and this introduces an element of *vertreten* to the story. However, in common with ‘The Raid’ and ‘Ward “O”3(b)’ in respect of the characters of Selden and Weston, the narrative moves increasingly towards a ‘re-

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<sup>92</sup> Thomas and Brown, ‘Colonial Wales’, p. 75.



presentation' through Beale's consciousness: Beale mediates the driver's voice for a particular purpose, as Marlow mediates various voices in his narrative. He recalls the driver's speech to be full of the meanness of a fragmentary working-class existence, which, presumably, is alien to Beale's class background:

"tried to emigrate first of all, didn't want to stay anywhere. I was fourteen, finished with reformatory schools [...]. I ran away from home but [the] Police sent me back. So then I [joined] the Army [...] I went to Palestine, against the Arabs; seen them collective farms the Jews got there, sir? Oranges ..."<sup>93</sup>

(pp. 214-215)

The driver expresses a theme common to Lewis's stories, namely, a need to distance oneself from home. The Palestinian collective farms represent an alternative community, something to replace the kind of communities destroyed in 'The Housekeeper' and 'They Came'. There is a reaching back to something fundamental and integral, as suggested in the Zionist aspect of Tobias's story, 'Glasshouses'. However, a balancing theme of Welsh restrictiveness and self-interest is also present, and this is continued from Lewis's earlier stories:

"then I come home [...]. We got a pub in our family and since my father died my mother been keeping it ... for the colliers it is ... [...]. Well, my mother 'ad a barmaid, a flash dame [...]. My mother said for me to keep off her. My mother is a big Bible woman, though nacherly she couldn't go to chapel down our way being she kept a pub [...] the Bute's Arms [...]. It was my pub by rights, *mine*. She was *my* barmaid [...]. [Monica] wanted the pub and the big double bed [...]. She took care to get pregnant, Monica did, and my mother threw her out. But it was my baby, and I married her without telling my mother. It was *my* affair, wasn't it? *Mine*."<sup>94</sup>

(p. 215; original emphasis)

The narrative allows the subaltern driver to speak for his own political position. However, his anxiously possessive view of Monica 're-presents' an intentionally 'distasteful' (p. 215) emphasis of gender oppositions. The rhetorical positioning of "my pub", "my

<sup>93</sup> M. Wyn Thomas notes that "[t]hose oranges are, in fact, the fruit of neo-colonial excursion; they are the product of Jewish (and British) incursions "against the Arabs"; see Thomas and Brown, 'Colonial Wales', p. 77. This idea denotes an early connection between Beale and his driver, despite their class difference.

<sup>94</sup> The driver's register, "I come home", for instance, is typical of ordinary south-east Walian speech, and his references to "colliers" and the local chapel are signifiers of his background. The name of the pub, The Bute's Arms, denotes a connection to the Marquis of Bute who had, in the nineteenth century, turned Cardiff into a prosperous port.

barmaid”, and “my baby” suggests that commerce and women are associated as objects of exchange which combine to produce a meaningful life for the driver.

One might suppose that Beale, from his officer-class position, would detach himself from the driver’s views, but instead he sympathizes: ‘there had been no hard luck story told, [but] a man [...] slowly explaining the twisted and evil curvature of his being’ (p. 215). Beale’s sympathy represents a development from the covert position of the officer-cadet narrator in ‘Almost a Gentleman’. There, in the home environment, association with the subaltern, Burton, was necessarily concealed. Here, where discriminating cultural barriers are less meaningful, Beale appears to permit the subaltern voice more agency, and he goes on with his recollection of the driver’s story. After Monica has been ‘thrown out’, she takes revenge by sleeping with another soldier: “I should ‘a’ murdered her,” says the driver (p. 215); these dysfunctional images strengthen the significance of the environmental and political disturbances that displace Beale’s sense of continuity and purpose.

The linear narrative resumes with the driver’s voice announcing that the cooker is working. Beale asks him to find some eggs to eat, but before he leaves the bungalow to do this, ‘some impulse’ causes Beale to delay him for ‘a moment’ (p. 216). The conversation about the collective farms again comes into Beale’s mind, and he asks the driver about the mutuality practised there: the driver tells of how people “shared what they had [...] the school teacher the same as the labourer [...] all living together” (p. 216). The idea of this hybridized existence has, in this moment, mobilized two distinct places. The narrative again stops, this time to enter deep into Beale’s consciousness. He experiences

one of those enlargements of the imagination that come once or perhaps twice to a man, and recreate him subtly and profoundly. And he was thinking [of] the quiet categories of the possible and the quieter frozen infinities of the impossible. And he must get back to those certainties ...

(pp. 216-217)

The thought of ‘enlargement’ recalls the words of Kurtz’s Russian devotee: the purpose of experience and ideas is to ““enlarge the mind””, as he says to Marlow.<sup>95</sup> The Russian is inspired by Kurtz’s capacity to operate beyond regulatory boundaries in an ambivalent space between the ‘possible’ and the ‘impossible’, as Beale now puts it. Meaning in that space is beyond received wisdom, but Beale, like the Russian imperialist, seems unprepared to consider such an idea: in Marlow’s terms, the time is not yet ““ripe.”” Despite the attractive proposition of the collective farms, Beale wants to return to absolutes – to a ‘pure voice’, perhaps, with which he can ‘write’ his identity. However, the ellipsis after the word ‘certainties’ suggests some doubt that there is anything left to return to, and the driver’s speech has contributed to this position.

The ‘third’ poetic voice heard earlier in the narrative sets this key conversation between Beale and the driver in an in-between world: the driver stands in the ‘deformity of the hunchbacked shadow’ projected by a lamp (p. 216). Beale’s thoughts, particularly in relation to his imperial self, are ‘projected’ into a subconscious realm, and there is a strong indication that gender issues contribute to a complex inner turmoil. As Beale thinks about the seedy activities of soldiers on leave in ‘permissive’ India, negativity consumes him:

[a]nd who is she whose song is the world spinning, whose lambent streams cast their curved ways about you and about, whose languors are the infinite desires of the unknowing? Is she the girl behind the grille, in the side street ...? But beyond that? Why had he failed with this woman, why had it been impossible with that woman? [...] Woman.

(p. 217)

As Marlow experiences merging images of light and dark in Africa in connection with Kurtz’s enticing and threatening African mistress, so Beale associates the Indian environment with a feminized figure who is both ‘lambent’ and dangerously ‘unrepresentable’: ‘who is she?’, he asks. The image of ‘she’ is similar to an image in Lewis’s poem, ‘Burma Casualty’

<sup>95</sup> Taffy, in ‘They Came’, experiences a similar ‘enlargement’ through the idea of a shared existence. This specifically relates to the bond he feels that he has with the English soldier, Nobby, and, generally, to his partaking in the experience of a world much wider than his limiting native environment; see pp. 131-132 above.

(1948). In the poem, a soldier lies in hospital after an operation to amputate his leg. He thinks of 'all the lads the dark enfolds', while he has survived.<sup>96</sup> The dark, for him, becomes a 'beautiful singing sexless angel' who 'flatters and unsexes every man' (ll. 63 & 66).

John Pikoulis notes the connection in the imagery of 'Burma Casualty' to Lewis's experience of the surgical operation to repair his jaw, as re-imagined in the story 'Ward "O"3(b)' and the 'In Hospital: Poona' poems. Lewis envisages a deathly 'annihilation', but one in which his wife 'might travel spiritually towards [him]'.<sup>97</sup> As Pikoulis suggests, '[t]he wife and the "beautiful singing sexless angel" stand opposed but they are also different aspects of the same figure [...] who gives and denies'.<sup>98</sup> In Beale's narrative, there are also dialectically related female figures: the archetypal, tender bringer of light, 'she', and the real 'Woman', with whom it had 'been impossible'.<sup>99</sup> Both belong to Beale's confused and objectifying gender views. Each 'flatters and unsexes' Man, and this sheds light on Beale's mediating 're-presentation' of the driver's speech about Monica. She is both seductive and draining, as, indeed, is Kurtz's African mistress, according to the imperialist voices in Marlow's narrative. In *Heart of Darkness*, the imperialist discourse ultimately negates the female; in Beale's narrative, he emphasizes the driver's anxious and seemingly self-destructive insistence that the pub, the wife, and the baby are *his*. Through this perceived need to assert a male self, Beale appropriates the driver's voice to resolve the disillusionments and failings of his own life.

The negative portrayal of women in 'The Orange Grove' presents an interesting contrast with the empathy of the gendered narrative position in 'The Housekeeper', regarding the character of Myfanwy. It is understandable that the alienated soldier's view is at odds with

<sup>96</sup> 'Burma Casualty', in Lewis, *Collected Poems*, p. 148, l. 57. Brownlow-Grace, in 'Ward "O"3(b)', expresses similar feelings that 'represent' the guilt of the survivor.

<sup>97</sup> Pikoulis, *A Life*, p. 152; these words are Lewis's, from an undated journal.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> The figure representing the bringer of light calls to mind 'The Angel in the House', as identified and 'killed' by Virginia Woolf.

that of the narrator in the Welsh valley community: Beale's inner narrative 'works to bar women from the text',<sup>100</sup> as, in public, does Marlow's. However, as the latter is anxious about the outcome of his interview with the Intended, Beale reminds himself that his homogenizing position is not tenable:

in an intenser lucidity Beale knew he must not generalize. There would be perhaps one woman out of many, one life out of many, two things possible – if life itself were possible, and if he had not debased himself among the impossibilities by then. The orange grove in Palestine ....

(p. 217)

This passage returns the narrative from the shadowy world of Beale's consciousness to the 'lucid' surface story, and the disjointed nature of his narrative suggests that he is undergoing an 'organic' process of hybridization. Unlike Myfanwy, who realizes that her inner turmoil will be a continuing challenge to her stability, Beale still expects some resolution to arise out of 'many' existences: the 'pure' and authentic notion of 'one woman' – the wifely figure who is the hierarchical superior of Monica – signifies what ideal might be sought in this process. But, he nevertheless acknowledges contingency: 'if he had not debased himself'.

The issue of contingency in 'The Orange Grove', as conveyed by its various narrative modes and Beale's mediating voice, renders it comparable to *Heart of Darkness*, more so than its story-line is about 'going native'. Like Conrad's story, its effects are displacing, discursive and recursive, and, as such, both texts are particularly relevant to the affective issues of modern identity that are so poignantly expressed through the feminized narrative of 'The Housekeeper'. As if to emphasize the cultural traffics that occur in its narrative, 'The Orange Grove' follows Beale's contemplations of personal disruption by bringing back into focus the political disturbances, thus associating the private and public narrative arenas. The device of a storm, familiar from *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* and 'The Secret Sharer', then functions to create a crisis point on which Beale's personal story turns. The caretaker has gone, roads are

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<sup>100</sup> See p. 238 above.

flooded, lines are down; he discovers that the driver has been murdered, presumably by insurgents.

Beale carries the driver back to the truck, and attributes the dead body with a living significance. He treats the 'kid' with an unexpected consideration by cleaning his body with nurse-like care, and does not 'feel any ease' until he secures the body and is ready to drive away (p. 219). Pikoulis suggests that this moment of individual responsibility is crucial in relation to Beale's identity and Lewis's own 'colossal experience' in the jungle:

[t]he driver [is] Beale's double come to forewarn him of his own end; he is his mortal self. At the same time, he allays his fears about death, assuring him that, far from being a conclusion, it is a venture into a new life [...]. Beale is the *pneumatikos* or spiritual man who carries his body, the *sarkikos* or carnal man, with him as his shadow or servant.<sup>101</sup>

The driver begins to merge with Beale, and this offers comparisons with Marlow's carrying home of the 'psychic' load of Kurtz from Africa, and the captain-narrator's relationship with Leggatt in 'The Secret Sharer'. However, in 'The Orange Grove' there is an important contrast in that there is no return home: Beale will truly become the displaced migrant: the 'landless soldier'.<sup>102</sup> In *Heart of Darkness* and 'The Secret Sharer', a 'survivor' is presented, through such a return, with the problem of how to re-tell their experience. Marlow, for instance, will, in Hélène Cixous' terms, 'always' be implicated in 'a success that is socially defined',<sup>103</sup> in a regulatory context, as is Conrad's captain-narrator. In Marlow's case, this leads to an evident dishonesty; for the captain-narrator, a similar outcome seems inevitable. In Beale, nevertheless, a struggle takes place, caused by the 'psychic' obligation which he now assumes, despite the dislocating nature of his journey. The driver's Welsh 'social' narrative has played such an influential part in Beale's developing understanding of his responsibilities that it cannot now be disregarded.

<sup>101</sup> Pikoulis, *A Life*, pp. 168-169.

<sup>102</sup> See p. 26 and pp. 168-169 above.

<sup>103</sup> Cixous, 'Sorties', p. 87. Stanley is an example of an imperialist who returns home with a need to define himself in a society that expects his experiences to be narrated in a particular manner.

Beale prepares to escape the danger area. His feminine-like care for the driver is now overwritten with a masculine authority:

[he] started the engine [...] slipped her into second, and drove slowly out [...]. [Maybe] he could dry out the map and work out the best route [to] a cantonment if possible.

(pp. 219-220)

Beale's behaviour is complex and indicates the organic nature of his learning process. This passage expresses, in his 'mannish' Army language, a pressing need to re-assert that part of his self and reach a defined conclusion to his journey. It suggests an anxious fear of cultural 'imbrication' in the merging which is taking place. However, any optimism that he can reinstate his authority soon proves to be unfounded, since he merely lets the truck drive for six hours into the jungle. Exhausted, he stops and falls asleep.

On waking, Beale feels guilty about a neglect of duty. In a similar manner to Conrad's captain-narrator, who realizes that he is culpable for a breach of discipline, the previously orderly Beale now worries that he will be held responsible for the failings in his mission:

[t]he driver had been murdered. What did they expect him to do? Stay there and give them a second treat? [...] Why hadn't he reported it earlier? How could he? [...] Yet the guilt complex persisted.

(p. 220)

This instance of Beale's free indirect discourse signals, in the terms of Henry Louis Gates Jr., 'the point at which [his] voice assumes control over the text's narration'.<sup>104</sup> Gates's critical focus is on the emergence 'into being' of subaltern voices, as I have suggested to be the case in 'The Housekeeper'. Beale, as an Army officer, is not a subaltern figure, but the voice in this passage suggest a point of view that operates against the dominant efficient Army discourse, one that would not be comprehended by the 'Administration', to adopt Marlow's term. This voice 'speaks for' Beale's real crisis. Like Marlow and the captain-narrator, he

<sup>104</sup> Gates, *The Signifying Monkey*, p. 186; as, in 'The Housekeeper', Myfanwy's voice assumes control over her text's narration.

reaches a moment when his governing ideology fails. In a similar manner to Conrad's characters, Beale resorts to a work ethic – an iteration of imperial procedures: he begins to write an accident report, but the paper is soaked and disintegrates. As has been demonstrated by each of Conrad's and Lewis's texts, iteration causes the failure of fixed ideology.

The driver's body has now begun to decompose: in his sunken 'inanition' (p. 221) recurs the caretaker's 'wizened' image. It is as though Beale is carrying responsibility for the range of social and political decompositions that are threaded through the story. In a panic, he again drives aimlessly, finally admitting that he is completely lost. An ungovernable process is working underneath Beale's officer-self. His merging with the driver is complete: 'he scarcely knew more than the man in the back of the truck' (p. 221). He drives on, encountering a tribe of gypsies who, unbeknown to him, were watching him earlier in his journey. Their position, 'driving their bullocks knee-deep in the alluvial mud before their simple wooden ploughs' (p. 222), suggests that Beale's journey becomes, progressively, a descent towards the primitive and a kind of death, an experience that echoes that of Kurtz and Marlow.

The jungle, as in *Heart of Darkness*, is a fluid space of 'brown streams': Beale, in turn, drives 'till the land was green with evening' (p. 222). In this discursive environment, the story's poetic voice returns to mobilize two cultural positions: 'in the crepuscular uncertainty he halted and decided to kip down for the night' (p. 222).<sup>105</sup> The interchange between high-flown language, 'crepuscular', and ordinary soldiers' slang, 'kip', is an instance of style-shifting, as analyzed by Elizabeth Gordon and Mark Williams. In this narrative device, movements from 'one kind of English to another takes place'; like code-switching, this technique may be politically motivated.<sup>106</sup> So it is in Beale's narrative: as an 'act of communication', it could simply reveal a clash of the authoritative and the subaltern –

<sup>105</sup> See p. 69 above for an example of Lewis's tendency to use everyday Army slang, like 'kip', in his letters.

<sup>106</sup> Elizabeth Gordon and Mark Williams, 'Raids on the Articulate: Code-Switching, Style-Shifting and Post-Colonial Writing', pp. 89-90; see p. 34 above for Kirsti Bohata's reference to this article.



between the 'possible' and the 'impossible', perhaps. However, within Beale, as within Marlow in his meeting with Kurtz, and the captain-narrator when he realizes that he is the 'same' as the primitive Leggatt, a new interpretative faculty is created through the combination of two competing voices. Through this mutualization, Beale reevaluates the fixed 'symbols of culture' which he has read into the driver's Welsh, working-class narrative.

Beale reconsiders the driver, now that the binary oppositions of rank and 'civilized' conduct have been equalized. His attitude to the driver also denotes a merging of the ideas of organized community in the Palestinian collective farms, and the gypsies' nomadic but fertile existence in a way that is key to the 'writing' of his identity. Beale needs to find the truck's petrol tins; reaching them entails moving the driver's body, but he

did all he had to do with a humility that was alien to him. Respect he knew; but this was more than respect; obedience and necessity he knew, but this was more than either of these. It was somehow an admission of the integrity of the man, a new interest in what he was.

(CS, p. 222)

This passage espouses human qualities to which Lewis aspired in his own conduct. As he puts it in a letter to Robert Graves in 1941, he admired the '[h]umility [...] integrity and willingness to endure' which he had witnessed in 'the [Welsh] people', especially the ordinary soldiers in his regiment.<sup>107</sup> These people were themselves part of a 'profound process of redefinition'<sup>108</sup> caused by communal and cultural dislocation. The 'new interest' which Beale has in the driver is his individual 'enlargement': it is the interchange of 'respect' and 'necessity', found, paradoxically, in extreme discontinuity.

Beale's mediation of the Welsh driver's narrative is now replaced by a quickly developing merging of the two men: Beale washes himself and the driver's body, and the two men are made to look the same. Just as, in 'The Secret Sharer', the captain-narrator cares for

<sup>107</sup> See pp. 71-72 above. In a letter of 30 September 1943, Lewis describes his 'crying loyalty to the Welsh soldiers'; and 'yet I want to be away, too', he remarks; see Lewis, *In the Green Tree*, pp. 52-53; letter 32.

<sup>108</sup> See p. 62 above.

his fugitive double in the secrecy of his quarters, Beale now glances 'covertly' at this secret 'Other', 'satisfied that he had done something for him' (p. 222). However, the relationship worries him, as Marlow worries about his merging with Kurtz as he arrives at the Intended's home. For Marlow, the sharing results in a re-assertion of his imperial self through the telling of a lie; in Beale's case, a masculine aggression emerges.

Beale attempts to explain his consideration for the driver in terms of compensation for Monica's culpability for his death: '[i]t was her doing [...] he'd gone [down the road] to get away from her'; as the driver "'should 'a' murdered'" Monica, Beale would 'bloody well beat her up' (p. 222). This translates into the physical the 'epistemic violence' of the possessive idea of women as 'objects of exchange'. The use of gendered stereotyping is a feature of Beale's masculine narrative and constitutes the same kind of 'violence' with which Marlow asserts his authority to determine the Intended's way of thinking. The truth of the driver's death was that it was actually caused by Beale asking him to leave the bungalow to look for food.

The effect of the problematic gender issues in 'The Orange Grove' is to convey the idea of a descent to a condition in which Beale is displaced from his ideas of 'civilized' conduct: the next day he wakes in a 'grovelling debased mood' (p. 222). As Kurtz, and, by association, Marlow, are lowered to the 'primitive', and the captain-narrator of 'The Secret Sharer' condones a conventionally unpardonable crime, so Beale is drawn down to a situation in which all social and ideological constructs are devalued. In Conrad's stories, the narrators emerge from such an elemental condition through what might be called an epistemological regeneration process. Beale undergoes a kind of 're-birth': as he prepares to drive on, he 'washe[s] himself in the paddy flood' and promises to 'get [the boy] through' (p. 222).

The storm passes, and the sun comes out. Its bright light introduces conventional imperial imagery to the story, and Beale anticipates that he can use the sun to navigate

towards a military base and report back. His hybridization process would then be complete: returned to his rightful place as an English Army officer, as Conrad's narrators re-establish themselves as Merchant Marine officers, he would be equipped with 'intentionally' egalitarian ideals. However, the same problems of hybridization that face Conrad's characters would face Beale – problems of decision-making in terms of the 're-presentation' of what are 'unrepresentable' events. Marlow's experience suggests that such a narrative task would not be the 'immense relief' (p. 223) that Beale anticipates.

The events which follow suggest that Beale will never encounter the problems faced by Marlow. The navigational aid of the sun takes him further towards the primitive. Human figures, confusingly, extend his displacement: 'lithe men like fauns' appear, as in Marlow's recollection of Kurtz's followers, as both earthly – visible while they 'stand a moment' – and amorphous – they then 'glide away back into the bush' (p. 223). At the moment when the road ends in a river, the gypsies return as a recursive enticement. As a community, they are fording the river:

little mules, demure as mice, kicked up against the current [...] camels followed the halter, stately as bishops [...]. The babies sat on their parents' heads, the women unwound their saris and put them in a bundle on their crowns, the water touched their breasts.

(p. 223)

The tribes-people's procession offers a dignified contrast to the self-serving society about which the driver spoke, and on which Beale has focused through his thoughts of Monica. The native women are presented as the antithesis of the sexually manipulative barmaid, and the 'girl behind the grille in the side street': but, they also oppose the more complex and imposing notion of dignity in the savage African woman to whom Marlow and Kurtz are drawn. In the context of the gypsy tribe, femininity is 're-presented' as simply and naturally maternal. The imagery in 'The Orange Grove' is tropological: women function

passively to serve men's needs.<sup>109</sup> However, the native women are seen by Beale also to contribute positively to the integrity of a communal effort, and, in their protection for their babies, their actions echo and validate Beale's caring for the 'boy' driver. The primitive and the civilized are thus shown to fuse in Beale's epistemological journey.

Beale attempts to ford the river in the truck. Feelings of discontinuity prevail: the road has ended, but different path has opened up. Midway, the 'brown tide' (p. 223) swamps the vehicle. His 'whole concern' is for 'the boy inside': the two men are joined, 'naturally' (p. 223). He calls out to the gypsies for help, but this form of communication is useless. Beale encounters the same problems as those experienced by Marlow in 'facing' and 'talking' to the African woman. Something more natural is required and Beale has to resort to showing and pointing, as, indeed, the African woman conveys meaning with her body. This human, 'carnal' means of communication eludes linguistic cultural barriers and facilitates an act of negotiation between Beale and the tribes-people. These cultural opposites now work together: the gypsies

helped him intelligently to hoist the body out. They contrived to get it on to their heads, ducking down under the tailboard till their faces were submerged.

(p. 223)

In a similar psychological environment to that which Marlow understands the 'unrepresentable' but elemental human 'cry' in the African woman's shouts, two cultures in this Indian jungle are hybridized in a fluid 'Third Space'. Some mutual agency arises from the polluting 'brown' water, and this notion suggests a similarity with the situation which Marlow repeatedly emphasizes in his narrative, namely the productive and enlarging fusion of the sombreness and the 'glitter' of the African jungle, its river, and its people.

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<sup>109</sup> Monica is a possible exception to this notion of passivity. However, even her 'active' decision to sleep with another soldier leads to thoughts of subjugation, in the sense that the driver wishes he had killed her.

The hybridization process that is suggested by Beale's immersing in the river is, as Kirsti Bohata argues, 'perhaps significant for a Welsh reading of the story'; in the swamping, '[n]ationality, history (with its linear temporality and written form, its maps and dates) and language [are] washed away.'<sup>110</sup> In the more general terms of modern Welsh identity, Bohata has noted that 'hybridity is often viewed in terms [of] annihilation of identity.'<sup>111</sup> This idea recalls Weston's complex thoughts of the 'annihilation' of his self that has occurred because of the persistent disturbances in his life, both in Wales and in India. However, in 'The Orange Grove', something that has been annihilated, the driver's body, is brought ashore; Beale follows with the symbolic trappings of his Army-self, 'his revolver and webbing' (CS, p. 224). Another negotiation takes place and the gypsies agree to carry the driver's body, in effect also to carry Beale, on their migrant journey. Rather than a washing away, the immersion and mutualization of Beale, the gypsies, and the driver 're-presents' a development of the re-birthing commenced by Beale's earlier washing of himself and the driver. The idea of the water as at once fertile and polluted points to a recursive and unbounded future – a process of washing and re-washing in the 'hither and thither' of the 'beyond'.

In Bakhtinian terms, Beale's situation is 'pregnant with potential',<sup>112</sup> but implicit in this position is a further degree of debasement, as the situation appears to the part of Beale that thinks in a conventional 'discriminatory' way. Beale has 'debased' his English officer-self through two connected acts: first, a social levelling with the Welsh driver; and second, his developing communication with the primitive gypsies. Lewis's own experience of the primitive produced complex feelings. His letters suggest him to be both the high-handed

<sup>110</sup> Bohata, 'Hybridity and Assimilation', p. 105.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89; see p. 24 above.

<sup>112</sup> See p. 228 above.

colonialist who takes ‘boyish pleasure’ in his life in ‘the wilds’,<sup>113</sup> and someone who is capable of understanding a pluralized existence that renders his ‘hyper-civilised world’ redundant in the face of ‘a rhythm of many universes and real truths.’<sup>114</sup> In Beale’s narrative, a re-emergence of his subaltern free indirect discourse ‘signifies’ that the latter mode of understanding now ‘assumes control’. In respect of his structured Army life, the narrative asks, ‘[w]hat was it all about, anyway?’ (p. 224).

As Beale follows the tribe, he ‘gradually [loses] the stiff self-consciousness with which he had first approached them’; a psychological enlargement takes place:

[h]e was thinking of a page [in] a history book he had studied in the Sixth at school in 1939. About the barbarian migrations in pre-history; the Celts and the Iberians, Goths and Vandals and Huns. Once Life had been nothing worth recording beyond the movements of people like these [...] with the poor property of their days.

(p. 224)

Pikoulis suggests that it is to ‘this ancient sense of [community] that [Beale] returns, bare, humbled, driven.’<sup>115</sup> This is undoubtedly so: the tribe is dissociated from anything that is akin to Beale’s Army life, the Palestinian collective farms,<sup>116</sup> and the driver’s decomposed Welsh community. For the tribe, no national, cultural, or other regulatory constructs exist. Nevertheless, in their ‘intelligent’ conduct in rescuing the driver’s body, the gypsies display a “‘migrant” knowledge’ of human qualities such as dignity and integrity, those which Beale values in the driver and to which he now aspires.

The theme of a ‘return’ to the values offered by the tribe’s self-sufficient community is significant for Lewis’s writing. As M. Wynn Thomas argues, a hankering after the ancient

<sup>113</sup> These quotations are taken from Lewis’s letters of 5 and 9 January 1944; see Lewis, *In the Green Tree*, pp. 63-64; letters 39 and 40.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65; see p. 78 above.

<sup>115</sup> Pikoulis, *A Life*, p. 169.

<sup>116</sup> Although the story presents the farms as an idea of collectivism, they may also be read to represent a more rigid Zionist desire for national definition and separation, the principles of which I discuss in Chapter 2.

life of, say, the Celts of his Welsh homeland may well be 'condescendingly romantic.'<sup>117</sup> Beale's journey, if regarded as an allegory that represents Lewis's own desire to return to pre-capitalist values, fixes the tribe as a primitive ideal. Beale's descent towards 'going native', as has been said of Kurtz's, and, by implication, Marlow's situations, may be considered to be culturally limiting. However, in both 'The Orange Grove' and *Heart of Darkness*, Beale and Kurtz genuinely desire an entrée to cultural positions that, because of their lack of fixity, would ordinarily hold no meaning for them. In Bhabha's terms, they attempt to 'reproduce' something which, in other circumstances, they would be expected to 'contain',<sup>118</sup> as does the captain-narrator in 'The Secret Sharer' in his complicity with the 'criminal' Leggatt.

To varying degrees, Beale, Kurtz, and the captain-narrator act outside their accustomed positions of authority, national and personal, and move towards what Judith Butler and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak have recently discussed, in both ontological and political terms, as conditions of 'statelessness' and plurality.<sup>119</sup> Such a move is, in Butler's terms, 'part of the discursive process of beginning something new; it is an inducement, an incitation, a solicitation.'<sup>120</sup> In his mutual and equal action with the gypsies, Beale acts in a manner other than that determined by his authority as an English officer or his inherent masculinity. It is only when he is denied these perceived authenticities, or 'states', that he can exercise an individual responsibility and act with 'effective agency'.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>117</sup> Thomas and Brown, 'Colonial Wales', p. 78.

<sup>118</sup> In his letter of 9 January 1944, Lewis talks of a 'communion' with the 'simple and natural' life conducted in the jungle villages to which his Army job took him; the villagers are at once 'complete and uninhibited'; see Lewis, *In the Green Tree*, p. 65, letter 40.

<sup>119</sup> Judith Butler and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Who Sings the Nation-State?: language, politics, belonging* (Oxford: Seagull Books, 2007), pp. 55-57.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55. Butler refers to Hannah Arendt's influential book, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, specifically Chapter Nine: 'The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man'. In this chapter, Arendt discusses the after effects of the 'explosion' of 1914 that set in motion a chain of events that led to the Depression and the Second World War. There developed an increasingly 'migratory' existence for many groups of Europeans 'to whom suddenly the rules of the world around them had ceased to apply'; see Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* ([1951] San Diego and New York: Harvest/HBJ, 1973), p. 267. Lewis's characters Myfanwy and Weston come to mind.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

The agency that is created in 'The Orange Grove' is formed in a 'Third Space' in which diverse cultural positions are mobilized, just as, in *Heart of Darkness*, potential is 'induced' in the communication between Kurtz and the African woman. In Marlow's narrative, that space is eventually destroyed by the destructive palimpsestic effect of the 'Administration', and Marlow's need to re-assert cultural and ideological boundaries for the purpose of public narrative resolution. I have suggested that Marlow's method of dealing with issues of resolution is a basis for comparison in this chapter. His public and private narrative manoeuvrings suggest that he has the 'right stuff' to run the Empire. Beale's story offers an important contrast: the 'positive terms' that Marlow reinstates in his narrative are not iterated; resolution is absent. Rather, the fixed cultural positions of Beale, the driver, and the primitives are revaluated, and an 'articulation of plurality'<sup>122</sup> is permitted to begin and develop.

Beale's driver is 'beginning to corrupt' and the gypsies will probably have to 'burn him' (p. 224) to protect their community from disease: the 'primordial' tribe thus proves to be capable of managing itself. Beale's conduct indicates that he is at the beginning of a process of change. He holds onto the signs of a conventional organizing discourse, the driver's 'identity discs and paybook' which re-assure him of his 'Sameness', of belonging or nationality, perhaps – he 'would be all right now', he thinks (pp. 224-225). But, most importantly, and most significantly different from Kurtz, his story does not entail the 'horror' of narrative foreclosure: in the 'writing' of Beale's conclusion, agency is created by its very lack of definition:

[m]aybe they weren't going anywhere much, except perhaps to some pasture, to some well.

(p. 225)

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<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.* p. 59.



Beale experiences a release in his attraction to the wandering tribe, but this is not an intentional regression to an ancient, perhaps Celtic, life, or any recordable life. The instability eludes a fixed, achievable state of hybridity that ‘annihilates’ identity. This is denoted by the two narrative elements to the conclusion. On the one hand, the merged English-Welsh Beale-driver is able to ‘speak for’ a definite personal position: ‘he would be all right now’; on the other, he can only imaginatively ‘re-present’ a fluid and unknown future for himself and the tribe.<sup>123</sup> For now, the time is ‘not ripe’ for Beale to understand the consequences of his journey, but he continues towards the fertile and fluid ideas of a ‘pasture’ and a ‘well’.

The well symbolizes organized community, but one which, at the start of the story, was contaminated: at the bungalow, it is where the caretaker ‘squat[s] amongst the flies’ (p. 213).<sup>124</sup> Beale now looks towards that ‘state’ of structured existence, and re-imagines it. However, no simple act of communication occurs between first and last positions; the exchange between Beale and the gypsies creates an end which subverts the idea of endings: there is left only the ‘incitement’ of an ambivalent process of transition – the ‘perhaps’ of a palimpsest of plural existences. As Marlow, in private, suggests of Kurtz’s end, opportunity is created as a dialectical idea at a key moment of change: “‘*perhaps* all the wisdom, and all truth, and all sincerity, are just compressed into that inappreciable moment of time in which we step over the threshold of the invisible.’”<sup>125</sup> Both texts render constructed boundaries, such

<sup>123</sup> This position develops the thoughts set out by Lewis in his story ‘Lance-Jack’ (1942). In the Army, soldiers are part of a structured regime, but everyone has to ‘begin again. All you were seems to have vanished.’ This situation forces them to ‘realise sooner or later that nothing is fixed, nothing inevitable [and to] realise the possibility of change.’ The soldiers’ life, to Lewis, was gypsy-like: ‘[h]e is a migrant, an Arab taking his belongings with him, needing surprisingly little of the world’s goods’; see CS, p. 64. Taffy, in ‘They Came’, looks forward to a similarly uncertain and disrupted future.

<sup>124</sup> In ‘The Mountain over Aberdare’, the speaker deploys a similar image of ‘squatting’ in degradation. The poem expresses, in a Welsh context, feelings of communal culpability and self-betrayal: ‘the colliers squatting on the ashtip / Listen to one who holds them still with tales, / While that white frock that floats down the dark alley / Looks just like Christ; and in the lane / The clink of coins among the gamblers / Suggests the thirty pieces of silver’; see Lewis, *Collected Poems*, p. 87, ll. 29-34.

<sup>125</sup> See p. 244 above.

as ‘truth’, identity and nationality, ‘invisible’, yet the outcome for each narrative is very different.

The *process* which Beale is undergoing forces him to acknowledge the challenging nature of hybridity, as envisaged by Robert J. C. Young, and the anxieties necessarily entailed in changing identity. Like Marlow, Beale agonizes about its attendant uncertainty: underlying an optimism about the future, he wishes that ‘he knew where they were going’ (p. 225). His tendency, then, is, like Marlow, to “‘draw back’”. Nevertheless, as C. B. Cox suggests, Beale descends ‘like a soul to Hades [to] he knows not where.’<sup>126</sup> Regarding his epistemological journey, there is a positive interchange between descent and ‘enlargement’, and the discontinuity illustrated by this idea is better understood by means of a contextualization of Beale’s story through ‘The Jungle’, the last poem that Lewis wrote. It is a text that also sheds light on Lewis’s personal situation towards the end of his life, and takes a further step towards ideas of the ‘unrepresentable’ and the unbounded.

### Alun Lewis: ‘The Jungle’ (1945)

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‘The Orange Grove’ and ‘The Jungle’ were written, respectively, in July 1943 and January 1944, following reconnaissance journeys that Lewis undertook during that six-month period.

John Pikoulis has noted the poem’s significance ‘at this critical juncture’ of Lewis’s life:

it is at once a narrative of the jungle, both as a place and a state of mind, a contrast of East and West, a personal confession and a description of the existential emptiness of life [...]. Within six weeks, on March 5<sup>th</sup> in Burma, he killed himself.<sup>127</sup>

‘The Jungle’ is a hybridized text: ‘at once’ various things. It develops from the personal to the political and back again; like Marlow’s experience, it sheds light on everything about its speaker and into his thoughts.

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<sup>126</sup> C. B. Cox, ‘Poets at War’, *The Spectator*, 18 November 1966, p. 654.

<sup>127</sup> John Pikoulis, “‘Inwards where all the battle is’: Alun Lewis’s “The Jungle””, in *Moment of Earth: Poems & Essays in Honour of Jeremy Hooker*, ed. Christopher Meredith (Aberystwyth: Celtic Studies Publications, 2007), pp. 84-100 (p. 84).

The poem forms links with 'The Raid' and 'The Orange Grove' in that the jungle space liberates, but also effaces a sense of organized existence. 'Such ironical ambivalence'<sup>128</sup> illuminates the 'perhaps' of Beale's future and points towards the complexity of Lewis's Indian texts: they are more concerned with "'endlessness'"<sup>129</sup> than the kind of reinstatement of imperialist boundaries with which Marlow concludes his narrative. The poem is key to this chapter's themes of development, enablement, and hybridization of identity, both personal and national.

'The Jungle' is structured in a similar narrative manner to 'The Orange Grove'. A migrant trafficking takes place, in which soldiers' thoughts move between unfamiliar and familiar places: in Bette London's terms, these spaces 'compete' within the narrative. It begins in the alien jungle; moves analeptically to a Welsh 'home' existence; into a contemplative phase, before re-locating itself in the jungle. As in Beale's story, the poem opens with British soldiers coming to a halt in the Indian wilderness, at which point they fall asleep:

In mole-blue indolence the sun  
Plays idly on the stagnant pool  
In whose grey bed black swollen leaf  
Holds Autumn rotting like an unfrocked priest.  
[...]  
Windfalls of brittle mast crunch as we come  
To quench more than our thirst – our selves –  
Beneath this bamboo bridge, this mantled pool  
Where sleep exudes a sinister content  
As though all strength of mind and limb must pass  
And all fidelities and doubts dissolve,  
The weighted world a bubble in each head,  
The warm pacts of the flesh betrayed  
By the nonchalance of a laugh,  
The green indifference of this sleep.<sup>130</sup>

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100; Pikoulis quotes from Lewis, *Letters to My Wife*, ed. Gweno Lewis, p. 379.

<sup>130</sup> 'The Jungle', in Lewis, *Collected Poems*, p. 155, ll. 1-17.



So charmed by Ariel are the drunken, animal-like conspirators<sup>135</sup> that they stumble into an overgrown environment that is as dangerous as the Indian jungle. Nevertheless, they ‘always’ bend ‘towards their project’ to become something which they are not – colonial rulers. Their unrestrained manner, ‘like unbacked colts’, brings to mind the unfettered decay of the jungle pool – ‘like an unfrocked priest’<sup>136</sup> – which has its corollary in the soldiers’ loss of ‘strength of mind’.

The ‘filthy’ aspirants in *The Tempest* find themselves close to Prospero’s room: they risk ‘steal[ing] by line and level’ (4.1. 239)<sup>137</sup> his clothes – his ‘glistening apparel’ (4.1; stage directions). The proximity of both the colonialist and the aspirants to the mantled pool suggests a strategy on Shakespeare’s part to suggest that neither party’s motives are sound. In their ambivalent space, recalling Marlow’s mingling of the ‘glitter’ and darkness of the jungle, moralities and authenticities are interchangeable. The conspirators come to the pool through their desire to usurp Prospero, but that desire also displaces them, and, by ‘reimplication’, Prospero.<sup>138</sup>

‘The Jungle’ suggests a strategy of interchange similar to that found in *Heart of Darkness* and ‘The Orange Grove’: the pool ‘quenches’ the soldiers’ thirst, and their ‘selves’. The implied possibility of renewal is as ambiguous as Beale’s re-birthing in the swollen, brown Indian river. As Pikoulis emphasizes, the word ‘quench’ ‘suggests termination as well

<sup>135</sup> The conspirators are like drunken soldiers, perhaps. In another of Lewis’s Indian stories, ‘The Reunion’ (1948), the narrator recounts the drunken behaviour of soldiers in a hotel: ‘[i]t’s an hour since they shouted at the manager when he asked them to make less noise [...] calling his skin black, aware of their whiteness, making me worse, worse, worse’; see *CS*, p. 232.

<sup>136</sup> The idea of an ‘unfrocked priest’ also suggests a connection to Prospero as the deposed Duke of Milan.

<sup>137</sup> Stealing ‘by line and level’, or stealing ‘properly’, indicates the hybridizing nature of their ‘project’.

<sup>138</sup> The title of the volume in which ‘The Jungle’ was published, *Ha! Ha! Among the Trumpets*, alludes to similarly self-endangering desires regarding the battle-charger in Job 39: 21-25: ‘He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; [...] He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.’

as satisfaction.’<sup>139</sup> The water renews the men as imperial soldiers, but, just as Caliban, his conspirators, and Prospero are attracted by what ‘fouls’ them, the soldiers are tempted by and complicit with a lowering, primitive degradation. Their faiths and certainties are thus ‘betrayed’. Like Beale and Marlow in their wildernesses, all cultural boundaries ‘dissolve’ between the pedagogical ‘weighted world’ and the performative ‘bubble’.

Most significantly, regarding the poem’s allusion to *The Tempest*, it is the soldiers’ imperial selves which casually betray the ‘warm pacts’ of their previous lives. Lewis’s ‘Army’ texts examined in this thesis follow a ‘Fall’ through ‘a single Infernal System’ of inner and outer circles, as Bruce R. Stark has suggested of Marlow. The inner circle of the aspiring cadets in ‘Almost a Gentleman’ leads to the cultural dislocations of ‘They Came’, and ‘The Raid’, the disillusionment of ‘Ward “O”3(b)’ (each of which expresses dissatisfaction in national terms), on to the disorientation of ‘The Orange Grove’, and, finally, to the beyond of ‘The Jungle’. Those characters who have become agents of imperial power also become its victims.<sup>140</sup> In ‘The Jungle’, the discursive ‘Third Space’ formed between these polarities will re-interpret the ideas of re-birthing and ending contained in Beale’s story. That space is now merged with the soldiers’ dreams of home through a hybridizing to-ing and fro-ing between their origins and their present circumstances.

I have suggested that Conrad’s and Lewis’s texts differ in that Conrad’s characters, such as Marlow, are faced with problematic decisions surrounding ‘re-presentation’ on their return to the imperial base, whereas in Lewis’s Indian stories the principal characters make no such homeward journey. However, ‘Ward “O”3(b)’, ‘The Orange Grove’, and ‘The Jungle’ demonstrate that a subconscious, ‘unintentional’ return plays a role in discontinuous meetings between competing selves.

<sup>139</sup> Pikouliş, “Inwards where all the battle is”, p. 86.

<sup>140</sup> The same statement may be made regarding Kipling’s character, Corbyn, in ‘A Sahibs’ War’.

(11. 24-36)

The theme of culpability runs consistently through Lewis's work, from 'Raiders' Dawn', and 'They Came', into his Indian texts, and presents a comparison with Marlow's anxiety that he is "'part of [...] high and just proceedings"'.<sup>142</sup> The movement downwards conveyed in 'The Jungle' by the idea of the miners' descent to the pit now recurs in the soldiers' feeling of falling to the dark 'mantled' pool. Correspondingly, the 'filthy' basis of internal colonialism's industry at home recurs in the attraction of the stagnancy of imperial India. In a manner similar to the to-ing and fro-ing motions of the brown river and muddy

<sup>142</sup> See p. 159 above.

hole imagery in *Heart of Darkness*, echoed in 'The Orange Grove', the mantled pool turns itself back on imperialism and its agents.

A subtle organic process, like that which operates on Beale, works internally on the soldiers' imperial selves: 'accents' have changed imperceptibly in their journey 'from precipice to plain'. Eliot's words again come to mind as the soldiers traverse the gap between the reality of their identities in Wales and a half-life in the unfathomable vastness of India: 'between the motion and the act', Western industrial cultures become 'cloud[ed]' – not lost, but increasingly 'unrepresentable' as they recur in the soldiers' memories. In this process, their voices are, to paraphrase Bette London, mediated by 'compromising accents.' In the 'clouded' world, the political ideology with which they are implicated clashes with the people in the redundant town at home. This memory competes for the speaker's attention: their previous identities are not erased, but overwritten so as to mobilize an alternative meaning:

[...] we who dream beside this jungle pool  
 Prefer the instinctive rightness of the poised  
 Pied kingfisher deep darting for a fish  
 To all the banal rectitude of states.

(ll. 37-40)

The variegated beauty of the bird is an image in which the soldiers see a metaphor of 'instinctive rightness'; it has an organic capacity to expose the stiff formality of national self-interest of the State, or, the 'Administration'. This guidance by instinct and mutuality, rather than construct and regulation, is what Marlow sees in the primitive communication between Kurtz and the dignified African woman, and what Beale realizes through the humbling affect that his driver's death has on him. In each of these instances, there exists a guiding 'representational' idea of enlargement through descent that, in Bhabha's terms, ensures that 'the meaning [of] culture'<sup>143</sup> has no fixity. For the soldiers in 'The Jungle', beauty feeds at the

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<sup>143</sup> See p. 226 above.



stagnant pool, and thus they recognize a paradoxical process of hybridization that illuminates Beale's direction at the end of his story.

The poem now moves into the speaker's consciousness in a manner similar to the passage in 'The Orange Grove' in which Beale reveals his inner 'sense of failure':<sup>144</sup>

Cargoes of anguish in the holds of joy,  
The smooth deceitful stranger in the heart,  
The tangled wrack of motives drifting down  
An oceanic tide of Wrong.  
And though the state has enemies we know  
The greater enmity within ourselves.

(ll. 51-56)

Just as Marlow's epistemological process takes him from the generalized imperial duplicity of projects such as the building of a railway to the individualized dilemma of Kurtz, and into his own questionable identity, 'The Jungle' moves from '[c]argoes of anguish in the holds of joy' to the more personal 'enmity within ourselves.' Marlow realizes that such a journey is not a simple binary motion: his merging with Kurtz also implicates him in "the pulsating stream of light [and] the deceitful flow [of] darkness" (*HD*, p. 47). As the captain-narrator in 'The Secret Sharer' recognizes that he is a 'stranger' to himself, so Lewis's speaker comes to understand the same condition. In this organic hybridization, fixed ideas of the 'self' are caught in the process of cultural traffic – as fluctuating and as plural as the identities of Caliban and his 'filthy', common conspirators who adorn themselves with Prospero's 'glistening' wardrobe, and, in doing so, become their own enslavers. The soldiers in 'The Jungle' now realize the insidious way their 'accents' change as they become the imperialists that they are not.

The speaker now addresses those who may not understand the epistemological enlargement process:

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<sup>144</sup> Pikoulis, "Inwards where all the battle is", p. 97.

Oh you who want us for ourselves,  
 [...]
   
 Forgive this strange inconstancy of soul,  
 The face distorted in a jungle pool  
 That drowns its image in a mort of leaves.

(ll. 64-69)

The address is to 'you' who seek the 'pure voice' of identity, the very notion of definition with which I introduced this thesis,<sup>145</sup> and which can be read into texts such as *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* and 'Almost a Gentleman'. In 'The Orange Grove', Beale seeks 'certainties', but is persistently displaced by a primitive, yet more dignified and human, merging with the driver and the gypsies. In 'The Jungle', ideas of distortion, as in *The Tempest*, result in notions of near-drowning. Shakespeare's conspirators are left 'up to [their] chins' in the pool: in 'The Jungle', the 'face' which looks into the pool drowns only part of itself – 'its image'. This image is the mirror-like reflection that attempts to fix the speaker's identity; for Beale, the same limiting tendency is suggested by his keenness to hold on to symbols of his Army life, the driver's identity-discs and paybook, as he joins the gypsies. The reflection in the pool is that created by the 'imperial gaze',<sup>146</sup> the same distorting gaze that is projected back at Marlow by the African woman's 'gleaming eyes'.

In 'The Jungle', the speaker wishes for his reflected image to be drowned in the 'mantled pool'. The 'imperial gaze', as Lewis comments, is 'not for me'; he imagines 'something much more biting real and distressing and inescapable.'<sup>147</sup> However, in the poem, the drowning takes place in a 'mort of leaves', and this use of language suggests the presence of the complex 'third voice' deployed in Beale's narrative. The word 'mort' has

<sup>145</sup> See p. 1 above.

<sup>146</sup> Lewis, *In the Green Tree*, p. 44; 8 July 1943, letter 23.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

plural meanings;<sup>148</sup> it connotes a 'death' or a 'killing', but by a naturally obscuring force – the descending leaves that cover the pool. But 'mort' also means 'mass' and 'corpse': this invites comparisons with Beale's situation in that he carries the deathly burden of the driver's body, but ultimately finds that in assuming this responsibility for an 'Other' is revealed a future potential. For the speaker in 'The Jungle', the 'third' voice suggests that the burden 'within' himself, his 'secret sharer', can only be covered up – he will always have an obligation to carry it within him.

The poem's fluid, doubling imagery facilitates the soldiers' return to the present as they consider their future direction. The process of hybridization is now reinforced by a traffic between their soldier-selves and primitive animal life:

Grey monkeys gibber, ignorant and wise.  
We are the ghosts, and they the denizens;  
We are like them anonymous, unknown,  
Avoiding what is human, near.

(ll. 70-73)

As Caliban puts it to his conspirators shortly before he takes Prospero's garments: '[w]e shall lose our time, / And all be turned to barnacles, or to apes' (4.1. 248-249). In the ambivalent spaces of both *The Tempest* and 'The Jungle', temporal and physical boundaries are dissolved as humans and animals become interchangeable. In the poem, the soldiers, like Kurtz, may gain an entrée to the alien culture; but, as the constants of social hierarchies are left behind, neither they nor the primitives are in control.

The soldiers' direction opens up in similar fashion to the point at which Beale drives into the brown river:

A trackless wilderness divides  
Joy from its cause, the motive from the act:  
[...]

<sup>148</sup> The word 'mort' also means the 'note sounded on a horn at the death of the deer' (*OED*). This meaning suggests associations with Ariel's musical enticement of Stephano and Trinculo, and the trumpet sound calling the charger to battle in Job 39.

The distant world is an obituary,  
 We do not hear the tappings of its dread.  
 The act sustains; there is no consequence.  
 Only aloneness, swinging slowly  
 Down the cold orbit of an older world  
 Than any they predicted in the schools,  
 [...]  
 And time is swept with a great turbulence,  
 The old temptation to remould the world.

(ll. 77-90)

Eliot's words, 'Between the motion / And the act / Falls the shadow', again come into focus. In the jungle space which is before them, the idealistic imperial 'motives' with which the soldiers left home to fight are an 'obituary'; the challenge of the 'act', the turbulent performative realm, prevails and 'sustains' a move forward.<sup>149</sup> The 'older world' that contains this challenge is the world sought by Kurtz, and by Beale. As has been suggested by M. Wynn Thomas, Beale relies on his imperial history books to confirm the nature of such a life. In 'The Jungle', the limiting ideologies contained therein are simultaneously dismissed and retained as a disruptive 'temptation' – there remains a motivation to 'remould' the world to convention. This is the soldiers' aspiration to identities to which they do not truly belong, and which has led them down to the mantled pool: for the moment, the tensions between the performative and the pedagogical persist, as they do for Marlow and Beale.

The speaker appears to fear the 'aloneness' of the position that the poem represents. This is a pointed instance of *vertreten*: it speaks for the peculiarly ambivalent yet insightful position of the insider-outsider. Like Marlow and the captain-narrator in 'The Secret Sharer', the speaker always sees both sides – at once an enablement and a torture. In terms of identity, 'there is no consequence'; the process does not intentionally reveal a final position, but rather

<sup>149</sup> The 'dread' that the poem expresses in respect of the distant world that they have left behind is an echo of Weston's attitude to home in 'Ward "O"3(b)'.

a 'ceaseless exchange of one with another'.<sup>150</sup> To recall Meisel's analysis of Kurtz's situation, the 'matter' of the self cannot be defined: it is a 'lateral event'. Thus, the speaker suggests, identity can have no final definition, hence his feeling of solitary alterity, of nothing-ness, of emptiness. Here lies the difference between 'The Jungle' and *Heart of Darkness*: Marlow is prepared to return home and lie to define Kurtz's imperial identity; in doing so he forecloses on Kurtz's narrative capacities, and his own worthiness as a storyteller. Although his frame narrator attributes him with a technique through which meaning exists 'outside the shell', he is also capable of preserving his own exclusively masculine, imperialist position. In Lewis's final poem, even in the face of the supposed finality of death, a discursive, discontinuous space prevails:

The bamboos creak like an uneasy house;  
 The night is shrill with crickets, cold with space.  
 And if the mute pads on the sand should lift  
 Annihilating paws and strike us down  
 Then would some unimportant death resound  
 With the imprisoned music of the soul?  
 And we become the world we could not change?  
 Or does the will's long struggle end  
 With the last kindness of a foe or friend?

(ll. 91-99)

The poem reaches its end through the figure of 'an uneasy house', an ambivalent domestic image which is common to several of the texts examined in this thesis. In 'Without Benefit of Clergy', Holden and Ameera are symbolically punished by death and the destruction of the house in which their transgressions took place, and by which 'proper' boundaries are re-instated; in *Heart of Darkness*, Kurtz's jungle-compound house is the place where his worst crimes are evidenced. In 'The Jungle', the similar 'uneasy' image prompts the questioning of its last lines, and consideration of alternative aspects of 'death'.

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<sup>150</sup> Cixous, 'Sorties', p. 86.

The poem's first consideration of 'death' imagines the '[a]nnihilating paws' of some primitive beast striking 'us' – the risk that Kurtz and Marlow face in their association with the savage African tribe. In 'The Jungle', the risk is collective – such a death is a possibility for all colonial soldiers in the tropics. However, there is a second consideration – that of 'some unimportant death', in the singular, but that 'resounds' in the public realm with something that has previously been 'imprisoned'. This suggests a comparison with Kurtz's more complex situation – the 'lone white man' who turns his back on civilization, but whose death has a continuing significance for that conventional world. As Conrad noted, when Marlow returns to Europe and the Intended, followed by the ghostly Kurtz, his subsequent 'interview [with] the girl' re-locates the story 'on another plane [to that of] an anecdote of a man who went mad [in] Africa.'<sup>151</sup> As Marlow realizes, Kurtz's narrative agency resounds and endures: it retains an element of individual 'worthiness' or dignity, except that Marlow's 'representation' overwrites it.

In 'The Jungle,' the speaker moves from notions of 'death', or 'annihilation', into a more complex ideological idea of 'punishment' – the self-enslavement to an unchangeable pedagogy. This is the corporate imperial world with which Marlow ultimately complies, and which initially 'contains' the conspirators in *The Tempest*. For Lewis's speaker, a final state of enslavement would occur in a return home to face the kind of cultural limitations that Marlow experiences – the masculine journey, 'to die there', as Hélène Cixous puts it.<sup>152</sup> The alternative position poses a question similar to that at the end of Beale's journey. Having embraced the hybridizing process, is the future as restrictive as Marlow's or as enlarging as Kurtz's?

<sup>151</sup> Joseph Conrad: letter to William Blackwood, 31 May 1902 in *Collected Letters: Volume 2*, ed. Karl and Davies, p. 417.

<sup>152</sup> See p. 252 above.

A comparison with the ending of *The Tempest* suggests an answer to this ‘final’ question. Instead of punishing his usurpers, Prospero releases them; he also forgives Caliban. However, Prospero acknowledges mutuality with Caliban; ‘this thing of darkness’, he says, is ‘mine’ (5.1. 276-277). ‘Foe’ and ‘friend’, and savage and civilized, are interchangeable – neither can be drowned in the mantled pool. Caliban is part of the civilizer; as Declan Kiberd puts it, Prospero ‘recognize[s] that his Other is also his innermost self’<sup>153</sup> – an ‘omnipresent’ secret, represented, for Marlow, by Kurtz and the African woman, and on which Empire is ‘superimposed’.<sup>154</sup>

Prospero’s epistemological journey has reached the point where he, like Marlow, can sum up his narrative: as he says, ‘I’ can tell ‘the story of my life [...] And thence retire me to Milan, where / Every third thought shall be my grave’ (5.1. 303-311). Nevertheless, the Epilogue of *The Tempest*, in which Prospero addresses the play’s audience, appeals for ‘endlessness’ in narrative terms:

But release me from my bands  
 With the help of your good hands.  
 Gentle breath of yours my sails  
 Must fill, or else my project fails,  
 [...]  
 As you from crimes would pardoned be,  
 Let your indulgence set me free.<sup>155</sup>

(5.1. 327-338)

The manner in which ‘The Jungle’ ends echoes the performative creation of ‘effective agency’ that *The Tempest* conveys. Underlying the masculine experiences of ‘The Orange Grove’ and ‘The Jungle’ is the notion that Lewis’s texts continue in the ‘production of meaning’ in unbounded cultural contexts. ‘The Jungle’ suggests that the final project is not to go ‘back to

<sup>153</sup> Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, p. 278.

<sup>154</sup> See p. 54 above.

<sup>155</sup> The notes to the Oxford University Press edition of the play suggest that in the Epilogue Prospero appeals for ‘the freedom to continue his history beyond the limits of the stage and the text’; see p. 204.

the point of departure', to the imprisoning darkness which is at the centre of Empire. Through the descent to the pool, the soldiers' selves are '*detrterritorialized*', as Kiberd suggests is the case for Prospero and Caliban;<sup>156</sup> colonizer and colonized, 'Same' and 'Other', alike are rendered 'stateless', whether one chooses to read this idea ontologically, politically or in both ways. In 'The Jungle', the speaker's continued questioning – yet more searching than Beale at the end of his jungle-road – generates a release, rather than a summing up. His trajectory, which takes us back to early critics' identification of the importance of the 'landless' soldier in Lewis's texts, delimits ideas of personal, imperial and national, identity, and exposes to perpetual questioning the notion that these constructs can be fixed. It envisages a journey that continues into the 'beyond' – an organic, migratory *process* in which identity is subjective, and its 'writing' is designed to effect agency rather than definition.

## Conclusion

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In their engagement with the discontinuous process of hybridization, the four texts examined in this chapter bear the marks of the variable cultural influences within Conrad and Lewis as, respectively, Polish and Welsh writers. The characters and voices therein, rather than exemplifying the divided identities with which their authors may be attributed, 'represent' and 're-present' a more complex and ambivalent sense of merging. Points of view are shaped by both the writers' imperialist 'trajectories' and their status as marginalized 'Others'.

In *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow is presented with opportunities for the displacement of fixed ideologies – to 'change the way people think', as Henthorne remarks. These 'incitations' occur at the places in which change matters most, at his home at the centre of British Empire, and, in a wider European context, at the Intended's home. His merging with Kurtz is an experience that illuminates the traffics of *vertreten* and *darstellen* entailed in personal and political narratives: as he comments, it throws "light on everything about me – and into my

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<sup>156</sup> Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, p. 279; (original emphasis).



thoughts.”<sup>157</sup> His story-telling is a benchmark for situations, such as that presented to the captain-narrator of ‘The Secret Sharer’, in which mediation and ‘re-presentation’ is required to negotiate public and national positions that, for reasons of expediency, need to be preserved. Although a productive ‘Third Space’ has been revealed to them, Marlow and the captain-narrator are both ‘reined in’ by their professional careers; their return home is a public affirmation of their imperial identity, which, in effect, results in the resolving death of ‘Sameness’.

In ‘The Orange Grove’, the ‘production of meaning’ in Beale’s journey is influenced by his position as a colonial officer, and a simultaneous desire to be detached from it. Beale appears to free himself, to a degree. Notions of complicity with imperialist attitudes – determined by the constructs of class, profession, and gender, for instance – similar to those expressed by Marlow and the captain-narrator, still exist in his mind. In these three characters, the hybridization process is enlarging, but a requirement to negotiate competing cultural demands remains.<sup>158</sup> If we, as readers, seek a ‘pure voice’, then it is found in those who have rejected fully the complete identity shaped by national and cultural boundaries – ‘the world we could not change’. This is especially significant in Lewis’s case, for he, unlike Conrad, chose not to return to that world and its confining social definition.

Kurtz, Leggatt, and the speaker in ‘The Jungle’ display a particular understanding of the hybridizing ‘Third Space’, especially that space formed in the interchange between a descent and an enlargement. Their continuing movement down towards the ‘last kindness’ is a release, to the final degree, from unworthy obligations. In this sense, death, or in Leggatt’s case, the death-like ‘lowering’ of exile in ‘uncharted’ territory, ‘re-presents’ a trajectory through which each of them is released from limiting discourses. The idea of ‘death’, or

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<sup>157</sup> See pp. 187-188 above.

<sup>158</sup> See note 190 to Chapter 1 regarding Lewis’s anxiety about being ‘unable to commit’ himself to the ‘primitive’ life espoused by Verrier Elwin in *Leaves from the Jungle*.

resolution, in these three cases is one which, paradoxically, is an enablement – a move to ‘another world’, as Lewis puts it.<sup>159</sup> It is this kind of ‘inducement’ towards an unrepresentable agency that associates the ‘Third Space’ with modern ideas of statelessness. The time for full understanding of such ideas is, perhaps, not yet ‘ripe’. Yet, the inducement encourages entry to the ‘exploratory, restless movement [of the] beyond’,<sup>160</sup> where nothing is defined, nothing is consequential, nothing is foreclosed – a notion that poses questions regarding Conrad’s and Lewis’s individual and ‘national’ positions.

As Marlow begins his journey home from the Congo, he perceives Kurtz’s life to be ebbing “‘into the sea of inexorable time.’”<sup>161</sup> There, as for the speaker in ‘The Jungle’, an organic traffic occurs in which even the most constant symbols of culture are re-processed so that they re-sound with new significance. Lewis’s seemingly despairing statement, ‘[h]ere I am, nowhere in particular’,<sup>162</sup> made towards the end of his life, thus takes on a complex meaning in relation to his and Conrad’s texts.

The texts examined in this chapter offer *ideas* about identity, about identity that is undergoing a process of perpetual change rather than reaching a completed ‘state’, and what should be done, if anything, to manage that situation. Reading their narratives with this notion in mind has implications for the binary notions of fixity and the ‘unrepresentable’ with which *Heart of Darkness*, ‘The Orange Grove’, and ‘The Jungle’ are concerned, and it is on these issues that I propose to focus in my Conclusion.

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<sup>159</sup> See p. 75 above.

<sup>160</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 2.

<sup>161</sup> See p. 242 above.

<sup>162</sup> See p. 79 above.

## CONCLUSION: 'THE TRUEST EYE'

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My opening quotation from the article, 'Congo Free State', contained in the 1902 edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, illustrates the characteristics of a defining and enslaving *fin-de-siècle* imperialist discourse. This thesis has moved outwards from that kind of fixed base to the contestable perspectives of Conrad's and Lewis's texts. Its trajectory has moved, through Bhabha's theory of the double narrative, towards his ideas of the 'transnational' and the 'migrant'.<sup>1</sup>

Postcolonial ideas, such as those contained in Bhabha's theory, relating to a 'back and forth' fluidity of narrative, have been applied previously to Conrad's writings. Given the biographical basis of many of his texts, the Polish writer's 'transplantation', via France and various colonial outposts, to Britain, but always retaining a yearning for a homeland, suggests that they are suited to an examination within Bhabha's postcolonial framework. In respect of Lewis's texts, postcolonial approaches have previously been applied only to a limited degree. However, their sense of negotiation and re-negotiation between several cultural positions, also developed from the author's personal experience, suggests that his writings are made more relevant to contemporary issues of identity by viewing them through that same theoretical lens.

The points of view in Conrad's and Lewis's texts derive from what Bhabha calls 'the truest eye [of] the migrant's double vision'<sup>2</sup> – the antithesis of the 'imperial gaze'. However, that 'imperial gaze' inescapably forms part of their narratives, hence exhibiting degrees of 'enslavement' to a 'successful' civilizing discourse. Marlow, in *Heart of Darkness*, and Beale, in 'The Orange Grove', are products of migratory, hybridizing processes that emerge gradually in earlier stories. Thus, *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*, seemingly a celebration of

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 22 above.

<sup>2</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, pp. 7-8.

Englishness, does not function wholly to re-position the exilic Conrad as an English writer. Similarly, the narrator of 'Almost a Gentleman', and the character of Taffy in 'They Came' are not completely assimilated to the dominant, natural 'state' of their English colleagues. These narratives adopt the plural strategies of the insider-outsider; they move to and from various cultural positions. Incorporation to the dominant view takes place, as, concurrently, the individual subaltern perspective is sustained to create a recurring process of redefinition.

The complex cultural positions of Conrad and Lewis have in the course of this thesis come to be better understood through a comparison of their texts with those of Stanley and Kipling, two writers who were also influenced by migratory experiences in the colonies. Both Stanley and Kipling returned home to political and literary success and were thus conscious of a pressure to protect their social positions. Their narrative strategies 're-present' pedagogical, linear ideas of holistic identity through the iterative and appropriative forms of imperial discourse. Ultimately, these repetitive strategies cause displacements and slippages of meaning.

Stanley's mutation from the position of a Welsh 'outcast' to an Anglicized identity at the centre of metropolitan life entails a suppression of 'Otherness'. However, his 'ungentlemanly' conduct undermines the façade of the civilizing mission, and, in turn, reveals his own status as a Welsh 'Other'. Kipling's characters, Stalky, Umr Singh, and Holden, are part of a more knowing strategy which reveals a performative aspect of empire that especially enables those with practical ability and initiative to fashion their own roles as imperialists. Yet, each of their stories demonstrates a need for controls and boundaries, and both writers combine themes of oppression with more subtle suggestions that subalterns are, or should be, willingly and gratefully dependent. Although their strategies differ – Kipling's is, of course, more artistic – what emerges is a concern to regulate the relationship between imperialism and its 'Other'. In *Through the Dark Continent* and 'A Sahibs' War', for

instance, that concern manifests itself in an over-emphasis on the conventional imperial narrative.

The extension of the comparative aspect of the thesis to include Lily Tobias's Zionist positioning initially appears to manifest a stable and rigid outlook. In fact, her story, 'Glasshouses', illustrates that identity is formed by more practical considerations of cultural existence. Its narrative realizes the difficulties of a public-private splitting of identity, a 'schizophrenia' that validates the likening of Jewish and Welsh identities. Through the character of Sheba Newman, Tobias demonstrates the problems of individual responsibility when one is simultaneously in the position of being 'Same' and 'Other', and of being not quite either of those entities. Slippages become more consequential as Sheba moves between marginalized and 'civilized' polarities. She learns that social processes do not necessarily have a centring, linear trajectory, and that identity is perpetually subject to potential compromise.

Bhabha suggests that 'it is from those who have suffered the sentence of history – subjugation, domination, diaspora, displacement – that we learn our most enduring lessons for living and thinking.'<sup>3</sup> As a story written by a Jewish writer, 'Glasshouses' offers an important insight to the experiences of Conrad and Lewis as similarly displaced writers. It is reasonable to say that Conrad suffered each of the 'sentences' to which Bhabha refers: as a result of aggressive Russian imperialism in his native Poland; as an imperial employee in the Congo; and through social manoeuvrings to establish his place as an 'English' writer. Marlow experiences similar displacements as he travels from Europe to the Congo, only to return to 'base' in London.

Whether one can relate all of the 'sentences' to Lewis within a colonized Welsh culture is, as I note in the Review of the Critical Field, a keenly debated issue. However,

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

Lewis's experiences in his formative years, and in the Army, exemplify the effects of an alienating imperial discourse. Although he expressed a need to be part of the people, *y werin*, and the community of ordinary Welsh soldiers in his regiment, he was also capable, like the Anglicized characters in 'Glasshouses', of complying with dominant 'norms'. The views expressed in his correspondence regarding what seems to be an inevitably dependent Indian culture indicate this aspect of his identity. In 'Ward "O"3(b)', the 'outwards, outwards ... inwards, inwards' movements that symbolize Weston's future reflect the multiple and potentially confusing cultural influences on Lewis as a Welshman, and as an officer in a British Army. Yet, above all, as Weston's trajectory suggests, Lewis desired 'to be away'.

The texts of Conrad and Lewis are comparable in the sense that they 'engage with culture as an uneven, incomplete production of meaning and value, often composed of *incommensurable* demands and practices, produced in the act of social survival.'<sup>4</sup> The redefinitions entailed in their narratives are not measurable by standards and outcomes that are common to one nation or people. Unifying and universal discourses cannot readily be applied to categorize 'states' that are, characteristically, displaced and migratory, and this idea becomes more apparent by comparison with the over-emphasis on stabilizing narratives in the texts of Stanley and Kipling.

The displacements 'represented' and 're-presented' in *Heart of Darkness*, 'The Housekeeper', and Lewis's Indian texts occur in that 'incommensurable', liminal place '[b]etween the idea / And the reality'. One of the things that Marlow learns on his journey is that Kurtz is not "common": he has a capacity to negotiate outside regulatory cultural confines – 'to be away', so to speak. Despite his moral failings, he is not in train to imperial duplicity. The 'Third Space' formed by Marlow, Kurtz, and, importantly, the 'primitive' African woman, brings the fixities of imperialism, those of race and gender for instance, into

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 247; (my emphasis).

a new arena to be re-imagined. It enables an agency to communicate between disparate and, perhaps, 'unrepresentable' cultural ideas. That the engagement includes the primitive illustrates the discontinuous nature of Marlow's performative trajectory.

In the imperialist narrative terms of the 'Administration', Marlow's and Kurtz's descents towards the 'primitive', and associations with the feminine 'Other' would be meaningful only within a binary structure of opposed spheres. In *Heart of Darkness*, rather, these 'Others' speak for 'omnipresent' notions of dignity and worthiness that recur in significance in terms of cultural production by opposing the progressive imperialist discourse. Marlow is thus haunted by his dark secret sharers – Kurtz and the African woman – who return with him to the imperial bases of Brussels and London.

In the company of his male colleagues, Marlow brings home the recursive and the discursive, the 'unrepresentable' and the 'incommensurable'.<sup>5</sup> Of course, in the 'pure' public arena symbolized by Kurtz's Intended, Marlow must perform an 'act of social survival', and keep secret the dark reality of colonialism. His narrative positioning denotes his migratory status: he treads the border between private and public realms, as does the captain-narrator of 'The Secret Sharer' by protecting the criminal, Leggatt. Both have the 'truest eye' created by a performative epistemological enlargement. However, they manage their situations by repeating, at home, the voices that their 'culture writes for [them]';<sup>6</sup> this is, in effect, the same socially-defining action that is carried out by the 'Administration' in the Congo. In practical, masculine fashion, they iterate a 'Sameness' that sets the terms of their own enslavement.

Given the 'close similarities' in their careers, it is intriguing to consider Marlow's narration in terms of what Said has called Conrad's 'persistent'<sup>7</sup> sense of his own marginality. The desire for a secure sense of belonging – however constructed an idea that

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<sup>5</sup> This idea mitigates Conrad's 'supererogatory insistence on [the] "inconceivable mystery"' of Marlow's experience, as Leavis puts it; see p. 9 above.

<sup>6</sup> See p. 252 above.

<sup>7</sup> See pp. 3-4 above.

may be – is reflected in Marlow’s defence of his imperialist position: he lies to the Intended so as to protect his own image of worthiness, and thus evades a personal responsibility. Identity, for Conrad the ‘English’ Merchant Marine officer and the Polish exile alike, is always a matter of negotiation between opposites. Marlow ‘represents’ that situation: he offers a special insight to the political realities of the *fin-de-siècle* imperial world, one that has a continuing relevance to the writing of cultural and national identity in complex, contingent and non-linear terms.

The works of Conrad and Lewis indicate shared concerns regarding contingent identities that span the gap between the *fin-de-siècle* and the Second World War, and on to our modern world. In both writers there is a manoeuvring towards the shaping discourse of Anglicization, followed by a deconstructive approach through the writing ‘into being’ of subaltern ‘native informants’, both in imperial and gendered terms. Similarly dialogic literary forms convey both writers’ ambivalent positions, and these forms are supported by double-voicedness, ‘signifying’ through free indirect discourse, and *heteroglossic* techniques. Through these creative strategies, there emerge consequential feelings of indeterminacy that contribute to the processes of hybridization evident in the later stages of *Heart of Darkness*, and Lewis’s Indian texts.

My concluding concern in this thesis is to examine what the literary forms and themes of the selected texts tell us about Welsh identity. It is reasonable to regard Lewis’s characters, Myfanwy and Taffy, as representatives of a national ‘dismantlement’ caused by the effects of colonization and industrialization. Their home communities have been destroyed, but there is also a sense of internal culpability, at least in part, for their own need for redefinition. This is evidenced in the backward-facing perspectives of the elders and patriarchs in ‘The Housekeeper’ and ‘They Came’. The manner in which Myfanwy’s voice ‘assumes control



over the text's narration'<sup>8</sup> may thus be read as the hesitant struggle of a small yet distinctive nation to emerge into the political world.

That the narrative struggle of small nations must be performative, rather than idealistic, is denoted by Lewis's stories that were written after 'The Housekeeper'. For practical reasons, those of economics for instance, the cultural way forward is suggested to be one of communication and mutuality. The position of the narrator of 'Almost a Gentleman', who has sympathy for the marginalized Jew, Burton, but cannot bring himself to declare this in public, ultimately focuses the story on his own shameful behaviour in excluding the 'underdog'. Lewis's humanitarian position regarding marginalized nations is thus made apparent, particularly through the comparison with Lily Tobias's more polemical perspective in 'Glasshouses'. However, there is a realization of an equally truthful double narrative which demonstrates that isolation merely creates a different set of cultural difficulties. This latter situation is, ironically, identified by Stanley: as he remarks, '[i]f confined strictly to itself, even a nation must, in time, deteriorate.'<sup>9</sup>

The moral dilemmas created by the necessities of social survival are, in effect, those faced by Marlow. He abhors the uncivilized savagery of the colonizing nations in the Congo, yet, because of the same economic factors that influenced Conrad in obtaining work with an imperial trading company in that country, he must remain an employee of an organization that furthers colonialism's "just proceedings." The test, for Marlow, is whether he can "step over" the confining boundaries set by the 'Administration', as has Kurtz, into a hybridizing 'Third Space'. Both Conrad and Lewis deconstruct those boundaries: their characters have 'nothing' behind them in terms of guiding ideas. But, if these writers' texts are to continue to convey meaning, what follows the deconstruction must facilitate some agency to exercise individual and cultural responsibility. The notion of becoming a 'self-

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<sup>8</sup> See p. 217 above.

<sup>9</sup> See p. 96 above.

proximate' person, or, in Marlow's terms, 'finding oneself', carries with it more than merely a sense of personal fulfilment. Therein lies the key contrast between Marlow's experience and that of Lewis's characters in his Indian texts.

On his return home, Marlow effectively does nothing in the public arena to change his native English culture, the culture in which Conrad was operating as writer: Marlow's experience of the 'Third Space' is not put into practice. Instead, he iterates, to the Intended, the restrictive conditions required for his own social survival. However, to his influential male colleagues aboard the *Nellie*, he bears witness to the horror of imperial 'truth'; the power for change is thus implied to remain firmly in the control of men and institutions. Characters such as Weston in 'Ward "O"3(b)', Beale in 'The Orange Grove', and the speaker in 'The Jungle' represent Lewis's contrasting Welsh perspective: affiliations to fixed cultural conditions, states and nations are more naturally negotiable. Change is recognized as a continuing 'reality' of the migrant cultural position. Beale's narrative of his descent towards the primitive gypsy tribe displays not a yearning 'to preserve indigenous traditions', to recall Heaney's words, but a connection with something that is naturally discontinuous. In this idea, Lewis finds the dignity of mutual existence that he perceives to be integral to the Welsh people, despite the displacements of the political crises of the early twentieth century. This social group bears the effects of constantly changing demands, but must, nevertheless, 'endure', as does Myfanwy in 'The Housekeeper'.

Towards the end of his life, Lewis recalls one of his dislocating reconnaissance journeys into the 'weird land' of India; wishing he had the 'composure and self-detachment' to write of the sub-continent's extreme cultural difference, he realizes that he cannot: as he says, 'everything is fluid in me, an undigested mass of experience, without shape or plot or

purpose.’<sup>10</sup> Lewis’s thoughts of composure suggest the need for a clear documentary or ‘defining’ form. Yet, in the major poem that results from this period of his life, ‘The Jungle’, he expresses, rather, ideas of constant change in a more affective manner. The poem dissolves fixed conditions – ‘the banal rectitude of states’. Whether we read the word ‘states’ in the political terms of warring nation-states, or ontologically as the deterministic manner in which people live out their existences, the key notion in the poem is that of shedding: at its conclusion, the poem goes as far as to render ‘unimportant’ the fixed notions of life and death.<sup>11</sup>

As John Pikoulis argues, ‘The Jungle’ ‘exposes the collapse of idealised beliefs.’<sup>12</sup> Given Lewis’s emphasis on ideas of dignity and mutuality, the enslaving demands of the ‘civilizing’ or ‘Successful Century’ can reasonably be included in the kind of fixed beliefs to be shed. The comparison of ‘The Jungle’ and *The Tempest* ‘exposes’ a common and seemingly timeless theme of empire and colonization: the ‘specious pretext’ of an imperialist aspiration to power, or at least a complicity with that aspiration,<sup>13</sup> inevitably leads to cultural degradation, and Lewis’s texts relate this idea to India and Wales alike. In Lewis’s own collapse, or ‘descent’ to the jungle, he seeks a ‘more constructive purpose’ to convey in his writing.<sup>14</sup> The idea of ‘statelessness’ that, in *Heart of Darkness*, the ‘Administration’ cannot tolerate is regarded by Lewis as a freeing opportunity to attain the agency ‘to write’ a purposeful identity.

The agency that Lewis imagines is facilitated through, in Bhabha’s terms, a ‘postcolonial perspective’ that is critically ‘collaborative’: an ‘uncomfortable, disturbing

<sup>10</sup> Lewis, *In the Green Tree*, p. 67; 15 January 1944, letter 41. See note 123 to Chapter 4 regarding Lewis’s story ‘Lance-Jack’, which expresses thoughts of fluidity and migrancy before he experienced the displacing effects of India.

<sup>11</sup> In his poem, ‘In Hospital: Poona (2)’, Lewis describes a ‘void’ where the mind ‘sheds the stippled scales of ancient dreams’; see p. 73 above.

<sup>12</sup> Pikoulis, *A Life*, p. 220.

<sup>13</sup> As Idris Davies puts it, ‘fathers’ who ‘sold the fern and flower’; see p. 3 above.

<sup>14</sup> Lewis, *In the Green Tree*, p. 67; 15 January 1944, letter 41.

practice of survival and supplementarity [...] both within the margins of the nation-space and across boundaries between nations and peoples.’<sup>15</sup> The nature of the epistemological journey is thus ongoing, and entails an individual and corporate responsibility for communication and interchange. The frame narrator of *Heart of Darkness* suggests that Marlow understands and applies to his story-telling the idea of a perpetually hybridizing narrative form: meaning resides outside ‘the shell’,<sup>16</sup> in the very mutuality ‘across boundaries’ that Kurtz furthers in the Congo, as does Beale in India. However, the comparison of Marlow’s narrative with that of ‘The Orange Grove’ and ‘The Jungle’ ‘distorts’, to recall Susan Bassnett’s term, Marlow’s political positioning. In the ironic conclusion to *Heart of Darkness*, the same frame narrator obliquely suggests that Marlow draws back from the dignified identity that his newly-acquired collaborative and “migrant” knowledge demands, and re-asserts the social order required by the civilizing mission.

Lewis’s texts are predominantly concerned with change. In this sense, they are ‘profoundly influenced [by] the values of the South Walian community he grew up in.’<sup>17</sup> His own ‘turbulent’, displacing experience echoes that of Wales in the 1930s: as such, the collaborative approach expressed in the relationships between Beale, his driver, and the gypsies in ‘The Orange Grove’ is crucial to the capacity to adapt and dispense with restrictive cultural practices. Here, I hesitate to suggest that Lewis’s dislocations were more severe than Conrad’s. The difference in their positions relates to Lewis’s personal situation caused by the proximity of Wales, his homeland, to its dominant neighbour, England.

Where Conrad, as an ‘English’ writer, retained an emotional attachment to Poland, other forms of contact were largely severed. His desire for cultural stability was thus more pronounced. Such a distancing did not prevail in Lewis’s case: a close interaction between

<sup>15</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, pp. 251-252. The terms of Bhabha’s analysis are echoed by Judith Butler in *Who Sings the Nation-State?*; see p. 284 above.

<sup>16</sup> See p. 156 above.

<sup>17</sup> John Pikoulis, ‘Afterword’ to Lewis, *In the Green Tree*, p. 180.

Welsh and English cultures existed throughout his life. This interaction is 'represented' in the merged Welsh-English perspectives of the soldiers in his Army stories; it is evidenced, for example, through the *heteroglossic* shifting narratives and multiple voices of Taffy and Nobby in 'They Came', and Beale and his driver in 'The Orange Grove'; and in what I have suggested are 'subconscious' ideas of return in 'The Jungle'.<sup>18</sup> It is also present in the earlier Welsh story, 'The Housekeeper', in Myfanwy's need to reach out to 'Slough or Dagenham', simply for the purposes of economic survival. That such a need for interaction, in the latter example, is persuasively expressed through the empowerment of a feminine voice indicates Lewis's inherent capacity to understand subaltern and multiple perspectives other than those determined by his masculine colonial trajectory.

For nations, such as Wales, that are 'peripheral' to a colonizing 'core',<sup>19</sup> cultural interaction is a function of a process of survival in which social and economic factors are strongly influential.<sup>20</sup> Glyn Jones's recollection of the regeneration of 'dismantled' Welsh industry through re-armament in 1939 exemplifies this point.<sup>21</sup> To move forward in time, one could argue that the process of devolution in Wales that resulted in the Government of Wales Acts in 1998 and 2006 illustrates the modern political realities of the kind of double narratives examined in this thesis. A degree of devolved power is vested in the National Assembly for Wales, but still by extensive financial and legislative reference to the U.K. Parliament, and its 'Administration' in London: some 'supplementarity', or dependency, as some might argue is the case, is an inevitable consequence of such an arrangement.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> See p. 291 above.

<sup>19</sup> See note 3 to the Introduction regarding Michael Hechter's use of these terms.

<sup>20</sup> As I note above, economic considerations dominated Conrad's decision to become part of the imperial regime in the Congo.

<sup>21</sup> See p. 68 above.

<sup>22</sup> In November 2009, the All Wales Convention, established by the Welsh Assembly Government, reported that, in the event of a referendum on whether or not the Assembly should be given full law-making powers in devolved areas, a 'yes' vote from the Welsh public was possible, but by no means certain.

The question then posed is: are the 'supplementary' features of a changed cultural and national identity limiting or enhancing? In my chapter, 'Biography and Culture', I ask whether the recurring alternation between different elements of an identity, or the simultaneous existence of several contingent identities, was an enriching experience.<sup>23</sup> In Judith Butler's terms, this is 'an open question to which [we] don't know the answer.'<sup>24</sup> Do the mergings suggested in 'The Orange Grove' merely re-state a pedagogical perspective, in the sense of the insularity of the 'tribe' – the 'new stability' discussed by Robert J. C. Young?<sup>25</sup> Or do they denote a performative migratory movement towards a 'beyond' that will never end in a clear and 'finished' identity?

Lewis's texts are full of rejections of insularity: in the potential of the suggested 'integration and independence' of 'They Came'; in the destabilization of 'England' as a home, as expressed in the Army environment of 'Ward "O"3(b)'; and in the more fluid and collaborative path that opens up the displacements of 'The Jungle'. His writings complicate conventional ideologies – those of class, race and gender, for instance. They enable ideas of personal survival, interaction, and development that may be extended to national terms. The agency that develops from these ideas is not created by the falsity of a prepared 'act', as is imagined by characters in 'Almost a Gentlemen' and 'Glasshouses'. Instead, as Declan Kiberd has argued, it is to be *pursued* through the 'ideal [of] the achieved individual, the person with the courage to become his or her full self.'<sup>26</sup>

That my thesis has returned to an ideal – the kind of progressive, defining narrative that is set out by the *Encyclopædia Britannica* – is, of course, paradoxical. However, in terms of identity, particularly Welsh identity, this narrative form is one that relates to an

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<sup>23</sup> See p. 81 above.

<sup>24</sup> Butler and Spivak, *Who Sings the Nation-State?*, p. 61.

<sup>25</sup> See p. 227 above.

<sup>26</sup> Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, p. 119.

epistemological process within what Stephen Knight regards as a 'wider' Wales.<sup>27</sup> The act of becoming does not necessarily have an outcome, a set of answers that determines the kind of unchangeable world about which the speaker of 'The Jungle' despairs.<sup>28</sup> That a 'peripheral' nation must have a relationship to processes that govern it, for instance, is an inescapable reality. Yet, the narrative entailed in the relationship is one that can be influenced and altered both 'beyond *and* inside'<sup>29</sup> territorial and ideological discourses: it is performative and, thus, by no measure definitive.

The freeing, 'stateless' conditions that Conrad's and Lewis's characters seek, and the multiple narrative forms through which their journeys are expressed, generate, 'perhaps', most possibilities for their texts to provide insights to our postcolonial world. Modern political and economic migrations – those that have occurred among Europe's nation-states, for example – suggest that the negotiation of difference is a prerequisite of realizing human potential. Lewis observed the failure of such negotiation in Welsh and Indian cultures in his lifetime,<sup>30</sup> just as we can witness a similar failure because of iterative nationalist perspectives in ours.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, this fact merely reinforces the notion that Conrad and Lewis deal in ideas of identity that emerge from the 'truest' nature of their insider-outsider's situation. They experience the effects of 'enslaving' discourses *and*, as is suggested in the conclusions of *Heart of Darkness*, 'The Orange Grove' and 'The Jungle', realize their own culpability in their involvement in such dominant narratives. It is their 'lessons for living and thinking' regarding the potential of a way forward that endure most.

The close, comparative, postcolonial readings in which this thesis is founded have, most significantly, revealed in Conrad's and Lewis's texts ideas of simultaneity: they reflect

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<sup>27</sup> See p. 36 above.

<sup>28</sup> See p. 298 above.

<sup>29</sup> See p. 39 above.

<sup>30</sup> Lewis regarded there to be a 'vast field for human effort' in correcting the deficiencies in colonized nations; see p. 75 above.

<sup>31</sup> As I note, the recent treatment of Romanian migrants in Belfast is an example of such iteration; see note 122 to Chapter 2.

multiple identities that are at once those of the colonizer and the colonized – ‘Same’ and ‘Other’. This key experience is conveyed through the complex narrative strategies of creative writing, and, arguably, it is expressed more effectively by this means than through the analytical approaches of cultural theorists and critics. Perceptive as Said’s criticism is, his observation regarding the modern-day demand to read the ‘cultural archive [...] not univocally but *contrapuntally*’ may be taken to re-state the polarities of cultural positioning: ‘no identity can ever exist by itself and without an array of opposites, negatives, oppositions’.<sup>32</sup> In other words, one must be ready to see both sides of the situation – ‘core’ and ‘periphery’, for instance. This is, of course, so, but Conrad’s and Lewis’s texts develop a more fluid, conflictual position in that the supposed polarities are merged in one personal or national identity that is perpetually in process.

It may be thought that the fluid position that emerges in Conrad’s and Lewis’s narratives is something that can be identified only through recent postmodern trends. However, these seemingly disparate, exilic authors from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries explore in depth complex, mutual and plural ideas of identity that arise from their relationships to and experiences of empire. Their texts embody the very concerns that occupy contemporary cultural theorists such as Butler and Spivak. In examining Conrad’s and Lewis’s ‘cultural archive’, the writing of identity is found to be discursive and discontinuous; caught in the act of *becoming*, in neither case has it yet reached its full achievement.

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<sup>32</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, pp. 59-60; (original emphasis); see p. 22 above.



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## Manuscript Material

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The thesis contains extracts from the following letters held in the 'Alun Lewis Papers' at the National Library of Wales:

**MS. 20** (Ninety-eight letters from Alun Lewis to his parents, almost all undated but written between May 1940 and December 1942)

Letter 22; undated

Letter 65; undated

**MS. 21** (Sixty-one airgraphs, letters and cards from Alun Lewis to his parents written between December 1942 and February 1944)

Letter 6; undated

Letter 12; 9 March 1943

Letter 14; undated

Letter 19; undated

Letter 26; 8 June 1943

Letter 27; 8 June 1943

**MS. 24** (Thirty-three letters and airgraphs from Alun Lewis to various correspondents, c. 1938-1943)

Letter 1; Lewis to Brenda Chamberlain, 21 February 1941

Letter 3; Lewis to Brenda Chamberlain, 3 October 1943

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