In the Wake of Conrad:

Ships and Sailors in Early Twentieth-Century Maritime Fiction

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to explore the changing representation of ships and sailors in English maritime fiction in the early twentieth century, as sailing ships were being replaced by steamships. It begins with a critical review examining the reception of Joseph Conrad's maritime fiction and subsequently presents new readings of five of his sea novels and their response to the transition between sail and steam: *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* (1897), *Lord Jim* (1900), *Romance* (1903), *Chance* (1913) and *The Shadow-Line* (1917). Arguing that Conrad's work is not the culmination of the maritime fiction genre, the third chapter examines sea stories that retreated back to the past in pirate adventure narratives. It begins with a contextual review of pirate fiction, followed by analyses of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's pirate short stories (1897 and 1911), F. Tennyson Jesse's *Moonraker* (1927), and Richard Hughes's *A High Wind in Jamaica* (1929). In the same period, other maritime texts turned away from the pirate romance to embrace the harsh realities of the brave new mechanised maritime world and the changing role of the sailor on modern vessels; chapter four examines the impact of war on maritime fiction through an analysis of Erskine Childers's *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903), which responded to and exacerbated national fears about invasion, while chapter five considers the impact of industrialisation on maritime fiction in James Hanley's *Boy* (1931) and Malcolm Lowry's *Ultramarine* (1933). The sixth chapter considers the role of fact and fiction in Richard Hughes's *In Hazard* (1938) and examines the ways in which this text looks back to Conrad's work. Ultimately, the texts discussed prompt a reconsideration of the maritime fiction genre, while the conclusion suggests how it enables further experimentation with the sea story throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century.

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Introduction: Contexts and Tradition

Historically, the transition between sail and steam began in the mid-1800s, but it was at the turn of the twentieth century that the demise of sail became increasingly evident in maritime fiction, particularly in the sea novels of Joseph Conrad, which reflect the usurpation of the steamship. In brief, the shift from sail to steam meant that responsibility for the ship's movement passed from sailors and sails to engineers and engines. Sailors now became 'deckhands', in charge of loading the ship, navigating, and keeping watch. The fundamental change in the role of sailors during the mechanisation of the maritime industry had a significant impact on early twentieth-century maritime fiction. Critical studies of the genre, particularly those of John Peck, Robert Foulke, and Margaret Cohen, locate the genre's end in the sea novels of Joseph Conrad. This thesis challenges that assumption, reconsidering Conrad's maritime fiction and assessing the sea story after Conrad. It opens with an account of the cultural and historical transition from sail to steam in the context of steamship development and the maritime fiction tradition.

Twentieth-century maritime texts were not only influenced by changes in the maritime industry, but also by the legacy of maritime adventure narratives stretching back to the seventeenth century. 'Maritime fiction'[1] is the description used by John Peck in his study of the genre in terms of Empire, while Margaret Cohen writes about the 'novel of the sea'[2] and Robert Foulke speaks of 'sea voyage narratives'.[3] Peck, Cohen, and Foulke have all

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[1] John Peck, *Maritime Fiction: Sailors and the Sea in British and American Novels 1719 – 1917* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001). Peck uses the definition 'maritime fiction' in order to cover a broad range of texts, some of which seem only to touch lightly on the subject, such as novels by Jane Austen and Elizabeth Gaskell, arguing that they use 'maritime references to explore some broad questions about British life' (p. 4). My thesis uses a similar approach and so I apply the same term.

[2] Margaret Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010). Cohen takes a broader approach than Peck by encompassing English, American, and French sea literature. She uses the concept of the 'sailor's craft' to extend her analysis to works of non-fiction, visual art, and poetry.

[3] Robert Foulke, *The Sea Voyage Narrative* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002). Foulke suggests that voyage narratives do much more than simply tell the story of a long and difficult journey at sea; they offer metaphorical explorations of unknown lands, unfamiliar parts of the human psyche, and the re-telling of tales in the sailor's return. Having established the enormous amount of sea literature and the variations in quality of writing, Foulke deliberately narrows the scope of his approach to the detailed study of a few selected 'sea

focused on canonical authors and texts, but this thesis turns its attention to lesser-known works, contending that maritime fiction is more prevalent and significant than previously thought. A selective and representative number of texts are the focus of this thesis, and they have been grouped into six chapters, covering the period 1897-1938. The choice of end date is the consequence of the Second World War, which itself marks a whole new chapter in the history of shipping. Focusing, then, on texts published in the early twentieth century, this thesis argues that maritime fiction comprises three strands. The first strand considers the historical context of the recent past, addressing the conflict between sail and steam, and contrasting the artisan skills of the sailor to the industrialised toil of the steamship crew, as represented in Conrad's novels. The second thread of this argument explores the pirate texts that look back to a distant mythologised and romanticised past of adventure stories, while the third assesses the texts that look beyond the grim realities of the mechanised maritime industry to focus on the ship as a setting for psychological explorations of the sailor's inner life. As well as operating separately, the strands are interwoven, creating a complex canvas for the maritime fiction genre.

The Transition from Sail to Steam

An understanding of the literature of the sea has to start with an understanding of the changes in ship construction, propulsion, and technology from the second half of the nineteenth century. Until the eighteenth century, the sailing ships that carried soldiers, passengers, and cargo were all built along similar lines, but increasingly ships were being designed for more specific functions, so that as steam power replaced sail, trading vessels became very different from warships and ocean liners. The Royal Navy was a key driver in maritime technology, with the production of heavy guns and armour leading, from 1860, to the replacement of

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voyage narratives' of which the key texts are Homer's *The Odyssey*, Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*, Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* and Joseph Conrad's *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*.

wooden-hulled ships by 'ironclad' sailing ships, of which the first was H. M. S. *Warrior*.[4]

Initially, there was some reluctance to abandon sail completely, and the first steam engines

drove paddle wheels placed in the centre of sailing ships as a secondary means of power.

Eventually, paddle wheels were replaced by efficient screw propellers under the waterline at

the stern of the boat. Then, as engines grew in size and efficiency, the funnels necessary for

the steam engines replaced most sails, leaving only those needed to maintain stability. The

steam engine was invented in 1769,[5] but it was not until 1887 that sails on new vessels finally

disappeared with the construction of the Royal Navy's first true battleship, *The Collingwood*.[6]

In 1906, less than twenty years later, H.M.S. *Dreadnought* was launched. This was the first of

a whole new class of battleship, with technology that was so advanced that it rendered all

previous battleships obsolete.[7] By the early twentieth century ship building had developed on

different lines to the old wooden-hull construction, and the maritime novel centred on the

traditional wooden sailing ship was in danger of becoming redundant. As this thesis argues,

maritime fiction responded to the change in a variety of ways.

Merchant shipping developed quickly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth

century. Indeed, after the trading monopoly of the East India Company ended in 1833,

economics seemed to favour sail for much of the nineteenth century.[8] In the mid-1800s, rival

shipping companies drove the demand for faster sailing vessels with larger cargo holds,

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[4] Instead of a wooden hull, these new ships had a hull of iron and auxiliary steam propulsion gave them greater manoeuvrability in battle. Geoffrey Callender, *The Naval Side of British History* (London: Christophers, 1943), pp. 241-243.

[5] Callender, *The Naval Side*, p. 239.

[6] Keith Lyon, *Steam, Steel and Torpedoes: The Warship in the 19th Century* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1980).

[7] Christopher Chant, *History of World's Warships* (Buntingford, Hertfordshire: Regency House Publishing, 2001).The term 'dreadnought' refers to a significant change in armaments; pre-Dreadnought ships had 'primary and secondary batteries of typically four 12-in (305-mm) primary guns in two centre-line turrets [...] and about 10 7.5 in (190-mm) secondary guns [....].The Dreadnoughts had 'no secondary or tertiary batteries' but their 'battery of single-calibre main guns was installed in large turrets on or as close to the centreline as possible, and was complemented by large numbers of small guns located wherever possible' (p. 79). By concentrating their firepower in this way a Dreadnought could attack and sink another vessel at a much greater distance and well before it could return fire.

[8] Robert. J. Hoare, *Travel By Sea Through the Ages* (London: A. & C. Black, 1967), p. 55.

leading to enhancements in ship design and construction. These developments were also

driven by competition newly opened-up between trading nations and in Britain by the

government legislation that was imposed on every part of the merchant shipping industry,

from ship maintenance to Masters' qualifications, which required improvements to be made.[9]

As Robin Knox-Johnston notes:

> Sailing-ships reached their zenith in the mid-1850s and 1860s on the China run. No faster ocean-going sailing merchantmen had been built before, and after the tea trade began to die in the 1870s nothing to compete was subsequently launched. [….] Shippers wanted the extra profit and to get it they were prepared to offer bonuses to the shipowner and master of the first ship home.[10]

The merchant ships in the China tea trade were pitted against each other as if they were

racing yachts and the names of the fastest clippers have passed down into maritime history.[11]

Despite advances in steam engine technology, the era of the sailing ship was not quite over;

Robert Gardiner observes that the cost of iron 'declined by half between 1850 and the 1880s',

fuelling a boom in the construction of iron and steel sailing ships, but that from the 1890s

onwards, continued developments enabled steam-powered vessels to outpace sailing ships on

key trade routes, increasingly relegating sailing ships to longer sea routes where the amount

of coal needed for fuel made steamships uneconomic.[12] In retrospect the 'golden age' of sail

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[9] Robert Gardiner, *Sail's Last Century: The Merchant Sailing Ship 1830-1930* (London; Conway Maritime Press, 1993), pp. 84-86.

[10] Robin Knox-Johnston, *The Twilight of Sail* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1978), p. 12. The author was the first man to sail single-handed non-stop around the world in 1967 and this account of the decline of sail contains knowledgeable insights into the seaman's day-to-day experience on sailing ships.

[11] 'The best known of the early British clippers were the *Fiery Cross*, *Serica*, *ARIEL*, *TAEPING* [*sic*], and *Taitsin*, all built for the China tea trade. In 1866 these five ships raced from Foochow to London, a distance of 16,000 nautical miles (19,650 km), to be the first home with the new season's crop, and the first three reached London within three hours of each other after a 99-day voyage half way around the world'. Peter Kemp, *Encyclopaedia of Ships and Shipping* (London: Reference International Publishers, 1980), p. 50.

[12] Gardiner explains that in the last decade of the nineteenth century iron and steel sailing ships 'were employed with surviving wooden vessels in carrying guano and nitrate from South America, canned salmon and lumber from British Columbia, coal from Britain to almost anywhere, grain from San Francisco to Liverpool, timber from Sweden to Australia and grain back to Europe, timber from Puget Sound to Britain, jute from Calcutta, and coal from Newcastle, New South Wales, to the west coast of South America'. Gardiner, *Sail's Last Century*, p. 91.

in this period can be seen as a late resurgence before its decline in the last decade of the nineteenth century.[13]

The advent of steam power offered ship owners the greater speed and reliability that started to deliver better economic returns. As maritime historians Peter Allington and Basil Greenhill point out, ship development occurred in stages and the initial problem for ship builders was how to make sail and paddle wheel work best together.[14] As in the Royal Navy's battleships, the most significant development in merchant shipping was the replacement of central paddle wheels by screw propellers. Allington and Greenhill observe that the constant speed provided by engines, which did not need to rely on the weather as did traditional sailing ships, meant that steamship captains could predict their passage time better and book harbour berths in advance, ensuring prompt turnaround of cargoes. Further efficiencies were also possible on steamships because they had powered winches to assist with loading cargo and did not need to carry, or load and re-load, the ballast that empty sailing ships required to balance their rigging.[15] As Gardiner notes, the invention of the compound engine in 1865 was among developments that began to make steamships more competitive in the last decades of the nineteenth century, as speed and reliability improved.[16] In 1869, thousands of miles were saved on trade routes when the Suez Canal opened. This gave steamships a considerable advantage because the Canal was not navigable by sailing ships, which still had to sail right around Africa via the infamous Cape of Good Hope. This is the route taken by the ship in Conrad's *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, as discussed in chapter two.

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[13] Gardiner, *Sail's Last Century*, p. 88.

[14] Peter Allington and Basil Greenhill, *The First Atlantic Liners: Seamanship in the Age of Paddle Wheel, Sail, and Screw* (London: Conway Maritime Press, 1997). This comprehensive text gives a detailed history of the engineering problems that had to be overcome as ships were adapted to accommodate steam power. At first, ships were 'steam assisted' as paddle wheels located amidships on both sides of the hull were inefficient. This was because in rough seas, or when ships heeled over as they sailed, only one wheel would be in the water, which meant that steam power was auxiliary to sail. The screw propellers that were developed later could always be submerged and therefore working constantly, so that ships were primarily driven by propulsion and only 'sail assisted' for reasons of balance and stability.

[15] Steamships could therefore offer a larger cargo capacity plus quicker and more efficient cargo delivery. Allington and Greenhill, *The First Atlantic Liners*, p. 31.

[16] Gardiner, *Sail's Last Century*, pp. 86-87.

The changing character of maritime activity, apparent in changes in naval and commercial shipping, was also evident in the transportation of people. This was particularly the case with Atlantic crossings. From 1850, emigrants to America, who had previously endured unpredictable passages of between sixteen and one hundred days on sailing ships, could take steamships that routinely completed the journey in just ten days.[17] Douglas Phillips-Birt discusses the ongoing development of the ocean liner, which appeared some thirty years later, in these early steamers:

> At first it was the speed of the new ships on the North Atlantic route and their ability to adhere to schedules that gripped the public's imagination. Passages on the sailing ships had been of unpredictable duration, and it was an achievement in keeping with an age conscious of its progress and material success that ships could now cross the Western Ocean dependably and rapidly.[18]

Certainly, the competition between nations and shipping companies that had driven advances in sailing ships was also a significant factor in steamship construction.[19] But now the speed of the ship depended less on the sailing abilities of captain and crew and more on the efficiency of the engine and the skill of the engineers. This was a profound transformation, and it subverted traditional notions of sailors, sailing and the sea: the ship driven by sailors who worked together to harness the wind with sails were replaced by engineers who controlled a machine.

But even though sailing ships were being replaced by steamships in the transportation of passengers and goods, the tradition of sailing was being kept alive by the increasing

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[17] Frank T. Bullen, *The Men of the Merchant Service* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1900), p. ix. In his preface Frank Bullen gives an informed contemporary account of the decline of sail, predicting that the forthcoming Panama Canal will be 'the final factor in the elimination of the sailing ship' (p. ix). In common with other sailor writers, including Joseph Conrad, Bullen's account nostalgically mourns a lost way of life rather than applauding the technological and commercial advances of steam.

[18] Douglas Phillips-Birt, *When Luxury Went to Sea* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles Publishers, 1971), p. 10.

[19] One example of the importance of speed was the competition between steamships to achieve the fastest mechanised Atlantic crossing, which became known as the Blue Riband. This tradition was said to have been started around the 1860s when the fastest passenger-carrying vessel was entitled to fly a small triangular flag, known as a pennant, in a distinctive blue shade to mark its distinction. 'Blue Riband', *The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea*, ed. I. C. B. Dear and Peter Kemp (Oxford University Press, 2006), *Oxford Reference*, 2007. Available at: http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199205684.001.0001/acref-9780199205684-e-295 [Accessed 8 August 2014]

number of amateur sailors on small sailing yachts from the end of the nineteenth century.

Yachts dated back to the reign of King Charles II, whose interest in small-boat sailing first encouraged the growth of sailing as a sport. The first club to be established was the Cork Harbour Water Club in 1720, followed by the Royal Thames Yacht Club in 1775, but it was from the mid-nineteenth century onwards that yacht racing started to become increasingly popular around the world.[20] Initially, small-boat sailing was the preserve of the aristocracy and the very wealthy who could buy, equip, and maintain a large yacht with an experienced paid crew. However, by the end of the nineteenth century there was a proliferation of independent owner-sailors in command of smaller vessels. For example, Joshua Slocum was one such sailor who became the first man to sail single-handedly around the world in his 36-foot yacht *Spray* in 1898.[21] Many of the authors whose work is discussed in this thesis sailed and owned yachts, including Erskine Childers, Richard Hughes, and F. Tennyson Jesse. Their perspective articulated a dramatic shift from work to leisure in maritime fiction and their experience differs markedly from the nineteen years Conrad had spent as a sailor in merchant navy. This new type of sailor/author also appears to have produced a change in emphasis in maritime fiction; whereas Conrad's fiction pays more attention to the dynamics of a crew, Childers's novel *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903) and F. Tennyson Jesse's *Moonraker* (1927) emphasise the role of the individual sailor.

Sailing ships were used in other realms of exploration around this time: between 1900 and 1914 there were a number of expeditions to the North and South Poles.[22] The voyages of

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[20] Peter Kemp makes the link between yacht sailing and royalty in response to the passion shown by Charles II, noting that 'During the 23 years of his reign Charles owned 27 yachts'. Kemp, *Encyclopaedia of Ships and Shipping*, p. 53.

[21] Joshua Slocum, *Sailing Alone Around the World* (1900; London: Adlard Coles Nautical, 1996). This text is Slocum's record of his three-year voyage, setting off from Boston in April 1895 and returning to Rhode Island in June 1898.

[22] Jennifer Niven, *The Ice Master; The Doomed Voyage of the Karluk* (New York: Theia, 2000). In the opening chapters Niven gives an interesting background to other polar expeditions, including a prior attempt at reaching the North Pole made by American Admiral Robert Peary in 1909 (pp. 10-11). Amongst other sources, her text is based on 'the diaries, journals, letters, unpublished manuscripts, and papers written by the members of the 1913 Canadian Arctic Expedition' (p. 371).

Captain Robert Falcon Scott and Sir Ernest Shackleton to the Antarctic are possibly the best known; they used sailing ships to cross the Southern Ocean in Antarctic expeditions from 1901 to 1914. Scott's first polar expedition in 1901-1904 was recorded in his book *The Voyage of the* Discovery (1905).[23] Sir Ernest Shackleton, who accompanied Scott on the *Discovery*, later led his own expeditions in 1907 and 1914.[24] Scott made his second polar expedition on the *Terra Nova*, competing with Norwegian Roald Amundsen to be the first man to reach the South Pole. Amundsen claimed victory on 14 December 1911, and was followed by Scott's party a month later. But what captured the public imagination was the bravery of all involved, particularly when Scott and his men tragically failed to complete the return journey.[25] The expeditions of Scott and Shackleton made the early twentieth century a time of real-life adventure, and readers seemed to become increasingly interested in Conrad's work in this period, just before the Great War. As Susan Jones observes, the publication of Conrad's *Chance* (1913) 'brought him the popularity and economic rewards that had earlier eluded him'.[26]

The Maritime Fiction Tradition

In order better to understand twentieth-century maritime fiction, it is necessary to consider the two hundred years of history connected with the genre. John Peck's definition of the sea story marks a useful starting point for such an analysis:

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[23] Captain R. F. Scott, *The Voyage of the* Discovery (1905; Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 2009).

[24] Following Amundsen's achievement, Shackleton was determined to cross the continent but he failed to achieve his ambition. Sir Ernest Shackleton, *South: the Story of Shackleton's Last Expedition 1914-17* (1919; London: Century, 1983).

[25] Captain R. F. Scott, *Scott's Last Expedition*, ed. Leonard Huxley (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2011). Scott's journal of this expedition was published posthumously after he and his shore party died in March 1912.

[26] Susan Jones, *Conrad and Women*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 99. In an informative footnote Jones documents the publication of *Chance*, noting that the novel was 'serialised from January to June 1912 in the *New York Herald*, appeared in book form in England in 1913 (London: Methuen), and in the United States in 1914 (New York: Doubleday)' (p. 99). She also adds details about the sales figures and Conrad's earnings, observing that 'By June 1913 the novel had earned him £1,400 [....] By February 1914, about 12,000 copies of the book had been sold in Britain' (p. 99).

three elements compete for attention in sea stories: there is the individual sailor, who more often than not will display distinctively masculine qualities; the sea and the other shore as places of danger, where challenges have to be met; and thirdly, the social, economic and political dimension, that the ship is a product of technology, that it has been built for a purpose, and that there is a practical aspect to every sea voyage.[27]

These elements of sailor, challenge and context underpin this thesis, as they do in all studies of maritime fiction, exemplified not just in Peck's text, but also in the recent works by Robert Foulke and Margaret Cohen. Each, however, emphasises one particular aspect of the sea story. Cohen pays most attention to the sailor archetype: using the explorations of Captain James Cook as a template, she defines the diverse skills of seamanship and leadership displayed by the ideal sailor. Robert Foulke considers the second of Peck's elements, the maritime challenges, as he investigates the voyage narrative in both fiction and non-fiction. In his discussion, Foulke analyses the different types of challenges faced at sea, from the Homeric epic to the solo circumnavigations of twentieth-century yachtsmen. Peck himself concentrates on the historical context, suggesting that maritime fiction reflects important aspects of national identity, particularly for Britain as an island nation whose wealth was founded on overseas trade, thus constructing for the British reader 'a national fiction in which the sea is seen as part of their being'.[28] Peck examines Britain's growth as an industrial and naval power and the subsequent creation of maritime fiction as a genre, compared to the parallel development of commercial and military shipping and maritime fiction in the USA.[29] While Peck focuses on maritime fiction in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this thesis draws on his concepts of maritime identity and shows how they are reinterpreted in the twentieth century as focus shifts from the ship's collective to the individual sailor.

Beginning with the work of Daniel Defoe and Tobias Smollett, Peck suggests that the sailor has the image of an adventurer, and he seems to reflect the dynamic optimism

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[27] Peck, *Maritime Fiction,* p. 14.
[28] Peck, *Maritime Fiction*, p. 27.
[29] Peck, *Maritime Fiction,* p. 4.

characterised by the growing opportunities for exploration and trade. Peck identifies how, in the late eighteenth century, this image started to become more refined, leading to the idea of the 'sailor as gentleman', a message which became increasingly powerful after the death of Nelson in 1805:

> Austen, early in the nineteenth century, then initiates the process of transforming the sailor into a figure who not only defends but also embraces domestic values. [....] The sailor was, in short, transformed, in the first thirty years of the nineteenth century, from a dangerous character to a solid citizen working for the best interests of society.[30]

Peck shows that the changing image of the sailor in maritime fiction reflected the evolution of Britain's navy, from the era of *Robinson Crusoe* and privateering to the age of Jane Austen and Frederick Marryat, authors whose protagonists played their roles in an increasingly professional Royal Navy. Later, he examines the evolution of the adventure story from the works of R. M. Ballantyne and Charles Kingsley in the 1850s to Robert Louis Stevenson and Rudyard Kipling at the end of the nineteenth century. Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883) is a particularly important text in the context of this thesis because it shaped the twentieth-century pirate adventure narratives, which are considered in chapter three.

By contrast, Robert Foulke's analysis of the maritime fiction tradition concentrates on the figure of the sailor who, he suggests, has time to explore the internal world of his thoughts while he is on watch, fulfilling his duty: 'watching the interaction of ship, wind, and sea, while waiting for something, or nothing, to happen'.[31] Foulke proposes that the outcome of such meditation is the discovery that there is a conflict between the expectations of life at sea and the reality:

> Although the vision of those at sea is bounded by a horizon and contains a seascape of monotonous regularity, what is seen can change rapidly and unpredictably. Unlike the land, the sea never retains the impress of human civilization, so seafarers find their sense of space suggesting infinity and solitude on the one hand and prisonlike confinement on the other.[32]

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[30] Peck, *Maritime Fiction*, p.51.
[31] Foulke, *The Sea Voyage Narrative,* p. 9.
[32] Foulke, *The Sea Voyage Narrative,* p. 9.

Here, Foulke articulates the discrepancy between the expectations of freedom that seem to be offered by life at sea, and the actual feeling of imprisonment in the cramped conditions on board ship. The tension between liberty and confinement is significant in the many different versions of *bildungsroman* present in maritime fiction; the novice sailor feels the need to escape from the cultural constructs of society, but finds himself restricted by living and working within a strict on-board social hierarchy and a regimented system of rules and procedures. The themes of freedom and imprisonment are particularly evident in Conrad's *The Shadow-Line* (1917), explored in the second chapter of this thesis, and are also prominent in Hanley's *Boy* (1931) and Lowry's *Ultramarine* (1933), as discussed in the fifth chapter. When the protagonist is a working sailor, whether he is on a sailing ship or a steamship, he often faces challenges associated with this sense of imprisonment, including alienation, bullying, isolation, and disillusion.

Foulke is also emphatic that the reader should try to understand as much of the world of sailing as possible in order to comprehend the figure of the sailor, as well as the technical sailing details in the text. Foulke's concept of the knowledgeable reader, armed with contextual knowledge, is of one able to assess the veracity of events in the narrative, as well as the different voices involved in their retelling:

> Such contexts, both historical and experiential, affect our reading of voyage narratives in three important particulars: understanding the functions of nautical character types, the significance of action at sea, and the reliability of narration. Familiar types include the jolly tar, the picaresque rogue in naval togs, the hawse-hole captain who goes to sea as a ship's boy and climbs to command, the bully mate, the brawny bo's'un, the stowaway, the jinx, the landlubber greenhorn, the wise old seaman mentor, the ancient mariner who must tell his tale ashore, the malingerer, the handsome sailor, the coal heaver, the oiler, and others.[33]

While some of these are stereotypes of public understanding, Foulke draws on more in-depth maritime knowledge to identify distinct types of sailor whose rank and function in the

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[33] Foulke, *The Sea Voyage Narrative,* p. 19.

hierarchy is often inter-connected with prominent characteristics of personality.

Understanding more about the maritime context, Foulke suggests, ensures that the reader can

access more information about how the narratives work and how far characters conform to

the stereotypes established the maritime fiction genre.

Taking an approach that differs from Foulke's, Cohen begins by focusing on one type

of sailor: the ideal mariner, defining the skills of seamanship and identifying fourteen

characteristic elements of the sailor's craft.[34] This is achieved through the detailed

examination of the grounding of the *Endeavour* on the Great Barrier Reef in 1770, as

described in Captain Cook's published journals.[35] This enables the exploration of the

demands of sailing a ship and their representation in British, American, and French literature

of the sea. Cohen traces how the characteristics of Cook, an actual sailor, are translated into

fictional adventurers featuring sailor heroes on the high seas, a subgenre she describes as

'maritime picaresque'.[36] This brief but significant period in maritime fiction begins with

Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and *The Life, Adventures and Piracies of the*

Famous Captain Singleton (1720) and is followed by the works of Abbé Prévost and Alain

René Le Sage.[37] She suggests that Smollett's *Roderick Random* (1748) marks the end of

maritime picaresque, observing that it was not followed by any other significant works of

maritime fiction until the novels of James Fenimore Cooper in the nineteenth century.[38]

Just as Foulke explores the perceived freedom of the sea, Cohen considers the ideals

of liberty expressed in the novels of American author James Fenimore Cooper, focusing on

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[34] Cohen's elements of craft are prudence, sea legs, protocol, remarkable occurrences, endeavour, resolution, jury-rigging, collectivity, compleat [*sic*] knowledge, plain style, providence, 'the edge', reckoning and practical reason. Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea*, pp. 15-58.

[35] Cohen's cites her source as *The Journals of Captain James Cook on his Voyages of Discovery*, ed. J. C. Beaglehole (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 1999). Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea*, p. 235.

[36] Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea*, p. 88.

[37] In terms of craft, Cohen distinguishes the later novels, noting that Prévost's *Les Voyages de Capitaine Lade* (1744) '*tells us* about the deeds of craft, rather than, like Defoe, *showing* the work of craft in action'. [author's emphasis] Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea*, p. 92.

[38] Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea*, p. 98.

The Pilot (1924) and *The Red Rover* (1827).[39] Cooper's works are compared to the British sea

novels of Frederick Marryat and Sir Walter Scott, which Cohen argues draw on the

eighteenth-century maritime picaresque. This marks a contrast to the sea novels of French

author Eugène Sue, particularly *La Salamandre* (1832), which examines the fallibility of

shipboard command and also presents a critique of land-based society.[40] Subsequently,

Cohen argues that, towards the end of the nineteenth century, improvements in

communication and navigation, diminished the importance of traditional sailing skills and

eroded the danger and romance of the sea voyage. She suggests that, as a consequence of this,

the decline of craft in maritime fiction can be mapped on to the disappearing sailor hero and

the fragmentation of the crew. Conventional maritime adventure stories begin to be replaced

by the more introspective explorations of psychology, technology and language, as in the sea

novels of Joseph Conrad, Herman Melville, and Victor Hugo.[41] Contrary to Cohen's

argument, this thesis contends that ships still faced and the sea still posed many dangers in

the twentieth century, and the fifth chapter examines how steamship narratives represent the

sailor not as a hero, but rather as a vulnerable figure. Hanley's *Boy* (1931) and Lowry's

Ultramarine (1933) are significant because they represent the ship as a brutal dystopia of

hazardous and unrelenting work and, as a consequence, the protagonists feel very much

imprisoned, isolated, and alienated.

While the structure of the sea story defined as the sailor hero overcoming maritime

challenges might seem simple, maritime narratives encompass many variations, as Peck,

Cohen, and Foulke's works demonstrate. They offer a full picture of the development of

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[39] Cohen locates Cooper's *The Pilot* in the romanticised maritime tradition, drawing on Sir Walter Scott's novel *The Pirate* (1821), and suggests that 'the continuity of Cooper's patterns [can be seen] in its adaptation by […] Captain Frederick Marryat in the United Kingdom and Eugène Sue in France.' Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea*, p. 136.

[40] Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea*, pp. 174-176.

[41] Cohen suggests that the erosion of 'craft' can be seen in the slipping away of the sailor hero, arguing that in Melville's *Moby-Dick* (1839) 'Queequeg comes the closest to the superman of sea fiction'. Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea*, p. 185. Later, in Hugo's *Travailleurs de la mer* [Toilers of the Sea] (1866), the protagonist, Gilliatt, exercises his craft in isolation, thus destroying the ethos of collectivity at the heart of craft (p. 192).

maritime fiction in analyses that focus on different aspects of the genre: Peck considers the

historical context, Foulke emphasises the challenges inherent in voyaging, while Cohen

delves deeper into the ideas of seamanship and the figure of the sailor hero. But they all

conclude their studies with the maritime fiction of Conrad. Peck's final chapter identifies an

overwhelming sense of nostalgic retreat to the nineteenth century in Conrad's later novels,

Chance (1913), *Victory* (1915), and *The Shadow-Line* (1917), which for him confirms the

death of the sea story.[42] Like Peck, Foulke devotes a chapter to Conrad, but follows it with a

final chapter entitled 'Postscript: Voyage Narratives in the Twentieth Century'. Foulke

suggests that after Conrad voyage narratives tended to be either based on non-fiction yachting

adventures, or took the form of novels that revived the days of sail:

> the world of sailing ships reappears in a familiar genre, the historical sea novel, first
> developed in America by James Fenimore Cooper. Beginning in the 1930s, it
> spawned a healthy and lasting subgenre dealing with British naval exploits during the
> Napoleonic Wars. [43]

In describing the historical sea novel, Foulke lists a number of texts written during and after

World War II, including those by C. S. Forester, Patrick O'Brian, William Golding, Nicholas

Montserrat, and Henry Carlisle. For Foulke, this renewed interest in the past days of sail

indicates the continuation of the sea story, while for Peck it marks the impossibility of going

forward.[44] Cohen reads the decline of the seaman's craft in Conrad's maritime fiction,

particularly in *Lord Jim*, where the steamship *Patna* is a ruin of a ship compared to previous

ones in maritime fiction.[45] Cohen argues that Joseph Conrad is one of the maritime authors,

along with Melville and Hugo, whose works depict the end of the sailor's craft, and thus the

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[42] Peck, *Maritime Fiction*, pp. 181-185.
[43] Foulke, *The Sea Voyage Narrative,* pp. 159-169, (p. 165).
[44] Peck asserts that maritime fiction after Conrad 'look[s] back to a period when things made sense as a way of evading the present; the conflicts [these texts] deal with are containable and comprehensible, rather than worrying and confusing.' Peck, *Maritime Fiction*, p. 207.
[45] Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea*, p. 210.

demise of maritime fiction.[46] This thesis builds on the work of Peck, Foulke, and Cohen by identifying Conrad as a key turning-point, but suggests that the ways in which his novels depart from tradition paves the way for further innovative interpretations of the sea story by later authors.

The Changing Nature of the Sea Story in the Twentieth Century

In the past two hundred years of maritime history, considerable improvements have been made in safety at sea, ship technology, navigation, and communication, and these have had a significant impact on the nature of the sea story. This thesis argues that early twentieth-century maritime texts are uniquely placed to comment on the maritime fiction tradition, and offer crucial insights into the transition between sail and steam and its effects on the genre. The first chapter reviews the critical reception of Conrad's maritime fiction, which is vital to understanding his texts, their place in the maritime tradition, and their influence on maritime texts later in the twentieth century. Subsequently, chapter two assesses the novels of Joseph Conrad which specifically address this conflict between sail and steam, beginning with *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* (1897). This narration charts a voyage from Bombay to London, during which the captain and crew are tested at moments of crisis: a storm, a becalming, and a near-mutiny. By contrast, *Lord Jim: A Tale* (1900) investigates the nature of honour, following the adventures of the eponymous protagonist after his shameful desertion from the steamship *Patna*. Conrad explores an entirely different kind of crisis in *Chance: A Tale in Two Parts* (1913), when the captain of a sailing ship marries and brings his wife aboard, which seems to disrupt his ability to manage the ship and lead the crew. In *The Shadow-Line: A Confession* (1917) the leadership of a captain new to command is tested when his ship is

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[46] Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea*, p. 55. Cohen attempts to locate the concepts of seamanship in the twentieth century in 'reckoning', the penultimate category of the sailor's craft, which is also a navigational term that describes a reasoned estimate of the ship's position using the ship's course and speed. She proposes that the popularity of twentieth-century maritime authors, such as C.S. Forester, marks the end of craft because these texts are more concerned with cultural memory.

becalmed and a dangerous fever strikes the crew. Conrad was particularly well-placed to comment on the maritime industry as he served on both sailing ships and steamships in his merchant navy career from 1874 to 1893. However, by the time Conrad was writing his maritime fiction later in his life, continued ship development meant that his novels about sailing ships were already imbued with nostalgia, and were even anachronistic.

Indeed, Conrad's novel *Romance* (1903), written in collaboration with Ford Madox Ford, turned back to the world of eighteenth-century pirates. And they were not alone; other authors were also plundering the past by reimagining the pirate adventure narrative, a genre dating back to Daniel Defoe's *Captain Singleton* (1720). The third chapter of this thesis examines texts by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, F. Tennyson Jesse, and Richard Hughes, all of which explore the tension between the romantic literary tradition and the brutal historical reality of piracy. Some of these pirate texts have fallen into obscurity, over-shadowed by Robert Louis Stevenson's novel *Treasure Island* (1883), which is set in the early eighteenth century at the height of piracy in the Caribbean.[47] For example, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, best known for his Sherlock Holmes stories, also created a serial pirate character called Captain Sharkey. The pirate captain featured in tales first published as short stories (three in 1897 and a fourth in 1911), also set in the early eighteenth century, which responded to the myths of piracy and pirates.[48] By contrast, F. Tennyson Jesse's *Moonraker* (1927) is set nearly eighty years later in the Napoleonic era and, although it begins in the style of a traditional sea yarn, the text moves beyond this to address the politics of gender, race, and civil war. In *A High Wind in Jamaica* (1929), by Richard Hughes, the pirate sailing ship relocates to the turn of

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[47] Referring to the famous map of Treasure Island in the text, Watson observes that 'The outlines are roughly those of Haiti – Hispaniola in the days of Captain Flint – turned at right angles'. Harold F. Watson, *The Coasts of Treasure Island* (San Antonio, Texas, USA: The Naylor Company, 1969), p. 126.
[48] The four Sharkey tales were published in *Pearson's* magazine: 'Captain Sharkey: How the Governor of Saint Kitt's Came Home' (1897), 'The Dealings of Captain Sharkey with Stephen Craddock' (1897), 'How Copley Banks Slew Captain Sharkey' (1897) and 'The Blighting of Sharkey' (1911). Richard Lancelyn Green and John Michael Gibson, 'Chronological List of Fiction with First serial Publication' in *A Bibliography of Arthur Conan Doyle* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 409, p. 412.

the twentieth century, sharing the seas with steamships and gunboats. Thus, the texts of Jesse and Hughes create increasing distance from tradition and this becomes apparent in the narrative experimentation of both.

Chapters four, five, and six of this thesis explore the different directions taken by maritime fiction in the twentieth century through texts that look towards the future, considering the changing role of the sailor on modern steamships and yachts. *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903), by Erskine Childers, innovatively brings together the genres of maritime fiction and spy fiction in its tale of two yachtsmen uncovering a German plot to invade Britain. The novel gained huge popularity in Britain as the threat of war loomed in the early twentieth century, and the amateur sailor/spy became a new type of sailor hero. By contrast, James Hanley and Malcolm Lowry returned to the working sailors of traditional narratives, but redefined the sea story in the era of the steamship by showing the potential for and consequences of alienation in life at sea in *Boy* (1931) and *Ultramarine* (1933). In Hanley's *Boy* protagonist Arthur Fearon stows away on a steamship, but after being discovered and signed onto the ship's papers, he is subjected to physical and sexual abuse by some of the crew. The text reveals the tension between the promise of freedom offered by life at sea, and the cruel realism of Fearon's entrapment in a brutal shipboard regime. Similarly, in Lowry's *Ultramarine* the steamship represents a dystopia and the romantic illusions of the text's 'hero', Dana Hilliot, are shattered by the monotonous routine of ship maintenance tasks and his increasing sense of isolation in an industrialised environment. Compared to these texts, Richard Hughes's novel *In Hazard* (1938) seems to return to traditional values of man versus sea in its representation of a steamship caught in a hurricane.

While the works of all of these authors, from Doyle to Hughes, have been studied in isolation or from particular critical perspectives, their texts have not previously been brought together in this way. Comparing and contrasting their different approaches to the sea story

enables the interrogation of the maritime fiction genre in the transition between sail and steam and in the period between two world wars. What emerges is a picture of the fascinating and complex maritime narratives that developed in the twentieth century. Conrad's sailors are hard-working men taking on heroic challenges at sea, but the sailors in other and later twentieth-century maritime narratives are more diverse: the amateur yachtsmen of Childers's spy novel, the female pirate captain of Jesse's *Moonraker*, and the modern pirates in Hughes's *A High Wind in Jamaica*. Hanley and Lowry challenge the Conradian myth of the sailor hero, usually an officer or captain, in narratives focalised through ship's boys, whose position at the lowest point in the crew hierarchy leaves them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. It appears that, increasingly, the ship becomes the setting for and stage upon which contemporary anxieties are played out – the role of women, the crisis of masculinity, and even the status of the innocent child, as in *A High Wind in Jamaica*. This thesis explores the development of the sea story from narratives in which the myth of masculinity was proved by the ability to sail, as in Conrad's novels, to new types of ships and different representations of sailors that were more complex and which subverted the myth. Twentieth-century maritime fiction exhibits a shift in emphasis from the community of the crew on traditional tall ships to the psychology and often the suffering of the individual sailor. This is portrayed positively in the depiction of the independent sailor on the small yacht, but steamship narratives represent multiple divisions within the crew, in which the individual sailor becomes increasingly isolated and alienated.

PART ONE

Chapter One

Re-Reading Conrad and Maritime Fiction: A Critical Review

The introduction outlines the ways in which maritime fiction of the past explored certain

tropes in the framework of the essential sea story structure: sailor; challenge; context. This

first chapter considers Conrad's maritime experience and assesses the critical reception of his

maritime texts, before examining the different ways in which his protagonists are tested in the

challenges on sailing ships and steamships in chapter two. Chapter one, then, opens with a

selective critical review that focuses on the reception of Conrad's maritime texts in the wider

context of changing critical responses to Conrad.

There is a vast critical heritage attached to Conrad's life and works; the range of

critical studies devoted to Conrad as an author, and the existence of two dedicated journals,

Conradiana (ed. Donald W. Rude) and *The Conradian* (ed. Allan H. Simmons), testify to the

enduring appeal of his work.[1] Conrad's maritime writing represents only part of a prodigious

output that comprised 'thirteen complete novels, twenty-nine novellas and short stories, two

stage plays, two major works of reminiscence and over forty essays'.[2] Despite the largely

positive critical response to his fiction during Conrad's lifetime, there was a tendency for his

contemporaries to label him simply as a maritime writer, and this review explores the impact

of such stereotyping on Conradian criticism.[3] Conrad was concerned by this label, as he

thought that in placing undue emphasis on his personal situation as a seaman-turned-writer,

critics might overlook the success of his other works, including his political novels: *Nostromo*

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[1] Published by the Texas Tech University Press, *Conradiana* has been running since 1968 and is published three times a year. Available at: http://lion.chadwyck.co.uk.abc.cardiff.ac.uk/contents/infopage/publ/conrad.jsp [Accessed 15 July 2013]. *The Conradian* is the twice-yearly journal of the Joseph Conrad Society (UK) and is available by subscription. http://www.josephconradsociety.org/ [Accessed 15 July 2013]

[2] Tim Middleton, *Joseph Conrad* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006), p. 11. Middleton's comprehensive guide, divided into three main sections, gives a synopsis of Conrad's life, commentaries on each of his works and an overview of key critical approaches.

[3] David Thorburn, *Conrad's Romanticism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 3-7. Thorburn is one critic who articulates the significance of Conrad's increasing objection to being pigeon-holed by contemporary reviewers as a writer of simplistic sea adventures.

(1904), *The Secret Agent* (1907) and *Under Western Eyes* (1911). After Conrad's death, his maritime fiction fell into disfavour, but in recent years, however, the later comparative neglect of it has been addressed by its reappearance in the critical canon, as demonstrated by critics such as John Peck, Margaret Cohen, and Robert Foulke, who have emphasised the importance of maritime fiction, particularly in the historical context of Empire, and the significance of Conrad's work in this genre.

The Early Critical Reception of Conrad's Maritime Texts

When approaching Conrad's maritime texts, important sources of biographical information can be found in his two autobiographical accounts, *The Mirror of the Sea* (1906) and *A Personal Record* (1912),[4] as well as in his extensive personal and professional correspondence, which records the transition from mariner to man of letters.[5] Conrad had considerable sailing experience which, as sailing ships disappeared, was increasingly unavailable to most of his readers, so it was perhaps natural that the contemporary reviewers of his texts were fascinated by his maritime career. However, Conrad himself was dismissive of those who sought to draw parallels between life and art and he grew increasingly frustrated with being labelled a writer of sea stories. As he stated in a letter to his friend Richard Curle in 1923, the publication of a new collected edition of his works represented:

> an opportunity for me to get freed from that infernal tail [*sic*] of ships and that
> obsession with my sea life, which has about as much bearing on my literary existence,

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[4] Joseph Conrad, *The Mirror of the Sea: Memories and Impressions* and *A Personal Record: Some Reminiscences*, collected edition (London: Dent, 1946). In *The Mirror of the Sea* Conrad tried to convey his feelings about ships and the sea; he established his preference for sail over steam, explained key aspects of maritime discourse, and span fanciful yarns in fifteen romantically-titled thematic sections, sub-divided into a further forty-nine. *A Personal Record* is a more studied contemplation about the relation between art and life, divided into seven numbered sections, in which Conrad documents his formative years in Poland and at sea in relation to his later career as an author.

[5] 'Introduction' in *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad*, ed. Frederick R. Karl and Laurence Davies, 8 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), I, pp. xxvii-xlvii. So prolific was Conrad's letter writing, that the surviving letters are estimated at 3,500 (p. xlv).

on my quality as a writer, as the enumeration of drawing rooms which Thackeray frequented could have had on his gift as a great novelist.[6]

It could be argued that his contempt for being described as a writer of sea stories brings to the fore the extent to which he drew on his own experiences of sailing in his maritime fiction. There has always been a risk of attempting to match the actual ships and sailors of Conrad's sailing career to their fictional counterparts. In Conrad's maritime texts, question marks hang over events that may have been misrepresented, or perhaps fabricated, to project a favourable self-image, as well as being mis-remembered.[7] The sea yarn is not to be trusted in Conrad's autobiographical works or his fiction.

There was a sense that in the contemporary reviews of Conrad's novels, critics were struggling to classify his work. When *Almayer's Folly* (1895) and *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896) were published, their initial reception included comparisons between Conrad's work and that of Rudyard Kipling and Robert Louis Stevenson, suggesting that critics were locating his work in the genre of adventure narratives.[8] Such comparisons also appeared in the critical reception of *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*. Conrad was simultaneously compared to other maritime writers, including Stephen Crane, Frederick Marryat, and William Clark Russell.[9] Praise for his writing grew with each successive novel and, despite the fact that some reviewers criticised *Lord Jim* for being far too long, this was the text that ensured Conrad's critical success. It was followed by generally positive reactions to the subsequent

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[6] Richard Curle reviewed the J.M. Dent & Sons Uniform Edition of the Works of Joseph Conrad and it was to this article that Conrad responded in a letter dated 14 July 1923. G. Jean-Aubrey, *Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters*, vol. II (London: William Heinemann, 1927), p. 316.

[7] For further details on the ships and sailors that inspired Conrad's maritime fiction, see Vincent Sherry, *Conrad's Eastern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966).

[8] An unsigned review of *Almayer's Folly* in the *Spectator* famously precipitated this trend by labelling Conrad the 'Kipling of the Malay Archipelago'. Anon, 'Unsigned review', *The Spectator*, October 1895, p. 530 in *Joseph Conrad: Contemporary Reviews*, ed. Allan H. Simmons, John G. Peters and J. H. Stape (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). When *An Outcast of the Islands* was published, comparisons to Kipling and Stevenson appeared in the reviews in the *National Observer* (*Contemporary Reviews*, p. 87) and *Sketch* (*Contemporary Reviews*, p. 96) and cropped up again in two articles for the *Saturday Review* relating to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* (*Contemporary Reviews*, pp. 97-98, pp. 98-100).

[9] The overwhelming concern expressed by reviewers in response to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* was a perceived absence of 'plot'; of the nine reviews collected by Sherry, five refer in some way to the fact that the novel suffered for the absence of a hero or central theme. Sherry, *The Critical Heritage*, p. 83, p. 86, pp. 89-90, p. 95, pp. 97-98.

publication of two short story collections. The first, *Youth: A Narrative and Two Other Stories* (1902), contained 'Youth', 'Heart of Darkness', and 'The End of the Tether', all of which were set at sea. In *Typhoon, and Other Stories* (1903), only 'Typhoon' was set on a ship, but the protagonists in 'Falk', 'Amy Foster' and 'To-morrow' are all sailors, or ex-sailors, struggling to find their place on land.

In this context, the critical emphasis on the maritime aspects in Conrad's writing seems understandable, even if Conrad found it frustrating in later years. And, while Conrad might have felt negatively towards the perceived constraints on his literary reputation, Norman Sherry argues in *The Critical Heritage* that reviewers became increasingly dazzled by Conrad's status as a highly acclaimed author. Sherry observed that after the publication of *'Twixt Land and Sea* (1912) and *Chance* (1913), 'the critics now seem incapable of finding anything wrong with his work. Evaluation is being replaced by adoration'.[10] To underline his point, Sherry included six 'extracts from various reviews praising the novel'.[11] However, of the six complete reviews included in the volume, three express reservations about *Chance;* only the reviews by Henry James, Arnold Bennett and Edward Garnett, all of whom had personal and professional relationships with Conrad, can be said to endorse the novel. In Sherry's view, critics were also over-enthusiastic about *Victory* (1915), *The Shadow-Line*, and *The Arrow of Gold* (1919). When *The Rover* was published in 1923, its tale of maritime adventure in a Napoleonic setting led the contemporary reviewers to return to making comparisons between Conrad's work and that of Robert Louis Stevenson, and it seemed that Conrad's maritime texts were once more being categorised as adventure narratives. Virginia Woolf was fascinated by Conrad's relationship with the sea; after writing reviews of several of his novels, she produced 'Mr Conrad: A Conversation' (1923). This critical essay is presented in the style of a dialogue between a man who accuses Conrad of 'singing the same

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[10] Sherry, 'Introduction' in *Conrad: The Critical Heritage,* ed. Norman Sherry (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), pp. 1-44, (p. 30).
[11] Sherry, *The Critical Heritage*, p. 281.

songs about sea captains and the sea, beautiful, noble, and monotonous' and a woman who

praises the narrative complexity of his works, particularly the use of his narrator/protagonist

Marlow.[12] In dramatising these binary opinions, Woolf's article articulated the range of

critical responses to Conrad: the critics who focused on how his texts fitted into the tradition

of maritime adventures (with inevitable comparisons to authors like Stevenson), and those

who placed greater emphasis on his innovative narrative form and perceived him to be a

Modernist.

After Conrad's death in 1924, Ford Madox Ford published a tribute to his friend, a

positive account of Conrad's life and work during the years of their literary collaboration

(1899-1904), the composition of their joint novel *Romance* (1903), and Conrad's writing

techniques.[13] Two years later, Conrad's wife, Jessie, published a biography which gave

insights into Conrad as husband, father, and author during the period of his literary life.[14]

Less personal and hagiographic were the two volumes of G. Jean-Aubry's *Joseph Conrad:*

Life and Letters (1927). The first volume comprised two roughly equal parts: firstly, a

biography of Conrad's life from his birth in 1857 to 1904, then a second section comprising

all the available letters from Conrad to his various friends, relatives and business associates.[15]

Most of the second volume consisted of Conrad's letters from 1905 to the events of the Great

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[12] Virginia Woolf, 'Mr Conrad: A Conversation', in *The Captain's Death Bed and Other Essays* (London: Hogarth Press, 1950), pp. 74-78, (p. 75).

[13] Ford Madox Ford (Ford Madox Hueffer), *Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance* (London: Duckworth, 1924). The animosity between the two men in later years, added to the lack of references and inaccuracies in Ford's text (such as the consistent misspelling of Marlow as Marlowe), limits the credibility of this study. Nevertheless, his text offers an author's insight into Conrad's 'impressionism' and his championing of Conrad's achievement may well have been influential.

[14] Jessie Conrad, *Joseph Conrad as I Knew Him* (1926; St. Clair Shores, MI: Scholarly Press, 1976). Starting with the early days of their marriage in France this text charts the beginnings of Jessie's role as wife but also as copy-typist and archivist of Conrad's manuscripts. Later, Jessie describes their return to England and family life with their two sons, Borys and John, interspersed with the multiple infirmities and illnesses suffered by all and, later the impact of the Great War. While Ford completely excluded Conrad's wife from his text, Jessie depicted Ford as an inconsiderate houseguest and refuted some of his claims, denying Ford's assertion that the idea for Conrad's short story 'Amy Foster' was taken from him (p. 113) and repudiating joint authorship of *The Nature of a Crime* because 'very little' was Conrad's work (p. 151).

[15] G. Jean-Aubry, *Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters*, 2 vols (London: William Heinemann, 1927), I. Jean-Aubry was Conrad's friend and confidant before Conrad selected him to be his biographer. Jean-Aubry began collecting material including Conrad's letters, which constitute the bulk of the text; volume I covers the years 1857-1904 in nine chapters, which is followed by the transcript of letters from this period (pp. 173-339).

War, preceded by a very brief biographical account of Conrad's life in this period.[16] Towards the 1930s critical interest in Conrad's texts dwindled, only to be rekindled in the 1940s, with the publication of M. C. Bradbrook's *Joseph Conrad: England's Polish Genius* (1941) and F.R. Leavis's *The Great Tradition* (1948). Both writers were highly influential in academic circles and Leavis in particular wrote persuasively about the literary value of Conrad's texts which contributed to his subsequent revival.

Achievement and Decline: Re-evaluations of Conrad

Responding, perhaps, to the fear that contemporary reviewers praised Conrad's writing indiscriminately because they were in awe of the author and his reputation, Bradbrook and Leavis were careful to evaluate all of Conrad's works and distinguish those which they considered to be the most successful. Leavis singled out *Heart of Darkness* and *The Secret Agent* for particular praise,[17] while in Bradbrook's survey *Joseph Conrad: England's Polish Genius* (1941), the emphasis is on dividing Conrad's texts into thematic categories.[18] Leavis followed Conrad's own lead in down-playing the significance of the sea, claiming that 'Conrad's novels, if they deal with the sea at all, deal with it only incidentally'.[19] However, Leavis undermined this argument to some extent by then observing that the sea was a

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[16] G. Jean-Aubry, *Joseph Conrad*, 2 vols (London: William Heinemann, 1927), II. The majority of volume II consists of Conrad's letters; Jean-Aubrey includes a bibliography of his sources and records Conrad's final years in two chapters, both of which are preceded by brief overviews.

[17] F. R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition* (1948; London: Chatto & Windus, 1973), p. 18. Leavis placed Conrad alongside Jane Austen, George Eliot, and Henry James in his assessment and concluded with the assertion 'that Conrad is among the very greatest novelists in the language-or any language' (p. 226). He also praised *Nostromo*, *Victory*, *Chance* and *Under Western Eyes* but denigrated Conrad's later works: *The Arrow of Gold*, *The Rescue*, *The Rover* and the unfinished *Suspense*. Contrary to the generally positive reception of *Lord Jim*, Leavis felt this text did not deserve the amount of praise it attracted, establishing that 'The presentment of Lord Jim in the first part of the book, the account of the inquiry and of the desertion of the *Patna*, the talk with the French lieutenant are good Conrad. But the romance that follows […] [does not] develop or enrich the central interest' (p. 190).

[18] M. C. Bradbrook, *Joseph Conrad: England's Polish Genius* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966). Like Leavis, Bradbrook also emphasises the need to evaluate Conrad's texts. In the first main section, 'The Wonders of the Deep' she divides Conrad's texts into his early novels and short stories, chiefly focused on maritime matters. The second section, 'The Hollow Men', concentrates on the protagonists in Conrad's novels beginning with *Nostromo* and finally, 'Recollections in Tranquillity', examines Conrad's later works after *Victory*.

[19] Leavis, *The Great Tradition*, p. 18.

pervasive influence on Conrad's writing: 'the Merchant Service is for him both a spiritual fact and a spiritual symbol, and the interests that made it so for him control and animate his art everywhere'.[20] Of the maritime texts, Leavis commended *The Shadow-Line* and 'Typhoon', lauding Conrad's 'gift for rendering the British seaman'.[21] Of course, this assertion rather begs the question of how many seamen Leavis had actually met. More importantly, Leavis restored critical interest in Conrad by including him in his construction of the English literary canon in *The Great Tradition* and his evaluation of Conrad's novels, including his maritime texts, offered a template for much subsequent criticism.

Leavis generated an evaluative critical approach that has tended to favour Conrad's earlier novels, exemplified in the work of Douglas Hewitt and Thomas Moser. In *Conrad: A Reassessment* (1952) Hewitt followed Leavis in distinguishing those of Conrad's texts he considered to be successful, beginning his analysis with *Heart of Darkness* and ending with *The Shadow-Line*.[22] His approach to Conrad's maritime texts was to focus less on their place in the maritime tradition and to explore instead the importance of the ship as a setting that enabled a detailed examination of human society. Hewitt suggested that representing the isolation inherent in shipboard life was a means of focusing attention on the specific problems faced by the protagonists, particularly on board the ships in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, *Lord Jim*, and *Nostromo*.[23]

Following Leavis and Hewitt, Thomas Moser's *Joseph Conrad: Achievement and Decline* (1957) provides an evaluative analysis of Conrad's writing career based on the literary achievements of his earlier texts, from *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* to short story

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[20] Leavis, *The Great Tradition*, p. 18.
[21] Leavis, *The Great Tradition*, p. 184.
[22] Douglas Hewitt, *Conrad: A Reassessment*, 3rd edn. (1952; London: Bowes and Bowes, 1975). Hewitt justified his selection of texts thus: 'The books of the early 'Malayan period' are omitted because they are not of much intrinsic interest, and all works after *Victory*, with the exception of *The Shadow-Line*, because the criticisms of *Chance* and *Victory* are by implication criticisms of these last works also' (p. 5). In the preface to the third edition Hewitt addresses the fact that he has been associated by others with the 'Achievement-and-Decline school of Conrad criticism' (p. vi). He distances himself from speculation on Conrad's decline and justifies his approach by stating that his focus is on achievement (p. vi).
[23] Hewitt, *Conrad: A Reassessment*, p. 8.

collection *'Twixt Land and Sea* (1912).[24] Moser traced what he called Conrad's 'literary decline' in the texts published from 1913 onwards, beginning with *Chance* and finishing with *Suspense* (1925). One of Moser's key arguments derived from his analysis of Conrad's heroes: the first type was the '*simple hero*: the unreflective, courageous, loyal seaman',[25] epitomised in Singleton and MacWhirr from *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* and 'Typhoon' respectively. Moser also used sailors as examples of the second type, '*the vulnerable hero*', focusing on the eponymous protagonists of *Lord Jim* and *Nostromo*.[26] Finally, Moser took a third sailor, Marlow (who appeared as a narrator in *Heart of Darkness*, *Lord Jim*, 'Youth' and *Chance*), as his model for '*the perceptive hero*', successful in his quest for self-knowledge.[27] So, although Moser claimed that 'Conrad had at last been "freed from that infernal tail of ships"', his examples are all drawn from Conrad's maritime novels, and his approach seems very much entrenched in the myth of the sailor hero.[28] In fact, while these post-war critics set out to challenge the stereotyping of Conrad as a writer of adventure stories set at sea, Hewitt observed the importance of the ship as a narrative device, a concept I develop later in this thesis in the novels of James Hanley and Malcolm Lowry, while Leavis and Moser acknowledged the significance of the sailor as a character of central importance in these texts.

Seaman and Author: Psychological and Biographical Approaches

Conrad's maritime writing was drawn from his own experiences during his nineteen-year career at sea and so understanding the biographical information from this period of his life is

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[24] Thomas Moser, *Joseph Conrad: Achievement and Decline* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 10. Moser argues that Conrad's texts were weaker in the sections where Conrad attempted to write about love, but successful where they analysed and explored moral failure. He attributes much of Conrad's 'decline' to a diminishing of the tension found in his earlier texts, suggesting that this could be due to the fact that 'Conrad rose above his earlier pessimism to arrive at the serenity of acceptance' (p. 131). Moser finds evidence of 'weaknesses' in many of the texts where Conrad explored the subject of love, including his 'apprentice work': *Almayer's Folly* (1895), *An Outcast of the Island* (1896) and *Tales of Unrest* (1898), and later novels including *Chance*, *Victory* (1915), and *The Rescue* (1920).

[25] Moser, *Achievement and Decline*, p. 15.

[26] Moser, *Achievement and Decline*, p. 16.

[27] Moser, *Achievement and Decline*, p. 16.

[28] Moser, *Achievement and Decline*, p. 10.

a key part of understanding and approaching these texts. Albert Guerard follows his

predecessors in the estimation of the literary value and status of Conrad's earlier works and,

reading Conrad's fiction through the lens of psychology, he mirrors Moser in focusing his

attention on *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, *Lord Jim* and *Nostromo*.[29] Suggesting that the

voyages in Conrad's maritime novels were part of his remembered identity, Guerard

attributes fears and anxieties to Conrad as he saw them reflected in the moral trials of his

protagonists, particularly in *Lord Jim*.[30] However, Guerard turns away from the tradition of

comparing Conrad's work to authors of an earlier period (such as Kipling, Stevenson and

Marryat) and instead seeks associations with the modern era, specifically comparing Conrad

to Malcolm Lowry.[31]

The psychological approach taken by Guerard remained influential in the 1960s and

was also apparent in the work of Paul Kirschner and Bernard Meyer. Bernard Meyer's

approach in *Joseph Conrad: A Psychoanalytic Biography* (1967) can be seen to follow

Moser's 'achievement-and-decline' model of literary criticism because Meyer attempts to

provide explanations for 'the varying quality of [Conrad's] writing'.[32] Meyer, a practising

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[29] Albert Guerard, *Conrad the Novelist* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 254-302. Guerard identifies a series of nine 'major inward conflicts' in Conrad set up in pairs of declared views and inner doubts, including: 'declared fear of the corrosive and faith-destroying intellect – doubled by a profound and ironic scepticism' and 'declared commitment to authoritarian sea-tradition – doubled by a pronounced individualism' (p. 57). Guerard consigned Conrad's later works to the final chapter '*Chance* and after', classifying all of them as 'inferior' (p. 254), with the exception of *The Shadow-Line*.

[30] Guerard devotes two chapters to *Lord Jim*; the first focuses on the status of *Lord Jim* as an 'impressionist' novel, comparing the differences between a first reading and subsequent readings when facts are revealed and the reader can appreciate the differences between illusion and reality, understanding the irony of the omniscient narrator. In the second chapter Guerard analyses the ways in which the novel's events are mediated through Marlow and focuses on the impact of the characters who interact with Jim, including Stein, Brown and Cornelius.

[31] Guerard, *Conrad the Novelist*, p. 300. After having made this comparison, Guerard does not elaborate on it, leaving it unclear whether he was referring to Lowry's maritime text *Ultramarine* (1933), considered by many to be a flawed early novel, or *Under the Volcano* (1947), generally thought of as his masterpiece. Although M. C. Bradbrook wrote on both Joseph Conrad and Malcolm Lowry, she also considers them separately and does not draw comparisons between the authors.

[32] Bernard C. Meyer, *Joseph Conrad: A Psychoanalytic Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 4. Fascinatingly, Meyer attributes Conrad's literary success between 'Heart of Darkness' (1899) to *Under Western Eyes* (1911) to the period of his collaboration with Ford Madox Ford. Many Conrad scholars dismissed this association because the three fictional texts produced by the pair were relatively unsuccessful. Nevertheless, Meyer labels Ford and Conrad as 'secret sharers', referring to Conrad's short story about a captain's shielding of a fugitive on his sailing ship (pp. 154-167).

psychoanalyst, adopts a clinical methodology in which he compares key personal events in Conrad's life with the corresponding dramas found in his fiction.[33] Organised according to the chronological progression of Conrad's life, Meyer's study uses the titles from Conrad's literary texts for each of the chapters. For example, chapter three, 'The Shadow-Line', examines the setbacks Conrad experienced in his maritime career from 1878 to 1887 and Meyer compares these to the narrator's difficulties in *The Shadow-Line* published thirty years later.[34] Meyer thus emphasises the importance of Conrad's life at sea and his maritime fiction but, in seeking to 'explain' Conrad, his analysis limits the possible multiple readings of the texts. In *Conrad: The Psychologist as Artist* (1968) Kirschner investigates Conrad's literary influences and the concepts of the self represented in his work.[35] His analysis of *Lord Jim* is incorporated into 'The Self in the Dream', which explores how Jim's leap from the *Patna* exposes the gulf between Jim's cowardly action and his 'exalted self idea'.[36] A discussion of *Chance* appears in the chapter on 'The Sexualised Self' in which the ship is regarded as a setting for detailed examinations of masculine and feminine selves in the figures of Anthony and Flora.[37] Kirschner's approach, then, focuses on psychoanalytic readings, which has the effect of downplaying the significance of ships and the sea.

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[33] The introduction is used by Meyer to explain his 'painstaking application of psychoanalytic principles and insights to two main sets of data – the available facts of the artist's life and his creative works.' Meyer, *Joseph Conrad: A Psychoanalytic Biography*, p. 7.

[34] Meyer, *Joseph Conrad: A Psychoanalytic Biography*, pp. 54-70.

[35] Paul Kirschner, *Conrad: The Psychologist as Artist* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1968). Kirschner sets out his approach as 'considering Conrad as a psychologist expressing himself in fiction' (viii), that is, analysing the different manifestations of the self he perceives in Conrad's texts.

[36] Kirschner, *Conrad*, p. 48. Kirschner suggests that Jim is important to Marlow because Jim's 'dream of fine conduct is virtually indistinguishable from a deliberate belief in the principles from which such conduct springs' (p. 49). In other words, Marlow feels the underlying principles of honour create a mythical bond between him, Jim and all sailors, and he feels the threat of experiencing, like Jim, a moment of cowardice and a lifetime of shame.

[37] Kirschner, *Conrad*, pp. 143-155. Kirschner suggests that the feminine self 'strives to assert power. But, according to Conrad, it must do so through sexuality – the force of unconscious nature – and not through the medium of ideas, which only hinder it. This natural force of feminine sexuality seems a beneficent transformation of the dark powers that previously threatened the Conradian self-idea; it works here for man's good, although man naturally mistrusts it' (pp. 254-255). This concept assumes that the female self is a 'natural' support for the male and therefore secondary in importance. Kirschner's assumptions are challenged by the works of Andrew Michael Roberts, Susan Jones, and Michael M. Roberts at the end of the twentieth century.

John A. Palmer was among the first literary critics to counter Moser's 'achievement-and-decline' orthodoxy, arguing that such an approach led critics 'to undervalue some works and overvalue others'.[38] Palmer analyses *Lord Jim*, *Chance* and *Heart of Darkness* in the first chapter of *Joseph Conrad's Fiction*.[39] Focusing on the technical aspects of narrative, Palmer distinguishes the Marlow who observed events at the time of action from the older Marlow who is present as the narrative develops. Later, Palmer identifies the ways in which the Marlow who narrates *Chance* differs from the earlier incarnations, observing in the later narrative a sneering intellectualism absent from the previous texts, suggesting that this could be one of the reasons why *Chance* was considered to be less successful than the earlier *Lord Jim* and *Heart of Darkness*.[40] By concentrating on Marlow, Palmer's approach contributed to the increasing trend to efface the maritime aspects of Conrad's works.

The psychological studies of the 1950s and 1960s generated interest in Conrad as man and author, inspiring a subsequent wealth of biographical research in the late 1960s. Norman Sherry bases his biographical approach on a geographical methodology, concentrating on Conrad's overseas travels during his maritime career in *Conrad's Eastern World* (1966) and *Conrad's Western World* (1971).[41] As an example of Conrad's use and frequent exaggeration of facts from his own life in his fiction, Sherry compares the real maritime incident of fire on board the *Palestine* to Conrad's fictionalisation of the event in 'Youth'. Sherry notes that Conrad increased the time spent by the crew in the lifeboats: 'It was after thirteen-and-a-half-hours journey in an open boat that Conrad first saw the East and its people, though, as he

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[38] John A. Palmer, *Joseph Conrad's Fiction: A Study in Literary Growth* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1968). Palmer's introduction makes clear that his challenge differs from previous approaches, but it still relies on the concept of evaluating and comparing the relative artistic merit of Conrad's texts, suggesting that 'Conrad's career may more usefully be viewed as one of successive major achievements, each preceded by a period of experiment and partial success' (p. x).

[39] Palmer, The Early Marlow Tales' in *Joseph Conrad's Fiction*, pp. 1-45.

[40] Palmer, *Joseph Conrad's Fiction*, pp. 1-46, pp. 198-243.

[41] Norman Sherry, *Conrad's Eastern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966).Sherry divides the world down a line of longitude to explore the geographical origins or 'sources' of Conrad's fiction; *Conrad's Eastern World* analyses *Lord Jim* and *The Shadow-Line*, while *Conrad's Western World* includes a study of *Nostromo*. Norman Sherry, *Conrad's Western World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971).

describes it in 'Youth', his narrator Marlow 'steered many days''.[42] Jerry Allen's *The Sea Years of Joseph Conrad* (1967) charts similar territory, emphasising the importance of knowing the lands and seas in the Indonesian Archipelago when comparing the facts and fiction of Conrad's life and works.[43] The works of both Allen and Sherry acknowledge the importance of ships and the sea, opening new modes of reading the interplay between Conrad's life and his texts. This change of emphasis can be seen in Edward Said's study, *Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography* (1968). Said analyses Conrad's correspondence, suggesting that aspects of the artist can be mapped onto the images and themes emerging in his short stories, focusing in particular on *The Shadow-Line*.[44]

Biographical scholarship continued to flourish through the 1960s and into the 1970s, and interest in Conrad's reputation as a writer of sea stories remained strong. In 1969 Jocelyn Baines produced a comprehensive critical biography, which revealed the correlation between fact and fiction in the chapters detailing Conrad's life at sea. Like Sherry, he also analyses the *Palestine* incident and showed how events were fictionalised in Conrad's short story 'Youth'.[45] However, in his discussions of Conrad's literary career, Baines continues to uphold Conrad's wish to be dissociated from his sea stories:

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[42] Sherry reproduces the details of *Palestine* incident from the report of Court of Inquiry in Singapore: 'On the 14th [March 1883], the hatches being on but not battened down, the decks blew up fore and aft as far as the poop [….] About 3 p.m. the S. S. 'Somerset' came alongside in answer to signals and about 6 p.m. she took the vessel in tow. Shortly afterwards the fire rapidly increased and the master of the 'Palestine' requested the master of the 'Somerset' to tow the barque to shore. This being refused, the tow-rope was lipped and about 11 p.m. the vessel was a mass of fire, and all hands got into boats, 3 in number [*sic*]. The mate and 4 seamen in one boat, the 2nd mate [Conrad] with three hands in another and the master in the long boat with 3 men. The boats remained by the vessel until 8.30 a.m. on the 15th'. Sherry, *Conrad's Eastern World*, pp. 17-19, (p. 18).

[43] Jerry Allen, *The Sea Years of Joseph Conrad* (London: Methuen, 1967), ix-xiv. Allen focuses on meticulous research in local libraries and reference collections to uncover the events behind Conrad's major maritime texts and devotes most space to the story of Augustine Podmore Williams, the man who inspired the protagonist of *Lord Jim* (pp. 120-166).

[44] Edward Said, *Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography* (1966; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968). Said concludes his text with an extended exploration of *The Shadow-Line*, a novella in which Conrad used the first-person narrator common to his short stories. In this text Said identifies for the first time a 'controlled dialectic between Conrad's experience of the sea and his experience as a literary man' (p. 168). With this final text Said shows how the symbolic trope of the voyage developed throughout Conrad's fiction and culminates in this final journey of self-discovery for the narrator communicated through an author tormented by his private struggles, as well as the events of the Great War.

[45] Jocelyn Baines, *Joseph Conrad: A Critical Biography* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), p. 73.

Although life on a merchant ship provided an excellent setting for the test of human solidarity, Conrad always emphasised the universal application of this theme and vehemently defended himself against the classification of a writer of sea-tales which dogged him throughout his life.[46]

Conrad's rejection of such labelling was in part formed in response to the repeated comparisons by his contemporaries of his work to that of Robert Louis Stevenson. Subsequently, his aversion to being pigeon-holed had an enduring influence on critics who, like Baines, avoided locating him in the maritime fiction tradition. By contrast, Jacques Berthoud reinforces the case for 'achievement and decline' by canonising Conrad's 'central achievement' and selecting *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, *Lord Jim*, *Nostromo*, *A Personal Record*, *Heart of Darkness*, *The Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes* for *Joseph Conrad: The Major Phase* (1978).[47] Berthoud does, however, acknowledge the importance of Conrad's maritime fiction in his analysis of *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, emphasising the central motif of the sea, and rejecting the 'swarm of symbolic or allegorical interpretations' (p. 25) put forward by other critics. Rather, Berthoud foregrounds the way in which the sea tests the sailor in comparison to the trials posed to Captain Allistoun by the figures of Donkin and Wait.[48]

By contrast to the focused studies of Allen, Sherry and Berthoud, Frederick Karl follows in Baines's footsteps, covering the whole of Conrad's life in his biography *Joseph Conrad: The Three Lives* (1979).[49] In the last of four sections charting Conrad's maritime

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Baines approaches Conrad's life in stages with the majority of the text focused on significant events in Conrad's literary career, such as the invention of Marlow, to which Baines credits the breaking of Conrad's writing block. Of the fourteen chapters in this text, three are dedicated to Conrad's life at sea: 'French Experience' (pp. 33-59), 'Merchant Seaman' (pp. 60-100), and 'Congo Episode' (pp. 101-119). In these chapters Baines interweaves significant events at sea with their parallels in Conrad's maritime novels. For example, Baines compares the ship and the characters in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* to the men and events Conrad encountered on two ships: the *Narcissus* and the *Duke of Sutherland* (pp. 75-77).

[46] Baines, *A Critical Biography*, p. 184.

[47] Jacques Berthoud, *Joseph Conrad: The Major Phase* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978). Berthoud's aim in analysing these texts is to assess the tension between realism and romanticism, and to interrogate an over-arching thematic trend towards public action, rather than private thought (p. 187).

[48] Berthoud, *Joseph Conrad: The Major Phase*, pp. 23-40.

[49] Frederick R. Karl, *Joseph Conrad: The Three Lives* (London: Faber and Faber, 1979). Like Baines, Karl explores the relationship between fact and fiction, but the key influence of his biography was in popularising the

career, Karl examines Conrad's final post on the *Torrens*, the sharing of his manuscript of

Almayer with a reader called W. H. Jacques, and his meeting with John Galsworthy, which,

Karl argues, brought about Conrad's transition from seaman to author.[50] Daniel Schwarz

attempts to incorporate biographical research into analysis by gauging each of Conrad's

works according to how they contribute 'to our understanding of Conrad [the man]'.[51] He

notes that Conrad's fiction draws so heavily on his own maritime experiences that the 'truth'

of his maritime career could be only partially glimpsed.[52] It is this crucial interplay between

fact and fiction that not only connects Conrad's maritime novels, but also links his works to

the twentieth-century maritime texts examined in chapters three to six of this thesis.

Ian Watt's *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century* (1981) looks back to the detailed studies

of Allen and Sherry but, taking a slightly different tack, combines a study of Conrad's

childhood in Poland with his years of overseas travel. Watt analyses the impact of Conrad's

youth on his writing, suggesting the importance of contextualising Conrad the author in order

to understand 'the close but complicated relationship in his works between their sources in

personal experience and their fictional embodiment'.[53] Zdzislaw Najder's comprehensive

biography, *Joseph Conrad: A Chronicle* (1983), covers Conrad's entire life and is informed

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tripartite approach to Conrad: the formative years of his youth in Poland; his maritime career, which took him all over the world and finally, his career as an author who settled in the UK.

[50] Karl, *Joseph Conrad: The Three Lives*, pp. 318-325. Conrad's maritime career is divided into four sections emphasising Conrad's sense of exile from Poland and the development of ties to France and England: 'The French Interlude: 1874-1878' (pp. 123-178); 'The English Mariner: 1878-1889' (pp. 170-262); 'In Leopold's Congo: 1889-1890' (pp. 263-301) and 'The Writer: 1891-1899' (pp. 303-441).

[51] Daniel R. Schwarz, 'Introduction' in *Conrad: Almayer's Folly to Under Western Eyes* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1980), pp. xiii-xix, (p. xviii). The first six chapters of the text, covering *Almayer's Folly* (1895) to 'The End of the Tether' (1902), are grouped under the heading 'Part One: Quest for Identity', but because Schwarz asserts that he has considered each text on its own merits, 'the quest' is not explored as an overarching theme.

[52] Schwarz provides an insightful interpretation of *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, suggesting that the multiple narrative voices create a tension between the ideal sailor and the real sailor by representing 'a Janus figure; the crew member's impulse is to look inward to the world of the voyage and the omniscient narrator's impulse is to look outward to his audience'. Schwarz, *Conrad*, p. 39. However, Schwarz's conclusion about how this relates to Conrad's own feelings about shipboard life and authority is speculative.

[53] Ian Watt, *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), ix. In his study Watt focuses on Conrad's early fiction: *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus', Heart of Darkness*, and *Lord Jim.* Watt analyses the composition of the 'Preface' to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* as a defining moment in Conrad's development as a novelist. Focusing on Conrad's literary development in this way, Watt approaches *Lord Jim* through Conrad's evolving relationship with Marlow.

by Najder's intimate knowledge of Polish life and culture, differentiating it from the works of Watt and Karl.[54] In terms of Conrad's maritime career, Najder begins with the early years of Conrad's sailing experience and the importance of his relationship with his uncle Tadeusz Bobrowski, who supported him emotionally and financially, and ends with an account of his transition from sailor to author.[55] While post-war evaluative approaches had tended to side-line Conrad's maritime texts, the psychological and biographical studies of Conrad from the late 1950s to the early 1980s, did much to illuminate the details of his maritime career and suggest its significance in terms of his literary texts. This is important as it reveals the ways in which Conrad combined historical research with fictionalised accounts based on his own experiences of sailing.

Maritime Author / Political Novelist

While the criticism of Edward Said, Jacques Berthoud, and Ian Watt acknowledges the importance of Conrad's maritime career in his later literary profession, other critics in the 1960s were keen to distance themselves from the perceived stereotyping of Conrad as a spinner of sea yarns. One important development was the re-evaluation of Conrad as a political novelist, as explored in Eloise Knapp Hay's *The Political Novels of Joseph Conrad* (1963) and Avrom Fleishman's *Conrad's Politics: Community and Anarchy in the Fiction of Joseph Conrad* (1967).[56] Hay felt that Conrad's political writing had been neglected, while Fleishmann criticises the studies of Jerry Allen and Norman Sherry for the '"biographical

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[54] Zdzislaw Najder, *Joseph Conrad: A Chronicle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 39-169. Compiled between 1957 and 1977, this account represents a wealth of research, informed by Najder's local knowledge, which is used to scrutinise Conrad's autobiographical writings and analyse his outlook on life, art, and politics.

[55] Five chapters document Conrad's maritime career: 'In Marseilles: 1874-1878' (pp. 39-53); 'The Red Ensign: 1878-1886' (pp. 54-93); Master in the British Merchant Marine: 1886-1890' (pp. 94-122); 'To the End of the Night: 1890' (pp. 123-142) and 'The Sail and the Pen: 1891-1894' (pp. 143-169). Najder, *Joseph Conrad: A Chronicle*, pp. 39-169.

[56] Eloise Knapp Hay, *The Political Novels of Joseph Conrad: a Critical Study* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1981). In this study Hay establishes her decision to emphasise the political aspect of Conrad's writings by focusing on *The Rescue*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Nostromo*, *The Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes*.

fallacy" of identifying an author's imaginative re-creation with his actual experience'.[57] In

Paradise of Snakes: An Archetypal Analysis of Conrad's Political Novels (1967) Claire

Rosenfield follows the emphasis on Conrad's political texts in her approach to the hero

myth.[58] By contrast, Bruce Johnson challenged Hay's political readings in favour of a

metaphorical approach towards Conrad's texts, particularly *Lord Jim* and *Nostromo*.[59] Later,

political ideology was used to challenge Conrad's reputation when Chinua Achebe, in a

response to *Heart of Darkness* in 1976, famously charged Conrad with racism.[60] Achebe's

assertion has since generated a great deal of discussion about the position of Conrad as author

in relation to his narrators and texts, particularly in postcolonial readings.[61]

Taking a different approach in the 1970s and early 80s, critics David Thorburn and

William Bonney focus on romanticism in their respective studies: *Conrad's Romanticism*

(1974) and *Thorns and Arabesques* (1980). Thorburn analyses texts frequently overlooked by

other critics, including Conrad's autobiographical works *The Mirror of the Sea* and *A

Personal Record*, and also in *Romance*, the novel Conrad co-wrote with Ford Madox Ford.[62]

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[57] Avrom Fleishman, *Conrad's Politics: Community and Anarchy in the Fiction of Joseph Conrad* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins Press, 1967), vii. In his study Fleishman focuses on Conrad's political context and the novels *Nostromo*, *The Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes*.

[58] Claire Rosenfield, *Paradise of Snakes: An Archetypal Analysis of Conrad's Political Novels* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1967). Exploring traditional Polish motifs, Rosenfield uses the political paradigm as a template in her analysis of *Nostromo*, *The Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes*.

[59] Bruce Johnson, *Conrad's Models of Mind* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), pp. 56-58, (pp. 111-112). Johnson responds directly to Hay's political interpretation of these texts by privileging the concept of 'self-image' and comparing it to the complex relationship between ego and sympathy put forward by German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer. In *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* this is manifested in the tension between the crew's sympathy for Wait and the egotism apparent in their sentimental pity. Johnson argues that instead of focusing on the abstract theme of honour, *Lord Jim* can be read in terms of 'different conceptions of self' (p. 60), while the political events in *Nostromo* can be interpreted as conflicts between competing identities.

[60] Chinua Achebe, 'An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*' in *Joseph Conrad*, ed. Andrew Michael Roberts, (London: Longman, 1998), pp. 109-123. Principally, Achebe was concerned with analysing Conrad's representations of Africa and Africans in the text, but he also drew attention to the two rivers in the text, the Congo and the Thames, which to him enacted the symbols of the primitive and the civilised (p. 111).

[61] Andrea White, *Joseph Conrad and the Adventure Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). pp. 193-203. In the final chapter of this study White argues that Achebe's arguments have 'great validity' (p. 193), but reminds the reader of the pervasiveness of the imperial myth at the turn of the century, arguing that Conrad's texts present a challenge to this way of thinking. White examines four of Conrad's texts in the context of nineteenth-century travel writing and imperialism, but although there is a detailed analysis of *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad's other maritime texts are mentioned only briefly.

[62] David Thorburn, *Conrad's Romanticism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974). Thorburn argues that Conrad's romanticism was a significant issue because it manifested as a tendency to excess, in danger of leading

Despite his frequent references to Conrad's discomfort about the attention given to his

maritime texts, Thorburn locates him in the adventure tradition of Robert Louis Stevenson.

Similarly, William Bonney studies the varying functions of romance in Conrad's texts and

finds a space for the sea in his investigation into the 'discontinuities' in Conrad's fiction.[63]

Later, in the context of poststructuralism, Fredric Jameson considers the tension between

'high literature' and 'light reading and romance' in *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as

a Socially Symbolic Act* (1983).[64] Jameson observes that this tension occurs in Conrad's texts,

as in *Lord Jim*, which contains a number of competing generic elements, including

'adventure story, gothic, science fiction, bestseller, detective story'.[65] Jameson's radical

approach was important at this point because it opened up new ways to interpret Conrad's

maritime texts. For example, Jameson shows that a political approach to Conrad can be

achieved through an analysis of the sea:

> the empty space between the concrete places of work and life; but it is also, just as
> surely, itself a place of work and the very element by which an imperial capitalism
> draws its scattered beachheads and outposts together.[66]

Jameson's Marxist reading of Conrad dismisses the concept of sea-faring as a romantic

vocation, reading it instead as a commercial and colonial enterprise. Although there were

attempts to decrease the visibility of the maritime element in Conrad's fiction by

repositioning him as a political author, critics such as Bonney and Jameson showed that these

two areas were not necessarily mutually exclusive.

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to exaggeration in 'every aspect of his work, from the smallest details of sentence and paragraph to the largest strategies of plot and structure and overall tone' (p. 22).

[63] William W. Bonney, *Thorns and Arabesques: Contexts for Conrad's Fiction* (Baltimore & London: John Hopkins University Press, 1980). As part of a larger investigation into ontological contexts, Bonney shows how Conrad represents the officers of sailing ships, such as the *Narcissus*, as knowledgeable, while denigrating steamship officers, such as MacWhirr in 'Typhoon', whose reliance on technology leads to a decline in traditional seamanship (pp. 31-50). From this point, Bonney goes on to explore the generic contexts of romance in Conrad's texts and the technical contexts of his experiments with narrative positions.

[64] Fredric Jameson, 'Romance and Reification: Plot Construction and Ideological Close in Joseph Conrad' in *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Methuen, 1981), pp. 206-280, (p. 206).

[65] Jameson, 'Romance and Reification' in *Political Unconscious*, p. 207.

[66] Jameson, 'Romance and Reification' in *Political Unconscious*, p. 213.

Jameson's text is also important in its challenge to the view, espoused by critics such as Virginia Woolf and Albert Guerard, that Conrad can be thought of as an impressionist writer, an early Modernist, who departed from nineteenth-century realism. Working from analyses of *Lord Jim* and *Nostromo*, Jameson proposes that archaism in Conrad can be interpreted as an ironic critique of the realism of Henry James's novels, arguing that:

> A case could be made for reading Conrad not as an early modernist, but rather an anticipation of that later and quite different thing we have come to call variously textuality, ecriture, post-modernism, or schizophrenic writing.[67]

By contrast, other critics, such as Jeremy Hawthorn, present persuasive arguments in favour of returning to the reading of Conrad as a Modernist. In *Joseph Conrad: Narrative Technique and Ideological Commitment* (1990), Hawthorn emphasises the connection between narrative and modernism, and also investigates how the fluidity of Conrad's narrative could lead to unresolved questions about ideology in his texts.[68] He argues that this is particularly evident in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, where the narrative switches between that of a character and that of an omniscient narrator, sometimes in the present and sometimes in the past, obfuscating the text's position on race in its problematic treatment of Wait, a negro seaman.[69] In addition, Hawthorn's discussions of narrative and modernism can be seen as significant because they support the importance of studying Conrad's maritime fiction. Similarly, Jakob Lothe uses *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* to explore notions of modernity in *Conrad's Narrative Method* (1991). Giving a detailed account of the narrative variations, Lothe draws on Jameson's argument to suggest that Conrad's writing can be seen as post-modern as well

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[67] Jameson, 'Romance and Reification' in *Political Unconscious*, p. 219.

[68] Jeremy Hawthorn, *Joseph Conrad: Narrative Technique and Ideological Commitment* (London: Edward Arnold, 1990). In the introduction to this study, Hawthorn establishes '*the* [*sic*] central problem of modernist fiction: how is the modern novelist to prevent a multi-perspectival view of the world [...] from degenerating into relativism, solipsism, and (very soon after) triviality?' (ix). His study comprises a detailed exposition of Conrad's use of represented thought and speech, particularly free indirect discourse, related to themes such as class, race, and gender in Conrad's texts.

[69] Hawthorn, *Narrative Technique*, pp. 101-128. In his analysis, Hawthorn proposes seven 'fundamental incoherences' (p. 101) in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, including inconsistencies in the portrayal of Donkin, Singleton, Captain Allistoun, James Wait, and the crew as a collective unit. Hawthorn suggests that these detract from the novel because they remain unacknowledged and unexplained, unlike the complexities of Marlow's position in *Lord Jim* and *Heart of Darkness*.

as modernist. However, Lothe's emphasis on the effectiveness of Conrad's narratives harks back to the earlier evaluative judgements of Moser *et al* that tend to close down readings of the texts.[70] Increasingly, there has been a trend in recent Conrad criticism to question the role of modernism in Conrad's writing as argued by Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan in *The Modern Temper* (1991).[71] In 'The Failure of Myth' she proposes that there is a thematic link between the maritime protagonists in *Lord Jim*, *The Rescue*, and *Nostromo* and that it lies in the oscillation between the hero of epic and the novels' 'historical reality and life-size characters'.[72] In the context of Conrad's maritime fiction, the debate about Conrad and modernism enabled critics to move beyond approaches based on psychoanalysis and biography, reviving interest in the maritime aspects of Conrad's texts and the role of the sea story.

New Readings of Conrad and the Maritime Fiction Tradition

In the 1990s further critical perspectives of Conrad's texts were being investigated. Robert Hampson explores themes of self and group behaviour by looking at the 'brotherhood of the sea' in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* and *Lord Jim* in a larger exploration of the ways in which betrayal is related to notions of identity.[73] Also focusing on the significance of the sea, Geoffrey Harpham calls for a reassessment of Conrad in *One of Us: The Mastery of Joseph Conrad* (1996), refuting the critical distancing of his works from adventure writers such as Marryat and Stevenson. He argues that 'Conrad is a "seaman writer" even in much of the

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[70] Jakob Lothe, *Conrad's Narrative Method* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991). This was also the case for his assessments of *Chance* and *The Shadow-Line*, but the narrative complexity of *Lord Jim* lends itself to a more nuanced analysis by Lothe.

[71] Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan, *Joseph Conrad and the Modern Temper* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991). Erdinast-Vulcan rejects the simplified 'achievement and decline' approach and re-assesses Conrad's later novels, including *Chance*, as a culmination of his Nietzschean world view whereby 'both the author and his characters seem to be afflicted with an acute sense of the unreality of their world'(p. 145).

[72] Erdinast-Vulcan, *The Modern Temper*, pp. 22-47, (p. 22).

[73] Robert Hampson, *Joseph Conrad: Betrayal and Identity* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 101-136. In his study, Hampson confronts the weaknesses in the psychological approaches of Guerard and Meyer, rejecting the temptation to close down the texts and rejecting the privileging of some texts over others by examining the majority of Conrad's novels, from *Almayer's Folly* (1895) to *The Rover* (1923).

work that is not "sea stuff".[74] Harpham examines the homosocial and homosexual bonds

between seamen, focusing on Conrad's early maritime texts, particularly *The Mirror of the*

Sea, *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, *Lord Jim*, 'Typhoon', and *The Rescue* (this last text,

although published in 1920, was first drafted in 1896).[75] Zdzislaw Najder delves into the

possibilities offered by romanticism in *Conrad in Perspective: Essays on Art and Fidelity*

(1997), by identifying significant events in Conrad's Polish background and mapping them

on to key themes, such as honour in *Lord Jim*.[76] Increasingly, critics in the 1990s began

paying more attention to Conrad's maritime texts, focusing on their significance in larger

thematic studies of his work. There was renewed interest in the figure of the sailor and this

continues through analyses of gender and sexuality that take Conrad studies into the twenty-

first century.

Feminist readings have turned the spotlight back onto Conrad's maritime texts by re-

evaluating *Chance*, a text consigned to obscurity for many years by critics influenced by the

achievement-and-decline paradigm.[77] In *Conrad and Gender* (1993) Michael Roberts and

Robert Hampson discuss *Chance* in relation to the importance of seafaring in the text's

creation of a world that excludes women, and so can be interpreted in terms of homosocial

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[74] Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *One of Us: The Mastery of Joseph Conrad* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 72. Harpham's definition of mastery is double-edged; acknowledging Conrad's successes and failures, he proposes that the reader can identify with an author who was 'as much mastered as master' (x). In the middle chapter, 'To Go to Sea', he argues that Conrad uses the sea as a means of reconciling metaphysical contradictions because the sea is both 'friendly and unfriendly, constant and inconstant' (p. 80).

[75] Harpham compares the concept of the crew to a masculine family with no possibility of procreation, where the absence of women results in the fetishisation of ships and suppressed homoeroticism between crew members. Harpham, *One of Us*, pp. 113-119.

[76] Zdzislaw Najder, '*Lord Jim*: a Romantic tragedy of honour' and 'Conrad and the idea of honour' in *Conrad in Perspective: Essays on Art and Fidelity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 81-94, pp. 153-164. This volume begins with four chapters dedicated to important aspects of Conrad's family and life in Poland, followed by five chapters analysing his texts, including *Lord Jim*, *The Mirror of the Sea* and *A Personal Record*. The final seven chapters encompass wider thematic issues including Conrad's relation to concepts of history, Europe, society, and art.

[77] *Conrad and Gender*, ed. Andrew Michael Roberts (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993). Of the eight essays in *Conrad and Gender*, four focus on *Chance*: 'Representing Women: Conrad, Marguerite Poradowska , and *Chance*' by Susan Jones (pp. 59-74); 'Conrad, *Chance*, and Women Readers' by Laurence Davies (pp. 75-88); 'Secret Agents and Secret Objects: Action, Passivity, and Gender in *Chance*' by Andrew Michael Roberts (pp. 89-104) and '*Chance* and the Secret Life: Conrad, Thackeray, Stevenson' by Robert Hampson (pp. 105-122).

and homosexual desire.[78] Susan Jones does much to champion *Chance* in *Conrad and Women* (1996), observing the strengths of the text's narrative and temporal complexity, and taking a positive position on the influences of other literary sub-genres, including 'the detective novel […], the sensation novel and melodrama'.[79] Jones's interpretation of the ship is as a place of 'female entrapment', using the example of the *Ferndale* in *Chance*, in contrast to the apparent freedom it offered to men. In a parallel assessment of masculinity in Conrad's texts, Michael Roberts locates power as male, demonstrated in his analysis of *Chance* in which the men conspire to conceal events from the only female character.[80] Roberts, Hampson and Jones demonstrate that a maritime text such as *Chance* can be approached in new ways by considering the ship as a contained space in which the themes of knowledge, power and gender are played out. This looks forward to Hughes's *A High Wind in Jamaica* (1929) in which the ignorance of the children is represented as a means of enabling them to co-exist with pirates on their ship.

In the twenty-first century, Conrad's maritime texts continue to attract attention and recent articles in *The Conradian* show continued interest in Conrad's seafaring: 'Joseph

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[78] Andrew Michael Roberts, 'Secret Agents and Secret Objects: Action, Passivity, and Gender in *Chance*' in *Conrad and Gender* (pp. 89-104). Roberts argues that 'sexual desire, sexual feelings, and sexual jealousy are brought into play in the novel *around* the figure of Flora but largely *between* men: Captain Anthony, Franklin, young Powell, Marlow, Fyne' (p. 99).
Robert Hampson, '*Chance* and the Secret Life: Conrad, Thackeray, Stevenson' in *Conrad and Gender* (pp. 105-122). Hampson's essay analyses the homosocial nature of shipboard life itself, in which the arrival of Anthony's wife comes as an unwelcome intrusion. He also considers the position of Marlow as narrator in terms of gender, noting that his apparent heterosexuality is undermined by his misogyny, that he appears to be 'imprisoned by homosexual panic' (p. 116), and that his inconsistent attitudes towards gender and sexuality suggest that he 'won't confront his desires – whatever they may be' (p. 116).
[79] Susan Jones, *Conrad and Women* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 104. Jones has mounted a convincing challenge to the received perception of Conrad as 'a man in a man's world' (p. 1), noting the historical context of women's suffrage in the early twentieth century. In addition, she works from biographical documents and correspondence to demonstrate the influence of women in his life, particularly Marguerite Poradowska (pp. 69-108).This research is then used to provide a context for a re-examination of *Chance* and a comparison between the 'three texts' of the novel: the final text, the serialised version, and an earlier text (pp. 134-160).
[80] Michael M. Roberts, *Conrad and Masculinity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), pp. 137-162. Unlike previous studies concerned with gender, Roberts makes a sustained analysis of the connections between masculinity and empire in several of Conrad's texts in this study. Conrad is placed in the historical and literary context of British Empire and boys' adventure fiction on the one hand, while on the other, Roberts observes the increased visibility of women's suffrage and the rise of the 'New Woman' novel. *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* is dealt with only briefly because 'the gender binary is largely excluded by the shipboard setting' (p. 56) and, by the same logic, his analysis of *Lord Jim* is focused not on the *Patna*, but on Patusan.

Conrad at the London Sailors' Home' and 'Conrad and "Civilized Women": Miss Madden,

Passenger on the Torrens'.[81] Richard Ruppel's *Homosexuality in the Life and Works of*

Joseph Conrad: Love Between the Lines (2008), suggests an alternative role of the ship as a

space away from women and away from society, in which men can bond with each other

through joint endeavour.[82] By way of example, Ruppel explores male intimacy in *The Nigger*

of the 'Narcissus', a text that he argues contains multiple images of the male gaze and the

male body, in support of his case. More recently, Hampson's *Conrad's Secrets* (2012) seeks

to unravel the numerous myths around Conrad's life in conjunction with analysis of selected

works.[83] Life at sea is represented by a chapter which recounts Conrad's voyage on a 'Q ship'

at the end of 1916, the report of a massacre of German mariners by a British submarine, and

the short story these events inspired.[84]

Most importantly, the full-length studies of maritime fiction by John Peck, Margaret

Cohen, and Robert Foulke have invigorated investigation into Conrad's maritime writing by

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[81] Alston Kennerley, 'Joseph Conrad at the London Sailors' Home', *The Conradian*, 33.1, Spring 2008, 69-102. Available at
http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&r
es_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:rec:abell:R04071828 [accessed 11 September 2013]
Ray, Martin Conrad and "Civilized Women": Miss Madden, Passenger on the Torrens', *The Conradian*, 33.1, Spring 2008. Available at
http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&r
es_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:rec:abell:R04688989 [accessed 11 September 2013]
[82] Richard J. Ruppel, *Homosexuality in the Life and Works of Joseph Conrad: Love Between the Lines* (New York and London, 2008), pp. 22-40, (p. 25). Ruppel's defence of his mission to 'out' Conrad falls back on the familiar denigration of female influence in Conrad's life, and the concept of Conrad as a 'man's man' (p. 1). However, he presents persuasive analyses of Marlow as 'bachelor narrator' in *Lord Jim*, noting the attraction between Marlow and Jim as older to younger man, compared to Marlow's misogyny and Franklin's jealous response to Anthony's new wife in *Chance*.
[83] Robert Hampson, *Conrad's Secrets* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). Hampson weaves intriguing tales about various aspects of Conrad's life from an account of his physical illnesses and mental anxieties, to the loves before his marriage, extra-marital flirtations and the precarious, convoluted nature of his finances.
[84] Hampson, 'Naval Secrets: A Tale' in *Conrad's Secrets*, pp. 176-204. Hampson begins by presenting Conrad's visits aboard Royal Navy vessels during the Great War, of which the most significant was a two-week journey on the HMS *Ready*, which was 'disguised as a timber-freighter [....] to be a decoy for German submarines' (p. 177). Conrad's expedition was uneventful, but Hampson suggests that when he wrote 'The Tale', Conrad drew on a notorious incident in 1915 when HMS *Baralong*, disguised by being renamed and flying an American flag, answered the SOS of a neutral merchant vessel and opened fire on German U-boat U-27, continuing to fire on survivors who jumped into the water (pp. 181-186). In 'The Tale' the Commanding Officer of a 'Q ship' decides to anchor in a cove during dense fog and discovers there a neutral merchant ship that he suspects of providing supplies to German submarines. The Commanding Officer interviews the captain of the merchant ship and, although he is given a plausible account, his doubts remain and he tests the captain by giving him a false course that will lead him on to the rocks. The captain follows the false course and the merchant ship is wrecked leaving the Commanding Officer uncertain as to whether he has killed innocent men.

placing him firmly in this literary tradition. In *Maritime Fiction: Sailors and the Sea in British and American Novels, 1719-1917* (2001) John Peck makes the important distinction between the dangers of matching Conrad's fact and fiction and appreciating Conrad's maritime texts in their historical and literary context. In charting the development of maritime fiction, Peck explains how the dynamics on board ship changed and evolved. Peck approaches Conrad as an author grappling with the dissolution of the sea story, a process that begins with the problematic representation of Donkin and Wait in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*. Despite the fact that the voyage in this text was successfully completed, Peck identifies the erosion of the traditional sea story as steamships replace sailing ships:

> The crew resemble craftsmen in a guild, with reassuring names that define their fixed roles in a preordained order. But this can only continue as long as the roles remain fixed; in the world of the steamship, the engineer, a man with a new craft, is a central figure. Even as Conrad summons up the trustworthy names, therefore, there is a sense that he is looking to the past rather than reporting on the present.[85]

Peck argues that *Lord Jim* reveals the failure of the sailor to live up to expectations, while *Heart of Darkness* destroys the balance between the aggressive individualism of maritime colonialist ambitions and the restraining influence of wider society. He sees further challenges to the idealised figure of the sailor in 'Falk', 'Typhoon', and 'The Secret Sharer'.

The beginning of the move to steam is also considered in Peck's study as he cites Britain's consolidation of naval and mercantile dominance through rapid advancements in ship technology, noting that as steamships started to replace sailing ships, crews became smaller and more specialised. In combination with the transition from sail to steam, he argues that these factors contributed to an increasing sense of alienation:

> a neo-mercantilist mentality, in which protectionism increasingly usurped the concept and practice of free trade. And there was the sense of being at the end of an era, as sail finally gave way to steam, which created the impression of moving into a new, less personal, more mechanized age.[86]

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[85] Peck, *Maritime Fiction*, p. 179.
[86] Peck, *Maritime Fiction*, p. 171.

Peck's final chapter considers the loss of British dominance of the seas as the greatest factor in the decline of maritime fiction, proposing that Conrad marks a crisis in the genre, noting that the pattern of the sea story has been disrupted.[87] He suggests that in Conrad's *The Shadow-Line*:

> the maritime references are serving a different, but in some ways simpler, purpose, as the sailor confronts a challenge in a time of war, but a war in which, for the first time in British history since the sixteenth century, the navy is not playing the dominant role.[88]

However, as discussed earlier in the introduction to this thesis, it can also be argued that as the fear of invasion increased with the threat of war in the years leading up to 1914, so ships and the sea became important narrative devices in the English literature of this period. Thus, Conrad's maritime fiction can be read as the beginning of a new phase of maritime fiction that assessed the changing representation of ships and sailors in the context of renewed threats to Britain's position as a leading trading nation and naval power.[89]

The year after the publication of Peck's study, Robert Foulke took a different stance, examining the nature of the voyage narrative and how it offers metaphorical explorations of unknown lands and unfamiliar parts of the human psyche, in fiction and non-fiction from Homer's Odysseus to the solo circumnavigators in the late twentieth-century.[90] In *The Sea Voyage Narrative* (2002), Foulke identifies how the voyage narrative can 'assimilate and develop many other literary paradigms', the most simple of which is the hunt, a theme explored in texts as diverse as Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* (1851) and Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952).[91] He also identifies a further challenge in the immobilisation of the ship: the stranding and shipwreck of vessels upon the shore, or

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[87] Peck, *Maritime Fiction*, p. 166.
[88] Peck, *Maritime Fiction*, p. 185.
[89] Paul M. Kennedy, 'The End of Pax Britannica (1897-1914)' in *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (London: Penguin, 2001), pp. 205-223.
[90] Foulke, *The Sea Voyage Narrative*, pp. 137-158.
[91] Foulke, *The Sea Voyage Narrative,* p. 10.

becalming at sea, typified in Conrad's *The Shadow-Line*.[92] The most common form of challenge, according to Foulke, is the initiation of the novice sailor, which comprises a whole range of tests of both courage and seamanship. However, Foulke observes that texts such as Conrad's *Lord Jim* (1900) explore more serious consequences: 'When the test becomes more menacing and the probability of failure greater, the stakes change from growing up to risking moral destruction'.[93] This thesis explores the most extreme example of initiation in James Hanley's *Boy* (1931), in which the protagonist, a stowaway on a steamship, suffers physical and sexual abuse and, consequently, experiences physical and mental breakdown.

In terms of the sea story, Peck emphasises the historical context while Foulke concentrates on the challenges faced by sailors, from the traditional maritime conflicts between man and sea to the inner turmoil of the self. Foulke also underlines the importance of understanding sailing and the context of the maritime industry, arguing that being able to decipher maritime discourse offers new and more complete readings of maritime texts and is necessary to avoid misinterpretations.[94] Instead of examining all of Conrad's maritime texts, he focuses on *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, suggesting that analysing the captain's actions and his orders to the crew enables the reader to reflect on the role of authority figures in the text. By analysing the storm scene in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, Foulke demonstrates how to decipher sailors' actions and why this is crucial to understanding the whole genre of voyage narratives. In contrast to Foulke's analysis of both fiction and non-fiction, Peter Villiers considers Conrad's maritime connections through the ships on which he sailed in *Joseph Conrad: Master Mariner* (2006).[95] Although Villiers steers clear of literature, this text

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[92] Foulke, *The Sea Voyage Narrative,* pp. 10-12.
[93] Foulke, *The Sea Voyage Narrative,* p. 12.
[94] Foulke, *The Sea Voyage Narrative*, pp. 17-26.
[95] Peter Villiers, *Joseph Conrad: Master Mariner* (Rendlesham, Suffolk: Seafarer Books, 2006). This text is based on research by the author's father, sailor and writer Alan Villiers, who was working on a maritime biography of Conrad, but died before the project was completed.

is a useful illustrated guide through which to trace Conrad's career at sea and to develop the understanding of sailing necessary to avoid drawing incorrect conclusions.

Like Foulke, Joseph Kestner focuses on the concept of the voyage in *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction, 1880-1915* (2010). Kestner introduces his argument with a quotation from *Lord Jim* that emphasises the protagonist's youthful fantasies of heroism, observing that 'Conrad underscores the crucial importance of adventure literature imprinting codes of masculinity: rescue, heroism, survival, courage, duty, isolation, voyaging'.[96] In the same year, Margaret Cohen published her comprehensive theoretical discussion of maritime fiction in *The Novel and the Sea* (2010). Cohen's text is built around the concept of *craft*, which she attributes to Conrad and defines as the diverse skills of seamanship and leadership displayed by the ideal sailor.[97] Cohen suggests that when maritime technology regularised the life of the sailor, making it safer and healthier, Conrad shifted his focus from the traditional adventure narrative to experimenting with narration and probing the psychology of sailors at moments of crisis. Conrad's texts are analysed as part of a larger chapter in which she proposes that his 'maritime modernism' pushes the boundaries of adventure fiction.[98] Furthermore, she observes that the crises in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* were less sensational but more incisively explored than those found in earlier maritime fiction, such as the novels of James Fenimore Cooper and Eugène Sue, *The Pilot – A Tale of the Sea* and *La*

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[96] Joseph A. Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction, 1880-1915* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), p. 1. Kestner arranges the chapters of his text thematically and the first chapter, 'Voyaging', is particularly pertinent to maritime fiction as it covers the act of leaving the security of home for homosocial spaces, such as the military institution or the ship. The subsequent chapters, 'Mapping', 'Invading' and 'Loving', also touch on maritime themes as they explorer the adventurers' contact with the 'Other' bound up with issues of imperialism and sexual encounters. In terms of Conrad's writings, Kestner concentrates on the novellas and short stories, the majority of which feature maritime settings or sailor protagonists including 'Youth', *Heart of Darkness*, *Typhoon*, *The Secret Sharer*, *A Smile of Fortune: A Harbour Story* and *The Shadow-Line: A Confession*.

[97] Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea*, p. 4. 'Craft' is established as a framework through Cohen's detailed examination of Captain Cook's actions during the grounding of his ship on the Great Barrier Reef in 1770, from which she identifies fourteen characteristic elements of craft. These include such attributes as prudence and protocol (Cook's careful and systematic attempts to float the ship), providence (the mariner's belief in God and/or Fortune), and practical reason.

[98] Cohen, 'Sea Fiction Beyond the Seas' in *The Novel and the Sea*, pp. 179-224, (p. 180). Cohen precedes her analysis of Conrad's texts by referencing *A Personal Record* and observing that he was inspired by maritime fiction and travel writing into undertaking a maritime career.

Salamandre .[99] There are also analyses of Conrad's maritime fictions, *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, 'Typhoon' and 'The Secret Sharer' but, unlike Peck, Cohen does not cover the later texts such as *Chance* and *The Shadow-Line*. She argues that *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* demonstrates craft, while *Lord Jim* suggests its disappearance through the cowardice of the officers on the *Patna*, and sees it transferred to Marlow as narrator who 'in the course of the mariner's work of navigation, [achieves] orientation from partial information'.[100] Cohen, then, traces the erosion of seamanship in Conrad's maritime texts, arguing that the loss of 'craft' corresponds to the decline of traditional maritime fiction. However, her interpretation of Marlow's narration as navigation also suggests the possibilities of developing new readings of maritime texts. This thesis argues that there seems to be increasing anxiety about the loss of the sailing ship in Conrad's maritime fiction, so while early novels like *Lord Jim* place the steamship at the centre of the story, his later novels to look further back into the past, even to the Napoleonic era with *The Rover*.

As do Foulke and Peck, Margaret Cohen locates Conrad's texts as the end-point of traditional maritime fiction because the transition from sail to steam marks the end of the sailor's craft. She offers a brief overview of twentieth-century maritime texts in a final 'Afterword' section but, in contrast to Foulke's focus on non-fiction voyage narratives, Cohen's emphasis is on historical fiction and on film adaptations.[101] Cohen argues that twentieth-century sea narratives have their roots firmly in the past and makes no mention of early twentieth-century authors such as Childers, Hanley, Lowry, and Hughes, who engage with the changing contemporary maritime environment. This thesis opens with an exploration of the tension between the tradition of sail and the modern era of steam in Conrad's maritime

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[99] Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea*, pp. 202-203.
[100] Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea*, pp. 200-213, (p. 208).
[101] Cohen observes that 'Sea adventure series have proved particularly appealing to children and adolescents across the twentieth century'. Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea*, p. 227. Citing C. S. Forester's Horatio Hornblower series as examples; Cohen also mentions Patrick O'Brian's Aubrey-Maturin series, noting that while the author's recycling of events from both maritime history and fiction might have been contentious in the era of sail, in the twentieth century it has become 'historical salvage' (p. 228).

fiction and maps it on to other early twentieth-century maritime narratives, which have been neglected, but which I suggest form part of a continuing tradition of maritime writing. These texts present new ways of reading the maritime past, as well as responding to concerns about the future, and the impact of industrialisation on the ship and the sailor.

The development of literary criticism over the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century can be traced in the varied interpretations of Conrad's texts, from biographical approaches to post-structuralist readings. The initial popularisation of Conrad as a maritime author in the first two decades of the twentieth-century discouraged examination of his sea stories from the 1940s through to the 1980s.This trend has been reversed in recent decades, supported by feminist and queer readings, which have given new perspectives on the masculine world of the ship. Conrad's maritime texts have always been approached with caution, largely because of Conrad's own much-cited hatred of being labelled as a writer of sea stories. This thesis contends, in contrast to Peck *et al*, that Conrad's writing does not mark the end of maritime fiction, but makes possible modern appropriations of the genre through the changing nature of ships, sailors, and the sea story.

Chapter Two

Sail Versus Steam in the Novels of Joseph Conrad

Introduction: Assessing Conrad in the Era of the Steamship

Having examined Conrad's position as an informed sailor/author in chapter one, chapter two

shows how his work challenged the myth of the sailor hero established in the maritime fiction

tradition. This chapter, then, focuses on those of Conrad's maritime texts which best respond

to the contemporary changes in ships, sailing, and sailors at the point of transition between

sail and steam: *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, *Lord Jim*, *Romance*, *Chance*, and *The Shadow-*

Line.[1] These narratives represent the challenge of seamanship: the ability of the sailor to

exercise control over the sea by successfully navigating his ship and completing his voyage,

and considers the changing nature of this challenge in an increasingly mechanised industry.

In maritime fiction the sea has tested the sailor's skills and knowledge in a tradition of

adventure narratives stretching back to Daniel Defoe, or even back to Homer according to

Peck[2] and Foulke,[3] but for Conrad the mechanisation of sailing consequent upon the

development of the steamship, resulted in the erosion of seamanship.[4] The new technical

skills of maintaining an engine are presented as inferior to the physical work of sail handling.

Moreover, the reduced physical labour associated with steamships is presented as morally

damaging because it allows the men to fall away from the values of hard work, comradeship,

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[1] Conrad published three other novels connected with sailing: *Heart of Darkness* (1902), *The Rescue* (1920) and *The Rover* (1923), but these texts do not address the representation of sailors and the sea within the sail/steam transition and so are beyond the scope of this thesis. *Heart of Darkness* is, of course, not set at sea, but on a steamboat on a river deep within Africa (presumably the River Congo, although it is not named); *The Rescue* is concerned with hostages from a rescued yacht and local politics in the Malay Archipelago, and *The Rover* is set during the Napoleonic wars. Similarly, Conrad's maritime short stories, such as 'Youth', (1898), 'Typhoon' (1902), and 'The Secret Sharer' (1909), are not included here because they fall outside the remit of this thesis. For detailed discussions of Conrad's short stories see Lawrence Graver's *Conrad's Short Fiction* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969) and Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan, *The Strange Short Fiction of Joseph Conrad: Writing, Culture, and Subjectivity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
[2] Peck, *Maritime Fiction*, pp. 11-12.
[3] Foulke, *Sea Voyage Narrative*, p. xiv.
[4] Conrad's continued passion for sail is reflected in the way he encouraged his sons in nautical pursuits: he enrolled Borys, the eldest, on the training ship H. M. S. *Worcester* (1911-1913) and taught John, his younger son, how to sail on a yawl belonging to Baker, an old shipmate, while they were on holiday in Deal, Kent in 1919. Borys Conrad, *My Father: Joseph Conrad* (London: Calder & Boyars, 1970), pp. 74-81. John Conrad, *Joseph Conrad: Times Remembered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 134-143.

and physical courage associated with the sailing tradition. In addition, faster and more efficient steamships rendered sailing ships obsolete, as well as representing a threat to the sailing ship in physical terms through collisions at sea.

To understand the significance of ships and sailors in Conrad's maritime texts, it is important to consider his own sailing experience. Conrad spent nineteen years at sea, beginning in 1874 in the French merchant navy, sailing on the three-masted barque *Mont Blanc*.[5] He transferred to the British merchant service in 1878 and signed on to the steamship *Mavis*.[6] Thereafter, Conrad worked mostly on sailing ships, but he also served short stints in steamships, including the *Europa*, the *Vidar*, and the *Roi de Belges*.[7] From 1894, Conrad's maritime career was over and his literary career beginning. His position as a sailor/author had significant ramifications for his response to the tropes of maritime fiction in the context of increasing mechanisation of the maritime industry. He expressed his concerns in a letter to a fellow sailor:

> I share to the full your sentiments about all kinds of mechanical propulsion. It changed the life entirely, and changed also the character of the men. There is not much difference now between a deck and a factory hand.[8]

Conrad's anxieties about how the sailor had been reduced to a worker at a machine are evident throughout his writings, which articulate the supposed loss of seamanship brought

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[5] It is worth noting that Conrad was only actively working on ships for just over half of this time, as Najder observes: 'From the time he left Cracow in October 1874 to the day he was discharged from the Adowa in January 1894, Korzeniowski worked on ships, including long periods in ports, for ten years and almost eight months. He spent just over eight years at sea – nine months of this as a passenger'. Najder, *Joseph Conrad*, p. 161.

[6] Jean-Aubrey, 'French Days (1874-1878)' in *Joseph Conrad*, pp. 28-47.

[7] Villiers, *Joseph Conrad,* pp. 37, 71, 92. Conrad's experience on the *Roi de Belges* on the River Congo inspired *Heart of Darkness* (1902), arguably the most widely-studied of his texts, which follows Marlow's steam boat journey down river into the heart of an unnamed African country, exploring Marlow's growing awareness of the evil acts perpetrated by Kurtz and wider issues of imperialism (pp. 92-94).

[8] Joseph Conrad, letter to Captain A. W. Phillips, 12 January 1924 quoted in G. Jean-Aubrey, *Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters*, Vol. II (London: William Heinemann, 1927), pp. 333-334, (p. 334). Conrad expressed this sentiment in a letter to Captain A. W. Phillips, dated 12 January 1924. Conrad also added an anecdote from a recent excursion on the liner *Tuscania*, which emphasised the loss of skill he thought accompanied the loss of sail: 'Capt. Bone, who had some ten years of sail, told me that [steamship officers] had wholly lost the "weather sense," that touch with the natural phenomena of wind and sea which was the very breath of our professional life. [….] Once he made the remark to me that being a ship-master now was not like being in command of a ship but at the head of an administration'(p. 334).

about by the replacement of sail by steam power. These concerns are played out in the clashes between sailing ships and steamships, which feature prominently in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, *Lord Jim*, *Chance* and *The Shadow-Line*.

Significantly, the sailing ships Conrad had sailed on in his youth had already been rendered redundant by steamships as he was writing and publishing his maritime texts years later.[9] His first major maritime novel, *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* (1897), has much in common with traditional maritime narratives: the captain and crew face a series of sea-faring challenges on their sailing ship, but the voyage is successfully completed. In this text, steamships appear on the periphery, only escorting ships into harbour, but in *Lord Jim: A Tale* (1900), steam plays a more significant role because the protagonist, Jim, is an officer on a steamship. However, Conrad's next maritime novel, *Romance* (1903), departs from the sail/steam transition by exploring the world of nineteenth-century piracy and it is not until the publication of *Chance: A Tale in Two Parts* (1913), that maritime industrialisation is again explored. Conrad's later maritime texts show how steamships accentuate the vulnerability and unreliability of sailing ships, exemplified in *Chance* when the sailing ship is destroyed by a collision with an ocean liner. And in *The Shadow-Line: A Confession* (1917) the sailing ship is severely hampered by unfavourable weather, requiring the assistance of steamships to gain refuge in the harbour of Singapore, having failed to reach its intended destination of Sydney. By the early twentieth century, sailing ships in fiction and fact seem to be inefficient at best and, at worst, no longer viable.

Similarly, there is a sense of crisis surrounding the sailor. After *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* Conrad's texts seem to show the erosion of the crew's collective spirit, an

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[9] For further insights into Conrad's maritime career, see Joseph Conrad, *The Mirror of the Sea and A Personal Record*, ed. Zdzislaw Najder, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). It is worth noting, however, that Conrad's memoirs should be treated with caution; in his introduction to these texts, Najder discusses Conrad's misleading presentation of his sea-faring roles. For example, Najder describes Conrad's tale of the 'Tremolino' in *The Mirror of the Sea* as 'a romanticized story of a youthful and foolhardy adventure' (p. x). Similarly, when analysing *A Personal Record*, Najder observes that 'there are many distortions, but blunted and obfuscated by the way of telling, to be exposed only by an inquisitive researcher' (pp. xix-xx).

integral part of the sailor's craft, as defined by Cohen. Beginning with *Lord Jim*, Conrad's

texts exhibit a shift in focus away from the crew to the individual sailor, but Jim is not the

hero that might be expected; he is a complex and alienated figure, cast out from the maritime

community. In *Chance* also, the protagonist, Captain Anthony, is shown to be isolated as he

withdraws himself from his crew. Although *The Shadow-Line* reverts to the figure of the

sailor hero in its portrayal of the captain, this is in contrast to the rest of the crew who are

struck down by fever, emphasising the vulnerability of the sailor figure, particularly as the

crew is stranded far from help and medical supplies on a becalmed sailing ship. This thesis

argues that, instead of spelling the end of maritime fiction, Conrad's maritime texts are

significant because they represent the ways in which the ship and the sailor are under threat in

the age of mechanisation. Furthermore, Conrad's narrative experimentation enables new

ways of reading maritime fiction, making possible the continuation of the genre into the

twentieth century and beyond.

Seamanship and the Sailing Ship: *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*

The Nigger of the 'Narcissus' seems to present an example of the archetypal sea story. In the

narrative, the captain and crew on a sailing ship have to overcome a familiar set of

challenges: a terrifying storm around the Cape of Good Hope, mutinous stirrings in the crew,

and a period of becalming as the ship enters the doldrums.[10] The storm represents the age-old

contest between men and the sea in which the captain and the crew prove their seamanship.

Similarly, the near-mutiny also offers a conflict familiar to the maritime fiction genre as the

rebellious seamen in the crew constitute another test of seamanship. The unrest occurs while

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[10] The doldrums refers to 'a belt of low pressure that extends 5° to 10° either side of the equator in a region known as the Intertropical Convergence Zone. The doldrums were notorious in the days of sail, because vessels could become becalmed there for many days and even weeks.' M. V. Angel, 'doldrums' in *The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), *Oxford Reference* [online], 2007. Available at: http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199205684.001.0001/acref-9780199205684-e-824 [accessed 14 January 2015].

the ship is becalmed, so this is the only challenge which the captain cannot control as he has

to wait for the winds to return. When the ship finally passes out of the doldrums, the captain

manages to reassert his authority as he directs the crew to set the sails. Ultimately, the captain

succeeds in leading the crew in a successful passage to their destination. However, when

reading *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* as an articulation of the classic sea story, the narrative

is disrupted by James Wait, the eponymous 'nigger', whose sickness and death unsettle the

crew when the ship is drifting in the light winds of the doldrums.[11] Wait is himself facing the

internalised challenge of trying to overcome his illness, a trope to which Conrad will return in

The Shadow-Line.

Conrad's own maritime experience also plays a significant role in understanding *The

Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* because, as Ian Watt notes, it was inspired by a voyage that Conrad

made from Bombay in 1884 in a sailing ship of the same name.[12] But, by the time the novel

was published, just thirteen years later, sailing vessels were more heavily outnumbered by

steamships than they were at the time of Conrad's original voyage.[13] The text, then,

commemorates the age of sail in the context of an increasingly mechanised maritime industry

and might be considered to be anachronistic, even to the contemporary late Victorian

audience. The construction of the Suez Canal in 1869 meant that steamships had been able to

use the shorter and safer route via the Red Sea to the Mediterranean for nearly thirty years.

As noted in the introduction, sailing ships still had to go round the Cape of Good Hope, so

that the route of the *Narcissus* belonged to the past.[14] In many ways, the whole story of *The

Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* was in danger of becoming incomprehensible to a readership

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[11] Allan H. Simmons, *Joseph Conrad* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 51-76. Since the late twentieth century much critical attention has focused on Conrad's problematic representation of Wait as the 'nigger' in the context of postcolonialism. Simmons is one critic who suggests that this abusive term and the racist abuse of Wait by the members of the crew present significant difficulties for the twenty-first century reader (pp. 56-57).

[12] Baines, *Joseph Conrad,* p. 203.

[13] Both voyages, real and imagined, departed from Bombay, but Conrad changed the real destination of Dunkirk to London in his novel. Watt, *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 89.

[14] Villiers, *Joseph Conrad*, p. 107.

which, accustomed to steam-powered ships, no longer understood sailing ships and the sea as had previous audiences. The danger here is that the declining relevance of the sailing ship to the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century economy is matched by the declining relevance of maritime fiction to its readers. Indeed, the very act of preserving sail in such narratives might seem merely to confirm that they are historical curiosities with diminishing influence. Such a reading, however, fails to acknowledge the significance of Conrad's text.

In approaching *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* as maritime fiction, the most obvious place to begin is by looking at the episode of the storm which, at the most basic level, sets man against sea. However, close analysis reveals that this is more than just a test of seamanship. It is important for the reader to understand what is happening to the ship in order to appreciate the danger of the storm and the action that needs to be taken by the sailors. In a sailing ship, when the officers give orders, seamen are obeying the physical needs of the ship, as well as the human authority that commands them. In *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* the wind increases in strength and the entire crew is called upon to help reef the sails, that is, to decrease the sail area so that the pressure of the wind against them is lessened. This act is significant because sailors are usually divided into 'watches', so that normally one watch works while the other rests. Calling on both watches simultaneously shows the danger of the situation and the need for the seamen and officers to work together for the good of the ship. As the storm worsens, the waves grow mountainously high and the ship is knocked over onto its side so that the mast is lying in the water. For a period of thirty hours the ship is perilously close to capsizing completely. Addressing the accuracy of the maritime discourse of the storm in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, sailor and critic Peter Villiers argues that in reality tall ships were rarely knocked down unless the cargo was very poorly stowed, unbalancing the vessel. Furthermore, he suggests that if the *Narcissus* had suffered such a fate, 'it would

have been impossible for the ship to recover and sail on with masts intact'.[15] Such evidence

suggests that Conrad has exaggerated the near-capsizing of the fictional *Narcissus* in order to

dramatise the situation faced by the sailors.

The challenge of the storm emphasises the seamanship and cooperation displayed by

the captain and crew in carrying out collective tasks to keep the ship afloat and, ultimately,

enabling it to be righted. But a different type of challenge arises when one of the crew,

Donkin, questions the captain's decision not to cut the masts when the ship is first knocked

down. United by their continued concern for the ship, the crew trust the captain's authority

and dismiss Donkin's insubordination. Robert Foulke's analysis of this scene leads him to

suggest that the captain, Allistoun, is so intent on making a fast passage to London that he has

contributed to the ship's knock-down by carrying too much sail. Furthermore, Foulke argues

that Allistoun ignores received wisdom, and gravely endangers his ship, by failing to cut the

masts the moment the ship is knocked down into the sea. The ship remains on its side for

thirty hours, in danger of sinking, while cutting the masts would have given the *Narcissus* a

good chance of recovering immediately. Sailing ships carried plenty of timber to replace the

masts, but Foulke argues that the captain is driven by egotism and, not wanting to lose time

on repairs, makes the wrong decisions.[16] Although Donkin's insubordination seems to be

grounded in self-interest, Foulke's analysis suggests that Donkin's plea to cut the masts is

prudent, showing greater concern for the ship and awareness of danger. The crew reject

Donkin's objections and support the captain, but unravelling this specialist sailing knowledge

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[15] Villiers, *Joseph Conrad*, p. 61. Compared to yachts, which have sails attached in a vertical position, the sails on tall ships are suspended from horizontal yardarms and are designed to sail with the wind further behind them. Yachts sail much closer to the wind, which pushes the sail from the side, causing the ship to heel over. When the wind is too strong and there is too much sail area, yachts are pushed so far over that the side-rail goes under water. This is what happens to the *Narcissus*, yet while yachts can be recovered from this position by loosening the sails to decrease the pressure of the wind against them, tall ships are not designed to heel over and so it is more dangerous for them to be knocked down in this way.

[16] Foulke, *The Sea Voyage Narrative*, pp. 147-151. To support his case, Foulke refers to standard nineteenth-century sailing manuals, which recommend letting fly all lines and sails in the first instance. If the ship does not recover, the only course of action is to cut the shrouds and lanyards (the lines supporting the masts) before cutting the masts (the *Narcissus* had three), beginning with the mizzenmast at the stern of the ship.

shows that Donkin's rebellion could be justified. Crucially, this episode reveals the fallibility of the captain, the voice of authority on the ship, and indicates how the myth of the sailor hero is challenged in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*. The image of the ship on the verge of sinking is important because it responds to the fear of transition between the old world of sail and the new world of steam that recurs in Conrad's sea stories.

The figure of Donkin, then, can be considered to be an agent that destabilises the authority of the captain and the old ways of seamanship, which sailors apply to overcome the challenges of the sea. He is stereotyped as a shirker, so although his advice contains sound values of seamanship, his comments are dismissed as subversive utterances. Instead, Donkin becomes the scapegoat for the crew, who find their unity in opposition to him. When Donkin delivers a second outburst, urging seaman Knowles to strike Baker, the first mate, the crew again display their resistance to Donkin and silence him, partly because the on-going storm requires them to focus on the safety of the ship.[17] Captain Allistoun gives orders to the men to set the sails in such a way as to correct the dangerous heeling over of the ship; the orders are followed and the ship rises back into position.[18] The captain's skill in directing this manoeuvre, in strong winds and heavy seas, restores confidence in his captaincy, as well as restoring the literal and metaphorical equilibrium on board. But the intense physical labour of taking the ship through the storm has also played a role; the need to follow orders in an emergency has prevented the men from questioning the captain's decisions, analysing their own situation too closely, and becoming discontented. In *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* the idea that seamanship is an abstract value common to seafarers is deconstructed, and is

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[17] Joseph Conrad, *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'/ Typhoon /and other Stories* (1897; Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1977), p. 70. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

[18] Foulke, *The Sea Voyage Narrative*, pp. 145-147. Noting that the rudder is out of the water, which means they are unable to steer, Foulke explains that Allistoun orders the men to set a sail on the foremast (the mast at the bow of the ship) so that the wind will move the ship. The wind was on the starboard (right) side of the ship at the beginning of the manoeuvre but, using the sails, they manage to move the ship so it is behind them. They continue to turn the ship by adjusting the sails so that the wind ends up on the port side of the ship, pushing it over and, as it does so, tons of water that had entered the ship when it was heeled over, surges across the deck, rolling back into the sea.

revealed to be a relative and subjective combination of knowledge and experience. The ship

is also a more complex environment in which the sailors do more than simply fight forces of

nature, they battle each other and, in doing so, reveal the divisions and conflicting interests

within the crew hierarchy.

The storm also shows how the concept of seamanship is closely tied up with

comradeship, another theme that links Conrad's maritime texts to the maritime tradition. In

The Nigger of the 'Narcissus' the crew's solidarity is at its strongest when they are forced to

cooperate with each other in order to overcome the external challenge of the storm.

Conversely, when the ship is at its safest, the crew is at its most volatile: later, when they are

becalmed in the equatorial doldrums, the crew breaks down into its constituent and

quarrelsome component individuals, which nearly results in a full-blown mutiny (pp. 103-

106). Donkin plays his role in this uprising, but a more unsettling challenge is located in West

Indian seaman James Wait, whose influence on the crew is pervasive, if subliminal, from the

opening of the narrative.[19] Wait is set apart, first by his illness, because it prevents him

working after the first week and subsequently, when he is physically separated from his

shipmates as the crew move him from the public space of the forecastle to convalesce in the

privacy of his own cabin (p. 48).[20] Wait's inactivity provides a stark contrast to the hard

physical work carried out by the other sailors, who must compensate for a lost crew member.

The seaman narrator represents Wait as betraying the values of seamanship by shirking his

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[19] Jeremy Hawthorn connects the figures of Donkin and Wait: 'The fact that Victorian society displaced many of its own problems and guilts – especially concerning social class – onto the figure of the Negro, constitutes a key element in the link between Donkin and Wait'. Hawthorn, *Joseph Conrad,* p. 123.

[20] The forecastle is 'the generic term to indicate the crew's living space in the forward end of the ship below the forecastle deck'. Anon, 'Forecastle' in *The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea,* ed. I. C. B. Dear and Peter Kemp (Oxford University Press, 2006), *Oxford Reference.* 2007. Available at: http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199205684.001.0001/acref-9780199205684-e-1012 [accessed 28 November 2014].

share of the work, exacerbated because his illness evokes pity in some of the seamen, gaining him extra care and preferential treatment.[21]

Where the storm unites the crew, their opinions of Wait are divisive. Even more significantly, Wait inadvertently precipitates the final conflict when he insists on returning to work towards the end of the voyage. Captain Allistoun refuses to let Wait return to duty because he does not wish to pay a man he believes has been 'shamming sick' (p. 103). The perceived injustice of the captain's decision is what incites the crew to begin airing their general discontent, encouraging each other in their grievances, which results in 'A lot of disputes […] going on all around' (p. 105). Donkin capitalises on the emerging conflicts, making the rebellion physical when he throws an iron belaying pin at the Captain, narrowly missing him. Allan Simmons suggests that the significance of this act goes beyond its physical intention: '[in] nautical grammar, the pin or baton has a specific function – it belays or secures a rope. When Donkin uses it as a weapon he offends this grammar'.[22] Each belaying pin plays a vital part of the ship's security and sense of order, so Donkin's action does more than simply challenge Allistoun's position. By misusing a vital part of the ship, the figure of Donkin is showing how the symbolism of maritime objects can be violated, used to undermine the security of the captain's position, and subvert the values of the maritime tradition. In the confusion that follows Donkin's action, the helmsman deserts his post, whereupon the ship rounds up into the wind and the sails flap violently, requiring urgent attention. It is the need to attend to the ship that distracts the crew, and so mutiny is prevented by chance. This is significant because it shows that Captain Allistoun does not defeat this challenge himself by asserting his authority. Indeed, events in the text question the traditional values associated with leadership and seamanship.

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[21] Robert Hampson argues that Wait manipulates the crew, who 'are "tender" towards [Wait] because of the thought of their own death'. Hampson, *Betrayal*, p. 104. Hampson suggests that death particularly threatens the crew because every individual dies alone and this negates any security the crew gain through a mutual sense of society.

[22] Simmons, *Joseph Conrad*, p. 60.

Rather than reading *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* as a traditional maritime adventure, I suggest that the continual questioning of seamanship distances Conrad's text from the maritime fiction of the past. The representations of Donkin and Wait play a key role in this challenge to the genre, but even the more traditional characterisation in this text presents difficulties. Seaman Singleton represents a stock character who seems to belong to the mythologised past of the maritime tradition, holding a supposedly singular and simple world view that is untouched by the uncertainties and ambiguities surrounding James Wait. Singleton's reliance on long-established maritime superstition offers a new perspective on Wait's illness, because Singleton interprets it as the cause of the light and unfavourable winds which are becalming the ship:

> He said that [Wait] was the cause of the head winds. Mortally sick men – he maintained – linger till the first sight of land, and then die; and [Wait] knew that the very first land would draw his life from him. (p. 120)

Wait does indeed die when the crew finally see the island of Flores in the Azores, confirming Singleton's belief and locating the text in the maritime past. Furthermore, faith in maritime superstitions is again emphasised by the return of the wind shortly after Wait's death: as soon as his body is released to the sea, there is a shout to 'Square the yards' from the captain, who has observed an oncoming breeze (p. 134).[23] This order instructs the men to haul on the lines attached to the end of the yardarms to swivel them round, so that when the sails are unfurled they will be in the correct position to catch the wind. The wind enables Allistoun to assert his authority by pulling the crew's attention away from Wait and back to the ship, but its occurrence also implies that his captaincy gains a much-needed boost from this chance change in the weather. Furthermore, the link between Wait's death and the return of the wind

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[23] There are a number of ways in which sailors can 'read' the imminent arrival of weather, including the rise or fall of the barometer and the presence of certain cloud types. Localised gusts can be spotted a short distance away because they ruffle the sea surface, making it appear a different colour in that area. This experience-based learning is crucial to the text because it reinforces the authority of Captain Allistoun and here he makes maximum use of the fickle, light airs. For further information on Conrad's maritime experience and the ships he sailed, see Peter Villiers, *Joseph Conrad: Master Mariner*.

suggests that the final challenge of the voyage hinges on the irrational imposition of human meaning onto natural events, so eroding the significance of seamanship as something that can harness or control natural forces.

The tale comes to its conclusion when the *Narcissus* docks in London. But, although the voyage has been successfully completed, the challenges have revealed weaknesses in the traditional values of sailing and seamanship. Furthermore, the plot and context of Conrad's voyage narrative is not without difficulties; indeed, some contemporary critics, when reviewing the novel, were surprised to find that very little happened.[24] Reviews in the *Daily Mail*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Glasgow Herald* and *Daily Chronicle* picked up on this point but it was not necessarily deemed to detract from the novel. W. L. Courtenay's review in the *Daily Telegraph* was fairly typical: 'It is not a story at all, but an episode, which Mr. Conrad has chosen to extend to 250 pages, and to adorn with all the resources of his knowledge, his artistic skill, and of his unflinching charm'.[25] The comment again reveals the tension between traditional modes of story-telling and the influence of modernism in Conrad's works, between maritime heroics and the fallacies of heroism at sea.

To some extent, Conrad used the traditional structure of the sea story in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, but started to introduce new and disturbing elements. In addition to the problematic figures of Donkin and Wait, *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* features experimental methods of narration, switching between a participant narrator, who has close involvement with the sailing ship but limited knowledge of the other sailors, and an omniscient narrator who gives the reader access to the thoughts of other crew members. Ian Watt compares the shifting narrative voices to a Greek Chorus, showing the achievement of:

> [a] lofty and impersonal assertion of the general dramatic theme [which] depends for its distinctive effect on the impact, at a point of rest in the action, of a plurality of voices, […] not an individualized narrator, because the function of a chorus in

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[24] Sherry, *Conrad: The Critical Heritage,* pp. 85-88.

[25] W. L. Courtenay, 'Review' in *Joseph Conrad: Contemporary Reviews*, ed. Allan H. Simmons, John G. Peters and J. H. Stape (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 150-154, (p. 154).

general, as of Conrad's in particular, is to achieve what Yeats called "emotion of multitude". [26]

Alternatively, this use of multiple narrative voices can be seen as a problematic feature of the text, and Jeremy Hawthorn argues that its narrative inconsistency constitutes a major flaw in the novel. As he observes:

> One aspect of Conrad's contradictory attitude towards the crew in the novella seems to be that it varies very much according to whether Conrad is picturing himself among the crew. [….] If at one time [the seamen] are Conrad's 'old chums', it is apparent that at other times they play a more representative role in the work. [27]

In terms of maritime fiction, the participant narrator supplies the nautical authenticity particularly valuable to the knowledgeable reader, while the omniscient narration takes the text beyond the adventure narrative by delving more deeply into the inner thoughts of different crew members, and so speaks to the general reader. It could also be argued that the experimentation with narrative voice was developed further in the representation of Marlow, the narrator Conrad uses in *Lord Jim* and *Chance*, a narrator who combines participation and omniscience as he tells sea stories in which he plays a number of roles.

Lord Jim, Steam Power, and the Lost Art of Seamanship

Where *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* can be seen as questioning the values of seamanship in the last days of sail, *Lord Jim* examines the complete disintegration of what Cohen calls the sailor's 'craft' in the modern era of steam.[28] The first part of *Lord Jim* follows the maritime career of Jim, who serves his apprenticeship on a sailing ship where he learns the 'craft' of sailing and navigation. Later, he transfers to a steamship called the *Patna* and is taken on as first mate, but he is shown to fall away from the ideals of seamanship, reflecting Conrad's idea that a move from sail to steam 'changed the life entirely, and changed also the character

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[26] Ian Watt, 'Conrad Criticism and *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, in *Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Nigger of the 'Narcissus': A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. John A. Palmer (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1969), pp. 78-99, (p. 85).
[27] Hawthorn, *Joseph Conrad*, p. 118.
[28] Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea*, pp. 4-5.

of the men'.[29] Jim grows increasingly disillusioned with life at sea and, when he faces the crisis of a collision during a voyage from Singapore to Jeddah, he joins the other officers, two engineers and the captain, in deserting the stricken ship, instead of staying and trying to save the ship and the passengers. Later, on shore in Aden, the two engineers are hospitalised and the captain flees, with the result that Jim alone attends the trial for desertion, and this is where Marlow, the main narrator, meets him.[30] At the trial's conclusion, all the officers, present or not, are stripped of their certificates, barring them from working on ships. The disgrace consequent upon his cowardice haunts Jim throughout his subsequent career, and he tries to make reparation in order to measure up to the archetypal sailor hero. The second half of *Lord Jim* moves away entirely from the sea story in its exploration of Jim's life after the desertion and subsequent trial. Compared to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus',* where the ship functions as a contained location in which to examine the dynamics between captain and crew, *Lord Jim* focuses on the internalised struggles of the individual sailor, seeking to reconcile his actions with a long-established maritime code of honour.

In terms of the maritime fiction tradition, *Lord Jim* is an important text because it departs from the classic pattern of the voyage narrative from departure to landfall as seen in Conrad's *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*. *Lord Jim* features a more complex narrative that follows Jim's career on land, and on different ships, in locations from Aden on the Arabian Peninsula to the Malay Archipelago. The majority of the novel takes the form of a sailor's yarn, being told by Marlow to a group of listeners, in which Marlow recounts his involvement with Jim.[31] The final eight chapters take the form of documents written by

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[29] Joseph Conrad, letter to Captain A. W. Phillips, 12 January 1924 quoted in G. Jean-Aubrey, *Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters*, Vol. II (London: William Heinemann, 1927), pp. 333-334, (p. 334).

[30] Marlow is also the narrator used in Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness,* where he takes an active role in the narrative, piloting a steamboat down a river in the heart of the African jungle to meet Kurtz, the trading company's agent. He is an active crew member on a sailing ship in the short story 'Youth', while in *Chance* he plays the role of an investigative observer who retrospectively spins his yarns to a select group of listeners.

[31] Lothe distinguishes this manifestation of Marlow as narrator from his role in *Heart of Darkness*, arguing that 'In *Lord Jim* Marlow's narrative is presented and edited by an authorial narrator, but the fact that this apparently omniscient narrator largely refrains from imposing evaluative judgements on Marlow can be interpreted as

Marlow and given to one of these listeners. In terms of sea story structure, *Lord Jim* incorporates the maritime tradition of challenges testing men against the sea, but while Allistoun of the *Narcissus* is a successful sailing ship captain who leads a functioning crew, Jim is an idle officer in a dysfunctional steamship crew. A clear distinction is evident between the celebration of manly courage and cooperation on the sailing ship in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, and the selfish individualism on board the steamship *Patna* that leads Jim and other officers to desert their posts.[32] Conrad seems to be mourning more than just the passing of sailing ships; he is mourning the passing of a way of life. Steamships have not only altered the collective ideals of seamanship, but are also suggested to be contributing to the moral disintegration of the individual sailors themselves.

The key crisis in *Lord Jim* is when the *Patna*, a steamship which is taking approximately eight-hundred pilgrims to Jeddah, collides with a partially submerged object that severely damages the vessel. The collision causes a major leak and, fearing that the ship is going to sink, Jim, the captain and two of the engineers escape in one of the lifeboats, leaving the pilgrims and the rest of the crew to their fate. Norman Sherry gives a detailed account of the real life case in which the S. S. *Jeddah*, in similar circumstances to the fictional *Patna*, was abandoned by the captain and officers in the early hours of 8 August 1880, leading to the trial of Captain Clark and Chief Officer Augustine Williams.[33] Referring to the Report from the Court of Inquiry in Singapore, published in the *Straits Times Overland Journal*, Sherry compares the life of Williams to that of Jim, Conrad's fictional counterpart, as he presents the details of the incident alongside the story of *Lord Jim*. While Sherry

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another indication of the narrative and thematic authority of Marlow as a personal narrator with an original and productive authorial function'. Jakob Lothe, *Conrad's Narrative Method* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 133-174, (p. 174).

[32] Erdinast-Vulcan, *The Modern Temper*, pp. 22-47. In *Lord Jim* Erdinast-Vulcan proposes that Jim can be understood through 'identi-fiction', that is, through a character's identification with a text or genre (as opposed to an author's). She suggests that when Jim is on the *Patna* he is guided by the 'Stevensonian adventure story' (p. 39).

[33] Norman Sherry, *Conrad's Eastern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp. 41-86.

observes that Conrad draws inspiration from the *Jeddah*, he also changes a great deal in the narrative, so any comparisons between fact and fiction have to be made with caution. For example, while the *Jeddah* experienced very heavy weather over many days, Conrad represents the *Patna* in calm conditions.[34] In the novel, Jim's lifeboat is picked up by a passing steamship and taken ashore at Aden and the *Patna* is rescued by a French gunboat some hours later, uncovering the act of desertion undertaken by the officers.[35] In contrast to the collective achievements that culminate in a completed voyage in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, *Lord Jim* focuses on failure and the sailor's inability to live up to expectations.

The novel's opening forewarns the reader of Jim's cowardly abandonment of the damaged *Patna* in its representation of the youthful and romanticised preconceptions influencing Jim's career choice: 'after a course of light holiday literature, his vocation for the sea had declared itself, he was sent at once to a "training-ship for officers of the mercantile marine"'.[36] Conrad's implicit criticism of the romantic aspects of maritime adventure stories, and the fear that they encouraged unsuitable candidates into a maritime career, is evident in Jim's repeated failure to live up to his ideals. The first instance of failure occurs while Jim is still on the training ship and he sees a sailing ship, racing for port in a gale, crash into another ship at anchor. Jim feels frozen with fear, while the other boys, emulating fictional sailor heroes, set off in a small sailing cutter to rescue the survivors (p. 12).[37] Jim's paralysis is

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[34] Sherry, *Conrad's Eastern World*, pp. 48-50.

[35] Jerry Allen, *The Sea Years of Joseph Conrad* (London: Methuen, 1967), pp. 120-150. Allen also compares fact and fiction, giving a detailed explanation of the conditions prior to the desertion of the *Jeddah*, including the discovery of a very bad leak at a time when fierce gales were battering the ship and the boilers had been severely damaged. Fearing that they were in imminent danger of sinking, Williams panicked. He persuaded the captain that they should get into a lifeboat immediately and they were accompanied by 'the chief engineer, the third engineer and sixteen members of the Malay crew' (p. 132). Williams lowered the lifeboat, but when the passengers saw this they stormed the deck, pushing Williams overboard (subsequently, he was picked up by the lifeboat). Officers in the second lifeboat returned to the *Jeddah* after being ordered back on board. However, when the men in the third lifeboat refused to return, the lines were cut and their boat plunged into the sea, rapidly sinking and drowning everyone on board.

[36] Joseph Conrad, *Lord Jim: A Tale* (1900; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), p. 11. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

[37] A cutter is defined as 'a fore-and-aft-rigged sailing yacht with a gaff or Bermudan mainsail and two foresails. In the USA such yachts are called sloops, and the term cutter refers only to the old-fashioned rig with a very long bowsprit'. Anon, 'Cutter rig', *The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea*, ed. I. C. B Dear and Peter

contrasted to the quick-thinking courage of his peers and it foreshadows his indecision years later aboard the *Patna*, when he sees the other officers abandoning the steamship. After prevaricating again, as he did in the earlier episode, Jim eventually follows his fellow officers, but this time the action, his leap overboard, is openly cowardly. In *Lord Jim* the ships, as well as the sailors, are held up to scrutiny. While the sailing ship of Jim's youth is sound and seaworthy, the steamship *Patna* is characterised as poorly maintained and involved in a reckless enterprise. Moreover, the *Patna* cannot even fulfil the definition of a true steamship, because it has 'a wind-sail', and so could be more accurately described as a hybrid (p. 69). Such construction was typical of many ships, built in the late 1800s, whose engines were not powerful or reliable enough to propel the ship, or whose lack of overhead rigging created instability.[38] The *Patna*, then, embodies the difficult transition between sail and steam as a vessel not fully fit for either purpose, an ineffectual hybrid. It could also be argued that, in its shift between settings at sea and on land, *Lord Jim* is far from being a straight-forward work of maritime fiction and is also something of a hybrid.

The central tenet of *Lord Jim* revolves around the idea that, as sailings ships gave way to steamships, the transition changed not just the work of the sailors, but also their adherence to codes of seamanship. In comparison with the sailing ship of Jim's youth, steam power is portrayed as complicit in human vice. For example, the reader is told that the Chief Engineer of the *Patna* has been sacked from his previous ship, although the reason is not revealed. That the Chief Engineer has found employment on the *Patna* says less about his proven ability and more about the shortage of men with his particular skills: 'steam navigation expanding in these seas and men of his craft being scarce at first, he had "got on" after a sort' (p. 24). The

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Kemp (Oxford University Press, 2006). *Oxford Reference* 2007. Available at
http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199205684.001.0001/acref-9780199205684-e-736
[accessed 30 June 2013].
[38] Allington and Greenhill observe that early steamships carried sail as a contingency in case the engines failed, for balance, and from an emotional reluctance to give them up. Peter Allington and Basil Greenhill, *The First Atlantic Liners: Seamanship in the Age of Paddle Wheel, Sail, and Screw* (London: Conway Maritime Press, 1997), pp. 19-22.

implication here is that as steam power is still relatively new, demand for engineers outstrips

supply, so that even the least reliable men can gain employment. This shortcoming is in

marked contrast to sailing ships, where a sailor needs the knowledge and seamanship gained

with years of experience, seeing how the ship handles in various different wind, weather and

sea conditions, and how to set the many sails accordingly. The steamship does not demand

the same skill set; an engineer can exploit market forces, substituting technological expertise

for experience, and does not need to know about sails, the sea, or the effects of wind

direction. The differences in skill sets between the men on sailing ships and steamships

contribute to the tension between the traditional virtues of sail and the industrialisation of the

maritime industry.

    As the traditional skills of seamanship, such as sail handling, are no longer required

on steamships, it is implied that other positive attributes have also been lost. This is

emphasised by the actions of Jim and the other officers in abandoning the troubled *Patna*. It

is perhaps surprising that the text's main narrator, Marlow, attempts to present Jim in a

sympathetic light, despite the fact that he has committed the heinous crime of deserting his

ship. Marlow, however, admires Jim's willingness to face the consequences of his failure and

the disgrace of his desertion. Indeed, having suggested that seamanship is a lost art in the age

of steam, during the trial the text emphasises Jim's impulsive actions, rather than his

intentions, suggesting he is foolish rather than cowardly when he jumps from the *Patna*.[39]

Hampson argues that there is a 'lesion between identity-for-self and identity-for-the-other'

because Jim's romantic image of himself conflicts with his public shame.[40] Here, guilt and

blame are associated less with the individual and more with the idealistic values propagated

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[39] Najder argues that when judging Jim, outcomes should be considered as well as actions: 'Had Jim stayed on board, it would not have made the slightest difference to the boat and her passengers. His remaining on the *Patna* would not have saved a single life if the steamer went down'. Najder, *Conrad in Perspective,* p. 161. In practice, this is too simplistic to be accurate because it is possible for a sailor to perform a number of useful actions on a stricken ship: mend the collision site, pump water from the bilges, and try to intercept passing vessels by steering towards a harbour or known shipping lanes.

[40] Hampson, *Betrayal and Identity*, p. 117.

by the maritime establishment and literary tradition. Jim's trial can, therefore, be seen to question how far the individual is responsible for the loss of seamanship and to what extent these values have been based in a mythologised past.

Lord Jim also prompts the question of whether sea narratives in the age of steam are able to support the concept of the maritime hero. One of the nautical assessors present at Jim's trial appears to have abundant heroic qualities, but these are quickly destabilised. Brierly is captain of the *Ossa,* described as 'the crack ship of the Blue Star Line' (p. 48) and so holds the honour of both his rank and of his command. Introducing Brierly, Marlow recounts his achievements and heroic actions, saving lives and ships at sea, but these are undermined by being presented in a monotonous list. Furthermore, Brierly is represented as a pompous man and when he commits suicide shortly after the trial by jumping overboard from his own ship, this is presented as a shocking *non-sequitur*.[41] The text suggests Brierly's anxiety about Jim's dishonour, but never reveals Brierly's innermost thoughts and consequently his reason for committing suicide remains opaque. Brierly's involvement in Jim's trial provides the only possible motive for his suicide and one clue is provided when Brierly reveals to Marlow his connection with Jim:

> I rather think some of my people know [Jim's]. The old man's a parson, and I remember now I met [Jim's father] once when staying with my cousin in Essex last year. If I am not mistaken, the old chap seemed rather to fancy his sailor son. (p. 57).

Even this distant acquaintance with Jim seems to remind Brierly of the gulf between the failures and accidents of life at sea and the ideals of maritime heroism which sustain the sailors' families on shore. Terry Collits suggests that Brierly's suicide emphasises the nationalism of such sentiments and that Brierly's adherence to a 'crude notion of British superiority' or the collective ego of national pride, comes into conflict with the ego of the

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[41] Brierly's disappearance from the *Ossa* is related to Marlow by Jones, the first mate, who describes the conscious and deliberate final actions of Brierly before handing over the watch to Jones (pp. 51-52).

individual.[42] Collits draws a comparison between Brierly and Jim in his analysis and dissects the distinctly British code of honour that lies behind Jim's hero fantasies, but which also prevents him from being able to act when called upon. In the modern age of steam, Brierly's suicide represents the literal death of the sailor hero, just as the exposure of Jim's cowardice overturns its symbolic ideal.

Lord Jim, then, explores the ways in which an individual's seamanship, his ability to sail, and his conduct at sea, is intimately bound up with a wider code of maritime honour. That Brierly is so disturbed by Jim's actions emphasises this correlation, and so the transgressions of individual can be seen as threatening to the entire maritime code. As a consequence of the trial, Jim loses his mate's certificate, marking the end of the sea tale and the beginning of Jim's attempts to regain his lost honour. He takes a lowly position as a water clerk, employed to sail out to boats coming in to port and lead them to the chandlery he represents. However, Jim over-compensates for his former lack of courage with reckless sailing and Egstrom, his employer, relays to Marlow the type of criticism Jim attracts from captains on incoming ships:

> I was feeling my way in at daylight under short canvas when there comes flying out of the mist right under my forefront a boat half under water, sprays going over the masthead, two frightened niggers on the bottom boards, a yelling fiend at the tiller. (p. 148)

Jim displays poor seamanship by risking collision and terrifying his crew with his hard sailing. Nevertheless, Egstrom praises Jim's excessive efforts, which bring more ships to the chandlery and this generates more business for Egstrom. In this, *Lord Jim* emphasises how profit takes precedence over good seamanship.

By contrast, seamanship is paramount and cargo is rarely mentioned in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, suggesting that *Lord Jim* equates steam power with a new age of

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[42] Terry Collits, *Postcolonial Conrad: Paradoxes of Empire* (Oxon: Routledge, 2005), p. 135. Collits seeks to relocate Conrad's 'novels of imperialism [focusing on *Heart of Darkness*, *Lord Jim*, *Nostromo* and *Victory*] in the discursive field of postcolonial studies' and to give an account of the changing contexts of Conrad's readers.

commercialism, but at the expense of traditional maritime values. Instead of exploring the principles of seamanship, *Lord Jim* considers the relationship between public honour and private shame. This is epitomised when a visitor unwittingly mentions the trial in Jim's presence and, suffering a mixture of indignation and anxiety, Jim feels compelled to leave Egstrom's employ. Subsequently, Marlow becomes directly involved again, arranging employment for Jim as an agent for a trading company in the Malay Archipelago. Although this appears to be a very different role, far removed from his maritime career, the island of Patusan can be compared to the ships of Jim's youth, because he is once again playing a part in a small and contained community. Three years later, Marlow visits Patusan and is impressed to see that Jim has finally achieved success, acting decisively and wisely, bringing stability to the island, and gaining the epithet 'Tuan' or 'Lord'. Contrary to the maritime tradition of gaining one's glory at sea, it is on land that Jim fulfils the heroic role he imagined for himself as a boy.

Just as the concepts of the ship and the sailor are explored and challenged in Conrad's maritime texts, so is the role of the sea. In *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* the storm reveals sailors' courage and unites the crew, while in *Lord Jim* the sea exposes the officers' cowardice and, later in the text, becomes a haven for criminals. After two years of peace in Patusan, Gentleman Brown, who is described as 'a latter-day buccaneer' (p. 265), arrives at the island by sea. Information about Brown's origins is supplied by rumour: 'he was supposed to be the son of a baronet' (p. 265), but the facts deconstruct the myth of the dashing fictional sailor-hero. Brown has, in fact, been driven to the distant shore of Patusan by hunger because he is unable to get provisions in established ports as he is sailing a stolen schooner. Brown's attempt to invade Patusan changes the representation of the sea as an arena of heroism to one in which it is a potential source of hostile threat. Just as ships are

vulnerable to being boarded by pirates, Patusan is susceptible to invasion, and the challenge

of Brown's raid can be mapped on to the pattern of the sea story.

Brown's arrival, however, deconstructs the association of the sailing ship with honour

and its implied ascendance over steam. Brown underestimates local resistance, and his

attempted invasion is repelled, forcing him to entrench on a hill with his men. When Jim

meets Brown to negotiate, the narrator reports that Brown appeals to Jim on the grounds that

they share the same nature, shaped through similar experiences at sea:

> And there ran through the rough talk a vein of subtle reference to their common
> blood, an assumption of common experience; a sickening suggestion of common
> guilt, of secret knowledge that was like a bond of their minds and of their hearts. (p.
> 291).

Brown is not aware of Jim's crime of desertion, but his insinuations about the betrayed ideals

of maritime honour resonate with Jim's secret shame. The discourse that had united seamen

in joint endeavour aboard the *Narcissus* is here used to suggest insidiously that life at sea can

also create bonds between men through the shared guilt of misdeeds.[43] In *The Nigger of the*

'Narcissus' the sea is the site of challenges where men prove their courage and seamanship,

but Jim's cowardice and Brown's piracy in *Lord Jim* represent the corruption of these values.

Ultimately, *Lord Jim* is characterised by Jim's inability to react correctly in crisis

situations. In Patusan Jim shows his ability as an effective leader, but Brown has discovered

that Jim's weakness is his adherence to a maritime code of honour and, in opposition to the

desires of the people of Patusan, Jim grants Brown safe passage to leave. As a boy, Jim has

failed the challenge on the sailing ship and, years later, he fails on the steamship, but the

island seems to provide a similarly contained space in which he has another opportunity to

live up to his ideals. Jim sends a message to Dain Waris, the Patusan Chief's son, who is

stationed with his men on a small island downstream, to allow Brown and his men to pass

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[43] Hampson, 'The Brotherhood of the Sea', in *Betrayal and Identity*, pp. 116-136. Hampson explores the tension
between the shared code of maritime conduct and the actions of the individual in *Lord Jim*, proposing that
'Brown has the same effect on Jim as Jim has on Brierly: he represents a secret fear and a secret guilt' (p. 125).

through in their canoe. But Brown takes a course that allows him to land on the island unseen and ambushes Dain, killing him and several of his men. Jim has staked his reputation on Brown's promise to leave peacefully, so he offers his life to Dain's grieving father, Doramin, in reparation. When Jim is killed by Doramin, his futile martyrdom is emphasised by the grief of Jim's lover, Jewel, who accuses him of abandoning her. Brown and Jim embody very different interpretations of the 'secret bond' (p. 291) between sailors; for Jim the ideal sailor lives up to ideals of honour and courage, while life at sea has made an expert opportunist of Brown and, feeling thwarted, he has taken his revenge.

Conrad's next sea novel, *Chance*, would also interrogate the sacrifice of the sailor hero, but *Lord Jim* is far more openly critical of the values underpinning maritime fiction. Marlow recognises Jim's desire for redemption, but he also emphasises the futility of Jim's sacrifice of his life to 'a shadowy ideal of conduct' (p. 313). Indeed, Marlow reiterates how Jim's death undermines the maritime code of honour. Jim is continually presented in the text as a victim of his own and, implicitly, the genre's unrealistic expectations. In portraying a deeply flawed protagonist and a criminally negligent steamship crew, *Lord Jim* represents Conrad's most significant challenge to maritime tradition. However, his later novels, *Chance* and *The Shadow-Line*, depict more stereotypical sailor heroes, but these texts look back to the idealised past of sail.

Chance: The Captain's Wife and the Crisis in Sail

Further unsettling challenges face the sailor hero in *Chance*, which sees Roderick Anthony, a competent captain of a sailing ship, metaphorically floundering on land when he meets Flora de Barral, the daughter of a disgraced financier who has been jailed for fraud. Anthony tries to fulfil a chivalric ideal by marrying Flora to save her from destitution, but the text makes it clear that they are not in love and the ship becomes the setting for the disintegration of their

relationship. Having taken Flora on board his ship as his new wife, Anthony seems to lose his ability to lead the crew and command the *Ferndale*, but when his vessel collides with a steamship, he proves his innate seamanship by quickly evacuating all passengers and crew. However, Anthony goes down with his ship becoming, like Jim, a martyr to the ideals of honourable conduct articulated in the traditional maritime narration. The narrative structure of *Chance* comprises Marlow's engagement in dialogue with an unnamed narrator and with the spoken testimony of Powell, who is second mate on board the *Ferndale*.[44] This gives rise to a disjointed account which makes use of multiple perspectives and also utilises a disjunctive chronology. As is *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, *Chance* is set on a sailing ship but, rather than focusing on seamanship and the challenges of man versus sea, the ship is used as a self-contained setting in which to explore the effects of introducing a woman into the strongly masculine maritime world. In this way, the text interrogates maritime tradition through the superstition that women on ships are omens of ill fortune and looks forward to later subgenres of maritime fiction that scrutinise the roles played by women on the ship, including *Moonraker* (1927) and *A High Wind in Jamaica* (1929).

By including interpersonal relationships and an element of romance, *Chance* marked a new direction for Conrad, and it attracted a wider reading public than his previous novels, establishing his popular success on both sides of the Atlantic.[45] However, *Chance* has always elicited a mixed reaction from critics: F. R. Leavis included it in his canon, but Douglas Hewitt thought it bore 'the marks of the decline in [Conrad's] art'.[46] *Chance* marks a

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[44] Andrew Michael Roberts, *Conrad and Masculinity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000). Roberts identifies the multiple levels of narration 'Conrad, implied author, frame-narrator, Marlow, Powell, Anthony, the (male) reader' (p. 159). He then examines the role played by these male voices in the representation of 'woman' as a stereotype, rather than an Flora as an individual, and deconstructs his own experience as a reader drawn into 'a dialectic of understanding and ignorance, of superiority and self-accusation in relation to the gender conceptions of other men' (p. 161).

[45] Baines attributes part of the novel's success to serialisation in the *New York Herald* and favourable reviews in the British press, including *The Observer* and the *Times Literary Supplement*. Baines, *Joseph Conrad*, pp. 380-381.

[46] Hewitt, *Conrad*, pp. 89-102, (p. 89). Hewitt considers that the clichéd representations of Anthony and Flora and the inconsistencies in Marlow's narrative contribute to the weakness of *Chance* as a novel.

development in the sea story because the sailor hero faces challenges not usually found in maritime fiction. For example, the first section of the novel takes place on land, where Captain Roderick Anthony is seen grappling uncomfortably with the challenges posed by his courtship of Flora de Barral. The narrative then explores how the couple's marriage unsettles Anthony, evident in their relationship when they return to his ship. Once aboard, he avoids contact with his crew, becoming a distant and ineffective captain. Only on two occasions, when the captain is faced with the more familiar maritime fiction challenges of collisions at sea, does his inherent seamanship seem to return. *Chance* differs from Conrad's earlier maritime novels because the captain is shown to have retreated from his duties for much of his time on board and is only minimally involved with the sailing of the ship. Furthermore, the presence of a woman on board the ship creates tension, jealousy, and disharmony among the crew. Certainly, Flora's presence disrupts the male exclusivity of shipboard life and *Chance* turns away from the externalised challenges of ship and crew to the sailor's internalised struggle to fulfil the roles of captain and husband.[47]

Conrad used his narrator, Marlow, in *Chance*, but Marlow's role in the novel is more complex and problematic than his position in *Lord Jim*. The text opens with an unnamed narrator who, with Marlow, quickly becomes a listener as Powell relates events aboard the *Ferndale*, beginning with Powell's 'chance' appointment as second mate. Marlow then reveals his personal acquaintanceship with the protagonists, Flora de Barral and Captain Roderick Anthony. The remainder of the novel's first section retrospectively establishes Flora's origins and her marriage to Anthony. Much of the first half of the text takes place on land, but it is at sea that the crises unfold. Following their marriage, Anthony takes Flora and her father, Mr. de Barral to live on board the *Ferndale*. At sea, the crew become aware of tensions between the three, not least the bitter hatred directed at Anthony by Mr. de Barral, a

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[47] For a historical account about women's connections with the sea including sailors' wives and mistresses, female sailors and women pirates, see David Cordingly, *Heroines & Harlots, Women at Sea in the Great Age of Sail* (London: Macmillan, 2001).

bitter and mistrustful man who has been recently released from prison, having served a 10-year sentence for fraud. Unusually for a sea story, the central crisis is the attempted poisoning of Anthony by de Barral, but when he is caught by Powell adding poison to Anthony's cup, de Barral commits suicide by swallowing the poisoned drink.

Actual maritime challenges arise on just two occasions: firstly, when there is a near-miss with another vessel and secondly, when there is a collision with a steamship. This devastating physical conflict between sail and steam sinks the *Ferndale*, resulting in Captain Anthony's death, but it is unclear whether this is an accident or if Anthony intended to go down with his ship. The last section of the novel returns to the narrative dialogue between Marlow and Powell that has been set up in the introduction. Subsequently, Marlow takes a more active role at the end of the narrative, acting as an intermediary between Flora and Powell, having recognised the couple's mutual attraction. Instead of ending with the completion of a voyage, as in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, in *Chance* Marlow finishes his yarn by telling the unnamed narrator about Flora and Powell's reunion after four years' separation in the wake of the sinking of the *Ferndale*. *Chance* is thus less focused on the relationship between man and sea than on the relationship between man and woman, compared to the focus on relations between men in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* and *Lord Jim*.

In contrast to the traditional maritime challenges found in Conrad's earlier works of maritime fiction, it could be argued that in *Chance* the ship is presented as a setting for a more introspective study of male/female relationships. The ship represents a contained environment in which to scrutinise the flawed sailor hero who is unable to confront unfamiliar new challenges, including marriage. At the same time, Conrad presents the psychological challenges faced by Flora as she struggles to come to terms with her new role as the captain's wife. As Laurence Davies suggests, the division of the novel into 'The

Damsel' and 'The Knight', invokes the genre of medieval chivalrous romance rather than maritime fiction.[48] Analysing *Chance* along similar lines, Robert Hampson considers Marlow's altered role in this text and compares him to a detective, making connections to the works of Edgar Allan Poe.[49] Susan Jones focuses instead on Conrad's attempts to address the female reader and suggests that the woman is central to the text in *Chance*.[50] Jones builds an argument that also encompasses the difficulties facing Captain Anthony, suggesting that *Chance* charts the development of the couple through these challenges:

> *Chance* is a *bildungsroman* where Flora and Captain Anthony's education – learning how to be and how to love – depends on their passage through psychological crisis and confrontation.[51]

Looking again at the concept of using the ship as a setting, Jones's analogy of the characters' 'passage' runs in parallel with the voyage of the ship, and its final 'confrontation' with the steamship. Throughout the narrative the tension between Flora and Anthony can be compared to the ship's cargo of dynamite, with the potential to explode with deadly force. *Chance*, then, can be read as a text that marks innovation in the maritime genre by using the ship as a setting and incorporating elements of other genres into the narrative, including the detective genre, in a way that looks forward to later subgenres of maritime fiction.[52]

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[48] Laurence Davies compares the chivalric theme in *Chance* to the context of pre-WWI environments depicting the 'active life on ships, imperial battlegrounds, Antarctic wastelands, and the playing fields of public schools'. Laurence Davies, 'Conrad, *Chance* and Women Readers', *Conrad and Gender*, ed. Andrew Michael Roberts (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993), p. 82.

[49] Robert Hampson draws comparisons between the nature of Marlow's narration in *Chance* with his narration in *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim*, noting that he does not seem to inhabit the inner life as the characters so much in *Chance* as in his other novels, suggesting that this can be attributed to the change in his role. Hampson, *Joseph Conrad*, pp. 197–202.

[50] In her approach to this text, Jones emphasises Conrad's experimentation with form in this narrative, as well as the co-mingling of genres: 'With [*Chance*] he broke with his usual masculinist themes, offering instead a number of intertextual allusions to the treatment of feminist politics in contemporary fictional forms such as the romance, sensation fiction, or the New Woman novel. Susan Jones, 'Modernism and the Marketplace: the Case of Conrad's *Chance*', *College Literature* 34.3 Summer 2007, 101–120 (104). Available at: http://find.galegroup.com/ips/start.do?prodId=IPS [accessed 2 December 2007].

[51] Jones, *Conrad and Women*, p. 117. Jones observes that early reviews of *Chance* lacked 'critical distance and frequently reshaped Conrad's characterisation of women according to lingering Victorian platitudes privileging the role of 'Angel in the House'' (p. 18).

[52] For example, in Agatha Christie's *Death on the Nile* (1937) the ship provides a contained space in which becomes an intricate murder scene and Hercule Poirot has to examine the ship's layout in order to solve a series of murders.

The focus on feminist politics and heroic chivalry in *Chance* has overshadowed the maritime aspect of the novel to some extent, but analysing Flora's problematic status in the masculine world of sailing opens up new possibilities for interpretation. Jones draws on the maritime tradition when she identifies connections between Powell and Flora in terms of a similar financial dependence:

> Conrad links these two [Flora and Powell] as novices entering a capitalist world, where sailors depend on commerce with the colonies to keep them in employment, and women without means, hovering between identification with father or husband, can only maintain economic independence by adopting a precarious role, ill-defined in terms of social status (such as governess or companion).[53]

Jones's analysis equates the power structures of patriarchal society which constrain women, to those which reinforce boundaries based on class. But while the working-class sailor still has a role to play, women have always been confined to the margins in the maritime industry. This also the case in maritime fiction, and they are usually absent from Conrad's ships, but in *Chance*, this tradition is broken.[54] When Powell arrives on the *Ferndale*, he is informed of Flora's presence, and he recalls hearing other sailors' opinions:

> I'd heard fellows say that captains' wives could work a lot of mischief on board ship if they happened to take a dislike to any one [....] In the general opinion a skipper with his wife on board was more difficult to please; but whether to show off his authority before an admiring female, or from loving anxiety for her safety, or simply from irritation at her presence - nobody I ever heard on the subject could tell for certain.[55]

Women are considered to disrupt the crew in two ways: actively, through their own partiality, and passively through the detrimental influence they have on the captain. In the eyes of the seaman, the captain's wife is a threat because she alienates the captain from the crew and her

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[53] Jones, *Conrad and Women,* pp. 99-160, (p. 117). Noting that *Chance* has often been devalued by critics, Jones argues that the text merits reconsideration as an example of Conrad's experimentation with genre and narrative in a compelling case for the reassessment of Conrad's relation to women, both in his life and in his texts.

[54] Commander Charles N. Robinson, 'The Sailor's Life and Loves' in *The British Tar in Fact and Fiction* (London & New York: Harper and Brothers, 1909), pp. 408-436. Although women are rarely referred to in novels and plays prior to 1900, Robinson's study shows how women were frequently the subject of popular ballads and songs. Women are also shown to be the most popular subject of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century illustrations in this collection, either welcoming their sailors home or bidding their sailors 'adieu'.

[55] Joseph Conrad, *Chance: A Tale in Two Parts* (1913; London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1949), p. 31. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

influence is supposed to cause him to become egotistical, protective, or fractious. Flora is not

considered in her own terms, but only according to this stereotype of the captain's wife, and

because she does not have a working role on the ship, such as that of boatswain or carpenter,

she is defined only negatively in relation to the captain.

Unlike the external challenge of a storm, the woman presents a threat from within and

she divides the men through their uncertainty about her. Much of the anxiety about female

intrusion into the maritime sphere is articulated through Franklin, the First Mate. He can only

relate his conception of women to his mother, who 'stood in the forefront of all women for

him, just as Captain Anthony stood in the forefront of all men' (p. 268). Within these limited

and stereotypical definitions of gender, Franklin seems to be incapable of reconciling the

sexual and the maternal in his concept of women and cannot accommodate Flora in his

narrow categorisation. In a subversion of the Oedipus myth, Franklin regards Flora as a threat

to his relationship with the captain, whom he equates with a father figure. Exploring the

background for Franklin's animosity, Marlow reports how the relationship between Anthony

and Franklin had developed through 'that slowly grown intimacy of the sea' (p. 267). Marlow

avoids fully exploring how such human bonds develop and declines to admit their fallibility

and prejudices, attributing mutual sympathy to a higher natural mysticism from which

women are barred. Richard Ruppel analyses Franklin's attitude towards Flora in terms of

sexual jealousy, suggesting that Flora disrupts the homoeroticism of the ship's masculine

environment.[56] Homoeroticism is certainly present in the maritime fiction tradition, but this

allusion also looks forward to later texts, such as *Boy* (1931) and *Ultramarine* (1933), where

it takes on the more sinister connotations of the abuse of minors.[57]

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[56] Richard J. Ruppel, *Homosexuality in the Life and Works of Joseph Conrad* (New York & Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2008). Ruppel focuses on Franklin's attachment to Anthony as evidence of 'barely suppressed homo-erotic longing', as a desire perfectly at home on a ship (p. 76).

[57] Although *Billy Budd* is often noted for its focus on homoerotic attraction, this theme is also apparent in *Moby-Dick* where the all-male companionship seems to move Ishmael deeply. One example is seen in Ishmael's involvement in harvesting the spermaceti from a whale: 'I squeezed that sperm till a strange sort of insanity

It is not just the unity of the crew that is under threat from female intrusion; it could be argued that the safety of the ship itself is compromised because Flora is shown to have a paralysing effect on the captain that he seems unable to overcome. Again, it is Franklin who attributes Anthony's inertia to Flora's presence; he refers to Anthony's previous good record as captain and accuses him of neglecting his responsibility. Franklin tells Powell that he is now effectively running the ship: 'it's lucky, all the same, [the captain] has me on board. I know by this time what he wants done without being told. Do you know that I have had no order given me since we left port?' (p. 302). Anthony is failing to fulfil his role of captain and Franklin begrudges having to assume command. Indeed, Franklin appears to *need* the security of the hierarchical order, even though he admits he knows what to do. Anthony, a captain paralysed by emotional turmoil in *Chance*, is a much more complicated figure than Captain Allistoun in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, and this shows the extent to which Conrad was beginning to experiment with sea story traditions.

And yet, despite this, there is a sense that Conrad is falling back on the familiar themes of the classic sea story when he does evoke seamanship in *Chance*. Flora has distracted Anthony from his duties as a captain, but this is revealed to be a temporary aberration as soon as genuine emergencies arise. On the first occasion there is a near-miss with another vessel. Later, the challenge is much more serious; in deep fog there is a terrifying collision with a steam-powered ocean liner, which penetrates deep into the sailing ship's hull:

> 'It was a Belgian Green Star liner, the *Westland*,' [Powell] went on, 'commanded by one of those stop-for-nothing skippers. [….] She cut through the old *Ferndale* and after the blow there was a silence like death.' (p. 439)[58]

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came over me and I found myself unwittingly squeezing my co-labourers' hands in it, mistaking their hands for the gentle globules'. Melville, *Moby-Dick*, p. 398. Although focalised through Ishmael, the hidden and anonymous hand-touching seems to be tacitly accepted by the other sailors.

[58] The name, 'Green Star Line', is reminiscent of the White Star Line, the company which owned the infamous *Titanic* which sank in April 1912, meaning that the liner's excessive speed and collision with the *Ferndale* would have had a particular resonance for Conrad's contemporary readers.

Powell blames the captain of the ocean liner for recklessness but, as with sailing ships in their heyday, speed was highly valued on steam-powered passenger ships because it attracted customers, made economic sense, and proved the ship's capabilities.[59] The crisis of collision provokes Captain Anthony into resuming command and he assists in transferring everyone from the sinking *Ferndale* onto the *Westland*, the ocean liner that has sunk their ship but which now becomes their rescuer. Anthony is shown to resume his authority and seamanship at moments of crisis: the near-miss and the collision demonstrate that he is able to act quickly and decisively. More importantly, there is a sense that Conrad is here returning to the past, because seamanship is treated as an innate and instinctive part of the sailor, rather than being analysed as a culturally-acquired set of values as it is in *Lord Jim*.

The collision also has the effect of shifting focus away from Flora, so that the captain is able to face knowable maritime challenges once more, returning to frames of reference familiar to the reader from *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*. It is the clash, physically and symbolically, between sail and steam that distinguishes this text from traditional maritime narratives. The awesome power of the steamship, capable of great destruction, appears as a stark contrast to Anthony and his sailing ship, which are represented to be vulnerable relics of the past slipping out of the modern world, and the sinking ship symbolises the death of sail. Subsequently, the text takes a significant turn: the ocean liner leaves the sinking *Ferndale*, oblivious to the fact that Captain Anthony has remained on board the sailing ship. Powell's narrative makes it uncertain whether Anthony is accidentally overlooked, or chooses to stay on board the ship as it sinks. As Powell hands a rope from the steamship to Anthony, the

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[59] There is an implied criticism that the steamship should have reduced speed when visibility was reduced in the fog, but there is a sense that reliance on maritime technology led to complacency. The official report of the *Titanic* tragedy makes the following comment on the speed and course of the ship: 'the practice of liners using this track when in the vicinity of ice at night had been in clear weather to keep the course, to maintain speed and to trust to a sharp look-out to enable them to avoid danger. This practice, it was said, had been justified by experience, no casualties having resulted from it. [….] But the event has proved the practice to be bad'. Arthur Gough-Calthorpe *et al*, *On the Loss of the Titanic: The Official Government Enquiry* (Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1990), p. 30.

captain turns passes it back to Powell, responding '"It isn't my turn. Up with you"' (p. 439).

Ostensibly, this is an instruction to Powell to climb the rope, but when these turn out to be the

captain's final words, they can be read as the older man handing over the baton of command

to the younger. Anthony's death is either an accident or suicide, the text lets this remain

ambiguous, but there is the hint that he commits suicide in order to release Flora from their

marriage, realising that it is doomed. The final image of Anthony is as the stereotypical

captain going down with his ship, but there is a sense of anachronism here: like Jim's

senseless death in *Lord Jim*, the maritime code of honour is undermined by the needless death

of Anthony as sailor hero. Published just before the Great War, *Chance* questions the

traditions of the distant past, such as maritime codes of honour, as well as exploring the

threats to these values in the modern maritime world. By contrast, Conrad's subsequent

novel, *The Shadow-Line,* written and published during the Great War, seems to step back

from negotiating the sail/steam transition and, in doing so, slips further into the past.

Looking back from Steam to Sail in *The Shadow-Line*

Conrad's novella *The Shadow-Line: A Confession*, again returns to the sailing ship and this

suggests a retreat from the realities of the steamship era to a nostalgic championing of sail.

The Shadow-Line begins with a confession by the unnamed narrator that he has left his job as

an officer on a steamship, but cannot give a rational explanation for his decision. While

waiting in the Officers' Sailors' Home in Singapore for a boat home, the narrator is offered

the opportunity to command a sailing vessel, currently located in Bangkok. After some

prevarications, he applies for the position and is accepted. He then makes his transfer from

Singapore to Bangkok by steamship. Upon arriving at his new command (a ship which, like

the captain, remains nameless) the captain/narrator meets Burns, the First Mate. Soon

afterwards Burns falls ill, but persuades the captain to take him back on board. At sea Burns

becomes even more ill and the whole crew, except for the captain and Ransome, the cook,

catch his fever. Even more worryingly, the ship becomes becalmed in light winds and thus

has no access to essential medical help available on land. It is revealed that Ransome has a

'natural sailor-like agility' but, critically, a heart condition that is compared to something

'very explosive' (p. 98) and which confines him to work in the galley.[60] However, so many of

the men fall ill that the captain/narrator has no choice but to ask the cook to assume a sailor's

role, despite the risk to Ransome's health. Fair winds finally arrive and the text concludes

when the ship comes to anchor just outside Singapore harbour and steam launches come to

her aid, equipped with men and medical supplies.

The unusual nature of these maritime challenges distinguishes *The Shadow-Line* from

Conrad's earlier maritime novels as the struggles between man and sea become internalised.

Moreover, this text occupies a particularly ambiguous space between fiction and

autobiography, which is made clear in the author's note, where Conrad writes that the story

'*is* personal experience'.[61] The route of the ship in the text parallels the real journey sailed by

the *Otago*, Conrad's first command, and the fiction is narrated in the first person by the

captain.[62] This differentiates *The Shadow-Line* from Conrad's earlier maritime fiction,

closing down the variety of readings offered by the multiple narrators used in *Chance*, for

example.[63] Furthermore, neither the narrator nor the ship is ever named and this makes it

easier for the informed reader to compare events in the text to Conrad's experiences on the

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[60] Ruppel, *Homosexuality*, pp. 77-81. Noting the intensity of the gazes between the narrator/captain and Ransome, Ruppel constructs an argument that their relationship goes beyond bonds of fellow seamen. He compares this to the pairing of attractive young sailors with older men noting that 'The Marlow of *Heart of Darkness* risks death to meet Kurtz, and, in *Lord Jim*, he risks his own professional self-respect in his attachment to young Jim (p. 81).

[61] Joseph Conrad, 'Author's Note' in *The Shadow-Line: A Confession*, ed. Jacques Berthoud (1917; London: Penguin, 1986), pp. 39-41, (p. 40). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

[62] Lothe, *Conrad's Narrative Method*, pp. 117-122. Lothe analyses the role of narrator as protagonist, suggesting that it delivers 'the tension generated not only by the temporal gap between the time of the actual experience and the time of writing, but also by the learning process the narrator goes through' (p. 122).

[63] Edward W. Said, *Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography* (1966; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 165-197. In this two-part study, Said analyses the tropes of Conrad's writing in his correspondence, particularly his development as an author of fiction, and compares these to modes of narration in his short stories, dedicating a substantial section to *The Shadow-Line*.

Otago. However, as Conrad's own voyage took place in 1888, claims to autobiographical authenticity are tenuous because twenty-nine years had elapsed between the real journey and the novel's publication in 1917. Moreover, in that period the European Arms Race and the Great War accelerated demand for efficient mechanised ships, effectively ending the era of sail, and making such sail-based maritime fiction an idealistic fantasy of the past.[64]

In keeping with this nostalgic sentiment, the retrospective narration in *The Shadow-Line* conveys a strong sense of world-weary disillusion. The 'shadow-line' of the title not only corresponds to the captain/narrator's developing sensibility, from youthful optimism to responsible maturity, but also defines his role commanding the ship. In his new appointment as captain of a sailing ship, the narrator has moved from a position as an officer, responsible only for his specific mechanical function on a steamship, to being accountable to and responsible for the entire crew. Moreover, the step back from steam to sail entails further challenges when the ship becomes becalmed. Although the protagonist in *The Shadow-Line* is a competent captain, rather than the fallen hero figure of *Lord Jim*, the ship's immobilisation is a challenge less familiar to maritime fiction. Compared to the ferocious storm in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, which lasts a matter of hours and is faced by the entire crew, in *The Shadow-Line* it takes twenty-three days for the ship to sail from Bangkok to Singapore, and the captain waits alone on the deserted deck for the winds to return. Published twenty years earlier, *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* presents a far more confident vision of a working sailing ship facing a knowable challenge which can be tackled by applying principles of seamanship. But in *The Shadow-Line* there is no action that can be taken. The situation is made even more unsettling when fever spreads amongst the crew and the medication runs out. As the winds are light and variable, the ship needs to carry as much sail as possible and

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[64] In his investigation into the sources of *The Shadow-Line*, Norman Sherry sub-titles the section 'Exact Autobiography' as he traces Conrad's captaincy of the *Otago* (p. 227). Nonetheless, Sherry concedes that although the previous master had been ill and buried at sea, Conrad exercised considerable fictionalisation of the former captain. Sherry, *Conrad's Eastern World*, pp. 211-249.

the sails need continual readjustment to capture the wind. However, only four to six men are fit enough at any time to do the hard physical work of pulling the yardarms round, so the ship is prevented from reaching harbour for essential medical supplies.[65] Understanding the maritime context is necessary in order to appreciate the unique challenges in this text and so to comprehend the extent of the danger facing a severely weakened crew.

Although *The Shadow-Line* focuses on the sailing ship and challenges at sea, the text presents a relationship between maritime tradition and modern technology that has become increasingly complicated. For example, the reader is aware that the narrator is qualified to sail, but has previously been employed on a steamship. When Captain Ellis, the Harbour-Master, offers the narrator the sailing ship command, he undermines the invitation by mentioning the difficulty of finding a suitably-qualified captain. Resistant himself to the industrialisation of shipping, Ellis builds up a composite caricature of the idle steamship officer, a man who fears a sailing ship command because of the knowledge, experience and hard work such a role requires. He describes the deficiencies of many potential candidates: 'Afraid of the sails. Afraid of a white crew. Too much trouble. Too much work. Too long out here. Easy life and deck-chairs more their mark' (p. 65). Ellis asserts that men choose not to work on sailing vessels because they feel unable to wield authority over a European crew as a result of their own lack of self-discipline, inclining to sloth rather than work. So, although increased efficiency and reduced labour makes steam much more commercially profitable than sail, Ellis asserts that the different style of work on steamships is morally damaging to seamen. In *The Shadow-Line*, Captain Ellis articulates Conrad's anxieties about steamships, rooted in the fear of change precipitated by technological progress in the maritime industry.

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[65] Villiers, *Joseph Conrad*, p. 77. The reader is not given the exact dimensions of the ship in the text but Villiers shows that the nearest comparison is Conrad's first command, the *Otago*, which was 147 feet in length and square rigged on the fore and main mast. Villiers then explains that the fore-and-aft sails on the mizzen mast could be handled by just two seamen meaning that, although very difficult, such a ship could be sailed by four or five men.

This privileging of sail over steam, at least in moral terms, means that the narrator's move from steam to sail can be construed positively, rather than seen as a regression. When the narrator boards his command, the differences between him and the previous captain are quickly established through the words of First Mate Burns. The former captain, according to Burns, was deliberately endangering the ship and crew by ordering the ship eastwards from Vietnam towards Hong Kong. Having recently unloaded the ship's cargo and re-loaded the hold with ballast, there is no obvious reason for this course, which forces them to sail directly into monsoon winds.[66] Knowledge of the maritime context gives further insight: heading into winds in this way is particularly dangerous because it puts a huge strain on the masts, the sails and the men, as well as forcing tonnes of water over the decks and increasing the risk of being capsized. Finally, Burns overrules the captain and turns the ship around, so the wind is behind the sails, taking the less hazardous course towards Thailand. Before the ship reaches Bangkok, the captain dies and is buried at sea in the entrance to the gulf of Thailand, leaving Burns as his successor. Thus, the relationship between the former captain and the first mate in *The Shadow-Line* is very different from that explored in *Chance*, where mutual trust enables First Mate Franklin to assume the day-to-day responsibility of command. *The Shadow-Line* presents a situation unique in Conrad's maritime novels, one in which a captain's authority is overturned for the sake of the ship and the crew.

Contrasting the past captain with the new incumbent draws attention to issues of leadership in *The Shadow-Line*. In overturning his superior's order, First Mate Burns has been tested in a situation that runs contrary to the maritime hierarchy. In *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* the captain reinstates his authority over the rebellious crew, but in *The Shadow-Line* there is an urgent need for the First Mate to usurp the Captain in order to save the ship.

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[66] It is important to understand the maritime context to appreciate the former captain's irrationality. In a tall ship, the wind needs to be behind the sails and the yards will only swing round enough to make it possible to sail at right angles to the wind at best. This means that to achieve the course heading into the wind the ship has to be tacked, which is a demanding manoeuvre for the helmsman and crew. Not only does sailing this course require immense effort from the crew, but waves will be slamming against the ship, thus slowing its progress.

The new captain/narrator's most serious challenge comes when the fever strikes the crew, and there is even the suggestion that this has been brought about by the captain himself, albeit unwittingly, as he has let Burns re-join the ship despite being clearly unwell. Once at sea, the crew start falling ill with fever, with the implication that this is the result of the captain's decision to allow Burns back on board. As the voyage continues, more of the crew succumb. More disturbingly, after finishing the first bottle of quinine (the use of which suggests malarial fever), the narrator/captain discovers that the remaining bottles have been emptied and filled with a useless powder, presumably by the late captain. Even though the new captain is not culpable, he feels responsible, and takes the decision to head to Singapore, the closest port, for urgent medical assistance. The majority of the crew are sick, unable to work and needing to be nursed, and so the narrative subverts the usual masculinity of Conrad's maritime discourse and the traditional sea story. In a radical departure from the maritime fiction genre, the ship is no longer the site of the struggles of man against sea, but the internal battles of man against himself: the captain and his self-doubt; Burns and his feverish ravings; Ransome and his weak heart.

The new captain's command begins in Bangkok. When the ship leaves they encounter light and capricious winds and, even though he knows this area is susceptible to calms, Burns is convinced that the ship has been cursed by the previous captain.[67] The captain/narrator ostensibly argues against Burns's superstitions, but his reasoning is destabilised by the appearance of unusual, and almost unnatural, winds:

> Then just about sun-rise we had for an hour an inexplicable, steady breeze, right in our teeth. There was no sense in it. It fitted neither with the season of the year, not with the secular experience of seamen as recorded in books, nor with the aspect of the sky. Only purposeful malevolence could account for it. (p. 109)[68]

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[67] In the 'Author's Note' Conrad refuted interpretations of the supernatural in his text, attributing Burns's belief to 'mere superstitious fancy' (p. 39).

[68] This says much about where seamen get their information; sailors consult pilot books, which contain detailed information on localised areas including harbours, hazards, and anchorages. Normal weather for the time of year is ascertained from local knowledge; in the Gulf prevailing winds are light and come from the North East, and should be ideal because they favour ships heading south.

Here the captain's inability to read the weather, despite his own observations, knowledge, and research, is representative of his wider struggle to make sense of things and to successfully lead his ship and crew.[69] However, there is a more serious problem: the men are too sick to keep watch and the structure of ship-life starts to break down. This further isolates the captain, who is responsible for the crew and the ship: if the vessel becomes completely becalmed the crew will die; but strong winds could overwhelm the ship as there are so few men able to handle the sails.[70] The voyage thus seems to represent a struggle between freedom and imprisonment as the ship, the captain, and the crew attempt to leave the enclosed Gulf of Thailand. But, metaphorically trapped in the past, the ship is unable to escape and reach the open sea.

For the captain, the challenge is to tackle uncertainty. When a shadow appears on the horizon, the narrator cannot tell whether it foretells rain or wind (pp. 124-25). This shadow echoes the title of the novella and can be read as a metaphorical shadow hanging over not just this ship, but the whole future of sailing ships, as the becalming emphasises another weakness of sail in comparison to steam. Subsequently, ominous clouds appear all around the ship, so that the narrator cannot tell the direction or strength of the wind. Understanding the implications of the changing weather on the ship appeals to the informed reader who is able to consider the dilemma of how to prepare the sails accordingly, but in order to include the general reader, the problem is explained in detail through the captain/narrator: 'If the wind shifts round heavily after we close in with the land she will either run ashore or get dismasted or both. [….] All we can do is steer her. She's a ship without a crew' (p. 138). Lacking a

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[69] Bonney also suggests that the narrator 'never recognizes in Burns's insistent perceptions of supernatural evil merely an exaggerated, single-minded version of his own propensity to force the world into absolute definition by imposing upon it rhetorically a slightly more complex if no more sane, fiction'. Bonney, *Thorns and Arabesques*, p. 71. This is significant because the narrator tries to impose his reasoning on the winds and the sea, forces of nature beyond his control.

[70] Such conditions encourage a recourse to superstition, just as they did in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* when the ship is stalled in the doldrums off the West coast of Africa and Singleton predicts that the winds will only return when Jimmy dies, a myth that is upheld by events in the narrative. Conrad, *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, p. 120.

functioning crew, the captain loses the capacity to harness nature but, despite his grave concerns, when the winds finally arrive he leads the cook and two seamen in sailing the ship to an anchorage outside Singapore harbour. With ship and crew safe, the captain can be said to have conquered all the challenges posed in the text and to have completed the voyage. *The Shadow-Line* presents values of perseverance and seamanship, in contrast to cowardly self-preservation in *Lord Jim*, and the protagonist in sail triumphs where the protagonist in steam fails. However, the conclusion to *The Shadow-Line* undermines any easy assurances.

The opposition between sail and steam established at the opening of the novella occurs again in the conclusion. Once the ship is anchored outside the harbour, the captain raises flags to signal urgent need for medical assistance. While Conrad's previous two maritime novels have featured dramatic collisions between sail and steam, in *The Shadow-Line* steamships arrive to assist the sailing ship, with men to help the captain furl the sails and take the sickened crew ashore. The captain has managed to overcome the challenges of sickness and immobilisation, but the ship is still a long way from its intended destination of Sydney. This implies that the captain's symbolic development from youth to maturity, outlined in the title, has only just begun. Although *The Shadow-Line* can be read as a *bildungsroman* for the narrator/captain as he faces the challenges of his first command, the novella subverts the classic patterns of that form. Crucially, the journey is not linear, but circular, because the captain/narrator began his journey in Singapore when he received the telegraph offering the sailing ship captaincy. On accepting the post, he travels from the Officers' Sailors' Home in Singapore to Bangkok by steamship in a passage that takes just four days. Although the intended voyage for the sailing ship is from Bangkok to Sydney, the new captain is forced to stop at Singapore, and on this second voyage it takes twenty-three days to sail from Bangkok to Singapore, as opposed to the original four-day voyage. This is significant because it emphasises the massive inefficiency of the sailing ship in contrast to the

steamship. Sailing here openly represents the past, and indeed, by the time Conrad published *The Shadow-Line* towards the end of World War I, sailing ships had all but disappeared from the maritime industry. However, that is not quite the end of the story because there is one more piece of Conrad's maritime fiction that is often passed over by Conradian scholars: *Romance* (1903), a pirate novel co-written by Ford Madox Ford and Joseph Conrad. By contrast to the four texts discussed, *Romance* turns away from the sail/steam transition, and instead plays a significant part in the resurgence of pirate fiction in the early twentieth century.

Romance: The Joseph Conrad / Ford Madox Ford Collaboration

The origins of *Romance* lie in Ford's *Seraphina*, an unpublished manuscript he gave Conrad to read in November 1898. The two authors eventually agreed the terms of their collaboration and started work on the project in December 1900, with Ford responsible for parts one, two and five, and Conrad writing parts three and four.[71] But their collaboration resulted in a tortuous adventure narrative which is generally considered to be inferior to the solo works of both authors, and which has received comparatively little critical attention. Indeed, most Conradian critics exclude *Romance* from the canon, although David Thorburn does discuss the text in detail in *Conrad's Romanticism*, as part of his argument against considering Conrad in terms of modernism.[72] William Bonney also draws attention to *Romance*, analysing the protagonist's pursuit of the idolised and idealised woman, Seraphina.[73] In a study of Ford's novels, John Meixner explores *Romance* in the context of authorship and the

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[71] For further details about the personal friendship and literary relationship between Ford and Conrad, see Ford Madox Ford (Ford Madox Hueffer), *Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance* (London: Duckworth, 1924).
[72] Thorburn, *Conrad's Romanticism*, pp. 24-60.
[73] Bonney, *Thorns and Arabesques,* pp. 107-109.

ways in which the different writing styles of Ford and Conrad disrupt the narrative.[74] But

Conrad and Ford's pirate novel has not yet been considered as part of Conrad's sea story

output, as this chapter aims to do, positioning *Romance* in the tradition of pirate adventure

narratives and the wider context of twentieth-century maritime fiction.

Romance is set in England, Jamaica, and Cuba in the early 1820s and begins with the

first-person narrative of the protagonist, John Kemp, looking back on his life of 'romance'.

The text follows the adventures of Kemp, who is uprooted from a mundane existence in Kent,

shipped across the Atlantic to the Caribbean, and plunged into a world of piracy and political

intrigue. Kemp is forced to leave England with two men accused of being buccaneers, his

Spanish cousin, Carlos Riego, and Riego's associate Tomas Castro. Riego, Castro, and Kemp

sail away on a ship called the *Thames* where they meet Nichols, the sinister and mysterious

second mate, who is later discovered to be the infamous pirate 'el Demonio'. When the

Thames arrives in Jamaica, Kemp spends two peaceful years working on a plantation, but he

becomes a fugitive after becoming involved in 'a sort of undignified scuffle' (p. 69)

involving four men, one of whom is Admiral Rowley. Afraid that Rowley will issue a

warrant for his arrest, Kemp is forced to leave Jamaica and seeks refuge in the home of

Carlos Riego's uncle in the Cuban town of Rio Medio. Pursued by a band of desperate pirates

known as the *Lugareños*, Kemp is then driven out of Rio Medio and escapes to the mountains

before eventually returning to Jamaica. A circular narrative sees Kemp being returned to

Britain to stand trial at Newgate, wrongly accused of being the pirate 'el Demonio'.

Following in the tradition of pirate novels such as *Treasure Island*, *Romance* charts the

protagonist's growing disillusionment as he leaves the dreams and safety of his innocent

youth in England to experience dangers and betrayals in the Caribbean.

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[74] John A. Meixner, *Ford Madox Ford's Novels: A Critical Study* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1962), pp. 28-35. Meixner also examines the stagnating effect on Ford's writing when Conrad added detailed description.

At the beginning of the narrative, Kemp thinks of pirates as charismatic figures, and he agrees to help Carlos Riego and Tomas Castro flee from England, where warrants have been issued for their arrests for acts of piracy. Kemp's fantasies are constructed through fictional sources, particularly his relationship with Carlos Riego: 'I imagined him an aristocratic scapegrace, a corsair – it was the Byronic period then – sailing out to marry a sort of shimmering princess' (p. 36).[75] Byron's poem 'The Corsair: A Tale' charts the tragic tale of Conrad, leader of the corsairs, who launches a pre-emptive strike against his enemy, the Turkish Pacha.[76] Kemp's re-imagining of Byron's poem is an inaccurate interpretation of 'The Corsair' because in the poem, rather than seeking love, the protagonist leaves his beloved Medora as he embarks on his quest. Given that the hero of Byron's poem is called Conrad, this allusion could be interpreted as an authorial in-joke, but the re-imagining of Byron's poem emphasises Kemp's naïve fantasies of piracy, established so that later they will afford a sharp contrast to his disillusionment.

Non-fiction sources are also integrated into the narrative. When Conrad was working on *Romance*, his starting point was the research completed by Ford, which revealed the extent of piracy in Cuba in the nineteenth century, and the account of a man who was tried and acquitted for piracy. This figure became the model for their fictional protagonist, John Kemp.[77] The influence of non-fiction sources is also apparent later in the text, when Kemp is a passenger on a ship called the *Breeze*, en route to Havana. The *Breeze* is captained by a man named Lumsden who, when the *Lugareños* (Mexican privateers) board the ship, makes no attempt to repel or confront them. This appears to be a reference to Captain Lumsden from

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[75] Joseph Conrad, *Romance* (1903; London: Dent, 1949). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

[76] For a more detailed discussion on 'The Corsair: A Tale' see Frederick W. Shilstone 'Fragmentation and Retreat: The Progress of the Turkish Tales' in *Byron and the Myth of Tradition* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), pp. 73-84.

[77] Thorburn notes that this process of working from detailed historical research was typically Conradian: 'in the pattern of its mutation from historical fact into completed novel, *Romance* is entirely representative of Conrad's work. Like *Lord Jim*, the book vastly elaborates the real incident on which it is based'. Thorburn, *Conrad's Romanticism*, p. 30.

Aaron Smith's *The Atrocities of the Pirates* (1824), in which the real life Lumsden is presented as a similarly cowardly figure. In his autobiographical account, Smith claimed that the captain of his ship, Mr Lumsden, asked him to go with the pirates in order that he would not be taken. In return, Smith asserts that Lumsden promised to help him, saying these words: 'The moment I am liberated, I shall proceed to Havannah [*sic*], and despatch a man of war in search of the corsair, and at the same time publish to the world the manner in which you have been forcibly detained'.[78] But, according to Smith, Lumsden did not live up to his promise and Smith remained with the pirates against his will until they were captured in May 1823. When they were subsequently brought to trial, Smith's defence, that he was coerced into a life of piracy, was believed and he was acquitted following a trial in December of that year.

Alluding to these sources makes the pirate adventure more complicated; pirates can be wrongly identified and unjustly imprisoned, while the actions of legitimate seafarers are not always noble. As the myths of sailor heroes and dashing pirates begin to unravel, Kemp becomes increasingly disillusioned. On the *Breeze* he witnesses at first hand the looting of the ship and her passengers by the *Lugareños*, and realises that he can no longer think of pirates as Byronic heroes, instead describing them thus: 'the Rio Medio pirates, if that miserable population of sordid and ragged outcasts of the Antilles deserved such a romantic name. They were sea-thieves' (p. 248). The wretchedness of the *Lugareños* is in stark contrast to the concept of the dashing Byronic corsair established at the beginning of the narrative in the figure of Carlos Riego.

The representation of pirates in the text, then, begins with 'romantic 'corsairs' and ends with 'sea thieves'. However, 'el Demonio' operates outside these definitions and has much in common with historical pirate Blackbeard and Doyle's Sharkey, figures who instil fear through notoriety. When Kemp is trying to arrange a safe passage from Jamaica to Rio

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[78] Aaron Smith, *The Atrocities of the Pirates*, ed. Robert S. Redmond (1824; London: Prion, 1997), p. 8.

Medio in Cuba, he has a revelation about the connection between Rio Medio and 'el

Demonio': 'this was where Nicolas el Demonio, the pirate who was so famous as to be

almost mythical, had beaten off Admiral Rowley's boats' (p. 81). Although the confrontation

between 'el Demonio' and Admiral Rowley has happened before the events of the narrative

take place, references to Rowley's retreat recur throughout the text, emphasising the pirate's

power, but also suggesting that re-tellings of the story have proliferated, and are out of

control. 'El Demonio' is known and not known; the reputation of 'el Demonio' is shown to

go beyond the man himself when Kemp is on a merchant vessel that is boarded by privateers

and their leader claims to be 'Nicola el Demonio' (p. 112). The pirate's fearsome reputation

is enough to cow the captain and crew into submission and no-one thinks to question his

identity. However, Kemp sees through the subterfuge to recognise the pirate as his former

associate, Tomas Castro, who later reveals that he has been ordered to seize Kemp under the

cover of a pirate attack in order to get him to the safety. In *Romance* the myth has taken on its

own reality.

In the twentieth century the figure of the pirate becomes increasingly elusive,

constructed from sources which become distorted over time, as fact becomes fiction, fiction

fact, and *Romance* articulates this confusion. The identity of 'el Demonio' is destabilised

further when Kemp meets O'Brien, a corrupt and malevolent Marine Court judge, who

oversees a band of Mexican privateers perpetrating attacks on the English. O'Brien tries and

fails to recruit Kemp to join his *Lugareños*, but in the process he reveals his in-depth

knowledge of Nicolas el Demonio, known to O'Brien as Nichols, claiming that Nichols can

no longer live up to his reputation as 'el Demonio': 'Nichols is alive right enough, but no

more good than if he were dead. And that's the truth. He pretends his nerve's gone' (p. 87).

By emphasising that his interpretation is 'the truth', O'Brien's scathing assessment betrays

some uncertainty, but this revelation is important because it reveals that the infamous pirate

was the sailor Kemp met aboard the *Thames* and also suggests the chasm between the real

Nichols and his reputation as 'el Demonio'. Furthermore, the instability of the pirate figure is

reflected in the variant spelling of the pirate's name: he is known to Castro as Nicola, to

O'Brien as Nichols and to Kemp as Nicholas.

The final twist in the narrative revolves around the identity of 'el Demonio' when

Kemp is captured by O'Brien. Incensed by Kemp's refusal to work for the *Lugareños,* his

band of privateers, O'Brien falsely identifies Kemp as the notorious pirate under the name of

'Nikola el Escoces, alias El Demonio' (p. 468), adding yet another variation to the name of

'el Demonio'. Although Kemp protests his innocence, he is sent to trial at Newgate where the

judge is sceptical until, at the last moment, witnesses are found who are able to prove that

Kemp is not 'el Demonio' and he is acquitted. The intervention of the justice system in

Romance marks a departure from Doyle's stories, in which there is a more brutal and direct

form of justice. Here, the law court represents the antithesis of the shadowy pirate figure,

veiled in myths, because it is a place of facts, an institution that seeks the truth.

In terms of Conradian tradition, *Romance* is a problematic text because Conrad's

collaboration with Ford results in a novel that is muddled and uneven. The years of Conrad

and Ford's partnership, from 1898 to the publication of *Romance* in 1903, marked a difficult

period for Conrad, as noted by Middleton, who observes that Conrad was struggling to write

The Rescue and *Nostromo*. And yet, during the years of his collaboration with Ford, Conrad

also published two of his greatest critical successes: 'Heart of Darkness' in 1899 and *Lord

Jim* in 1900.[79] Having moved from the sailing ships of *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* in 1897

to the world of steam in *Lord Jim*, Conrad attempted to return to sail in a pirate novel that

went back even further in history. But Conrad found writing *Romance* a struggle with scant

reward, and it was not until 1913 that he published another work of maritime fiction. There

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[79] Middleton, *Joseph Conrad*, p. 12.

was a hiatus, too, in pirate fiction, and it was not until the late 1920s that Jesse and Hughes revived the pirate adventure story.

Conclusion

Conrad's maritime texts feature the key elements of the traditional sea story: the sailor hero, his craft or seamanship and the challenges he faces, but they are presented in new ways and often subverted to create a body of work that both celebrates and questions the maritime fiction genre. *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* seems to contain recognisable stereotypes of the sailor hero and sailors in general, for example, Allistoun, the stoic captain, and Donkin, the shirker. However, close analysis of the maritime discourse describing the storm suggests that Allistoun's decisions are questionable, justifying Donkin's protest and so undermining the traditional image of the sailor captain as hero. This theme is continued in *Lord Jim*, when the sailor undergoes a series of crises. Jim is haunted by the act of his desertion and feels the need to escape the risk of being identified and exposed as a coward. Captain Anthony also has a crisis of identity in *Chance* because when he becomes a husband he seems to lose his ability as a sailor, as if he cannot sustain both aspects of his identity, the man on land and the man on the sea. In *Chance*, Anthony fails to issue orders when he is on board the ship with Flora, but only during the day-to-day running of the *Ferndale* when duties can be delegated to officers and crew. His neglect is thus less critical than the damning dereliction of duty exhibited by the officers in *Lord Jim*, who abandon ship at the moment of crisis without attempting to save the passengers. The death of the sailor hero, epitomised by Jim and Anthony, coincides with the death of sail, a mode of transport which is rendered obsolete in the age of industrialisation, capitalism, and technology.

The maritime challenge undergoes ever more radical transformation over the course of Conrad's maritime writing. In *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* challenges are largely met

and overcome: the ship comes through a storm and an attempted mutiny to arrive safely at the intended destination. But in *The Shadow-Line*, maritime values are subverted when First Mate Burns is forced to counter the authority of his captain in order to ensure the safety of ship and crew. Challenges are failed in *Lord Jim* when Jim abandons ship, and although he achieves some restoration of his lost honour in his death at the end of the text, this is achieved on land rather than at sea. *The Shadow-Line* appears to follow a similar line to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* in its representation of the ultimate ability of the captain to overcome challenges, the fever that affects his crew and the becalming, to guide the ship safely to harbour. However, the meditative nature of *The Shadow-Line* distances it from maritime adventure fiction because the challenges are internalised and are personal to the captain, who battles with his own doubts and anxieties. Moreover, this corresponds to a focus on the individual, and his isolation and alienation, which will be articulated in later works of twentieth-century maritime fiction, as explored in the works of Hanley and Lowry in the fifth chapter.

Conrad was uniquely qualified to write with authority on sail as a dying tradition and yet as a writer he was part of the emerging modernist movement that embraced the new, challenged nineteenth-century realism, and experimented with form. Erdinast-Vulcan categorises Conrad as 'a modernist at war with modernity', reading the unevenness in his texts as a struggle between acknowledging that life has no meaning and yet striving to present a coherent vision.[80] Conrad was very much a champion of sail, but he did confess to fears about becoming a 'relic'.[81] Although he romanticises the past by drawing on adventure fiction and glorifying sailing ships, his texts also acknowledge innovations in literary form and represent the technological progress evident in steamships. Steam represents rationality in *The Shadow-Line*, as established by the narrator when he describes his steamship as an

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[80] Erdinast-Vulcan, *Modern Temper,* p. 5.
[81] Conrad, *A Personal Record*, p. 117.

'excellent sea-boat, easy to keep clean, most handy in every way, and if it had not been for her internal propulsion, worthy of any man's love' (p. 44). However, even though steamships are much more efficient, the implication is that they are prosaic places of work and their emotional value is decreased by the fact of their mechanisation. By contrast, sailing ships are given a higher value that is linked to the long-established romanticism of the maritime fiction genre. But in many ways such romanticism is questioned on the facts in Conrad's work; while 'running away to sea' is admitted to be a romantic dream, there is recognition that the sea is no longer an escape from society because life on a ship is itself is strictly contained and regulated, as in a prison: the seaman eats, sleeps and works at set times, has to obey authority and cannot escape. Indeed, *Chance* shows how the ship becomes a prison for the captain and his wife, while the entire crew are effectively imprisoned on their immobile sailing ship in *The Shadow-Line*.

John Peck suggests that maritime fiction ends with Conrad, specifically with *The Shadow-Line*, and Conrad's later novel, *The Rover*, seems to support this argument in its relocation in the Napoleonic era.[82] My contention is that Conrad's maritime texts have addressed the transition from sail to steam, tracking the changing representation of ships, and establishing themes that will inform later maritime narratives, particularly those of James Hanley and Malcolm Lowry, in which the protagonists view sailing ships as nostalgic and anachronistic. Conrad himself railed against simplistic classification of his sea stories, claiming that *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* was not concerned with 'a problem of the sea, it is merely a problem that has arisen on board a ship where the conditions of complete isolation

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[82] Noting that Britain's maritime power had been in decline since the Great War, Peck sees Conrad's novels as a reflection of this change: 'Conrad's novels, therefore, seem to announce the end of an era: he writes at a point when the maritime character of Britain is losing its significance, and when, as a consequence, the maritime tale seems to be losing its capacity to embrace and sustain a broader analysis of society'. Peck, *Maritime Fiction*, p. 8.

from all land entanglements make it stand out with a particular force and colouring'.[83] Such

an assertion paves the way for later maritime fiction that moves away from tradition and uses

experimental narrative techniques to explore the figure of the sailor, as discussed in part two

of this thesis. It also emphasises the ways in which Conrad problematises sea stories, even as

he draws on the traditional themes of the sailor hero and challenges at sea. Early twentieth-

century maritime fiction was Janus-faced, with some texts looking to the future of steam and

others looking back to the days of sail. Indeed, *Lord Jim* could be said to incorporate both of

these elements by depicting a protagonist who initially experiences the disintegration of

maritime values on a steamship, but who is eventually forced into a confrontation by latter-

day pirates.

After publishing *Romance* in 1903, Conrad deserted the sea to write novels based on

land, such as *The Secret Agent* (1907) and *Under Western Eyes* (1911), and he only returned

to sailing ships as war loomed, publishing *Chance* in 1913 and *The Shadow-Line* in 1917.

The challenges of the sea story, previously represented as external maritime events facing the

whole crew, are being internalised and focus instead on the individual sailor in *Chance* and

The Shadow-Line. But after these innovative texts, regression very much characterises

Conrad's later novels: *The Rescue: A Romance of the Shallows* (1920) retreats to an imperial

past in which Lingard, an adventurer/gun-runner living aboard a yacht, becomes embroiled in

political tensions between different factions operating in the Malay Archipelago.[84] Similarly,

Conrad's last complete novel, *The Rover* (1923), looks back even further to the days of

Napoleonic France. These late Conrad texts are deemed far less significant to the maritime

fiction genre than his earlier work and are passed over by Peck, Foulke, and Cohen. Indeed,

Peck concludes his study with an analysis of *The Shadow-Line*, arguing that Conrad's later

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[83] Such was the sentiment Conrad expressed in a letter to Henry S. Canby dated 7 April 1924, quoted in Jean-Aubrey, *Joseph Conrad*, pp. 341-342, (p. 342).

[84] *The Rescue* represents a step backwards in terms of composition because, as Middleton observes, Conrad began writing the novel in March 1896 'and, after interminable stops and starts, [it] was eventually completed in May 1919'. Middleton, *Joseph Conrad*, p. 121.

historical approach marks an end to the genre of maritime fiction.[85] Although Foulke does not analyse Conrad's later works, he perceives the subsequent rise of the historical sea novel as a new direction for twentieth-century maritime fiction.[86]

This thesis takes a slightly different route, suggesting that the maritime novels Conrad wrote in the middle of his career, including *Chance* and *The Shadow-Line*, as well as works by other twentieth-century writers, are significant because the interaction of steam and sail reveals anxieties about what is being lost in the name of progress. Moreover, these texts were all serialised in periodicals before being published in book form: *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* appeared in the *New Review* August- December 1897; *Lord Jim* was serialised in *Blackwood's Magazine* in fourteen monthly instalments between 1899 and 1900; *Chance* was serialised in the *New York Herald* January - June 1912 and *The Shadow-Line* was printed in the *English Review* September 1916 - March 1917.[87] Serial publication expanded the audience of maritime fiction and it was a medium used by other early twentieth-century authors, including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who not only published stories about Sherlock Holmes, but also ventured into maritime fiction. The next chapter explores the ways in which Doyle's writings form part of a resurgence in pirate adventure fiction that gives a different perspective on the transition between the old world of sail and the new world of steam power.

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[85] In his final endnote, Peck proposes that that twentieth-century maritime fiction can be categorised into three types: the war novels of Alastair MacLean, the Napoleonic wars novels of Forester, Kent and O'Brian, and the 'literary' sea novels of Ernest Hemingway and Peter Metthiessen. He argues that these texts have no place in the maritime fiction genre because they 'look back to a period when things made sense as a way of evading the present'. Peck, *Maritime Fiction*, p. 207.

[86] Foulke suggests that after World War II maritime fiction no longer looked at the vessels afloat, but looked back in time, ushering in the rise of the 'historical sea novel' with the Napoleonic-era novels of C.S. Forester and Patrick O'Brian. Foulke, *The Sea Voyage Narrative*, pp. 159-169.

[87] *Oxford Reader's Companion to Conrad*, ed. Owen Knowles and Gene M. Moore (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 248, p. 65, p. 255, p. 58, p. 344

PART TWO

Chapter Three

A Return to the Past: Maritime Adventures and Pirate Tales

Introduction: The Making of Myths

Having argued that the writings of Conrad mark a turning-point, rather than an end-point, in

maritime fiction, my contention is that his texts were followed by others that also attempt to

negotiate the transition from sail to steam. Despite the suggestions by John Peck and

Margaret Cohen that Conrad's maritime fiction marks the demise of the genre, this thesis

proposes that the early twentieth century saw the publication of sailing narratives that

developed the themes raised in Conrad's works.[1] This chapter, then, explores the second of

three different 'strands' of the maritime yarn that developed in the wake of Conrad – one

strand showing a return to the past and the age of sail, the other developing experimental

narratives that responded to technical reality and which embraced the steam age, considering

the effects of these on the relationship between man and the sea. As in Conrad's novels, these

texts suggest a continuation and development of the maritime fiction genre. At the beginning

of the twentieth century, there was a tendency for maritime fiction to look back to the well-

charted waters of the historical past by drawing on factual and fictional narratives from the

eighteenth- and nineteenth-century. Critics such as John Peck and Joseph Kestner analyse the

imperial quests of young male protagonists, and their confrontations with pirates, in texts

aimed at boy readers such as R. M. Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* (1858) and Stevenson's

Treasure Island (1883).[2] In the twentieth century, this focus on unlawful uses of the sea was

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[1] Cohen concludes her study of maritime fiction with a final chapter on Joseph Conrad, Herman Melville and
Jules Verne. However, while Peck focuses on the larger social and economic changes that he observes
precipitating the decline of the genre, Cohen cites the destruction of individual seamanship, or the seaman's
'craft', in the increasingly safe and mechanized world of the sailor. In a brief 'Afterword' she does mention the
likes of C.S. Forester and Patrick O'Brian, alongside considerations of the maritime subject in films. Cohen, *The
Novel and the Sea*, pp. 225-229.
[2] Peck, 'Adventures at Sea' in *Maritime Fiction*, pp. 149-164. Peck observes that, at a superficial level, *Coral
Island* is 'a Christian adventure story, [...] a classic text of imperialism' (p. 150). But he cautions against
assuming that its simplistic values offer a straightforward reflection of Victorian society, noting that subsequent

an important part of the maritime fiction genre because pirate texts reinterpreted the figure of the sailor from the days before steam.

In the early twentieth century pirate tales were not just for boys; texts aimed at other readerships were being published by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, F. Tennyson Jesse, and Richard Hughes, and they reflected some of the contemporary social and cultural anxieties of the period. Doyle's pirate tales, of which three were published in 1897 and one in 1911, are significant because his pirate protagonist, Captain Sharkey, is a loathsome anti-hero. Even more radically, F. Tennyson Jesse's *Moonraker* (1927) introduces issues of gender and sexuality into the pirate adventure, culminating in the sensationalised climax of the novel, when Captain Lovel is revealed to be a woman disguised as a man. A common feature of these pirate texts, from *Treasure Island* to *Moonraker*, is the high level of violence. By contrast, the more modern pirates in Richard Hughes's *A High Wind in Jamaica* (1929) are initially portrayed rather as wily tricksters, although they become more threatening during the course of the narrative. These pirate texts have been largely overlooked by critics and passed over in surveys of maritime fiction, such as those of Peck, Cohen, and Foulke, but my argument is that they show the ways in which the genre developed, rather than died, weaving together fact and fiction in new and inventive ways.

The Seduction of Silver: Defoe, Stevenson and the Tradition of Pirate Adventures

The writers of these piratical maritime adventures were able to draw on a long-established tradition and accompanying mythology, as pirates have sailed in seas across the world since

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adventure stories in the late nineteenth century, including *Treasure Island*, offer more complex heroes and challenges.

Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction*, pp. 18-24, pp. 28-34. Kestner analyses the 'codes of masculinity: rescue, heroism, survival, courage, duty, isolation, voyaging' (p. 1), positioning *The Coral Island* as a template for later adventure narratives and emphasising the importance of Stevenson's 'focus on masculine experience' (p. 7).

the days of Ancient Greece.[3] Britain itself has a long history of piracy, from the Elizabethan era, when British 'privateers', and later the 'buccaneers', operated loosely under letters of marque that licensed them to attack European ships, particularly those belonging to the French and Spanish in the Caribbean, during the periods when these countries were at war with Britain.[4] The wars ended with the Peace of Utrecht in 1713, but the pirates remained, basing themselves in New Providence in the Bahamas.[5] They proliferated to such an extent that trade in the Caribbean came to a virtual standstill, and the years between 1713 and 1722 became known as the 'Golden Age of Piracy'.[6] The historical context is relevant here because the blending of fact and fiction is an integral part of pirate narratives, where aspects of notorious real figures, such as Henry Avery and Edward Teach (also known as Blackbeard), whose reputations established their own mythology, can be discerned in the portrayals of fictional pirates, particularly in the works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.[7]

The seriousness of the pirate problem was foregrounded when King George I issued a general pardon in 1717 and promised bounties for bringing pirates to trial. To support these measures, Captain Woodes Rogers was granted 'the Governorship of the Bahamas and given the responsibility of suppressing piracy in the West Indies'.[8] Rogers arrived at the pirates' base in New Providence in 1718 with the intention of restoring order and punishing any pirates who refused to foreswear piracy and accept the pardon. Enforcement was critical; in 1722 fifty-seven pirates were captured in the Caribbean and forty-one men were hanged.

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[3] David Cordingly, 'Introduction' in *Pirates: Terror on the High Seas – from the Caribbean to the South China Sea*, ed. David Cordingly (Bridgewater, MA, USA: World Publications Group, 2007), pp. 6-16, (p. 13).

[4] John Esquemeling, *The Buccaneers of America,* ed. Henry Powell (1684; London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1893). This is a reprint of the 1684 edition translated from the original Dutch text, first published in 1678. It gives a detailed and incisive account of famous seventeenth-century buccaneers, including Pierre Le Grand, L'Ollonias, and Henry Morgan.

[5] Daniel Defoe, *A General History of the Pyrates*, ed. Manuel Schonhorn (1724; London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1972), p. 35.

[6] Jenifer G. Marx, 'The Golden Age of Piracy' in *Pirates*, ed. David Cordingly, pp. 100-123.

[7] This mixing of fact and fiction stretches back to the works of Daniel Defoe, whose narrative *The Life, Adventures and Pyracies of the Famous Captain Singleton*, models the life of Henry Avery. References to historical figures are also evident in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, which cites Blackbeard and Benjamin Roberts, while Conan Doyle drew on infamous pirate captains Edward Low and George Lowther.

[8] Manuel Schonhorn, 'Introduction' in Defoe, *A General History of the Pyrates*, pp. xi-xl, (p. xvi).

Infamous pirate Bartholomew Roberts was killed in a battle with a British warship and his two ships were captured, leading to the trial of 160 men, of whom fifty-nine were executed.[9] These measures started to reduce the incidence of piracy after the mid-1720s, partly because the pirates could no longer operate from New Providence, but mainly because many men were able to find alternative employment in the rapidly expanding Royal Navy, which needed skilled sailors.[10] In the twentieth century, writers of pirate fiction had a thrilling, if historically questionable, eighteenth-century source of information on the topic in *A General History of the Pyrates*. This account capitalised on the public appetite for the sensational reports of piracy trials in criminal courts by charting the life and times of thirty-three of the most infamous eighteenth-century pirates. Although Captain Charles Johnson was the name on the cover, authorship was attributed to Daniel Defoe by Professor Moore in 1932.[11] However, significant doubt has been cast on this theory and it remains a matter of debate.[12]

Pirate fiction reaches back to Daniel Defoe's *The Life, Adventures, and Pyracies of the Famous Captain Singleton* (1720), which traded on the very high level of piracy in this period to present an invented first-person narrative of a pirate's life.[13] In the text Singleton travels from the Canary Islands to the West Indies, the West Coast of Africa, to Indonesia, Ceylon and to the Arabian coast, where he joins forces with Captain Henry Avery, a real-life

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[9] David Cordingly, 'Introduction' in *Pirates*, ed. David Cordingly, pp. 6-15, (p. 6).

[10] George Woodbury, 'The End of an Epoch', *The Great days of Piracy* (London, New York: Elek Books, 1954), pp. 199-208.

[11] Schonhorn, 'Introduction' in Defoe, *A General History of the Pyrates*, pp. xi-xl. In his introduction, Schonhorn reveals his belief in Defoe's authorship: 'Not until 1932, when Professor John Robert Moore recognized Defoe's hand, was it made clear that Captain Johnson was another mask of the indefatigable Daniel Defoe' (p. xxiii). I have consulted Schonhorn's edition of *A General History of the Pyrates*, which uses Defoe's name, because the authorship of the text is not a question this thesis sets out to investigate, and it does not impact on my use of the material.

[12] Pirate specialist David Cordingly explains the debate about the authorship of this volume: 'Professor Moore's reputation as the foremost Defoe scholar of his generation persuaded most of the libraries of the world to recatalog the *General History of the Pirates* under the name of Defoe. But in 1988 two academics, P. N. Furbank and W. R. Owens, demolished Moore's theory in their book *The Canonisation of Daniel Defoe*. They showed that there was no documentary evidence to link Defoe with the *A General History of the Pyrates* and pointed out that there were too many discrepancies between the stories in the book and the other works on pirates attributed to Defoe. David Cordingly, 'Introduction', *Under the Black Flag: The Romance and Reality of Life Among the Pirates*, Harvest Edition (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Co, 1997), pp. xiii-xxi, (p. xx).

[13] Daniel Defoe, *The Life, Adventures and Pyracies of the Famous Captain Singleton* (1720; London: William Clowe, 1974).

infamous pirate figure from the eighteenth century. Six years later, Defoe published another work of invention, *The four years [sic] voyages of Capt. George Roberts* (1726), which featured real pirates Captain Edward Low, a notoriously ruthless and sadistic pirate, and Captain Francis Spriggs, a similarly cruel pirate who sailed in Low's company for some time.[14] *The four years voyages of Capt. George Roberts* examines piracy from the perspective of a legitimate captain whose vessel has been plundered by three pirate ships. Subsequently, the captain is set adrift in a small boat, accompanied by the two ship's boys, but without provisions or water. The focus here is on the victims of piracy, rather than the perpetrators, which distinguishes this text from Defoe's *Captain Singleton*, in which the pirate captain provides the focus of the narrative.

In a wider context, Defoe's texts are significant because they established the dynamic between fact and fiction in the genre through the incorporation of real-life pirates and pirate myths into adventure stories. In investigating this relationship, this thesis draws on Lennard Davis's concepts of fact and fiction in relation to the early modern novel, that is, considering them not as 'two distinct and unimpeachable categories. They are more properly extremes of a continuum'.[15] Expanding on this definition, Davis adds that 'perceptions, experience, fantasy and belief are all gradations on the same scale'.[16] Subsequently, Davis traces the history of the newspaper from the sixteenth-century 'news ballad', constructing the news/novels discourse and building a definition of the novel that addresses its relation to fact and fiction:

> It is a report on the world and an invention that parodies that report. This double stance toward experience can be traced in part to the predisposition of the news/novels discourse to comment on and report on the world by virtue of its

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[14] Daniel Defoe, *The four years [sic] voyages of Capt. George Roberts: being a series of uncommon events, which befell him* (London: A. Bettesworth and J. Osborn, 1726).

[15] Lennard J. Davis, *Factual Fictions; The Origins of the English Novel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 9. Having considered the history of the novel through its precursor, the romance, Davis traces the development of other forms of narrative (particularly journalism), their relationships to fact, and their mass dissemination through printing and publication.

[16] Davis, *Factual Fictions*, p. 10.

connection with journalism. It is through the reportorial function that the novel arrived in its privileged position of observation and commentary.[17]

This definition underpins the complex relationship between Defoe's work as a novelist and his role as a journalist and it is ironic that there is a debate about whether Defoe was the author of *A General History of the Pyrates*.[18] But although Davis dedicates a chapter to scrutinising the connection between criminality and discourse, no mention is made of accounts of piracy or pirate adventure narratives. This chapter addresses that absence and it considers Davis's concepts of fact and fiction in the novel in its analysis of the changing figure of the pirate, beginning with the work of Defoe's *Captain Singleton*.

The romanticised archetype, embodied in the figure of Defoe's Captain Singleton, was revived in the early nineteenth century in Lord Byron's poem 'The Corsair: A Tale' (1814)[19] and Sir Walter Scott's novel *The Pirate* (1822).[20] Both authors relocated pirate narratives away from the Caribbean: Byron's poem features Mediterranean privateers, while Scott's novel tells the convoluted tale of Clement Cleveland, a former pirate, who longs for a new life in Shetland but is coerced by his shipmates back into piracy.[21] Frederick Marryat also capitalised on the romanticised stereotype, and his novel, *The Privateersman* (1846), has much in common with *Captain Singleton* as it follows the many adventures of its protagonist

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[17] Davis, *Factual Fictions*, p. 212.

[18] In a chapter entitled 'Daniel Defoe: Lies as Truth', Davis demonstrates Defoe's ability to construct multiple frames in a narrative. One example of this is shown as Davis untangles Defoe's extraordinary political stance as editor of the *Flying Post,* observing that Defoe was 'originally a Whig writer, [who] was persuaded to write for the Tory point of view for Harley by insinuating himself into the control of a Whig paper. However, Defoe then secretly agreed to push the original Whig position while pretending to write as a Tory infiltrator'. Davis, *Factual Fictions*, p. 172.

[19] Lord George Gordon Byron, 'The Corsair' in *Byron's Poems*, 4th edn, ed. Professor V. de Sola Pinto, 2 vols (1814; London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1963), II, pp. 223-268. Conrad enters the Pacha's palace in disguise and sets fire to it, but is captured when he attempts to rescue women enslaved and kept in the harem. One of the women, Gulnare, kills the Pacha so they can escape. But when Conrad returns home he finds that his beloved, Medora, has died.

[20] Sir Walter Scott, *The Pirate*, ed. Mark Weinstein and Alison Lumsden (1822; Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001). Mordaunt Mertoun lives with his father on Shetland, but he spends much of his time with landowner Magnus Troil and his daughters Minna and Brenda. One day Mertoun rescues a man washed up on a beach; this man turns out to be former pirate Clement Cleveland, who subsequently falls in love with Minna Troil. She accepts the facts of his criminal past, but later it is revealed that they are first cousins and so cannot marry. Later, Cleveland is tried for piracy but pardoned.

[21] The 'Advertisement' preceding the text describes the capture of the *Revenge*, a pirate vessel, in the Orkney Islands around 1724-25. A local man, James Fea, managed to imprison the pirates with the result that the Captain was 'tried, condemned, and executed, with others of his crew'. Scott, *The Pirate*, p. 4.

Alexander Musgrave in a tightly-packed account of his voyages around the globe.[22]

Following in the same tradition, Marryat's earlier novel, *The Pirate* (1835), tells the tale of

Francisco, separated from his twin brother Edward as a baby and subsequently raised by a

pirate, Captain Cain on the *Avenger*.[23] Marryat changed tack with *Poor Jack* (1840), which

looks at the impact of piracy on the victim as it follows the fortunes of Tom, a channel pilot,

whose ships are frequently attacked by privateers.[24] Marryat's melodramatic pirate

adventures, in which captives are frequently thrown (or leap) overboard, contributed to the

ongoing tension between realism and romanticism, fact and fiction, in the sea story.

The popularity of the pirate genre, particularly amongst a young male readership, saw

its appropriation by the 'Penny dreadfuls', which produced numerous pirate-themed short

stories in the second half of the nineteenth century.[25] Joseph Bristow locates *Treasure Island*

in the context of a late nineteenth-century society eager to turn young boys towards

'respectable' books and periodicals, where a certain level of violence was tolerated as long as

it kept readers away from cheap, sensationalised fiction.[26] Marryat's pirate novels were

followed by those of boys' author R. M. Ballantyne, whose novel *The Coral Island: A Tale of*

the Pacific Ocean (1867), is one of the best known nineteenth-century pirate adventure

narratives.[27] Stevenson's *Treasure Island* therefore took advantage of an established market

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[22] Frederick Marryat, *The Privateersman: adventures by sea and land, in civil and savage life, one hundred years ago* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1898).

[23] Frederick Marryat, *The Pirate and The Three Cutters* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1897).

[24] Frederick Marryat, *Poor Jack* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1898).

[25] The success of the 'Penny dreadfuls' was due to their accessibility as they were easy to read and far cheaper than classical children's books. Lucy Andrew explores the social context of these publications, noting that they were 'denounced for their pernicious influence upon impressionable young readers who were encouraged, critics argued, through the texts' glorification of criminal life, to follow in the footsteps of their fictionalised criminal heroes'. Lucy Andrew, 'The British Boy Detective: Origins, Forms, Functions, 1865-1940' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Cardiff University, 2014), pp. 38-43 (pp. 40-41). Peter Hunt observes that: 'A dominant figure in Victorian cheap fiction was Edwin John Brett, whose eight-page 'gallows' literature (with a lurid illustration) had titles such as *Black Rollo, the Pirate* (1864-5)'. Peter Hunt, *An Introduction to Children's Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 61-67, (p. 62).

[26] Bristow explores the ways in which adventure stories were popular with child and adult readers because they glorified boyhood and associated it with empire, preparing the next generation of colonialists. Joseph Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1991), pp. 109-123.

[27] R. M. Ballantyne, *The Coral Island: A Tale of the Pacific Ocean* (1858; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

and helped to ensure the continued popularity of pirate fiction, as argued by Bradley Deane, who also cites the popularity of Cutcliffe Hyne's sensation fiction in the 1890s.[28] It was the enduring success of *Treasure Island*, influenced by the legacy of pirate fiction, which was to provide a common reference point for texts in the twentieth century, as this chapter explores.

Treasure Island is perhaps the best known pirate novel of all. Where earlier pirate fiction often became caught up in complicated plots and featured numerous acts of piracy, *Treasure Island* tells a more straightforward story of the search for buried treasure, a move that would widen the readership of pirate fiction and go on to inspire countless imitations. Similarly to the novels of Marryat, Kingston, and Ballantyne, *Treasure Island* is often considered first and foremost to be a boys' adventure story. Writing a centenary tribute to Stevenson in 1950, Richard Hughes begins his article with an imaginary search of his bookshelves for *Treasure Island*, only to realise that he had 'put it in the children's room; and *Kidnapped* and *Catriona* too'.[29] However, the suitability of *Treasure Island* for a juvenile audience has been challenged; Paul Maixner argues that, although the novel was well received on publication, it was not successful when first serialised in *Young Folks*.[30] Then and now, some readers and critics consider it a problematic text, objecting to its moral ambiguity and violence. John Peck describes it as 'an exceptionally nasty book', albeit 'a work of great charm'.[31] Nonetheless, evidence from Stevenson's letters and his essay 'My First Book' shows how the child reader was central to the creation of *Treasure Island*, as

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[28] Bradley Deane, 'Imperial Boyhood: Piracy and the Play Ethic', *Victorian Studies* 53.4, Summer 2011, 689-714, (693). Available at: http://lion.chadwyck.co.uk/searchFulltext.do?id=R04644157&divLevel=0&queryId=../session/1386160470_26225&trailId=142231B7243&area=mla&forward=critref_ft [accessed 14 October 2013].

[29] Richard Hughes, 'Robert Louis Stevenson: a Centenary Tribute' in *Fiction as Truth: Selected literary Writings by Richard Hughes*, ed. Richard Poole (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, 1983), pp. 140-143, (p. 140). Robert Louis Stevenson, *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*, ed. Emma Letley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

[30] Maixner observes that 'circulation was not increased by a single copy and on at least one occasion the editor was obliged to defend the story against a dissatisfied reader'. Paul Maixner, *Robert Louis Stevenson: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 15. In comparison, the reception of *Treasure Island* as a novel was much more positive: 'Almost without exception the reviewers were enthusiastic [....] By the tributes given the book and the way in which it was compared on equal terms with the best works of Defoe, Dickens, Thackeray, Poe, and others of similar stature, it was clear that reviewers where confident, from the very first, that it would be a classic' (p. 17).

[31] Peck, *Maritime* Fiction, p. 153.

early chapters were read by Stevenson to his twelve-year-old stepson, Lloyd Osbourne.[32] It

could also be argued that *Treasure Island*'s focus on the search for treasure, rather than the

violent means by which it had been originally acquired, is more appropriate in a text intended

for child readers. Indeed, Deane suggests that the balance between child and adult is reflected

in the representation of men and boys in late nineteenth-century adventure fiction and is

shaped by the 'imperial play ethic'.[33]

      The interweaving of fact and fiction is another feature, clear in Defoe and still evident

in *Treasure Island*, which remains important in twentieth-century pirate fiction. Frequent

references are made to historical pirates in *Treasure Island* in order to construct the

reputations of the fictional characters, but such references also give the narrative the stamp of

authenticity characteristic of the maritime fiction tradition. In his assessment of the author's

sources, Harold Watson notes inconsistencies in Stevenson's references, including his

inaccurate conflation of the terms of 'buccaneers' and 'pirates'.[34] Notwithstanding such slips,

Stevenson's imaginative use of pirate history and mythology established his fictional

character, Long John Silver, firmly in the pirate tradition. Silver's fictional predecessor,

Captain Flint, is already dead at the time of the events being narrated, but his formidable

reputation, established by comparisons to historical pirate Blackbeard, haunts the text.

Furthermore, historical figures are integrated into the narrative when Long John Silver claims

to have sailed with both Edward England and Bartholomew Roberts. The latter is even

dropped into an anecdote Silver relates to Jim Hawkins, the young protagonist:

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[32] Emma Letley, 'Introduction' in Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island*, ed. Emma Letley (1883; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) pp. vii-xxiii (p. vii).

[33] Deane, 'Imperial Boyhood', 689-694, (694).

[34] Watson, *The Coasts of Treasure Island*, p. 150. While pirates attacked ships registered in any country for their own gain, buccaneers had more complex motivations. Watson observes that the buccaneers 'were a group of French, and later English, free-booters who took advantage of the stupid Spanish policy of monopoly to sell to the Spanish colonies what the settlers must have but could not get legally. These free-traders gradually developed into the freebooters who preyed on the Spanish – and only the Spanish – possessions and commerce whether the home counties were at war or not [....] but they occasionally rose to rather noble heights of chivalry and loyalty.' (p. 19)

> Flint was cap'n; I was quartermaster, along of my timber leg. The same broadside I lost my leg, old Pew lost his deadlights [eyes]. It was a master surgeon, him that ampytated me [...] That was Roberts's men.[35]

As a bold and successful pirate, the name of Roberts is loaded with historical associations and the text recreates a similar status for Flint. This anecdote also reveals another significant characteristic of pirate fiction in the casual presentation of Silver and Pew's horrific maiming. Understated description of extreme events is a common feature of the maritime fiction tradition, and its use here downplays the reality of the men's wounds and makes it is possible for *Treasure Island* to be classified as a children's book.

Stevenson's text exploits the appeal of the pirate story by presenting the vicarious thrill of misdeeds committed by larger-than-life, and thus less credible, villains whose notoriety gains in stature over time. Twentieth-century pirate fiction builds on the success of Stevenson's text, imitating its integration of fictional and factual pirates and drawing on historical knowledge of piracy. These features are particularly evident in the pirate short stories of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, published just fourteen years after *Treasure Island*. Doyle was a friend of Robert Louis Stevenson, and Robert Fraser and Daniel Stashower have noted the similarities between the fictions of the two authors.[36] Like Stevenson, Doyle drew on historical sources; for example, he named his pirate protagonist's ship *Happy Delivery* after a pirate ship sailed by Captain George Lowther.[37] However, Doyle moves away from the romanticised tradition of pirate fiction in creating a repellent pirate figure, which stands in

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[35] Stevenson, *Treasure Island*, p. 82.

[36] Robert Fraser, *Victorian Quest Romance: Stevenson, Haggard, Kipling and Conan Doyle* (Plymouth: Northcote House Publishers, 1998). Robert Fraser's examination of Stevenson and Doyle, in addition to Kipling and Haggard, traces the growth of the adventure story, of which the pirate tradition forms a part: 'beginning in the sixteenth century, the novel itself slowly evolved out of the medieval romance' (p. 6).
Daniel Stashower, *Teller of Tales: the Life of Arthur Conan Doyle* (London: Penguin, 2000), p. 64. Writing of Doyle's maritime short story 'J. Habakuk Jephson's Statement', Stashower notes that 'the story appeared anonymously, as did all contributions to *Cornhill*, with the result that hundreds of readers wrote in to identify Robert Louis Stevenson as the author. Doyle found the comparison flattering, but the confusion suggests the degree to which his immature work derived from other writers' (p. 64).

[37] Lowther did not achieve the notoriety of some pirates, but he was distinguished by the fact that he sailed in company with Captain Edward Low, infamous for the sadistic and murderous treatment of his prisoners. Defoe, 'Of Captain George Lowther and his Crew' in *General History of the Pyrates*, pp. 304-316, (p. 312).

contrast to the more charismatic character of Long John Silver in Stevenson's novel. But, even as the stories of Doyle present different visions of pirates and piracy, elements of the romanticism appear, as this chapter reveals. After Doyle, the texts of F. Tennyson Jesse and Richard Hughes tend to fall back on traditional romanticised motifs. For example, Jesse bases her protagonist on an established historical pirate figure, using the life of Mary Read as a template for her novel. Hughes fictionalises a little-known anecdote by a victim of piracy and, rather than focusing on the pirates in a straightforward adventure narrative, instead emphasises the consequences of a pirate raid and their far-reaching effects. Just as Conrad's maritime novels had a major influence on maritime fiction as it developed in the twentieth century, *Treasure Island* is perhaps the starting point for reinterpretation of pirate myths as writers looked back to the past and the world of sail.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and the Tales of Captain Sharkey

Although much of Doyle's short fiction, and indeed his historical novels, have been overshadowed by the Sherlock Holmes mysteries, which began with *A Study in Scarlet* (1887), he published a number of maritime short stories, including six pirate tales.[38] Writing maritime fiction had an important impact on his early career, as Doyle himself acknowledged as early as 1884:

> What gave me great pleasure and for the first time made me realise that I was ceasing to be a hack writer and getting into good company was when James Payne accepted my short story 'J. Habakuk Jephson's Statement' for Cornhill [*sic*].[39]

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[38] The first twelve of these maritime stories were collected in an edition: *The Captain of the Polestar and other Stories* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1890). Further details of all Doyle's writings can be found in Richard Lancelyn Green and John Michael Gibson, 'Chronological List of Fiction with First serial Publication' in *A Bibliography of Arthur Conan Doyle* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 404-414.

[39] Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *Memories and Adventures: An Autobiography* (1924; Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2007), p. 61. 'J. Habakuk Jephson's Statement' purports to be the retrospective narration of a doctor who had been a passenger on the famously abandoned vessel, 'Marie Celeste', sailing from the US to Portugal. The narrator recounts an uncanny voyage in which passengers begin to disappear. One night Jephson is captured and bound by Septimius Goring, another of the passengers, assisted by two black crewmembers, but Jephson's life is spared because he possesses a black amulet shaped like an ear. Goring has managed to tamper with the navigational instruments and lead the ship to the African coast and the 'Marie Celeste' is boarded by local tribespeople. While his shipmates are thrown into the sea, Jephson is taken ashore and led to a temple where his

Doyle's maritime stories are often overlooked, but his input in pirate fiction is significant because four of these tales revolved around a central character, pirate Captain Sharkey. The first three stories were initially published as a series in *Pearson's Magazine*, beginning with 'Captain Sharkey: How the Governor of Saint Kitt's Came Home' in January 1897.[40] This was followed by 'The Dealings of Captain Sharkey with Stephen Craddock' in March and 'How Copley Banks Slew Captain Sharkey' in May 1897, in which the pirate captain is killed. However, Doyle later wrote a fourth story, 'The Blighting of Sharkey', which was published in *Pearson's Magazine* in April 1911.[41] The collected book editions create a logical sequence by placing 'How Copley Banks Slew Captain Sharkey' as the last of the four tales.[42] Martin Priestman suggests that the success of Doyle's short stories, particularly his Sherlock Holmes adventures, was due in part to the fact that they formed a series of works that could also stand alone, rather than a serial made up of inter-linking instalments.[43] Each of the stories stood on its own merits and, if readers liked the style of tale and its protagonist, they would be encouraged to buy future copies of the magazine, in the hope of reading more. Doyle also wrote two stand-alone sea stories which featured elements of piracy: 'The Slapping Sal' (1893)[44] and 'One Crowded Hour: A Pirate of the Land' (1911), but his linked

ear-shaped stone is restored to the head of a sacred statue inside. Jephson escapes by sea in a small boat and is eventually rescued by a passing boat and eventually returns to the US.

[40] Green and Gibson, *Bibliography of Arthur Conan Doyle*, p. 119.

[41] Green and Gibson, *Bibliography of Arthur Conan Doyle*, p. 159.

[42] Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 'Tales of Pirates' in *The Conan Doyle Stories* (London: John Murray, 1929), pp. 239-318.

[43] Martin Priestman, 'Sherlock Holmes: The Series' in *Sherlock Holmes: The Major Stories with Contemporary Critical Essays* (Boston & New York: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1994), pp. 313-320.

[44] Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The "Slapping Sal"' in *The Conan Doyle Stories* (London: John Murray, 1929), pp. 293-303. Although 'The "Slapping Sal"' is included in the 'Tales of Pirates', the focus in the story is on the *Leda*, a Royal Navy frigate. The *Leda*, in company with the *Dido*, are in pursuit of French warship the *Gloire* and pirate ship the *Slapping Sal*. However, when the *Leda* encounters the *Gloire* the French inflict great damage on the British and are standing by to board until, inexplicably, the *Gloire* flees. The Captain then observes the wreck of the *Slapping Sal* nearby and concludes that the British pirate engaged with the *Gloire*, which saved them just before the *Dido* arrived.

tales of Captain Sharkey are more pertinent here as they can be read as episodes in a pirate adventure story.[45]

The inspiration behind Doyle's pirate narratives is evident in the guided tour of his bookcase in which he presents books by his favourite authors, *Through the Magic Door* (1907).[46] Doyle devotes a whole chapter of this volume to the travel and maritime genres, discussing among others Conrad's *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*.[47] In the same chapter Doyle also reveals his interest in non-fiction maritime accounts, expressing his admiration for the explorer Captain Scott and the account of his travels as documented in *The Voyage of the 'Discovery'* (1905). Doyle's empathy with Scott possibly stems from his own sailing experience in the capacity of ship's surgeon during a seven-month voyage on a whaler in the Arctic in 1890-91 and a three-month voyage to the West Coast of Africa in 1891.[48] Daniel Stashower cites this episode as an influence on Doyle's writing:

> Like his contemporaries Jack London and Joseph Conrad, Conan Doyle would draw on his sailing adventures for the rest of his life, notably in a series of tales chronicling the adventures of a brutal pirate named Captain Sharkey.[49]

The majority of maritime fiction authors have a significant amount of sailing experience, suggesting that first-hand knowledge is needed in order to write with authority on sailing and is vital to the credibility of the text.

Doyle supplemented his experience with research into the maritime fiction genre, and *Through the Magic Door* shows his enthusiasm for pirate fiction, including Sir Walter Scott's

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[45] Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 'A Pirate of the Land' in *The Conan Doyle Stories* (London: John Murray, 1929), pp. 303-318. This story has only a symbolic connection with piracy as it describes the adventures of a highwayman who drives a Rolls Royce. The twist of the story is that one of the victims recognises the attacker as a local magistrate and confronts him the following day. The magistrate confesses that he disguised himself as a 'pirate of the land' for one night in order to revenge himself on a man who had swindled him.

[46] Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *Through the Magic Door* (1907; Doylestown, Pennsylvania, USA: Wildside Press, 2004), p. 143.

[47] Doyle, *Through the Magic Door*, p. 138.

[48] Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 'Whaling in the Arctic Ocean' and 'A Voyage to West Africa' in *Memories and Adventures*, pp. 27-38, (pp. 39-47).

[49] Daniel Stashower, *Teller of Tales*, p. 41. Stashower notes that: 'The experience also gave Conan Doyle a surprising appreciation for the writing of Herman Melville, whose work was largely unnoticed at the time. He also immersed himself in the tale of William Clark Russell, whose "fine sea stories" would one day find their way into the hands of Dr. Watson' (pp. 41-42).

The Pirate and Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. Scott drew on the notoriety of real-life pirates by naming one of his pirate captains Goffe, an alias used by real pirate Captain Smith (also known as Gow).[50] Likewise, Doyle made use of historical pirates and sea yarns in his tales, perhaps recognising the seemingly limited literary possibilities afforded by the rapidly industrialising maritime industry of the late nineteenth century. Doyle also acknowledges the long shadow cast by Stevenson's writing. Discussing the representation of Long John Silver, Doyle observes that 'Scott's buccaneers in *The Pirate* are admirable, but they lack something human which we find [in *Treasure Island*]. It will be long before John Silver loses his place in sea fiction'.[51] But, while Stevenson's text is focused on the search for treasure, reflected in the naming of the pirate captain as Silver, Doyle's pirate fiction concentrates on the violence of piracy. It is telling that Doyle's pirate captain is named Sharkey, because the shark was seen to be ominous by sailors, who believed that its presence foretold death.

In speaking of 'Scott's buccaneers', it seems strange that Doyle should confuse the terms 'pirates' and 'buccaneers', because in his short stories he is careful to avoid Stevenson's careless conflation of the two. In the interest of historical accuracy, three of the four 'Captain Sharkey' stories begin with an omniscient third-person narrator establishing the historical context of piracy in the Caribbean. Doyle's first tale, 'Captain Sharkey: How the Governor of Saint Kitt's Came Home', opens with a carefully-worded contextualisation:

> When the great wars of the Spanish Succession had been brought to an end by the Treaty of Utrecht, the vast number of privateers which had been fitted out by the contending parties found their occupation gone. Some took to the more peaceful but less lucrative ways of ordinary commerce, others were absorbed into fishing-fleets, and a few of the more reckless hoisted the Jolly Roger at the mizzen and the bloody flag at the main, declaring a private war upon their own account against the whole human race.
> With mixed crews, recruited from every nation, they scoured the seas.[52]

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[50] Defoe, 'Of Captain John Smith and his Crew' in *General History*, pp. 358-369.
[51] Doyle, *Through the Magic Door*, p. 155.
[52] Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 'Captain Sharkey: How the Governor of Saint Kitt's Came Home**'** in *The Conan Doyle Stories* (1897; London: John Murray, 1929), pp. 239-52, (p. 239). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

Doyle represents the different European governments, grouped together as 'contending parties', as being responsible for providing work for the dependent privateers, as if privateering could be placed in a civil context of labour and employment. When some of these sailors choose to become pirates and take on multi-national crews, they are seen to be disassociating themselves from their country. This potted history of piracy, then, does more than set the scene for the general reader: it also reflects late nineteenth-century anxieties about class and nationalism. Although Doyle's stories have their roots in maritime tradition, by emphasising how pirate ships operate under their own set of laws, as if they were floating 'rogue states', they offer a new perspective on pirate mythology, representing piracy as an anarchic force that threatens both the Old World and the New.

'Captain Sharkey: How the Governor of Saint Kitt's Came Home'

In setting his maritime short stories in the early to mid eighteenth century, Doyle was looking back to the 'Golden Age' of piracy. As in the myths of pirates such as Blackbeard and Roberts, the fictional Sharkey's reputation is shown to precede him and is established from the beginning of 'Captain Sharkey: How the Governor of Saint Kitt's Came Home' through the eyes of a legitimate sea-farer, Captain John Scarrow. Scarrow's ship, the *Morning Star,* is sailing to Jamaica and the reader is told how Scarrow has been 'assailed continually by stories of [Sharkey's] villainy and outrage' (p. 240). When he arrives in harbour, Scarrow is told by a shipping agent that Sharkey, a wanted man, has been captured and imprisoned. Although the reader is not told the details about Sharkey's detention, the shipping agent tells Scarrow that it was made possible due to the actions of Sharkey's crew: "[Sharkey] became more than his own comrades could abide, and they took such a horror of him that they would not have him on the ship. So [his crew] marooned him" (p. 242). Repulsed by Sharkey's excessively ruthless command, the crew has overturned his authority, ousting him from his

captaincy and his ship. Sharkey's notoriety resembles that of real-life pirate Captain Low, whose reputation was so fearsome that he was said to have 'possess'd the Minds of all People, that he became a Terror, even to his own Men'.[53] Low was also ousted from his captaincy, and this action suggests that Sharkey's transgressions have breached unwritten codes of behaviour to the extent that the crew feel compelled to maroon him.[54] Parallels between the fictional Sharkey and historical pirate Low recur throughout Doyle's pirate stories.

In focusing on Sharkey, Doyle's short stories expose the different influences of historical fact and maritime fiction on the development the pirate figure. For example, while a fearsome reputation is established for Captain Sharkey, this first tale subsequently reveals that although much is known *about* Sharkey, it becomes clear that few people know the man himself. The gap between the pirate and his mythical reputation is apparent in Sharkey's ability to disguise his identity. On Captain Scarrow's arrival in Jamaica, the agent informs him that Sir Charles Ewan, the Governor of St. Kitts, has requested to board the *Morning Star* as a passenger for their return journey to London. But it is later revealed that Sharkey has escaped from prison and has murdered Sir Charles, disguising himself as the Governor and taking his place on the *Morning Star*. No-one on board detects this subterfuge, suggesting that, although the myths surrounding Sharkey are notorious, little is actually known about the man himself.

At the end of the voyage, the Captain and the mate have dinner with 'the Governor', alias Sharkey, and his companion Hiram Evanson, alias Ned Galloway, who is Sharkey's old quartermaster. Sharkey dramatically reveals his identity and his escape from the prison on St. Kitt's:

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[53] Defoe, 'Of Captain Low' in *General History of the Pyrates*, pp. 318-336, (p. 329).

[54] Although there is no mention of marooning in the full account of Low's life, it is revealed in the editor's notes that Low's ship, the *Diamond*, was destroyed in 1924 and this was followed by 'the marooning of Low by another pirate crew on the island of Honduras'. Manuel Schonhorn, 'Commentary and Notes' in *General History of the Pyrates*, p. 679.

> When I broke prison I learnt from my friends – for Captain Sharkey has those who love him in every port – that the Governor was starting for Europe under a master who had never seen him. (p. 250)

Sharkey has received assistance from Ned Galloway and anonymous 'friends', and this seems to be in stark contrast to the hated and isolated figure marooned by his crew. In terms of fact and fiction, the events of Sharkey's prison escape and disguise appear to be inventions; certainly, there are no similar events in the accounts of Lowther or Low, on whom Sharkey is closely modelled. Sharkey's confrontation with Captain Scarrow on the *Morning Star* culminates in Sharkey killing the mate, tying Scarrow to the table and locking him in the cabin before escaping, with Galloway, in a long-boat. When Captain Scarrow finally breaks free, he sees Sharkey and Galloway seize a fisherman's vessel and set off back across the Atlantic. In showing Sharkey's escape, the open-ended narrative suggests the possibilities of further adventure, and so fulfils the demands of series publication. The significance of this tale is in Sharkey's murder of the Governor of St. Kitts and the assumption of his identity. These acts suggest the insidious menace of the pirate who is able to cross the boundaries of land and sea, to infiltrate society, to pass as a member of that society, and become a threat to those in authority.

'The Dealings of Captain Sharkey with Stephen Craddock'

Doyle's second Sharkey tale, 'The Dealings of Captain Sharkey with Stephen Craddock' (1897), continues the tradition of mixing fact and fiction by alluding to real-life pirates. Doyle's sailing experience is evident in the use of maritime discourse; for example, 'careening' is explained as a process to ensure ships can maintain speed through the regular cleaning of 'the vessel's bottom from the long, trailing plants and crusting barnacles which

gather so rapidly in the tropical seas'.[55] It was particularly important for pirate ships to have

a smooth hull, because they relied on speed to pursue victims and to outrun warships.

Addressing the general reader, the narrator spells out the implications of hauling the ship onto

dry land, which are that 'during the weeks that were thus occupied the ship was, of course,

defenceless' (p. 253). This is a clear reference to Captain Lowther, another real pirate who is

used as a source for Sharkey because, despite the widespread and necessary practice of

careening, Lowther's pirate ship was one of the few to be discovered hauled onto land for

cleaning.[56]

One of Doyle's innovations in the pirate fiction tradition was his exploration of the

possibilities of pirate identity as a dramatic device, achieved in the first tale through

Sharkey's disguise and exposure. But in 'The Dealings' the notions of disguise and identity

are transferred to the ship. While Sharkey's usual vessel, the *Happy Delivery*, is being

careened in Hispaniola, he goes hunting on the nearby island of La Vache. Meanwhile, news

of the pirate's vulnerable position leaks out and Craddock, himself a reformed pirate,

responds to the Governor of Jamaica's offer of a reward for Sharkey's capture. Craddock

proposes capturing Sharkey by borrowing the *White Rose*, sister ship to Sharkey's *Happy

Delivery*, and almost identical in appearance. Craddock sails to La Vache, leaving the *White

Rose* at anchor, hoping he will be able to trick Sharkey into boarding, mistaking it for his own

ship. When Sharkey fails to appear after two nights, Craddock takes 'a small party armed to

the teeth' (p. 259) to search the island. Although they see evidence of Sharkey and his men,

they fail to trace him. Craddock returns to the anchorage, but himself mistakenly boards the

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[55] Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Dealings of Captain Sharkey with Stephen Craddock' in *The Conan Doyle Stories* (1897; London: John Murray, 1929), pp. 252–267, (p. 253). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

[56] Defoe, 'Of Captain George Lowther and his Crew' in *General History of the Pyrates*, pp. 304-316. 'It was now thought necessary to look out for a Place to clean their Sloop in, and prepare for new Adventures: Accordingly the Island of Blanco [Blanquilla] was pitched upon for that Purpose' (p. 315). During careening the pirate vessel was discovered by a merchant vessel called the *Eagle*, which 'took the Advantage of attacking her' (p. 316), forcing Lowther and his crew to escape onto the island.

Happy Delivery, discovering too late that Sharkey has turned his own trick back on him. Subsequently, Craddock learns that Sharkey has sunk the *White Rose* and is devising a plan to sail back to Jamaica and stage a daring attack. In order to get close to the island, Sharkey decides to imitate the triumphant return Craddock would have made had he captured the infamous pirate. At the final moment, however, Craddock manages to break free of his manacles, jump overboard, and shout a warning across the bay before the guns of the *Happy Delivery* are in range. His cover blown, Sharkey turns his vessel and sails away. Significantly, this tale echoes Lowther's history as he too was hunted by a former pirate. Captain Massey, the first of Lowther's partners, repented the acts of piracy he had committed with Lowther and received a pardon from the Governor of Jamaica. Massey tried, but failed, to track down Lowther near Hispaniola.[57] In fictionalising the events in Lowther's life, Doyle breaks away from Stevenson's looser interpretations of pirate myth and makes more firm the connections between fact and fiction.

'The Blighting of Sharkey'

This tale, published in *Pearson's Magazine* sixteen years after the other stories in 1911, goes further in rejecting the romanticised stereotype of the bold and charismatic pirate, presenting Sharkey as a particularly repulsive individual who becomes tainted by disease.[58] However, time is compressed in the story, which begins: 'Sharkey, the abominable Sharkey, was out again. After two years of the Coromandel coast, his black barque of death, the *Happy Delivery*, was prowling off the Spanish Main' (p. 267). On board the pirate ship, Sharkey's barbaric behaviour has stirred up mutinous feeling amongst the crew, and he is challenged by Sweetlocks, the master, acting as their representative. Suddenly, internal hostilities are set

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[57] Defoe, 'Of Captain George Lowther and his Crew' in *General History of the Pyrates*, pp. 304-316.
[58] 'The Blighting of Sharkey' is presented as the third tale in collected editions, which is the logical sequence to recreate here because 'How Copley Banks Slew Captain Sharkey' (1897), the tale that denoted the end of the original three-story series, features the death of the protagonist. Green and Gibson, *Arthur Conan Doyle*, p. 409, p. 412.

aside when a merchant ship comes into view. The pirates swiftly board the vessel, taking all

the money on the ship and drowning everyone, except for a young female prisoner, Inez

Ramirez. Later that evening, Sharkey summons the woman to his cabin, where he is

celebrating the successful raid with the ship's surgeon and the quartermaster. Sharkey takes

Inez onto his lap, and is surprised at her lack of resistance, until the surgeon points out that

she is suffering from leprosy and is attempting to infect Sharkey.[59] The next day Sharkey is

confronted by his crew and cast overboard in a small boat with the young woman. 'The

Blighting' traces the physical degeneration of Sharkey and, the story suggests, this is

mirrored in Sharkey's moral degeneration, transgressing even the codes of pirates so that his

crew cast him out.

The opening paragraphs of 'The Blighting' locate Sharkey's piracy within a wider

political and historical context, cataloguing the different types of pirates operating in distinct

periods: the privateer from the Elizabethan era, the buccaneer from the seventeenth century

and the pirate from the eighteenth century:

> First it was the gentleman adventurer, the man of family and honour, who fought as a patriot, though he was ready to take his payment in Spanish plunder.
> Then, within a century, his debonair figure had passed to make room for the buccaneers, robbers pure and simple, yet with some organized [*sic*] code of their own, commanded by notable chieftains, and taking in hand great concerted enterprises.
> They, too, passed with their fleets and their sacking of cities, to make room for the worst of all, the lonely, outcast pirate, the bloody Ishmael of the seas, at war with the whole human race. This was the vile brood which the early eighteenth century had spawned forth, and of them all there was none who could compare in audacity, wickedness, and evil repute with the unutterable Sharkey.[60]

This creates a narrative of degeneration in the pirate figure, culminating in the villainous

Sharkey. Disturbingly, the language here almost mitigates the criminal acts perpetrated by

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[59] The idea of rapid infection is exaggerated because leprosy is described as having 'an incubation period of 1–30 years'. Anon, 'leprosy', *Concise Medical Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 2010). *Oxford Reference* 2010. Available at http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199557141.001.0001/acref-9780199557141-e-5556 [Accessed 26 January 2015]

[60] Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Blighting of Sharkey' in *The Conan Doyle Stories* (London: John Murray, 1929), pp. 267-280, pp. 267-268. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

privateers, who are motivated by zealous nationalism, and buccaneers, driven by feudal concepts of class.[61] The distinction between these 'types' can be broadly defined thus: privateers operated as 'private ships of war' acting like an extended navy under the direction of their respective governments; buccaneers were more independent, carrying 'letters of marque' from different European governments (often English or French), and getting new commissions when necessary to justify attacks on the Spanish. Only the pirate is presented as illegitimate, demonised, a figure with no political connections and who attacked any vessel for profit. Significantly, the pirate is compared to Ishmael, sole survivor from the *Pequod* in Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* (1851).[62] Ishmael was a whaler, not a pirate, but this comparison shows how the sailor and the pirate are both subjected to the isolation that can afflict men at sea. Describing the pirate as being 'at war with the human race' also places him in a historical tradition; in *General History of the Pyrates* the beginning of Low's career is described in similar terms: 'The next Day [Low and twelve companions] took a small Vessel, and go in her, make a black Flag, and declared War against all the World'.[63] At this point, Doyle is again relying on historical fact in his fiction.

Indeed, Doyle is emphatic about establishing historical context, separating privateers and buccaneers, and any accompanying myths, from lawless and ruthless pirates, but there is a tension between such anti-romanticism and Doyle's allusions to historical pirate figures, particularly Blackbeard and Roberts. For example, the description of quartermaster Ned Galloway in this tale evokes the infamous Blackbeard: 'Bearded to the temples, with fierce blue eyes, a tangled lion's mane of coarse, dark hair, and huge gold rings in his ears' (p.

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[61] The privateer is presented as an individual in a high social class, supported by systems of family and government. In contrast to the privateers, the buccaneers are presented as a group outside of the class system whose quasi-legitimate 'sacking of cities' is reminiscent of Henry Morgan. They are described in archaic tribal terms as 'noble chieftains', redeemed by the scale and organisation of their ambition, but separated in time from early twentieth-century civilised society. For further information on Henry Morgan see John Esquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America* (1684; London: Swan Sonnerschein, 1893), pp. 120–238.

[62] Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (1851; London: Penguin, 1994).

[63] Defoe, 'Of Captain Low' in *General History of the Pyrates*, pp. 318-329, (p. 319).

269).[64] Galloway's costume, however, is represented to be similar to that of pirate Bartholomew Roberts: 'A red cap, a blue silken shirt, brown velvet breeches with gaudy knee-ribbons and high sea-boots made up the costume of the rover Hercules' (p. 269).[65] Galloway is a strange and contradictory figure: his wild-looking head seems ill-matched with his elaborate clothing and the comparison to the classical demigod Hercules. Galloway comes across as an incongruous amalgamation of two very different pirates; Blackbeard was a violent despot, while Roberts, a smartly-dressed tee-totaller, was known for the strict laws on his ship that prevented gambling and restricted drinking.

In the tales of 1897, Sharkey's costume is similar to that of Galloway. For example, Sharkey wears elaborate clothes in 'How Copley Banks Slew Captain Sharkey', and is described as being 'in his shirt-sleeves, with his cambric frills breaking through his open red satin long-flapped vest. [....] A many-coloured band of silk passed across his body'.[66] Sixteen years later, in 'The Blighting of Sharkey' (1911), two years have passed in fictional terms and Sharkey's costume is radically different, described as being of 'sober drab material' (p. 269). Physically, Sharkey is:

> part bald, with a few lank locks of tow-like hair, and a steep narrow forehead. His thin nose jutted sharply forth, and near-set on either side of it were those filmy blue eyes, red-rimmed like those of a bull terrier. (p. 269)

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[64] His beard was such a prominent feature that Captain Edward Teach is commonly known as Blackbeard, and therefore Doyle's comparison is unlikely to be accidental. Defoe notes that the pirate's 'Beard was black, which he suffered to grow of extravagant Length; as to Breadth, it came up to his Eyes'. Defoe, *General History of the Pyrates*, p. 84.

[65] There are striking similarities between Doyle's description of Galloway's costume and the clothes of Benjamin Roberts, blurring the divide between drawing on historical details and plagiarism. Roberts is described as 'a gallant Figure, […], being dressed in a rich crimson Damask Wastcoat and Breeches, a red Feather in his Hat, a Gold Chain round his Neck, with a Diamond Cross hanging to it'. Defoe, 'Of Captain Roberts' in *General History*, pp.194-287, (p. 243). His personality is summarised as being 'of good natural Parts, and personal Bravery, tho' he applied them to such wicked Purposes' (p. 244). Furthermore, his reasons for becoming a pirate lay some criticism at the appalling conditions suffered by naval and merchant seamen: '*In an honest service,* says he, *there is thin Commons, low Wages, and hard Labour; in this, Plenty and Satiety, Pleasure and Ease, Liberty and Power; and who could not balance Creditor on this* Side' (p. 244).

[66] Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 'How Copley Banks Slew Sharkey' in *The Conan Doyle Stories* (London: John Murray, 1929), pp. 280-293, (p. 287). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

Although Sharkey retains his 'red-rimmed eyes', he has here been rendered older than the passage of two years would suggest. Sharkey's appearance is now that of an older and weaker man, who is even more physically repulsive. This change in Sharkey's appearance creates an inconsistency in the Sharkey series, particularly when the stories are taken out of the order of their publication in *Pearson's Magazine,* and 'How Copley Banks Slew Captain Sharkey' is positioned as the final instalment in collected book editions. The portrayal of Sharkey as a hideous figure further disassociates the pirate from the myths of the charismatic anti-hero.

In 'The Blighting', Sharkey and Inez, the leprous female prisoner, are cast overboard and no more is heard of them. Instead, the conclusion is revealed through documentary-style evidence interspersed into the narrative. This takes the form of extracts, supposedly from the log of a naval war-ship, which recount how sailors, when they are sent ashore at Hispaniola for provisions, find evidence of the pair:

> at the edge of the forest was found the skeleton of a woman, clad in European dress [...] Her head had been crushed by a great stone which lay beside her. Hard by was a grass hut, and signs that a man had dwelt therein for some time. (p. 280)[67]

The reader is led to assume that Sharkey has escaped. Reiterating the blending of fact and fiction throughout the pirate tradition, the reference to ship's logs is designed to convey a sense of credibility because logs represent the factual summary of events recorded by trusted officers.[68] Presenting evidence in this way alerts the reader to the process of decoding maritime fiction, defined by Margaret Cohen as the method in which 'the skills of mariner and reader meet in the organization of partial information by the pragmatic imagination to

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[67] Sharkey's marooning draws parallels with that of Lowther who, after being caught careening at Blanco by Captain Moore of the *Eagle*, was forced to escape onto the island of Hispaniola. Lowther's crew were eventually caught and tried, but Lowther escaped justice by committing suicide: 'As for Captain *Lowther*, it is said, that he afterwards shot himself upon that fatal Island, where his Pyracies ended, being found, by some Sloop's Men, dead, and a Pistol burst by his Side'. Defoe, 'Of Captain Lowther' in *General History of the Pyrates*, pp. 304-317, (p. 317).

[68] Cohen describes the writing in log books as 'plain style', designed to be efficient and economic, but their adoption in longer narratives, such as Dampier's *A New Voyage*, resulted in 'dense paragraphs held together by chronology, teeming with disparate kinds of information'. Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea*, pp. 42-45.

come up with a best guess about outcome'.[69] In terms of the Sharkey series, this is an open

ending that allowed for Sharkey's return, although no further stories were published after

1911. The narrative's conclusion not only emphasises the isolation of the pirate figure, but it

also evokes the tradition of the Robinsonade, a literary subgenre of works inspired by

Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* that imagine the creation of a new society following a shipwreck.

Although it remains unclear whether Sharkey is still alive, the hut indicates or appears to

indicate the success of Sharkey's human intervention on the desert island, and leaves an open

ending for the pirate serial.

'How Copley Banks Slew Captain Sharkey'

This story marks the final instalment of the Sharkey series in the collected book editions with

the death of the central character. Again, the influence of pirate history can be traced in

comparisons between Sharkey and his pirate associate, Copley Banks, mimicking the

association of real-life pirate Captain Lowther with Captain Massey.[70] The fictional element

takes the form of a revenge narrative in which, unknown to Sharkey, the wife and sons of

Copley Banks had been killed during one of Sharkey's pirate raids some years before and

Banks has become a pirate in order to get close to Sharkey so that he can avenge them. Banks

represents a very different type of pirate; when he recruits a crew, he proposes that they all

sign up to a distinct set of laws:

> All should share and share alike, save only the captain, quartermaster, boatswain,
> carpenter, and master-gunner, who had from a quarter to a whole share extra. He who
> saw a prize first should have the best weapon taken out of her. He who boarded her
> first should have the richest suit of clothes aboard of her. Every man might treat his

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[69] Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea*, p. 81. Although Cohen makes no mention of the Sharkey tales in her text, she does refer to Doyle's writing when she suggests that adventure fiction offers entry into 'specialized bodies of knowledge [and] problem-solving protagonists' (p. 86). Using Doyle's Sherlock Holmes mysteries as a case in point, Cohen argues that 'Conan Doyle challenges the reader to adventures in problem-solving drawing on chemistry, botany, biology, physiognomy, the history of technology, and ethnography, among other areas of expertise' (p. 86).

[70] Captain Lowther initially sailed in company with Captain Massey (until he renounced piracy), and later he invited Low into partnership**.** Defoe, 'Of Captain Lowther' in *General History of the Pyrates*, pp. 304-317, (p. 306).

> own prisoner, be it man or woman, after his own fashion. If a man flinched from his gun, the quartermaster should pistol him. These were some of the rules which the crew of the *Ruffling Harry* subscribed by putting forty-two crosses at the foot of the paper upon which they had been drawn. (p. 286)

The 'bonuses' in Banks's contract inject some form of capitalist incentive for those who identify opportunities for profit, but by threatening to kill any man who hesitates during battle, the contract also legitimises violence. Banks's written agreement, and the allocation of 'company' shares according to rank and position, has more in common with that of a traditional ship and stands in contrast to Sharkey's autocratic regime. Furthermore, there is evidence that such contracts were used by pirates in reality and Banks's rules are strikingly similar to the laws devised by Captain Lowther.[71] The representation of pirate laws in this tale complicates the myth of the anarchic pirate figure, operating outside the rules of society, by setting him within a whole new set of codes. Again, there is an insistence on inserting these factual details into the narrative to establish verisimilitude and legitimise the sensational nature of the subject.

There are difficulties, however, with combining fact and fiction here. Banks is a troubling figure because, although he is described as gaining a fearsome reputation, the details of how this has been achieved are not explained. Similarly, Banks is described as earning Sharkey's trust over a two-year period, but without explanation or detail. In other words, the details of piracy are glossed over and the narrative moves quickly to the key event: Sharkey is invited, with his three officers, to dine on board Banks's ship, the *Ruffling Harry*. Banks entertains Sharkey and his men in his cabin and plies them all with drink until only Banks and Sharkey remain conscious. At this point, Banks reveals his identity by telling Sharkey about his murdered family. Before Sharkey has time to react, Banks's steward binds him with a rope and, with Banks, the steward scatters gun-powder all around the cabin. Finally, they set a timed fuse and flee the imminent destruction of the *Ruffling Harry* by

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[71] Defoe, 'Of Captain Lowther' in *General History*, pp. 304-317, (pp. 307-308).

sailing away in a small boat. Banks's entire pirate crew, plus Sharkey and his three officers, are blown up on the ship, and this is presented as a form of justice that operates outside the law courts. When Banks witnesses the destruction of the *Ruffling Harry*, he feels 'his heart singing within him' (p. 293). However, Banks has done more than kill Sharkey, the man directly responsible for the murder of his wife and sons, because by blowing up his own ship Banks has also murdered his crew, men he recruited and led in acts of piracy. Putting this in historical context, Banks's 'execution' of the pirate crew stands in contrast to the criminal trials of real pirates, where a surprising number were spared the death sentence. For example, 74 of the 148 of Bartholomew Roberts's men brought to trial were acquitted.[72]

Comparing the bloodshed in 'Copley Banks' to the violence and murder in a text such as *Treasure Island*, Doyle's narrative represents an act of murderous vigilantism on a far larger scale, and in a more disturbing context.[73] The fictional death of one of his fictional creations was nothing new; Doyle had killed Sherlock Holmes in a dramatic fight scene with Moriarty at Reichenbach Falls in 'The Final Problem' (1893),[74] but later revived him in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902).[75] However, unlike in the case of Sherlock Holmes, there was no public demand for the revival of Sharkey, and that the three pirate stories of 1897 were followed only by a single tale in 1911 suggests a declining interest in pirate fiction until the texts of Jesse and Hughes in the 1920s. In the genre, Doyle's pirate stories are significant because they portray a pirate whose authority can be overturned by his crew, who can be

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[72] Defoe, 'Of Captain Roberts' in *General History*, pp.194- 287, (p. 285).

[73] As Peck attests, the particularly disturbing nature of the murders in *Treasure Island* can be attributed to the detached way in which they are described by Jim Hawkins, the young narrator, because they create in him 'a kind of voyeur to acts of violence'. Peck, *Maritime Fiction*, p. 154.

[74] The public outcry about the death of such a popular fictional hero stands in contrast to the author's apathy: 'For Conan Doyle, however, the destruction of his famous characters was a matter of indifference. 'Killed Holmes', he scribbled laconically in his notebook'. Jon Lellenberg, Daniel Stashower and Charles Foley, *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: A Life in Letters* (London: Harper Collins, 2007), p. 324.

[75] Andrew Lycett recounts Doyle's plans to resurrect Holmes, as presented in the press: 'As recently as December [1900] Arthur had declared in the hundredth issue of the Strand's downmarket sister paper *Tit-Bits* that, although he had never regretted killing Holmes, he had not closed the door on his revival [....] So it was no surprise when, on 25 May 1901, *Tit-Bits* ran an exclusive story reporting the imminent return of Sherlock Holmes'. Andrew Lycett, *Conan Doyle: The Man Who Created Sherlock Holmes* (London: Weidenfelt & Nicolson, 2007), p. 266.

marooned, duped by outside agents, and even infected by disease. In the representation of Sharkey the pirate became a hated and isolated figure, rather than a bold and daring leader of men, as typified by the earlier pirate fiction of Defoe, Marryat and Stevenson. For eighteenth-century seafarers, terrorised by the likes of Low and Blackbeard, such a portrayal certainly seems to be more in keeping with reality, but it also paved the way for further challenges to perceived stereotypes in the genre by Jesse and Hughes.

Pirates and Petticoats in F. Tennyson Jesse's *Moonraker*

The world of the pirate, like the world of the merchant seaman, is almost exclusively male, written by men, about men, for men (and boys). Women rarely appear in maritime fiction generally and, when they do come on board ship, they are often disastrously unsettling: Flora de Barral disrupts the captain and crew in Conrad's *Chance*, while the leprous female passenger in 'The Blighting of Sharkey' critically destabilises the authority of Captain Sharkey. But female pirates did exist and one of the most notorious was Mary Read, who was the inspiration for the fictional female pirate Captain Lovel, the protagonist of Jesse's *Moonraker* (1927).[76] Read was on a ship bound for the West Indies when it was captured, and she became a pirate under Captain John Rackham and was later arrested with him.[77] In his study of women at sea, David Cordingly disrupts the romantic myth that women went to sea to be with their lovers: 'the evidence suggests that most of the women who went to sea disguised as men did so for hard economic reasons or because they wished to escape from something in their past'.[78] This appears to have been the case with Read, who claimed at her

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[76] Read's mother was married when she gave birth to a little boy, but her husband died soon afterwards. Mary conceived again, but as a widow, and so to conceal the consequences of her new relationship from her mother-in-law, she moved away from her home. Shortly afterwards the baby son died, but she safely delivered a baby girl whom she disguised as a boy in order to continue receiving an allowance from her mother-in-law. Defoe, 'The Life of Mary Read' in *General History*, pp. 153-59.

[77] Defoe, 'The Life of Mary Read' in *General History*, pp. 154-157.

[78] Cordingly, *Heroines & Harlots*, p. 73.

trial that she was only able to support herself by turning to piracy, disguised as a man.[79] In

Jesse's *Moonraker* Captain Lovel is represented as a female pirate who has successfully

disguised herself as a man all her life, as did Read, but, in the fiction, Lovel commands her

own ship.

In common with other maritime fiction authors, Jesse was a keen sailor and yacht-

owner, and her understanding of sailing informs her narrative.[80] But the key distinction here

is that F. Tennyson Jesse was a female author writing in the very masculine maritime fiction

genre.[81] The initial 'F' stood for 'Fryniwyd'[*sic*], which originated from the inversion of her

Christian name, Wynifried [*sic*].[82] The absence of a given name androgenises the authorship

of the text, although it is difficult to gauge how far this was a deliberate attempt to disguise

her gender in this most masculine of genres.[83] The contemporary context is also important

because Jesse's text was published just before the vote was granted to all women over the age

of eighteen in 1928 and so Lovel's captaincy takes on added significance in the context of

post-war anxieties about gender equality and employment. Initially, *Moonraker* seems to

follow the same pattern as its predecessors, drawing on the myths of piracy set up in *Treasure*

Island. Lovel professes to be seeking the 'buried treasure of Captain Kidd' (p. 15),

mimicking the quest for Captain Flint's treasure in Stevenson's narrative.[84] However,

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[79] Defoe, 'The Life of Mary Read' in *General History*, pp. 157-159. Another female pirate was also in Rackham's crew: Anne Bonny, who was the lover of Captain Rackham. When Bonny made advances to Read, Rackham became jealous, and so Read was forced to confide her secret to both.

[80] Jesse married Harold Marsh Harwood in 1918 and two years later they bought their first yacht, an 11-ton yawl, which they named *Gudgeon*. Joanna Colenbrander, *A Portrait of Fryn: A Biography of F. Tennyson* Jesse (London: Deutsch, 1984), p. 117. Three years later *Gudgeon* was sold to buy an eighty-ton ketch named *Moby Dick* (p. 134). Colenbrander observes: '*Moby Dick* had been fitted out and equipped with a master – Captain Rice – and crew, and was lying at Malta on 2 March 1924, when Fryn's birthday was celebrated' (pp. 135-6).

[81] In her lifetime Jesse was a successful journalist and author, but *Moonraker* was her only piece of maritime fiction. Bob Leeson observes that Jesse is best known for co-writing plays with husband Harold Harwood and for her novel *A Pin to See the Peepshow* (1934). Bob Leeson, 'Introduction' in *Moonraker* (1927; London: Virago Press, 1981), pp. v-viii.

[82] Colenbrander, *A Portrait of Fryn*, p. 10.

[83] Born in 1888, in Chislehurst, Kent, Fryn was the great-niece of Lord Alfred Tennyson. Further information about F. Tennyson Jesse can be found in the biography, *A Portrait of Fryn*, written by Jesse's former secretary, Joanna Colenbrander.

[84] Jenifer G. Marx, 'The Pirate Round' in *Pirates: Terror on the High Seas – from the Caribbean to the South China Sea*, ed. David Cordingly (Bridgewater, MA, USA: World Publications Group, 2007), pp. 140-163, (p.

Moonraker is a complex adventure story set in the Napoleonic era, eighty years after piracy's 'golden age', and it focuses less on the pirate as romantic adventurer and more on feminism and postcolonialism.

Jesse adopted another feature of *Treasure Island* by including illustrations in *Moonraker*. Six black-and-white illustrations, drawn by Jesse herself, represent the key protagonists and a map, and the images of Lovel on the frontispiece and final page are particularly significant. The first is a full-length study of Captain Lovel dressed in frock coat and breeches, standing with drawn cutlass, her back to a flag that displays the skull and crossbones of the Jolly Roger. This depiction is clichéd, but it also reveals the beardless androgyny of Lovel's face and the masculinity of her clothes. By contrast, the final illustration shows the head and torso of Captain Lovel wearing a simple shirt and deliberately baring her right breast, revealing her gender.[85] This recalls the historical account of Mary Read, who maintained her disguise until she fell in love, eventually revealing herself to her lover 'by carelessly showing her Breasts, which were very white'.[86] In Read's case this led to a secret relationship with a fellow pirate, but although Lovel reveals that she is a woman to Raoul, her prospective lover, she fails to win him over.

Similarly to *Treasure Island*, *Moonraker* is divided into a number of short chapters and is focalised through an adolescent boy but, unlike Stevenson's adventure, *Moonraker* is narrated in the third person. *Moonraker* follows the adventures of Jacky Jacka on a ship called the *Piskie*. As they leave harbour, Jacky yearns for the excitement of the 'golden age of

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159). This is an implausible proposition as Kidd's treasure was buried on Gardiner's Island near New York, rather than in the Caribbean. Marx recounts the burying of Kidd's treasure, its recovery by the authorities in 1699, and the public knowledge that the sum total of Kidd's booty was accounted for. This did not stop the myth of buried treasure, popularised in *Treasure Island*, continuing to exert a powerful influence on pirate fiction into the twentieth century.

[85] Visual representations of infamous real-life female pirates Anne Bonny and Mary Read often show a bared breast or a clear indication of breasts under their clothes. One example is available on the website of the National Maritime Museum: A Catel and A. Debell, *Mary Read reveals herself to a vanquished enemy* in P. Christian, *Histoire des Pirates et Corsaires* (Paris: Cavailles, 1846). Available at http://www.nmmprints.com/image/328177/a-catel-a-debelle-mary-read-reveals-herself-to-a-vanquished-enemy [accessed 19 August 2011].

[86] Defoe, 'The Life of Mary Read' in *General History*, p. 157.

piracy [....] Captain Kidd and Morgan and Blackbeard and the rest of them' (p. 8). As seen in the pirate fiction of Scott and Doyle, Jesse emphasises the tension between myth and reality. The real danger concealed in the glamorous myth-making becomes evident when Jacky sees the pirate vessel, *Moonraker*, that is about to attack the *Piskie*: 'she flew the Jolly Roger from her spanker-gaff when in action, just like the pirates in the story-books. Her lines were as sweet and her heart as sound as any vessel's afloat' (p. 12). It is telling that Jacky's admiration of the pirate ship has originated from the 'story-book' tales of pirates, because presenting this emphasises the romantic mythology of pirates established in the maritime tradition and anticipates how these will be challenged.

Indeed, Jacky's romanticised fantasies of adventure are shattered when his ship, the *Piskie*, is destroyed, some of his shipmates are killed, and he is one of the remaining few taken prisoner: 'Piracy was all very well to read of, and pirates were doubtless very good fun to fight when you beat them, but he had never imagined them winning' (pp. 12-13). Jacky articulates a rejection of pirate myths, but does not make a distinction between 'story-book pirates' and the real pirates he had named earlier, Kidd, Morgan and Blackbeard, creating the blurred edges between fact and fiction in this narrative from the outset. But even as the narrative challenges maritime stereotypes, this is undermined throughout the text by the recurrence of the handsome sailor motif, as the sailor's gaze rests on the pirates, as well as their ships, as objects of desire. This is revealed when Jacky first sees Lovel, and describes the pirate captain as 'a handsome young man, with a long lean brown face [....] as little like a bloody murderer as any one you could think of' (pp. 10-11). As they pursue a French ship, Jacky's admiration of Lovel increases in intensity: 'Jacky's heart went out to him; he was a scoundrel and a murderer, but there was something wonderful about him, something alive and splendid' (p. 17). Here, criminal aspects of the pirate are overshadowed by the boy's admiration of leadership and seamanship, partly because Jacky has now been assimilated into

the pirate crew as the captain's 'boy'. The hero worship might be read as homoeroticism, but Jacky's love object proves to be a woman, and is therefore conventionally acceptable.

Although *Moonraker* can be distinguished from other maritime adventures by its focus on the feminine, in many ways the text reveals how representations of women are still trapped in the conventions of maritime fiction in the 1920s. When Lovel subsequently captures the French ship, an important outcome is the taking of a French prisoner, Raoul de Kérangel: 'the handsomest young man you ever clapt eyes on, with black hair and a pale face [….] it was clear that the Captain had taken a great fancy to him' (p. 22). As Lovel's relationship with Raoul develops, she is said to become 'strange, and so was everything on board the *Moonraker*' (p. 24). Lovel as a woman in disguise is shown to have a disruptive influence on the ship. This resonates with Conrad's examination of male/female relationships in *Chance*, when the presence of Flora has a paralysing effect on Anthony as a captain. But while the progress of the ship is unaffected in Conrad's text, in *Moonraker* the inattention of the captain transmits itself to the ship and the crew, so that even the ship's progress becomes 'lazy' (p. 24). The implication here is that as Lovel begins to fall in love with Raoul, discovering an emergent femininity, her skills of seamanship are weakened. Lovel's identity is shown to be mutable, shifting from captain to lover and, subsequently, from pirate to rescuer. Indeed, Lovel's pirate persona is swiftly and simply eradicated by a change in clothes when she decides to leave the ship and join Raoul in his intention of helping Toussaint L'Ouverture, leader of the Slave Rebellion in San Domingo. As Lovel steps onto the island, Jacky observes that there is 'nothing of the pirate about [Lovel] now; the big gold rings were gone from his ears; he wore white breeches and white silk stockings and buckle-shoes and a dark blue broadcloth coat with silver buttons' (p. 32). Lovel's change of clothes signifies a whole change in direction for the text as the focus shifts to fact: the political

struggles of Toussaint L'Ouverture.[87] Lovel and Raoul join L'Ouverture who has been

fighting alongside the French against the English and Spanish to free the island's inhabitants

from slavery. However, Raoul has discovered that Napoleon plans to betray L'Ouverture by

sending thousands of troops to crush the uprising, and reinstate San Domingo as a French

colony. Lovel and Jacky accompany Raoul as he tries to convince L'Ouverture to escape and

the pirate adventure story is superseded by a more complicated political tale, which

culminates in the defeat of L'Ouverture's armies by French forces and his capture.

The conventional narrative of the pirate adventure returns when Jacky helps Raoul to

save two English women, Laura and Mrs Pounsell, from French-occupied San Domingo,

chartering a small boat and taking them to the *Moonraker*. Once Lovel has also returned to

the ship, the crew expect that their pirate raids will recommence, just as the reader might

expect the tale to revert to a pirate story, but the presence of two female passengers changes

everything on board. When Lovel refuses to give chase to a potential target, there is unrest in

the crew, who place blame firmly on female shoulders: 'it was darkly hinted amongst them

that someone, the Captain or that young Mounseer [Raoul], had decreed that there was to be

no fighting while the petticoats were aboard' (p. 120). When women are on board, the ship

ceases to function, which is an ironic notion on a ship captained by a woman.

But it is not just the ship that is affected, the sailor too is altered in this narrative.

Bo'sun Red Lear, who is the only crew member given a voice, draws attention to changes in

Lovel's behaviour, which are attributed to the influence of Raoul: '[Lovel's] never been the

same man since that accursed Frenchy came on board' (p. 119). Later, it is revealed that

Lovel is the daughter of Red Lear and he mockingly calls her by her Christian name of Sophy

[*sic*], her real identity (p. 137). The text then reveals that Lear's exaggerated hatred of women

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[87] Leeson, 'Introduction' in *Moonraker*, pp. v-viii. In his introduction Bob Leeson writes an apology for the failings of the novel and a plea for its achievements: 'Along with, and specifically linked to its feminism, is a cry of freedom for black people' (p. vi). Although the text does explore the betrayal L'Ouverture suffers at the hands of the French, the islanders are often referred to as 'niggers' or 'savages', which although not unacceptable in the 1920s, does lessen the appeal to reader empathy.

stems from the desertion of Sophy's mother and that, as a consequence, Lear has suppressed femininity in his daughter throughout her life. Lear's ironic observation about Raoul's effect on Lovel is complicated by the knowledge that Lear has concealed the biological fact of Lovel's gender by raising her as a boy. This again resonates with the life of Mary Read who was also raised as a boy and continued to live as a man when she went to sea.[88] Thus, although in many ways *Moonraker* challenges the masculine archetypes of maritime adventure, the revelations about Lear demonstrate that Lovel's identity is very much shaped by men.

Traditionally the preserve of men, the ship has been a place in which it has been possible for Lovel to conceal her gender, but in the final chapters she reveals her true identity.[89] The first stage of the denouement occurs when Lovel summons the passengers, including Laura and Mrs Pounsell, to dinner in her cabin, and enters wearing women's clothes: 'The Captain bowed awkwardly to the assembled company, and then settled the full skirts in the chair' (p. 130). Everyone seated at the captain's table is shocked by Lovel's change of costume; Mrs Pounsell refuses to recognise Lovel's femininity, viewing the scene as a 'masquerade'. But what is the nature of this mask and what does it conceal? The use of the word 'masquerade' is significant because it taps into the issues of female sexuality raised in Joan Riviere's famous paper 'Womanliness as a masquerade' (1929).[90] Lovel is shown surrendering the power of her masculine identity in order to try and persuade Raoul to accept her as a woman and a lover. But the desperation of her attempt is clear because Raoul has

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[88] Read became a sailor on a British Man of War and, later, a soldier in the cavalry, stationed in Belgium. Here, she fell in love with a fellow soldier, revealed her gender, and married him, but he died soon afterwards and Read once again returned to sea. Defoe, 'The Life of Mary Read' in *General History*, pp. 154-157.

[89] The hiding of Lovel's gender evokes two of the motifs, doubling and imprisonment/escape, put forward in Sandra. M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's, *The Madwoman in the Attic: the woman writer and the nineteenth-century literary imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979). In their study of nineteenth-century literature, they identified 'houses as primary symbols of female imprisonment' (p. 85), but in *Moonraker* imprisonment takes place on a ship, where Lovel is trapped in a lie.

[90] 'Womanliness as a masquerade', was published two years after *Moonraker* and it adopts a Freudian approach to female sexuality, illustrated by the case of a woman who 'had dreams of people putting masks on their faces in order to avert disaster'. Joan Riviere, 'Womanliness as a masquerade' in *Formations of Fantasy*, ed. Victor Burgin, James Donald & Cora Kaplan (London and New York: Methuen, 1986), pp. 35-44, (p. 38).

already fallen in love with Laura, the woman he rescued from San Domingo, and it turns out Lovel had earlier revealed her secret to him. *Moonraker* can be read as a comment on the cultural construction of femininity because, although Lovel is female in the biological sense, her awkwardness at appearing in women's clothes at dinner reveals how she struggles to be feminine.[91] Indeed, Lovel's position resonates with Riviere's case studies of professional women who feel compelled to conceal their knowledge when interacting with men, an anxiety rooted in Oedipal fear of retribution, and so they assume a 'mask of femininity' that prevents them from dealing with men on equal terms.[92] By presenting the biological fact of Lovel's gender and showing how it conflicts with her status as a captain, *Moonraker* departs from the traditional pirate adventure narrative to contemplate the cultural construction of sexual identity.[93]

The tensions consequent upon Lovel's gender identity are paralleled by the conflicts in the crew on board *Moonraker*; events draw to climax when Red Lear hears a disturbance on deck and realises that the seamen are mutinying. Lovel, Lear, Jacky, and Raoul rush on deck and a bloody fight ensues. At a point of stalemate, the crew suddenly realise that Lovel, whose torn dress reveals her breasts, is a woman, and this immediately alters the power, instilled by fear, that she had held over them as captain:

> all the authority that these cut-throats had bowed to and trembled at, gone with her man's gear, but her eyes flaming and her wild head out-thrust, laughing at them. And slowly they fell back from her jeers as they had from her onslaught. (pp. 144-145)

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[91] Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics* (London: Routledge, 1985), p. 65. The assumptions behind the terms 'female' and 'feminine' analysed by Moi are also applicable to understanding Lovel. Moi analyses how definitions of femininity entrench male authority: 'patriarchal oppression consists of imposing certain social standards of femininity on all biological women, in order precisely to make us believe that the chosen standards for 'femininity' are *natural*. Thus a woman who refuses to conform can be labelled both *unfeminine* and *unnatural*' (p. 65).

[92] Riviere, 'Womanliness', p. 38.

[93] Judith Butler analyses Riviere's definitions of masquerade, noting that it goes beyond the 'indeterminate type' of woman who falls between the categories of the heterosexual woman and the homosexual woman to become an essential part of 'womanliness' itself. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990; New York and London; Routledge, 2006), pp. 59-77, (p. 71).

As a woman, Lovel has lost her authority but now has a different power over the men; they no longer fear the threat of violence, but are disconcerted by Lovel as by a madwoman, someone whose identity is unstable, unconfined by behavioural norms and outside their range of reference.[94] Despite the suggestion of Lovel's irrationality, she manages to negotiate with the crew in order to secure the release of Raoul, Laura, and Mrs Pounsell, who all leave the ship in a longboat with Red Lear and Jacky. The implications of Lovel's gender identity are fore-grounded when Raoul suggests that it will be very difficult for her to continue leading her crew. Her position, he suggests, is untenable; although Lovel has the skills of seamanship required to be a captain, and despite her proven ability, she cannot command the vessel because she is female, men wield power over women, physically and culturally and so are considered naturally inferior to men.

More disturbing is the threat of sexual violence. Raoul fears that Lovel, as Sophy, will be vulnerable to advances from members of the crew, an anxiety she dismisses by countering 'I am not attractive as a woman!' (p. 152). This is beside the point; it is not a question of Lovel's sexuality, but her inability as a woman to resist superior masculine physical power. When Lovel reveals her secret female self in the dinner scene described earlier, the ship's passengers think it is a tasteless joke. Lovel is perceived as, and sees herself to be, monstrous, and she recognises her inability to inhabit her true identity authentically. On deck, gender stereotypes typify the reactions of the crew, who mock her loss of authority and, when she confronts them, fear that she is insane. Just as her gender identity is incompatible with her position as a sailor, pirate, and captain, so Lovel's identity as a sailor and pirate is

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[94] Gilbert and Gubar relate madness to the idea of a woman looking in the mirror and seeing that 'she is indeed the monster that she fears she really is rather than the angel she pretended to be'. Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p.77. Referring to the first wife of Rochester in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Gilbert and Gubar suggest that the madwoman is 'the author's double, an image of her own anxiety and rage' (p. 78). Although this point is debatable, as a female author Jesse had additional obstacles to overcome because the maritime fiction genre had always been so masculine: written by men for men with mainly male characters. Ultimately, *Moonraker* reveals the masculine assumptions of the maritime fiction genre but remains trapped within them.

incompatible with wider concepts of gender identity in society on land. To leave the ship would necessitate betraying one or other element of Lovel's identity, pirate or woman: 'That I may hang, and my body swing in chains, or if I escape that, to sit on shore and take to plain sewing?' (p. 153). In the same way that Lovel reveals her gender identity by accidentally exposing her body to the crew, it is suggested that revealing her shipboard identity on land would mean exposing her pirate persona to the public spectacle of punishment. Alternatively, Lovel would need to conceal her role, as a former leader of men, and be forced to submit to the cultural expectations of femininity, narrowing her options for economic survival. Lovel's revelation emphasises the constrictions of gender, and of economic identity, in a patriarchal society, whether on land or at sea. Equally, Lovel's ability to impersonate a man in order to command a ship resonates with the contemporary anxieties about women, careers, and post-war employment in 1920s Britain.

This reminder of prosaic economic necessities also emphasises the few options open to women at the time of the narrative's events in the nineteenth century. Although *Moonraker* begins by imitating *Treasure Island*, Jesse's exploration of gender identity reveals the shortcomings of the adventure narrative in the twentieth century. Having ruled out the possible and equally unattractive alternatives, Lovel confronts her mutinous crew and kills them all by throwing a lantern into a barrel of gunpowder, destroying herself and the entire ship. The climax of Jesse's text bears some resemblance to Doyle's final pirate story, when Copley Banks blows up Sharkey's ship; where there is no possibility of a positive outcome, there is a dramatic moment of extinction. The death of Lovel suggests the impossibility of combining the roles of woman and pirate, not to mention being the captain of the vessel. Gender roles are subverted in the representation of Lovel: she has autonomy when she assumes the masculine authority of a captain, but behind this is the secret of her female identity, suppressed by her father, Red Lear. History was kinder to the real female pirate;

when Read's ship was captured, she was tried with her shipmates but had a convenient

defence, which was 'her great Belly, which she pleaded to save her life'.[95] By contrast, the

fictional female pirate's death seems inescapable in the masculine world of the sailing ship,

where it is impossible to reconcile conflicting notions of gender, sexuality, and identity.

Previously, pirate stories and maritime fiction in general had been aimed at a young

male audience, but in presenting a female protagonist in a more complex tale, *Moonraker*

reaches out to a more mature readership that includes women. Even if *Moonraker* did not

receive the popular or critical success of more conventional pirate texts, it represents another

variant of the pirate adventure tale and further experimentation in the genre. Just two years

later, Richard Hughes published *A High Wind in Jamaica* (1929), which featured four

females on board a pirate ship. However, in Hughes's text the females are all young girls and

they are passengers, rather than active members of the crew, and this leads to a very different

sort of pirate tale.

Myths of Piracy and Childhood: *A High Wind in Jamaica*

Twentieth-century maritime fiction provides several examples of women disrupting the ship:

Lovel and Laura in *Moonraker*, Flora in Conrad's *Chance*, and Inez Ramirez in Doyle's 'The

Blighting of Sharkey', but in Hughes's narrative the disruption is caused by children.

Hughes's inspiration for *A High Wind in Jamaica* came in the form of a manuscript written

by Jeanette Calder and shown to him by a friend:

> In the year 1822 (she wrote) she was one of a party of children from Jamaica being
> shipped home to England in the brig 'Zephyr' when the brig was captured just off the
> coast of Cuba. [....] Lumsden, master of the 'Zephyr', obdurately denied that he
> carried any money at all: and though [the pirates] ransacked her from stem to stern,
> they could not find it. To make Lumsden talk, they then told him he should see all the
> children in his charge murdered before his eyes if he would not give up the money.

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[95] Defoe, 'The Life of Mary Read' in *General History*, pp. 153-159, (p. 158). At the trial Read was fortunate but her life ended soon afterwards: 'Being found quick with Child, [...] her execution was respited, and it is possible she would have found Favour, but she was seized with a violent Fever, soon after her Tryal, of which she died in Prison' (p. 159).

But the money, after all, was his own and children weren't, a point the pirates had overlooked: even when a preliminary volley aimed just over the children's heads was fired into the deckhouse where they huddled, Lumsden remained quite unmoved. On that the pirates let the children out of the deckhouse and rowed them over to their own schooner, considerately wanting them out of sight and earshot while more direct (and ultimately more successful) means of persuasion were applied to Lumsden's own tender person.[96]

Although this is a useful source, the process of translation has to be remembered here; because this is the nineteenth-century narrative of a young woman, being interpreted and fictionalised by a man in the twentieth century. Hughes saw the potential in this intriguing eye-witness account, and his narrative reflects the real-life events that happened on the *Zephyr* during the pirate raid, followed by a scenario he imagined in which the children stayed on board the pirate ship. By 1822, the year of the *Zephyr* incident, the pirates' heyday was, in reality, a hundred years behind them. In the opening pages, the narrator distances the narrative from historical events by inserting a specific reference to the date: 'I know nothing of modern methods [of distilling rum] – or if there are any, never having visited the island since 1860, which is a long time ago now'.[97] No further information is given and, as steamships date back to Brunel's *Great Western* in 1843, no further information can be gained from considering the ships that appear in the text. However, Paul Morgan identifies references to the cinema and Italian fascism, suggesting 'that the story is being narrated in the 1920s'.[98] Although the historical account of the *Zephyr* provides a useful starting point from which to approach *A High Wind in Jamaica*, Hughes plays with the conventions of fact and fiction, and this chronological ambiguity further destabilises the narrative.

As with many twentieth-century maritime authors, Richard Hughes combined a love of writing about the sea with his sailing experience. Hughes owned and sailed small yachts,

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[96] Richard Hughes, 'Introduction to A High Wind in Jamaica' in *Fiction as Truth: Selected Literary Writings by Richard Hughes,* ed. Richard Poole (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, 1987), pp. 38-44, (p. 38).
[97] Richard Hughes, *A High Wind in Jamaica* (1929; London: Chatto & Windus, 1975), p. 4. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.
[98] Morgan, *The Art of Richard Hughes*, p. 27.

entering races and competing enthusiastically.[99] Similarly, he devoted a great deal of time to writing, publishing poems in a number of influential journals, including *The Athenaeum*, *The Literary Review*, and *The Spectator*,[100] and publishing his first play, all while studying at Oxford University.[101] Hughes undertook his first major sea passage in the summer of his second year at Oxford, travelling to Philadelphia for a holiday with family friends. Robert Graves notes that the voyage, in steerage class, was far from glamorous, but the value of Hughes's experience was that he 'learned to see his own race and class from the outside'.[102] Unlike *Moonraker*, which has had just one re-printing since its original run, *A High Wind in Jamaica* was a critical and popular success, and it has remained in circulation into the twenty-first century.[103]

The narrative opens in Jamaica as a violent hurricane, the under-stated 'high wind' of the title, tears through the island. Two families, the Fernandezes and the Bas-Thorntons, decide to put their children, for their future safety, on a ship, the *Clorinda*, bound for England. At thirteen years of age, Margaret Fernandez is the oldest female on board (she has

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[99] Further information about Hughes' sailing pursuits can be found in Penelope Hughes's *Richard Hughes: Author, Father* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1984). His skills were proved by winning the 1937 Bristol Channel Pilots' Race in his pilot cutter *Tern*, a particularly impressive achievement because it lasted three days and three nights in such heavy weather that 'two yachts were dismasted before they crossed the starting-line' (p. 21).

[100] Hughes started his literary career by composing poems in childhood and going on to become sub-editor of *The Carthusian*, the school magazine of Charterhouse, a public school in Surrey. His first publication was a one-act play, *The Sisters' Tragedy* (1922), which he wrote during his second year at university. Peter Thomas, *Richard Hughes*, ed. Meic Stephens and R. Brinley Jones (Cardiff: University of Wales Press on behalf of the Welsh Arts Council, 1973), pp. 4-9.

[101] Poole notes that Hughes's first full-length play, *A Comedy of Good and Evil*, was first performed at the Court Theatre in London in July 1924, and enjoyed some success. However, Hughes struggled to earn a livelihood and turned his hand to writing for radio with a one-act play entitled *Danger* that same year. Poole, *Richard Hughes*, pp. 36-40.

[102] According to Graves, Hughes soon adapted to his surroundings by learning a little German and Hungarian and mixing with his fellow passengers although he reported, with sadness, on the seediness of the fleeting relationships formed on board and the degrading medical examinations as they passed through quarantine and customs. This detailed and comprehensive tome covers the whole of Hughes's life from his birth (even noting sailing ancestors) and childhood, through his school years, overseas adventures, literary life, marriage and family up until his death in 1976. Richard Perceval Graves, *Richard Hughes: A Biography* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1994), pp. 58-66.

[103] As Paul Morgan observes: 'According to the publisher's printing schedule, a first impression of 10,000 copies had to be supplemented within days, and a further 20,000 copies were printed before the end of 1929 alone. As well as this evident popular success, the novel enjoyed considerable praise from critics'. Paul Morgan, *The Art of Richard Hughes: A Study of the Novels* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1993), p. 21.

a younger brother, Harry), while thirteen-year-old John is the eldest of the Bas-Thornton children, followed by his sister Emily, the ten-year-old narrator of the text, and younger siblings Edward, Rachel, and Laura. They are on the first leg of their voyage across the Atlantic on the *Clorinda*, when the ship is boarded by Captain Jonsen and his pirates. Focalised through Emily, *A High Wind in Jamaica* is a psychological exploration in which the dynamics of the pirate crew are disturbed by the arrival of seven children on board their ship. The disruption is increased by the fact that two of the girls are uncomfortably close to womanhood, introducing issues of inappropriate sexual behaviour. The text explores gender and sexuality through the crossing over into womanhood by thirteen-year-old Margaret. This change of emphasis marks a departure from pirate adventure narratives of the past, focused on sensationalised events, and instead presents the interaction of children and pirates in terms of the complex and disturbing consequences experienced by individuals in both age groups.

By contrast to Doyle's Sharkey stories, in which pirates are demonised, the pirates have a more complex portrayal in *A High Wind in Jamaica*. Indeed, during the raid, it is Captain Marpole of the *Clorinda*, based on Captain Lumsden of the *Zephyr*, who is criticised for refusing to reveal the whereabouts of the freight-money and endangering everyone on board.[104] The pirate captain, Jonsen, fires warning shots into the deckhouse above the heads of the children, but Marpole still fails to speak and he is tied to the mast, surrounded by a pyre sprinkled with gunpowder, and threatened further. In the meantime, the five Bas-Thornton children and two Fernandez children are temporarily taken on to the pirates' schooner, an order put in place by Jonsen who wishes to apply firmer pressure on Captain Marpole so that he will reveal the whereabouts of the ship's money. Later, the pirates return to their ship in order to fetch the children. However, their return is delayed and, on hearing the pirates casting empty trunks into the sea, Marpole assumes that the children have been

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[104] Hughes's research included Aaron Smith's account of the pirate raid on the *Zephyr* which was particularly critical of Captain Lumsden. Aaron Smith, *The Atrocities of the Pirates*, ed. Robert S. Redmond (1824; London: Prion, 1997).

killed and their bodies thrown overboard, so he quickly musters the crew and the *Clorinda*

sets sail. On the pirate sailing ship, the crew are distracted by supper and, by the time Jonsen

notices the *Clorinda*, Marpole's ship is too far away to be caught. Captain Jonsen has to solve

a problem that has no precedent in pirate fiction or in fact: what should he do about the

children? Clearly, pirates and children are incompatible and, by bringing them together on the

enclosed environment of the ship, *A High Wind in Jamaica* makes possible an exploration of

this incompatibility. This represents a move away from the voyage narrative that looks

outwards towards the sea, to a text that focuses on the ship as a setting for a more

introspective examination of adult/child and male/female relationships.

Hughes was also inspired, like Conrad before him as he wrote *Romance*, by another

account of this pirate raid on the *Zephyr*, this time taken from Aaron Smith's *The Atrocities

of the Pirates* (1824).[105] Speaking of the same events as Calder, as noted earlier, but from

Smith's perspective as one of the crew, this account alleges that Captain Lumsden would

have been taken by the pirates when the *Zephyr* was boarded, but that Lumsden persuaded

Smith to join them in his stead. Not only does Smith portray Mr Lumsden as cowardly, but

also dishonest, alleging that:

> Mr Lumsden directed us to throw [the cargo] overboard, which we commenced doing,
> and threw some over; but this was prevented by the [pirate] Captain, who said that he
> only wanted to throw the ship's cargo overboard, in order to say that it was taken
> from him, and defraud the underwriters.[106]

Richard Poole traces Hughes's research, noting that he 'proceeded to read everything he

could lay his hands on that pertained to "what might be called the decadent period of the

Caribbean pirates", and this general reading contributed significantly to the novel'.[107] Poole

observes that Hughes found the witness accounts of Calder, as a passenger, and Smith as a

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[105] Smith gives an insightful account of both everyday life in a pirate ship, that would prove invaluable to Hughes, as well a description of the capture of the *Zephyr* that matched that of Calder's testimony of her experiences as a child passenger on that ship. Smith, *The Atrocities of the Pirates*, p. 8.
[106] Smith, *The Atrocities of the Pirates*, p. 13.
[107] Poole, *Richard Hughes*, p. 42.

crew member, to be in general agreement about the details of the *Zephyr*'s capture. However, when Hughes read the testimony of Lumsden, he found no mention of the children at all and, noting the self-justifying tone, used Lumsden's testimony to create a satirical portrait of Captain Marpole in *A High Wind in Jamaica*.[108]

Initially, the pirates' capture of the *Clorinda* is narrated by Marpole in the form of a letter to Mr. and Mrs. Bas-Thornton, parents to five of the seven children on board.[109] Marpole's retelling of the events is presented in a rambling, grandiloquent style that is at odds with the grave news about the alleged murder of the children by pirates. Hughes implicitly criticises Marpole's seamanship by using this style, which is the antithesis of the succinct factual writing typical of mariners completing log-books and journals of their travels. Marpole claims to have been boarded by 'about fifty or seventy ruffians of the worst Spanish type' (p. 59), whose leader 'threatened to blow up the ship *and all in it*' [emphasis in the text] (p. 59) unless the captain revealed where the money was hidden. Marpole first lists the financial losses to himself and the ship as 'five thousand pounds in all mostly my private property and most of our cargo (chiefly rum sugar coffee and arrowroot) [*sic*]' (p. 60). He then reveals that the last act of the pirate captain was to bring the children out of hiding and kill them. The letter is concluded on a particularly disturbing note:

> you will still feel some anxiety, considering the sex of some of the poor innocents, and on which I am glad to be able to set your minds at rest, the children were taken onto the other vessel in the evening and I am glad to say there done to death *immediately*, [*sic*] and their little bodies cast into the sea. (pp. 60-61)

Marpole's testimony is shown to be wildly exaggerated in its account of the pirate attack when a very different version of events is later revealed. When Marpole fabricates their murder he dehumanises the children, who are reduced to 'little bodies', and at this point the

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[108] Poole, *Richard Hughes*, pp. 41-42. Poole's study of Richard Hughes charts his life and career as a poet and playwright, in addition to insightful analyses of Hughes's novels. Poole's description is of an author who steeped himself in his subject and developed each of his novels through a long and thoughtful gestation.

[109] It is notable that the novel focuses on the Bas-Thornton children and their parents; the parents of Margaret and Harry Fernandez are conspicuously absent, even when the *Clorinda* leaves, so that only a nurse is there to see them off.

spectre of rape is raised only in Marpole's imagination. However, the sexual abuse of children becomes a disturbing reality later in *A High Wind in Jamaica.*

By contrast to Marpole's account, the 'real' version of events in the fiction is represented to be far less threatening and much more farcical. The *Clorinda* crew are trying to catch the ship's monkey, which they have plied with alcohol, and have failed to notice that another schooner is drawing near. Subsequently, the schooner lowers a boat of what appear to be tourists and women, but who are actually pirates, and they approach the *Clorinda*. In comparison to Marpole's flowery style, this account is ominously understated, and reveals that it was the crew's negligence that allows the pirates to board without meeting resistance. The monkey falls to his death and the crew return to their duty, but it is too late; their ship has been captured while they were distracted: 'But the visitors were already on board. That is how the *Clorinda* really was taken' (p. 70). In addition to the crew's negligence, Marpole's dereliction of duty is also emphasised: 'Indeed, the whole manoeuvre was executed so quietly that Captain Marpole never even woke - incredible though this will seem to a seaman' (p. 71). Even when sailors are not on duty, they maintain an awareness of the usual sounds and movements of a ship so that, even in sleep, they instinctively wake up when something is not right. By contrast to Conrad's sailors, who rely on seamanlike instincts in times of crisis, in Hughes's text Marpole fails to protect his ship because he lacks the requisite seamanly instinct. This understated description of the pirate raid contrasts to the sensationalised events portrayed in Marpole's letter, inviting the reader to assess the veracity of different viewpoints. By assuming the disguise of women's clothing and achieving the ship's capture without guns, the pirate raid on the *Clorinda* defies every expectation established in the literary pirate tradition, and portrays the pirate as a figure of almost comical anarchy.

In a wider context, the constant negotiation between fact and fiction in *A High Wind in Jamaica* enables the text to explore social and cultural issues, particularly the concepts of

masculinity, femininity, and childhood. Subsequently, when further details about the farcical capture of the *Clorinda* are revealed, it comes to light that only eight or nine pirates had boarded the ship and that they had been unarmed. So, rather than positioning the pirate as the violent villain, this text emphasises the cowardice of the crew in allowing the pirates to imprison them in the forecastle and trap the children in the deckhouse.[110] Compared to pirate raids of the past, in which potential victims were intimidated into surrendering swiftly, the raiding party have been hired by the pirate captain, Jonsen, for the specific purpose of boarding ships disguised as 'Spanish ladies' (p. 78). It is the very unsuitability of a ship as a place for women, explored in the texts of Conrad and Jesse, which makes it particularly ironic that the raid is achieved by men impersonating women, assuming a gendered disguise to show that they are unthreatening. In *A High Wind in Jamaica* cross-dressing at sea is a clever tactic, but in *Moonraker* cross-dressing is the key to physical and economic survival for Lovel/Sophy. Lovel is forced to develop a male gender identity in childhood by her father; in adulthood her masculinity enables her to gain power, but she loses that power as soon as her female identity is revealed. By contrast, in *A High Wind in Jamaica* the pirates conceal their identity, utilising social and cultural expectations of the feminine, in order to lull potential victims into a false sense of security. Rather than looking back to the ultra-masculine shows of force employed by eighteenth-century pirates, Jonsen and his crew subvert expectations and invent a new mode of piracy. Developing one of maritime fiction's narrative strands, *A High Wind in Jamaica* goes beyond the sensational episodes of traditional sea adventure narrative in using the ship as a setting in which to explore conventional concepts of masculinity, femininity, and childhood.

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[110] Poole assesses *A High Wind in Jamaica* in terms of Darwin's theory of natural selection, observing how, in his research on pirates, Hughes was intrigued by 'their surprising softness, their lack of savagery, their unwillingness to indulge in acts of violence. They seemed, indeed, the lingering survivors of a dwindling species'. Poole, *Richard Hughes: Novelist*, p. 137. This may have seemed surprising to Hughes because it reads against the demonisation of pirates in history and their glamorisation in literature.

The theatricality of this pirate raid is in marked contrast to the image of pirates as violent, ultra-masculine figures based on real-life pirates, such as Low and Blackbeard, alluded to in Doyle's pirate stories. At the same time, piracy becomes more secretive and sinister: when young Harry Fernandez asks Emily if Jonsen and his crew are pirates, she denies it and advises the other children not to ask the pirates directly: '"I think they mightn't like it," said Emily. In her heart she was afraid of the answer; and if they were pirates, it would here again be better to pretend not to know' (p. 147). Emily imagines that they are safe because the pirates expect the children to be innocent, unaware of adult concepts of crime. As Morgan notes, the novel was originally published in the United States as *The Innocent Voyage*.[111] On one hand, this title locates the text in the maritime tradition, but on the other hand it also alludes to the text's innovations in the genre through the interrogation of childhood myths and the troubling events experienced by the children on board. By contrast, the title *A High Wind in Jamaica* detracts attention from the maritime subject and emphasises the hurricane as the origin that precipitates the whole chain of events, so disrupting any expectations of a traditional sea story.

However, Captain Jonsen and his crew experience the more conventional challenges that have been faced again and again in maritime fiction, notably in Conrad's texts, where a crisis at sea often constitutes the central tension between man and the elements. There are two storms in *A High Wind in Jamaica*; the first storm wreaks havoc and destruction on land, leading to the children's departure on the *Clorinda*, but the second storm tests the effectiveness of the pirate crew in handling and steering the ship. This leads to a feeling of solidarity once the crisis has passed: 'When the worst of the squall was over they got the advantage of it, the schooner lying over lissomly and spinning along like a race-horse. The

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[111] Morgan, *Richard Hughes*, p. 139. Morgan observes that 'Hughes's original title had been, *The Girl in the Egg. A Chatto & Windus Miscellany* (London, 1928) advertises it as 'in preparation' with this name. After Henry Leach published an excerpt as 'A High Wind in Jamaica', though, Hughes liked this title so much, he appropriated it for the work as a whole' (p. 139).

crew were in great spirits' (p. 118). However, the children present a very different kind of test to the captain of the ship and one which will eventually defeat him. The disruptive possibilities posed by the children in *A High Wind in Jamaica* become evident when the sailors get drunk one night and enter the children's cabin (p. 142). As Jonsen stands before them, Margaret is the only one old enough, at thirteen, to realise the danger of potential sexual abuse and this marks the beginning of her separation from the rest of children. When Jonsen starts to stroke ten-year-old Emily's hair, Emily instinctively bites his thumb so hard it bleeds and she rushes away from him. The narrative emphasises Emily's confusion in contrast to Jonsen's knowing shame; he never approaches her again in this way. Subsequently, Emily is puzzled by Margaret's actions:

> For some time [Margaret] had behaved very oddly indeed. At first she seemed exaggeratedly frightened of all the men: but then she had suddenly taken to following them about the deck like a dog - not Jonsen, it is true, but Otto especially. (p. 144)

Here, and elsewhere in the novel, Emily's childhood naivety creates gaps in narrative that lead the reader to guess at the motivations of other characters. Margaret, it is implied, is driven by the need to choose Otto as her protector so that she will be safe from the other pirates. In the limited society on ship, Margaret is the only 'woman' amongst many men and her developing sexuality is bound up with fear.[112] Not only does this disrupt the myth of the innocent child, but it also shows a fundamental shift in maritime fiction from presenting the voyage as a series of externalised challenges to representing the journey at sea as a more complex and disturbing psychological voyage of self-discovery.

To use a Conradian analogy, Margaret represents a shadow-line between youth and maturity, but in terms of sexuality, rather than leadership and responsibility. She is in a

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[112] Poole notes that when Hughes gave a draft of his novel to Amabel Williams-Ellis, Literary Editor of the *Spectator*, 'She criticized the lack of sex in the book, remarking that it was inconceivable that Margaret Fernandez would not have entered into some sort of relationship with the pirates. Hughes took the point and rewrote accordingly'. Poole, *Richard Hughes: Novelist*, p. 48. Like Conrad, who wrote women into his maritime fiction only when pressed, Hughes also initially viewed the children as pre-sexual beings in the asexual space of the ship.

situation where, at thirteen, she may be a woman biologically, but emotionally she is not. The sailors, for their part, collude with Margaret's sense of guilt and deliberately isolate her, taking 'peculiar pains not only not to let her speak to, but even not to let her be seen by the other children' (p. 144). This not only signals Margaret's disturbing transition to adulthood, but also draws attention to the binary oppositions of childhood/adulthood and innocence/shame. Through these oppositions, *A High Wind in Jamaica* explores the extent to which the children disrupt the life and masculine society on the pirate ship, and it also shows how life on the pirate ship corrupts them. It is particularly unsettling when Laura, at just three years old, copies Margaret and seeks her own protector in Jonsen, developing 'a dog-like devotion to the reserved and coarse-looking captain of the pirates' (p. 160). In the middle of the voyage Emily experiences a revelation that subsequently precipitates frequent attacks of anxiety: 'She suddenly realised who she was' (p. 134). Later, Rachel experiences an episode of religious mania and bursts on to the deck where she convulsively imitates a church service until she is stopped by the captain (pp. 197-198). As each girl displays, to adult eyes, seemingly irrational behaviour, it becomes apparent that the ship is more than just a setting in which the children are seen to be growing up. *A High Wind in Jamaica* seems to suggest that the ship, owing to the nature of the children's on-board confinement with men they dare not define as pirates, has a damaging effect on their psyches.

Pirates in earlier texts by Stevenson and Doyle tend to act within recognisable codes of behaviour, but Jesse and Hughes present more complex figures, capable of fundamental change and of subverting norms. In *A High Wind in Jamaica* the pirates seem almost comical initially, but they gradually become more threatening during the course of the narrative and, disturbingly, this change is precipitated by the presence of the children. In fact, the children become unintentional accessories to piracy when they help to trap the pirates' next victim, which is a Dutch steamboat, struggling in heavy weather. The captain of the *Thelma* sees the

pirates lower a boat but, because he can see children on board, he assumes that the ship is

coming to his aid: 'the Dutchman never thought of suspecting this presumable offer of

assistance' (p. 171). It is worth noting that few steamships were operating in 1860, so this

episode destabilises Hughes's ostensible historical location.[113] The pirate raid on the Dutch

steamship is destined to have devastating consequences in the narrative, but it also reverses

the ascendancy of steam over sail seen in Conrad's texts.

Once aboard the steamboat, the pirate boarding party discover that the cargo,

comprising zoo animals, does not have any value for them. Vandervoort, the Dutch captain, is

taken over to the pirate ship, tied up in Jonsen's cabin and left with Emily, who is

recuperating from a leg injury. However, the pirate crew are intrigued by the Dutch boat's

cargo and, in deserting their ship to see the zoo animals, they leave Emily alone with

Vandervoort. Emily is terrified, not only because they cannot speak each other's language,

but because she has also developed a more general fear of men initiated by Jonsen's

unwelcome advances.[114] In the confines of the cabin the tension escalates as Vandervoort

makes frantic efforts to reach a knife that has been dropped on the floor in order to cut the

ropes that bind him. Misunderstanding his intention, Emily shouts for help and becomes even

more scared when nobody comes. Eventually, she seizes the knife and hits out at

Vandervoort: 'In the course of the next five seconds she had slashed and jabbed at him in a

dozen places' (p. 175). Emily kills Vandervoort and his death is particularly significant

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[113] Explaining his methods of researching his novel, Hughes's intention seems to have been to set his story around 1860: 'I decided to pitch my story a whole generation later than the 'Zephyr' incident'. Richard Hughes, 'Introduction to A High Wind in Jamaica' in *Fiction as Truth*, ed. Poole, pp. 38-41, (p. 39).

[114] Although this novel is not aimed at children, Hughes' daughter Penelope remembers reading it aged ten and being so terrified that 'The panic that seized Emily seized me'. Penelope Hughes, *Richard Hughes*, p. 63. Such was Penelope's empathy that she felt Emily's action was 'the only possible thing to do' (p. 63). Reactions of this type are identified in Lynne Pearce & Sara Mills's 'Marxist Feminism' in *Feminist Readings, Feminists Reading*, 2nd edn (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1996), pp. 185-224. They suggest that such identification is a symptom of cultural stereotyping of the madwoman in literature: 'The text interpellates women readers into a position of sympathy with the narrator, and thus leads them to recognize within themselves the elements of madness which the protagonist is undergoing. Thus, in reading the text, the connection between madness and womanhood is restated, in the same way as patriarchal texts run together these notions of femininity, frailty and madness' (p. 212).

because, unlike previous pirate texts where murders are commonplace, this is the only act of fatal violence in the novel. Emily believes she is acting in self-defence, but she has, in fact, killed an innocent man, and her act marks the end of her childhood innocence. Emily's transgression is a horrifying rite of passage, but it soon becomes apparent that the effects are not confined to her alone; soon, murderous thoughts spread to the crew. It is as if the first death on board also marks a crossing of boundaries for all those on the ship.

During the course of the narrative the pirates, *in loco parentis*, increasingly find themselves in the position of having to assume responsibility. But murder has entered the narrative through the children, destroying fantasies about the innocence of childhood. Just as the children have become unintentional accessories to an act of piracy, the pirates have now become accessories to murder, and this marks a fundamental change in their behaviour. After killing the Dutch captain, Emily faints and Margaret, hearing the knife fall, investigates. However, Margaret is unable to help Emily because she is traumatised by the sight of the dead man. When some of the crew return from the steamer, they see Margaret sat by the dying Dutch captain and, wrongly assuming that she has stabbed him, exact swift revenge:

> The contempt they already felt for Margaret, their complete lack of pity in her obvious illness and misery, had been in direct proportion to the childhood she had belied.
> This crime would have seemed to them grave on the part of a grown man, in its unrelieved wantonness: but done by one of her years, and nurture, it was unspeakable. She was lifted by the arms from the stair where she still sat, and […] was dropped into the sea.
> But yet the expression of her face, as […] she vanished to windward, left a picture in Otto's mind he never forgot. She was, after all, his affair. (p. 179)

The crew transgress their own codes when they cast Margaret into the sea to die. However, Margaret is saved from drowning a short while later by one of the boats returning from the captured steamer and she rejoins the rest of the children in secret. Crucially, this event reveals how the crew fail to understand Emily and Margaret, whose actions have been driven by fear of men. As a child, Margaret should be absolved of blame, but the pirates, possibly feeling

guilty about their abuse of her, see Margaret as having crossed the boundary of normal child behaviour in terms of sex, and assume she is capable of crossing another by committing murder. Fear spreads amongst the crew because they have seen that, without proper parental control, and on their watch, it has been possible for a child to become a killer.

Subverting social and cultural norms, *A High Wind in Jamaica* presents the children as a troubling presence on the ship. The crew are afraid that they will be hanged for the murder of the Dutchman and this changes the dynamic on board; the children are now 'treated with a detached severity not wholly divorced from fear – as if these unfortunate men at last realised what diabolic yeast had been introduced into their lump' (pp. 182-83). The pirates have the potential for violence, but the children are the possible catalysts. Following Emily's murder of Vandervoort, the pirates become increasingly desperate and when they see a potential target the men now sharpen their knives, instead of putting on disguises, as they would have done in the past. The significance of this is underlined: 'I have said that the murder of the Dutch captain had affected the whole character of their piracy. The yeast was working' (p. 221). Although the children are passengers, not sailors, it is suggested that they are an active and malevolent influence on the pirates. In his desperation, Jonsen imagines a scenario where they might be able to avoid delivering the children to St. Lucia and suggests to Otto the possibility of killing them by throwing them overboard.[115] Here, Jonsen contemplates actions more consistent with stereotypical pirates of myth, and he comes close to fulfilling the fate of the children imagined in Marpole's exaggerated letter to Mr. and Mrs. Bas-Thornton.

But it is the children who will instead condemn the pirates to death. Jonsen has a change of heart, abandoning his plans to catch the sailing ship he has targeted, and which the

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[115] Poole interprets Jonsen's suggestion as a joke, although the narrative is by no means clear on this point, and reads the opposition between the children and the pirates in terms of a Darwinian struggle for survival, in which the pirates' weakness lies in the mercy they show in delivering the children safely. Poole, *Richard Hughes: Novelist*, pp. 148-49.

men have been preparing to rob with violence. Instead, Jonsen changes the course of the pirate ship to intercept a steamboat and, when he eventually boards, Jonsen persuades the captain to take the children to England. Following their transfer, the children are soon surrounded by the steamer's passengers who have already heard the infamous, and easily imagined, story of the captured *Clorinda*.[116] Emily is escorted to a cabin by a stewardess and suddenly reacts strongly to her, having not seen a woman for months: 'Thank God she had not been born a boy! She was overtaken with a sudden revulsion against the whole sex of them' (p. 236). On impulse, Emily confides in the stewardess, but her narrative is not reported in the text, which focuses instead on her listener's reaction: 'the first look of incredulity changed to utter stupefaction' (p. 236). The stewardess leaves Emily to inform the captain but again, the dialogue is not reported and the reader is simply told: 'you many imagine that the steamer captain, when he heard the trick that had been played upon him, was as astonished as she' (p. 236-237). Back on board the pirate ship, Emily's swift betrayal is contrasted to Jonsen's misplaced trust:

> no intuition told him of Emily's whispering to the stewardess: of the steamer, shortly after, meeting with a British gunboat: of the long series of lights flickering between them. The gunboat, even now, was fast overhauling him… (p. 241)

Here the narrator is omniscient, relating Jonsen's lack of suspicion, while simultaneously informing the reader of the consequences of Emily's whisper, communicated to the stewardess, passed on to the captain, converted into Morse code, and flashed from the steamship to a warship. Otto has already acknowledged the vulnerability of sailing ships when the children had spotted a steamer in the distance when they first arrived on board the pirate ship: '"they'll be the death of us, those steamers [….] They'll be using them for men-of-war next, and then where'll we be?"' (p. 122). Referring to the tension between sail and steam explored in Conrad's maritime texts, *A High Wind in Jamaica* presents the pirates'

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[116] Although it is not made explicit in the text, Marpole's letter to the parents of the Bas-Thornton children, and his deceitful testimony, seem to be the likely sources of information accessed by the steamship passengers surrounding regarding the capture of the *Clorinda*.

vulnerability in their sailing ship, which is rapidly becoming an anachronism in an age of maritime technology.

   A High Wind in Jamaica does not end with dramatic death, punishment, or penitence, the conclusions typified by the pirate adventures of Doyle and Jesse. Instead, Hughes concludes the narrative with a criminal trial, showing how the institutions of justice can reconfigure into reality the romanticised world of piracy. Although the pirates' trial is supposed to distinguish fact from fiction, the children's memories of events on the pirate schooner are described as 'crystallising into myth' (p. 260). Emily is chosen to be a witness, but when the lawyer fails to gain sufficient information from her, he gives her a statement of what he thinks has happened for her to learn and rehearse, obscuring the facts of her testimony. When she is questioned about the Dutch captain in court, Emily's hysterical response is not recognised as a confession: '"He was all lying in his blood... he was awful! He... he died, he said something and he died!"' (p. 281). As a result of Emily's evidence, Jonsen, Otto, and the cook are hanged, receiving the ultimate punishment for a murder they did not commit, which questions the justice of their sentence. *A High Wind in Jamaica* subverts the norms of pirate fiction by presenting pirates as cunning thieves, rather than ruthless killers. It also questions the myth of childhood innocence by suggesting that the children are the agents, albeit unwittingly, of change, goading the crew into violence, and bringing them closer to the figures of notorious historical pirates.

   Early twentieth-century pirate fiction experiments with the conventions of the genre, from the aggressive male pirates in the texts of Doyle and Conrad, to Jesse's focus on a female captain, to the shrewd but farcical pirates in Hughes's novel. However, *A High Wind in Jamaica* marks a significant change in focus: the children, rather than the pirates, have become central to the text. This resonates with Cohen's argument that, as improvements in navigation and ship design made the seas less dangerous in the twentieth century, maritime

fiction started to concentrate on the inner turmoil of those on board.[117] Hughes's text presents an uncomfortable concept of the child as each exhibits forms of disturbing behaviour, and the loss of innocence and rationality within the group looks forward to the complete breakdown of a child's utopia seen in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954). Arguably, *A High Wind in Jamaica* is less about pirates than about the ship as a space isolated from society in which the potential for savagery can be glimpsed just beneath the surface of civilization.

Conclusion

A pattern is beginning to emerge in early twentieth-century pirate narratives: fact and fiction are manipulated in the exploration of social and cultural issues, particularly around the binary oppositions of man/woman and adult/child. Focusing first on the relationship between fact and fiction, twentieth-century pirate adventure narratives reveal an increasing gap between their fictional settings and historical events. The texts of Stevenson and Doyle are set in the 'Golden Age' of piracy around 1717-1722, but Jesse's *Moonraker* is set nearly a hundred years later at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The setting of Richard Hughes's *A High Wind in Jamaica* is more difficult to identify, but Paul Morgan argues that contemporary references locate the story in the 1920s, a hundred years after the events on the *Zephyr*.[118] Doyle's stories follow closely the accounts of real pirates Low and Lowther, while parallels can be drawn between Jesse's protagonist in *Moonraker* and real pirate Mary Read. By contrast, the only factual parallel in *A High Wind in Jamaica* occurs in the pirate raid at the beginning of the text. As the settings become further removed from the early eighteenth century, fictional pirates bear less resemblance to historical pirates, and they also seem to lose

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[117] Although Cohen suggests that safer sea voyages threatened maritime fiction, she also shows how this changed environment created the opportunity for writers such as Conrad to approach the genre in a new way, reworking 'sea adventure fiction to dramatize skilled work in other Edge zones that, like the maritime frontier, were murky, unknown, and risky, but that were qualitatively different: situated at the level of language and the human psyche, rather than the physical world'. Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea*, p. 180.

[118] Morgan, *The Art of Richard Hughes*, p. 27.

their power. Where Silver escapes justice at the end of *Treasure Island*, Doyle's Sharkey and Jesse's Lovel are killed, and Hughes's Jonsen is condemned to death at his trial.

Taking the pirate figure away from the historical context and bringing it closer to the present day makes a break with the past, and twentieth-century pirate texts also reflect changing attitudes to issues such as crime, justice, gender stereotypes, and childhood. This chapter has shown that *Moonraker*, although set in the early-nineteenth century, engages with feminist issues contemporary to its readership in the early twentieth century. *Moonraker* demonstrates how the adventure story is gaining complexity as Jesse's text challenges pirate stereotypes, presenting a female captain who falls in love with one of her captives and becomes involved in his political campaign. Like Anthony in Conrad's *Chance*, Lovel is weakened by love, but in contrast to Conrad's text, which sees First Mate Franklin assuming Anthony's duties, Lovel faces a mutiny. The dramatic revelation of Lovel's gender exacerbates her vulnerability, not only reflecting contemporary concerns about the position of women in society, but also undermining the adventure narrative in a modern world.

Arguing that Hughes felt the need to confront complacency, Peter Thomas reads *A High Wind in Jamaica* in terms of Hughes's attacks on 'pre-war social morality':

> Certain basic myths are undermined at source: belief in a secure society, in childhood innocence, the objectivity of human law, and above all a moral law which can clearly distinguish between saint and sinner.[119]

The pirate figure in Hughes's text can be read as representing the ways in which individuals can be unjustly crushed by institutions, and how their ruin can, in turn, destabilise society. Not only does *A High Wind in Jamaica* challenge pirate mythology, it also disrupts myths of childhood in its disturbing depictions of the encounters between the men and the young girls on board the ship. Hughes's text marked the final pirate adventure aimed at an adult readership in this period. *A High Wind in Jamaica* is also significant for its challenges to

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[119] Thomas, *Writers of Wales: Richard Hughes*, p. 49.

pirate mythology, specifically the strongly masculine and combative stereotypes of piracy: 'who ever heard of a pirate without guns? It was laughable: yet [Captain Jonsen] had proved again and again that one could make a capture as easily without them' (p. 218). Jonsen and his crew portray a new type of cunning pirate who uses guile rather than violence. Ultimately, however, the pirates are brought to justice when Emily confides in the stewardess who then makes a report to the captain. In the context of twentieth-century maritime fiction, the pirate, in sail, is defeated by steam when the captain of the steamboat sends signals to the gunship, leading to the capture of Jonsen and his crew. The development of steamships in the maritime industry represents progress in society, but *A High Wind in Jamaica* emphasises the casualties from the transition between sail and steam. Pirates belong to the past, the lost world of sail, and some of the factors affecting pirate fiction are those faced by maritime fiction more generally, that is, the decreasing relevance of these literary traditions in an increasingly industrialised world.[120] Subsequent pirate fiction, in the shape of the Swallows and Amazons series in the 1930s, reinforces the genre's change of direction by turning piracy into child's play.

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[120] In the twenty-first century the pirate problem is very much a reality. When I was sailing through the Gulf of Aden on SY *Windfall* as part of the Blue Water Rally in January 2003, we were aware of the risk of attacks from pirates armed with AK-47s operating speedboats from the coasts of Yemen and Somalia. This is a dangerous 'pinch-point' for shipping because the Gulf is narrow, making it necessary to sail in the centre and be aware of potential attacks from the coasts at all times. The tactics we used to ensure a safe passage were reported in *Yachting Monthly*. Dick Durham, 'Through the Gulf of Aden', *Yachting Monthly*, 25 February 2003, Available at http://www.yachtingmonthly.com/news/through-the-gulf-of-aden-26870 [accessed 17 January 2015].

Chapter Four

New Directions in Maritime Fiction I: From Tall Ships to Modern Yachts

Introduction: The Changing Shape of Adventures at Sea

New maritime technology, accelerated by the threat of war, made a significant impact on maritime fiction in the early twentieth century. Having explored the sail-steam conflict in Joseph Conrad's maritime novels as the first strand of the maritime tale, the return to the past in the fiction of pirate sailing ships has been analysed as the second strand. The third strand, which considers the textual representation of the individual aboard twentieth-century vessels, is analysed in the following three chapters. Rather than discrete divisions, the three narrative strands of twentieth-century maritime fiction are inter-linked. Certainly, the diversity of Conrad's maritime fiction is evident in its pervasive influence across these boundaries, from the traditional sailing narrative of *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* to the tale of the stricken steamship *Patna* in *Lord Jim*, and Conrad's foray into pirate fiction with *Romance*, making possible later developments in experimental versions of the sea story. Similarly, Richard Hughes wrote in part about the sailing ships of the past with his pirate novel *A High Wind in Jamaica*, but his later fiction, *In Hazard* (1938) placed the steamship centre-stage. Chapters five and six explore the narratives of the steamship, which had largely replaced sailing ships in the world's navies and in global trade in the twentieth century. This chapter focuses on the yacht narrative represented in Erskine Childers's *The Riddle of the Sands: A Record of the Secret Service* (1903), which I examine here as an example of a maritime novel which crosses genres and breaks away from the past to address the very real concerns of approaching war.

Although sail had become obsolete in the commercial and military sectors, the booming leisure sector provided a new role for sail in the form of yachts designed for competitive racing and cruising, and the exploration of seas and waterways for pleasure.[1] In

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[1] Leonard Piper, *Dangerous Waters: The Tragedy of Erskine Childers* (London: Hambledon and London, 2003).

Robert Foulke's study of sea voyage narratives, the final chapter of which examines the twentieth century, he observes that 'One of the most flourishing of the new subgenres is the yacht voyage'.[2] Most of his examples are non-fiction accounts, such as Joshua Slocum's *Sailing Alone Around the World* (1900), but he also mentions Erskine Childers's *The Riddle of the Sands*. Childers's maritime knowledge and involvement with naval intelligence draws on the legacy of fact and fiction running through pirate adventure narratives, as well as Conrad's novels. But rather than featuring a crew of professional sailors, such as Conrad's *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, *The Riddle of the Sands* is a tale of maritime espionage, or a spy novel set at sea, which follows the spy work of two amateur sailors from the upper-middle classes. This crossing over into another fictional genre and the portrayal of recreational sailing distinguishes *The Riddle of the Sands* from other maritime texts in the twentieth century, but their common concern is the changing role of the sailor in a rapidly changing and hostile world.

One important historical factor in the development of maritime novels at the turn of the twentieth century was the European arms race, particularly between England and Germany, which contributed to the outbreak of the Great War. Erskine Childers's *The Riddle of the Sands* was one of the most commercially successful novels of many that responded to a fear of invasion by sea and address the prospect of war.[3] A. Michael Matin identifies this type of invasion-scare story as a sub-genre of the many 'future war narratives' written in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century which, he suggests, were 'designed to stimulate public and Parliamentary support for increased military and naval expenditures'.[4] Although many of

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[2] Foulke, *The Sea Voyage Narrative*, pp. 159-169, (p. 161).

[3] Erskine Childers, *The Riddle of the Sands: A Record of the Secret Service* (1903; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 2-4. All references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

[4] Matin proposes that fiction influenced and was influenced by a growing appetite for war, contextualising the invasion-scare story in a time of competing theories of international diplomatic relations and sensational newspaper reporting. Matin uses the term 'future war narratives' to describe a number of novels written by military and naval professionals in this period. A. Michael Matin. 'The Creativity of War Planners: Armed Forces Professionals and the Pre-1914 British Invasion-Scare Genre', *English Literary History* 78.4 (2011),

these narratives cannot be classed as maritime fiction, the sea is the common factor, and here it acts as both a boundary and an entry point. In *The Riddle of the Sands* Childers drew upon this national invasion paranoia in his tale of two amateur sailors, cruising for pleasure in a yacht around the coast of Germany, who stumble on a plot to invade Britain. The text's emphasis on the importance of individuals in global events tapped into the increasingly popular spy fiction genre.[5] In this respect, *The Riddle of the Sands* also accorded with developments in the works of Doyle and Conrad as focus shifted from the collective voice of the crew in texts such as *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* to the individual sailor in Conrad's later maritime novels, particularly *The Shadow-Line*.

In contrast to the two heroic sailors in Erskine's novel, the individual in Doyle's Sharkey tales is a pirate and, hence, poses a threat to society. But, Doyle's later writings responded to real fears about the safety of society in the context of war hysteria, and he published a non-fiction article that voiced his concerns about Britain's defence: 'England and the Next War' (1913).[6] He also published an invasion-scare story entitled 'Danger! Being the Log of Captain John Sirius' (1914), which is presented as the narrative of Captain Sirius of Norland (an imaginary country at war with Britain) who uses eight submarines to sink a number of merchant vessels and blockade Britain, forcing the government to sue for peace.[7] Although Doyle intended his story to be a warning to the Royal Navy, Stashower observes that this propaganda was turned against him when the Germans claimed that it inspired their

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801-831. Available at http://muse.jhu.edu.abc.cardiff.ac.uk/journals/elh/v078/78.4.matin.html [accessed 1 December 2012].

[5] Edward Phillips Oppenheim was one of the most prolific authors in the spy fiction genre and his novels, beginning with *The Mysterious Mr Sabin* (1898), became increasingly popular in the first two decades of the twentieth century. The sea does not figure greatly in the spy novels of Oppenheim, aside from his concern about invasion, which he explains in his autobiography led him to write a number of novels about the threat of German militarism, including *The Mischief Maker*, *A Maker of History*, *The Great Secret*, *Double Traitor* and *The Great Impersonation*. E. Phillips Oppenheim, *The Pool of Memory* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1941).

[6] Stashower reveals Doyle's concerns about what he viewed as the worrying complacency of the Royal Navy and their reluctance to embrace new ideas and technologies, which could make Britain open to attack by sea. He explains the significance of Doyle's article: 'published in the *Fortnightly Review* in 1913, in which he described powerful new forms of warfare that had never been tested in the hands of "competent" men. "These new factors are the submarine and the airship," Conan Doyle wrote, expressing a view that had not been widely discussed at the time'. Stashower, *Teller of Tales*, p. 298.

[7] Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *Danger! and other Stories* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2008).

blockade of Britain by submarines during the Great War.[8] John Buchan also addressed the

fear that Britain was unprepared for war in *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (1915)[9], a tale of sinister

foreign agents stealing sensitive military and naval information, and their plans for escaping

by sea.[10] Historically, maritime novels like Conrad's *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* had

represented the sea as a means by which Britain could expand the Empire and participate in

global trade, but in these invasion-scare stories the sea brings enemies to British shores.

The Riddle of the Sands was a particularly important text because it responded to

concerns about Germany's increasing military strength and, as one of the most critically and

commercially successful books in the emerging invasion scare genre, it was hugely

influential. The story is narrated by a civil servant called Carruthers, who is invited by his

friend, Davies, to sail with him in the Baltic Sea. However, Davies has observed suspicious

military activity and, as he and Carruthers navigate the shallow waters and sand banks of the

North German coast, they gradually uncover a plan to launch an invasion of England from

seven German ports. They narrowly escape detection by the German Imperial Navy and

manage to capture a British traitor involved with the plot before sailing back to England with

this vital information. As had Conrad, Childers drew on his own sailing experience, but this

engagement with politics and espionage distinguishes *The Riddle of the Sands* from previous

works of maritime fiction. Childers's text reflected a focus on the individual and responded to

contemporary concerns; its setting aboard a small yacht also suggested a shift in focus from

the maritime world of commercial tall ships, to independent sailing.

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[8] Stashower, *Teller of Tales*, pp. 301-303.
[9] John Buchan, *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (1915; London: Dent, 1964).
[10] Thomas Hitchner divides the genre into two main categories: 'spy stories, which featured British spies operating in foreign territory, and counterspy stories, which featured patriotic heroes striving to expose and thwart foreign spies, preventing foreign invasion. Thomas Hitchner, 'Edwardian Spy Literature and the Ethos of Sportsmanship: The Sport of Spying', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920* 53.4 (2010), 413-430. Available at
http://muse.jhu.edu.abc.cardiff.ac.uk/journals/english_literature_in_transition/v053/53.4.hitchner.html [accessed 1 December 2012].

Part of the success and significance of *The Riddle of the Sands* can be attributed to its moment of publication, as fears of a German invasion started to alarm politicians, the press, and the general public in Britain. Leonard Piper places the text in the context of Erskine Childers's career as a soldier in the Boer War, referring to the two non-fiction texts examining military strategy he published prior to *The Riddle of the Sands*, namely, *In the Ranks of the CIV* (1900) and *The HAC in South Africa* (1903).[11] Piper also observes that, by the end of 1903, *The Riddle of the Sands* had been published in 'three editions, plus a special cheap edition that sold several hundred thousand copies', followed by further editions in 1904, 1907 and 1908.[12] This commercial success, according to Piper, proved to Childers the book's value in terms of military strategy and defence:

> [Childers] did not see the book as a successful novel; indeed he didn't see it as a novel at all. He had set out to awaken the government and people of England to a foreign threat; the book's success had done precisely that.[13]

Although Childers seemed to share the general concern about Germany's military expansion, in his preface to the 1910 edition he expressed the hope 'that 'nobody will read into this story of adventure any intention of provoking feelings of hostility' (p. 2). He cited his interest in British naval power, but strongly denied that his novel was aimed at German naval strategy or that it had an anti-German agenda.

In steering this difficult course between fact and fiction, Childers was following a route similar to that taken by maritime authors before him, and which would be followed by those who came later. Certainly, the ships and voyages in Conrad's novels bear close resemblance to the author's own days of sailing, particularly in texts such as *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, but there is more to Conrad's fiction than simply matching it with the facts of his career. Texts such as *The Shadow-Line* delve deeper into the figure of the sailor by presenting a first-person narrative that explores the psychological challenges facing a man

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[11] Piper, *Dangerous* Waters, pp. 62-66.
[12] Piper, *Dangerous Waters*, p. 72.
[13] Piper, *Dangerous Waters*, p. 78.

assuming his first command. Similarly, when looking at the figure of the pirate, twentieth-century pirate adventure fiction does more than simply produce facsimiles of infamous characters from history. Although Doyle's short stories are closely modelled on the histories of real pirates, his tales work in dialogue with them, defying romanticised stereotypes to present the pirate as an isolated and despicable figure. In *The Riddle of the Sands* fact is merged with fiction from the outset: in the preface to the 1903 edition Childers claimed that he was merely an editor and that his text had been constructed from the oral testimony of two men given the pseudonyms 'Davies' and 'Carruthers', who approached him about publishing their account in the interest of national security (pp. 3-5). With this overt claim to authenticity, Childers is muddying the waters, making it uncertain whether this text is the fictionalisation of his own sea travels or those of others.[14] In 1910 two British naval officers, Lieutenant Brandon and Captain Trench, were imprisoned by the German authorities for spying in German waters following the discovery of suspicious charts, papers, and photographs in Trench's hotel room in Emden and on board their yacht. During the trial, Trench was asked if he was aware of *The Riddle of the Sands* and replied that he had read it three times. On the back of such publicity, sales received a further boost and new editions were published in 1910, 1913 and 1914.[15]

The Riddle of the Sands offered a new perspective on invasion fears, but it also responded to the increasing popularity of sailing as a sport and leisure activity. The connection between yachting and international politics was played out in the escalating tensions between England and Germany as Edward Prince of Wales and his nephew, Kaiser Wilhelm II, raced their yachts against each other in Cowes Week regattas.[16] Edward was elected as commodore of the Royal Yacht Squadron in 1882 and Wilhelm became a member,

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[14] There are parallels here to Defoe's ability to construct multiple frames in a narrative, as defined by Davis in a chapter entitled 'Daniel Defoe: Lies as Truth'. Davis, *Factual Fictions*, pp. 154-166.
[15] Piper, *Dangerous Waters*, pp. 105-107.
[16] Veres Laszlo and Richard Wooman, *The Story of Sail* (London: Chatham Publishing, 1999), p. 322.

bringing over his yacht *Meteor* to race Edward's *Britannia*, in 1892.[17] Lothar Reinermann

argues that Kaiser Wilhelm's 'nautical interest was not regarded as threatening, but taken as a

compliment to something so very British'.[18] But, while the Kaiser's involvement in ships and

sailing was not perceived as sinister at the time, Reinermann observes that:

> the Emperor's motor yacht *Hohenzollern* was ostentatiously accompanied by a
> number of new German vessels. This was the first sign of Wilhelm's ambitious aim to
> build a navy of his own.[19]

Kaiser Wilhelm had always denied any intention to invade Britain, but historian Paul

Kennedy has shown that the Kaiser had been considering plans for an invasion of England

from 1896 onwards.[20] However, by the time *The Riddle of the Sands* was published, such an

invasion had been deemed unworkable due to the strength of the Royal Navy and the threat of

a war on two fronts involving France and Russia.

Erskine Childers also owned and sailed yachts, although his were far smaller than

those sailed by the monarchs of Britain and Germany. Moreover, Childers was not involved

in sailing as a competitive sport; as a member of the Royal Cruising Club he was more

interested in sailing for pleasure and exploration.[21] Biographer Andrew Boyle associates

Childers's increasingly ambitious voyages with the desire for adventure that saw him enlist in

the Army, as well as feeling himself part of the wider sense of nationalism and militarism in

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[17] Anon, 'About RYS', n.d. Available at http://www.rys.org.uk/about/history [accessed 3 December 2012].
[18] Lothar Reinermann, 'Fleet Street and the Kaiser: British Public Opinion and Wilhelm II', *German History* 26.4 (2008), 469-485, (473). Available at http://gh.oxfordjournals.org.abc.cardiff.ac.uk/content/26/4/469.full?sid=f9ba7bdf-2188-4386-ab79-ed59d882f3dc [accessed 5 December 2012].
[19] Reinermann, 'Fleet Street', 473.
[20] Paul Kennedy, 'Riddle of the Sands', 'Saturday Review', *The Times*, 3 January 1981, p.7. Available at http://find.galegroup.com/ttda/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TTDA&userGroupName=ucw_itc&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&docId=CS117671971&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0 [accessed 30 November 2012].
[21] The home page of the organisation's website has the following introduction: 'The Royal Cruising Club was founded in 1880 by Sir Arthur Underhill and a coterie of friends to encourage and facilitate cruising in small yachts. [....] Many familiar sailing names have been RCC members: Claud Worth, Erskine Childers, Tilman, Miles and Beryl Smeeton, and that other remarkable couple Eric and Susan Hiscock, whose lifetime of voyaging inspired countless long distance sailors'. Anon, 'The Royal Cruising Club', n.d. Available at http://www.rcc.org.uk/ [accessed 19 April 2013].

the UK and throughout Europe.[22] Later, his sailing experience enabled Childers, a passionate advocate of Home Rule, to make a bold political statement when he used his yacht *Asgard* to smuggle guns to the Irish Volunteers in July 1914.[23] Childers managed to accomplish this in secret, but just weeks later the British Government tracked him down in Dublin. However, it was the fame of *The Riddle of the Sands* and Childers's knowledge of German coastal waters that interested them and he was asked to write a report on a possible invasion by Germany. Upon offering to assist the war effort, Childers was accepted and joined the Royal Navy as an intelligence officer.[24] In their examinations of Childers, Boyle and Piper try to account for his inconsistencies: he enlisted both in the British Armed Forces in the Boer War and the Great War, but acted against the British Government by smuggling arms to Ireland. After the war, Childers became deeply involved again with Sinn Fein and the Irish Republican Army. Like his protagonists in *The Riddle of the Sands*, Childers was playing a deadly game involving war, international politics, and covert operations at sea, but he paid the ultimate price when he was tried and executed for treason in 1922.[25]

Spies, Sailors, and *The Riddle of the Sands*

In examining this historical context it becomes apparent that a new form of twentieth-century maritime adventure fiction was beginning to take shape: fear of war and the increasing popularity of yachting fed into sailing narratives and spy stories, of which *The Riddle of the Sands* is perhaps the most famous. In the later years of his life, Childers's knowledge of the

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[22] Andrew Boyle, *The Riddle of Erskine Childers* (London: Hutchinson, 1977), pp. 71-97.

[23] Boyle charts Childers's enduring belief in Home Rule and his supporting actions, including his involvement in buying and supplying guns to the Irish Volunteers. Childers helped to secure funds from a select group of subscribers and then travelled to Hamburg to negotiate with an arms dealer, arranging a rendezvous just off the German coast in July for the transaction. Childers sailed in company with another yacht and together they loaded 1500 rifles and 49,000 rounds of ammunition. He sailed to Howth, a peninsular to the North-East of Dublin, and handed over the arms to his contacts in Ireland. Boyle, *The Riddle*, pp. 170-209.

[24] Boyle charts Childers's position as intelligence officer firstly, aboard the *Engardine* and subsequently the *Ben My Chree*. In 1916 he returned to an office-based post in the Admiralty in England before being assigned to the Motor Boat Squadron in December. In July 1917 he was appointed to the Irish Convention, but by April 1918 they had failed to come to any agreement. Boyle, *The Riddle*, pp. 196-243.

[25] Piper, *Dangerous Waters*, pp. 193-214.

sea informed his official and unofficial political and military appointments, but it was in the early years of his sailing experience that he found much of his material for *The Riddle of the Sands*. Between August and November 1897 Childers sailed, with his brother and a friend, from Boulogne via the coasts of France and Belgium, to Dordrecht in the Netherlands and on to Kiel and Flensburg in Germany. Piper intersperses the details of Childers's voyage in his third yacht, *Vixen*, with excerpts from *The Riddle of the Sands* in order to emphasise the links between fact and fiction, particularly in matters relating to sailing and navigation.[26] The mixing of fact and fiction has always been a feature of traditional maritime fiction, but the key difference here is that the ships are no longer sailed by professionals; this new genre is dangerous and unstable because the protagonists in this adventure narrative are part-time amateur sailor/spies. Another key departure from traditional maritime fiction is the fact that the sailing/spy story in the early twentieth century is appealing to a wider audience. In *The Riddle of the Sands* the first person narrative is focalised through Carruthers, who joins his friend Davies on his yacht, *Dulcibella*, as he gradually develops his understanding of sailing. This technique enables the uninitiated general reader to grow in knowledge of both sailing and spying, as sailing technicalities are carefully explained. Indeed, the word 'riddle' in the title anticipates the novel's emphasis on the pursuit of knowledge.

Initially, the purpose of sailing the *Dulcibella* in the Baltic Sea seems innocuous: Davies is a man of leisure and Carruthers is on holiday. The first suggestion that there is something amiss is when Carruthers discovers that a page of the log book is missing (p. 48). This is significant because a ship's log is supposed to be sacrosanct: the captain relies on it for navigational purposes, recording the ship's location at regular intervals and noting the wind speed and direction, sea state, visibility, general weather conditions and any significant events. Removing a page represents a gross violation of maritime etiquette and suggests that

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[26] Piper, *Dangerous Waters*, pp. 29-31.

Davies is hiding something very serious. Later, Davies reveals to Carruthers that he believes

a man, Dollman, on a ship called the *Medusa*, is involved in some form of espionage that

concerns a plot to invade Britain. The missing page of the log book contains notes made by

Davies incriminating Dollman, suggesting that he guided Davies through an area riddled with

sand banks during a period of bad weather and sailed out of sight, leaving Davies behind in

low visibility without knowing the safe route. The implication is that Dollman realised that

Davies had suspicions about him and was hoping that the *Dulcibella* would be wrecked and

Davies killed. This part of the voyage was, naturally, recorded in Davies's log book and so he

ripped it out, knowing that it was evidence of Dollman's murderous intention. The links

between the genres of maritime fiction and the spy story are particularly evident here,

because unpicking the specialist sailing knowledge about the log book and navigation of sand

banks involves the reader in visualising life at sea. Similarly, 'The Blighting of Sharkey' also

features the presentation of log-book evidence in the narrative, but in Doyle's story the report

is written by naval officers trying to piece together the whereabouts of the pirate. Log-book

evidence can be patchy, incomplete, or even contradictory, revealing as much about its

authors as the events it records, and drawing the reader's attention to the sometimes arbitrary

division between fact and fiction.[27]

The links between maritime fiction and the spy story are reinforced by the twentieth-

century sailing vessel: small and movable, yachts are ideally suited to espionage. When

Davies tells Carruthers about the incident described above, he agrees to stay on board and

help Davies find the channels that will help them navigate through the shifting sands and

solve the mystery posed by Dollman. Another key player in the plot turns out to be

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[27] Although Margaret Cohen does not examine *The Riddle of the Sands* in depth, like Foulke she acknowledges the significance of this text in its larger historical and literary context, noting that 'Detective fiction and spy fiction are two other forms of the novel that flourish at the turn of the twentieth century, using sea fiction's adventures in problem-solving to explore the expanding frontier of information'. Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea*, p. 10.

Commander von Brüning of the German torpedo boat *Blitz*.[28] Von Brüning's task is to guard

the channels and ensure that Davies and Carruthers do not discover the plans to invade

England, but he explains his presence to Davies and Carruthers by claiming to be involved

with the salvaging of a wreck containing bullion at Memmert. Davies and Carruthers use

shallow water channels to circumvent von Brüning, arriving secretly at Memmert, and

eavesdropping on a rendezvous attended by Dollman, von Brüning and two other

conspirators, Böhme and Grimm. Here, Carruthers gains further clues about German plans to

invade Britain. The shifting of the sands at low and high tide becomes a metaphor for secrecy

and intrigue, constituting the riddle of the title.

Further guides for the uninitiated reader of *The Riddle of the Sands* include two

geographical maps, which focus on landmarks, and two sea charts that indicate water depth

and sea-based features. Map A (p. 6), shows the German coastline, and Davies uses this map

to explain to Carruthers (and the reader) how the coasts of England and Holland can be seen

in terms of national security. Later in the text, Map B (p. 8) shows the geographical area of

the German channels and islands in greater detail and includes the rail connections, vital

because they prove the suitability of the area as an offensive base.[29] When Davies needs to

explain to Carruthers how Dollman misled him in heavy weather, he refers to the sea chart A

(p. 7), which shows the track of the *Dulcibella* as Davies navigated through the sands (pp. 62-

66). Similarly, sea chart B shows the details of the sands around Memmert and the track

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[28] The three ships are given names that reflect whether they are friendly or hostile: Davies's yacht is called the *Dulcibella*, which translates as sweet and pretty in Italian, denoting its diminutive size and the affection Davies feels for it. Conversely, the 'enemy' vessels have sinister names: Dollman sails the *Medusa*, a Gorgon in Greek mythology whose gaze turned the spectator to stone, and the torpedo gunship is named *Blitz*, possibly derived from 'blitzen', the German word for lightning.

[29] It is the inclusion of the maps and charts that prompts Lang and Thomas, two contemporary reviewers, to suggest that 'The book must stand, not as a novel, but as a sketch in naval geography, with adventures, incomprehensible to the landsman, thrown in'. Andrew Lang and Sir William Beach Thomas, 'The Riddle of the Sands', *Times Literary Supplement*, 14 August 1903, p. 242, *Times Literary Supplement Historical Archive*. Available at
http://find.galegroup.com.libezproxy.cardiff.ac.uk/dvnw/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=DVNW&userGroupName=tou&tabID=T003&docPage=article&docId=EX1200001633&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0 [accessed 4 December 2012].

taken by Carruthers and Davies when they row their dinghy to the conspirators' rendezvous to uncover their plans. Although descriptions of sailing and navigation are common in maritime fiction because they establish the authenticity of the narrative, maps and charts are not often used. Even when maps are included, in such texts as *Treasure Island* and *Moonraker*, they are far less technical, appealing to the general reader, as well as the knowledgeable reader. As Piper observes, Childers did not see himself as a novelist but instead 'saw his future in terms of a military analyst. For him, the whole point of the book was the serious message it contained: the German threat and British ill-preparedness to deal with it'.[30] With *The Riddle of the Sands*, Childers moved away from the romanticised tradition of setting up sailor heroes to face challenges at sea typified in Conrad's texts, particularly *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*. Instead, *The Riddle of the Sands* works on a smaller scale, with two men on a yacht cruising coastal waters in a narrative that is painstaking in its explanation of minute technical details, especially navigation. The accumulation of factual details within the fictional narrative creates a sense of urgency, a desperate need for credibility, which corresponds to the very real threat facing Britain.

Despite the presence of maps and charts, there are no illustrations of ships or sailors in the text and, in contrast to the romantic description of ships by authors such as Conrad, Doyle, and Jesse, the *Dulcibella* is represented to be an ungainly vessel with an ironic name. Carruthers compares it unfavourably with yachts intended to reflect their owners' status and to be sailed at speed in short races: 'The decks had none of that creamy purity which Cowes expects, but were rough and grey, and showed tarry exhalations round the seams and rusty stains near the bows' (p. 29). Cruising yachts, like the *Dulcibella*, are designed for sustained practical use and so the decks are rough to prevent sailors slipping, while the tar stains, caused by the engine's exhaust, and the rust caused by the anchor chain, indicate that the

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[30] Piper, *Dangerous Waters*, p. 72.

yacht is in constant use and frequently anchored in different locations at sea, rather than moored in a harbour.[31] While in Conrad's texts the smooth lines of his trading vessels indicate their speed and commercial viability, in *The Riddle of the Sands* the ugliness of the cruising yacht is almost proof of its seaworthiness. This is reinforced when Carruthers notes that 'in the distant past [the *Dulcibella*] had been a lifeboat, and had been clumsily converted into a yacht' (p. 29). It is a key part of Carruthers's initiation that he learns to appreciate the boat's function over its form and is converted from a civil servant to an adventurer, a process Joseph Kestner suggests is inscribed in terms of Carruthers's masculinisation.[32] But there are further implications: as a racing yachtsman Carruthers has enjoyed a superficial relationship with the sea and sailing, but his experiences on the cruising yacht are made more profound by the seriousness of the quest.

While the yacht itself may not be attractive, the sailors are, and in this sense the text upholds the myth of the handsome sailor hero. The depiction of Davies's face is intended to suggest a man who is trustworthy and reliable, who has 'pleasant blue eyes, open, clean-cut features, [and an] unintellectual forehead' (p. 21). Carruthers describes Davies in contradictory terms so that every virtue is somehow emphasised, noting that Davies's face:

> had always rather irritated me by an excess of candour and boyishness. These qualities it had kept, but the scales were falling from my eyes, and I saw others. I saw strength to obstinacy, and courage to recklessness, in the firm lines of the chin; an older and deeper look in the eyes. (p. 31)

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[31] Since being founded in 1880, the Royal Cruising Club has had the intention to bring together like-minded sailors, but also states on its website the importance of sharing navigational good practice and local pilotage information: 'Members were encouraged, then as now, to contribute to the enjoyment and safety of others by writing up accounts of their cruises for the Club Journal, publishing coastal guides and many other works of pilotage. [....] Since 1976, thanks to the hard work of many RCC members and other like-minded yachtsmen and women, the RCC Pilotage Foundation has been endeavouring "to advance the education of the public in the science and practice of navigation". The Foundation publishes a wide range of pilotage information'. Anon, 'The Royal Cruising Club', n.d. Available at http://www.rcc.org.uk/ [accessed 19 April 2013]

[32] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction*, pp. 47-53. Kestner reads *The Riddle of the Sands* as the 'regeneration, remasculininsing and maturation of a smug Foreign Office clerk [Carruthers] into a man of action' (p. 48). Placing the novel in the context of Childers's concern about the Royal Navy, Kestner also argues that '*The Riddle of the Sands*, then, not only describes initiation as remasculinisation. It also enacts it, since in fact its positions were acted upon in the interests of England's defence' (p. 53).

Initially, Davies seems to be too honest and childish to Carruthers, but he gradually comes to appreciate new virtues in his companion. Even though *The Riddle of the Sands* is not a text that follows the classic maritime fiction tradition, Carruthers and Davies embody the myth of heroic sailors because their discoveries turn out to have national strategic importance. This is confirmed when Carruthers manages to hide himself away on a tug belonging to Grimm, one of the conspirators, and observes 'an experimental rehearsal of a great scene' (p. 247). Here, Carruthers learns about the surprise attack planned by Germany on the East coast of Britain. The influence of earlier maritime fiction is explicitly acknowledged when Carruthers is searching for a hiding place and bemoans the absence of 'an empty apple-barrel, such as Jim of *Treasure Island* found so useful' (p. 243). This reference to Stevenson's nineteenth-century novel clearly situates *The Riddle of the Sands* in the maritime adventure tradition.

Indeed, the text emphasises the importance of gaining maritime knowledge through learning sailing skills and, as Carruthers learns to navigate the channels between the sands, he also discovers their significance to the spy plot. Together with Davies, he solves the riddle of the sands: the network of seven islands and seven channels, which they have been exploring, is to be used to launch a fleet of boats carrying enemy soldiers. An offensive from this area would be unexpected because the waters are shallow and treacherous to navigate, but Davies and Carruthers discover that these difficulties are to be overcome by the use of shallow-drafted German vessels handled by seamen with local knowledge. Carruthers and Davies continue to play the role of heroes as they plan to capture the British traitor, Dollman, and take him 'secrets and all, daughter and all, away from Germany altogether' (p. 171). Believing that Dollman's daughter Clara is not involved in her father's conspiracy, Carruthers and Davies go to Dollman's villa and confront him with their evidence of his part in the invasion plans. Kestner interprets Clara Dollman's role as a direct threat to the novel's avowed masculinity: 'Clara threaten[s] the two men's camaraderie. Though opposed to her

father's traitorous activities, she might also weaken Davies' will against her father'.[33] Clara's role, however, is passive; she is defined first by her connection to her father and then by her connection to Davies, her rescuer, and each man excludes her from knowledge in the name of protection. Female characters are largely absent from the maritime fiction tradition, and a similar level of exclusion also works in Conrad's *Chance* when Powell refuses to let Flora know that her father has committed suicide, having been caught attempting to poison her husband, Captain Anthony.

In its marginalisation of women and its emphasis on the heroic sailor, *The Riddle of the Sands* adopts some of traditional commentaries of maritime fiction. But it is also innovative, particularly in its representation of sailing, which is no longer portrayed as a lost tradition to which the reader can never have access. Instead, sailing is shown as a skill, explained in detail as it is learnt by the protagonist and his companion Carruthers, the novice sailor, making sailing appear to be almost within the capabilities of the reader. Although ostensibly realist, a feature that is emphasised in the explanation of sailing technicalities and the inclusion of maps, the novel is idealistic in its attempt to recapture elements of the sea adventure narratives of the past. Although Carruthers and Davies are successful in capturing Dollman and taking him back on board the *Dulcibella*, the intricacies of Dollman's trial are neatly avoided when he is shown committing suicide by jumping over board. Even though *The Riddle of the Sands* engages with real-world problems, espionage is very much portrayed as a game as Davies and Carruthers oscillate between being the hunters and the hunted.

Conclusion

The Riddle of the Sands departs from the classic sea story structure that pits man against sea in Conradian texts, creating a new function of the ship as a factor in international politics.

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[33] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction*, p. 51.

Conrad's maritime fiction appeals to the inexperienced sailor through intricate explanations about sailing. This attention to factual details is an important feature in the maritime fiction genre, where it helps to establish the text's authenticity. Like Conrad, Erskine Childers includes a wealth of technical detail in *The Riddle of the Sands*, reinforcing the connection between fact and fiction characteristic of the genre. Later, as authors such as Malcolm Lowry and James Hanley focus on the steamship, technical details transfer from the sails to the ship's engines, but it is all still part of the crucial interplay between fact and fiction, real and imagined.

But, more importantly, *The Riddle of the Sands* is a text that reveals the dangerous implications of interweaving fact and fiction in the maritime adventure narrative. Childers conceived his novel as a warning to the admiralty; although later it transpired that they had already been considering the likelihood of an invasion on the East coast of Britain. In due course, the Admiralty announced plans for a North Sea naval base shortly before the text's publication, which Childers acknowledged in a postscript dated March 1903. In this postscript Childers also commented favourably on some of the subsequent actions taken by the Royal Navy, including the possibility of setting up a Volunteer Reserve to harness the sailing skills of civilians in case of need (pp. 267-268). Furthermore, in the epilogue Childers claimed that the evidence of the narrative was corroborated by a crucial incriminating document from Dollman's villa: 'a confidential memorandum to the German Government embodying a scheme for the invasion of England by Germany' (p. 260). Examining the details around the novel's conception reveals how closely fiction is built upon fact and even the extent to which Childers wished to influence politics.

The impact of *The Riddle of the Sands* cannot be under-estimated; it was a best-seller, one of the most popular books in a whole sub-genre of invasion scare stories that stoked a frenzy of military ship-building and contributed to growing tensions between England and

Germany. In the maritime tradition, focus had been on reading the shipboard community as a social microcosm, but *The Riddle of the Sands* emphasises the role of the individual, and his importance on the international stage. This marks a change of direction in the genre, also evident in Conrad's later maritime fiction, which anticipates James Hanley's *Boy* (1931) and Malcolm Lowry's *Ultramarine* (1933). These later examples of maritime fiction examine the minute details of the seaman's life, delving deeper than Conrad and Childers, to the level of his innermost thoughts, fears, and desires.

Chapter Five

New Directions in Maritime Fiction II: From Sail to Steam

Introduction: Mechanisation and the Dismantling of Maritime Myths

Although Childers's detailed descriptions of sailing create the illusion that this is an adventure in reach of its readers, such access to sailing boats would still have been very much in the realm of fantasy for many. Firstly, life at sea remained an almost entirely male domain, and secondly, prosaic economic realities restricted the sport to the moneyed middle and upper classes because boats cost money to buy, equip, and maintain.[1] While *The Riddle of the Sands* presents the privileged voices in a narrative of modern yachting, this chapter considers the very different world of the lower-class working sailor in the modern steamship with James Hanley's *Boy* (1931) and Malcolm Lowry's *Ultramarine* (1933). In contrast to Childers and Hughes, who enjoyed yachting, James Hanley wrote from his own position of being driven to sea by economic necessity, and he started out as a ship's boy on a steamship in 1914.[2] Hanley drew on his factual experience in his novel, *Boy*, which is informed by his perspective of the maritime industry from the lowest place in the hierarchy of the ship's crew. Focalised through the eyes of a young ship's boy called Arthur Fearon, the text reflects the extent to which the protagonist is disenfranchised, particularly when compared to ship's boy Jim Hawkins in *Treasure Island* (1883), who has far greater agency. Just two years later, Malcolm Lowry published *Ultramarine*, which also presented life on board a steamship from the perspective of the ship's boy. But Lowry's position was different because he came from a wealthy background and, rather like Conrad, had a romantic longing to go to sea. Conrad, of

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[1] Male exclusivity operated throughout the Royal Navy, merchant navy, and the yachting industry. Sailing clubs also assumed the arbitrary gender division; the Royal Yacht Squadron website records the extension of their hospitality to women: '1919 – 1948 After the war, the ladies arrived. They had been entertained before in the "Deer Park", as the lawn was named in their honour, but it was not until the Squadron secured the ballroom below Castle Rock […] that they had a roof of their own'. Anon, 'About RYS: History', n.d., Available at http://www.rys.org.uk/about/history/ [accessed 13 December 2007].

[2] Hanley's autobiography focuses on his maritime career, sandwiched between his family background and his later career as a writer. He left school in the summer of 1914, spending much of the Great War working as an Ordinary Seaman on merchant ships converted for troop-carrying, before joining the Canadian Army in 1917. James Hanley, *Broken Water: An Autobiographical Excursion* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1937), pp. 34-206.

course, stayed in the merchant service for nineteen years, eventually rising to the position of captain, but Lowry served on a ship, the *S. S. Pyrrhus*, for just one voyage in 1927.[3]

The shared element of *The Riddle of the Sands*, *Boy* and *Ultramarine* is their explanation of the complexities of the maritime world and the technicalities of sailing for the uninitiated reader through the eyes of protagonists who are themselves learning the ropes. Childers's text represents a new breed of independent sailor, sailing his own craft and plotting his own course. In *The Riddle of the Sands* the ship and the sea are associated with a sense of freedom only possible outside the restrictions and conventions of society, but in *Boy* and *Ultramarine*, away from the scrutiny of society and its laws, seamen are shown to abuse that freedom in order to exploit those of lower status. In the orderly environment of a modern steamship this is unexpected and stands in contrast to, for example, the strict system of rules operating on Banks's pirate ship in Doyle's short story 'How Copley Banks Slew Captain Sharkey'.

Sailors and Whores in James Hanley's *Boy*

Not only did Hanley's *Boy* mark a radical departure from the classic tradition of maritime fiction, the publishing history shows how the text was frequently used by different parties for their own political purposes. James Hanley was a versatile and prolific author whose literary career spanned more than forty years and he wrote on a wide range of subjects, from non-fiction reviews and articles to short stories, novels, and plays.[4] He is often associated with the maritime fiction genre because of the notoriety of *Boy*, his first full-length sea novel, which has had the most significant and long-lasting impact of all his work. Although Hanley received critical admiration, establishing an academic/literary readership, he never managed to achieve popular success and his early works were often published in limited editions of

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[3] Bradbrook, *Malcom Lowry*, p. 41.
[4] Linnea Gibbs, *James Hanley: A Bibliography* (Vancouver: William Hoffer, 1980), p. 20.

between 99 and 550 copies, many of which are now out of print.[5] As much of his work has

fallen into obscurity in the twenty-first century, investigating author and novel presents a

series of puzzles and contradictions. For example, Chris Gostick describes Hanley's

autobiography *Broken Water* (1937) as 'a teasing palimpsest of truth and imagination' and

reveals that the author was born in Liverpool in 1897, not in Dublin in 1901 as he claimed.[6]

Hanley's other quasi-autobiographical work, *Don Quixote Drowned* (1953), is an even more

complex blend of fact and fiction, consisting of six essays of varying length ranging from

discussions of his work as a writer to character sketches of men with whom he sailed.[7] *Boy* is

the notable exception to the critical neglect of Hanley's writing, although its fame - or

notoriety - can be partly attributed to its status as a *cause célèbre* after the obscenity case

brought against it in 1934.[8]

    Boy was originally published by Boriswood in September 1931 in a limited edition of

145 copies.[9] A trade edition followed later that year, in which some of the more sexually

explicit words and phrases were censored and replaced by asterisks. On the cover was an

endorsement from T. E. Lawrence, saying that 'BOY [*sic*] is very remarkable.' [10] However,

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[5] In 1989 Frank Harrington published a short but informative account of Hanley's writing career, life in Wales, and friendship with John Cowper Powys. Harrington's checklist of Hanley's publications gives an indication of the volume of work that Hanley produced: thirty novels, ten short story collections, and six works of non-fiction. He also wrote plays, some of which were produced for radio and broadcast by the BBC, and he published a collection of his plays in 1968. Harrington's account of his painstaking collection of Hanley's books through rare book dealers shows how far the popularity of his works had slipped because interest in Hanley is focused on the rarity of his texts, rather than their content (pp. 12-13). On the title page of *James Hanley: A Bold and Unique Solitary* there is a statement saying that this slim volume is 'a revised and expanded version of an article that appeared in the American Book Collector, May 1987'. Frank G. Harrington, *James Hanley: A Bold and Unique Solitary* (Francestown USA: Typographeum, 1989), pp. 37-40.

[6] Gostick's material is significant because he challenges the myth perpetuated by Hanley that he was born in Dublin in 1901 by explaining that Hanley's parents, and the birth of their twelve children, can be traced back to Liverpool from 1892-1916. Chris Gostick, 'Extra Material' in James Hanley, *Boy* (Richmond, Surrey: OneWorld Classics, 2007), pp. 181-204, (p. 182).

[7] James Hanley, *Don Quixote Drowned* (London: MacDonald, 1953).

[8] For a full account of *Boy*'s publication, and the ensuing legal case, see James Armstrong, 'The Publication, Prosecution, and Re-publication of James Hanley's *Boy* (1931)', *The Library* (1997) s6-19 (4), 351-362. Available at http://library.oxfordjournals.org/ [accessed 10 May 2013].

[9] The prospectus for this limited edition gives a description of it as 'A Moral Novel' [*sic*]. Linnea Gibbs, *James Hanley: A Bibliography* (Vancouver: William Hoffer, 1980), p. 20.

[10] The full quotation on the cover of the 1931trade edition reads: 'BOY is very remarkable... Your writing is just a transparent medium, through which what you want to say slips invisibly and silently into my mind. I like that:

John Fordham points out that this endorsement is unreliable because it was assembled, by C. J. Greenwood, a director of Boriswood, from 'bits of Lawrence's letters to both himself and Hanley'.[11] Writing in the *Times Literary Supplement*, Geoffrey West considered the violence and sexual content in *Boy* to be gratuitous, but he apportioned some of the blame to the manner in which the text was censored: 'it is the effect of these omissions, indicated by blanks and stars, to be far more suggestive than any of the actual words, even to the degree of making certain passages, perhaps justifiable as frank statement, simply repellent'.[12] The scene where the teenage protagonist, Arthur Fearon, is sexually solicited by the steward, shortly after Arthur is discovered stowed away on board the ship, supports West's argument:

> He was afraid to cry out. Like one hypnotised he lay still. The ** ** **** *******
> ***** *** ******. [*sic*] He tried to think but could not, and ** ***** ** ******
> ** *** *** ***** *** ***. [*sic*] He clenched his hands, murmuring**:**
> "Get off. Get off, you dirty beast." (p. 114)[13]

This censorship makes it difficult to ascertain the severity and nature of the abuse, encouraging the reader to assume the worst. The unexpurgated extract is not as graphic as the censored section implies:

> He was afraid to cry out. Like one hypnotised he lay still. The next moment the boy felt a hand stealing amongst the bedclothes. A single blanket covered him. He tried to think but could not, and suddenly the weight of the man was upon him. He clenched his hands, murmuring:
> "Get off. Get off, you dirty beast." (p. 72)[14]

It seems excessive to censor such phrases as 'the weight of the man was upon him'. West's view was that the censorship was provocative rather than protective, but West was also

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it seems to me the essence of style. Parts of BOY are very painful: yet I think that your sanity and general wholesomeness stick up out of your books a mile high...' Gibbs, *James Hanley*, p. 21.

[11] John Fordham, *James Hanley: Modernism and the Working Class* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2002), p. 104.

[12] Geoffrey West, 'Boy', *Times Literary Supplement,* 5 November 1931, p. 62. *Times Literary Supplement Historical Archive*. Available at http://find.galegroup.com.libezproxy.cardiff.ac.uk/dvnw/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=DVNW&userGroupName=tou&tabID=T003&docPage=article&docId=EX1200238875&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0 [accessed 4 March 2013].

[13] James Hanley, *Boy* (London: Boriswood, 1931).

[14] James Hanley, *Boy* (1931; Richmond, Surrey: OneWorld Classics, 2007). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

critical about the novel as a whole; he called it 'a very terrible book' on the basis that the level of abuse in the novel was not justified.[15]

Boriswood brought out a cheap edition of *Boy* in 1934 in which the expurgated passages were either replaced or rewritten. Trading on the novel's controversy, Boriswood featured extracts from five reviews, including the negative response of Sir Hugh Walpole: 'A novel that is so unpleasant and ugly, both in narration and in incident, that I wonder the printers did not go on strike while printing it'.[16] In addition to using Walpole's moral indignation to sensationalise and exaggerate the text's sexual content, Boriswood also produced a new dust jacket which featured a scantly-clad belly dancer. It was these provocative additions that brought the novel to the attention of the police and which became key to the prosecution's case.[17] In 1935 the novel was withdrawn (after 1,501 copies had been sold) and Boriswood were fined £400.[18] The overt representation of sex in *Boy* certainly marked a departure from the classic maritime fiction genre, compared to the more usually male-dominated homosocial adventure narratives of the nineteenth century. But, although *Boy* was far more candid in its exploration of sex and the sex trade than previous texts in the maritime tradition, Boriswood's cover image was deliberately titillating and bore little relation to the text's representation of illicit sexuality as sordid and dangerous.

Boy was one of a number of novels, including James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928), which was banned in the UK as a consequence of the Obscene Libel law. Authors and academics rallied to defend freedom of speech in Britain and *Boy*, turning a work of maritime fiction into a *cause célèbre*. When E.

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[15] West elucidates further: 'Mr. Hanley might plead that such things do happen, and so should be set down. We sympathize with that point of view, and indeed it were well that all should realize of what, at the lower end of the scale, humanity is capable; but at the same time we do feel that the author has carried his indictment beyond belief, and that he does enter into quite unnecessary detail in some of the later scenes'. West, 'Boy', p. 62.

[16] Gibbs, *James Hanley*, p. 25.

[17] Gibbs, *James Hanley*, pp. 25-26.

[18] Armstrong notes that Hanley protested about the cover in an article, saying that it was 'disgusting' and that it 'had no relation to the subject of the book, which is the very reverse of suggestive'. Armstrong, 'Publication, Prosecution, and Re-publication', 357.

M. Forster addressed the *Paris Congress of Writers* he emphasised the absurdity of banning

Boy, not least because it had already been in publication for four years and had gone through

four editions.[19] Hanley was distressed by the controversy but publishers continued to trade on

the text's notoriety. The Obelisk Press, in Paris, brought out an unexpurgated edition of *Boy*

in 1936, with a note on the title-page stating '(Banned In England, May 1935)'.[20] Hanley's

work of maritime fiction had crossed the English Channel and been published in France as a

comment on stereotypically prudish English attitudes towards sex. It is perhaps unsurprising

that, although Hanley eventually assented to the publishers' wish to re-issue *Boy* on its

fiftieth anniversary in 1982, he cancelled the project before it was completed.[21]

Hanley has always attracted a small but loyal band of supporters; his obituary in 1985

ended with an appeal for the texts of this 'neglected genius' to be re-assessed.[22] Edward

Stokes, who wrote the first full-length critical study of Hanley's novels, was not alone in

comparing Hanley to Joseph Conrad. Before going on to explain why he considers Hanley

worthy of study, Stokes attempts to rationalise the critical neglect, noting that Hanley's

writing is:

> undeniably uneven; its subject-matter is, in itself, unappealing; his vision of life is
> regarded as distorted and unrelievedly gloomy; his style is flawed and often
> monotonous; his longer books are shapeless [...][23]

Some of Stokes's criticisms are levelled specifically at *Boy* and his initial assessment is

damning: 'as simple as it is sordid and horrible'.[24] Such sentiments were widespread when

Boy was published and subsequently banned in 1935, but in recent years Hanley has received

recognition and praise, albeit on a modest scale. *Boy* was eventually re-published in the UK

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[19] Harrington, *James Hanley*, p. 29.

[20] Armstrong. 'Publication, Prosecution, and Re-publication', 360.

[21] Harrington, *James Hanley*, p. 30.

[22] Anon, 'Mr. James Hanley: Neglected Genius of the Novel', *The Times*, 12 November 1985, p. 16. *The Times Digital Archive*. Available at
http://find.galegroup.com/ttda/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TTDA&userGroupName=ucw_itc&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&docId=CS271290732&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0 [accessed 27 March 2013].

[23] Edward Stokes, *The Novels of James Hanley* (Melbourne, Australia: F. W. Cheshire, 1964), p. 11.

[24] Stokes, *The Novels of James Hanley*, p. 28.

by André Deutsch five years after Hanley's death in 1990, followed by a Penguin paperback in 1992, and the OneWorld edition in 2007. The re-publication of *Boy* in these editions goes some way to redress the injustice of the text's original ban and also responds to the shift towards a more permissive attitude to literature and sex in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.[25]

In its stark portrayal of life at sea, *Boy* is far removed from the romanticism of the maritime tradition. Hanley's essay 'A Writer's Day' clarifies the extent to which he strove to differentiate his idea of maritime fiction from Conrad's approach, of which Hanley was very critical:

> Conrad, a rather self-conscious man, who sometimes tripped over his own vanity, happened one day to trip over a stone in the for'ard quarters – it would be the for'ard quarters! – and drew back somewhat shocked for he had turned up a nest of ants. He was fascinated yet repelled. [....] Also he must get back on the bridge, have a chat with Marlow about it. That is, if Marlow wasn't too busy himself airing his precious views and philosophising by the yard.[26]

Hanley's reference to the 'for'ard quarters' indicates the part of the ship inhabited by the crew (as opposed to the cabins in the stern, or rear, of the ship inhabited by the captain and officers). Hanley's sarcasm emphasises his view that Conrad's maritime works focused on the lives of the officers, to the neglect of the crew. Furthermore, Hanley suggests that in using Marlow, a character he ridicules for his pretension, as a frame-narrator, Conrad distances himself further from the reality of life for the ordinary seaman. This chapter reads Hanley's *Boy* as a reaction to the myths that were perpetuated in the maritime fiction tradition and, to a certain extent, in Conrad's texts. Fact and fiction again play a pivotal role through the key

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[25] Sixty years later, it seems that the scandal behind the text is still the most important selling point, according to Bryan Cheyette: 'If the republication of Boy [*sic*] is "an event of great importance in the history of censorship", as its publishers extravagantly claim, it is only because half a century later we can, post-Rushdie, knowingly wince at the ludicrous vilification of an essentially decent tale'. Bryan Cheyette, 'Trial by ordeal', *Times Literary Supplement*, 10 August 1990, p. 855, issue 4558, *Times Literary Supplement Historical Archive*. Available at http://find.galegroup.com.libezproxy.cardiff.ac.uk/dvnw/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=DVNW&userGroupName=tou&tabID=T003&docPage=article&docId=EX1200177088&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0 [accessed 4 March 2013].

[26] James Hanley, 'A Writer's Day' in *Don Quixote Drowned* (London: Macdonald, 1953), pp. 57-83, (p. 78).

binary opposition of youth/age in which the idealism of the 'boy', who longs for freedom from poverty and abuse on land, comes into conflict with the realities of life at sea where he is confronted by the brutality of the older seamen who abuse him.

The first four chapters of *Boy* present the dehumanising effects of poverty on the young protagonist, Arthur Fearon, in order to explain the boy's need to run away to sea. Growing up in Liverpool between the wars, Fearon, whose very name suggests the fear that continually plagues his life, is regularly beaten by his father and is taken out of school shortly before he reaches the age of thirteen so that he can be sent out to work on the docks. Fearon begins work in the bilges and boilers of one of the steamships in the harbour, but his tasks are filthy and highly dangerous: 'sometimes a boy was burnt to death or suffocated in a boiler, or drowned in the foul water at the bottom of the ship' (p. 48). Desperate to escape, Fearon stows away in the coal bunkers of a steam-ship called the *Hernian*. He almost dies from suffocation, but is found and rescued by the crew. However, Fearon soon finds that conditions on board the ship are even worse than those he has fled, as crew members start to abuse him physically, mentally, and sexually. When the ship docks at Alexandria, Fearon goes ashore and discovers the dancing bars and brothels of the city, where he has his first sexual experience with a woman. A few days into their return journey, he is taken to the sick-bay with a high fever and the crew realise that he has contracted syphilis. Fearon is visited by Captain Wood, who has been drinking heavily for days and who, on seeing Fearon's pain, suffocates him. In comparison to the traditional sea story, in which sailors are presented as a community overcoming the challenges of the sea together, *Boy* presents Fearon as a boy trapped in communities, first on land and later at sea, which crush the individual.

The gap between maritime myths and shipboard reality is critical to the text, and it is established through the contrast between the routines on board ship and the undisciplined behaviour of the men. The secretive drinking bouts of the captain are just one example of the

contrast between the public image of the responsible ship's commander, setting an example to his crew, and the hidden shame of the man off-duty, indulging in private vices. When Fearon is first discovered on the *Hernian*, he is taken to the steward, but although the steward brings food and drink he quickly betrays Fearon's trust by trying to assault him sexually (pp. 71-73). A short time later Fearon has a meeting with Captain Wood and is assigned to help the cook in order to work his passage. His duties are explained in terms of routines:

> You'll sleep in the bunk below mine. You'll rise at five o'clock each morning and clean out the galley in readiness for me when I come on at six o'clock sharp. [....] As the steward is laid up with a dose, you'll go into the mess-room and lay table for seven men. You'll serve their meals, clean out their rooms, mine as well. If you have a slack hour or so, the boatswain might want you, or Mr. Grierson might want something doing. I'm afraid, sonny, that you have placed yourself in a bit of a mess, for as things stand at present, you aren't even a member of the crew. You'll just be used, as the saying is. (pp. 80-81)[27]

The cook's offhand comment about one of the other stewards (the mess steward) being ill with 'a dose', which the reader is expected to understand is venereal disease, suggests the extent to which the crew indulge in casual sex when off-duty. Furthermore, Fearon is reminded that he has no rights, is without status and is operating outside of the crew. Only a few hours after the steward's assault and the captain's words 'You'll just be used', the implications of Fearon's vulnerability are emphasised when he is woken in the middle of the night by the cook, who propositions him (p. 87). Fearon runs to the First Mate for protection and is moved into a spare cabin, where he overhears the cook giving his version of events to the crew: "Fed the sod. Fed him well. Said that night, "Drop 'em down." Bloody kid whingin'. Runs to mate. Crying' (p. 90). The implication here is that sexual favours form some sort of informal exchange and the open discussion between crew members suggests that the sexual submission of ship's boys is expected.

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[27] The shipboard routine is similar to the one recounted in Hanley's autobiography *Broken Water*. However, Hanley's real life account of his experience as a ship's boy does not suggest the misery of Fearon's life, nor is there any allusion to venereal disease. Hanley, *Broken Water*, p. 58.

It is even more damning that the text does not present these instances of abuse as isolated incidents but implies that such abuse is endemic in shipboard life. The discussions that Fearon overhears are less about him and more about the lives of the speakers when they were boys, establishing a legacy of abuse. The crew spin yarns about rough treatment in much the same way they talk about rough weather:

> [1] Was a boy in a four-masted barque in the Nineties. Had to work. Holystone decks with belly not much filled and cold as hell getting to Nova Scotia. [....] Sailors coming along and kicking you in the rump, putting hands where they shouldn't be. Did I kick? No. Couldn't. Had no right to. Just a boy. (p. 90)

There is nothing new about the hardships of cold and hunger, but the narrative suggests that sexual abuse was an unspoken reality in sail and steam and the sailors' frank allusions to sexual abuse are new to mainstream maritime fiction. Social conventions made the articulation of such issues impossible in earlier sea stories and, ultimately, the material in *Boy* was deemed too graphic for public consumption. The sailor's reference to 'boy' not only indicates youth but it also stands for 'ship's boy', the lowest place in the crew hierarchy, and the tacit acceptance of this yarn by the other crew members implies an expectation that boys have always accepted abuse as part of their initiation into their crew and the wider maritime community. This resonates with B. R. Burg's study of prosecutions for sexual acts in the Royal Navy in the eighteenth century, which reveals that 'a large majority of the defendants were officers and that in almost every case the officers were accused of forcing sodomy and indecent acts on unwilling boys'.[28] In *Boy*, the ship is revealed as the location of abusive and aberrant behaviour which is normalised and where the absence of landside social conventions allows those in power to dominate those without.

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[28] B. R. Burg, *Boys at Sea: Sodomy, Indecency, and Courts Martial in Nelson's Navy* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. xi-xii. Burg's study represents his research of courts martial transcripts from 1706 to 1830, through which he reflects on the incidence of sexual acts at sea and social attitudes towards the men and boys involved. He establishes the history of the Articles of War, initially produced in 1652, and revised in 1660 when 'sodomy at sea [became] a capital crime' (p. 29), and examines the cases tried by the Admiralty, noting that 'the preferred partners for officers at every level were the boys that comprised between 8 and 10 percent of ships' crews' (p. xii).

Hanley's novel explores the failure of different sections of society to support the most vulnerable.[29] Fearon is born into a hostile world in which he is abused by his family and neglected by his school, before he is exploited by the men on the ship. However, Fearon sees a glimmer of hope when Captain Wood tells him he will be admitted into the crew to replace Joseph Parr, an ordinary seaman who has died of a seizure. Wood encourages Fearon, adding: "I think somehow you will make a good sailor" (p. 94). Instead of feeling downtrodden by the relentless routine and abuse, Fearon is encouraged to perceive his lowly status in terms of maritime myths, to think that the abuse is part of the process of developing the manly virtues and seamanship that will make him proud as a man and as a seaman in the ship's crew. Fearon's reply shows his willing participation in Wood's fantasy: "Thank you sir. I want to make good. I want to be something. I will do anything, work hard, have courage and hope if I can make good" (p. 94). The idealism of the young man resonates with that of young Jim in Conrad's *Lord Jim*, in which the boy yearns to realise his ambition. When Jim deserts his ship he fails his most important test at sea, but, ultimately, finds fulfilment at the point of death on Patusan. By contrast, Fearon's fantasy of a fulfilling career at sea is soon quashed when he is informed by the boatswain that he 'will help the watch in any work they may be engaged on' (p. 96). Even though Fearon is officially signed on to the ship's articles, it is implied that nothing will change and he will continue to be treated as an accessory to the crew rather than a full member. Unlike Conrad's *Lord Jim*, in which the protagonist learns to prove his worth beyond his maritime career, Fearon's life at sea teaches him that dreams are crushed and myths are betrayed in the daily grind of shipboard routine.

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[29] Peter Kemp perceives this issue as fundamental to the text: 'Fearon is laid out as an extreme embodiment of what several of the novel's characters perceive as a general situation: the damaging of the young by the brutality or neglect of their elders'. Peter Kemp, 'Years before the mast—and years before its time', *Sunday Times*, 12 August 1990. *The Sunday Times Digital Archive*. Available at http://find.galegroup.com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/dvnw/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=DVNW&userGroupName=tou&tabID=T003&docPage=article&docId=FP1802905513&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0 [accessed 4 March 2013].

The contrast between maritime fantasy and shipboard reality is revealed in a long and rambling letter Fearon writes to his parents, a letter that he plans to send when the ship docks in Alexandria. He tells them about the discipline of his work routine, which appears in contrast to the lack of discipline shown by some of the crew, including the steward and the cook: 'Most of the men were rotten drunk. First few nights I couldn't sleep as men were interfering with me' (p. 102). Nevertheless, much of Fearon's letter is full of hope for the future and he tells his parents of his ambition to 'go up for my ticket' (p. 103), that is, to apply for a mate's certificate that will enable him to become an officer. Fearon also mentions a man who was a former shipmate of his father:

> There is a man on board this ship who says he knows Dad, as he sailed with him in the old clippers. His name is O'Rourke. Ask Dad whether he can remember the name. O'Rourke has promised to see that I am looked after and come to no harm. (p. 102)

The romantic allusion to clippers, the fastest of the sailing ships operating at the end of the nineteenth century, establishes Fearon's life at sea in a family tradition, but it also emphasises the transition from sail to steam that divides father and son. The gulf between generations becomes apparent when O'Rourke starts drifting into talk of the old days and Fearon's reaction is dismissive: 'It appeared to him that all men who had shipped under sail were sailing in steam under protest. They could not look ahead' (p. 109). Such criticism is unusual in this era, when experience on a sailing ship was still highly prized by employers because of the additional skills that sailing required. Hanley's *Boy* refuses to romanticise the past and also challenges the championing of sail, locating it rather as an anachronism in the age of mechanisation.[30]

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[30] Jasper Rees is one critic who sees *Boy* in terms of Hanley's challenge to the genre: 'Hanley wrote *Boy* as an aggressive riposte to the romanticism in maritime fiction'. Jasper Rees, 'Strife on the ocean waves', *The Times*, 9 August 1990, p.18, *The Times Digital Archive*. Available at http://go.galegroup.com.abc.cardiff.ac.uk/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA116879259&v=2.1&u=ucw_itc&it=r&p=STND&sw=w&asid=5732341985d081e9f0c6038de63c1aca [accessed 4 March 2013].

The theme of the outsider runs throughout the narrative and Fearon discovers that, despite his appointment as Ordinary Seaman, he is still not fully accepted into the crew. However, he continues to have fantasies about becoming an officer:

> It was fine, he thought, to be an officer. One had a nice uniform, a beautiful room, a steward to look after it for you and to wait on you at meals. The salary was ten times more than his own as an ordinary seaman. They were always clean, always had plenty of money, and much time to themselves. (pp. 110-111)

The shape of Fearon's fantasy is perhaps exaggerated, but also tellingly modest; he dreams of being an officer, rather than a captain, and yearns for work that is cleaner, better paid, and less arduous. Fearon's fantasy also suggests the unfair allocation of work and pay determined by position in the crew hierarchy. A seaman named Larkin tries to advise Fearon against pursuing a career at sea by suggesting that a seaman's life is nothing more than slavery (p. 113). Later, another seaman, Donagan, reveals that he has an officer's certificate, but has not been able to gain promotion: 'Why the bloody foc'sles are packed with sailors who have had their tickets' (pp. 124-125). While the young construct visions of the future from maritime myths, the older men reflect bitterly on the betrayal of dreams and the reality of unfulfilled ambition.

In the pre-war setting of *Lord Jim*, the eponymous protagonist views his life after his desertion of the *Patna* as a series of challenges that, if successfully overcome, will allow him to redeem the lost honour of his name. By contrast, Fearon is continually addressed as 'boy', effacing his identity, and the trials of his life seem to prepare him for disappointment and disillusion. Ominously, it is revealed that working on ships has broken Larkin: 'The sea had twisted something in his nature. From being a kind-hearted and gentle Irishman, he had ended up by being sour and morose, and he was at a loss to understand it' (p. 113). The sea is more usually personified on a heroic scale in maritime fiction, but here it represented as being malicious, a force that can crush man's spirit. Fearon visualises his ascent from seaman to officer through a man-made hierarchy, but Larkin has been so brutalised by life at sea that he

no longer recognises social structures. While the steamship is presented as a threat to the sailing ship in Conrad's texts, following the Great War, the steamship has become a more personal threat and *Boy* shows how mechanisation has cut the need for manpower to such an extent that it has devastated the maritime labour market. Instead of representing an optimistic vision of progress, steam ships in the post-war era have made seamen into slaves of the engines.[31]

Their spirits crushed, the sailors are represented as becoming brutalised by the harsh environment and, in turn, seeking an outlet for their frustrations, they turn to the potential for sexual relief offered by ship's boys. *Boy* is more candid in its portrayal of sexual abuse on ships than earlier works of maritime fiction but even here, Hanley makes his points through inference and allusion, Fearon telling the First Mate that on the first night sharing a cabin the cook 'interfered with me' (p. 137). By contrast, the representation of prostitution later in the narrative is much more explicit. When the *Hernian* arrives in Alexandria Captain Wood gives Fearon permission to go ashore, where he meets shipmate Donagan, who takes him to a dance show on the infamous 'Sister Street'. Donagan then negotiates for both of them to go back to a prostitute's room where he has sex with the prostitute and tries to force Fearon to do the same. Fearon is made to lie down on the bed while the woman straddles him and Donagan provides encouragement: '"Come." The voice of Donagan broke upon his ears like a flood of waters. "Come!"' (p. 130). In the commotion, Fearon's letter to his parents falls out of his coat and the intensity of conflicting emotions, his shame and excitement, causes him to have a seizure. Fearon loses consciousness, and Donagan, terrified by Fearon's convulsion, carries

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[31] In her analysis of Fenimore Cooper's early nineteenth-century novels, Cohen observes that at this point 'the mariner's compleat [*sic*] agency contrasts starkly with the contours of industrial labour, and in particular with its dehumanizing effect so eloquently described in the socialist tradition. In Marx's description, the division of labour in the factory was an important element in this degradation. As a result of industrial practices, the worker participated in only one small part of the labor [*sic*] process. She was disconnected from the outcome of her activity, and from her bond to other workers that would be nurtured in the collective process of artisanal production'. Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea*, p. 144. Certainly, this is reflected in *Boy* where the seamen are increasingly specialised according to specific tasks, not least, the major division between deck crew and engine crew.

him out of the house. This scene dramatises the plight of thirteen-year-old Fearon who is completely overwhelmed by an experience that is commonplace for older and more experienced seamen.

The vexed issues of sex and innocence raised in *Boy* resonate with those in Hughes's *A High Wind in Jamaica*, where the ship becomes a dangerous space in which the thirteen-year old Margaret experiences puberty. Although for Fearon the sexual act that marks his transition from child to adult takes place on land, it is on board ship that he starts to feel the punishment for his transgression. When Fearon and Donagan return to the ship, Fearon is ordered to remain on board for the remainder of the ship's time in harbour, but he yearns to see the prostitute again and later sneaks off the ship to return to Sister Street. Although unable to track down the previous girl, Fearon finds another prostitute and has sex with her, in a graphically-described scene that fell foul of the censors in 1935. Soon after this incident, the *Hernian* heads back out to sea and normal routine resumes but, unbeknownst to the crew, Fearon is becoming ill. Donagan appears to have avoided the incidental hazards of sexually transmitted disease, but Fearon has contracted syphilis. Although both Fearon and Donagan have indulged in acts of illicit sex, only the boy is punished. In this way, although the novel's content might have been shocking, its morality is conventional.[32] The myth of the roving sailor, the 'jolly tar' with a girl in every port, has been exposed as Fearon suffers the consequences of his actions. Not only does he exhibit the physical effects of syphilis, the disease takes a tremendous toll on him mentally and emotionally.[33]

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[32] Bryan Cheyette suggests that this scene has ramifications beyond its shock value: 'It is an irony that will not be lost on a contemporary reader but, far from being "indecent", the sexual frankness in *Boy*, which was unusual for the 1930s (even in Hanley's euphemistic form), is an integral part of the novel's moral frame. Given the choice between the dubious pleasures of an all-too "oriental" brothel or of bettering himself (as Fearon was desperately trying to do during his school-days), the "boy" succumbs to his new-found sexuality with dire results'. Cheyette, 'Trial by ordeal', p. 19.

[33] Syphilis is divided into an early stage, a late stage, and a latent stage that may become obvious many years after the initial infection. His sickness suggests that Fearon is suffering from the second stage of syphilis: 'In the primary stage, there is an ulcer called a chancre, at the point of inoculum, be it penis, vagina, anus, or mouth, with enlarged lymph nodes locally. [....] If untreated at some variability, but usually 6–8 weeks later, secondary syphilis occurs. A rash, which may often be atypical, appears affecting the skin and mucous membranes. There

The other effect of Fearon's illness is that he becomes completely disillusioned with life at sea and his fantasies move away from gaining promotion in a maritime career. In Fearon's imagination dreams of honour and glory at sea are replaced with a sentimentalised picture of home:

> After all, the lads amongst whom he had worked at the docks, they were happy. At the end of the day's work they could always go home to a good meal and after that there was a football or a cricket match or the pictures. But there was nothing here. Nothing at all. What a fool he had been, what a ridiculous show he had made of himself. Promising himself that one day he would walk the bridge of a ship as her first officer or captain. (pp. 247-248)

As the early chapters of the novel have established the grimness of Fearon's home life in Liverpool, the reader knows that in reality the dockworkers are far from happy and are unable to afford the pastimes Fearon imagines. But equally, fantasies about life at sea are prone to be just as unrealistic and, now that Fearon knows this, life seems to offer no escape from unrelenting toil and misery. As he sickens, Fearon becomes less capable of doing his job, which aggravates the other crew members, particularly the cook and boatswain, who tell him to drown himself. Miserable and desperate, Fearon runs to the rail, accompanied by the voices of people calling: "Boy. Boy." (p. 256). He is not sure if the voices are inside his head or if they come from the crew; his hallucinations make him increasingly isolated. The text's title acts as a reminder that, although Fearon pretends to be nearly sixteen years of age, he is particularly vulnerable because at only thirteen he is very much a child. The word 'boy' emphasises Fearon's youth but it also dehumanises him, eroding his identity and his status, because even though he is listed as an Ordinary Seaman, this label insinuates that he is a ship's boy. Fearon is alienated from life on land and has no place in the mythical 'brotherhood' of the sea because he is not yet a man. But Fearon is not alone in his misery;

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may also be constitutional symptoms such as fever and feeling off-color [*sic*]'. Michael A. Waugh, 'Syphilis' *The Oxford Companion to Medicine* (Oxford University Press, 2001), *Oxford Reference* (2006). Available at http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780192629500.001.0001/acref-9780192629500-e-471 [accessed 26 November 2014].

the text has exploded maritime myths through its portrayal of disillusioned sailors in the crew, trapped in a cycle of hard labour, low wages, few prospects, and damaging vices.

The hopelessness of Fearon's situation culminates in death. Raving, he is taken to the sick bay and becomes increasingly delirious, hearing the word 'BOY', now printed in capital letters as if shouted, over and over again. Captain Wood is given a message about Fearon's illness and visits him, when he castigates him for catching syphilis. Moving closer to the bunk, Wood whispers to Fearon:

> "Boy. Come boy."
>   The Captain stretched out his arm and switched out the light. [....] The voice was in Fearon's ear again: "BOY. COME BOY."
>   In that instant Captain Wood placed the great-coat over the face of Fearon, and laid all his weight upon it. (p. 175)

These are the final lines of the novel. The captain's act of murder comes as a shock because Wood has been has been shut away in his cabin for days. It is apparent that much is being blotted out as Fearon is suffocated: firstly, the light is switched off and secondly, Fearon's struggles to stay alive are not shown. Ironically, Fearon is not the only one to have given in to temptation, because Wood has been drinking heavily in secret, but again, it is the boy who takes the punishment for shipboard excesses. Indeed, when *Boy* was first published Geoffrey West considered that the captain performed a 'merciful' killing.[34]

A similar interpretation was put forward by Hanley twenty years later in his essay 'Oddfish' in which he recalls overhearing the anecdote that inspired the dramatic conclusion to *Boy*:

> 'Smothered him, they say. Mercy killing, like cancer, you know.'
> 'Boy with cancer?'
> 'Not exactly, but with something he didn't like.'[35]

By contrast, when *Boy* was re-published in 1990, Jasper Rees gave a different assessment, arguing that 'the cure administered by the ship's captain is a climatically nasty blow'.[36]

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[34] 'The end is expected but appalling; the captain, drunk, mercifully kills the boy, who is reported lost overboard'. West, 'Boy', p. 862.
[35] Hanley, *Don Quixote Drowned*, p. 51.

While West and Hanley consider Fearon to be a pitiful scapegoat, Rees focuses on the excessive force used by the captain, reflecting a willingness to criticise figures in authority that is not evident in the earlier reviews. Certainly, there is a strong sense in the narrative that key authority figures, men who should be guiding and supporting Fearon, let him down continually. Indeed, Wood's words echo Donagan's desperate instructions to Fearon during the first of his two experiences with prostitutes, the possible cause of his illness. Similarly, the weight of the captain's body recalls the weight of the steward's body on Fearon when he first arrives on board, emphasising the crushing of the individual by those in charge. The text undermines the myth of sailor heroes, renowned for their virtues and seamanship; here the captain is a murderer and a drunkard, while the seamen are despicable or pitiful characters, who indulge in excessive drinking and illicit sex to blot out the misery of shipboard life.

Hanley's *Boy* concludes with an epilogue that steps back from ships and the sea to demonstrate how the fictionalisation of the ship's log can create a network of lies. This questions the integrity of the maritime narrative and emphasises how maritime myths can be betrayed. The final page comprises four brief communications, each presented in italics: Wood's entry in the ship's log, his cable message to the owners of the ship, the wire from the owners to Fearon's parents and the published record of Fearon's death in 'The Pilot'.[37] The log entry is reproduced as follows:

> *Ordinary Seaman Arthur Fearon reported missing. Ship searched but no trace of him.*
> *Put about and cruised in vicinity for one hour. No trace. Search abandoned. Believed*
> *washed overboard in middle watch. Heavy ground swells. Resumed voyage. Position:*
> *S.E. 41, by E. 39, G. Wood. Master.* (p. 176).

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[36] Jasper Rees, 'Strife on the ocean waves', p.18.
[37] There is no such publication as 'The Pilot' but pilot books are used in addition to sea charts and give detailed information about seas and coastal areas. This could be a reference to *Lloyd's List*, a publication which covers news for the shipping industry and was started in 1734. Jill M. Terrell, 'Maritime Journals and Magazines', *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of Maritime History*, Oxford University Press, 2007. Oxford Reference 2007. Available at http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195130751.001.0001/acref-9780195130751-e-0429 [accessed 29 January 2014].

The ship's log is established in maritime lore as an accurate record of events, and therefore Wood's lie about Fearon's death is significant because it breaks this code. Furthermore, because the log book is taken on trust, the lies proliferate through the subsequent messages as Wood informs the owners of the *Hernian* and they inform Fearon's parents. Each communication decreases in length and detail, as if Fearon's identity is being effaced, an effect that is reiterated throughout the novel with the constant substitution of his name with the word 'boy'. The last note is the published record which simply states: '*Lost at sea. March 11th. Ordinary Seaman Arthur Fearon. Aged fifteen years. R.I.P.*' (p. 176). Of course, even this is a lie because Fearon's age is thirteen. The narrative has shown how Fearon has been preyed upon predatory members of the crew, led astray by Donagan and punished by Wood, and these final pieces of written testimony implicitly emphasise the horror of life at sea and the hypocrisy of maritime myths. The contrast between the dramatic conclusion of the narrative and the sparse 'factual' writings of the epilogue not only emphasises the unreliability of written evidence, but it also undermines the whole structure of the traditional sea story because the boy has been unable to fulfil his potential as a man and a sailor.

Man, Machine, and *Ultramarine*

Compared to the controversy surrounding *Boy*, Malcolm Lowry's *Ultramarine* (1933) slipped under the critical radar. While Hanley might have found it difficult writing maritime fiction in the long shadow cast by Conrad, the same comparisons were not raised in connection with Lowry, whose novel is more usually compared to the works of American maritime authors Conrad Aiken, Richard Henry Dana, and Eugene O'Neill. [38] In later years *Ultramarine* has

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[38] Recent conferences at the University of Sussex and the University of British Columbia in Vancouver reflect continued interest in Lowry, particularly in Canada, where he lived for much of his adult life.
Andrew Hadfield and Laura Marcus, 'Malcolm Lowry: Fifty Years On', University of Sussex, 27 June 2007 http://www.sussex.ac.uk/newsandevents/pressrelease/media/media622.html Accessed 2 September 2012.
Colin Dilnot's blogspot reproduces the programme for the three-day Malcolm Lowry Centenary International Conference (no longer available on the website for the University of British Columbia). Colin Dilnot, **'**Malcolm

tended to be approached as a precursor to his later novel, *Under the Volcano* (1947), which examines the relationship between Geoffrey Firmin, his estranged wife Yvonne and his half-brother Hugh, and which is regarded as his masterpiece.[39] *Ultramarine*, however, has its own significance in its departure from the traditional depiction of externalised maritime challenges to its detailed portrayal of the protagonist's inner life and sensory experiences in the hostile environment of the steamship.

Ultramarine shares important elements with *Boy*, including the deconstruction of maritime fantasies, the subsequent disillusion of the fantasist, and the alienation of the seaman in an increasingly industrialised maritime environment. But this chapter also explores how this fundamental distinction between the writers, and the differences in their social class and backgrounds, is reflected in their fictional narratives. Like Hanley, Lowry's fiction was informed by time spent at sea on a steamship, but Lowry seemed to be more enthusiastic about his experiences in comparison to Hanley. His brother, Russell Lowry, recalls: 'We spent long cheery hours over his adventures and evolved an early version of *Ultramarine*'.[40] While Hanley's employment as a ship's boy was brought about by economic necessity, Lowry came from a privileged background and worked his passage on a six-month voyage from Liverpool to Yokohama in 1927 in order to fulfil his boyish dreams of going to sea.[41]

Lowry Centenary International Conference', *Malcolm Lowry at the Nineteenth Hole*, 19 April 2009. Available at http://malcolmlowryatthe19thhole.blogspot.co.uk/2009/04/malcolm-lowry-centenary-international.html [accessed 2 September 2012].

[39] Malcolm Lowry, *Under the Volcano* (1947; London: Cape, 1967). *Under the Volcano* is set in Mexico on the Day of the Dead in 1939 and is considered by many to be Lowry's best work, attracting the majority of critical attention.

[40] Russell Lowry, 'Preface: Malcolm – A Closer Look' in *The Art of Malcolm Lowry*, ed. Anne Smith (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1978), pp. 9-22, (p. 19). Russell, Malcolm's third brother and four years his senior, introduces his preface by explaining that it derives from a statement he made to Liverpool's City Librarian in 1963. The fact that thirty years have elapsed between the events Russell describes and the first production of this record, added to the fact that Malcolm had been estranged from his family since 1934, emphasises the likelihood of bias and inaccuracies in this source. Russell further muddies the waters of Malcolm's nautical pretensions: 'Malcolm had no "calling" at all for the sea, at this age – whatever he may have developed, or assumed, later. Nor did he ever hear any rollicking yarns about his grandfather Boden [....] The original germ of the desire to "rough it" was planted by a rather unpleasant youth at the Leys, son of a colonial pro-consul' (p. 19).

[41] Bryan Biggs and Helen Tookey, 'The voyage that never ends' in *Malcolm Lowry: From the Mersey to the world,* ed. Bryan Biggs and Helen Tookey (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), pp. 7-17. The Liverpool Echo reported Malcolm Lowry's signing as a deckhand on the *Pyrrhus* on Thursday 27 May 1927. In

This demonstrates another kind of collusion between fact and fiction, in which maritime texts create a romanticised myth that attracts young men to the maritime industry. Reading books and running away to sea is, in turn, reflected back in maritime texts, such as Conrad's *Lord Jim*, in which Jim meditates on 'the sea life of light literature' (p. 11) when he joins his first ship.

But while Lowry treats sailing as a game, sailors in maritime fiction are usually working men. Hanley draws attention to the predicament of the working sailor, qualified but finding it difficult to secure promotion, or even employment, because mechanisation has led to a surplus of labour in the maritime industry of the twentieth century. *Boy*'s protagonist, Fearon, is in an even more vulnerable position, risking death or imprisonment by stowing away in the stokehold, rather than being taken on as a bona-fide crew member. By contrast, Hilliot, the protagonist in *Ultramarine*, is alienated from the rest of the crew because he comes from a wealthy background and goes to sea for 'experience'. Elizabeth Rankin suggests that, because of this, Hilliot is destined to remain an outsider:

> On the one hand, [Hilliot] longs to be part of the ship's society, to be accepted by ship's cook Andy (a kind of ambiguous father-figure) and the rest of the crew, not as a "toff" but as equally one of them. [....] On the other hand, he is well aware of the inauthenticity of his very existence on the ship. He is there, as both he and the crew well know, "for experience", not because he has to earn a living as they do, and thus he will never be one of them.[42]

Playing at being a sailor is perceived to trivialise the profession, and the crew, having seen him arrive at the dock by car (p. 38), repeatedly label him a 'toff' and accuse him of depriving someone else more deserving of a job. Here, the author has again drawn directly from his own experiences; his brother Russell recalls that Malcolm Lowry arrived at the docks in the chauffeur-driven family limousine, which did little to endear him to the crew of

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a facsimile of an article reproduced in this text, Lowry is reported as saying: "The voyage will last eight to ten months," he said, and during that time I shall work just the same as the other members of the crew. I shall not receive – and I don't want – any privileges" (p. 9).

[42] Elizabeth Rankin, 'Beyond Autobiography: Art and Life in Malcolm Lowry's *Ultramarine*', *Studies in Canadian Literature / Études en littérature canadienne*, 6.1, 53-64, (1981). Available at http://journals.hil.unb.ca/index.php/scl/article/view/7955/9012 [accessed 8 December 2012].

the *S. S. Pyrrhus*.[43] Although comparing author and protagonist is fraught with difficulty, the fact that Lowry drew on his sailing experience in writing *Ultramarine* reinforces the connections between fact and fiction.

The production and publication history of *Ultramarine* was no less complicated than Lowry's convoluted personal affairs.[44] Critical attention has often focused on Lowry's creative processes, because his writing was alternately inspired and marred by bouts of depression and alcoholism, as well as deeply entangled with the lies and fabrications he wove around his life. This is significant when considering *Ultramarine*, because of the blending of fact and fiction, a feature which is also evident in the biographies, autobiographies, and fictional writings of Conrad, Childers, Hanley, and Hughes. The interweaving of fact and fiction reflects the uncertainty in early twentieth-century maritime adventure narratives and their place in the context of rapid ship development, industrialisation, and war. Unravelling the myths of these maritime writers often requires quite a bit of detective work, and Lowry is no exception. Douglas Day produced the first biography[45] which, although detailed, contains a number of errors and unsubstantiated evidence, as subsequent studies by Tony Bareham[46] and Richard Cross[47] have demonstrated.

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[43] Russell Lowry, 'Preface', *The Art of Malcolm Lowry*, p. 19.

[44] Bradbrook gives a comprehensive chronology of Lowry's life which shows him leaving England in 1934 to live in Canada, the United States and Mexico for twenty years. He returned to England in 1955 and died just two years later at his house in Ripe, East Sussex. M. C. Bradbrook, *Malcolm Lowry, His Art and Early Life: A Study in Transformation* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), pp. xi-xiii.

[45] Douglas Day, *Malcolm Lowry* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974). Day's biography is sensitive and knowledgeable but emulates the meandering nature of its subject, presenting the events in the author's life and Lowry's famously exaggerated anecdotes, often with little commentary on their accuracy or alternative versions.

[46] Day's empathetic but cavalier attitude leads Bareham to issue this caution: 'Day is horribly inaccurate. He spells names wrong, confuses dates, and blurs continuity of outline'. Tony Bareham, *Malcolm Lowry* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1989), p. xi.

[47] The unreliability of Lowry and Day is illustrated by Cross's presentation of one of Lowry's anecdotes: 'His sense of kinship with Melville depended, Lowry once remarked, on such "romantic" correspondences as their both having sailed before the mast, on his having a grand-father who went down with the windjammer he captained, and on the American writer's having had a son named Malcolm "who simply disappeared" (p. 119). In his footnote Cross compares four different sources relating to Captain Boden, Lowry's grandfather: firstly, Lowry's version in a letter to Derek Pethick that a British gunboat was asked to sink the ship because cholera had spread throughout the crew. His second source is critic Tony Killigan who claims that Boden died of cholera and that the ship was lost afterwards. Douglas Day, Cross's third source, argued that Boden lived to ninety years of age. Finally, M. C. Bradbrook, Cross's fourth source, believed that Day confused Boden with his

The distinction of Lowry's novel among other twentieth-century maritime authors is that his text does not trace the British maritime fiction tradition through Conrad, but instead through American literature. *Ultramarine* tracks the coming of age of Eugene Dana Hilliot, following his development as he learns his role as a deckhand on a steamship, the *Oedipus Tyrranus*. Douglas Day is one critic who traces the protagonist's name to twentieth-century playwright Eugene O'Neill, famous for his maritime dramas,[48] and nineteenth-century maritime author Richard Henry Dana.[49] O'Neill's sixteen months at sea are reflected in *Seven Plays of the Sea* (1919).[50] By contrast, Dana produced a gritty factual account of his time aboard the *Pilgrim* and the *Alert* entitled *Two Years Before the Mast* (1840).[51] Dana was so horrified by the conditions on these ships, such as the effects of scurvy and the brutal flogging of sailors that, in the preface, he outlined his altruistic intentions of communicating to the general public more about the lives of seamen in order to 'diminish the hardships of their daily life'.[52] By comparison, life on the fictional *Oedipus Tyrannus* in *Ultramarine* in the 1930s is safer, but the narrator of *Ultramarine* undergoes a process of disillusionment similar to that related by Dana.

[footnotes]

wife's grandfather and that Killigan's account is likely to be the most accurate. Richard Cross, *Malcolm Lowry: A Preface to His Fiction* (London: The Athlone Press, 1980), p. 119.

[48] Eugene O'Neill, *Seven Plays of the Sea* (1919; New York: Vintage Books, 1972). Of these sea plays four are set on board the S. S. *Glenairn* and feature serial characters from different countries: Ireland (Driscoll and Paddy), England (Smitty and Cocky), Scotland (Chips), America (Yank) and Sweden (Lamps and Max), whose dialogue mimics the idioms and accents of their respective nationalities. Although the effect is somewhat exaggerated and stereotypical, O'Neill's attempt to recreate authentic voices for his crew may well have influenced Lowry.

Jean Chothia, *Forging a Language; A Study of the Plays of Eugene O'Neill* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 53-83. Chothia, noting that O'Neill's seven sea plays were first published as a collection in 1923, explains how O'Neill was innovative in his presentation of dialogue in the context of American theatre (pp. 66-67).

[49] For an analysis of Richard Henry Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast* in the context of American sea narratives see John Peck, *Maritime Fiction*, pp. 102-106.

[50] Chothia, *Forging a Language*, p. 44.

[51] Richard Henry Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast* (1840; London: Dent, 1912). Like Lowry, Dana did not become a sailor out of necessity or as a career, but chose to go to sea for 'experience'. Dana left Boston in August 1834 on the brig *Pilgrim*, which was carrying a cargo of luxury goods including food, clothes, jewellery, and furniture to sell in California. Half-way through the voyage he transferred to a cleaner and better-run ship called the *Alert*, which returned to Boston with a cargo of animal hides in 1836.

[52] Dana, *Two Years*, p. 2.

Other important influences on Lowry include Nordahl Grieg, whose novel *The Ship Sails On* (1927)[53] provided the template of charting a young protagonist's initiation into life on a steamship that is followed in *Ultramarine*.[54] There is an ongoing debate in Lowry criticism about the extent to which Lowry imitated Grieg's text and *Blue Voyage* (1927), a novel by American author Conrad Aiken.[55] *Blue Voyage* follows the fortunes of a steamship passenger, as opposed to a sailor, but Aiken's innovative stream-of-consciousness narrative is considered to have inspired Lowry to follow suit. Bradbrook is just one critic who has investigated links to Aiken and Grieg. She observes that the title of Lowry's novel, *Ultramarine*, is an allusion to Aiken's *Blue Voyage*.[56] Bradbrook identifies the similarities between *Ultramarine* and these other two texts, as well as investigating Lowry's personal relationships with both authors. When Lowry discovered *Blue Voyage* in 1928 he wrote to Aiken asking to be taken into his household, to which Aiken agreed. Lowry spent the summer of 1929 with him in Boston, where they worked on *Ultramarine*, before returning to England to begin his degree at Cambridge University.[57] Bradbrook believes that Lowry also met Grieg on a trip he took to Norway in 1930.[58] Parallels have also been drawn between the central relationship of Hilliot and Andy, the ship's cook in *Ultramarine*, and Lowry's own

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[53] Grieg's text was first published in Norwegian as *Skibet gaar videre* (1924) and later translated into English. Day, *Malcolm Lowry*, p. 117.

[54] Hallvard Dahlie 'On Nordahl Grieg's *The Ship Sails On*', *International Fiction Review* 2.1 (1975). Available at http://journals.hil.unb.ca/index.php/IFR/issue/view/1084 [accessed 10 June 2013]. Dahlie acknowledges Grieg's connection with Lowry in the very first sentence of his article and he suggests that, in terms of content too, this gloomy and pessimistic novel is close to *Ultramarine*. The protagonist of *The Ship Sails On* is nineteen year-old Benjamin who watches his fellow seamen succumb to the lure of prostitution and catch venereal diseases. Unlike Lowry's Hilliot, who stays faithful to his girl back home, Benjamin sleeps with a prostitute and becomes infected, preventing him from returning to his sweetheart, and condemning him to a miserable existence at sea.

[55] Harry Marten, 'Conrad Aiken's 'Absolute Fiction': *Blue Voyage* and *Great Circle*', *ELH*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (1978), 325-342. Johns Hopkins University Press. Available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/2872519 [accessed 10 June 2013]. Marten describes Aiken's novel as 'quite simply the tale of William Demarest's voyage from New York to England' (327), but he focuses on Aiken's poetic narrative style: 'a few sharp facts serve as touchstones for a looping wave-like motion of accumulating details' (328).

[56] Bradbrook, *Malcolm Lowry*, p. 45.

[57] Day, *Malcolm Lowry*, pp. 102-126. Douglas Day describes how Lowry 'came across Conrad Aiken's novel, *Blue Voyage* (published only the year before), and his future lay clear before him: he would absorb all of Aiken's works, then go to Aiken and sit at his feet until he had absorbed all of the American's genius as well' (p. 102).

[58] Bradbrook, *Malcolm Lowry*, pp. 40-53.

relationship with his father Arthur Lowry.[59] As Malcolm Lowry emphasises the father-son relationship through the ship's name, the *Oedipus Tyrranus*, the narrative may perhaps represent a desire to escape from his father's authority. Moreover, the text could also reflect Lowry's dependence on his literary fathers, Grieg and Aiken, and his desire to escape the influence of Conrad, the 'father' of the maritime fiction tradition.

Lowry continued working on *Ultramarine* while studying at Cambridge University, publishing two short stories in the University magazine *Experiment*. These would eventually reappear in the novel as chapters three and four.[60] In 1932 he submitted his manuscript in place of a final year thesis and, later that year, it was accepted for publication by Chatto & Windus. During this time, the only manuscript copy was lost and Lowry had to rewrite the book from his notes and typescripts.[61] This second version was rejected by Chatto & Windus, but, subsequently, published by Jonathan Cape in 1933. However, Lowry was not satisfied with it and always intended to rewrite *Ultramarine* and re-publish it as part of 'a cycle of three or five or seven novels'.[62] The volume was to be entitled *The Voyage that Never Ends*, but Lowry never managed to complete the project.[63] *Ultramarine* is significant in the context of maritime fiction because it departs from the conventional sea voyage narrative, in which the crew leave port and endure crises at sea before arriving at their destination. Instead,

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[59] Richard Cross draws on Lowry's naming of the ship in his theories of patriarchy and hierarchy, presenting a Freudian reading of *Ultramarine* and observing that the name *Oedipus Tyrannus* 'may strike some readers as contrived, but it does at least conform with Dana [Hilliot's] will to become his own father'. Cross, *Malcolm Lowry*, p. 12.

[60] Bradbrook summarises the genesis of *Ultramarine* from the earlier experimental short stories: 'One of the earliest parts of *Ultramarine* [...] appeared in the Cambridge magazine *Experiment* under the title 'At Port Swettenham'[....] Another tale from the book *Ultramarine* was so far indebted to Nordahl Grieg as to carry the same title as his book; in *Experiment*, no. 7, Lowry supplied under the title 'Punctum indifferens; Skibet gaar videre' the story of the quarrel with Andy, the Norwegian cook which forms chapter IV of *Ultramarine*. It closely parallels the fantasy of the hero of Grieg's book, that he is guilty of murdering the fireman Anton'. Bradbrook, *Malcolm Lowry,* pp. 44-45.

[61] Day, *Malcolm Lowry,* pp. 144-158.

[62] Cross, *Malcolm Lowry*, p. 2.

[63] Malcolm Lowry, *The voyage that never ends: fictions, poems, fragments, letters*, ed. Michael Hofmann (New York: New York Review, 2007), pp. vii-xii, (p. vii). Lowry's unfinished project was taken up by Michael Hofmann and he explains in his introduction how he has edited Lowry's works. Crucially, Hofmann has excluded *Ultramarine*: 'Rather than excerpting *Ultramarine*, I chose the little-known short story "China" from the same period in Lowry's life' (xi). Like Lowry, Hofmann might have felt that *Ultramarine* was flawed, but Hofmann avoids explaining his decision.

Ultramarine begins when the ship is in mid-voyage and much of the narrative is set on shore. Lowry's text follows the disillusionment of the protagonist, Dana Hilliot, with life at sea as he experiences the gruelling and monotonous physical work on board and the squalor of life in port.

The majority of *Ultramarine* is set in the fictional port of Tsjang Tsjang, changing the emphasis from ships and the sea to Hilliot's perceptions of the portside aspects of seamen's life, in which men find relief from hardship in drinking and whoring on shore. In the ship's previous ports of call, Hilliot has remained on board, staying faithful to Janet, his girl back home. However, when Hilliot fails to receive letters from her, the crew begin to doubt her existence and put pressure on him to join them: "'Why don't you have a woman? You'd perhaps get our chow prompt if you had a woman'" (p. 58). Desperate to be accepted by the crew, Hilliot goes ashore at Tsjang Tsjang with the intention of getting drunk and sleeping with a prostitute, but he finally receives a letter from Janet and this throws him into confusion. On shore, he meets Popplereuter, a German sailor from another ship, and together they go to a number of 'dancing' bars. On the following day the voyage continues. Unusually for a maritime novel, most of the action takes place ashore, with only the first and final chapters set at sea. Furthermore, although Hilliot overhears many yarns from the seamen about the ships and hardships of their pasts, no significant maritime event takes place.

The allusion to the maritime tradition of story-telling is continued in the text through Hilliot's recollection of having read Rudyard Kipling's *Captains Courageous* (1897), which follows the rite of passage of a wealthy young boy who falls overboard from an ocean liner and is rescued by the crew of a fishing boat (p. 133).[64] The backgrounds of Kipling's protagonist Harvey Cheyne and Lowry's Hilliot (not to mention Lowry himself) are all similar in terms of wealth and status. However, the inclusion of *Captains Courageous* is

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[64] Rudyard Kipling, *Captains Courageous: A Story of the Grand Banks* (1897; London: Macmillan, 1963).

ironic, because Kipling's novel is strongly didactic, espousing the value of the hard work

through which the protagonist gradually becomes accepted by the crew.[65] Lowry's reference

to *Captains Courageous* serves to locate *Ultramarine* in the maritime tradition, but the texts

of Lowry and Hanley challenge Kipling's simplistic approach by portraying the misery and

alienation suffered by their protagonists. One noticeable difference concerns the ships:

Kipling's vessel is defined by its purpose as a fishing boat, working in the specific

geographical area of the Grand Banks just off Newfoundland in North America and much

maritime fiction recreates a similar sense of purpose. For example, Melville's *Moby-Dick*

follows the hunt for the infamous white whale on a whaling vessel and Stevenson's *Treasure

Island* focuses on the search for pirate treasure. Conrad's ships are mostly involved in

delivering passengers and cargo between ports: the ship sails from Bombay to London in *The

Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*; pilgrims sail from Jeddah to Mecca in *Lord Jim*; the *Ferndale* in

Chance has a cargo of dynamite, and logs are being transported from Bangkok to Sydney in

The Shadow-Line. By contrast, Lowry's *Oedipus Tyrannus* is a tramp ship; that is, it does not

have a single pre-determined voyage, but travels between ports plying for trade.[66] Notably,

Ultramarine was published just four years after the stock market crash of 1929, and the

effects of the depression can be glimpsed in the speculative operations of the *Oedipus

Tyrannus*. Not only have the myths of life at sea been betrayed for the seaman, for whom

working conditions are still poor and lowly paid, but in the wider context of global trade the

promise of progress ushered in by the age of steam, seems to be unfulfilled.

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[65] John Peck demonstrates that *Captains Courageous* conforms to the classic sea story in its presentation of maritime challenges. Peck argues that, in comparison to Conrad, Kipling's attempt to 'illustrate and celebrate the masculine culture of seafarers' is more than twenty years out of date by the end of the nineteenth century. Peck, *Maritime Fiction*, pp. 159-162.

[66] This fact is ironic if one examines the classical origins of the ship's name; Mark Rudman observes that '*Ultramarine* is structured around the classical idea of the voyage as the journey of the hero. The name of the ship the *Oedipus Tyrranus*, is a clue to the formal structure – the unities of Greek drama' (14). Mark Rudman, 'Blue Note' [On Malcolm Lowry's *Ultramarine*] *New England Review*, 20:2, Spring 1999, 13-19. Available at http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xr i:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:rec:abell:R01581872 [accessed 1 November 2012].

In comparison to the maritime texts discussed earlier, very little happens in *Ultramarine*; there are no storms, shipwrecks or mutinies, except in the tales told by the crew to each other about previous voyages and former ships. Instead, *Ultramarine* concentrates on Hilliot as the alienated individual who struggles to find his place in the social structures of a disaffected crew. Even the ship itself is shown to be out of balance. The reader is told that 'the fo'c'sle was 'aft'' or, in the rear of the ship (p. 23), which is unusual because the 'forecastle' gets its name from its location in the 'fore' of the ship.[67] Divisions between the crew are represented by Hilliot's repetition of the words 'SEAMEN … FIREMEN' (p. 32), each time he passes the plaques above the forecastle. In maritime fiction before the age of steam, the 'social' division was between the sailors and the officers, who worked together on deck, but were separated when off-duty; the officers lived in cabins at the stern of the ship, while the sailors lived in the forecastle at the bow. In the steamship there is an additional division; the men are also separated into those who work on deck and those who work in the engine room, undermining the idea of a cohesive crew from the outset. Lowry and Hanley are working against the Conradian tradition in which the crew, including the captain and officers, come together in a crisis. *Ultramarine* and *Boy* thus mark an important shift in the maritime fiction genre, revealing an increasingly divided crew who are not presented with the maritime challenges and crises that might unite them.

Lowry's fragmented and complex narrative features a plurality of voices that destabilise the opposition between fact and fiction. The narrative begins in the third person, depicting Hilliot from the outside, interacting with other crew members as the ship sails into port in the first chapter. This narrative position is also used to describe the stopover in Tsjang Tsjang in chapter three and the departure of the *Oedipus Tyrranus* as it heads back out to sea in the fifth chapter. In chapters two, four and six the narration is in the first person depicting

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[67] Malcolm Lowry, *Ultramarine* (1933; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), p. 23. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

Hilliot as a sailor/author writing his memoirs during the voyage. Douglas Day reads

Ultramarine as a metaphorical journey for Hilliot as an artist, suggesting that his artistic

ability diminishes during the voyage and is thus 'a *Kunstlerroman* in reverse'.[68] Elizabeth

Rankin challenges this, arguing that Hilliot does not give up writing but changes his attitude

to it.[69] Most importantly, the first-person narrative represents Hilliot's thoughts as they

descend into incoherence in sections of streams-of-consciousness, revealing his struggles to

interpret people and events. These sections explore Hilliot's maritime fantasies and contrast

them with his disappointment about the reality of life at sea, picking up the theme of betrayed

myths represented in *Boy*:

> Or is it only a nightmare? … I am not on a ship. …. [*sic*] Anyhow I am not a seaman.
> No. The ship is not alongside the wharf in Tsjang-Tsjang. I am not on a ship's poop,
> listening at a skylight. (p. 133)

When Hilliot states 'I am not a seaman', this conveys his apparent defeat in his struggle to be

a successful sailor. But his subsequent comment 'the ship is not alongside the wharf in Tsjang

Tsjang', also suggests a focus on the act of writing itself because the port is fictitious,

emphasising that the scene is fictitious. Robert Foulke suggests that in both factual and

fictional maritime narratives 'voyaging has always fostered fantasy [requiring the reader to

negotiate between] the direct and accurate report of experience at sea and the many

speculations and fancies that sea experience generates'.[70] Hilliot's disjointed thoughts are an

attempt to recreate the reality of the writer/sailor's experience, but this is interrupted by the

coherence of the chapters narrated in the third person. *Ultramarine*, then, can be read as a

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[68] Unlike a conventional *Kunstlerroman*, which charts the development of the artist, Day argues that 'Nineteen-year-old Dana Hilliot sails as a dedicated author [...] and proceeds though his stages of development until he learns, midway through the novel, that his callowness or self-absorption will not let him be a writer'. Day, *Malcolm Lowry*, p. 162.

[69] Rankin picks up on two key points underpinning Day's argument: 'First, the Dana of Chapter Five is not the same ironic, self-contemptuous person he was in Chapter Three. If he deprecates the kind of writing he has been doing, it is not with bitterness or cynicism but with new resolution and determination to leave old ideas about art behind. And besides, we actually see, only ten pages later, that Dana is writing again'. Rankin, 'Beyond Autobiography', pp. 53-64.

[70] Foulke, *The Sea Voyage Narrative*, p. 25.

challenge to texts in the maritime fiction tradition, which attempt to convey authenticity through cohesive narratives and factual technical descriptions of sailing.

In an uncertain world where Hilliot is unsure of his place, the text portrays his desire to put his trust in an authority figure. As the captain is largely absent from the deck, as well as the narrative, Hilliot's trust is transferred to the first man who catches his eye, who happens to be Andy, the cook. However, Andy's personal qualities seem less important than the impulsive drive with which Hilliot targets him as someone to befriend at the beginning of the voyage:

> he had almost at once picked out [...] Andersen, the tattooed cook, him whom they called Andy, whose weakness of chin was complemented by his extraordinary dignified forehead (p. 18)

This first impression of Andy is mediated in two ways; firstly, the meeting happened in the past and secondly, the narrative is in the third person, but focalised through Hilliot, so that his thoughts are reported indirectly. Tellingly, Hilliot has chosen to befriend Andy, and subsequently Norman, men who work in the galley, rather than any of the seamen with whom he will be working on deck. One of the sailors queries the way Hilliot isolates himself from the crew: 'Why do you always go ashore with stewards? Ain't you a sailor?' (p. 58). The implied separation between stewards and sailors marks a distinction from maritime fiction of the past, where the cook was more integrated with the crew and even able to assist on deck on occasion. For example, in Conrad's *The Shadow-Line* (1917) the cook helps the captain do the work of several seamen in sailing the ship into harbour when they, and a sailor named Gambril, are the only men capable of working after a debilitating fever strikes the crew.[71] By contrast, the cook and galley boy in *Ultramarine* are separated from a crew that is already very much divided in their roles as officers, seamen, or firemen.

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[71] Conrad, *The Shadow-Line*, pp. 130-140.

In *Ultramarine* a further division is created between Hilliot and the crew because he remains on board the ship whenever it arrives into port, whereas they venture ashore to drink and consort with local women. Hilliot cites his loyalty to Janet, his sweetheart, as the reason for his abstention, but later he considers the possibility of visiting a prostitute:

> Surely Janet wouldn't mind that; she would *want* me to be a man, a hell of a fellow like Andy. Besides, I felt with a renewal of intensity my failure to be a shipmate among shipmates. My breaking faith with Janet in this simple fashion meant, I argued to myself, my acceptance by the community in a matter of hours; then, surely it was worth while. (p. 74)

Although Hilliot feels committed to Janet, he has become so obsessed by sexual desire and his need to be accepted into the crew that he attempts to justify seeking a casual sexual encounter. His thoughts, presented in the first person, show his desperate need to define manhood through sexual experience and to equate sex with sailing as a rite of passage. When he gives in to pressure from the crew and visits a dancing bar with them, Hilliot dances with a girl, but he does not sleep with her. Being a sailor allows a man to step out of society to enjoy the sexual experience he wants and needs to confirm his masculinity when he returns home, but Hilliot feels unable to do this. In this sense the text suggests that the voyage not only provides a space for fantasies about life at sea, but also the promise of sexual fantasies.

However, *Ultramarine*, as did *Boy*, portrays the potential consequences of casual sexual experiences, shown in the repeated references to venereal disease: one sailor tells Hilliot that 'the first mate got a dose' (p. 20) and the quartermaster describes how the galley boy 'got all poxed up to the eyeballs, voyage before last' (p. 39). The casual tone in which sexual diseases are discussed suggests that visiting prostitutes is considered normal behaviour and that venereal disease is an accepted consequence. Furthermore, the fact that the first mate and the galley boy are still working on the ship, seemingly none the worse for their infections, shows that the repercussions for visiting prostitutes are not seen to be devastating. This is in stark contrast to Hanley's *Boy*, where Fearon's two sexual liaisons with prostitutes see him

punished severely by contracting syphilis, a debilitating and incurable condition. In *Ultramarine* the galley boy and the first mate are mocked for their indiscretions, but in *Boy*, Fearon is murdered. This is the difference between being a 'boy' and being a 'man'; Fearon upsets the definitions of boyhood by his transgression, but in Lowry's text the men are merely seen as conforming to the stereotype of the roving sailor on shore leave.

Sexual relations on board ship are also explored in both *Boy* and *Ultramarine*. *Boy* characterises crew members as predating on vulnerable youth, but in *Ultramarine* inequality does not have such serious ramifications. The quartermaster invites Hilliot into his cabin to share a bottle of gin and Hilliot accepts, despite the fact that he has an inkling of what he is going to be asked when the quartermaster makes his move:

> I don't believe in going ashore when you can get all you want right here aboard. Now I've had it on every ship I've been in, and I'm not going to be disappointed on this one. Come on now: what do you say? (p. 39)

The quartermaster's reasoning presents the ship as a closed system that operates entirely without women. Although this is nowhere near as threatening as the propositions made to Fearon in *Boy*, the quartermaster in *Ultramarine* does apply some pressure by insinuating that homosexual relations on board ship are so normalised that there is an expectation for Hilliot to submit. Lowry approaches this taboo subject tentatively, showing Hilliot to be fully capable of rebuffing the advance. None of Lowry's biographers mention Hanley or his novel *Boy* as an influence on Lowry, perhaps because although it achieved some critical success, *Boy* was not well known until the court case in 1935. By the time biographers such as Day were documenting Lowry's life in the 1950s, *Boy* was yesterday's news. However, the different approaches of these texts to sex and sexuality are revealing; as a confident, well-educated, and privileged youth Lowry is capable of rejecting the quartermaster and resisting the temptations of prostitutes. By contrast, Fearon in *Boy* is a downtrodden adolescent from a poor working-class family, who is forced to leave school early. Lacking confidence and

education, Fearon is portrayed as much more vulnerable to seamen's advances and the lure of prostitutes.

The important similarity between *Boy* and *Ultramarine* lies in the alienation of the young protagonist. While Fearon shrinks from society on board, Hilliot focuses his frustration on Andy, who acts as both father-figure and scapegoat, as the pair frequently come into conflict with each other. Tony Bareham compares Lowry's problematic relationship with authority and Hilliot's desire to be accepted by Andy and the crew:

> Andy is in fact a chinless non-entity, without dignity, charisma or sensitivity; but Hilliot is utterly fixated by him as an invented object of authority, through whom acceptance into the world of fo'c'sle masculinity may be achieved.[72]

Certainly, Andy does not receive a sympathetic portrayal in the text, but Hilliot is not engaged in simple hero-worship; he has chosen a figure he can also despise and denigrate. The resolution to the tension between Andy and Hilliot is finally settled after a brief exchange between the two men, concluded with the words: 'Peace was made' (p. 158). But this small act is pivotal for Hilliot as he describes it changing his whole perception of the engine room, the ship, and of life:

> And all at once the maelstrom of noise, of tangled motion, of shining steel in his mind was succeeded by a clear perception of the meaning of the pitiless regularity of those moving bars [...] [and] had become related to his own meaning and his own struggles. (p. 158)

As Hilliot watches the engines, they appear to be chaotic until he manages to make sense of them and perceive their regularity in terms of understanding himself. The identification of man with machine stands in contrast to Conrad's *Lord Jim*, which suggests that the advent of steam allowed men to develop skills and become more valuable, to the point that they had their pick of jobs, becoming lazy and complacent, losing their bond to the ship. Greg Bond interprets this moment in *Ultramarine* as Hilliot 'accepting his own interdependence with the

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[72] Tony Bareham, 'Lowry and the Great Figure of Authority' in *Lowry Eighty Years On*, ed. Sue Vice (London: Macmillan, 1989). pp. 51-69, (pp. 60-61).

machine and the elements'.[73] But the description of the engine's movement as 'pitiless' suggests the dehumanising effect of the machine, the erosion of the self, brought about by mechanisation in the maritime industry. In *Ultramarine* the engines are represented as enslaving the seaman.

The romanticised past of the classic sea story, evident in Conrad's works, is in contrast to the bleakness of the mechanised world represented by Hanley and Lowry. The monotony of life and work on board the steamship is specifically contrasted with the romance of the sailing ship. As the ship nears the harbour, Hilliot looks back on his voyage so far and begins to realise how his fantasies of sailing have already been challenged, as he addresses the reader:

> Perhaps you think of a deep grey sailing ship lying over in the seas, with the hail hurling over her [….] Instead of being called out on deck at all hours to shorten sail, we have to rig derricks, or to paint the smokestack…' (pp. 47-48)

Addressing the reader directly suggests that Hilliot is criticising the literary context in which his maritime fantasies developed, leading him to this point. Hilliot contrasts the specific language for sail and steam: the phrase 'shorten sail' means to reduce sail area in order to prevent the ship from heeling over too far in strong winds and this gives a heroic image of sailors battling the elements. In terms of romanticism, the difference between sail and steam is marked; Hilliot is engaged on mundane tasks, such as working on the derricks used to lift cargo. The question here must be, in the absence of romantic myths, whether there is a future for maritime fiction.

In its conclusion *Ultramarine* is bathetic; the ship has not returned home and, as a tramp ship, the *Oedipus Tyrranus* does not have a final destination. By showing a snapshot in the middle of voyage, *Ultramarine* draws attention to the artificiality of the conventional

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[73] Greg Bond, 'Boundlessness Beyond Boundlessness: The Sea, Drink, and Form in Malcolm Lowry's Fiction' *Modern Language Review* 94.3 (1999), 626-636, (627). Available at http://www.jstor.org.abc.cardiff.ac.uk/stable/pdfplus/10.2307/3736989.pdf?acceptTC=true [accessed 5 December 2012].

linear voyage narrative, typified by Conrad's *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*. The title of the text, *Ultramarine*, reflects a desire that is stretched to excess, going beyond being a good sailor, to be the ultimate mariner, and so anticipates a quest destined to fail. Rather than learning how to be a man and a sailor in the classic sense of the maritime *bildungsroman*, Hilliot's rite of passage is less about being accepted into the crew and more about the disillusionment of his fantasies about life at sea as he comes to terms with the mechanised dystopia of the ship. In *Boy* and *Ultramarine*, the vulnerability of Fearon and Hilliot as ships' boys is exploited by the crew, albeit to a lesser extent in *Ultramarine*. This represents a complete change in perspective from Conrad's novels, which represent the idealised values of ships and sailors in an imagined past, where the texts of Hanley and Lowry present an alternative vision of ships and seamen as sordid spaces of entrapment. This suggests the crisis facing the maritime fiction genre in the 1930s, when the age of sail has passed and the myths of sailing and sailors are no longer relevant in the age of steam. Perhaps unsurprisingly, subsequent maritime fiction revives the classic sea story of maritime challenges, but in a more complex form, as observed in Richard Hughes's *In Hazard* (1938).

Conclusion

By the 1930s the transition between sail and steam becomes almost obsolete because there is no place for sailing ships and they are fading from cultural memory, alive only in the reminiscences of increasingly aging sailors and in fiction. On the steamships in *Boy* and *Ultramarine* many of the older seamen have moved from sailing ships to steam and they refer to the past nostalgically. However, Fearon and Hilliot have worked only on steamships, and so to them sailing ships are irrelevant and anachronistic. More damningly, the era of sail is held responsible for producing what prove to be the unrealistic myths of life at sea. Hanley observed that Conrad focused on the officers in his novels and, although these seamen were

challenged in such texts as *The Shadow-Line* and *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, they were usually successful. But in Lowry's *Ultramarine* the captain is a shadowy figure who has barely any impact on the narrative. Hanley's *Boy* provided the major subversion of the myth of the heroic captain by presenting Captain Wood as a man who neglects his duty and shuts himself away in his cabin to indulge in drinking binges. Wood's ultimate betrayal is to murder Fearon, conceal his crime, and falsify the log-book, breaking maritime codes of honour bound up with Conrad's portrayal of the maritime tradition.

As the focus in maritime fiction shifts away from the captain, it also draws back from the crew, to the increasingly isolated individual sailor. In *Ultramarine* the protagonist's most meaningful dialogue is with himself, and the protagonist is increasingly alienated in *Boy*, as his shipmates fail to protect him from abuse, and, ultimately, from death. As in *Boy*, the protagonist in Lowry's *Ultramarine* is also at the bottom of the hierarchy but, significantly, the text is partly narrated in the first person, suggesting elements of agency and control. *Ultramarine* and *Boy* do not present the maritime challenges which test seamanship, they present psychological challenges for the individual in which the ship becomes the setting for a *bildungsroman*. Unlike the disturbing experiences of the children in *A High Wind in Jamaica* and *Boy*, Hilliot's development in *Ultramarine* is couched in terms of his relationships with the crew, putting him on a more equal footing. Fact, then, is gradually eroded as twentieth-century maritime texts move away from the knowable struggles of man versus sea, to the conflicts of man versus man and the complex internalised torments of the self. The ship becomes a place of imprisonment in which these battles are intensified as the individual sailor to tries to find his - or her - place on the ship and in society.

In a wider social and economic context, *Boy* shows how the transition from sail to steam has reduced the number of sailors required on vessels and led to a surplus of labour, which has important ramifications for the mariner. At the turn of the century, when European

economies were being buoyed up by armament production, *The Riddle of the Sands* does not reflect any concerns about sailors' employment; in fact, Carruthers is a wealthy man who can easily afford to take weeks off work to enjoy sailing as a form of recreation. In the context of economic depression following the Wall Street Crash of 1929, *Boy* and *Ultramarine* reflect a grim economic reality: it was no longer possible to consider the sea as a romantic calling because the efficiency of steam had drastically reduced the number of jobs in the maritime industry, increasing unemployment and putting downward pressure on pay and conditions. In *Boy*, Fearon believes that running away to sea will prove his fortune but, ominously, he only becomes a proper member of the crew when he replaces an Ordinary Seaman who has died on board. While the crew in Conrad's *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* try to nurse James Wait back to health, needing every sailor they have, Fearon is shunned when he becomes ill, even before the crew realise that he is suffering from syphilis. Furthermore, Fearon's death seems to have little impact on either the world of the ship or society at large and there is no justice for Fearon's murder by Captain Wood. *Boy* reveals the human cost of maritime myths: on a steam ship the individual has become dispensable.

Chapter Six

How to Survive Storms at Sea

Introduction: Following in the Wake of Conrad?

As sail gave way to steam, Conrad's texts mourned the loss of a tradition, but this was not the only response. Later in the twentieth century, the maritime novels of James Hanley and Malcolm Lowry abandoned any sense of nostalgic romanticism in favour of exposing the bleak realities of an increasingly industrialised maritime industry. Hanley's *Boy* and Lowry's *Ultramarine* depict the exploitation meted out to the lowest members of the steamship's hierarchy, who were most exposed to the squalor of shipboard conditions and the gruelling labour of life at sea. For example, they show seamen encountering new hardships in the hot and dangerous engine rooms of steamships at sea and the sordid bars and brothels in port. In these steamship novels the seamen are divided into deck crew and engine crew and the protagonists are disenfranchised ships' boys, shunned by other seamen as they strive to define their roles in life and on the steamship. By contrast, it could be argued that Richard Hughes's steamship novel, *In Hazard* (1938), looks back to the past through its similarities to Joseph Conrad's short story 'Typhoon' (1903). But even in *In Hazard*, Hughes's exploration of fear and heroism in the face of a terrifying hurricane challenges convention by assessing the impact of new technologies on the age-old sea story.

As in Childers's novel *The Riddle of the Sands*, *In Hazard* spoke to the contemporary concerns of a reading public struggling to come to terms with global conflict, and sales of these texts peaked during World War I and World War II respectively. In assessing the impact of these maritime novels, it is worth noting that only Erskine Childers and Richard Hughes achieved the level of popular and critical success enjoyed by Conrad. Lowry's *Ultramarine* appealed only to a limited readership and was eclipsed by his later (non-maritime) masterpiece, *Under the Volcano* (1947), and Hanley's *Boy* was banned from sale

from 1935 to 1989.[74] The maritime fiction that followed Conrad does not fit neatly into a genre: *The Riddle of the Sands* draws upon spy fiction, while Hughes wrote within the established sub-genre of pirate fiction with *A High Wind in Jamaica*, and in the newer sub-genre of steamship narratives with *In Hazard*. All of this goes some way to explain why these texts have been neglected.

Even though Conrad's maritime fiction has been deemed as signalling the demise of the genre, this thesis argues that his work in fact opened up new possibilities. In Conrad's *Lord Jim*, for example, the protagonist is shown failing the challenges put to him, and it is not until Jim reaches the island of Patusan that he begins to develop the skills and leadership of the sailor hero, and he dies feeling he has fulfilled his boyish dreams of honour. By contrast, the texts of Hanley and Lowry present a very different form of *bildungsroman*, using the ship's boy's perspective in order to give a grim and gritty account of the hazardous work, squalid conditions and abuses in reality suffered by seamen on modern steamships. The common factor linking the texts of Childers, Hanley, and Lowry is their focus on the individual, but Richard Hughes's novel *In Hazard* returns to the Conradian approach of analysing the dynamics of the crew in response to maritime challenges.

Like Conrad, Hughes drew inspiration from real life experiences; he wrote *In Hazard* after researching eye-witness testimonies and combining them with his own knowledge of sailing and the sea.[75] The idea for *In Hazard* started to take shape when Hughes heard about the steamship, *S. S. Phemius*, which had been swept through a hurricane of unusual intensity

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[74] Although *Boy* was first published in 1931, problems began in 1934 when Boriswood published a cheap edition which featured a provocative image of a belly-dancer on the cover. Following a complaint from a member of the public, there was a trial which led to the banning of the book the following year. In the introduction to his article Armstrong states that he realised there were 'omissions from the history of the novel which this article seeks to correct using evidence from an archive of contemporary published sources'. Armstrong, 'Publication, Prosecution, and Re-publication', 351-362, (351).

[75] This is a similar methodology to the one Hughes used for *A High Wind in Jamaica*, which developed from the witness accounts of Jeanette Calder, Aaron Smith, and Captain Lumsden. Hughes's later novels, *The Fox in the Attic* (1961) and *The Wooden Shepherdess* (1973), had the same founding in historical events but were based on the rise of Hitler and Nazism. They were the first two instalments of a planned trilogy entitled *The Human Predicament* but Hughes died before completing the third book. For in-depth studies of these novels, see Morgan, *The Art of Richard Hughes,* pp. 89-136.

in the Caribbean Sea between 5 and 12 November 1932. In his fiction, Hughes takes the

steamship and pits it against the sea in the classic sea story structure whereby the crew are

faced with a series of challenges to their skills of seamanship. Incredibly, all the crew on the

S.S. Phemius survived, and the ship managed to stay afloat long enough to be rescued. When

the ship was brought back to the UK for refitting, Hughes demonstrated the thoroughness of

his research by going to see the ship and arranging meetings with some of the crew:

> one could still see and handle cold steel torn and twisted like paper, tangled like
> string. I studied her logs and track charts. I questioned deck officers and engineers
> while their experience was still liquid in them so that, however reticent their normal
> natures, for the time being they could not help but talk and talk and talk. A little later,
> and in another command, I went to sea with her master. Thus I was able to piece
> together their several stories until possessed of the complete narrative of everything
> which had happened.[76]

Hughes sailed with Captain Evans from the *Phemius* on his new command, the *Myrmidon*, in

April 1934. Although he was a very experienced yachtsman, Hughes had never been on a

steamship, and so this trip enabled him to study the engine room and witness at first hand the

technical demands of working on a steamship. The voyage was important because

authenticity is critical to the genre of maritime fiction, and texts are often judged accordingly,

particularly by knowledgeable readers.[77] Much of the technical detail is covered in the early

chapters of *In Hazard*, so that all readers, regardless of their maritime knowledge, have an

understanding of the ways in which a ship responds to the wind and the sea during a

hurricane. The narrative is structured around the successive problems brought about by the

storm and maintains the dramatic tension between man and sea as each problem is resolved.[78]

In Hazard uses the structure of overcoming maritime challenges employed by Conrad in texts

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[76] Hughes, 'Introduction to *In Hazard*' in *Fiction as Truth*, ed. Poole, pp. 45-49, (p. 45).

[77] Graves, *Richard Hughes,* p. 223.

[78] Hughes's interest in science is shown in a talk he gave entitled 'The Poet and the Scientist' in which he responds to criticisms of art by emphasising the fallibility of science. Hughes speaks authoritatively on such subjects as quantum physics, geometry, and wave theory, but suggests that scientists have adopted 'the language of mathematical symbol' (p. 97). He sees these disciplines as irreconcilable because 'The truth of science is proved by experiment: the truth of mathematics can never be proved by experiment'. Hughes, 'The Poet and the Scientist' in *Fiction as Truth*, ed. Poole, pp. 92-102, (p. 98).

such as *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, and in this sense, can be read as a return to tradition in the era of steam, but there is more to this text than such a comparison might suggest.

Hughes began writing *In Hazard* in 1934 but was distracted by the demands of family life, an active social life, and other literary projects.[79] According to Richard Graves, Hughes was brought back to the novel two years later after his involvement in a significant maritime event that inspired him to return to his tale about man's ability to face the wrath of nature. Hughes heard that a ship called the *Ulysses* had been struck by a storm in the Bristol Channel on 5 January 1936. In response, he raced to Swansea, 'secured the use of a pilot cutter' and gathered together seven volunteers to sail out to the *Ulysses* and provide transportation for the dead and injured.[80] Hughes later took a job as assistant purser on the *Eurymedion* in 1936 and sailed from Amsterdam to Tangier and Jeddah. In a letter to his wife, Hughes noted that the captain 'lent me his sextant, &[*sic*] taught me to find out latitude and longitude by the sun and stars'.[81] On his return to Wales in the summer of 1936, Hughes resumed work on his manuscript armed with further knowledge of steamships and celestial navigation. Hughes made a number of decisions that created distance between his narrative and its source, which included changing the date of the hurricane from 1932 to 1929. Poole observes that Hughes also added episodes of his own invention, namely the uprising of the Chinese crew members

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[79] Penelope Hughes, *Richard Hughes,* p. 17. In her biography Penelope Hughes talks sensitively about the conflicting demands on her famous father when he moved his family to Laugharne in South Wales. He was beset from the start by a number of distractions, ranging from the needs of his wife and four growing children, and a number of literary projects, including a biography of Walter Harris, a play and numerous reviews and articles. Added to this, Hughes enjoyed an active social life; he was well connected in literary circles through friendships with influential authors such as Robert Graves, John Masefield, T.E. Lawrence, John Buchan (all Oxford men like himself) and, in later years, Dylan Thomas.

[80] Graves, *Richard Hughes,* p. 241. Of all the biographical material on Hughes, Graves's book is the most comprehensive. The author is the nephew of famous writer and poet Robert Graves who, like Hughes, attended Oxford University and it was there that the pair first became friends. Graves alludes to Hughes's connections to his own family, the extensive help he has received from the family and friends of Richard Hughes (xi-xvi), and the access he has been given to a huge amount of personal insights and anecdotes from those who knew Hughes as a father, colleague, and friend.

[81] Graves, *Richard Hughes*, p. 242. In addition to the collection at the Lilly Library, Indiana University, and Oriel College, Oxford, Graves lists the additional sources to which he has access including letters, manuscripts, and documents from his own collection and that of his family, plus those of Hughes's daughters, Penelope and Lleky (p. 428). The footnote to this source is 'MINNEY MSS RH to FH from Tangier, 7 Feb. 1936' (p. 451), showing that this letter from Hughes to his wife comes from the collection of Penelope Minney (née Hughes).

and the death of the Chief Engineer.[82] There is a fine line to be drawn here; Hughes is writing a novel, not an account of the *Phemius*, so creating new characters and events, as well as fictionalising some factual details, is necessary. In this respect *In Hazard* can be compared to *A High Wind in Jamaica* which, originating in the real-life accounts of the pirate raid on the *Zephyr*, also combines fact and fiction.

The Mechanics of Seamanship: Richard Hughes's *In Hazard*

After the success of *A High Wind in Jamaica*, Hughes felt the pressure to produce another best-seller, to live up to his own expectations and those of the public, in addition to the financial commitments of having a family. However, when *In Hazard* was published in 1938 the initial critical response was mixed. Paul Morgan emphasises the positive reactions, but also observes that Hughes was active in the promotion of *In Hazard*, which might suggest the author's belief in his novel but also his anxiety about its sales.[83] Hughes sent a copy of the novel to Virginia Woolf, Hughes having reviewed *Mrs. Dalloway* in 1925.[84] She sent a letter in reply, which included the following criticism: 'It seems to me possible that on the one hand there's the storm: on the other the people. And between them there's a gap, in which there's some want of strength'.[85] Despite Hughes's fears, reviewers did not speculate on the

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[82] Richard Poole has taken this biographical account and added detail to it, naming the officers that Hughes interviewed and noting that his research also included 'Captain Evan's Official report and the report prepared by Rooscoe and Little, Consulting Engineers, Naval Architects and Arbitrators, on the incident'. Richard Poole, *Richard Hughes: Novelist* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, 1987), p. 57. Poole has also summarised the content of the Captain's report which mirrors the incidents described in the novel (pp. 57-59). In addition, Poole has identified three anecdotes from Hughes's research which are repeated very closely: the Captain's confession to the first mate that, after days without food, he had been given an orange but instead of sharing it he had eaten it, the rescue of the Chinese Quartermaster, and the salvage agreement reached with their rescuer (pp. 59-61).

[83] 'By the time it appeared in bookshops, *In Hazard* was *Daily Mail* 'Book of the Year' and the Book Society recommendation for July. Hughes enthusiastically publicised the novel by writing articles and broadcasting on the subject of hurricanes, and he also made several timely television appearances on the infant BBC service'. Morgan, *The Art of Richard Hughes*, p. 54.

[84] Morgan lists the article in his bibliography: 'Review of Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, *Saturday Review of Literature*, 16 May 1925, p. 755'. Morgan, *The Art of Richard Hughes*, p. 161.

[85] Quoted in Graves, *Richard Hughes,* p. 268.

real events behind the fiction.[86] When comparisons were made, it was to Conrad's

'Typhoon': Graham Greene thought Hughes had taken a risk in attracting unfavourable

comparisons by evoking Conrad's famous and successful short story, which would have been

'foolhardy if it were not triumphantly justified'.[87] By contrast, James Hanley found

comparisons to Conrad 'ridiculous and hardly fair'.[88] Although there are some important

parallels, this chapter argues that the significance of Hughes's text to twentieth-century

maritime fiction goes beyond reductive comparisons to Conrad.

Possibly pre-empting such reactions, Hughes makes references to Conrad's

'Typhoon' explicitly and implicitly within *In Hazard*. In both texts steamships encounter and

survive storms of unprecedented strength, but while 'Typhoon' is set in the South China Sea,

In Hazard tracks the progress of a hurricane in the Caribbean Sea.[89] Furthermore, Hughes

expanded the classic sea story; *In Hazard* is a novel that covers a catastrophic event lasting

eight days, while 'Typhoon' is a short story, published alongside other sea tales, in which the

storm is measured in hours.[90] Hughes cited Conrad's short story by name in the text: 'The

days of Conrad's *Typhoon* are past: the days when hurricanes pounced on shipping as

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[86] 'It was only in [his] 1966 introduction to an American edition of the novel that Hughes confessed the factual origins of the tale, kept strenuously hidden when it first appeared'. Morgan, *The Art of Richard Hughes*, p. 53.
[87] Graves, *Richard Hughes,* p. 268.
[88] While authors such as Graham Greene might have felt that a comparison to Conrad conferred praise on Hughes, Hanley was critical of Conrad and so by challenging the comparison he was allowing Hughes's novel to stand on its own. Nonetheless, Hanley was not convinced that Hughes had achieved a sense of balance in the novel and he 'felt that "the human element" was "entirely subservient to the natural ones"'. Poole, *Richard Hughes*, p. 62.
[89] Essentially, 'Typhoon' is a short story of a steamship caught up in extreme weather conditions, but unlike the other Conrad texts discussed in chapter one, it does not address the conflict of sail and steam. Conrad wrote a number of important maritime novels and short stories, but the focus of this thesis is in his handling of this transition from traditional sailing ships to steamships, portrayed in the four selected texts. In 'Typhoon' Captain MacWhirr is a competent seaman and effective leader who is able to direct both deck crew and engine room crew, headed up by First Mate Jukes and Chief Engineer Rout respectively, to overcome the challenges of the storm. The *Nan-Shan* carries passengers and on this voyage there are two hundred Chinese men whose quarters are in an area of the ship known as the 'tween decks'. The central crisis of the text occurs at the height of the storm when some of the boxes holding their possessions break open, sparking a riot as the men scramble for the silver dollars rolling in the darkness. First Mate Jukes manages to restore order and collect the fallen money, which is distributed back to the men by the Captain once the storm has subsided.
[90] Middleton, *Joseph Conrad*, pp. 57-63, (p. 57).

unexpectedly as a cat on mice'.[91] Here, the narrative acknowledges the impact of technology

on seafaring, but also alludes to a standard maritime adventure plot, in which man is at the

mercy of weather systems he cannot predict. However, citing Conrad also betrays an

unwillingness to escape from traditional modes of maritime story-telling and a fear, perhaps,

that maritime fiction is under threat because those days 'are past' and there is nothing to

replace them.

In Hazard might have elicited a mixed response on publication, but it became

increasingly popular during World War II. Its vivid description of a crisis, engendering fear,

but also courage, in the seamen, clearly resonated with readers facing the horrors of war, so

that by 1945 its sales exceeded those of *A High Wind in Jamaica*.[92] In his introduction to an

edition published in 1966, Hughes denied that he wrote it as a conscious allegory of war, but

acknowledged that he was influenced by the growing tensions in Europe.[93] He used the

'Author's Note' to emphasise the plausibility and authenticity of the events, while insisting

that his text was 'a work of fiction, not of history; and no single character in it is intended to

be a portrait of any living person' (p. v). Indeed, Hughes invented a 'super-numerary officer'

(p. 25), Mr. Rabb, who had no direct equivalent on the real ship.[94] It is revealed that Rabb is

travelling to Colon to join another ship from the Sage line, the *Descartes*, named after the

French philosopher famous for establishing the system of doubt as a means of proving what

can be known. This philosophical allusion creates a link to another important piece of

Hughes's 'fictionalisation' in the change to the ship's name. The repeated references to

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[91] Richard Hughes, *In Hazard: A Sea Story* (1938; London: Vintage, 2002), p. 31. All other references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

[92] Morgan focuses on the novel's success, noting that 'In the next six years, over 100,000 copies were printed, an extremely high figure, which suggests the particular allegorical appeal this tale of a lone British steamer surviving a storm must have held in the wartime period'. Morgan, *The Art of Richard Hughes*, p. 54.

[93] Hughes, 'Introduction to *In Hazard*' in *Fiction as Truth*, ed. Poole, pp. 45-49, (p. 45).

[94] On completing *In Hazard* Hughes sent the typescript to Laurence Holt, chairman of the Holt shipping line, who told Hughes that Rabb was too similar to Brown, second mate on the *Phemius*, who suffered a nervous breakdown. To avoid possible legal action, Hughes had to rewrite sections of the novel, making Rabb a super-numerary officer and inventing another second mate, who he named Mr. Foster. The additional work caused further delays to publication (Graves, *Richard Hughes*, pp. 262-63).

philosophical learning are an ironic way of establishing the tradition of man's rational scientific knowledge, before showing how it is going to be dwarfed by nature's power. The ship in the real hurricane in 1932 was called the *Phemius*, a Greek poet in Homer's *Odyssey*, but Hughes names his fictional ship the *Archimedes*, after the famous Greek mathematician. This is particularly appropriate because to save the ship the crew has to solve a series of engineering problems, such as raising steam from makeshift boilers.[95] In other words, there is a shift from the 'art' of handling a sailing ship to the practical 'science' of working the engines on a steamship.

There is more to *In Hazard* than its use of the factual voyage of the *Phemius*. In his reading, Richard Graves examines the text from the perspectives of Buxton and Watchett, emphasising the biographical element of Hughes's personal experiences of danger.[96] All of the twentieth-century maritime authors discussed here sailed either for work or pleasure, but in *In Hazard* Hughes communicates the deep feelings that only manifest themselves when a person is under extreme pressure. Peter Thomas's analysis emphasises the battle between man and nature, the traditional elements of maritime fiction: 'the crew of the *Archimedes* attempt in different ways to create moral order out of the reality of arbitrary nature – by romantic egotism, religious belief, dedication to a professional code, political ideology'.[97] Richard Poole, like Thomas, examines *In Hazard* from a psychological perspective, focusing on how the hurricane exposes the different personalities of the characters, but he also pays

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[95] Morgan discusses Hughes's philosophical references, adding detail about Hughes's interest in science and the fact that the ship's name has a wry twist because 'Archimedes is popularly known for discovering the principle of displacement of liquid'. Morgan, *The Art of Richard Hughes*, p. 66

[96] Graves comes to this assessment by examining Buxton's reasons for choosing to become a sailor, which he realises is due to his love of duty. Such feelings of responsibility are essential on a ship: 'Buxton's revelation and Watchett's new religious faith lie at the heart of *In Hazard*'. Graves, *Richard Hughes*, p. 260.

[97] Thomas, *Richard Hughes*, pp. 64-65. Although this is an insightful study of Hughes and his writings, the way that Thomas refers to Hughes using his nickname 'Diccon' reminds the reader that when a critic is friends with an author it might restrict their ability to see or express negative aspects of their life. The same caution can be applied to Richard Graves, who had a close connection to Hughes through his uncle Robert Graves, a trusted friend of Hughes.

attention to Hughes's use of form and narrative strategies.[98] The key similarity between the approaches of Graves, Poole, and Thomas is that each reflects the central tension between the storm and the men. By contrast, Paul Morgan focuses on how the text establishes order out of chaos, observing that the changes in narrative voice and the way the novel seems to slip between different genres can, in places, make *In Hazard* complex and disorientating:

> The complex time-scale [...] and the many voices and attitudes of the narrator must also, somehow, be accommodated in a coherent reading of the novel. The same is true of the apparent jumble of adventure, philosophy, meteorology and history into which the book sometimes seems in danger of fragmenting.[99]

So, even though *In Hazard* might appear to tell a simple story, this belies the complexity of its form in the blending of fact and fiction, as the text responds to conventions in the maritime fiction genre and new technologies in the maritime industry.

In Hazard reveals an emphasis on factual details as the narrative unfolds, showing how the crew manage to guide the steamship through a particularly violent hurricane. The text is divided into two parts: the first six chapters chart the first three days of the hurricane, Wednesday to Friday, followed by the eerie calm of its centre. The last eight chapters cover the following four days from Saturday to Tuesday and the increasing danger faced by the crew as the badly damaged ship struggles to stay afloat.[100] Hughes was meticulous in re-enacting the exact conditions encountered by the *Phemius* and the authenticity of the narrative is emphasised early in the first chapter by a detailed description of the engine room.[101] The majority of the text is narrated in the third person, but the opening paragraphs are introduced by an un-named first-person narrator speaking about events in the past: 'For it

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[98] Poole, *Richard Hughes, Novelist*, pp. 154-174.

[99] Morgan, *The Art of Richard Hughes*, p. 61. Rather than focusing on the sea story, Morgan dedicates much of his analysis to the extended narratives of Watchett, a junior officer who is involved in a number of actions that help to save the ship, and Ao Ling, a Chinese fireman who is arrested when he is identified as a communist outlaw towards the end of the novel.

[100] In the 1938 edition of *In Hazard* the six days appear in headings above the text: Wednesday to Friday in part one and Saturday to Tuesday in part two. Richard Hughes, *In Hazard: A Sea Story* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1938).

[101] Thomas reveals the complexity behind Hughes's narrative strategy: 'With each successive novel, the fictional 'I' in Hughes's work becomes more shadowy. The narrator of *In Hazard* is evidently aboard but is not an agent'. Thomas, *Richard Hughes* p. 66.

was in 1924 [...] that I originally met Mr. MacDonald [the Chief Engineer]' (p. 3). In his

interpretation of the text, Morgan considers the narrative style of paramount importance: 'The

storyteller himself, then, is a dynamic element within *In Hazard*. His presence is forcefully

established in the opening pages'.[102] The blending of fact and fiction is highly significant in

the maritime genre, and Hughes was particularly scrupulous about recording with accuracy

the actions taken by the crew to keep the vessel afloat against all the odds. The intervention

of the first-person narrator at the beginning of the text underlines this appeal to authenticity.

The fictional ship *Archimedes* in *In Hazard* follows the same course taken by the

Phemius, from Colon in Panama to Jamaica via the Caribbean Sea, and the text records the

wind conditions, blowing from the north east and increasing in strength. This information is

important because it is used to explain that Captain Edwardes alters the ship's course to the

South to avoid the possibility of being wrecked on the shore of Colon. The narrator describes

how such decisions are based on observation and meteorological broadcasts:

> For now, when a hurricane is abroad, all shipping in its neighbourhood keeps a tag on
> it, and telegraphs data regarding it to a shore station. Thus, be its behaviour never so
> eccentric, the meteorologist on shore is able to watch [....] and the news, twice a day,
> can be broadcast back to shipping. (p. 32)

This measured style of narrative is used to reassure the reader that events have not been

sensationalised, but it also works on an ironic level because it shows men trying to categorise

and control forces of nature. The narrator explains, in meteorological terms, how hurricanes

develop, observing that the hurricane season finished two weeks previously, which

anticipates the story of the unusual hurricane about to happen. The winds keep increasing

until they reach hurricane strength and eventually achieve incredible speeds of 'two hundred

miles an hour' (p. 48). Moreover, the reader is told that the air pressure has dropped to an

unprecedented level: 'The barometer had fallen to 26.99. So low a reading had never before

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[102] Morgan goes on to note that 'of eighteen uses of the first person pronoun in the novel, half occur in the first
twenty pages'. Morgan, *The Art of Richard Hughes*, p. 57.

been recorded for certain at sea' (p. 64). In Conrad's 'Typhoon', the barometer reading is also significant: 'It stood very low – incredibly low, so low that Captain MacWhirr grunted. [....] It was the lowest reading he had ever seen in his life'.[103] The barometer is used as a means of trying to quantify the captains' experience. In 'Typhoon' the figure is withheld from the reader, but the number is revealed in *In Hazard* , suggesting greater transparency, acknowledging the specialist reader, and showing how statistics can establish credibility while still developing the tension and foreboding consistent with the conventions of the sea story.

Initially, the strength of the hurricane is underestimated and the crew on the ship of the ironically named 'Sage' Line, with its fleet of ships named after famous philosophers, seem to know less than the reader about meteorological fallibility. Hughes communicates this through the naivety of Dick Watchett, one of the junior officers:

> But what are a rough sea and half a gale to a fine modern vessel like the *Archimedes*? Enough to show her good qualities, not more [….] It was enough to make Dick Watchett, on the bridge, feel himself a mariner; to blow away the lugubrious notion that a sailor's life nowadays was a process of cramming for examinations, and counting groceries. (p. 27)

By using the antiquated word 'mariner', with its associations with Samuel Coleridge's poem 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' (1798), Watchett is portrayed imagining himself as a hero of the past in the romanticised world of sail, to a time before Conrad. The allusions are wistful, evoking the mythologies of sailing and the sea.[104] The irony of the sailor's complacency in this passage relies on narrative conventions, recognising that the reader has knowledge of the enormous forces of nature that will soon dwarf the man-made technology of an inconsequential ship. It also sets up the maritime challenge, but the contest is no longer a simple contest between man and the sea, it is between machine, man and the sea.

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[103] Joseph Conrad, *Typhoon and Youth* (1903; London: Heinemann, 1976), pp. 1-85 (pp. 69-70).
[104] Samuel Coleridge, 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, 3rd edn (New York & London: W. W. Norton, 1983), pp. 567-581. The mariner is Coleridge's poem is the archetypal seaman and storyteller, compelled to impart his confessional narrative.

It could be argued that the details of *In Hazard* emphasise the importance of facts for general and knowledgeable readers, enabling them to become immersed in the experience and feel themselves mariners. Having established Watchett's confidence in the impregnability of the ship, the narrative then shows how that faith is shaken when the ship is forced over on its side by the strength of the wind and the hatches that connect the deck with the cargo hold are torn away, allowing tons of water to pour into the ship.[105] Instead of running into the bilges, where it can be pumped out, the sea water is absorbed directly into the cargo of tobacco and newspapers, hugely increasing their weight and making the ship unbalanced. These consequences are explained carefully so that it becomes clear that covering the hatches quickly is a priority and explains why this is the first challenge for the crew. At this point, however, Mr. Rabb becomes paralysed with fear and is unable to move, while Buxton, the Chief Officer, leads apprentices Bennett and Phillips in a successful operation to secure the hatches. This demonstrates the distinction between the man who panics and the successful seaman, a man who remembers his duty, conquers his fear, and displays all the skills of seamanship as he works with his shipmates.

This episode, then, establishes the text's key themes: fear and seamanship, where a good sailor can overcome his personal sense of panic and help to save a ship in a crisis, showing that it is crucial to select and nurture a strong crew.[106] Maritime fiction often articulates the importance of judging men, although this is often through the faulty lens of physiognomy. Conrad's 'Typhoon' (1903) begins with a physical description of the blue-eyed and fair-haired Captain MacWhirr, whose physiognomy was 'the exact counterpart of

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[105] In his report to the owners of the *Phemius* Captain Evans estimated that 'ten tons of water an hour went down No. 2 hatch, and five tons down No. 1 and No. 6 hatches'. Poole, *Richard Hughes*, p. 58

[106] Hughes asserted the importance of fear as a theme in 'Fear and *In Hazard*', an article he wrote following the book's publication in 1938. He was concerned that *In Hazard* was popular with critics and the buying public 'because the description of the storm is said to be vivid and the story to be exciting' (p. 42). Hughes, in Poole, *Fiction as Truth*, pp. 42-44. Hughes defined fear as a rational avoidance of danger and his exploration of it 'in the shipload of men exposed to that appalling and prolonged danger almost every possible effect of fear, good and bad, has its expression' (pp. 43-44).

his mind [...] ordinary, irresponsive, and unruffled' (p. 1). In the terrifying chaos of the typhoon lack of imagination is presented as a particularly admirable quality in the captain, ensuring that 'every ship Captain MacWhirr commanded was the floating abode of harmony and peace' (p. 2). In Hughes's *In Hazard* the physical description of Mr. Rabb draws on the expectation that if a sailor looks the part, then he will act the part:

> But an unprejudiced physiognomist, looking round the saloon for someone on whom to place implicit reliance, would almost certainly have chosen the small, lean Devonian, the super-numerary Mr. Rabb, with his steady and brilliant blue eyes, and his firm jaw, his look rather of a naval officer than a mercantile one. (p. 25)

Rabb bears some resemblance to MacWhirr and Davies, the capable and resourceful yacht captain in Childers's *The Riddle of the Sands*, archetypical of the sailor hero. But here it is suggested that Rabb might be too good to be true. In this way Rabb is more akin to blue-eyed Jim in Conrad's *Lord Jim*. The ironic tone of the narrator ensures that the reader will expect anything but steadfastness from the man with a 'firm jaw' when the crisis arrives.

The archetype of the heroic sailor generates expectations that are placed on blue-eyed boys such as Rabb, but *In Hazard* warns against trusting a sailor on the basis of race and face. This is particularly pertinent on the *Archimedes* because the men are divided into English and Chinese factions. Unable to speak each other's languages, communication breaks down between the different nationalities, leading to mutual mistrust and misunderstanding. At the height of the hurricane on Friday, the Chinese engine-room crew are asked to help on deck and their growing discontent becomes apparent: 'The English, in taking them into a storm like this without telling them when they signed on, had broken the bargain: it was as bad as lying to them' (p. 70). Focalised through Mr. Soutar, an engine-room officer, the narrative suggests that the Chinese crew continue to believe that 'the English' are in control and should

therefore carry responsibility and blame.[107] But there are further divisions between the men

on the *Archimedes*:

> The engineer has to make certain machines work, but he has no interest whatever in what they are used for. He is as careless where they take him as a man's stomach is careless on what errand his legs are bound. The deck-officer, for his part, hardly seems to know whether he is on a motor-ship or a steamer (except by the amount of dirt on the decks). He cannot explain the working of any simple mechanism that he employs every day. [....] In the shipshape, decent mahogany of the officers' saloon they [the engineers and deck officers] dined at separate tables, the apprentices' table as a barrier between them. Their quarters were separate. Even the Chinese firemen slept at one end of the ship, and the Chinese deck-hands at the other! (p. 11)

The narrator's disparagement of the division between the men on deck and the men in the

engine room is shown by the fact that each specialist is defined in negative terms by his

ignorance of the other. Transcending race, this engineer-deck crew schism seems to be the

most fundamental division on board, but their ability to work together is necessary if the

Archimedes is going to survive the hurricane. Technology, designed to improve ships and

shipping, has alienated men from each other. But a major maritime challenge is on the

horizon, a storm of unprecedented fury, which will test the resources of each seamen, as well

as their collective endeavour.

The only way of bridging the gulf between a divided crew seems to be through the

captain, and in this text Captain Edwardes overcomes a series of challenges that show how he

is capable of uniting his crew. Having supervised the mending of the hatch covers on deck,

Edwardes knows that they need to keep pumping water out of the ship to stop it sinking, and

explains to the engine room that they need steam to power the pumps. Steam is also essential

so they can steer the ship away from the breaking waves in order to prevent the ship from

rolling and capsizing. The most serious crisis occurs when there is a major leak, the engine

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[107] Later, Soutar overhears discussions between the Chinese crew and believes that they are inciting each other to mutiny, which precipitates the Captain's arrest of Communist bandit Ao Ling, in the hope that he is removing the key agitator. Morgan argues that Ao Ling has 'no part to play in saving the ship', but yet Hughes dedicates a substantial piece of the novel to explaining how Ling has become a fugitive with false papers. (Morgan, *The Art of Richard Hughes*, p. 68). Morgan analyses this section of the novel in detail, surmising that Hughes's treatment of this character is a template for the role each character plays in constructing the narrative. (Morgan, *The Art of Richard Hughes*, pp. 68-75).

room is filled with smoke and the steam pressure drops, causing the pumps and fans to stop and the furnaces to blow back. The narrator spells out the cause in mathematical detail as it sinks into the consciousnesses of Edwardes and Buxton:

> the pressure exerted by air (leaving humidity out of account) increases according to the square of its velocity: the pressure of a wind at 200 m.p.h., therefore, would be roughly seven times as great. And that would mean a total of … [*sic*] but you can work that out for yourself, as Captain Edwardes did, in his head, while Mr. Buxton ran into the engine-room yelling 'The funnel's gone! The funnel's gone!' like a maniac. (p. 72)

The loss of the funnel is further proof of the wind's phenomenal strength and this colossal damage polarises the men's reactions to fear: Edwardes is stoically analytical, while Buxton becomes hysterical. It is as if the hurricane has exposed hidden aspects of each individual as they face their own mortality in a truly terrifying situation.

Initially, Chief Officer Buxton emulates the calm of his captain, but he experiences moments of terror which illustrate the spread of panic and its devastating effects.[108] On Wednesday, the first day of the hurricane, he is calm, even when the engines can no longer give enough power to keep the ship facing into the wind and the ship is knocked down onto its side. Nevertheless, Buxton thinks of duty first: 'It took about five minutes, altogether; and then she was lying broadside on to the wind, heeled over steeply, vulnerable; and Mr. Buxton, noting the time, entered it in the log' (p. 45). However, when the waves start to grow mountainously high on Friday, Buxton believes that the ship is doomed and, fearing that they will be pitched into the sea, he cuts his trousers to the knee thinking it will help him to swim more easily. Most of the crew follow Buxton's lead, but his logic is roundly scorned by Captain Edwardes, through whom the narrative is here focalised:

> Go on! Cut off your trouser-legs, and put on your life-belts! Then let us see you do your fancy swimming-strokes among these waves! Waves that will drop on you from seventy feet above you, weighing five hundred tons a time! And where do you think you will swim to, in the Name of Christ? (p. 70)

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[108] When Buxton is introduced the narrator explains that he is the Chief Officer 'alias first mate' (p. 11), assuming a readership conversant with the ranks of the sailing ship in maritime fiction, although not necessarily those of a steamship.

Although the ship is vulnerable, the crushing weight of the waves would mean instant death for the seamen if the ship sank. Having explained this reasoning, the captain's reaction to the waves is to analyse their shape and surmise that the ship must be in shallower waters, possibly over a bank or even dry land (p. 70). The narrative emphasises that Edwardes is the only man consistently able to overcome his fear in order to make rational decisions by thinking in terms of numbers and logical consequences. The measured response of the Captain Edwardes to different crises perpetuates a belief in mechanisation.[109] But a good ship alone is not enough; *In Hazard* shows how the crew have an urgent need to believe in an authority figure and Edwardes provides them with a reliable leader. *In Hazard* adopts the trope of the steadfast captain often seen in Conrad's texts, particularly *The Shadow-Line*, but one that is conspicuously absent in Hanley's *Boy* or Lowry's *Ultramarine*.

Hughes would have had some insights into the responsibilities of command, having sailed and owned his own vessels, albeit on a smaller scale. As captain, Edwardes has an immediate duty to make the correct decisions about how to handle the ship safely, but he also has responsibility for the ship and cargo's monetary value, all of which would be assessed after the storm in an official enquiry. By Thursday, the second day of the hurricane, it becomes clear that the survival of the ship and crew outweighs any potential financial concerns:

> For soon the storm reached such a height that plainly this was no longer an issue between himself and the Owners, but become an issue between himself and his Maker. [....] From then on, he was like an artist in a bout of inspiration.
> The boys were the turning-point; when they came rushing up on to the bridge, courageous in themselves and confident in him. It was they who lit him. (p. 82)

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[109] In his talk 'The Poet and the Scientist' Hughes warns about trusting science too implicitly. He considers quantum physics and mathematics, noting that they seem to come back to an 'absolute and mystical reality in number' but that this is 'anthropomorphism in a refined form. When man first studied nature, he conceived it in his own image. The lightning struck him because he had offended it. [....] For God, it seems, is now the Great mathematician. He no longer reveals Himself as an angry God in the hurricane, or a benign God in the warmth of summer, but He reveals Himself as a calculating God'. Hughes, 'The Poet and the Scientist' in *Fiction as Truth*, ed. Poole, pp. 92-102, (p. 100).

This episode serves as a reminder that the captain does not hold absolute power; Edwardes has to defer to the 'Owners', capitalised, until the storm reaches such a pitch that he feels he can exchange his responsibility for the ship and cargo to a struggle for life-and-death. Here, Hughes seems to be invoking the nostalgia for a lost maritime past, before technology and bureaucracy entered into the equation, of Conradian contests between man and sea. The captain's reaction to the boys here shows that he thinks of them as an integral part of the crew, including them in a strong sense of brotherhood. This is a very different attitude from that explored in *Boy* and *A High Wind in Jamaica*, in which children are treated as a nuisance, whether they are working sailors or passengers. *Boy* presents a crew in danger of collapse, led by a captain who is criminally negligent, and whose murder of Fearon marks the ultimate failure of his responsibility to look after his sailors. *In Hazard*, then, could be said to look back to the past in its portrayal of sailor heroes, but there are important differences, not least the fact that these challenges are presented on a steamship compared to the sailing ships of Conrad's later maritime fiction.

If the captain fulfils the role of heroic sailor, the greatest challenge is realised when he loses the inspiration he felt during the worst of the crisis and becomes frightened about the substantial damage to the ship as the hurricane begins to subside: 'Captain Edwardes was, for the first time in that storm, afraid' (p. 215). Hughes uses maritime knowledge to show how the steamship has survived the worst extremes by comparing it to a sailing ship: 'While the hurricane lasted, the *Archimedes* had been pinned down almost as if her slab sides were working-canvas' (p. 119). The image of 'working-canvas' suggests it has a sense of purpose, that it is like a sailing ship working with the wind and being propelled along in a purposeful direction. But as the winds decrease in strength, the *Archimedes* stops acting like a sailing ship and, because there is no power from the engines, the ship cannot be steered and lurches in an uncontrolled way, smashing objects in the cabins and on the decks, including the

lifeboats. The text emphasises that the risk of sinking now reaches its height because the seas are coming in through the hatch into the stern of the ship and pulling the *Archimedes* down lower into the water. Edwardes is the only man with the complete knowledge of their situation because he has to direct sailors to each task that has contributed to saving the ship. While the fears of the seamen are portrayed as being more instinctive and more individual, occurring in the moment, the fears of the captain are shown to be more complex.

In presenting the dilemmas of leadership, *In Hazard* again refers to Conradian values, where the weighty responsibility of captaincy is explored in *The Shadow-Line*.[110] The turning-point in *In Hazard* comes when Edwardes receives a telegram from the Owners of the *Archimedes* which reads: '*Salvage vessel Patricia been searching you three days stop*' (p. 121). Edwardes replies: '*Hurricane moderating. Am confident of safety of ship will proceed Kingston*' (p. 121). Edwardes is indignant that a salvage ship has been searching for them, resenting the implication that the Owners of the ship doubt his ability to save the ship and think only of rescuing what they can of the wreckage. The narrator observes that for Edwardes 'his training had been in Sail, not Steam' (p. 122) and explains why this is significant:

> every common action in the working of a sailing-vessel, all the time, partakes of something of the nature of an emergency. [....] Thus is a natural aptitude for virtue increased by everyday practice. For changing a jib in a stiff breeze is a microcosm, as it were, of saving the ship in a storm. (p. 123)

The reference to sailing terminology and use of the word 'jib' assumes that the reader will be aware that this is a fore-sail and, even if they do not have direct experience, that they have an awareness of maritime discourse, the type of knowledge that could be supplied by maritime fiction. Hughes shows how the captain's training in Sail (with a capital 'S') has prepared Edwardes for the ultimate test of a facing a hurricane and this represents a marked contrast to

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[110] Conrad's study of the captain in *The Shadow-Line* reveals a very different kind of pressure; when the captain reaches harbour after many days of becalming with a dangerously sick crew he reveals to a doctor the continued stress and sleep deprivation in such conditions: 'I have been seventeen days on deck' (p. 141).

the way that Hughes has presented the mathematical logic of the steamship in the modern era. In other words, Edwardes is a man who has the traditional sailing skills and leadership qualities, but also the technical knowledge required to command a steamship.[111] I would argue that Edwardes fulfils Cohen's definition of the sailor with 'compleat [*sic*] knowledge' and that he represents a new breed of sailor, trained in sail, but working in steam.

In Conrad's *Lord Jim* and *The Shadow-Line*, men with engineering knowledge are portrayed as men corrupted by their skills, becoming lazy, neglectful, and complacent, but in *In Hazard*, the old ways are brought together with the new and this shows a way in which the genre can also move forward. Edwardes thinks back to a storm in which a previous ship, a schooner, was dismasted. It was possible to build a new mast for the sailing ship from the cargo of timber and they managed to sail the ship back to port: 'No salvage-ship was sent combing the seas for *her* [*sic*]' (p. 123). This suggests that steamships are more vulnerable than sailing ships because they have more complicated working parts that are far more difficult to replace when broken. Inspired by this memory, Edwardes directs the engine room to jury-rig the furnaces so that, although their original design required oil, they can be adapted to burn wood. He then directs the deck crew to chop up all the furniture on board to supply the furnaces with fuel. Conrad's maritime novels suggest that seamanship belongs to the era of sail, raising concerns that seamanship will die out with sail, but *In Hazard* shows how Edwardes can triumph as a man on the cusp between sail and steam. Previously, it has been the courage and stoicism of Edwardes that has been praised; now it is his ability to apply to a steamship the skills he has learnt on sailing ships. This brings to the genre ways in which to incorporate maritime technology into revitalised forms of the sea story, particularly as the sailing ship did not disappear from the sea as the twentieth century progressed, but

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[111] Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea*, pp. 37-41.

changed in function from a commercial vessel to a ship designed for leisure, sport, and exploration.

Earlier in the text, the divisions between the crew members who are working in the engine room and those working on deck mirror those in Lowry's *Ultramarine*, but in their final efforts to save the ship from foundering, the deck crew and the engineers of the *Archimedes* work together successfully to raise enough steam to power the pumps. This means that they can keep pumping water out of the ship and can send S.O.S. messages. Subsequently, the *Archimedes* receives a response from the salvage ship *Patricia*, with whom they arrange a tow. The men on the *Patricia* bring over supplies to the crew on the *Archimedes* and, as they have dinner together, the narrator makes the observation that the 'Deck and Engine-room mixed at last' (p. 245). The crisis of the storm has led to the breaking down of barriers within the crew. This meal provides some sort of resolution to the sea story, although it is undermined by the ironic observation that the men are only eating together because one of the tables was destroyed by the storm. It is in such details that Hughes moves beyond Conradian myths of brotherhood amongst seamen.

Conclusion

As the twentieth century progressed, maritime texts reflected a changing perception of the myths of the sailor hero: how he was meant to look, how he acted in a crisis, and how he thought. Even though Conrad begins to look at the internalised conflicts of the individual, beginning with the protagonist of *Lord Jim*, externalised challenges still play an important role in his texts. Jim deserts his ship in *Lord Jim*, but later defends Patusan from invasion, while Anthony safely evacuates the ship following a ship-to-ship crash in *Chance*. Abandoning a ship, repelling an attack, and surviving a collision are all crises to which the sailor can be judged on the ways in which he responds. Ultimately, Conrad's captains and

officers are portrayed as heroes and, in many ways, *In Hazard*'s Captain Edwardes, a resourceful and courageous leader, is similarly represented. Moreover, even though the narrative is set on a steamship, it promotes the inherent virtue of sailing in terms of seamanship, also strongly espoused in *The Riddle of the Sands*. In this sense, Hughes's narrative can seem regressive in its celebration of the sailor hero and the collective efforts of the crew. However, Hughes's seamen are more palpably fallible, and therefore appear more real, than many of the sailors in Conrad's maritime fiction, displaying moments of fear, irrationality, and indecision.

In contrast to Conrad's texts, *Ultramarine* depicts an unremarkable voyage devoid of maritime challenges, in which knowledge and understanding of the seaman's experience is paramount. Having arrived at this point, it becomes difficult to see how maritime fiction will develop. At the end of the 1930s, Richard Hughes's *In Hazard* returns to the type of externalised maritime challenge typified by Conrad's maritime fiction, but the question is whether this indicates a retreat to the past or a way forward. Death is faced at every moment in the ferocity of the hurricane but, in the end, everyone in the crew survives the ultimate maritime challenge. Except one; MacDonald, the Chief Engineer, accidentally falls overboard and is lost at sea when the storm is over and the ship is being towed to safety (pp. 138-139). In a text based so closely on the passage of a real ship through a hurricane, this was one of the elements fictionalised by Hughes, and it emphasises the need to look beyond the grand narrative to the small details that encourage us to look anew at sea stories. Similarly, this thesis has gone beyond the texts of canonical authors to seek out the unusual events and silent tragedies on the routes less travelled in maritime fiction.

Conclusion

New Horizons: The Diversification of Sea Stories into the Twenty-First Century

This thesis set out to investigate the widely-accepted perception that maritime fiction ends

with Conrad, and that subsequent authors simply repeat the patterns apparent in his work,

most commonly the return to the past evident in Conrad's *The Rover* (1923). Certainly, Peck

suggests this is the case with twentieth-century English authors such as C. S. Forester, whose

'Hornblower' series began with *The Happy Return* (1937) and ended with *Hornblower and*

the Crisis: an Unfinished Novel (1967).[1] Peck also cites the Aubrey/Maturin series of Patrick

O'Brian, initiated in 1970 with *Master and Commander*,[2] which ran until *Blue at the Mizzen*

(1999), which seems to exemplify maritime authors retreating to the mode of the classic sea

story.[3] However, this thesis has examined texts that, I suggest, look beyond traditional

maritime myths, opening new avenues of possibility where the sea and ships remain central

but, in the aftermath of the shift from sail to steam, fulfill different functions.

My thesis has focused on the early twentieth century, bridging the gap in English

maritime fiction between Conrad and Forester, and showing how the classic shape of the sea

story responded to a rapidly developing maritime world. Similarly, Foulke considers

twentieth-century maritime fiction to represent a thriving continuation of the genre:

> recent decades have seen the publication of works like John Barth's *Sabbatical*, Peter
> Matthiessen's *Far Tortuga*, Nicholas Monsarrat's *The Master Mariner Running*
> *Proud*, William Golding's trilogy (*Rites of Passage*, *Close Quarters*, and *Fire Down*
> *Below*), Derek Walcott's *Omeros*, John McPhee's *Looking for a Ship*, Charles
> Johnson's *Middle Passage*, Robert Stone's *Outerbridge Reach*, and a spate of novels
> in Patrick O'Brian's Aubry/Maturin series.[4]

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[1] C. S. Forester, *Captain Hornblower, RN* (1965; London: Penguin, 1985). This edition comprises three novels:
Hornblower and the 'Atropos' (1953), *The Happy Return* (1937), and *A Ship of the Line* (1938). Forester is best
known for the series of nine novels featuring protagonist Horatio Hornblower, but he also wrote a maritime
novel that engaged with contemporary concerns: *The Ship* (1943), set on a Royal Navy cruiser in the Second
World War.

[2] Patrick O' Brian, *Master and Commander* (1970; London: Harper Perennial, 2007).

[3] Peck, *Maritime Fiction*, p. 207. Although concluding with Conrad, Peck's study encompasses American
literature, demonstrating the breadth of maritime writing over two hundred years.

[4] Foulke, *Sea Voyage Narrative*, p. 160.

While this thesis has focused on works of English literature, Foulke's study has a global reach, and he, like Peck, includes writers on both sides of the Atlantic in his assessment. Taking the maritime novels of William Golding as an example, *Rites of Passage* (1980), *Close Quarters* (1987), and *Fire Down Below* (1989), present complex first-person epistolary narratives containing unsettling episodes of rape and abuse. Although set on a nineteenth-century sailing ship, the form and content of Golding's novels differentiates them from the classic historical maritime tradition; rather, they draw on the more realistic, if harsh, representations of life at sea seen in the innovative texts of Hanley and Lowry.[5] My contention, then, is that Conrad's sea novels do more than simply follow the tradition of the classic sea story. In responding to the sail/steam transition and exploring the psychology of the sailor, they exert a profound influence on contemporary and on later maritime fiction. Conrad's maritime texts set in place the narrative threads of twentieth-century sea stories, threads that inspired and enabled the generic experimentation of the authors I have considered here: Childers, Jesse, Hughes, Lowry, and Hanley.

The works of Conrad, and those that followed in his immediate wake and which are studied in depth in this thesis, make possible, I suggest, the subsequent survival of and diversification in twentieth-century maritime fiction. For example, Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, but also, I would argue, Jesse and Hughes' sea stories, contributed to a burgeoning interest in the genre from the publishers of literature for children. While the focus in the thesis has been on adult novels published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, maritime fiction also featured in juvenile publications in the same period, such as Arthur Ransome's Swallows and Amazons series. Ransome wrote twelve books, which followed the adventures of the four Walker children and the two Blackett sisters in and around small sailing boats. *Swallows and Amazons* (1930), the first of these, appropriated the quest

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[5] William Golding, *To the Ends of the Earth* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991). This edition encompasses all three volumes of the trilogy.

narrative of *Treasure Island*, and tailored it to a smaller lakeside setting in which the 'pirate' figures of Captain Flint (in reality the Blackett sisters' uncle) and the amateur thieves who steal the chest containing his manuscript are imaginary and unthreatening.[6] Ransome wrote slightly more sinister pirates into two other books in this series: *Peter Duck* (1932) and *Missee Lee* (1941). As books about children and intended for a juvenile audience, they were less experimental and rather more innocent than the pirate adventures of *Moonraker* and *A High Wind in Jamaica*, yet they testify to the genre's continued flexibility in form, function, and audience.

Ransome's texts also respond to another important development in the twentieth-century maritime world: the rise of sailing for pleasure rather than, as seen in the works of Conrad's and other authors discussed earlier, economic reasons.[7] With the economic need removed, much of the necessity to describe the methods used to drive the ship and consequently the actions of the sailors is removed, and the ship becomes rather the locus in which other activities can take place. Childers's sea/spy story *The Riddle of the Sands* is an early example, as an intricate tale of espionage unfolds in the space of a small leisure yacht. Later, another leisure yacht is the scene first for illicit sexuality and subsequently for murder in Daphne du Maurier's gothic romance *Rebecca* (1938) becoming, finally, a watery grave for the Rebecca of the title. Gothic fiction has much in common with crime fiction, and in Agatha Christie's *Death on the Nile* (1937) a ship replaces the confines of the country house or the rural village as the setting for the crime as detective Hercule Poirot studies the layout of the decks and cabins of a passenger steamship in his attempt to discover the murderer of Linnet Ridgeway.[8] As this thesis shows, crime, murder, and illicit sexuality feature in early twentieth-century maritime fiction, sometimes in coded form but overtly in Hanley's *Boy*. In

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[6] Arthur Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons* (1930; London: Red Fox, 2001).

[7] For further discussions of non-fiction yacht voyage narratives from Joshua Slocum's *Sailing Alone Around the World* (1900) to Hal Roth's *The Longest Race* (1983), and yachting novels, particularly by American authors, such as John Barth's *Sabbatical: A Romance* (1982), see Foulke, *Sea Voyage Narrative*, pp. 161-164.

[8] Agatha Christie, *Death on the Nile* and *They Do It with Mirrors* (1937; London: Heron Books, 1976).

Conrad and in his literary wake lie the tropes and themes that enable the survival of the maritime genre in its many and various forms.[9]

Another developmental feature of maritime fiction seen in Conrad and his immediate successors in the twentieth century is the motif of the *bildungsroman.* Rites of passage are evident not only in Conrad's *Lord Jim* and Hanley's *Boy*, but appear also in some of Virginia Woolf's novels, in which the protagonists' voyages through life are paralleled by or take place on symbolic sea voyages.[10] For example, in Woolf's *The Voyage Out* (1913) Rachel Vinrace embarks on a quest narrative from virginity to prospective marriage that takes place on the literal voyage from the River Thames in London, across the Atlantic Ocean to the inland waters of South America, on board on the *Euphrosyne*. More obliquely, *To the Lighthouse* (1927) uses the promise of a boat trip, its repeated postponement and young James's disappointment, to shape the first part of the novel, which examines the interactions between the Ramsay family and their houseguests. Many years later, Mr. Ramsay and two of his children, Cam and James, finally sail to the lighthouse, and the brief exploration of sixteen-year-old James's resentment towards his father as they sail towards their destination suggests the use of the voyage as a space for the psychological development central to the *bildungsroman* that is implicit in much of Conrad's fiction. In *Orlando* (1928) ships function as locations freed from the constraints of society, chronology, and biography as the eponymous protagonist leaves England as an Elizabethan gentleman, but sails back on a

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[9] The final chapter of Cohen's study suggests that the end of the sailor's craft marked the search for new frontiers, or as she calls it, 'high-risk zones at the Edge [*sic*]'. Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea*, p 225. Cohen's argument is that, not only does maritime fiction continue in the writings of Ernest Hemingway, Patrick O'Brian et al, 'sea adventure fiction's poetics of problem-solving' evolve and are also assimilated by space travel, spy fiction, science fiction, and cyberfiction. Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea*, p 225.

[10] Woolf's first essay on Conrad was written in the form of a dialogue between two fictional characters: a man who accuses him of 'singing the same songs about sea captains and the sea, beautiful, noble, and monotonous' and a woman who praises him for the narrative complexity conferred by Marlow. Virginia Woolf, 'Mr Conrad: A Conversation' (1923), *The Captain's Death Bed*, pp. 74-78, p. 75. In a second essay first published in the *Times Literary Supplement* eleven days after Conrad's death in 1924, she identified Conrad's success in presenting 'fundamentally simple and heroic' characters in the novels prior to *Nostromo*. This was a novel she rated more highly than Conrad's later works, which she admired for their complexity, but found less convincing. Virginia Woolf, *The Common Reader* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1938), pp. 222–228.

nineteenth-century merchant ship as a Victorian lady.[11] Although Virginia Woolf is not

considered a maritime fiction author in the way that we might understand Joseph Conrad, the

influence of the genre is evident in the way that the sea and ships feature prominently in her

works.[12] In common with other authors writing in the maritime fiction genre, Virginia Woolf

had maritime experiences but as a steamship passenger, rather than sailing her own yacht or

working on a steamship, and her fiction reflects this different experience and perspective.[13]

Later in the twentieth century, the popularity of authors such as C.S. Forester and

Patrick O'Brian, as well as the critical success of William Golding, testifies to the continued

interest in maritime fiction into the twenty-first century. The enduring fascination with the

sea and sailing continues to draw an audience, rather as Sarah Woodruff is continually drawn

to watch the sea from the shoreline in John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman*

(1969).[14] The use of the sea in Fowles's postmodern revisiting of the Victorian novel can be

related back to Conrad and to Woolf's modernist narrative experiments. Looking even further

ahead, Joanna Rostek argues that the maritime metaphor often plays an important role in

contemporary Anglophone literature where 'the past and history are metaphorically

conceived of in terms of the sea'.[15] I consider that Rostek's recent study supports and justifies

my contention that Conrad and the writers who followed in his wake opened up new

approaches to using and reading maritime tropes and motifs. Her work is organised according

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[11] Laura Marcus, 'Writing Lives: *Orlando*, *The Waves* and *Flush*', *Virginia Woolf* (Tavistock, Devon: Northcote House Publishers, 1997), pp. 116-149. Marcus proposes that 'For Woolf, as we have seen, forms of transport are primary vehicles for the exploration of identity; in *Orlando*, they are part of the text's exploration of transportations from one state of being and time to another' (p. 124).

[12] In a letter to Violet Dickinson on 5th and 10th April 1905 Woolf records that she is on ocean liner *Madeirensa*, a passenger/cargo liner of 2760 gross tons run by the Booth line. Woolf uses the *Madeirensa* as the starting point for *The Voyage Out*, sailing the *Euphrosyne* the same route to South America, and both ships have this dual role of transporting both people and goods. Virginia Woolf, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf,* ed. Nigel Nicolson, 6 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1975), I, *1888–1912 The Flight of the Mind.*

[13] Jan Morris, *Travels with Virginia Woolf* (London: Pimlico, 1997). Morris's book collates Woolf's travel writings, including letters and journals. One entry from her 'grand tour' from September to October 1906 reveals a love/hate relationship with the sea caused by seasickness: 'We travelled down to Nauplia by steamer. And if this steamer had not smelt, & [*sic*] if it had not had the cruel consequences of smelling ships, no voyage could have been more pleasant' (p. 203).

[14] John Fowles, *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969; London: Triad/Granada, 1977).

[15] Joanna Rostek, *Seaing* [*sic*] *Through the Past: Postmodern Histories and the Maritime Metaphor in Contemporary Anglophone Fiction* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2011), p. 17.

to the different ways in which fourteen critically-acclaimed contemporary novels approach the interlocking themes of postmodern histories and the maritime metaphor, from Iris Murdoch's *The Sea, the Sea* (1978) to Doris Lessing's *The Cleft* (2007).[16] While she recognises that these narratives are shaped by the maritime fiction tradition, Rostek argues that 'if the aim of contemporary criticism is to broaden the perspective by looking forward, backward, sideways, up, and down, the vast sea is exactly that which allows such a complex, spatial gaze'.[17] In other words, postmodern readings invigorate these contemporary sea narratives because they enable the sea to be considered as a new site separated from social structures on land. Contrary to this, I have argued that the ship's distance from land makes it a dangerous space, shown in the works of Hanley and Lowry, because being separated from the judicial institutions designed to protect the individual allows the strong to exploit the weak.

Rostek shows how contemporary maritime fiction responds to a postmodern critical and cultural context in a way that parallels Foulke's explanation of how sea narratives adapt and thrive in the twentieth century, as the world of sailing moves away from the tall ships of Conrad's youth to the leisure yachts of Joshua Slocum, Erskine Childers, and Sir Francis Chichester. Similarly, this thesis has argued that early twentieth-century maritime fiction does more than simply replicate the patterns of tradition, arguing that texts manipulate the boundaries of fact and fiction in the genre as they respond to the industrialisation of the maritime industry and to the wider issues of alienation and separation in an industrialised world traumatised by war and nostalgic for the past. In the wake of Conrad, Doyle, Childers,

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[16] The texts studied in *Seaing Through the Past* are grouped into four sections; the first examining the role of individual biography in Murdoch's *The Sea, the Sea*, Candia McWilliams' *Debatable Land* (1994), Graham Swift's *Last Orders* (1996), and Ian McEwan's *On Chesil Beach* (2007). Subsequently, Rostek analyses Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* (2002) and John Banville's *The Sea* (2005) in 'Salvaging the Self: Narratives of Personal Trauma'. Widening the scope, the next section examines the political impact of Darwinian/origin theories in Julian Barnes's *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* (1989), Jeanette Winterson's *Lighthousekeeping* (2004), Doris Lessing *The Cleft* (2007) and Barry Unsworth's *Sacred Hunger* (1997). The final section shows how maritime history and the maritime fiction tradition are re-written from a new postcolonial position in J. M. Coetzee's *Foe* (1986), Marina Warner's *Indigo or Mapping the Waters* (1992), Fred D'Aguiar's *Feeding the Ghosts* (1997), and Matthew Kneale's *English Passengers* (2000).

[17] Rostek, *Seaing Through the Past*, p. 327.

Jesse, Hughes, Lowry, and Hanley explore and in some cases explode the maritime myths of honour and seamanship, of man challenging and harnessing the sea. The consequences of that exploration, as I have shown, ensure the survival of the genre, albeit in new forms that respond to and interrogate the societies and cultures in which they are produced, as enduring a motif as the sea itself.

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