

## Chapter 1

### Depiction of Illusion on Modernism

Polish-born English novelist Joseph Conrad has gained a reputation as a master stylist of English language and literature. Though he belongs to the white community he invested his efforts to execute the ethos of black community through writing. The queries regarding imperialism and racism have raised controversy in his works. He was accused for his racist view towards Africans in his works, he portrayed Africa as a continent devoid of civilization. Conrad uses the descriptive style which makes the stories come alive however the excessive uses of details grind to a halt the narrative. Peters has also analyzed Conrad's writing ways and descriptive style and given remarks on it. In Peters opinion towards Conrad's writing styles is, "Early on, critics recognized aspects of Conrad's work that would become consistent points of interest, particularly his style, atmosphere, characterization, narrative methodology, descriptive abilities, and psychological investigations" (1). Like this, Conrad's works reflect the contemporary issues on the lifestyle of human in modern society portraits to emotional and moral problems.

The main argument of this thesis is to reveal the illusion of modern society of youth in Conrad's selected stories "The Lagoon", "Amy Foster" and "Youth". The study examines that people have illusion about love, marriage, and youth because of the modern life style of the major characters. This study focuses on the central characters, who are facing obstacles in their love, marriage and sorts of upheaval in their youth that they have to go through to pursue the passions of their lives in the modern society. In these stories, characters are presented as reflection of modern society where relations merely turn out as an illusion. These characters undergo high level of illusion regarding their love and marriage because they neither can

completely quit traditional norms and values nor can be adjusted to purely modernized situation.

Conrad's favorite themes include the impact of isolation of an individual. His works represented the indistinctness of human conditions. Conrad produced thirteen novels, two volumes of memoirs, and twenty-eight short stories, although writing was not easy or painless for him. In most of his novels, Conrad portrayed European men in situations far removed from their usual society and customs. Thus isolated, his characters are brought into conflict with nature and with the forces of good and evil within themselves. Conrad's life at sea and in ports abroad furnished the background for much of his writing, giving rise to the impression that he was primarily committed to foreign concerns. Middleton points out most of Conrad's plots are associated to voyage experiences in "Joseph Conrad". Middleton states "Conrad drew upon his sea experiences as a source for stories and incidents and as a basis for particular characters. The following list details some of the ways he drew upon his sea life for the characters, incidents or setting of some of his major works" (6). In reality, however, his major interest as a writer was the human condition.

Conrad's stories "The Lagoon", "Amy Foster" and "The Youth" are set in the early modern world and they have shown the departure, love, marriage, disapproval, betrayal, loyalty of the central characters. The main characters of these stories perform the different roles as well as narrate the different feelings and emotions. The works deal with the mazed world in modern society where relations are merely turned out as disillusion. "The Lagoon" has shown the betrayal in relation and isolation of the brave soldier. The major characters Arsat was in dilemma to save his brother or to escape from Rajah's men with his beloved. Similarly, in "Amy Foster", Yanko, a poor immigrant, struggles to survive but his wife also betrayed him and left for dying. At

the end of these two stories “Amy Foster” and “The Lagoon” both central characters Amy and Arsat lost their beloved which is clearly shown that collapsed norms and values of emigrants with the cultural and identity clash due to the consequences of modern lifestyle.

On the contrary, “Youth” focuses on romanticism of central character Marlow in his youth. This story depicts the travelling heart and their suffering voyage. This story portrays the fascinating dream of youth which creates the dilemmatic situation for the youth. Also, this story is not just about the romantic dream of youth but the American dream of youth, a combination of adventurous life with a romantic dream which is greatly affected by the modern social rules, values, norms, and beliefs.

All the characters have intense relations but later they fed up and ignore it or choose the other option betraying their own partner or spouse. Both Amy and Arsat have prioritized their love which is shadowed by modernism later. This is Conrad’s exhibition of human psychology due to modern life. The human mind is complex and easily attracted towards the glittering light of the world where everything is hidden, and at the upper level, only illusion remains, in which everyone falls down as a reality. According to Panichas, “to register suffering and guilt in relation to moral crime, as well as to present, in profoundly dramatic terms, the moral aspect of the confusion that conduces disorder, in both the outer world and individual soul” (88). Furthermore, due to modernist the relations are distorted that creates illusion in human mind.

Indeed, Conrad's stories have reflected modern issues and problems with their anti-heroic notions and narrative styles. Collapsed norms and values of emigrants with the cultural and identity clash, which has occurred due to modernism, are clearly shown in the stories. Basically, he has presented the impacts of modernism in

people's lives. Their expressions and experiences are based on the grand setting of contemporary time and issues, and are related to their day to day experiences. Conrad has represented modern life and modern relationship through the upheaval and struggles in his stories.

### **Review of Literature**

Conrad has written short stories making the postcolonial world as a setting and their issues as a central theme. He has shown the life in the transition phase where people are holding their traditional belief adopting modern life. At places, characters are unable to distinguish their true selves and identity. He has put one more break to English literature representing the voice of emigrants and their dilemmatic life in modern society; they cannot leave their past identity, neither can they accept a current position from their heart.

Researchers have their own opinions regarding his stories and narrative form. He is renowned for his artistic presentation in his stories. In the essay "The Genius of Joseph Conrad," James Huneker writes, "The figure of Joseph Conrad stands solitary among English novelists as the idea of a pure and disinterested artist" (270). Further, he examines his stories' way of presentation in which Conrad has used:

A difficult and elusive method, but it presents us with many facets of character and is swift and secular. The color is toned down, is more sober than the prose of the Eastern stories. Sometimes he employs the personal pronoun, and with what piquancy as well as poignancy may be noted in the volume *Youth*. This contains three tales, the first, which gives the title-key, has been called the finest short story in English, although it is difficult to discriminate. (275)

Huneker has analyzed Conrad's stories from the angle of writing style and

presentation of piquancy and poignancy in the volume of "Youth". But, he has left the huge part of representation of modernity and its impact in his stories.

Harper Brothers have examined Conrad writing in their review, "A Personal Record by Joseph Conrad." According to them, Conrad writing has said:

friendly preface, "we do not want much encouragement to talk about ourselves."... Unlike M. Anatole France, who assures us that he never writes of anything but himself, his own adventures in the field of thought, Joseph Conrad, great a master of style in his own kind as the other, writes of everything he sees and hears, but most casually and incidentally of himself. (569)

Conrad has used grand setting to walkout through stories to show the grand lives of its characters. His writing is rich in symbols and style which is different from others. He has introduced an unexpected end staying away from the reader's presumptions.

On the contrary to them, J.M. Robertson has criticized Conrad's view of the world. Robertson says:

"Assumes that the books he extols are not likely to be appreciated in England and America," ... With the regulation right of seniority to be contemptuous of the present, I demur both to the 'nowadays' and to the 'odd thing'. Conrad had been before the public for only two and-twenty years; and already he has a high repute and a wide audience, as vogue goes among authors who do not write for 'the multitude.' (439)

Conrad is in his reader's heart through the question raised by Robertson is still valid because most of them don't understand the real concept of Conrad. His issues are verisimilitude to their life and unknowingly they appreciate it unknowingly.

Hugh Clifford has presented his view on Conrad's writing in his review:

The matter is, in a sense, the common property of all the world, or of that section of the world which has roamed widely; but, from the outset, the reader is made conscious of an intensely individual point of view, a special outlook upon life, of a constructive imagination working upon lines different to those common to Englishmen, of a profound comprehension of the psychology of a certain class of character, and withal of a somber force and a forth right sincerity that compel recognition of the essential truth revealed. (843)

As Clifford has analyzed Conrad's writing as true and original its nature, he has presented the modern social values and norms. It has greatly shaken the truth of modern world and social relation of human.

Joseph Conrad's number of novels and stories which deal with the encounter between western European people and non-western people in different geographical territories of the world. Although Conrad grounds his humanism in universality, he inevitably encounters the risk of imposing Western ideology and thus Western power on the East in "Youth". As Edward Crankshaw says of Conrad's ideology as "It is primarily rooted in the humanist perception of cultural identity, a perception that tends to reinforce cultural distinctiveness, difference, and distance and in so doing provides the epistemic basis for the historical emergence of colonial expansion" (54). As claimed by Crankshaw, Conrad recognizes the prevailing limitations. He knows them well as he faces similar complications with his characters in "Youth". Westerner's desire to connect to a fictitious geography may be overridden by Western power over the Orient.

Chinua Achebe is extreme critic of Conrad. Conrad is just a backdrop which eliminates the African as human factor. Conrad's nonwestern geography is a

metaphysical battlefield devoid of all recognizable humanity, into which the European enters at his own peril. Chinua Achebe gives expression to the following view with regard to Joseph Conrad:

The point of my observations should be quite clear by now, namely that Joseph Conrad was a thoroughgoing racist. That this simple truth is glossed over in criticisms of his work is due to the fact that white racism against Africa is such a normal way of thinking that its manifestations go completely unremarked. (12-13)

Conrad effectively silences the other. He reconstitutes difference as identity. It rules over and represents domains figured by occupying powers, not by inactive inhabitants. Both the implicit and explicit components stand side by side in most of the works of Conrad including “Youth”.

Achebe claimed that Conrad was “a thoroughgoing racist” (12) because of the way that he portrayed Africans in the story. A tumultuous scholarly debate broke out after the publication of Achebe’s essay. Some scholars argued that Conrad was a visionary who recognized the wrongs of imperialism at a time when most Europeans either tacitly accepted or keenly endorsed efforts to colonize Africa. Some praised Conrad for attempting to depict Africans sympathetically; others argued that Conrad’s depictions of Africans were shaped by racial stereotypes but noted that Conrad’s views and blind spots were typical of the time in which he lived. While the majority of Conrad critics today concur that Conrad is literal anti-imperialist, debates on Conrad’s presentation of imperialism and of African characters continue to culminate in literary criticisms.

Conrad’s stories basically deal with social relations that are filled from different golden dreams of life. But in-depth, his stories have moved around the

identity clash and issues of the modern world. Human identity is constructed through the myth and the culture that they adore. In Conrad's stories, means of identity/ sources of identity are dismantled and that brokenness has a direct impact upon characters life. The central characters in the stories under consideration suffer illusion because of their inability to quit tradition and their failure to fully except modern values. Characters are trying to search their identity in a new land but flee from the modernization and lost their values, tradition, social norms and relations in stories.

Indeed, this study is significant for those readers who have a great interest in the modern lifestyle, and social relations. Marriage is a spiritual bond in the past days. It has become merely a bonding to fulfill each other's desires and needs until one does not feel fed up. These all issues are gifted of the modernity and its impacts which are attributed to human psychology and relations. Conrad has beautifully explored the darker issues of modern life in his writings. So different from other critics this study focuses on the aspect of illusion of relation in modern life.



## Chapter 2

### Modernism and Illusion

Modernism involves the customization of philosophy and transformation of art from late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in Western countries and North America. Modernism shows the new moral sense / emotions of this time. The new generation of modernists showed that this new period was identical from others before. The new generation which was self-conscious breaks the traditional norms, values, feelings, ways which raised the disillusionment after the war. Misa, Brey and Feenberg give their statement as “The tie between modern technology and social progress was much in the minds of “modernists” in the early twentieth century” (5). This illustrates modernism raised in turbulence in the initial period of 20<sup>th</sup> centuries which stimulated the modern civilization views towards life, art, politics and technology. Modernism was mainly focused on the vision on life of human being and society and optimism in advancing or moving ahead.

Modernism exhibits the self-reflection of the modernist views seen distinctly in the reality of the subject of works which separate the individual from society. This concept is visualized via the actions of trying on costumes, ethics which constantly tears one’s identity and transfers to another. Modernism attempted to break the classical way of representing beliefs to explore the concurrent the new forms of expression. The modernists have evolved due to the advance in science and social values. Thus modernism either wants to forget history or at least reinterpret it to modify the society rapidly.

The basic aspect of modernist architecture involves the belief in the growth of technology, innovation and enlightened opinions. Modernism also assumed the contrast poles of tradition or conventional behavior of ancient society. Modernism

created confusion in omitting the traditional values and acceptance of the modern norms completely. The modernists viewed to reimagine the environment and eager to recreate the world in current style.

The elements of modernism are thematic, formal and stylistic in literature. During the First World War, the world experienced the turmoil and destruction which is reflected in modernist literature. Literary modernists acknowledged the fall down of conventional form and overturned the traditional ways. Schedler also explains the turbulence of traditional and modern way after World War I. In Schedler's *Border Modernism*, he states, "by the early twentieth century there had been a major social upheaval in the tribe so that traditional social models no longer applied" (80). So, modernism is a separation from usual conventions and look for new views, opinions, styles and thoughts. In literary forms modernism strengthened the fragmentation of reality. Modernism exhibited alienation from community which creates isolation leading towards violence. Modernism commemorated the destructive never ending cycle rising to modern forms and creation.

Loss and exile is also one of the most significant issues of modernism. Modernism ignored the traditional truth and figures of authority leading modernists towards detachment from religion. This created individualism resulting isolation and drop out from human community. Similarly, the collapse of social values and culture is presented in modern society of human life by the modernists. The traditional forms followed various steps and ways to bring people under control. On the other hand modern norms and values are overtaking the old values and beliefs, where characters are unable to adopt new one completely, nor able to leave old ones. Illusionary situation is spread over everywhere.

During late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, most of the creations exhibited ironic

and emotionless which reflects frank awareness of communal ill and human intensity of cruelty. Despite this various narrators and speakers' conflicting opinions show the diversities and multiplication of truth. In this way modernism fetched the inevitable changes in literature after the First World War.

Illusion is one of the major elements of modernism in literature during late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Illusion misrepresents the real object and interprets the contradict object as reality which is accepted by normal beliefs. According to Gazetas, "to realize that illusions are part of our reality" (11). For example, a child considering tree branches at night as goblins are afraid to face them in low visibilities are considered to have an illusion. Like this in the modern society the power of myth is already lost which has created a feeling of lostness that experience, especially youth.

Modernism is a period where disillusionment broke the implicit contract with social relations after World War I. After the destruction from war, modernism searched the universality and evolution of myth in the history of the human race and replaced the place of myths in modern society. In modernist society norms and values of relation and marriage are dismantled. In the past the true mythological marriage and relation were sacrificed by the individual for the union to create a whole that is greater than its parts. But in modernism, people are ignoring others along with marriage and relation in sake of own happiness. So, the traditional values of relation and marriage are lost and have become the medium of fulfilling the desires. All are obsessed with outer values: money status etc. that forget about the inner values, internal development and the real value which is lost especially in youths. This consequence is created by illusion resulting in collapse of cultural identity, relation and conventional beliefs in the society in modernism.

Through illusion, it conceals the underlying reality which presents the false

appearances. Illusion is remarkable factor of modernism which depicts the cultural disorders, modern lifestyle, betrayal, disapproval and more. Illusion shows the glittering world which attracts the people easily but always gives the result negative. Through illusion people follow the modernism but they cannot totally ignore the conventional forms affecting the cultural myth and values.

### **Illusion in Literature**

Illusion is a literary tool which confuses the brain to sense the imagination of fantasy by the reader. Illusion is a misleading or illusory portrait, concept or impact, along with error perception. In literature, illusion can be a narrative approach to the characters that misguide, betray and complicate the vision and dreams. However, illusion also cites to the process of learning leading to concentration that the readers sense the narrative as real. The word illusion is coined from the Latin word ‘illudere’, translated to ‘mock’ or deceive.

In literary form, illusions are used for different reasons. Some aesthetic illusions make literary works authentic and alive. Illusion depicts the real world via the developed character, detail descriptions, expressive images, a clear mood and environment along with other narrative capabilities contribute to the illusion of reliable and credible story. In “Anti-Illusionism in Modern and Post Modern Art” Noël writes his views on modern society. He also highlights, “once mired in the much of naive illusionism, leaps to a higher stage, a self-conscious stage, recognizing itself not as a mirror of reality, but as a reality” (297). Illusions are used as plot term that an unrealistic speaker can knit an illusionary story helping the readers to resolve the deception. The protagonists are motivated from hallucination, dreams, visions and other illusory experiences impede the character which signals the reader about the climax.

Literature is a body of literary writings that react to the discourse of illusion which affect the construction of culture and the invention of tradition. Those pursuing an illusionary critique are able to hail the vigorous contestation of ideologically contrived knowledge. Burwick and Pape have edited the opinions of de Gruyter which states:

The first two these claim that illusion is to illusionism is nature is to culture: .... I want to argue, into the universal structure of ideology or false consciousness. This is illusion as error, delusion, or false belief. Illusionism, by contrast, is playing with illusions, the self conscious exploitation of illusion as a cultural practice for social ends. .... and illusionism rigorously distinct from one another; at the same time, we have (as the fourth thesis argues) a whole set of metaphors and practices which tend to collapse them into one another. (77)

Thus the illusion creates such types of conflicts which affect the traditions and culture in modern society which consequences in neither acceptance of modernism nor ignorance of the traditional culture, values and beliefs.

Anthony Brewer points out some of the important clues as to how representation of culture takes place in a discourse and how the process of interpreting culture turns out to be problematical from illusion. Brewer works out some sorts of plan to narrow down the gap between cultures as such and the textually represented culture. Brewer's ideas are reflected below:

As people who belong to same culture must share a broadly similar conceptual map, so they must also share the same way of interpreting the signs of a language. In order to interpret them, we must have access to the two systems of representation: to a conceptual map which

correlates the sheep in the field with the concept of a sheep: and a language system which is visual language, bear some resemblance to the real thing of looks like it in some way. (72)

As claimed by Brewer, the meaning is constructed by the system of representation. It is constructed and fixed by the code, which sets up the correlation between our conceptual system and our language system. One way of thinking about culture is in terms of these shared conceptual maps, shared language systems and the codes which govern the relationships of translation between them. Not because such knowledge is imprinted in their genes, but because they learn its conventions and so gradually become culture persons. They unconsciously internalize the codes which allow them to express certain concepts and ideas through their systems of representation. But of our social, cultural and linguistic conventions, then meaning can never be finally fixed.

The harshness of reality is questioned and challenged by the lightheartedness of illusion. Illusion, dislocated identity and fragmented self have shown the modern society in the selected stories which is studied on the theoretical ground of modernism, comparing with traditional belief. The researcher has analyzed the Conradian uses of illusions following the concepts of modernism as well as natural cosmos of universe.

### Chapter 3

#### Performativity of Illusion in Conrad's Selected Stories

The women in "Amy Foster" and "The Lagoon" are crucial to the expression of the illusion theme through their women characters where as "Youth" deals with illusion of dream and journey to achieve it. The movement toward the use of an identified narrator is traced through the fiction preceding the appearance of Marlow in "Youth". In these tales a rational, determined central characters struggle to relate to a tormenting ambiguous cosmos, which fluctuates from indifference, to sympathetic response in modernism. The central characters either suffer demoralization through the maddening inscrutability of phenomena or are profoundly disillusioned by a vision of the nothingness of existence and the meaninglessness of human values and interpretations.

The protagonist is inadequate and wavering perceptions or interpretations of his illusions are part of Conrad's concern, just as the particular illusion known as idealism is his concern in the tales. But among these selected tales only "The Lagoon" shows a preoccupation with illusions as human interpretations which do not concern the physical world and which are the direct source of conflict within an individual soul. Arsat also confuses "stood lonely in the searching sunshine; and he looked beyond the great light of a cloudless day into the darkness of a world of illusions" ("The Lagoon", 35). "The Lagoon" serves as a convenient transition between these two themes, since it treats both an ambiguous cosmos and human illusions which are more or less autonomous from the ambiguity of the cosmos.

The protagonists in these tales undergo a tormenting vacillation, in which the physical universe alternates and wavers indefinitely from innocent, indifferent, and mindless phenomena. Yanko and Marlow are victimized from isolation due to

shipwreck. “cast out mysteriously by the sea to perish in the supreme disaster of loneliness and despair” (“Amy Foster”, 119) which shows the loss of identity and traditional norms and values in search of golden dream.

It does not seem to result from feelings about sex but from his connection of the mystery and dualism or hypocrisy of the central characters with seemingly willful obscurity and covert malevolence of the cosmos to create an illusion. “Amy Foster” has the same basic theme of the central characters’ struggle with the Inscrutable. This tale gives a more interesting contrast between pre and post modernism, since here the contrast does not follow the traditional and expected juxtaposition which is clearly identified with the central and peripheral main characters in the story. Conrad is concerned with the nature of belief and an individual's worldview or orientation with the inadequacy and instability. In Conrad’s eyes disillusionment is always falling short of the security of an Absolute, always dwarfed by the immense and eternal obscurity. Thus seems at times to nurture and indulge characters’ dreams and at times to loom menacingly, contemptuously, or obliviously above theirs’ limited understanding.

The story is related to a country physician named Kennedy to the unnamed narrator, the "I" of the tale in “Amy Foster”. Yanko Gooral, the central character, is a young mountain peasant of the Eastern Carpathians, innocent, simple of heart and of childlike good will. With numerous others of his countrymen he is herded on board a ship by swindlers posing as emigration agents, who promise an easy fortune in America. The ship goes down in a storm off the coast of a dreary and provincial shire in England where Dr. Kennedy has his practice. Yanko alone survives, to be cruelly misunderstood, taunted as an insane man, mistrusted, and feared by the amazingly close minded inhabitants, whose worldview and orientation, whose very manner of



seeing, are so incompatible with Yanko's as to make him believe at first that he is living among the dead.

After arousing the fear and indignation of the villagers, who mistake him for a runaway lunatic or a drunken tramp, Yanko is locked up in a woodshed by one of the town worthies. His servant girl, Amy Foster, pities the man who she is sure means no harm, and brings him bread. To Yanko she appears "with the aureole of an angel of light" ("Amy Foster", 107) and becomes for him the one intelligible phenomenon in the strange realm he has entered. He finds work as a shepherd, marries the girl, and becomes quasi-acclimatized in Colebrook, though his ways of speaking, singing, looking, and walking and his excitable spirit remain repellent to the natives. The birth of a son signals a change in his domestic life. Amy grows morbidly suspicious about his speaking and singing to the child in his own language, and in her dull mind there grows a pervasive fear of his strangeness, which had at first attracted her. Yanko falls ill with lung trouble and during a fit of fever, asks Amy for water, not realizing he is speaking his native tongue rather than English. He is amazed by her silence and immobility. She is startled by his direct and insistent request in a foreign and unearthly language. She is terrified "maternal instinct and that unaccountable fear" ("Amy Foster", 117) by the passionate entreaties with which Yanko reacts to her dumb stare. A wave of brute panic sweeps over her, and she snatches up the child and runs to her father's house.

The contrast between Yanko and the natives of Colebrook is only superficially an ethnic conflict a clash between racial temperaments. Thematically the conflict is between imaginative insight and the spiritual blindness of superficial and plodding realism or, more neutrally stated, between realism and imagination. The ethnic trait of demonstrativeness which the Colebrook citizens find so repellent in Yanko is simply

his response to a meaningful universe, of which his memory continues to inspire an open exuberance of soul. The English peasants of course have no experience of a world in which every part of reality is fraught with meaning, and they naturally deny its existence and find nothing but madness “‘Gone;’ he said distinctly. ‘I had only asked for water-only for a little water...’” (“Amy Foster”, 118) in Yanko’s response to a meaning, they have never perceived. It’s like a entering into another world, a new illusionary world which is completely different from Yanko’s old world.

Contrast to these tales, the consummate artistry of Conrad’s use of technique is delineated in the early Marlow fiction: in “Youth” the point of view provides the dual perspective of age looking upon youth the enveloping point of view of Marlow provides the insight into the mysterious complexities of human character. The point of view becomes not only a means of objectifying primary sensation, but of defining and exploring values within the material presented in the fiction.

The structure of “Youth” is based upon a contrast that results in a double vision which is made possible by the point of view. The initial setting, as it is, has characteristics which will help to define the theme. The first pages, written by a narrator who is not identified by name, but who is known to be a seaman and a friend of Marlow, narrow the focus as “This could have occurred nowhere but in England, where men and sea interpenetrate, so to speak the sea entering into the life of most men, and the men knowing something or everything about the sea, in the way of amusement, of travel, or of breadwinning” (“Youth”, 69). The focus is narrowed to five men sitting round a mahogany table whose surface reflects their faces. The director of companies, an accountant, a lawyer, Marlow, and the narrator all are men who have lived a good part of their lives and, all having begun life in the merchant service, have between them the “strong bond of the sea, and also the fellowship of the

craft" ("Youth", 69) which is "the amusement of life and the other is life itself" ("Youth", 69).

Marlow's story is simply introduced after the focus of attention has been carefully narrowed: "Marlow (at least I think that is how he spelt his name) told the story, or rather the chronicle, of a voyage" ("Youth", 69). Marlow begins his story by modestly saying, "I have seen a little of the Eastern seas; but what I remember best is my first voyage there. You fellows know there are those voyages that seem ordered for the illustration of life that might stand for a symbol of existence" ("Youth", 69). Here, Marlow has revealed that the voyage is "a symbol of existence," ("Youth", 69) but this is also what the narrated story becomes through the use of technique. The contrast that is established in "Youth" is that between youth and age, and inexperience and experience. The men listening to Marlow's tale have lived a good part of their lives and can look with Marlow sympathetically and retrospectively at this first "memorable affair" ("Youth", 69). The contrast is pointed up immediately by Marlow's commentary, "between those two old chaps, I felt like a small boy between two grandfathers" ("Youth", 70). The old ship appeals to his youth, "With the motto 'Do or Die' underneath. I remember it took my fancy immensely. There was a touch of romance in it, something that made me love the old thing - something that appealed to my youth!" ("Youth", 70). The immediately perceivable contrast between youth and age leads to a realization that the experience of the Judea's difficult voyage is, in itself, of relative importance and that the significance comes with the awareness of Charlie Marlow, who can look back upon the experience with nostalgia and a degree of ironic perception.

The youthful Marlow wants the chance for independence and achievement whereas it is the mature Marlow who uses the adjectives "silly", "charming," and

"beautiful." Then, as Marlow and his crew of two part company from the other boats, the captain admonishes him to be careful; and Mahon, as Marlow "sails proudly past his boat, wrinkled his curved nose and hailed, "You veil sail that ship of yours under the water, if you don't look out, young fellow" ("Youth", 90). Marlow adds that "He was a malicious old man- and may the deep sea where he sleeps now rock him gently, rock him tenderly to the end of time!" ("Youth", 90). The point of view provides the two-fold vision and presents the opportunity for the older Marlow's emotional tenderness to be expressed with a great deal of sincerity and restraint.

The view and impression that Marlow has of the East is colored by his youthful romantic illusion. When he arrives, he sits, "exulting like a conqueror" ("Youth", 91), whereas the old captain is tired, and one of his first remarks is, "I had a terrible time of it" ("Youth", 92). Of the long pull to the shore from the sunken ship, Marlow comments:

I remember the drawn faces, the dejected figures of x-ray two men, and I remember my youth and the feeling that will never come back any more the feeling that I could last forever, outlast the sea, the earth, and all men; the deceitful feeling that lures us on to joys, to perils, to love, to vain effort--to death; the triumphant conviction of strength, the heat of life in the handful of dust, the glow in the heart that every year grows dim, grows cold, grows small, and expires and expires, too soon, too soon before life itself! ("Youth", 91)

The past is extended to include all men; thereby the experience has been universalized through the use of point of view. The men, who sit around the table, listening, are also representative of the active life of toil. The movement toward extension becomes greater as the story progresses toward its moving close. Yet the particular is still there

and lends the generalization validity. The two different perspectives that Marlow has of the Fast are presented. The men who have been listening round the table are all aware that they have heard a tale that is about a universal human experience. The "I" as narrator completes the narrative:

And we all nodded at him: the man of finance, the man of accounts, the man of law, we all nodded at him over the polished table that like a still sheet of brown water reflected our faces, lined, wrinkled; our faces marked by toil, by deceptions, by success, by love; our weary eyes looking still, looking always, looking anxiously for something out of life, that while it is expected is already gone-has passed unseen, in a sigh, in a flash- together with the youth, with the strength, with the romance of illusions. ("Youth", 94)

Through the use of the narrator Marlow, Conrad has succeeded in eliminating all authorial intrusion. Whereas neutral omniscience is best if the superior and explanatory tone of the author is to dominate the perceptions of the characters, the narrator as protagonist is best if a personality in response to experience is to be presented. The point of view objectifies the experience and provides the double vision in "Youth" that is complimentary to the contrast of youth and age.

The travelogue may be the voyage and an autobiographical experience, but it is the technique which makes the journey into the self possible through the intellectual and intuitive groupings of Marlow. Conrad has succeeded in projecting or in immersing himself into the narrative so that there is no authorial intrusion to wreck the illusion of reality which exists within the confines of Marlow's mind.

More than this, "Amy Foster" is the first tale here discussed which treats the contrast between imagination and realism and which sees physical immobility as a

symbol of spiritual vacuity and death, and as the result of disillusionment, of the discovery of the total absence of meaning in the universe. Incidentally, it gives a more negative valuation of the sea than is common in Conrad. In its treatment of the contrast between imagination and realism it suggests the large Conradian question of "dream," which figures prominently in his other stories and in its preoccupation with immobility it has ties with "The Lagoon". Yanko experiences the total lack of meaning in a glimpse of the bare and neutral stuff of reality. This confrontation and the subsequent vanishing of illusions is still more central in "The Lagoon".

### **Immobility on Conrad's Selected Stories**

Conrad has scrutinized the possible correlation of imagination and immobility, or realism and immobility in "Amy Foster". The sea for Yanko is clearly a symbol of blankness, a part of reality totally and frightfully devoid of meaning. The first description of the sea in this story suggests a boundlessness, a blankness eternally abiding, beside "mud and shells" ("Amy Foster", 95) which all else is temporary, ephemeral, illusory. The doctor pointed with his whip, and from the summit of the descent seen over the rolling tops of the trees in a park by the side of the road, appeared the level sea far below us, like the floor of an immense edifice inlaid with bands of dark ripple, with still trails of glitter, ending in a belt of glassy water at the foot of the sky. Amy's emergence from the lethargy typical of Colebrook peasants, and her later shift from imagination and love back to dullness and fear, must remain a mystery. To explain the latter as waning of interest in her foreigner husband after her sexual desires have been satisfied is to overlook entirely the theme of epistemological uncertainty in which Conrad from work to work and outside his fiction showed an enduring interest. Though Amy's double nature is not explained, it is prepared for by her behavior in regard to her mistress's parrot early in the tale. Her fear "watching

every movement and every sound, with the terror, the unreasonable terror, of that man she could not understand creeping over her” (“Amy Foster”, 117) shows double nature which created the illusion in her real perception as a character and her transformation through the tale.

In “The Lagoon” the strongest proof of the illusory nature of human meanings and values is in the convincing and empathetic immobility of Arsat in the last scene. He stands completely immobile “then stood still with unmoved face and stony eyes” (“The Lagoon”, 34-35), caught in a spell of painful and restless lethargy. His immobility has nothing to do with sex. Instead it is the basic quality of his disillusionment. His soul is helplessly empty between the passing of one illusion and the return of another. The "illusions" which Arsat is left contemplating at the end of the tale are visions or interpretations of life which for him had made the world intelligible. They are two: one is the purpose which formerly directed and oriented his life: his love for Diamelen, for which he betrayed his brother “I left him in the midst of enemies.” (“The Lagoon”, 34). Now after his lover’s death he returns, or attempts to return, to his previous illusion: loyalty to his brother, or now rather to his brother’s memory, “but I am going back now” (“The Lagoon”, 34) which requires vengeance against his slayers. It is essential to note that, according to the tale, both of these orientations not merely the love of Diamelen are illusory. Both the love for Diamelen and the loyalty to his brother which that loves overthrew are mere illusions. The darkness of a world of illusions into which Arsat stares, oblivious of "the great light of a cloudless day," (“The Lagoon”, 35) embraces not only the love of the woman now dead but also the loyalty to the brother betrayed.

There is nothing in the story to suggest that Arsat’s relationship with Diamelen has been disappointing or disillusioning from the time of their first coming to dwell

beside the lagoon until this moment when she lies dying “Now I can see nothing-see nothing! There is no light and no peace in the world; but there is death-death for many” (“The Lagoon”, 34). Arsat’s love for her, nevertheless, is an illusion by virtue of its subjectivity and transience when she dies; it loses its efficacy as the central motif around which the man’s life is oriented. But there is nothing inherent in it as a love relationship or a sexual relationship which gives it this illusory quality. Arsat’s loyalty to his brother has proved itself to be equally transient. His love for Diamelen is neither more nor less illusory than any other human feeling or activity. There are much juxtaposition in this tale of ephemeral human meaning and the spectacle of objective, physical nature. All of them indicate not that love per se is illusory, but that all human meanings are illusory. Arsat’s love for Diamelen is equally as strong and valid an illusion as his loyalty to his brother and it remains so until her death, when the old illusion naturally exerts its force. Arsat is the epitome of a mankind which must placidly submit to the pathetic human limitation of being able to discern and follow only one of life equally intense, valid, and at times contradictory illusions at once. And he must accept not only the anguish of contradicting illusions but also the emptiness and immobility, the motivational vacuum, the hollowness of heart which results from the total deprivation of illusions which he suffers, between the death of one illusion and the rebirth of another.

The jungle becomes mobile and loudly rustling, almost animate, when Diamelen dies and an illusion vanishes, leaving a void in which the heart is uninspired and man is immobile. The obvious meaning is the isolation of human values and meanings from the phenomenal universe from reality. Arsat and the jungle are diametrically opposite in their fluctuations, precisely unattuned to one another. Before the tale is begun, Arsat and the white man, sitting on the porch of the hut in the night,



face an emphatically empty and lonely universe void of human meaning. The voices of the Malay boatmen gradually die out from the traveler's sampan floating on the lagoon: "It was as though there had been nothing left in the world but the glitter of stars streaming, ceaseless and vain, through the black stillness of the night" ("The Lagoon", 28).

The pathetic malaise of Arsat is the most remarkable achievement of "The Lagoon". It is entirely convincing and empathetic to the reader, and it is the picture of man tragically conscious of the universe which so often fascinated Conrad. Arsat presents blindness as an example of the dependence of mankind on such "illusions" as love and loyalty. He has learned also that human meanings are illusory in that they are at times mutually contradictory, antagonistic: his love for Diamelen, so strong that it seemed to promise to lead him to a country without death, led him to betray his brother, a son of his own mother, a part of himself. Dramatized in the exotic adventure of Arsat is the tragically meaningless and arbitrary shift within the human soul from one illusion to another.

Arsat is incredibly able to watch his brother pursued by enemies and rushing to join him in the canoe, and to push the craft into deep water. He later describes the action to his listener as if it were someone else's behavior. Both the origin and the passing of illusions, whose truth and validity seem self-evident, are incredible, inscrutable, and incomprehensible. At the beginning of his confession, Arsat says to the white man: "I always remembered you, Tuan, till the time came when my eyes could see nothing in the past, because they had looked upon the one who is dying there— in the house" ("The Lagoon", 29). It is this consciousness of the ephemerality of his illusions, and a vague awareness of the arbitrariness of the changes, within his soul, of one illusion for another, which cause Arsat's immobility.

There is a counterpoint throughout the tale by which human meaning and meaningless nature seem now to merge and now to separate. At one point before telling of his betrayal of his brother, Arsat pauses to praise that brother's courage and strength, and from the silent land comes a gust of warm air almost a conscious response of stifled remorse and foreboding "a breath loud and short like an uneasy sigh of the dreaming earth" ("The lagoon", 32). But for the most of Arsat's stirring tale of human desire and ferocity the jungle is immobile and indifferent; it becomes freshened, animate, and mobile only with the dawn, when Diamelen dies and Arsat slips into the immobility of a man whose illusions have darkened and disappeared. The white man's imposition on the jungle of his vision of strife between good and evil is another manifestation of the inadequate and unstable and ephemeral illusions by which human beings live and which, by their arbitrary shiftings, cause the suffering of Arsat.

Moreover, they disliked Arsat, first as a stranger, and also because he who repairs a ruined house, and dwells in it, proclaims that he is not afraid to live amongst the spirits that haunt the places abandoned by mankind. In the final scene of the tale, however, Arsat is tormented not by illusions but by their departure, which leaves a valueless, bare, and dark universe a world in which immobility is character's plight.

On one hand, Yanko, who is possessed by the idea that his wife holds the secret of life, Arsat, in the intensity of his love, believes that with Diamelen he can find a country where death is unknown in "The Lagoon". Arsat's identification of Diamelen with a dream of life in its greatest intensity, in its eternal freedom from death, constitutes the same ethereal and unsubstantial vision of woman as Yanko received and Arsat experiences the same subsequent disillusionment and vision of nothingness, although Arsat's disillusionment is caused by Diamelen's death rather

than by some change in her character. Diamelen is thus connected or identified with life itself, which, Arsat discovers, is made up of illusion. Seeming to promise a life in which death will be forgotten, Diamelen herself dies. She is the epitome of the disillusionment which is the end of all man's hope, of all man's search for meaning, for life intense and purified of the fear of death. She epitomizes all the worldviews, the basic assumptions and orientations, which seem so objective and which it is merely human to take for granted. The flight of an eagle, described just prior to the moment when Arsat reports Diamelen's death, may be a symbol of the progress of human "illusions." Just after the rising of the sun. The unveiled lagoon lay, polished and black, in the heavy shadows at the foot of the wall of trees. A white eagle rose over it with a slanting and ponderous flight, reached the clear sunshine and appeared dazzlingly brilliant for a moment, then soaring higher, became a dark and motionless speck before it vanished into the blue as if it had left the earth forever. Thus, Diamelen is identified throughout the tale both with the spectacle of nature, which is always only imperfectly perceived and incessantly wavering between indifference and human meaning, and with mankind's illusions, which are equally ambiguous and, to man's eternal sorrow, inconsistent.

The connection between Arsat's immobility and his relationship with Diamelen calls for closer scrutiny, since some readers have felt that Diamelen herself is the direct cause of the hero's immobility and have found in this tale an example of Conrad's supposed hatred and fear. It is clear that when Arsat takes Diamelen he chooses a new way of life a new human meaning or illusion and deserts the old. Before his enamoration with Diamelen his main interest was war: "You, Tuan, know what war is, and you have seen me in time of danger seek death as other men seek life!" ("The Lagoon", 28). He continually refers to himself and his brother as men of a

fierce race who take what they want. In this old way of life a kind of recklessness, almost fatalistic, is central. Perhaps the truth is that Conrad did not believe man capable of attaining happiness through being but only through doing, through action. But he knew that the happiness which derives from mere being is an eternal dream of man. He knew that human life per se is inconceivable without this aspiration that every man must decide to follow it or control it or suppress it.

Concrete representation of the theme: all human aspiration, all human dream, all human meaning, are illusory, futile. The terrain of "The Lagoon" is not restfully void of motion; it is oppressed by the illusion of motion, and its facade of silence and stillness is subtly stirred by such isolated vestiges of motion and sound as "the brown swirl of eddies" ("The Lagoon", 24), by the water that "frothed alongside with a confused murmur" ("The Lagoon", 24), by "the short-lived disturbance" ("The Lagoon", 24) of the boat advancing upriver. The idea that motion is illusory or futile is also strengthened by the unsubstantial, immaterial phenomenon of sound being here conceived as motion— and motion which is lethargic and haphazard: "the repeated call of some bird, a cry discordant and feeble, skipped along over the smooth water and lost itself, before it could reach the other shore, in the breathless silence of the world" ("The Lagoon", 24). The only motion is of such disembodied, unsubstantial things as sound, and is thus illusory where darkness oozed out from between the trees, through the tangled maze of the creepers, from behind the great fantastic unstring leaves; the darkness, mysterious and invincible; the darkness scented and poisonous of impenetrable forests.

Moreover, "The Lagoon" complicates the theme of an incomprehensible cosmos by combining with it the idea of the illusionary nature of human meanings and values. This tale concerns different human illusions from those which result

from the activity of the primary imagination. It also shows the inadequacy and illusoriness of interpretations not concerned directly with the objective world but rather with man's ideals and standards of conduct, with an individual's relations with his brother and with his beloved. Love and loyalty here become illusions. In this sense "The Lagoon" transcends the tales previously discussed as a treatment of man's confrontation with an ambiguous cosmos. It represents the more thorough and complex treatment by Conrad of a theme which is one of the most significant in world literature and a vital subsidiary theme in most of Conrad's fiction.

## Chapter 4

### Revelation of Illusion on Modernism

The conclusions of this study are Conrad's attitude toward modernism that generates too ambivalent, complex and illusion in the characters. Through these tales were shown that how modern lifestyle affect the traditional cultures and beliefs. It depicts Conrad's unorthodox moral conception of illusion which duplicity capable of wide variation in character type and moral effects. Furthermore, Conrad's pessimism on this matter is not the lonely and neurotic condition that some critics would interpret it to be. Conrad is definitely in the great romantic tradition in seeing love and most other aspects of the human condition as a momentary and unsustainable beatitude.

The character fails to show the rich ambiguity of the characters in such works as "Amy Foster" and "The Lagoon". The ambiguous mixture of pretentious light and ultimate, enigmatic darkness, the promise of an immaterial and precious certitude which is soon replaced by nothingness, the mixture of revelation and deception, inspiration and disillusion the numerous implications of modernist duality are paramount in the symbols. The ambiguity of the cosmos remains in most of these tales completely balanced and unresolved, and the moral meaning or status of the characters and the tales implied attitude toward them is also richly ambivalent and complex. Nevertheless, from tale to tale, as the cosmos is more or less indifferent, responsive or hostile, so the qualities of the characters vary in degrees of ambiguity or definiteness and of guilt or innocence. The protagonists are often aggressive, rational, and directive whose straightforward determination is foiled by the obscure and arbitrary shifting of the cosmos or some part of it with which they struggle.

To Conrad human propensity to desire happiness through rest and being, and to value finality and stasis and the end result of action rather than action for its own

sake, was a basic and fascinating element in human nature. The ways of life between which *Arsat* oscillates are illusory, and are based on contradictions or paradoxes. Both ways end in death and are ephemeral, marked by the instability of all human hopes. Either one's life one's experience of meaning, passion, intensity is in the moment of risking death recklessly, or one seeks life itself, directly, only to find that this way also is subject to the power of death and disillusion. Thus the story's attitude is ambivalence, not a pure hatred of peace. In turn, "The Lagoon" does not really show a hatred of woman or a fear of sex. Woman and love between the sexes (as opposed to brotherly loyalty) are the objects of ambivalent feeling, and in this lies the intensity, the strength, of the tale but "Youth" stands distinctly far from them. To discount the value of the ambivalence about love, peace," illusions" as the theme of the story, and to dismiss it as simple misogyny, as irrelevant to a consideration of the literary value of the tale or relevant only as a supra literary attitude of Conrad's which affects the story only by disturbing the author's psyche so traumatically as to interfere adversely with the creative process is certainly a distortion.

Indeed, this is the path that the entirety of modern thought has taken, although it has substituted a particular branch of epistemology psychology for all epistemological inquiries and has replaced metaphysics with the scientific method. It may seem naive and artificial to separate Conrad's epistemological concerns from his moral ones, for our age cannot seriously consider any inquiry into morals which does not use the findings of psychology, and Conrad's worth to our age as a moralist depends on his recognition that problems in psychology or communications or physical and scientifically verifiable conditions in the environment lie at the basis of moral issues. When we think of Conrad's value as a moralist we assume that his recognition of these complexities is the source of his value.

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