

## 1. Introduction

### Politics of Irony and Conrad's Writings

This research critically analyzes Conrad's novel *Victory* from the light of politics of irony, which highlights the lack of morality and humanity in the so – called idealist people. In *Victory*, irony functions as a means of discursive strategy that comprises the social and political scenario. Discursive communities make irony possible in interpreting –whether arising from the ironist's intension or from the rubbing together of the apparent said with the implied unsaid meaning. The social circumstances of irony make its politics inevitable in the mix of the said meaning with the unsaid one. Hence, the politics of irony is its discursive presence in the aesthetic, social, ethical, cultural, religious, economic, ideological and historical aspects of its contexts of use and interpretation. Conrad's political irony emerges from the dialectical tension between the outward presentation of the characters as true revolutionist with better insight of social mobility and their inner reality which is dark and full of ignorance.

The protagonist, Heyst portraying himself as idealist who knows everything but in reality he cannot distinguish his enemy. Moreover, he considers himself as savior but he cannot know that his own life is in crises due to his ignorance. At last, he is saved by his beloved Lena:

After Heyst had gone, Lena allowed Ricardo to make love to her so that she could take possession of his knife. Heyst told Jones about her presence in the bungalow. Jones, who suffered a pathological hatred for women, had not known of Lena's existence. Heyst convinced him that Schomberg had led to get rid of the gamblers and to inflict upon Heyst's revenge. Schomberg was too cowardly to inflict himself.

Enraged by what he considered Ricardo's treachery, Jones suggested that they go to Heyst's bungalow. Meanwhile Lena had taken Ricardo's knife. As the two men entered the bungalow, Jones fired over Heyst's shoulder, the bullet piercing Lena's breast. (Magill 1069)

Irony in its simplest semantics can be defined as, in words of Samuel Johnson; " a mode of speech of which the meanings is contrary to the word" (qtd. in Enright 5). Etymologically, the term irony is derived from Greek *iron*, a dissembler in Greek comedy by Aeschylus who characteristically spoke in understatements and deliberately pretended to be less intelligent than he was, yet triumphed over the *alazon* the self stupid braggart. The Greek term *eironeia* for irony has been first recorded in Plato's *Republic* referring to the irony implied in Socratic dialogue.

Similarly Latin term "ironia" is used by Cicero to elaborate the rhetoric of irony. Irony, especially in its Greek use, is the outcome of the deliberate pretension of the *iron*, an ironist, and the self – deception of the "alazon", a victim or the butt of the irony. Such a dialectical discrepancy of the appearance and reality or "eironic" and "alazonic" features in irony has been later explored as a powerful "rhetorical enforcement" for its special rhetorical and artistic effects (8), and then later as " a discursive strategy" for analyzing the politics of representation (Hutcheon 194). In *Victory*, the protagonist Heyst is meditating on being a hermit whilst staying in a busy hotel with many customers. The island where Heyst lives is associated with an ideal of isolation, but the hotel is full of social circumstances. Although Heyst spends the time sitting apart from the hotel's other customers his contemplative ideal is invaded by the sight and sound of the hotel's entertainment:

In these ways the novel clearly presents a tension between the people who are attempting to live in an ideal way, and those motivated by

selfish opportunism. Where we have found the main challenge in appreciating Canard, however, is not so much in the ideas as in his style, in the language and the tone through which the themes are expressed. The most effective way of approaching any difficulty in this aspect of a novel is by means of close analysis of particular passages, and we should now move on to does that. (Spittles 88-89)

Heyst seeks inner peace and harmony but his mentality always follows the materialistic life. It is the critical point in Heyst's life, which is clarified by the politics of irony. The sense of loneliness occurs not a long time before or after his decision to seek an ideal of isolation, but in the very hours of renunciation of social reality. As a result, the two contradictory impulses occur almost simultaneously.

Joseph Conrad's *Victory* begins with the words "[t]here is ..." and ends with the word "[n]othing," pointing out to the reader the insignificance of individual lives within the context of the wider universe. Axel Heyst, a character who after his father's death, resolves to lead a life free of commitment, refusing to take roots in any specific place. The father's last advice to his son, to enable him to avoid pain, is: "Look on make no sound" (1). Hence, Heyst decides to travel and not to form any attachment with either piece or others, thus putting into practice the tenets of his father's teachings: to remain uninvolved in society, to be a mere observer and not a participant in societal activities. The endeavor, however, is doomed to fail, since "No man is an island entire of itself" and for all his attempts not to be involved, Heyst continually experiences the impossibility of absolute detachment. The onlooker, when among his fellow-men, finds it unavoidable to the very action of speech leads to communication and involvement.

An aspect of social circumstances invades even the ideal thought; politics of irony illustrates the gap between what is said and what is intended. Thus, this irony emerges from a contrast between what is implied by actions what is their actual outcome; what is said and what is meant; or what is thought about a situation and what is actually the case. The pretended idealism of the protagonist of *Victory* hides his ignorance about the social circumstances:

[. . .] the effect is partly achieved through an ironic style, which as we have seen, is a recurring feature of Conrad's writing. For instance, at this point Heyst, staying in Schomberg's hotel, does not know that the German hates him, and in trying to escape from the music is unaware that his destiny will shortly be changed by one of the musicians who is being pursued by the hotel- keeper. Heyst is dreaming of his ideal whilst literally positioned between two of the people who will contribute, although in different ways, to his destruction by the reality he wants to shaven. (Spittles 90)

Heyst, living alone to avoid emotional entanglements, nonetheless rescues Lena from a touring orchestra, and they escape to live together on his remote island. Lena's connection to Heyst matures from initial interest to sexual love to selfish or spiritual love. But Heyst's response to her remains stuck in sexual possession. Given this failure of love connection, representative of evil arrive on the island shortly thereafter. The victory of the little is Lena's victory over the fear of death:

[. . .] it is part of the irony that in saving Heyst from death at the hand of Ricardo. She starts the chain of events that will end in Heyst's suicide – setting fire to the bungalow after Lena has died from the sting of that fatal bullet. Lena has expressed her love for Heyst, but it is

achieved only through the sacrifice of death. It is simultaneously both a victory and a loss. An aspect of Conrad's power as a novelist is his ability to present paradoxes, to encourage us to see event in two different ways at the same time. (Spittles 103)

Grounded in love for Heyst, Lena achieves a permanent and real sense of self and an ability to deal with evil. Conrad's *Victory* analyzes his format as a conflict between the philosophies of Buddhist separation and Holy Spirit connection, a conflict played out dramatically in the emotional relationship of one man and one woman living on a remote south sea island. Finally, the Holy Spirit forces Lena's ultimate sacrifice for Heyst. Heyst remains self-possessed, ultimately giving nothing of himself to Lena, but ironically without a secure sense of self or the ability to deal with evil.

It is therefore his pride that leads to Heyst's failure to follow his father's admonition. Although he does attempt to become rootless, and free of anchor and bonds, a stance which would involve his total freedom from allegiance to a specific place, he nevertheless fails.

The individual's endeavor to free him from archaeology is it in the form of human relationships or attachment to a place is doomed to failure. Since place also represents the self, escape, even in absolute isolation, is impossible. Furthermore, since man does not live in a vacuum, Heyst, for all his loneliness, finds himself obliged to come into contact with society, to go to Timor, where he meets Morrison, and since he is a gentleman, to talk to him:

The suggestive parallels with Lord Nelson's naval victory and sacrificial death, like the numerous allusions to the Bible, emphasize the universal significance of the theme, add a new element to the

allegory of evil, intensify the disturbing mixture to tragedy and irony, and clarify the nature of Lena's psychic victory. (Meyers, 419)

It is another impulse that leads to Heyst's involvement with Lena, the orchestra girl with the irresistibly seductive siren-like voice. Although she is a female, there is a certain amount of resemblance between the girl and her benefactor. They share an unrealistic romanticism.

In that Heyst impetuously assumes the role of the knight in shining armor rescuing the damsel in distress, and believes that he can save her from the fate worse than death that awaits her. Her name is indicative: "They call me Alma. I don't know why. Silly name. Magdalen too. It doesn't matter; you can call me by any name you choose" (19). In the scene that 'alma' means 'soul' in latin, Lena's final action can be assumed to be positive, an actual victory.

### **Joseph Conrad and His Works**

Joseph Conrad is generally acclaimed as one of the most important fiction writers of the modern era, and attention to his work has increased exponentially since writers acknowledged his centrality in the 1940s. While earliest studies tended to work within New- critical and formalist frameworks, subsequently bio- graphical, historical, political studies have mined the fiction in order to unearth other meaning. Recently, a post- colonial critical context has emerged as significant in Conrad studies in relation to post-colonial issues, Edward W. Said says: "And in Europe itself at the end of the nineteenth century, scarcely a life was untouched by the fact of empire; the economics were hungry for overseas markets, raw materials, cheap labor, and hugely profitable land . . . (*Culture* 7). It is the irony that Europe was slightly raising its power and it was interested in increasing its domination and influence all over the world in the name of civilization. European interest was to increase its trade and

commerce, exploit the rich natural resources and to expand its investment in the foreign markets. These issues are the prime of Conrad's writing. As a result, his writings are analyzed from the light of politics of irony.

Conrad has remarkable contribution in the field of fiction writing: innovation in form and narrative technique, and profound exploration of human condition. Though it is by no means good to generalize any writer's preoccupation with certain themes, it is at least commonly regarded that Conrad explores men's vulnerability and corruptibility, or relationship between man and society. To Conrad, the time for man's testing or evaluation comes when s/he is placed in a situation where no 'public codes' function. And at that time he either gets enlightenment and self-knowledge, or comes down to utter destruction as in the heart of darkness. Conrad is also appreciated for his mature craftsmanship, his triumph in the evocation of exotic life and color, his dazzling shifts in time sequence, which became a source of inspiration for later modernist writers.

But very little attention has been paid to Conrad's preoccupation with the theme of empire and colony. Unlike many nineteenth century novels, however, Conrad's fictions are not primarily concerned with domestic and sexual relations. Conrad's fictions raise question about power and ethics. *Heart of Darkness* questions European colonization of Africa, its ideology and effect. *Nostromo* is concerned with British and US economic imperialism in Latin America. So, by the end of the nineteenth century, the empire was longer a shadowy presence, but in works of writers like Conrad and Kipling, a central area of concern. But we don't find uniformity in their attitude towards imperialism or the white man's presence in counties from Asia, Africa and Latin America. Many writers like Rudyard Kipling and Rider Haggard celebrated 'white man's burden' or Western colonial occupation

and their success. But Conrad was different from them; Conrad wrote what he saw, though it was highly indebted to what he read in the exotic fictions of earlier writers. Though a contemporary of Kipling, Conrad temperamentally belonged to a later historical moment -- a moment in which colonial possession had become more problematic. Conrad dramatizes the crisis and failure of colonial and the contradictions of the white man's caviling mission.

The novel has been read and interpreted from various perspectives and angles. However, the approach of the present study is different. It is the postcolonial mode of interpretation. It tries to show Conrad's ambivalence in terms of his representation of the landscape, people and the politics; in his treatment of the theme of imperialism in his characterization. It analyses *Nostramo* to show Conrad wavering between two poles: imperial and anti-imperial.

Now it is necessary to define some specific terms that are going to be used frequently with specific meaning in the present study. The terms are as follows; imperialism, colonialism, colonial literature, neo-colonialism, nationalism and ambivalence situation of the postcolonial people. To begin with imperialism, it is a theory of domination and authority of one territory or the political society over another in various forms like economic, political, social or the political society over another in various forms like economic, political, social and cultural. One state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society. Imperialism, Boehmer writes; "refers to the authority assumed by a state over another territory, authority expressed in pageantry, and symbolism, as well as in military power. It is associated in particular with the expansion of the European nation-states in the nineteenth century" (2). Imperialism has a broader significance and scope than the term colonialism. Though direct colonialism has largely ended, imperialism lingers



where it has always been in a kind of general cultural sphere, as well as in specific political, ideological, economic and social practices.

The colonialism and imperialism are considered as synonymous, but there is slight difference between them. Colonialism involves implanting of settlement in a distant territory by an alien nation. Elleke Boehmer defines the term in a similar line: “colonialism involves the consolidation of imperial power, and is manifested in the settlement of territory, the exploitation or development of resources, and the attempt to govern the indigenous inhabitants of occupied lands” (2).

So, these terms need to be defined is neocolonialism. A term from economic theory, Boehmer writes; “neocolonialism signifies the continuing economic control by the West of the once-colonized world, under the guise of political independence” (9). So, it is a new form of colonial domination, though less overt, it is more insidious. In this age of multinational or transnational companies, imperialism is not a thing of past, but it is continuing in new forms and shapes. So, some prefer to call this practice of neocolonialism new imperialism. Axel Heyst, living alone to avoid emotional entanglements, nonetheless rescues Lena from a touring orchestra, and they escape to live together on his remote island. Lena’s connection to Heyst matures from initial interest to sexual love to selfless or spiritual love. But Heyst’s response to her remains stuck in sexual possession. Given this failure of love connection, representatives of evil arrive on the island shortly thereafter. The victory of the title is Lena’s victory over the fear of death that generates the selfish ‘me first’ attitude in humans. Grounded in love for Heyst, she achieves a permanent and real sense of self and an ability to deal with evil. Finally the Holy Spirit force field powers her ultimate sacrifice for Heyst. Cleanliness may or may not be close to godliness, but for Conrad mendacity was surely close to mortality. (Ricardo's deception of Mr Jones concerning

the presence of Lena on the island adds a third problematical term to the truth/falsehood opposition:

He did not need to lie. He had only to hold his tongue. One is to read the silence of the held-tongue, to discern and distinguish between the withheld or repressed utterance, and honest speechlessness-between the silence of did-avowal and that of non –avowal – is another problem with which Conrad engages in this novel, as elsewhere. (Tanner xiii)

He remains self-possessed, ultimately giving nothing of himself to Lena, but ironically without a secure sense of self or the ability to deal with evil. This author sees Conrad's large structure for Heyst's failure of the spirit as the biblical account of Mary Magdalene's part in the Resurrection of Christ. Heyst's failure to love Lena is his resurrection lost. This author also analyzes the sophisticated art of this novel as an unfolding from stem-cell metaphors into more specialized metaphors producing a powerful artistic victory.

Heyst, the protagonist portraying himself as idealist who knows everything but in reality he cannot distinguish his enemy, therefore, politics of irony functions as a means of discursive strategy that comprises the social and political scenario which makes irony possible in interpreting whether arising from the ironist's intension or from the rubbing together of said with the implied unsaid. It is the social circumstances that make irony politics. Likewise, Heyst considers himself as savior but he cannot know his own life is in crises due to his ignorance.

## II. Politics of Irony

Irony in its simplest semantics can be defined as a mode of speech of which the meanings is contrary to the word that sounds ironical concept and function as dynamic. It is derived from Greek *ieron* to denote a mode of behavior and expression "conveying quite different messages" (Muecke 33). *Ironia* is Latin term used by Ciero to elaborate the rhetoric of irony. Dialectical discrepancy of the appearance and reality or "eironic" and "alazonic" has been later explored as a powerful rhetorical enforcement. Irony defines as the discrepant gap between what is said and what is intended because it emerges from a contrast between what is implied by actions and what is their actual outcomes; what is said and what is meant.

This concept is first available in Socratic dialogue that refers to ignorance to make the arguments stronger. The irony generated out of the speaker's pretension to be ignorant and under the guise of seeking to be taught by others. An irony is intensified by the listener's knowledge that the speaker is wiser than the permits himself to appear and who may perceive slightly in advance the direction the native questioning will take. The Socratic irony has also been adopted by Cicero who defines irony "as a figure of speech" to elaborate "the verbal strategy of whole arguments" (qtd. in Muecke 17). The pretended ignorance of speaker hides a skeptical attitude towards some opinions.

The speaker who provides some clues makes the sharp ironic undercutting of he ostensible meaning inevitable that is called verbal irony arises from the sharp contrast between the expressed meaning and the implied ironic meaning (Gurung 11). The ironic intensity of the verbal irony depends on the ironist's depends pretension to " aim at achieving maximum plausibility for her/ his ostensible meaning " (45). In this sense, ironic pretences are the basic features of verbal irony. Verbal iron is often

confused with sarcasm as the latter because its surface meaning undercut by the intended meaning and it depends on the author's ironic intensity that is shared with the reader – a bond that allows for playing a verbal game of irony to take place.

Verbal irony unmasks the appearance, while sarcasm lack this feel of liberation and the tone conveys reproach so strongly that no feeling of contradiction is possible (Gurung 11). It becomes rhetorically effective and aesthetically pleasing that generates the curious feeling of paradox, ambivalent, ambiguity and double contradictory reality that conjoins with the feeling of liberation. Structural irony is used to invent a hero, narrator or speaker who is either naïve or fallible and whose persistent judgment or interpretation is the expressed meaning in the text impaired by the person's prejudice, personal interests and the limited knowledge. Writers employ irony as certain structural features that help maintain a double level of meaning.

The next type of irony is dramatic irony, which involves spoken words. The ironic effect of the dramatic irony depends on the author's ironic intention shared with the audience. However, unlike verbal irony, it involves characters' action in a particular situation; unlike Socratic, the characters' misinterpretation is not based on pretension but on the ignorance of the characters about the actuality. Therefore, irony becomes the true vision of human being as a creation is inevitably undercut by the necessity of recreation. It implies itself in the incessant paradoxes of life versus failure, and so on. No human being can be an ironist in a true sense except as one who builds up on the illusion of reality. Irony locates itself not only in a dramatic situation but it also comes into being in the implied faith in the relationship between the supernatural power and human beings. When explored in such a way, irony turns to be what has labeled as cosmic irony. Another type of irony, which especially has

comes to the fore in the nineteenth century, is romantic irony, which is also called paradoxical irony.

However, irony lies in the structure of human existence since despite his/her consciousness about his/her limitations to grasp the inherently elusive and protean nature that reduce it to order and coherence, which is inevitably conditioned to be failure. Similarly, Romantic irony has emerged out of the philosophical and aesthetic speculations about the paradoxical relationship between Nature and human beings. For ironologists such as Fredrich Schlegel, August Wilhelm, Ludwig Tieck and Karl Soleger, Nature is "an infinitely teeming chaos –an overflowing exhaustless vital energy being in "process of becoming" with a dialectical process of continual creation and decreation, "while human being is " the created and soon to be decreased "with limited "thought" and "fixed language," becomes unable to "acquire {any} permanent instinctual experimental leverages over " the world (Muecke 23).

Dramatic irony is a situation in which the reader knows more about the immediate circumstances or future events of which a character is ignorant because the audiences come to detect a discrepancy between characters' perceptions and actions and the reality. Character' beliefs and actions become ironic within that dramatic situation because they are very different from the reality of their actions. Dramatic irony is achieved by lending its ignorant characters; what they believe and act so that the inevitable reversal of the situation or the recognition of the reality generates intense tragic or comic irony. The term dramatic is used to connote a powerful sense of exciting and gripping situation that can also occur in narrative fictions.

The ironic intensity in cosmic irony is reinforced by the characters' blind faith in divinity and destiny, though such a faith may generate frustration and tragedy.

Cosmic irony occurs when individuals are usually struck with tragedy, frustration and mocking because of their belief that the universe of human life is deliberately manipulated by supernatural power like fate. So, it is also most often known as "the irony of the universe with human being or the individual as victim" (Muecke 23). The expressed meaning is that human beings are like toys in the hands of supernatural powers, while the ironic meaning is often critical causing people to question God and see the universe as hostile.

Literature is the representation of the fact of paradox, which shows how human beings maintain and poised balance over such contradiction. Irony, for them, has become a general criterion of literary value – an internal equilibrium of opposite experience. Attitudes and evaluations which as Muecke states; “brings in of the opposite, the complementary impulses "into a balanced poise” (Enright 26). Human understanding about this paradox is essentially ironic where as a romantic ironist; "obliged to recognize the limitations of his/ her perceptions of the infinites as inevitably partial and thus in some degree false, yet s/he must rightly value them and should preserve "a balance in his /her work between rhapsodic affirmation and skeptical reservations" (Enright 12). This view of irony has established literature as the site of human consciousness about his /her ironical relation with Nature, which is full of dialectical tensions. For New Critics, a paradoxical irony is not the outcome of paradoxical relationship of human beings with rather of the multiple impulses and experiences that are likely to be subverted by another.

Irony provides a weighting or qualification on every world in it. Thus requiring the reader to "infer meaning which are in a sense not in the world themselves: all literary meaning in this view become a form of irony" ( Booth 7). Unstable irony, therefore, is a mode of reflecting the paradoxes and incongruities

implicit in the structure of universe and in our existence. In this sense, unstable irony comes close to what we call deconstructive irony. The stable irony covers all intentional Socratic, verbal, structural, dramatic, and cosmic ironies, which say one thing and give to understand the opposite. On the contrary, the unstable irony offers no any fixed standpoint for its unequivocal interpretation since to give any fixed clue is either impossible or inadequate as the one interpretation essentially uncertainly ironic and equivocal. Booth gives his interpretive strategy of irony in his book, *A Rhetoric of Irony* (1975) by categorizing all types of ironies into stable and unstable. Stable irony, for him comprises four "intended", "covert," "fixed", marks in "application" (6).

The irony whose ironic intention of the speaker is shared with the reader by some patent clues offered in the established circumstances by the writer is called stable irony. Beerendra Pandey says irony; "becomes the motor of the entire rhetorical system" (55). The deconstructive irony is inherent in signification, in its deferrals and in its negations of certainty. It is, in the words of Pandey in "Intellectual History Reader, "a power to entertain widely divergent possible interpretations to "process by which meaning gets determined in texts and interpreted by readers" (665). Hence, irony has become a mode of life that is based on our recognition that experience is open to multiple interpretations.

The hypothesis of the concept of irony's political functioning in socio-cultural contexts comes from Mikhail Bakhtin's "notion of the double-voiced discourse" that is the forms for transmitting speech cannot be treated in isolation from the means of its contextualized "dialogizing" – the one is indissolubly linked with the other (B. Pandey, *Intellectual* 387). From the viewpoint of Bakhtinian dialogizing, it is irony in use, in discourse, which gets precedence over irony as a textual strategy. In other

words, it is "irony's political functioning in contexts – in the sense of the more specific circumstantial, textual and intertextual environment of the text in question," somewhat "broader than the pragmatic notion of contextual background – that generate overtones which facilitates an –intercourse that enables the unsaid to enter into ironic" political "relation with the said" (387-88). The political relationship of said and the unsaid with culture ramifications becomes further clear if the Bakhtinian notion of double – voice discourse is extended further with respect to the concept of "double consciousness" by W.E.B Du Bois (Davis 42).

Du Bois though does not connect the double consciousness to irony explicitly, his "knowledge of two culture (white Americans and African American) gives {s} African American a keen sensitivity to ironic meanings to the dissonance created " when "two cultural ideals rub against one another " (Davis 46 ). Such an ironic sensibility becomes political when, as Du Bois claims, it leads the black to the sad reality of "always looking at one's self through the eyes of other" (qtd. in Davis 46). The "ability to see in a quality that many people in majority culture lack; they cannot get enough distance from themselves , it is the context that an existing community creates that sets such a scene for the very use and comprehension of the politics of irony. As in the words of Hutcheon, the "cutting edge" of irony "is always social and political" that "gets heated" at the "evaluating edge" provoking responses from those who get it and in those who become victim of it ( 2) . Irony is a political issue that involves "relations of power based in relations of communication with issues such as exclusion and inclusion, intervention and evasion, thereby making the functioning of irony inevitably political. Our nationality, male or female, working class or not, at these factors condition the interpretation of the specific function of ironic meaning.



The function of ironic meaning gets its political edge even out of the ironist's intentional and the interpreter's interpretative move with a certain attitude towards both, therefore, said and the unsaid meanings of irony in certain discursive situation. In other words, irony is a complex in "the intentional transmission of both information and evaluative attitude other than what is explicitly expressed" (11). The interpretations of irony, as Christine Kerbrat – Orecchioni says, "brings into play, besides their linguistic competence, the cultural and ideological competences of ironist and audience" (qtd. in Muecke 40-41). Reading or interpreting irony is at once reading or interpreting life itself where we read character and value, thereby referring to our deepest convictions. It is because of its very nature of foregrounding the politics of human agency in this that irony has become an important discursive strategy. Its discursiveness comes from the interpreter and the ironist as the agents who perform the act of attributing both meanings and motives, and do so in particular situation and context for a particular purpose, and with particular means.

Such an attributing, irony involves both semantic and evaluative inferences. Similarly, "the semantic dimension of irony "is influenced by the receiver and by" the surrounding tension –filled environments" (Hutcheon 12). This study, therefore, argues that politics of irony happens because of such a discursive communicative process in which irony "itself comes into being in the relation between meanings, between intensions and interpretations" (13). Irony explicitly between meanings and audience that is political in nature because irony invokes notions of hierarchy and subordination, judgment and perhaps even moral superiority. Its " semantic and syntactic dimensions cannot be considered separately from the social, historical and cultural aspects of its contexts of deployment and attribution" (16-17). In such a context, the interpreters' interpretation is not simply a matter of the "subjective attitude

of either interpreter or ironist, but (is) a function of the culture, language, and social context {where} both participants interact with each other and with the text itself" (91). In this light, the political meaning of irony is not only substitution of the identity and position of both the ironist and the audience but is a matter of interpretation.

Thus, the context for the construction of irony is always crucial to interpreting its meaning and politics. This point further clarifies that the politics of irony is a relational strategy in the sense that it operates not only between said and unsaid meanings, but also between people: ironist, interpreters, and targets. Irony being relational discursive strategy has its politics means that irony can be used either to undercut or to reinforce both conservative and radical positions. To put it more explicitly, irony can be provocative when its politics is conservative or authoritarian as easily as when its politics is oppositional or subversive. It depends on who is using and attributing it and at whose expense it is seen to be. The politics of irony, in this sense, at once forces a distinction between irony that might function constructively to articulate new oppositional positions, and irony that would work in a more negative and negativizing way where the ironist would stand outside of system in a position of power.

The use of irony from the position of power, especially by the dominant authority, generates irony's conservative political function. Such an elitist use makes the irony as weapon for negating, thereby becoming largely destructive. In this context, the notion of irony as a negation appears to be held by almost everyone who has been on the receiving end of an ironic attack or by those for whom the serious or the solemn and the univocal are the ideal. Obviously, the last group includes not only the humorless but those elites whose political commitments lead them to desire for didactic purpose and an unambiguous discourse of engagement. The totalitarian

regime uses or attributes irony in order to materialize dangers in the protective cover of repressive irony.

Irony is primarily concerned with social and political scenario and it functions in context. It is the fact that irony happens in all kinds of discourses in common speech as well as in highly crafted aesthetic form. The politics of irony focused on issues of gender, race, class of sexuality, feminist, gay and lesbian criticism has taught about the textual complexities of the gender and sexual politics involved in studying discursive strategies. Conrad's creates tension between ideals and reality; Heyst's father teaches him that reality is harsh, and therefore the ideal life is one of isolation as far from worldly reality as it is possible to get. Although Heyst pursues this ideal apparently with considerable success, it breaks down on two critical occasions. The first time is when he saves Marrison from financial ruin, the second when heyst rescues Lena from servitude and unhappiness. On both these Heyst breaks out of his isolation to help someone worse off than himself, a person who is encountering the harshest circumstances of reality. Thus, the politics of irony lies in the activities of Heyst who searches for the isolated and ideal life but in reality his life of ignorance and involves in the social circumstances.

The social complexities and their political intricacies generalized theory of irony. It is the fact that many fine analyses of precisely this particular political dimension of feminist, gay, lesbian or postcolonial irony in specific texts:

With irony, there are, instead, dynamic and plural relations among the text or utterance (and its context, the so-called ironist, the interpreter, and the circumstances surrounding the discursive situation; it is these that mess up neat theories of irony that see the task of the interpreter simply as one of decoding or reconstructing some "real" meaning

(Usually named as the "ironic" one) (Booth 1974), a meaning that is hidden, but deemed accessible, behind the stated one. If this were actually the case, irony's politics would be much less contentious, I suspect. (Hutcheon 11)

The social circumstances make irony possible in interpretation whether arising from the ironist's intention or from the rubbing together of the apparent said with the implied unsaid meaning. Inevitable is the mix of the said meaning with the unsaid one. We could analyze the appropriateness of the fact that Heyst first Lena in this scene, and the irony of her being brought to the attention of her eventual rescues, Heyst by the bullying of the aggressive pianist, Mrs. Zangiacomo. My purpose here, though, is to illustrate how what might appear to be an unimportant scene, designed merely to advance the plot, does express the main themes of the novel, and how the specific language used gives the passage interest, and force. It is the writing that is in control of the materials and knows clearly the effect he is trying to achieve.

The interpreter and the ironist are the major players in the ironic game. The interpreter may –or may not – be the intended addressee of the ironist's utterance, but he or she is the one who attributes irony and then interprets it. The interpreter is one who decides whether the utterance is ironic or not, and then what particular ironic meaning it might have. The ironist is the one who intends to set up an ironic relation between the said and the unsaid, but may not always succeed in communicating that intention. Heyst and Davidson are mournful. Irony, therefore, is seen as both empowering and displeasing and it is often the transdiegetic nature of irony itself that is exploited in order to recode into positive terms what the patriarchal discourse reads as a negative, in which silencing of women's voice is transformed into the

willed silence of the ironic and traditional manner. Heyst is calm and moves noisily to perform the social activities.

The dialogic function is to project an alternative through which any element of the here and how may be shown as contingent, thereby subjecting the whole configuration of power relationship to the erosive dialectical power of altered. Lena is hardly breathing, and although on the point of death. The description of her appearance is also scored. Thus, the language of this novel also expresses the silence, the reverence of the moment. The reverential words 'sacred' and 'serene' bring a heroic tone to Lana's death and she has achieved victory. Her death is compared to the awful numbness of her life in the touring ladies, orchestra, vulnerable to the vile desires of Schormberg. In this way, her death becomes the irony in relation to the idealistic vision of Heyst. Irony will mean different thing to the different point of view. Form the point of view of the interpreter, irony is the making of meaning in addition to and different from what is stated, together, with an attitude toward both the said and the unsaid. Thus, irony is the intentional transmission of both information and evaluative attitude what is explicitly presented.

One of the significations of the verb "to mean" is "to intend", but interpreters "mean" as much as ironists do, and often in opposition to them. To attribute irony where it is intended and where it is not – or to refuse to attribute irony where it might be intended is also the act of a conscious agent. This agent is engaged in a complicated interpretative process that involves not only the making of meaning but the construction of a sense of the evaluative attitude displayed by the text toward what is said and what is not said.

It happens in the space between (and including) the said and the unsaid; it needs both to happen. What I want to call the 'ironic' meaning is inclusive and

relational: the said and the unsaid coexist for the interpreter, and each has meaning in relation to the other because they literally "interact" to create and real 'ironic' meaning. The 'ironic' meaning is not, then, simply the unsaid meaning, and the unsaid is not always a simple inversion or opposite of the said: it is always different other than and more than the said.

It undermines stated meaning by removing the semantic security of "one signifier one signified" and by revealing the complex inclusive, relational and differential nature of ironic meaning-making (Hutcheon, 12-13). The whole communicative process is not only distorted but also made possible by those different worlds to which each of us differently belongs and which form the basis of her exceptions, assumptions, and preconceptions in ironic discourse. It involves a simple decoding of a single inverted message and it is more often a semantically and combining said and unsaid meanings. Irony is also a culturally shaped process. It is the community that enables the irony to happen. It is the irony, which creates relationship between the ironist and the interpreters:

In such a culture (if this is, in fact, the case) the shared context necessary to understand irony would be the most basic one: that is, the very possibility of conceiving of a made of discovers in which one can say one things but convey something else (and do so with some evaluative edge), and yet not be lying. Interpreter expectations at even this fundamental level are not simply a matter of the "subjective" attitudes (Kaufer, 1981:505) of either interpreter or ironist but are function of the culture. (Hutcheon 91)

Like all other communication irony always acts in cultural specific that relies on the presence of a common memory shared by addresser and addressees. While an ironist

purposes in the interpretation, it will permit particular allusions particular ellipses without endangering comprehension guard.

These social dimensions of irony make its politics inevitable, as its discursive presence is not only a matter of an intended message encoded in the text but also it is mostly produced by interpreters in a dynamic interplay of the said meaning with the unsaid one. In the encoding and decoding process irony is equally culturally specific but must be shared by both participants who came to some sort of agreement on how the counters of through or discovers are to be constituted. This is the precondition of intersubjective communication.

Irony relies on mutually shared factual background information to set up what has suggestively been called the "interindividual territory of recognition. The success of irony depends upon a lack of disparity or, perhaps more accurately, some degree of coincidence between interpreters and ironists' senses of the rules determining when to speak and when to be silent, and when and where and by what means and in what form tone, and code who may say to whom:

This ironic unsaid meaning is not merely a static message encoded in the text, but must be produced by the audience in a dynamic interface with the text, and it is the instability of the exchange that gives irony both its power and its limitations as a discursive mode. Because of this instability, Hutcheon argues that irony has "transideological" politics; it can be used for both conservative and progressive ends . . . while the progressive politics of irony has been extolled by many feminists, African Americans, queer theorists. (Davis 27-28).

Discursive communities are defined as the overlapping condition of the discursive communities makes the irony politics. The social space where culture meets in is the

contact zones of politics of irony. The politics of representation in the practice of cultural studies examines how the knowledge that a particular discourse produces connects with power, intertwines irony with wider historical and socio-cultural contexts "a discursive strategy" for analyzing the politics of representation (Hutcheon 194).

The political use of irony gets heated within the social circumstance. Moreover, it involves forms of social practice of interaction between participants in particular situation like irony's complex semantics, communities too are relationally defined just as are people within them because there have been forceful attacks on those uses of the word "community" that ignore "the mobility, multiple forms of contact, and numerous levels and modes of interconnectedness of contemporary life" and thus forget "that contemporary communities are not only internally complex and highly differentiated but also continuously and rapidly reconfigured" (B.H. Smith 1988:168).

Sharing this notion of community as something dynamic and subtly differentiated its moving back to the possible tension that might exist between a communitarian idea of shared belief and assumptions and an awareness of the diversity and mobility that will inevitably characterize that sharing (Hutcheon 92). The semantic dimension of irony is difficult to treat in isolation without keeping it not only one perspective on the receiver but also the surrounding environments. In the novel, Heyst makes three impulsive attempts to form relationships: two with human beings, Morrison and Ima, and one with a place, when he decides to take up residence on the island of Samburan. He becomes the indirect cause of the deaths of the first two, and is himself annihilated by the island and "the mysterious financial world" (Mallios 1). Heyst's ultimate decision to settle on Samburan coincides with his



impulsive involvement in the life of the bankrupt merchant Morrison. His attempt to save Morrison is thwarted by the reality of England, that other island, and a materialistic and increasingly imperialistic social structure. The conservative function of irony, therefore, is controlled by the, as Bakhtin says, "One –sided serious dogmatic and authoritarian cultures" (qtd. in Hutcheon 27). It is the repressive cultures' affirmative and the destructive political functions of irony to force the marginal be complicit with the system. In the "affirming and negating" use, irony functions, in Culler's words, as the "ultimate form of recuperation and naturalization". "we reduce the strange or incongruous, or even attitudes with which we digress, by calling them ironic and making them confirm rather than abuse our expectations" (qtd. in Hutcheon 28).

This active and impulsive participation in social life constitutes an unconscious rebellion against his father's admonitions. From that point on, in his relationships with Morrison, and, later, Lena, he becomes a usurper of God's prerogative, the giving and shaping of life. His interference with the existence of Morrison, to whom he gives a new chance in life through the materialistic medium that money is, only results in the annihilation of the latter. His attempt to create a new woman out of Lena, which is a re-enactment of the creation of Eve, but by Adam himself, is defeated by forces triggered by society in the shape of Schomberg, the hotelkeeper. His attitude to the place he chooses to settle in, Samburan Island shows parallels with his dealings with human beings. Motivated by idealistic intentions, which at heart echo the missionary spirit of Western culture, he causes the colonization of the island, reshaping it in the image of industrial Western society. Irony involves social interaction as an inquiring mode to avoid the single and dogmatic. It becomes a special kind of substitute for silence where in the irony's

working as self-protective suggests that irony can be interpreted as kind of defense mechanism.

Whereas initially his purpose had been to be a wanderer with no specific abode, by settling down in Samburan, he not only becomes the colonizer, an integral member of the community, but also introduces into the place that he so drastically alters, the alien and destructive forces of an exploitative society. For all the well-meant rebellion inherent in Heyst's activity, he cannot withstand or evade the chaotic, disorderly world of contingencies which ultimately arrives to engulf him, in the form of a demonic trinity consisting of Satan, Sin and Death, personalized by Mr. Jones, Ricardo and Pedro respectively. The island thus becomes a Garden of Eden infected by not only societal corruption, but also by a more primeval form of evil.

This intimacy is what makes irony potentially an effective strategy of oppositionality since the ironized discourse can point to difference to avoid both imperial and simply oppositional single voicing. The ironized language can allow "alternatives of being" through the alternatives of saying.

Another radical transideological political function of irony is to use it in a positive and constructively progressive way where it is used as a powerful tool or even as a weapon in the fight against a dominant authority by demystifying or subverting the repression. Oppositional theorists like feminists, postcolonialists, and other marginal use this function of irony where, as Culler's irony that no prison can contain" (qtd. in Hutcheon 28). In such a use, irony is not taken, as Belsey reminds, as "authoritative because its meaning are implicit than explicit" (qtd. in Hutcheon 29). The recourse to irony's multivocal instability is exploited by the oppositional theories at the expense of necessarily univocal social commitments in which irony not only works to point to the complexities of historical and social reality but also has the

power to change that reality. So, the subversive function is the "mode of the unsaid, the unheard, the unseen relishing them power in its verbal and structural forms" (4).

Irony, in this light, is a discursive strategy operating at the level of language, which has intrinsically subversive, self-questioning, and internally dialogic mode that can and does function tactically in the service of a wide range of political positions, legitimating or undercutting a wide variety of interests. Political function of irony has established ironic discourse as, in Terdiman's words, a "counter discourse" (qtd. in Hutcheon, 184). In this view, irony's intimacy with the dominant discourse it contests is its strength to relativize the authority and stability in part by appropriating its power. So, just as the uncanny fashion; it can be seen as at once constitution and disruptive or any discursive structure or controlling intention. Morrison describes the kind of history or art with an eye to the uncanny as possessing a constant presence of haunting.

It is not a coincidence that Samburan should be an island. It not only reminds us that the source of corruption lies in that other island, England, but I also functions as a metaphor for the self. The desolation depicted implies that the island had become a mirror image of Western industrial areas. In such alternatives, the marginalized can be heard by the center, and yet to keep their critical distance and thus unbalance and undermine the authority. But irony is a matter of unspoken understandings, which can obviously cut across professional lines. This function of irony, therefore, is radical and democratizing as it gives a room for alternative reactions. The black jetty is a phallic indication of man's violation of the integrity of the island, which significantly is round, as well as suggesting that both the islands and Heyst's integrity and insularity have been irrevocably broken.

The blackness of the jetty is echoed in the color of the coal for which the Tropical Belt Company decided to mine in the area, and that very action of mining is reminiscent of manimon in *Paradise Lost*, "by [whom] first / Men also, and by this suggestion taught, / Ransacked the center, and with impious hands / Rifled the bowels of their mother Earth / For treasures better hid – "(6). With industrialization, however, the quest for gold and treasure has relegated its place to more prosaic quest for the commodity ensuring the perpetuation of industrial activities. The counter discursive function or irony, which rests on irony's denial over certainties by unmasking the world as an ambiguous and instable, is frequently exploited in oppositional theories.

Such a function of irony lies in the realization of the power that lies in its potential to destabilize with critical ends and ideological contradictions so that not to let the marginal resolve into the coherent and potentially oppressive dogma. The irony is that the Tropical Belt Coal Company's project falls and the result is that the entire process initiated by Heyst to remodel or recreate Samburan in the image of its European conquerors has been futile as far as the colonialists are concerned. Hence, it is the gigantic sign announcing the proprietary rights of the Western capitalist power, and the wanted mount of coal that form the grave in which the natural order of the environment has been buried. This is the irony, for an instance, that feminist theorists and other marginal see as working to deprive, in the words of J. Butler, "hegemonic culture and its critics of the claim to naturalized or essentialist gender identities" (qtd. in Hutcheon 32).

The incipient force that originates Heyst's inability to survive in modern society lies in this failure to choose between the alternatives presented to him. It is the irony's politics that gives, in Fisher's words, a "survival skill, a tool for knowledge acknowledging complexity, a means of exposing or subverting oppressive hegemonic

ideologies, and an art for affirming life in the face of objective troubles" (qtd. in Hutcheon 26). One option for survival is to integrate himself in "the flow of life's stream, where men and women go by thick as dust, revolving and jostling one another like figures cut out of cork and weighted with lead just sufficiently to keep them in their proudly upright posture" (12).

That, in fact, he attempts to do when he decides to become the manager in the tropics for the Tropical Belt Coal Company. He is hampered, however, by the attraction of the other alternatives, refusing to establish bonds and obligations that would result in active participation in communal life. Heyst's father's admonition had been one of non-involvement. Irony becomes a political method when it deconstructs and decanters the dominant discourses on the premise that often been used as a weapon of dominant cultures to keep the subservient in their place.

It has been reversed as something that spring from recognition of the socially constructed self as arbitrary, and that demands revision of values and conventions. But, like God and Father and Adam, Heyst's father is inadequate because he refuses to supply his son with a explanation for his instruction: when Heyst asks, "Is there no guidance?", his father's response is, "You still believe in something, then? ... You believe in flesh and blood, perhaps? A full and equable contempt would soon do away with that too" (13). This inability on the part of the father to justify himself is caused by the fact that he is already fallen. Muecke says the politics of irony is like a gyroscope with corrective function that keeps life on an even keel or straight course, stabilizing the unstable and the excessive stable where the ironic observer's awareness of himself or herself as an observer tends to enhance his / her feeling of freedom (4). While God undoubtedly believes in His own Godliness, there is nothing that Heyst's father finds worthwhile to have faith in. He dies, therefore, this "destroyer of

systems, of hopes, of beliefs," (14) curled up in the fetal position, isolated from the 'proudly upright' people crowding the streets of London.

The dialectical power of altered arises from the said and the unsaid. The unsaid is related to the repressed, marginalized and colonized; it is not just unsaid, but unsayable within the hegemonic homogenous discourse. The problem, as far as Heyst is concerned, that he has been badly equipped by his father to make the necessary choices in the outside world: "The dead man had kept him on the bank by his side. And now Heyst felt acutely that he was alone on the bank of the stream. In his pride he determined not to enter it" (15). The irony's as Conway and Seery state, "becomes ' political . . . when it is performed in the service of 'life' " (2). Irony, in this way, functions as guide and a disciplinarian. There is much in every personal life, which like wild shoots must be pruned away, and irony is an excellent surgeon. Indeed, irony intensifies or reduces all socio- political ills. The key word there is of course the word "pride", with its satanic implications. It also indicates disobedience to the patriarch. Since his father's advice had been to remember that he himself is as pitiful as the rest of humanity. They are said to be able to use irony as a particularly potent means of critique of or resistance to patriarchal social restrictions or even essentialist claims to truth.

Canard depicts politics of irony by creating the circumstances of unsaid said. This political relationship of said and the unsaid with culture ramifications becomes double consciousness that leads the black to the sad reality. Heyst's existing views create sets a scene for the very use and comprehension of the politics of irony as irony is always social and political that gets heated at the edge provoking responses from those who get it. Irony is a political issue that involves relations of power based in relations of communication with issues such as exclusion and inclusion, intervention

and evasion, thereby making the functioning of irony inevitably political. Irony in certain discursive situation is a complex, therefore, it happens because of such a discursive communicative process in which irony itself comes into being in the relation between intensions and interpretations.

### III. Politics of Irony in Conrad's *Victory: An Island Tales*

Conrad applies politics of irony in *Victory* to excavate the tension between idealism and practicalism. The ironic mode of *Victory* creates a paradoxical harmony between the saying and the doing. The protagonist, Axel Heyst lives many years in London with his father who is an intelligent but a bitter man. Heyst's father convinced him that the world is full of disappointment and unhappiness. He also suggested to his son that the ideal life is one of isolation in order to avoid these disappointment and materialistic circumstances. After his father's death Heyst pursues his father's suggestions, wandering around the islands of the Southern Pacific Ocean. But Heyst cannot follow his father's ideas although he tries his best. He called himself as idealist and isolated but he can't avoid the social circumstances that influenced him; "It was a long time before the materialized in this alarming way into the destroyer of our little industry" (23).

One day he meets by chance a casual acquaintance, Morrison, who is threatened with financial ruin by some corrupt harbor officials who have confiscated Morrison's ship because the unwisely generous captain cannot pay a fine. Heyst, in an act of spontaneous generosity, immediately lend Morrison the money to pay the fine and Morrison is so overcome with gratitude that he makes Heyst his partner in business. The activities of Heyst are related to the concept of politics of irony as: "it happens in the space between (and including) the said and the unsaid; "it needs both to happen"' (Huethon, 12). Regarding the same vein, Spittles views on the space between ideals and reality in Heyst activities as:

As we have seen, looking at the tension between ideals and reality may approach the plot of any Conrad's novel. It may occur to you here that in Heyst's life the theme begin in the young man's relationship with his



father. His father teaches him that reality is harsh, and therefore the ideal life is one of isolation as far from worldly reality as it is possible to get. (88)

Heyst is influenced by the receiver and by the surrounding tension that happens a discursive communicative process in which it comes into being in relation between intentions and interpretations. Without hope, without love, without trust, life is but a living death. Axel Heyst, Conrad's hero of *Victory*, is a complex man we are deeply drawn to – for he has the heart and he has the high ideals if not the hope or trust.

Heyst's activities are socially shaped because it enables to be happened which creates gap between the saying and the interpretations; "Heyst is offered employment in coal company and when Morrison dies, Heyst become the owner" (37). In his vulnerable youth, Heyst's father stripped him of these tools without which living a meaningful life is a barren if not futile prospect. Although Heyst pursues this ideal apparently with considerable success, it breaks down on two critical occasions. The first time is when he saves Morrison from financial ruin, the second when Heyst rescues Lena from servitude and unhappiness. The irony is also lies in language. The politics of irony stems from the idea that the character is contemplating a lifetime of tranquil, if lonely, isolation, but that actually he is on the brink of an involvement with reality that will erupt in terrible violence.

The whole communicative process is not only distorted but also made possible by those different worlds to which each of them which form the basis of his exceptions, assumptions, and preconceptions of Heyst that involves a simple decoding of a single inverted message and it is more often a semantically and combining said and unsaid meanings; "And I suppose those two considerations, the practical and the mystical, prevented Heyst- Axel Heyst-from going away" (3). Heyst had once been enchanted

by the spell of the islands, which suggests that he had no conscious say in his destiny, like a man bewitched. Furthermore, he has no intention of leaving them; he has made up his own mind about that, taking control of his future. Thus, the more he tries to expose his idealism, the more he evokes his ignorance as we have seen in looking at other novels. Conrad's style is often ironic- appreciating it is part of the sheer pleasure of reading him:

Reality this episode to the novel as a whole, I think it is ironic that this thought occurs just at the moment when he is about to lose control over his fate, through his spontaneous acting of rescuing Lena. Heyst is also dwelling on the idea that nobody anywhere on earth belongs to him, and is doing so whilst unable to escape from the plaintive music that Lena- of whose existence he is ignorant at present – is helping to make.  
(Spittles 91)

A recluse on a deserted island breaks his solitude and rescues a girl from a life from a life with a semi- shady gang. This act of kindness starts a chain of events that brings violence and change to his lonely island.

Heyst has been infected by his father's skepticism and analytical view and never manages to find a way after that to engage with the world or other people in it. His view attempts at engagement are awkward and almost unwilling. Conrad uses a great line to describe his approach to other people's emotion. Everybody in the book tried to remain in isolation. Wang removes himself from Chinese society to go native. Mrs. Schomberg is locked behind her mask of fear. Mr. Jones and Ricardo are set apart because of the Gentlemen's obsessive fear of women. Lena is set apart by her past. Everybody is trying to connect, but (with the exception of Lena) always on his or her own terms and always within limits.

Lena dies because she refuses to run away when Heyst is in danger, and it is her attempt to save him from being murdered by Ricardo that caused her death. Sacrifice becomes an ideal to them both, and one that leads to the reality of death. Lena's sacrifice prefigures Heyst's suicide, the sacrifice of his own life being consequences of her act of absolute sacrifice. The somber mood of the episode suggests that tragedy awaits these isolated idealists. We read much of Heyst's 'inertia', just as we hear a lot about Mr Jones's 'laziness'. Mr Jones assumes that he is- or was – from a similar 'social sphere' as Heyst, just as Ricardo assumes that he and Lena have similar 'origins' 'in the dregs of mankind'. That all the evolutionary options were, as it were, still open, is clear from such comments as the following, when Heyst's attempts to break out of the magic circle of the island take him in the direction either of new Guinea or of Siagon – to cannibals.

As the modes of existence are present in the world, there is a great deal of difference between the two poles. Heyst seems the very opposite of the gentleman who, by contrast, looks martial; who has tried to renounce the lawless jungle of the world without realizing that it is quite out of his power to force it to renounce him. There are also some odd, and potentially disturbing, similarities. The character almost perfectly constructed, and they drive the story. The main character, Axel Heyst, has to be one of Conrad's most complex heroes. Lena, the female protagonist is a starting combination of innocence and power. The setting is masterfully described, with typical Conrad depth. Perhaps only *Nostromo* is more of vivid descriptions. Heyst and Lena sit in a forest clearing on the island of Samburan, each still unsure at this early stage of their relationship of the other person.

Heyst is living on ideal life but he is neither sure how to express his happiness in reality. His ideal love is not used to real life; “passionate relationship between a

man and a women” (Hodges 2). The reality is that he is unaware about the other people and not able to show his own deep feelings. His position is similar to the idea of politics of irony because it is simple antiphrasis which can be understood by a straight forward meaning: “His ambition was to feed it at a profitable price, and has delight was to talk of it behind its back” (26).

Heyst, on the other hand, attempts to remove himself from the 'world as will' to live in the abstracted realm of the 'world as idea'. With such an attempt, we know that Conrad had a great deal of sympathy: he admits in his author's note that 'I have always liked him' 'to excess'. For, and this is still Conrad writing in his author's note, 'the habit of profound reflection, that compelled to say, is the most pernicious of all the habits formed by civilized man'. Heyst thinks he has thought himself out of the world of reality; but he is, while still a body, irrevocably in it, tied in by all kinds of drives, whether they be the unpredictable propulsions of 'wind-currents', or those of compassionate desire – or desire disguising itself as compassion.

Heyst is indeed under the dominating influence of the voice – and text, and portrait of his dead father. But as the book indicates, Heyst half realizes, he has already been 'broken in on' – first by Morrison, more finally by Lena. It is the kind of leakage or punctuation, which cannot be blocked, a gap or wound open to reality, which cannot be sutured. In the form of total instinctive obedience to the basic appetite of survival, eating and sexuality – operates totally through him, unhindered or interrupted by any of the deferments and displacements consequent upon self-consciousness.

The story takes place on the near-deserted Indonesia island of Samburan, where Axel Heyst, the reclusive Swede, has chosen to make his hermitage. In an important vignette about midway through the novel Conrad lets the reader in on the

origin of Heyst's cynical and disillusioned attitude toward life; "A bell started ringing, and he led the way to the dining as if into mankind as if into a temple, very grave, with the air of a benefactor of mankind" (26). This profoundly affected Heyst, and stayed with him, and a fortnight later he started on his travels. He leads a wandering life and avoids contact with others. Intimacy is foreign to him, but he has a truly magnanimous, altruistic heart, and one day on the island of Timor, he impulsively paved the fines for the captain of a trading ship (Morrison) and bails him out of certain financial ruin. As a result, Heyst is offered employment in a Coal Company, and when Morrison dies, Heyst becomes the owner.

Heyst is indeed a man who from excessive withdrawn reflective thought. We should note that both Heyst and Mr. Jones have distinctly curious attitudes towards women. Heyst, it is true, does get involved with Lena, and it is quite clearly a sexual involvement, no matter how his 'impulse' towards her is rationalized as compassion or sympathy. But for the most part of his life, he has maintained an attitude of the most correct and exquisite 'courtesy' towards women as towards everyone else. Courtesy, as we know, can be a way of keeping women at a distance quite as effectively as, if in a more 'civilized' way than, the overt and hysterical, if not discernibly homosexual (his 'feminine eyelashes' are noted) misogyny of Mr. Jones. It suggests that men can become, as it were, 'over civilized' and thereby lose contact with those deeply 'nature' instinct towards the other sex on which nature's reproductive drive depends.

Heyst breaks out of his isolation to help someone, a person who is encountering the harshest circumstances of reality that is a simple inversion or opposite of the said: it is always different other than and more than the said. Yet his heart is a stubborn thing in its will to beat with red blood. Even in his willful isolation, a woman's love finds the hermit. Conrad indulges in a little formula damsel-in-distress

rescue, and Heyst brings Lena to his solitary island of Samburam, where they slowly develop a kind of heaven. Heyst is a solitary wanderer, and almost a hermit on the coal island of Samburan. The Tropical Coal Belt Company was an economic threat to some of the coal-traders. Heyst is viewed with a mixture of curiosity and suspicious enmity by most of the other Europeans in the southern Pacific Ocean area. Hence, Heyst cannot be isolated from the materialistic life; "These manifestations shook the soberest minds. For a time everybody in the Islands was talking of the Tropical Belt Coal" (22-23).

*Victory* involves the woman's self-sacrifice for the central male character – although the central male character, in this writing, is not the man she lives; "The flush of rapture flooding her whole being broke out in a smile of innocent, girlish happiness, and with that divine radiance on her lips she breathed her last, triumphant, seeking for his glance in the shades of death" (380). Heyst without a sense of guilt, in a desire for safety, and from a profound need of placing her trust where her woman's instinct guided her ignorance. Nothing would serve Schomberg but that she must have been circumvented by some occult exercise of force or craft, by the laying of some subtle trap. His wounded vanity wondered ceaselessly at the means 'that Swede' had employed to seduce her away from a man like him (89-90).

Here we are given a description of Schomberg's thoughts as he reflects on his own failure to gain Lena's affections, despite trying for weeks, and Heyst's success in apparently doing so very quickly. Since the extract is partly concerned with Schomberg's attitudes. The main tension rests between his view of himself if and what he actually achieved. Schomberg has an ideal view of himself in which he is an overpowering force full of 'personal fascinations'. That vision of him comes into conflict with Lena's 'desire for safety'. Schomberg sees himself as irresistibly

attractive, but Lena perceives him as a meaning threat. The reality that Lena finds him repulsive and prefers to trust the Swidish born is not easy for Schomberg to accept. The destruction of Schomberg's ideal view of himself by that reality is what causes his humiliation and fury.

The description of the unfortunate Lena before her escapes also contributes to the central tension that involves relations of power based in relations of communication with issues such as exclusion and inclusion; thereby making the functioning of irony inevitably political as Schomberg's reaction to the reality of the situation and the style in which they are expressed. Schomberg's first response is disbelief, preferring to think it is 'a survey trick', an underhand practical joke by the Zangiacomos. When she shrinks and lowers her eyes, Schomberg's vanity never allows him to consider that Lena finds him intimidating. He interprets her attitude as submission to the force of his personality. Schomberg is so egocentric that he cannot see the reality, although it is fairly obvious: that Lena is an impoverished and refined young English woman without a friend or protector (and remembers this takes place in the early part of the twentieth century) literally thousands of miles from home. She naturally feels very vulnerable. Schomberg himself is middle-aged and married.

The reality is that Lena is terrified by his attentions. The style emphasis that Lena could do little to protect herself she had to listen to him, because she was cornered, like an animal at the end of an empty corridor from which no help would come if he offended schomberg and he physically attacked her. Having eventually to lose that illusion, Schomberg creates another: that Heyst has used a form of witchcraft to entrap Lena. This is so ludicrously from the reality – the truth being that Lena felt vulnerable and simply trusted Heyst to protect her – that one think we can say it is satire against Schomberg.

In the vanity of his ideal self-image Schombereg just will not face up to the reality of his own unattractiveness. The satiric style comes from the tension between Schombereg's obviously unrealistic idealizing of himself as an irresistibly powerful and attractive personality, and his inability to see, or accept, the truth of the situation: that Lena finds him repulsive and frightening. If we do not think the style here is satiric and working against Schombereg, we will obviously not agree with my analysis. In that case you will want to work out your own views and argue the reasons for them, but, as long as you always base your argument on the evidence of the text, you will be able to build a coherent case.

It is perhaps now time to look closely at the novel's central relationship, to see how this reflects the main themes and how it is presented. The relationship between Heyst and Lena is not easy one to understand, and if you attempted merely to summarize the observations would quickly become generalized and limited. This is a good reason for working from close analysis of an extract, to give your views a sound foundation and keep them specific. To explore related to the early days of Heyst and Lena's life together on the isolated island of Samburan.

Heyst and Lena sit in a forest clearing on the island of Sanburan, each still unsure at this early stage of their relationship of the feelings of the other person. The tension here is very subtle: both people are living an ideal life of mutual love, but they are neither of them sure how to express their happiness or love in reality. So, the ideal is the love of two people who are not used to loving or being loved, the reality their unsureness about the other person, and their inability to shows their own deep-feelings.

When Heyst has to visit the mainland he stays at Schombereg's hotel when a visiting female orchestra is also there, playing for the entertainment of Schobereg's



customers. Thus, Heyst wants to shun the social activities and stay in isolation but in reality he involve in the social experience; “He was no longer enchanted, though he was still a captive of the islands. He had no intention to leave them ever” (64). This situation is related to the idea of the semantic dimension of irony which is difficult to treat in isolation because it not only one eye on the receiver, but also the other on the surrounding tension. Life has a way of being messy and intrusive, Conrad knows, and so he brings the conflict of the story to the island, undeservedly bad reputation following Heyst there in the often comic and villainous figures of Ricardo and Jones.

If Heyst's heart does indeed love, and passionately so, then Lena's heart has within in the unconditional devotion perhaps only a woman can fully express. And so woman gives life. The tragedy of Heyst is that he so rarely knows how to express his love. Perhaps the story ends, then, in the only way it can, in sacrifice:

We can see how this relates to the central tension of the conflict between ideals and reality, but the point I want to stress is that Conrad does not express it as simply and baldly as I do in my comments above. It is by looking closely at the language that we can appreciate how Conrad powerfully gives life to the theme. (Spittles 100-01)

Conrad's characters have depth and motion; plot is not overwhelming, but enough to hold suspense; dialogue is real and revealing. Conrad does plenty of tell, not show, which writers are today admonished not to do, but the reader loved every moment of the skillful telling. He is a master, taking on themes and characters that have lasting value.

Heyst's 'detachment' from the world is not complete. He has a flaw: he can still be 'touched'. So, despite his deep distrust of 'action', despite his sense that this 'a world not worth touching, and perhaps not substantial enough to grasp', despite his having

nothing worth holding on to, he is vulnerable, penetrable, touchable. But later says to Lena that 'when one's heart has been broken into in the way you have broken into mine, all sorts of weaknesses are free to enter. His conviction is that who forms a tie is lost, but on impulse he does form ties; "Perhaps that was it. A man who could propose, even playfully, to quench old McNab's thirst must have been an utopist, a pursuer of chimaeras; for of downright irony Heyst was not prodigal" (8). And his island, like his heart, can be broken into, and all sorts of things, specters and monsters, as well as weaknesses and fears, are then free to enter. 'Touch' is of course a key pun or ambiguity in the book. You can be 'touched' in the sense of being emotionally stirred, as, when he first sees Alma, Heyst feels 'a secret touch on the heart'; or you can be 'touched', handled, 'grabbed' by any of the alien predators drifting around the world.

The differences and oppositions are not stable for the change with the context: circumstances do not make the gentleman, but they may reveal the latent egoist as Meyers says; "disturbing mixture of tragedy and irony" (419). Conrad also works through distinctions and oppositions; between Heyst and Mr. Jones, Lena and Ricardo, Wang and Pedro; two very distinct triangular groupings, brought into confrontation to reveal a number of problematical similarities-within-difference and differences-within-apparent similarities which make it impossible to emerge from the book with any clear and stable sense of any to emerge of evolutionary progress – whether natural or social- and any certainty about the affixing in any approbatory or derogatory way the labels of 'primitive' and 'civilized'. Yet a feeling for problematical aspects of ideas of 'evolution' does pervade the book.

Heyst is meditating on being a hermit whilst staying in a busy hotel with many customers. He thinks that the island is associated with an ideal of isolation but in

reality it is full of crowd. Heyst is described as a dreamer who has an ideal of silence, but the reality of the noise from the orchestra pursues him even into what should have been the ideal privacy of his bedroom, destroying all tranquility and thought, until it becomes in expressing tedious. It would seem almost as though language, in one way or another, can always threaten to take one out of the world of action, or render one incapable within it. Lena, in her capacity, retains her integrity: Heyst, transparent to him, existing in a world made ambiguously transparent by his thought, effectively disintegrates. Heyst tries both to 'read' and 'renounce' the world, and can find no enabling attachment to the world, not even in the elusive but present form of Lena. When Lena is full of her 'passionate purpose' and engaged in action, thinking not of herself but of Heyst, we are told that 'all power of combining words had vanished in the tension of her mind.

Heyst decides to stay in islands with his servant, the 'Chinaman' Wang. On a neighboring island, a hotelkeeper by the name of Schomburg begins to circulate rumors about "the Swede", rumors that include blaming Heyst for the untimely death of Morrison. Heyst, (completely unawares of Schomburg's malicious hatred) makes a rare visit to the hotel, and while staying there, he is again moved to action by his sensitivity and altruism. This time, he becomes involved in the troubled life of one of the showgirls, a violinist by the name of Alma (Heyst changes her name later to Lena). He rescues her from the loathsome Schomburg's amorous intentions, and carries her off to his island. This infuriates the already hateful hotelkeeper, and soon a wandering trio of deperadoes provides the perfect means for murderous revenge. Under the unfounded pretense that Heyst has hidden vast stores of loot on his island, Schomburg convinces these three thugs to invade wits and bodies:

The conflict, however, does not pit the saving power of love against the deeper impulse that romantic love destroys. Comparison of manuscript with printed version suggests that Conrad intended *Victory* to be a study of deviant religious experience yet apparently sensed that he lacked the convictions the theme requires. (Purdy 91)

The scoundrels are armed and accustomed to shedding blood, while Heyst and Lena are completely unarmed and defenseless. When Lena is alone and suddenly confronted by one of the villains, she feigns sympathy for their plan, and begins to work a duplicity that even Heyst is unaware of. She takes it upon herself to divest the villainous Ricardo of his weapon.

Like Adam naming the creations of God, Heyst takes the nameless girl to his rather dilapidated Eden, and gives her a new identity: she is to be called Lena. Since she is misappropriated from her legitimated possessors, Zangiacomo and Schomberg, the two representatives of societal activity, it is fitting that the furious hotelkeeper should dispatch his avenging army to Samburan. But Jones, Ricardo and Pedro, as a Satanic parody of the Holy Trinity, are elements that have already been introduced into the island by the Western colonizer and that perhaps explains their surprising success the volcano to puff intermittently and threateningly, the different degrees of violence that bring with them unleash the ferocity latent in the island and in nature.

Since relationships between human beings are based on fictions created by individuals, since mankind has replaced the natural with the unnatural, and persists in believing that the unnatural is the natural, nature herself rages in the background through the final act of the tragedy, shivering, trembling and shuddering, much in the way that the natural elements in the Garden of Eden do as Adam progressively approaches his fall. As Purdy says has the “deviant religious experiences” (91)

because the human beings fail to survive and like Morrison who in a way had sacrificed himself for the sake of his benefactor and died of gratitude, Lena is killed, presumably to save her own savior, but Heyst's inability to face the prevalent destruction he has caused renders her. He personifies precisely what Henry James calls the "emotion of recognition" as he collides with the power of the world, and finds that he cannot kill the invisible god within him.

In many ways, *Victory* developing love that was horribly infringed upon, invaded. It is beautiful how the devotion, charm and innocence of Lena were slowly plowing up the fallow ground of Heyst's long –forgotten heart:

The truth is that nobody out here can boast of having known him well; said Davidson. He was a queer chap. I doubt if he himself knew how queer he was. But everybody was aware that I was keeping my eye on him in a friendly way. And that's how I got the warning which made me turn round in my tracks in the middle of my trip and steam back to Samburan, where, I can grieved to say, I arrived too late. (381)

Heyst is calm and moves noisily to perform the social activities. Lena is hardly breathing, and although on the point of death. The description of her appearance is also sacred. Thus, the language of this novel also expresses the silence, the reverence of the moment.

The reverential words 'sacred' and 'serene' bring a heroic tone to Lana's death and she has achieved victory. Her death is compared to the awful numbness of her life in the touring ladies, orchestra, vulnerable to the vile desires of Schormberg. In this way, her death becomes the irony in relation to the idealistic vision of Heyst. Conrad tells Heyst's story, not revealing all at once, and he is the most intriguing part of the book so it is a very clever technique for until the end. That dimension of the novel is

like a mystery and a good one. Heyst has chosen a life of solitude and it is slowly revealed that he has a very complex reason for doing so. The love story is a little weak though Heyst and his beloved Lean have their moments, other than that there is much to admire about this book and a very exiting finale:

By contrast, his picture of male-to-male relations has an unusual intensity and is offered as a bulwark in a dangerously unreliable world. One must concede that in some stories the stable relationship between men is specifically non-sexual, most often when it is contrasted with the instability of a passionate sexual relationship between a man and a women. At times the portrayal of relations between men suggests a love affair or the solitary yearning of one man of another. (Hodges 2)

Conrad's own complex upbringing involved exile and was eventually brought to ruin for it. The instability of being raised in such a home had a corrosive effect on the author's sense of his own identity. Many of Conrad's books have biographical elements in them but this one is even closer to home than the earlier books were. Conrad combined in his person two distinct selves, a man of action and a man of inaction, or an observer.

In *Victory*, Conrad trying to balance these two opposes tendencies in his own character. Heyst has chosen inaction but that choice soon becomes clear is not his alone to make. The world and its other inhabitants also have a say in that. Heyst may not want to be involved in the world but just by existing he is already involve as a relational strategy that is operates not only between meaning but between people that comes into being as the consequences of a relationship, a dynamic, per formative bringing together of different meaning makers. Heyst may be able to avoid the world for a time but eventually the world finds everyone. For Heyst, the world finds him

through the character of Lena. That is the victory of the novel. Though that meeting puts Heyst in touch with the world for the first time it also puts him in contact with some of the worlds more unsavory aspects.

Heyst is related to, and in part incorporates, many of Conrad's heroes – Jim, Razumov, Decoud, to name only the most obvious: like them, indeed more deeply than most of them, he feels in some way 'caught', 'seeing clearly the plot of plots and unconsumed by the lucidity of his mind'. Heyst, the gentleman, the man of 'refinement', admits at one point that he has managed to refine everything away. Conrad does not celebrate renunciation in *Victory*; rather, he explored and exposes its dangers and limitations. The saddest moment in the book occurs when Lena is dying, and Heyst, with his 'infernal mistrust of all life' finds that 'he dared not touch her'. She who had touched him, and brought him alive again, back into reality – at the end he cannot properly and confidently reciprocate that 'touch'. It is a telling, and terrible, indictment, of the life, which he inherited, forms his father.

So, Heyst's motives echo the widespread Western attitude that sees its own way of life as the only correct one and that endeavors, peacefully or forcibly, to impose the same lifestyle upon what it deems to be the alien, the unknown, and therefore the unnatural, that which needs to be reformed and restrained, since the unknown at liberty is threatening and frightening. In that sense, Heyst is an early Twentieth-Century version of Thomas Gradgrind, intent upon the reform of a structure he believes to be less than perfect: "Facts," broke in Heyst in his courtly voice. "There's nothing worth knowing but facts. Hard facts! Facts alone Mr. Tesman." (9) Belief in facts implies a belief in the stability of reality and the universality of knowledge, and Heyst's fascination with facts intimates a quest for knowledge, which connects him with Adam.

Heyst's denial of the existence of a regulating power further associates him with the first man but the novel is about the "women's self-sacrifice" (Hampson 96). One of the contradictions inherent in his nature lies in the fact that this fierce believer in hard facts also functions as an artist who returns from his travels with "a portfolio of sketches under his arm" (10). His artistic nature is another setback in his relationship with society; if pure detachment from society turns out to be unattainable, a life of pure art is equally unachievable and Heyst's efforts as the indifferent artist are fated to be abortive (11). Likewise, the artist's attempt to create, exemplified in Heyst's endeavor to give Morrison a new life, Samburan a new identity, and Lena a new existence, is doomed to failure. A transcendental power, be it God, the Immanent Will, or nature herself, inevitably interferes, wreaking havoc in man's petty plans to usurp its prerogatives, and a purging destruction follows:

Without enlarging very much, Davidson explained to the attentive Excellency how women, the wife of a certain hotel-keeper named Schonberg, had overheard two card-shaping rascals making inquiries from her husband as to the exact position of the Island. (381)

Heyst's stride forward can only result in tragedy since the unnatural actually resides in the very stride that he is aiming at. The fact that he comes from Sweden enhances his alienation from the tropical region he has chosen to settle in and reform. His aristocratic lineage removes him further from the bourgeois, mercantile frame of mind of the Westerners who do survive in the tropics. Albeit with a little help from alcohol and gambling.

The pure spirit of love and devotion and sacrifice who can save Heyst's soul by waken him from his sterile negations. The book doesn't offer a clear answer to such a question. Rather, it shows that among other things, this girl poses a crucial



language problem for Heyst, a problem which centers on the phenomenon of nomination. Heyst is all lucidity, and all impotent inertia: it is clear how profoundly Conrad intended the irony. But the following words are even more important, particularly bearing in mind what we have said about the key words 'automatic' and will: She was not automatically obeying a momentary suggestion; she was under influences more deliberate, vaguer, and of greater potency. She had been prompted, not by her will, but by a force was outside of her and more worthy.

Lena is, by contrast, living, life, the present – an interloper in the paternal library, an interrupter of his scripts. She is the opposite paradoxical being – patriotic and non-at-home, in place and powerless though she will exert and exercise her own kind of power in the world outside the paternal library. The 'charm' of the 'ghostly voice' of his father constantly exerts a pressure away from all engagement with the physical, negating the reality of 'desire'. It is exactly now that Heyst finds Lena 'unreadable'. She is rarely so direct and articulate. It is as if she is specifically countering the (written) voice of the father, which has just 'spoken' out so firmly against the 'cruel consolation of love' – as if to say, from beyond the grave, 'you should try *not* to love a woman'. The negative force of the paternal interdiction and prohibition, with its imperatives of repression and refusal, are up against the direct solicitations of the living, female body, with its imperative pressures of aroused and avowed desire. Heyst now finds Lena to be 'like a script in an unknown language, or even more simply mysterious: like any writing to the illiterate.

This novel is not one of Conrad's crowning achievements but it is the best one he wrote in his latter period. It does seem appropriate. Be sure to get a copy with author's note in which Conrad tells of his glimpse of a girl in cafe who suggested to his imagination the character of Lena:

What am I to do when I get there? She murmured with an intonation so just, with an accent so penetrating- the charm of her voice did not fail her even in whispering – that Heyst seemed to see the illusion of human fellowship on earth vanish before the naked truth of her existence, and leave them both face to face in a moral desert as arid as the sands of Sahara, without restful shade, without refreshing water. She leaned slightly over the title label, the same little table at which they had sat when they first met each other. (76-77)

*Victory* is the story of a man named Heyst who leads an isolated life in the South Pacific. A chance encounter between a dishonest German who dislikes Heyst and two criminals sets up the dramatic ending. Conrad's style is amazing that someone could write English so well who did not learn it until later in life and who always spoke it with a heavy polish accent.

Hospitality turns the potentially disruptive enemy, interloper, and intruder, into the defined and therefore safe figure of the 'guest' – a ritualistic defusing of a possible danger. Heyst at the end of the day, and later Heyst refer ironically to the sacred virtue of hospitality! But it leads one into trouble as well as any other'.

Anthropologists have been shown us how absolutely fundamental the guest/host roles in the rites of hospitality are, in all tribes, and 'hospitality' is of course the crucial way of mediating between the known and the unknown, the familiar and the strange, the inside and the outside, the home and the 'guest' which, let us remember, originally meant 'enemy' as well as 'stranger'. Conrad's *Victory* is rooted in irony that in practice in a social context is something happens rather than something that simply exists in discourse: “Heyst, while through his mind flashed the hope that something enlightening might come from that being so unlike himself, taking contact with the

world with a simplicity and directness of which his own mind was not capable” (290). Unlike many here, reader found this one to be overwritten and ponderous. The story was predictable and took rather too long to unfold. The characters, too, were less deep than readers have liked and the tale, of a loner adrift in the Pacific islands who is the object of rumor and jealousy and yet who blindly finds love, is not particularly fresh. For much of the time one was reading the book, one had in mind those old films from the thirties and forties. And yet, it is suppose that a compliment in itself since Conrad's work came first and set the tone which these films clearly set out to emulate thereafter. So cliché or no, the book, in its time, was fresher than it manifestly is now. Still, found the slow and ponderous way Conrad grows his tale dated and less efficient than more modern narrative forms. And, in this case, the dept of the tale did not suffice to offset the lumbering explication. Allusions to Minton’s *Paradise Lost* are clever but they are only that, not the tools needed to advance the tale. And the bad guys are clearly, as others have noted here, more symbolic than real.

Heyst, the honorable loner, never comes clear in his miserable isolation from others, and Lena, the fleeing Maiden in distress, never grows into anything more:

Formerly, in solitude and in silence, he had been used to think clearly and sometimes even profoundly, seeing life outside the flattering optical delusion of everlasting hope, of conventional self- deceptions, of an every- expected happiness. But now he was troubled; a light veil seemed to have before his mental vision; the awakening of a tenderness, insistence and confused as yet, towards an unknown woman. Gradually silence, a real silence, had established itself round him. (79)

Conrad's shows that man's isolation is wrapped in a tale of adventure and swept along by an uncharacteristically eventful plot. Conrad's works have, of course, been reviewed to exhaustion; the only thing that I could hope to add would be emotional response to the novel as a reader.

Personally through the majority of the novel one found Heyst to be the only truly well defined character. Much of what we learn of him is revealed indirectly through the observations of others, but somehow Conrad manages to use this method to flesh out a complex and intriguing figure in Heyst; "The concert was over; the audience had gone; the concert hall was dark; and even the pavilion, where the ladies not a gleam of light" (79). The unsaid does get said in a hidden way – as the negative residues of a repressed history. Discursive irony, therefore, can also be linked with the question of writing alternative histories and unearthing repressed memory. The remaining characters, while interesting, serve mostly as scenery. The villains Jones and Richard, while interesting, struck me not so much as human characters but as force of impending doom; they could have as easily been an approaching storm or a plague or any other brand of natural disaster.

The girl Lena in the end is the one exception; perhaps the one thing that found most gratifying is the way in which her character developed as the novel neared its climax. It is well footnoted for those of the reader that would have missed some of the more obscure Biblical references and allusions to *Paradise Lost*. The notes also comment on the narrator's shifting viewpoint, and one revisions Conrad made to subsequent editions. There are often both contextual signals and specific textual makers that work to lead the interpreter to recognize or to attribute irony.

As is always the case when discussing the particular situation of ironic meaning, what is involved here is in fact a general problem in all communication

because Axel Heyst makes a whole life has been lived in isolation is irony. His father taught him that life was a Great Joke, that it was an illusion; that the best way to survive was to drift oneself into oblivion. But he found love in the person of Lena and it changed his perspective on living and was responsible for his change of heart as represented in the above-quoted statement. It's too bad that the novel could not have had a happy ending, but Conrad's view of the world probably would not permit it. I found the novel engrossing, somewhat melodramatic, yet vintage Conrad in its depiction of good and evil battling each other on the island of Samburan:

Meantime Heyst and Lena, walking rather fast, approached Wang's hut. Asking the girl to wait, Heyst ascended the little ladder of bamboos giving access to the door. It was as he had expected. The smoky interior was empty, except for a big chest of sandalwood too heavy for hurried removal. Its lid was thrown up, but whatever it might have contained was no longer there. (321)

This issue of the role of context in determining meaning plays a significant role in the generating of meaning at any time because of verbal play. Heyst is the typical Swede—unable to express his feelings for the life of him, let alone verbalizing his affectionate feelings for Lena (the Swedish man loved his wife so much that he almost told her). Then there is Lena young, soft, and beautiful – yet courageous.

The idea of how Heyst eloped with Lena is so romantic to think of them, with their troubled pasts, starting a new life by getting away from everything. Conrad has a terrific sense of humor. It is hilarious how he describes the characters: Mr. Zangiaco's hooked nose and blue-black beard. Schomberg's foaming-at-the-mouth rages and extraordinarily expanded nostrils. The secretive Wang, the Chinaman, and his absurd wall that protects his house from foes in the middle of nowhere!

You know the path, he continued; make your way to the barricade. So to Wang- yes, to Wang. Let nothing stop you!' it seemed to him that the girl's hand trembled a little. The worst he can do to you is to shoot you; but he won't. I readily think he won't, if I am not there. Stay with the villagers, with the wild people, and fear nothing. They will be more awed by you than you can be frightened of them. Davidson's bound to turn up before very long. Keep a look- out for a passing steamer, think of some sort of signal to call him.' (348)

Heyst makes a rare trip to a nearby island, rescues a beautiful violinist named Alma (Irene Jacob) from a wretched hotelier, and returns home with reward-seeking killers (Sam Neill, Rufus Sewell) in close pursuit. A misanthropic pacifist, Heyst faces a dual dilemma: he's fallen in love and must protect Alma at all costs. Preserving Conrad's literary elegance, *People* opts for a simmering escalation of tension, with a conclusion that Miramax deemed too downbeat for U.S. audiences.

Heyst, a man of moral sensitivity, functions in a corrupt and derelict world who presumably a Swedish baron, despites through a demanding process of self-examination and self-discovery as Panichas states; “pessimism and melancholy” (10). Conrad, to be sure, conveys in this novel the fundamental pessimism and melancholy that stamp his view of the human condition: “All Wang’s possessions were gone. Without tarrying in the hut, Heyst came back to the girl, who asked no questions, with her strange air of knowing or understanding everything” (321). But at the same time, he also shows how the power of redemption unfolds in the decisions and the actions, which Heyst strenuously enacts in the course of the novel's happenings. In him we see a deep, agonizing struggle going on between his habit of detachment and his instinctive need to involve him in the life-process as he tears his self away from the

doubts and fears, which prevent one from putting trust in life. As Heyst moves out of his self-chosen isolation on the island of Samburan in the Malaysian Archipelago, his assets faith in the essential meaning and signify of the human being.

*Victory* is hardly one of Conrad's masterpieces, and is his most melodramatic piece of fiction. The story is a classic good vs. evil allegory, with Heyst (Wissem Dafoe) representing a fallen Adam trying to make his way back to paradise. Just for reinforcement of the concept, Heyst's father down in glaring disapproval from a painting Heyst has had delivered from his old digs in San Francisco. He's now living in a paradisiacal setting yet is living in isolation. His loneliness is cured when he rescues a young, French violinist playing in a traveling all-female orchestra, which is performing at Schomberg's hotel. Schomberg, who hates Heyst, is in the process of purchasing Lena (who we learn is actually named Alma) from San Giacomo, the oily impresario who conducts the orchestra and who, along with his iron-fisted wife, has absolute control over the female orchestra members. Reader could analyze the appropriateness of the fact that Heyst first Lena in this scene, and the irony of her being brought to the attention of her eventual rescues:

My purpose here, though, is to illustrate how what might appears to be an unimportant scene, designed merely to advance the plot, does express the main themes of the novel, and how the specific language used gives the passage interest, and force. It is the writing of another who is in control of the materials and knows clearly the effect he is trying to achieve. (Spittles 101)

After Heyst has rescued Alma and hidden her away on his island retreat, Schomberg receives a trio of unwelcome guests at his hotel. These are the satanic duo of the

mysterious Mr. Jones and his 'secretary,' Ricardo. A swarthy henchman named Pedro also acts a criminal aide-de-camp to Ricardo.

In order to get rid of the trio and to exact his revenge on Heyst, Schomberg tells them that Heyst has swindled a former partner and had him killed, and that he then cashed in a huge insurance policy, the proceeds of which Heyst has secreted away somewhere on his island. In the meantime, Heyst, who had been a reluctant benefactor at first, has fallen in love with Alma, who appears to have fallen for him as well. Suddenly, the trio appears at Heyst's dock in an open boat, and they look to have suffered from water deprivation and exposure. Plot description beyond this stage would involve spoilers.

Heyst is suspicious of them from the outset, but acts the Samaritan and gives them food, drink and shelter. Thus, the politics of irony lies in the activities of Heyst who searches for the isolated and ideal life but in reality his life of ignorance and involves in the social circumstances.



#### IV. Conclusion

Heyst in *Victory* illustrates the discursive idealism that makes the social circumstances of the mix of the said meaning with the unsaid one. His activities are always crucial to interpreting its meaning and politics in a relational strategy between said and unsaid meanings. Therefore, Conrad's novel emerges from the dialectical tension between the outward presentation of the characters as true revolutionist with better insight of social mobility and their inner reality which is dark and full of ignorance. Heyst portrays himself as idealist who knows everything but in reality he cannot distinguish his enemy. Furthermore, he considers himself as savior but ... cannot know that his own life is in crises because of his ignorance.

Heyst's father convinced him the world is full of disappointment and suggests his son that the ideal life is one of isolation in order to avoid this disappointment. After his father's death Heyst pursues his father's suggestions, wandering around the islands. Heyst called himself as idealist as his father says and isolated but he can't avoid the social circumstances that influenced him. As a result, the tension between idealism and practicalism creates a paradox between the saying and doing. Heyst's social circumstances make possible in interpretation whether arising from the ironist's intention or from the rubbing together of the apparent said with the implied unsaid meaning. Heyst purpose is the mix of the said meaning with the unsaid one. It is the writing that is in control of the materials and knows clearly the effect he is trying to achieve. Heyst may or may not be the intended addressee of the ironist's utterance but he or she is the one who attributes irony.

Heyst's utterance is ironic because he is not always succeeding in communicating his intention. His social dimensions are inevitable as its discursive presence that is not only a matter of an intended message encoded in the text but also

it is mostly produced by interpreters in a dynamic interplay of the said meaning with the unsaid one. In the encoding and decoding process, Heyst is equally socially specific but must be shared by both participants who came to some sort of agreement on how the contours of thought or discovery are to be constituted. This is the precondition of intersubjective communication.

The wider tension between ideals and practices that Heyst has been discussing makes ideas memorable; however, it is the way in which he is given life. This is a touching, poignant scene of Heyst and Lena deeply happy but unable to communicate it. Heyst can only sit and look at Lena. The details of his conversation show that he is awkward in speech, speaking without diplomacy and being content mainly with silence and waiting. He feels a divine enchantment, 'the fresh sortileges', at the novelty of having such a woman to care for, but he cannot express his feelings in words. Lena is in a similar position: she would rather stare into the gloom of the forest than look at Heyst. More than this, she is positively frightened of betraying herself. The reason seems to be that she thinks of her love for Heyst as a revelation of something best concealed because he does not appear to need her love. Heyst seems to her to have no idea what she is feeling. Because Lena feels she cannot show it in any other way, therefore, her ideal can be expressed only through some act of absolute sacrifice. Hence, the use and interpretation of irony takes place in the discursive form of Heyst and Lena.

Heyst and Lena's discursive form encompasses the strangely enabling constraints of discursive context and foregrounds the particularities not only of space and time but also of gender, ethnical and sexual choice. Political groupings place us in society so that how much the more searching and ironic testing and molesting- and arguably final voiding –of the word/concept 'gentleman' Conrad gave in *Victory*.

Heyst and Lena's discursive forms are the complex configuration of shared knowledge, beliefs, values, and communicative strategies but that is the condition of gap between ideal and practical. In their discourse, the political meaning in the whole communicative process is not only altered and distorted but made possible by those different micro political power relations to which each of us differently belongs and from the basis of the expectations, assumptions, and preconceptions that we bring to complex processing of discourse: of language in use. Irony, therefore, rarely involves a simple decoding of a single inverted message; it is more often a semantically complex process of relating, differentiating, and combining said and unsaid meaning – and doing so with some evaluating edge.

Hence, the irony of Heyst's getting temporarily involved in the coalmining venture with its illusions of progress – the "stride forward", as he expressed it, in the general organization of the universe'. The theoretical 'stride forward' rapidly becomes a series of moves backwards, aptly illustrated in the spectacle of the 'abandoned settlement invaded by the jungle' on Samburna, just as the large signboard advertising the progressive, enterprising presence of the 'tropical belt coal company' is slowly being reclaimed by the non-signifying, thought not, therefore, insignificant, indigenous vegetation. First the enterprise goes, then the men, the buildings, finally the very 'signs' of the human, intruding presence. Irony, as an ideologically shaped process, involves forms of social practice, of interaction between participants in particular situation.

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