

**Tribhuvan University**

Treatment of Terrorism in Conrad's *The Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes*

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## Abstract

Joseph Conrad ironizes and reduces the anarchists/terrorists and represents the ironic butt as being contaminated in both the novels *The Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes*. Conrad deflates the anarchists/terrorists along with their agents and provocateurs. He marginalizes the Russians and Russia as a whole and the Orientals, in other words, and centers the Westerners in *Under Western Eyes*. This dissertation assesses such reduction in the light of the nexus between his superior ironic position and colonial project against anarchism/terrorism that had threatened the very centre of the British colonial rule – London. It throws light on such marginalized issues with contrapuntal reading.

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## **Anarchism (Terrorism) and Irony: A Discursive Analysis**

Both *The Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes* deal comprehensively with anarchism. The nineteenth century witnessed an outbreak of scattered international political violence. The agents of this violence commonly lumped together as “anarchists” ostensibly use individual murders and assassinations, as well as bombings of military units etc. Joseph Conrad on the author’s note in the secret agent reveals that he is trying to ironize the anarchists.

*The Secret Agent* is a perfectly genuine piece of work. Even the purely artistic purpose, that of applying an ironic method to a subject of that kind, was formulated with deliberation and in the earnest belief that ironic treatment alone would enable me to say all I felt I would have to say in scorn as well as in pity. It is one of the minor satisfactions of my writing life that having taken that resolve I did manage, it seems to me, to carry it right through to the end. (235)

The anarchists’ ultimate goal is to precipitate a full-scale international workers uprising and beyond that to destroy the oppression of government by ending government itself.

Following the teaching of Mikhail Bakunin, Pyotr Kropotkin, Sergei Nechyav, and others, anarchists spread fear not only among the wealthy in Europe and America but also among average citizens, who often made up the collateral damage of what became a heated, long-running battle through out the western world.

Anarchists are against nation-states and borders. Nation-states are inherently oppressive, and in subjugating the individual further for the welfare of the state in a race of nation-states and global economies. Then, anarchists are for direct democracy and often organize according to consensus-based self-governing principles, based on

the understanding that they are best qualified to make decisions about their own lives. Anarchists believe that they must all control their own lives, making decisions collectively about matters which affect them.

We witness many similarities between the anarchists and the modern- day terrorists: guerrilla war, vague and unattainable message, their enemies, their weapons, the way of their destruction etc. The anarchism's central aim, like that of terrorism, was to create an atmosphere of fear and instability that would weaken the loyalty of the average citizen to his or her government.

The anarchist's message was vague- Bakunin said. "We object to all legislation, all influence....., even it is based on universal suffrage" (qtd in Carr 148). Like terrorists, the anarchists also used very rudimentary weapons like knives, pistols and homemade bombs. However, today's terrorist have many strengths that the anarchists did not. For example , the anarchists had no state sponsors, no extensive intelligence systems and no access to the most up-to-date military weapons.

Like terrorists, anarchists see modern capitalist society as fundamentally flawed – a system where the people have to struggle to get food, water and shelter to survive. The anarchists strive for a world where workers, women, moon-whites, queers and others are not systemically discriminated against of the benefit of a few:

The modern form of multinational corporate capitalism that travels in tandem with western cultural expansionism has given fuel to the fury of may international terrorists by creating the impression that any and all regional concerns are subordinate to the interests of western business. (Carr 151)

Anarchism was invented in 1840 by Piere Joseph Proudhon, and expanded upon by Mikhail Bakunin in 1848 and Karl Heinzen in 1849. Anarchism supported terrorism

with statements such as if you have to blow up half a continent to destroy the enemy, do so with no scruple or conscience.”

The word "terrorism" traces its root in the English language to the French Revolution (1789-1795) when British statesman Edmund Burke used the term to describe the actions of the Jacobin-dominated French government. During a period of the French Revolution known as the “Reign of Terror” (1793-1794) under the leadership of Maximilien Robespierre (head of the committee on Public safety and Revolutionary Tribunal) thousands of “enemies of the state” were put on trial and guillotined the work “terrorism” took on a slightly different meaning after German philosopher, Immanuel Kant wrote about it in 1798 to describe a pessimistic view of the destiny of mankind.

"Terrorism" is a pejorative term. It is a word with intrinsically negative connotations that is generally applied to one's enemies and opponents, or to those with whom one disagrees and would otherwise prefer to ignore. Terrorism involves activities such as assassinations bombings, random killings, hijacking airplanes, kidnapping individuals, releasing harmful chemical and biological substances, or take other violent or threatening actions. Such a term is often used as political labels to condemn violence or threat of violence by certain actors as immoral, indiscriminate or unjustified. Terrorism is a crime in all countries where such acts occur.

However, those labeled “Terrorists” rarely identify themselves as such, and typically use other generic terms or terms specific to their situation, such as: separatist, freedom fighter, liberator, revolutionary, vigilante, militant, paramilitary, guerrilla, rebel, Jihadi or Mujaheddin, or Fedayeen, or any similar-meaning word in other language. A terrorist does not sacrifice his/her life out of the psychological need

for appreciation or any other form of irrationality/insanity. Instead: “It is to reason and reason alone that he (a terrorist) bows” (Satha- Anand Chaiwat 158).

Contrary to the impression fostered by official incidence counts and media reports, terrorism is not a given in the real world but is instead an interpretation of events and their presumed causes. And these interpretations are not unbiased attempts to depict truth but rather conscious efforts to manipulate perceptions to promote certain interests at the expense of others. More powerful conflict parties, especially governments, generally succeed in labeling their more threatening (i.e. violent) opponents as terrorists, whereas attempts by opponents to label officially sanctioned violence as “state terrorism” have little chance of success unless supported by powerful third parties (e.g. the United Nations). Those in superpower (e.g. the United States) can easily determine to label the opponents as terrorists. "Probably the most significant contribution of sociological thinking to our understanding of terrorism is the realization that it is a social contraction" ( Turk 271).

Austin T. Turk argues that there are different aspects of terrorism: terrorism as a social construct, as political violence, as communication, organizing terrorism, socializing terrorism, social control of terrorism and theorizing terrorism.

Turk argues, that political and/or economic inequalities are the sources of collective violence:

Terrorist acts are political, rarely involving psychology or material deprivation. Indeed, the evidence is mounting that terrorism is associated with relative affluence and social advantage rather than poverty, lack of education, or other indicators of deprivation. The typical terrorist comes from a relatively well-off part of the world, and appears to be motivated by political–ideological resentment rather than

economic distress. Suicide bombers, for instance, appear increasingly likely to be respected individuals from advantaged classes, with stable family and community ties. (273)

Governments and other organizational authorities always try to censor the media coverage of terrorist events. They try to minimize the risks of either public sympathy for terrorists or public fear of terrorism:

Since the nineteenth century caricatures of anarchists in newspapers (deranged, bearded bombers), the established media have encouraged the belief that political violence in opposition to authority is both criminal and crazy. Assassins are widely portrayed as lone disturbed persons whose murderous acts are attributable to their individual pathologies, the consequences of loveless lives and frustrated ambitions. Suicidal attacks are similarly pictured as the irrational or obviously misguided acts of uninformed people driven by despair and fanaticism (275).

Terrorists have long been organized or trying to be organized, though the way of organization has changed, for electronic communications, transportation networks etc. have contributed. Moreover, corporate globalization facilitates more complex and flexible ways to organize terrorist activities, frequently involving operations among various "international" and "domestic" terrorism:

Because terrorism is increasingly organized in networks, and in some places committed by lone individuals, conventional organizational analysis offers little promise; models developed through network analysis are obviously needed [...] Explaining as well as tracking the

financial and logistical support for terrorism appears to be the most promising focus for social network researchers. (278)

It is also important to analyze why and how individuals become terrorist. Turk argues that the opposition to authority or a particular social order is more likely to stem from a reasoned position than from pathology or deficient socialization:

Reasoning in cosmological, religious terms is increasingly characteristic of the rationales by which terrorists justify their acts to themselves and others [...] People learn to accept terrorism as a political option when their experiences lead them to see truth in messages that defending their way and kind cannot be accomplished by non-violent means. (278)

Though the government uses forces and media censors the reporting to control terrorism, terrorists seem to be successful in gaining access to weapons of mass destruction and credible threats of worldwide terrorist campaigns are now regularly documented, attacks and attempts in various countries are frequently reported and multinational cooperation in countering terrorism is a growing reality:

[...] Still, what has been gleaned from sociological research on control offers many promising leads. For example, analyses of successes and failures of counterrevolutionary strategies suggest that maintaining the will to repress oppositional violence may be more effective than limited and erratic appeasement tactics. Alternatively, harsh repression without significant concessions in the face of widespread grievances seems in the long run to lead to cataclysms instead of social stability. (282)

The governments make lots of efforts to prevent such destructive activities but all such efforts go in vain, rather, there is an equal but opposite force in such circumstances. Governmental and other organizational authorities are predisposed to minimize the risks of either public sympathy for terrorists or public fear of terrorism:

However one approaches the sociological study of terrorism, the distinctive objective is to develop an explanation of its causation, the dynamics of its escalation and de-escalation in relation to other forms of political violence, and its impact on the stability and charge of social orders. (285)

Then it is wise to deal with and respond terrorism tactfully and logically. In other words, one should not add fuel in the fire by using force censoring medial and oppressing the rebellions with the military force. Tariq Ali in his book *The Clash of Fundamentalisms* argues that the gap between the well- offs and the poor, if those in power turn the deaf ears to those in search of equity, the violence in inevitable:

To fight tyranny and oppression by using tyrannical and oppressive means, to combat a single-minded and ruthless fanaticism by becoming equally fanatical and ruthless, will not further the case of justice or bring about a meaningful democracy. It can only prolong the cycle of violence.(3)

Inspired by the ideological messages, the charisma of leaders, the potential for material or status gains, or whatever else attracts them, others are likely to join. Particularly in nondemocratic societies, conflicts are likely to proceed a long fault lines reflecting class, ethnic, racial, or religious divisions. if such conflicts persist, years of reciprocal violence tend to result in its institutional, so that individuals caught

up in the conflict may have no real comprehension of why they go on attacking one another.

It is the response of atomized individuals to world that no longer listens, to politicians who have become interchangeable to corporations one-eyed in the search for profits and global media networks owned by the self-same corporations and locked into a relationship of mutual dependence with the politicians. This is the existential misery that breeds insecurity and fosters deadly hatreds. If the damage is not repaired, sporadic outbursts of violence will continue and intensify.

(314)

Conrad, in both the books *Under Western Eyes* and *The Secret Agent*, ironizes anarchists and their activities. He hints at the author's note that he has written the book to ironize the anarchists. His avowed purpose is to completely reduce the anarchists and for this purpose, he extensively uses irony in the portrait of the anarchists. Actually, irony reflects some effects which work as a critical tool. Irony is a position and a hierarchically determined position, defined against a first context of ordinary meaning. Irony never escapes from psychological reality. When one tries to ironize one tries to reduce the butt. It shows that one always tries to denounce those towards whom the one is negative.

Irony seems to be antagonistic to the practices of cultural studies that remains concerned with the politics of representation. But Irony as a discursive strategy comprises of a social and political scene and examines how the knowledge that a particular discourse produces connects with power and intertwines irony with wider historical and socio-cultural contexts. The social scene of irony makes its politics

inevitable in the mix of the said meaning with the unsaid one. Beerendra Pandey, in an interview, makes the point:

The political edge of irony arises from the said and the unsaid. The unsaid is related to the repressed, marginalized and colonized; it is not just the unsaid, but the unsayable within the hegemonic, homogenous discourse. But just as the uncanny is never surmounted, the repressed is similarly related to the said in a dialectic, uncanny fashion, it can be seen as at once constitutive and disruptive of any discursive structure or controlling intention including ironical ones, but the ironist may approach and play with the uncontrollable.

Irony also seems to have social dimensions: 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. To put it more explicitly, irony happens because discursive communities exist. Its dissuasive presence, which comes about in interpretation - whether arising from the ironist's intention or from the space between the said and the unsaid, carries such a serrated edge that the politics of irony becomes unequivocally apparent.(50)

The politics of irony not only exposes the biases and prejudices of the ironist but it also shows the representation of the ironic butt as being contaminated with the elitist/centrist/racist discourse of the center to which he or she belongs. Conrad's ironic deflation of the anarchists/terrorists along with their agents and provocateurs in *Under Western Eyes* and *The Secret Agent* needs to be assessed in light of the nexus between his superior ironic position and the colonial project against

anarchism/terrorism that had threatened the very centre of the British colonial rule— London. What Conrad's imbibing of the nexus does to his irony is make it verge on the Orientalist.

Edward Said argues that Orientalism is a style of thought based upon epistemological and ontological distinction between the West and the non-West. Ontology refers to the being or existence while epistemology refers to the human perception and knowledge. The Western people tend to believe that the orientals are inferior both in knowledge and existence. They are barbaric, wild, conservative traditional and savage in existence. They are different from *us* because they know less than we do and live differently than we do. This definition points out the category formation aptitude of the western people. It creates 'I'- 'You' and 'We' – 'They', 'Us' – 'Them' categories in these hierarchies first term is privileged over other.

Edward Said uses Foucaultian theoretical modality of discourse in Orientalism. At present, Orientalism has also become a discourse. It was created by the people who are in power. The Western people are in the strong position technologically, economically and sociologically. Because of their strength, they created a body of knowledge about the orient and that body of knowledge is the representation which is, for Edward Said, based on generalization. It doesn't correspond to the reality of the non Western people. Had the non-Western people been in power, such representation, thereby the truth would not exist. He is trying to show truth doesn't exist in Orientalism, it is just a construction or fabrication. They make the images to suit their interests.

The Orient is a Western phenomenon or it is their construction. The construction of Orient is based on the imaginative geography. To justify this concept , Edward Said brings the reference of Levi Strauss who argues that human mind

categorizes everything as other which it doesn't know. It is very exclusive in the sense that it takes a few and excludes many. Then the unknown zone becomes dark, vast, exotic and unexplorable. Then, what is unknown is rubbish for human mind. The same principle is applicable in the West-non West relationship. The Western people live in their own-world. They don't go beyond their own land. In other words, they don't know beyond their territory. Then, what is beyond their territory and knowledge is other, dark and unexplorable. They lack the knowledge of Orient and out of this lack, they constructed orient with negative attributes. Then, the Orient is an imaginative geography, it doesn't exist in the form they have said.

Edward Said also brings the reference of Sigmund Freud to analyze the Orientalism. Dreams have two parts: latent and manifest. The dream process is latent, it is unrealizable, it is there in our unconscious, but we may not be able to be aware of it. What we see is the manifest. It comes in the visual and verbal form. It can be realized and we are ware of it. The latent dream is abstract while the manifest dream is concrete. This Freudian modality of psychoanalysis is applied in the discussion of Orientalism. Then the Orientalism itself has two parts: latent and manifest. Deep down into their unconscious, they have the negative attitude towards the orient. They themselves are not aware of the attitude they have possessed. And its manifest form is seen in domination, exploitation and subjugation. Now the west has manifest Orientalism. It openly expresses its attitude towards the orient. Said argues this manifestation is not immediate phenomenon; it has a long history and it has passed through the stages of love, anger, challenge, hatred, sympathy and so on.

In his book *Culture And Imperialism*, Edward said strongly and clearly argues that colonial and imperial culture, though having deceased physically, has continued in different forms. It affects all including art, literature, music and so on. With

reference to T.S. Eliot, Said says that an artist is an individual talent, but he works within a tradition that cannot be merely inherited but can only be obtained by great labour.

Edward Said, focusing on the continuity of imperialism and its effects in the arts, defines imperialism as:

thinking about, settling on, controlling land that you do not possess, that is distant that is lived on and owned by others.. For all kinds of reasons it attracts some people and often involves untold misery for others. (7)

As I shall be using the term, "imperialism" means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory; "colonialism," which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory. (9)

Said believes that the privileged role of culture in the modern imperial experience, and little notice taken of the fact that the extraordinary global reach of classical nineteenth- and early twentieth - century European imperialism still casts a considerable shadow over our own times. He continues — "Hardly any North American, African, European, Latin American, Indian, Caribbean, Australian individual—the list is very long—who is alive today has not been touched by the empires of the past" (5).

Past, then, can not escape form the present and thus imperial mentality doesn't escape form the minds of the writers. Said adds:

...the processes of imperialism occurred beyond the level of economic law and political decisions and—by predisposition, by the authority of recognizable cultural formations, by continuing consolidation within

education, literature, and the visual and musical arts—were manifested at another very significant level, that of the national culture, which we have tended to sanitize as a realm of unchanging intellectual monuments, free from worldly affiliations. (12-13)

Thus Edward Said views that the writers from the West always in one form or the other bring the concept of past that is colonialism or imperialism in their writings. The colonial sentiment continued as imperial sentiment continues in their creations, which comes to the fore when a contrapuntal reading is done. A contrapuntal reading, in which the subdued colonial overtones come to the fore faintly underlines Conrad's depiction of anarchism/terrorism in *The Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes*.

### **Deflating Anarchism: Politics of Irony in *The Secret Agent***

Joseph Conrad contaminates and deflates the ironic butt brutally in *The Secret Agent*. He reduces the anarchists so severely that he attributes them no human qualities, rather pulls them in the position of non-human beings or at least futile in their thoughts, pig-headed, mindless and morally bankrupt. Conrad brutally underscores the anarchist activities as a sort of conspiracy against the British colonial system and decries their political ideology as sham. He ironizes the anarchists\terrorists are portrayed as foolishly ignorant and absurd. The revolutionary idea of the anarchists is nothing but a dirty game directed towards nothingness. He portrays no character as a genuine goal-oriented rather he presents them all corrupt, exploiter, swindler who deceive others and do no morally good deed.

*The Secret Agent* depicts all the main characters nobody but the anarchists who aimlessly destroy or plan to destroy the public property including the Green observatory. Conrad's portrayal of revolutionaries, whom he views as shams who renew the crimes and delusions of the society they seek to destroy. Verloc thinks of himself as a respectable family man. A dealer in pornography, a police informer and a spy working for a foreign embassy, he believes his work contributes to social and political stability. In this he is no different from his controller, Vladimir, who directs him to commit bomb outrages so as to force the English to defend the social order by repression. Mr. Verloc, who is an agent provocateur, the protector of the Verloc family and the society is the hypocrite who for his personal safeguard, acarifices the life of his mentally degenerated brother-in-law Stevie. In the beginning part of the novel, the writer describes the appearance and quality of Verloc as:

too lazy even for a mere demagogue, for a workman orator, for a leader of labour...He required a more perfect form of ease, or it might have been that he was the victim of philosophical unbelief in the effectiveness of every human effort...His big prominent eyes were not well adapted to winking. They were rather of the sort that close solemnly in slumber with majestic effect undemonstrative and burly in fat-pig style, Mr. Verloc, without either rubbing his hands with satisfaction or winking skeptically at his thoughts, proceed on his way...but there was also about him an indescribable air which no mechanic could have acquired in the practice of his handkerchief however dishonestly exercised: the air common to men who live on the vices, the follies, or the baser fears of making: the air of moral nihilism common to keepers of gambling hells and disorderly houses...(The Secret Agent 12)

The 'lazy' anarchist makes Stevie "wash the dishes in the basement kitchen, and to black the boots" and where there was "obviously no future in such work." Mr. Verloc then "thought that some occupation would be good for him"(10). Mr. Verloc certainly then gives him a 'pious' job which dismembers the mentally defective child. Mr. Verloc is 'dark' not only in his appearance but also in his action and behaviour. The "unexpectedly vulgar, heavy and impudently unintelligent" anarchist runs a pornography shop (22). Verloc has no moral center to fall back upon in order to redeem the fragmenting society.

Mr. Verloc is presented as a traitor in the novel. He deceives every one in the family. Winnie respects a lot to her mother and is ready to take all responsibilities of her. She equally loves her son-like brother – Verloc who has clearly understood it

doesn't give a second thought before deceiving them. Verloc, stone-heartedly took much advantage of Winnie's innocence and Stevie's mental defectiveness. He caused the death of such a defective boy, who was but a piece of heart of his sister and mother. Verloc didn't actually tell what his exact business was. He only said that "his work was in a way political" (8). He also warned her "to be very nice to his political friends" (8). Mr. Verloc is nobody but a Satan who destroys the family. He married Winnie, took all the furniture of her mother and looked very nice. His mother-in-law thought he had "heavy good nature" which "inspired her with a sense of absolute safety. But, if he can deceive such a devoted wife, a mother-like sister of Stevie; his own mother like mother-in-law and son-like Stevie, then who can believe that he will not deceive his own nation? A nation can not be safe in the hand of such a person who should be a saviour but turns out to be a devil!

Conrad reduces him to "influenza". Conrad says - "He generally arrived in London (like the influenza) from the continent, only he arrived unheralded by the Press; and his visitations set in with great severity"(7). Influenza is an infectious disease that causes fever, pains and weakness. Verloc then only causes fever, pains and weakness in the family but also tries to weaken and threaten London. He "never offered to take Winnie to theatres, as such a nice gentleman ought to have done"(8). He not only runs a pornography shop, but also is a pornographic and a dirty man. He never treats his wife as a wife but as a mere commodity and uses her in his in the bed and being very nice to his so-called political friends. He can never live upto anybody's expectations neither in the family nor in London. On the other hand, Winnie is a patriotic. She loves mother and the nation. Her love towards the nation is justified when she stabs her husband she knows that he was killed her brother Stevie.

She kills Verloc so as to protect the nation because he could deceive his own “home” i.e. family means he could also deceive the nation a home.

Conrad’s scorn for revolutionaries is comprehensive and unremitting. He represents Verloc as a man whose life is ruled by indolence and a perversely refined notion of respectability. Much the same is true of Verloc’s revolutionary comrade Ossipon, who is described as a weakling who lives by exploiting the vulnerability of women. Ossipon exploits many women including Winnie. He takes all the money Winnie has taken, promises to travel at once to Paris with her; but, after he has installed her in the train at Waterloo, he deserts her. Conrad gives his verbal picture as:

A bush of crinkly yellow hair topped his red, freckled face, with a flattened nose and prominent mouth cast in the rough mould of the negro type. His almond-shaped eyes leered languidly over the high cheekbones. He wore a grey flannel shirt, the loose ends of a black silk tie hung down the buttoned breast of his serge coat; and his head resting on the back of his chair, his throat largely exposed, he raised to his lips a cigarette in a ling wooden tube, puffing jets of smoke straight up at the ceiling. (35)

Conrad in the quote above exploits physiognomic irony. In appearance itself he is very immoral and unhealthy man for the society, but as an anarchist. His job is to be “perfectly determined to make a clean sweep of the whole social creation,” as the ambassador suggests Mr. Verloc. Comrade Ossipon leers languidly. Even in his look, he has evil or sexual interest. Conrad completely contaminates this anarchist who has but evil eyes and is very immoral in his nature. Conrad likes no part of his face, nor does he give positive attitude towards the attitude of Ossipon. He is a polluted person

who pollutes the society by exploiting women, bringing evils, threatening the system with terrorist activities and even by puffing jets of smoke. Then Conrad depicts him as the most morally depraved of the lot. Ossipon, "was not afraid of strange women, and no feeling of false delicacy could prevent him from striking an acquaintance with a woman apparently very much intoxicated. Comrade Ossipon was interested in woman" (200).

Ossipon is interested in woman and not in reforming the society! He has an intoxicated manner from whom what good can a society expect? Moreover, he is not a man of action either. Comrade Ossipon "held up" Mrs. Vercoc "between his two large palms, peering at her in a business-like way till he heard her say faintly 'Mr. Ossipon!' and then he very nearly let her drop to the ground" when she came to him seeking protection and security after stabbing her husband. Ossipon was 'business-like' in his manner and sought profit from everything and made hay while the sun shone, from Winnie. Conrad attacks the anarchists' political ideal as lacking genuine motive. The immorality of the anarchist Ossipon knows no boundary when he sets lustful eye of Winnie and pursues to possess her through tricky yet deceptive language. Ossipon's self-projected image of political idealism covers a reality of simple greed.

In *The Secret Agent*, Conrad's demonic portrait of anarchist motivation is that political goals such as- revolution, justice and freedom have little to do with what really drives the anarchists. Conrad adopts a very aggressive attitude towards the anarchists rhetoric of political ideology. Conrad also directs his irony forwards Karl Yundt who:

...giggled grimly, with a faint black grimace of a toothless mouth. The terrorist, as he called himself, was old and bald, with a narrow snow-

white wisp of a goatee hanging limply from his chin. An extraordinary expression of underhand malevolence survived in his extinguished eyes. When he rose painfully the thrusting forward of a skinning grouping hand deformed by gouty swellings suggested the effort of a moribund murderer summoning all his remaining strength for a last stab (33).

In the quote above, the "extinguished eyed" "old" "toothless terrorist" giggles grimly suggests that he too lacks any vision. He is also 'no man of action'. He is also not even orator of torrential eloquence, sweeping the masses along in the rushing noise and foam of a great enthusins" (38). "The old terrorist, raising and uncertain and claw like hand, gave a swaggering tilt to a black felt sombrero shading the hollows and ridges of his wasted face" (40). Thus, Conrad denounces the anarchists/terrorists their activities whether young or old . Conrad shows no sympathy on the old terrorist as he says ' the old terrorist turned slowly his head on his skinny neck form side to side (34).

Machaelis is not less worse than the other terrorists. He , "the ticket-of-leave apostle," smiles "vaguely with his glued lips; his pasty moon face drooped under the weight of melancholy assent (38). He talked to himself, indifferent to the sympathy or hostility of his hearers, indifferent indeed to their presence" (35). Conrad further describes:

He was no good in discussion, not because any amount of argument could shake his faith, but because the mere fact of hearing another voice disconcerted him painfully, confusing his thoughts at once- these thoughts that far so many years, in a mental solitude more barren than

a waterless desert, no living voice had ever combated, commented or approved.(35)

Conrad reduces him to a waterless desert and barren who is futile in his ideology and has no genuine aim. Similarly, the other anarchist who comes from the same basket is Chief Inspector Heat. Chief Inspector Heat receives a better position in the novel other than the terrorist, for "the terrorist and the policeman both come from the same basket." (53-54). Even the Professor is not ready to give him any respect Professor goes on:

The other day I came suddenly upon Chief Inspector Heat at the corner of Tottenham Court Road. He looked at me very steadily. But I did not look at him. Why should I give him more than a glance? He was thinking of many things of his superiors, of his reputation, of the law courts, of his salary, of newspapers- of a hundred things. But I was thinking of my perfect detonator only he meant nothing to me. (53)

In the quote above, not only the narrator but also professor is denouncing the chief inspector. Chief Inspector Heat gave 'eat' more than light. Heat then was actually good for nothing nor was he useful for the colonial government who delayed the investigation. "Chief Inspector Heat was not very wise at least not truly so" (64). The plot of *The Secret Agent* advances on the doctrine that it takes a thief to catch a thief. The mind and instincts of a burglar are of the same kind as the mind and instincts of a police officer. Both recognize the same conventions, and have a working knowledge of each other's methods and of the routine of their respective trades. But the unconventionality and unpredictability that go with anarchists and terrorists make it quite tough for the police, making the latter feel to have lost the game even before actually on the former. In this first encounter with the Professor after the Greenwich

explosion, Chief Inspector heat inadvertently gives an impression of balking at the prospect of being confronted with the perpetrator, inasmuch as he does not know the stakes involved. The inspector's unawareness comes off as a striking contrast to an awareness of the stakes on the part of the Professor.

The professor, whom Conrad calls "the perfect anarchist," is the only character in the book without a name. This motto is "No God!" Go Master ! (225) He walks the streets of London with a bomb in his pocket to discourage the police from approaching. He need only press a rubber ball for an explosion to take place after an interval of twenty, seconds. This however, does not satisfy him, and he works fourteen hours a day in his laboratory to construct the "perfect detonator." He calls Comrade Ossipon that "the world is mediocre, limp, with out force. And madness and despair are a force. And force is a crime in the eyes of the fools the weak and the silly who rule the roost" (227).

And the incorruptible Professor walked too, averting his eyes from the odious multitude of mankind. He had no future. He disdained it . he was a force. His thoughts caressed the images of ruin and destruction. He walked frail, insignificant shabby, miserable—and terrible in the simplicity of his idea calling madness and despair to the regeneration of the world. Nobody looked at him. He passed on unsuspected and deadly, like a pest in the street full of men (229). The above quote is very significant in the sense that the writer directs the most brutal irony towards the Professor whom Conrad reduces to a "pest in the street full of men. Conrad actually is so severe towards the professor that he no longer worth a human being walks averting his eyes from the odious multitude of mankind. The Londoners are the mankind who ever don not look at him when he passes them on. The writer says that the perfect anarchist has no future and thus walks frail, insignificant, shabby, miserable and so on. His

thoughts have caressed the images of ruin and destruction. Conrad denounces him so severely that in the street of London which is full of men, the perfect anarchist hovers round with the perfect detonator in him. Professor lives in illusion with the false belief that he is a force and could further empower himself by perfecting his detonator with paying no thought to the liable disaster his detonating device could cause to mankind. Anarchist Professor's irresponsible attitude to humanity undercuts his revolutionary ideas as that of activating the society's status-quo. Conrad sees no reason behind Professor's mad pursuit about perfecting his device for nothing. That he makes him remain a nameless shows the degree of Conrad's Hatred of he man but, as Beerendra Pandey argues, the novelist also shows his liking of the man especially for his steadfastness to his conviction, howsoever misguided it may be:

The professor turns out to be the only revolutionary who sticks steadfastly to his conviction however lunatic it may be . He believes that any social redemption can occur only if the existing ideas on which the present exploitative system is built are blown up along with the system itself. And it is to that end that he attempts to build the perfect detonator. The effectiveness of which will increase in case of madness and despair setting in among the people...Although Conrad ironizes the Professor's fanatical nihilism and reduces him to "a pest" in the very last line of the novel, he also respects him for the incorruptibility of his conviction — a thing which is a abundantly absent form the other anarchists whom he portrays negatively all through. (23)

Conrad's position, however, turns to be ambiguous that he reveals the fragments of his sympathy towards Professor. Professor is incorruptible and sticks steadfastly to his

conviction in his revolutionary act. The novelist shows him to be the only incorruptible character who seems to be pure in his attitude and behaviour. He teaches the other anarchists not other than revolution. Then he is a 'force' which is a positive remark of the novelist. Thus, Conrad seems to be to some extent sympathetic towards the Professor.

Thus, even the book's most sympathetically portrayed anarchist, the Professor is presented in terms that are half-comic. His thinking is credulous and self-indulgent, shaped by naive positivist belief in science not much different from the faith in progress that animated the Victorian social order he despised. His fate goes unrecorded, but it seems likely that, like the weaker Comrade Ossipon, he will end marching in the gutter. All of these professed revolutionaries are shown as being hopelessly compromised by the same vices and illusions that permeate the society they reject.

Conrad instantly ironizes all the anarchists brutally. He does not at all consider their revolutionary activities to be for any good purpose but rather regards the characters as sham and their activities as futile, worth-less, aimless and out of their control. The attributes all negative connotation to them like savage, wild, rude, curt, pig-headed, ignorant and so on as Edward Said argues the West give to the non-west, Conrad's portrayal of the pictures of the anarchists resembles the portrayal of the British authority in the late nineteenth century. Then, Conrad promotes the voice lack of fellow-feeling towards the Russians shows that he sides towards the British colonialism in the imperial race between Britain and Russia.

Thus, Joseph Conrad, in *The Secret Agent* denounces the anarchist and sees no redemption for them. To him, revolutionary violence is vain, deluded and inherently criminal. Conrad, at the same time also doesn't believe in the fundamental health of the society which the revolutionaries try to disturb. In Conrad's view, social institutions are themselves tainted with criminality. Society is a dim battleground of predatory and fragmentary egos in which self interest and self deception leave nothing untouched. Thus, in the novel, Conrad portrays London where there are "full of men" as a sightless wasteland where human hopes are consumed in the everyday struggle for survival. Conrad leaves no stone unturned to reduce the ironic butt who has made London a wasteland. In other words, Conrad ironizes the anarchists who challenge the colonial system and who want to liberate their nation from such colonialism.

### **Russian's Abetment of Anarchism: Irony in *Under Western Eyes***

Like in *The Secret Agent* Conrad deflates the ironic butt in *Under Western Eyes* Conrad, gives not only the naked pictures of Russian revolutionists what he calls anarchists but also of Russia. In the novel, Conrad employs a language teacher who is but himself a westerner. The narrator uses a very peculiar vocabulary, difficult to penetrate. The idiosyncrasy and initial impenetrability of this vocabulary invite the reader's attention to suggest that careful examination and contemplation of its implications are requisites for understanding its function — both in the narrator's psychology and, with a very different import, in the thematic structure of the novel as a whole.

The narrator in the beginning of the novel confesses that he:

has no comprehension of the Russian character. The illogicality of their attitude, the arbitrariness of their conclusions, the frequency of the exceptional, should present no difficulty to a student of many grammars; but there must be something else in the way, some special human trait — one of those subtle differences that are beyond the ken of mere professor. (4)

In the quote above, it is straightforward mentioned that Russian characters are something ununderstandable Russians are in a sense unexplorable. They have their ownness in everything which a mere professor cannot easily generalize. When the narrator is speaking this a critical reader may immediately remember Edward Said. The narrator admits that Russians have no logic in their attitude and thus conclude anything anyway they like. The farthest he goes to narrate is that they have no special human trait. The narrator is very bewildered by their behaviour and language. The western narrator is much surprised by their extraordinary love of works:

They gather them up; they cherish them, but they don't hoard them in their breasts; on the contrary, they are always ready to pour them out by the hour or by the night with an enthusiasm, a sweeping abundance, with such an aptness of application sometimes that, as in the case of very accomplished parrots, one can't defend oneself from the suspicion that they really understand what they say. (4)

In the above narration, the Russians do not seem quite normal. Whenever they have to speak, they pour down all the words they have collected. The narrator contrasts them with the Westerners who never do so. It is then very difficult to perceive what the Russians say. This blurriness leads one to ask themselves whether what they speak is untreatable for themselves. They have enthusiasms but enthusiasm too much. The narrator then concludes that the words "are the great foes of reality" (3). He adds: "To a teacher of languages, there comes a time when the word is but a place for many words and man appears a mere talking animal not much more wonderful than a parrot" (3).

Conrad, in this context, through the help of his narrator, is reducing the Russians to a parrot and no more than that. The narrator then concludes that because of the reason quoted above, he "couldn't have observed Mr. Razumov or guessed at his reality by the force of insight, much less have imagined him as he was". Since the narrator is narrating the whole novel reading the diary of Razumov, he even thinks "even to invent the mere bald facts of his life would have been utterly beyond my powers" (3).

Kirylo Sidorovitch — Razumov, a Russian fellow, third year's student in philosophy, as the narrator says, was "looked upon as a strong nature — an altogether a trustworthy man". He was considered so because he was a Russian living in Russia "where an opinion may be a legal crime visited by death, meant that he was worthy of

being trusted with forbidden opinions"(6). It means that only such people who are silent and never opine for anything or criticize the government or any institutions are trustworthy:

Mr. Razumov was a tall, well-proportioned, young man, quite unusually dark for a Russian from Central Provinces. His good looks would have been unquestionable if it had not been for peculiar lack of fineness in the features. It was as if a face modelled vigorously in wax (with some approach even to a classical correctness of type) had been lost in the softening of the material. (5)

In the quote above he looked good but his looks were questionable for he peculiarly fitness in the features not only that he was "unusually" dark. The Razumov was not an usual creature but rather of a peculiar type. Razumov's behaviours were also good. "with his young compatriots he took the attitude of an inscrutable listener, a listener of the kind that hears you out intelligently and then just changes the subject" (5). In other works, he listens but can not give his opinions or suggest or correct rather tries to escape by changing the subject.

Razumov also did not have any social relations. He only attended the obligatory lectures regularly and thus was considered as a very promising student. He did not have his own strong point. He could not oppose what he didn't like. He was thus liked "also for his amiability and for his quiet readiness to oblige his comrades even at the cost of personal inconvenience.

Razumov, the brilliant and promising student betrays his fellow Russian — Haldin. When Haldin comes to him after assassinating the minister Mr. de P —, Razumov betrays him and gives him to the police. Haldin who has surrendered himself before Razumov, is betrayed when Razumov in Haldin's request goes to call

Ziemianitch but finds him drunkard and informs the police. Razumov has no sense of fellow citizenship. Russians are not presented as somebody who have strong point and a firm ideology. They are always guilty before the state. Haldin assassinates Mr. de P— and is guilty in the eyes of the state and Razumov also, even after giving Haldin to the police is guilty because the police come and check his room again.

Razumov himself is a very shortsightedness and merely a bookworm. He at first informs the police and later confesses. So, he has but no ideology and strong stand point. Razumov, though he could not make Ziemianitch rescue Haldin he could have at least suggested Haldin about what to do next but he directly goes to the police and informs but again confesses and is in a dilemma. So, he does not seem to have any firm standpoint rather is a coward and a deceiver.

The narrator characterizes Russians by the "illogicality of their attitude", Razumov tries to remain preeminently logical. Like the teacher of languages, Razumov thinks of himself as a "reasonable" man the most "striking quality of the Russians, according to the narrator, is their "extraordinary love of words," which manifests itself in their loquacity, their "ardour of speech," and their enthusiasm for discussion (4). In contrast to his fellow students, who are "exuberant talkers." Razumov is a "listener," primarily, and "a man of few words", he is therefore "credited" with "reserve" and "reserve power" by Haldin and others of his fellow students (5/6). In being "taciturn," Razumov again resembles the language teacher himself, who is "a quiet individual" (5/6). Significantly, Haldin, who is fascinated by Razumov's "reserve" (15), characterizes this aspect of his fellow as "English".

In the whole novel, all the characters are presented as having no position, no good friends and no unity. All act individually. Haldin's closest person is shown Ziemianitch who could rescue him but he himself is drunk and intoxicated and thus

unconscious. Haldin's next so called close friend Razumov is also not a good friend at all because he betrays him. So, in the whole novel, no unity is seen of the Russians.

When Razumov went and met Ziemianitch:

his eyeballs blinked all white in the light once , twice — then the gleam went out. For a moment he sat in the straw with closed eyes with a strange air of weary mediation, then fell over slowly on his side without making the slightest sound. Only the straw rustled a little . Razumov stared wildly, fighting for his breath. After a second or two he heard a light snore. (30)

The narrator then again goes on to describe the Russians. Razumov, after being failed to make Ziemianitch help Haldin, returns but since his guest (Haldin) was in his room, he now was very angry. His plan to win a medal was shattered. He thought to harbour Haldin in his room " was like harbouring a pestitential disease that would not perhaps take your life, but would take from you all that made life worth living — a subtle pest that would convert earth into hell" (32).

Likewise, in describing the airings of Madame de S—and Peter Ivanovitch, the narrator speaks of "Russian simplicity" (125). It seems at first strange that it is this very simplicity which is impossible for the narrator to grasp (104). What he means by "Russian simplicity" is by no means obvious and in the end is actually quite complex.

At its simplest level, "Russian simplicity" indicates the Russian ability to display in intense form the characteristics associated with one pole of the dichotomies that run through the novel— the material and the spiritual, the masculine and the feminine, order and anarchy, emotion and reason, etc. Thus "simplicity" comes to refer to the Russian ability to fasten upon one mode of experience and to experience in that mode, in itself, intensely. In this respect, Madame de S—, who seems to be

pure spirit, is typically Russian. In the Russian character, according to the narrator's vision, the spiritual is for the most part ascendant over the physical, as is the abstract over the concrete and the passionate over the rational. The language teacher states, "It is the peculiarity of Russian natures, that, however strongly engaged in the drama of action, they are still turning their ear to the murmur of abstract ideas" (294). From such a statement, it would seem that, for the narrator, Russia, "the land of spectral ideas and disembodied aspirations," displays simplicity in still another sense it does not seem at all concerned with the disembodiment of its "abstract ideas" and with the possibility that they might be in contradiction to actuality (34).

To the language teacher, then, the Russian character seems to be endowed with a capacity for the experience of extreme states, but these states always appear in pairs, so that one extremity suggests, almost implies, its opposite "simplicity" in this context suggests the capacity to go from one extreme to another naively, rapidly, unself-consciously, and without awareness of possible contradictions. Eventually and from greater distance, the oscillation between extremes appears to be capacity to combine, though not necessarily to reconcile, extremes, and the Russian temperament takes on the character of a series of paradoxes. Thus, Peter Ivanovitch seems to present an intense spirituality in the guise of an equally intense animalism—"naked" spirit and naked" flesh combined in one personality but not merged. To the teacher of languages the whole of the Russian character is highly oxymoronic:

Russian simplicity often marches innocently on the edge of cynicism for some lofty purpose. But it is a vain enterprise for sophisticated Europe to try and understand these things. Considering the air of gravity extending even to the physiognomy of the coachman and the

action of the showy horses, this quaint display might have possessed a mystic significance....(125/126)

The symbolic relationship between Russian autocratic forces and Russian revolutionary forces instances the paradoxical closeness of opposites in the Russian character. The narrator sees Natalia's youth as "given over to a ferocious strife between equally ferocious antagonisms" of autocracy and revolution (319). His description of these forces makes plain that they are only two sides of the same coin both forms operate outside all systems of legality, they are both anarchistic in tendency, and they both rely for their "authority" upon some hieratic, supernatural sanction. Thus, the Chateau Borel reflects the form of the government which it presumably opposes and Nikita can serve simultaneously the Russian government and the Russian revolutionists because he embodies the anarchistic cruelty which both forces share.

Declaring that "Russian simplicity often marches innocently on the edge of cynicism," the language teacher finds in "cynicism" the "key-word" to summarize the moral conditions obtaining in Russia (67). Cynicism, according to the narrator, is characteristic of both "oppression and revolt" (356). But his usage of "cynicism" is rather idiosyncratic, and it is never entirely clear what he takes the primary meaning of his key-word to be certainly his "cynicism" has something to do with a "moral negation" and with nihilism, which might be understood as the result of a distrust of the motives of one's fellows— the most ordinary meaning of *cynicism* (163). Furthermore, "cynicism" as the narrator uses it, is associated with the more classical meaning of "self righteousness," as is shown by the use of the term in connection with the airings of Peter Ivanovitch and Madame de S—, with Natalia's "scorn fro all practical forms of political liberty known to the western world," and with the Russian

detestation of earthly life (104,125/26). Most importantly, cynicism is related to Russian abstractness, mysticism, spirituality, and moral seriousness, it leads to a moral "readiness" to abase oneself in suffering, as the classical meaning of "cynicism" would imply (67). "Cynicism" is another concept which demonstrates the paradoxicality of the Russian temper. Cynicism combines moral abasement, especially in physical suffering, with moral exaltation, spiritual superiority. In fact, cynicism is characterized by abasement for the sake of exaltation. It is for this reason that Russian cynicism takes "freedom look like a form of debauch and the Christian virtues themselves appear actually indecent" (67). In "cynicism" indeed, lies the key to the interdependence of "the oppressors and the oppressed" "the oppressed" need "the oppressors" to provide opportunity to demonstrate through suffering their own moral superiority. In this aspect, at least, of the narrator's delineation of the Russian temperament, he displays an unwonted profundity. "The oppressors and the oppressed are all Russians together; and the world is brought once more face to face with the truth of the saying that the tiger cannot change his stripes nor the leopard his spots" (xxxii).

Though the language teacher never applies the word "cynical" to them and though they lack almost any overt indication of self righteousness, the personalities of both Natalia and her mother bring out two other characteristics of Russian cynicism. First, as Mrs. Haldin shows, the Russian "readiness" for suffering depends upon the capacity to experience deep feeling and to become "passionately" "aware" of one's psychic wounds (318). Such a capacity for feeling, which should characterize the living, becomes, paradoxically, the source of a deadening effect the fluidity of the emotional life turns, self protectively, into stasis, and the person can experience only destructive alternation between excitation and paralysis. Natalia, too, is passionate in

a characteristically Russian way, though she lacks her mother's extremely masochistic sensitivity. At the end of the novel, when she decides to return to Russia, she performs what the narrator describes as "a characteristically Russian exploit in self-suppression" she chooses to suffer, to abase and suppress herself, there is "no longer any Natalia Haldin" left (375). Her combination of a capacity for passionate feeling with a capacity for repression of feeling provides another instance of Russian paradoxicality. Natalia's suppression is characteristically Russian in a second sense, also what she suppresses is her capacity to experience intensely personal emotion. The narrator doubtless disapproves Russian "self-suppression" because, as Natalia's act shows, it involves a sacrifice of his highly valued "individualism" on the altar of collectivism, not because it involves the suppression of emotion.

Several times the narrator characterizes himself as "the dense westerner" (112). The density applies not only to himself but also, he implies, to all westerners when they are confronted with a mode of experience essentially Russian. The word dense then, expresses the failure of the west to comprehend the East. The adjective bears a curious significance western density is linked with Western materialism the narrator speaks of both characteristics in the same breath. It is as if the Westerner, by being materialistic, has become matter itself — literally dense and impenetrable, not susceptible to impression by the "spirit" of the Russian, which he defines as spirituality itself.

If, in confrontation with the Russian, the westerner seems to the language teacher to become substantial, the Russian, in confrontation with the Westerner, seems to become insubstantial, to be deprived of the concrete, materialistic aspect which is, for the narrator, the primary criterion of actuality. Consequently the Russian seems to him to be unreal. The "gruesome associations" of the "bombs and gallows" involved in

Haldin's assassination of de P—and his subsequent execution seem to take on "a lurid, Russian colouring" which is "not quite decent" and hardly "real" (112). Since the narrator conceives the artistic, which is the product of the imagination, to be the opposite of the real, it is natural that he should describe the typically Russian in terms of an artistic and primarily theatrical metaphor—as "childish, crude inventions for the theatre or a novel," "something theatrical and morbidly affected," a "public play" of "words and gestures" (109,110,338/49). What is merely theatrical lacks the status of the factual, which the language teacher values so highly, the Russian does not have to be taken seriously and therefore cannot significantly threaten him.

For the language teacher the Russian appears as an incongruity in his own life, and his contact with it has the character of a "night-marish" experience similar to Razumov's sense of absurd involvement in diabolical plots (110). The player upon the metaphoric stage of the Russian seems to the narrator a Shakespearean shadow issuing out of the cruel mist of Russian problems, "Whenever two Russians come together, the shadow of autocracy is with them, tinging their thoughts, their views, their most intimate feelings, their private life, their public utterances—haunting the secret of their silences" (107).

If the language teacher perceives the Russian as spiritual, mystical, abstract and therefore not real, it is largely because he himself mysticizes the Russian like its insubstantiality and its theatricality, the shadowiness of the Russian is the product of the narrator's effort to reduce it to nonexistence.

By the expression "shadow," the narrator subtly indicates that the Russian seems to him not only unreal but also inscrutable. Shadowy mysticism results from the Russian "propensity of lifting every problem from the plane of the understandable" (104). For this reason, the teacher of languages is unable, he often

claims, to grasp fully and precisely what Natalia says. The "shadow" of Russia which falls upon her words seems to create a corresponding emanation, which issues from her words and obscures them "it may be that she thought I understood her much better than I was able to do. The most precise of her sayings seemed always to me to have enigmatical prolongations vanishing somewhere beyond my reach" (118).

Raxumov bitterly resents Haldin's interruption of his academic work, for he unsettles his already tenuous identity,. Ruzumov is a fatherless child, unrecognized by his father. Prince K, who has disavowed paternity: others had fathers, mothers brothers, relations connections to move heaven and earth on their behalf— he had no one. The anarchist Haldin however, has a claim to a father, to a family, to a home, to land and hence to Russia, as opposed to Razumov who has no domestic tradition. Moreover, Razumov comments, Haldin has inherited a revolutionary inspiration together with a resemblance from an uncle.

Haldin's anarchism, strangely nationalist and organicist, excludes Razumov: its touchstone is the Russian soul, which is born not made and which has an organic link to the land. He cannot participate in Haldin's romantic notions of Russia: while Haldin celebrates Ziemanitch the sled driver anarchist sympathizer and his escape assistant as the bright Russian soul, Razumov sees only a drunken peasant. Lacking organic links to Russian-ness, he holds onto his fantasized prize as though it was his patrimony, a patrimony of which Haldin robs him! While Haldin imagines himself embraced by mother Russia as her revolutionary martyr, for Razumov, mother Russia is enshrouded, unresponsive, denying—the ground of Russia is frozen rather than yielding to him: Razumov stamped his foot— and under the soft carpet of snow felt the hard ground of Russia, inanimate cold, inert, like a sullen and tragic mother hiding her face under a winding sheet — his native soil! — his very own— without a

fireside, without a hearth. Thus, his feverish ranting against Haldin flows from his resentment against Haldin's confident attachment to mother Russia, to a father and family and to a hearth; searching for a way to deny Haldin's Russian-ness, he labels him un-Russian: a mongrel. Haldin is a slave to foreign ideas while he, Razumov, thinks like a faithful Russian from a newer, purer Russia.

Instead of celebrating an organic connection to Russian-ness, Razumov will identify with the state. After beating Ziemanitch, Razumov thinks with relish: Ah the stick, the stick, the stern hand longing for the power to hurt and destroy. He counters the organicist nationalism and anarchism of Haldin with an autocratic vision of a state with a strong leader—a stern father rather than Mother Russia: The grace entered into Razumov. He believed now in the man who would come at the appointed time. In effect, Razumov initially desires an encounter and bond with General T, a desire that is only met by the quiet bureaucrat, Mikulin. Mikulin, the avatar of those who will replace the General Ts in the twentieth century, taps into the rage of the unrecognized thinking reed, and in his urge to be understood, Razumov heeds the barely articulated call of Mikulin.

Most of the exchange with Mikulin involves Razumov's attempts to be understood as rational, intellectual, and patriotic, a thinking person in the midst of chaos and ignorance. Thus, his transference to Mikulin excites discourse; his urge to clarify his "intellectual superiority" induces him to denounce the anarchists as irrational, intellectual inferiors and mongrels (89). In response to Mikulin's comment, "You are angry [...] Is that reasonable?"—a question that disciplines as it provokes the very response it chastises—Razumov uncontrollably erupts:

I am reasonable. I am even —permit to say—a thinker, though to be sure, this name nowadays seems to be the monopoly of hawkers of

revolutionary wares, the slaves of some French or German thought—  
devil knows what foreign nations. But I am not an intellectual mongrel.  
I think like a Russian. I think faithfully—and I take the liberty to call  
myself a thinker. It is not a forbidden word, as far as I know. (89/90)

Razumov defines himself against the anarchists. He is "reasonable" while they are "irrational" and a true Russian—a pure thinker— while they are "mongrels" and sane while they are insane (89/90). He says to Haldin, " I hated him simply because I am sane" (95). His seemingly unbidden condemnations of the anarchists will lead to spying mission to Geneva as a way of making himself understood. After all, Razumov winds up in Geneva in part as an answer to Mikulin's question to Razumov (who tells him that he must "retire") at the end of the first interview and Part One of the novel: "Where to?"(99).

The collapsing of the Russian and the western is furthered by the language teacher's revelation— mad, tellingly, to Razumov alone—that he was born in St Petersburg, spent the first nine years of his life there, and acquired the Russian language as a child (187). Thus, the preeminently Western, as represented by the teacher of languages, is shown to be natively Russian. His parents, the narrator states, were "settled in St Petersburg". Their nationality is not specified, the validity of the narrator's insistence on the "terrible obstacle" of "difference of nationality" is called into serious doubt (116,187). That the language teacher does not even remember St Petersburg confirms the suspected function of Russianness, the Russian is the repressed aspect of his own psyche. Thus, the language teacher, Conrad implies, has achieved security, order, and stability, however tenuous, at the expense of suppressing that part of himself— the passions of the "spirit"—which would allow him a full experience of life Deprived of vitality though he might be, the teacher of languages is

still susceptible to the appeal of the Russian in himself, he is drawn to understand it and, through Razumov, to recover it. But his civilized defenses are too strong to open himself completely to the burden of Russian experience would threaten the entire structure of his personality. However limited his options, Razmov tries to adjust himself to his initiation into the demonism of the "Russian". The language teacher cannot. Even at the end of the novel, there is no evidence of change in his character. His failure to comprehend the Russian is a tragic one it indicates that he cannot understand—much less recover—himself.

Through the ironic opposition of the Western and the Russian in the narrator's personality, *Under Western Eyes* points, to the conclusion that civilization originates in and continually depends upon repression. The viewpoint of the novel is almost a despairing one in that the only terms it allows are those of the choice between the Russian and the Western—the blatantly destructive nightmare experience of Razumov or the banal existence of the language teacher. But by the end of novel, through the narrator especially, the Russian and the Western (no longer indicating particular geographic regions but circumscribing states of human consciousness) are implicitly established as aspects or potentials ever present in the psychology of the reader. The necessity and just possibly the capacity to reconcile them lies with the reader— who, warned of the dangers of both experiential forms, though encompassed by the Western one, can perhaps change more readily than the language teacher and with less destructive consequences than Razumov. Under the reader's "Western eyes" lie both Russia and the West.

## Conclusion

In both *The Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes*, Conrad ironizes Russians in one way or the other. Russians are by no means good people who can neither behave properly, nor speak meaningful nor lead a civilized life as the westerners do. Conrad ironizes Russians in such a way that whatever the Russians do that is nothing but meaningless and futile and moreover the Russians can no longer be the useful human beings who can benefit others but rather, they are the terrorists/ anarchists. These people neither build their homes nor do they preserve the other houses already built.

In *The Secret Agent*, Conrad depicts all the characters only anarchists who never have any goal in their lives, rather they are the hypocrites who pretend to be struggling for the sake of their nation but in reality, they neither fight for their country, nor do they seem to have any concrete aim in doing so. As Conrad presents, Adolf Verloc, Inspector Heat, Michaelis, Vladimir, Comrade Ossipon, Professor, Karl Yundt etc. are nobody but the slur in Russia. Conrad severely reduces them to even insects and pests who always cause harm to others. Conrad debunks these anarchists since they chant revolutionary slogans but are, actually, lazy to work for social mobility. The anarchists are, rather, immoral, inhumane, greedy, hostile, pessimistic and completely irresponsible to mankind.

In the same way, Conrad, ironizes the Russians and Russia as a whole in *Under Western Eyes*. Russia is such a place where only silence is praised and not logic and intellectuality. Russians, in the same way, are never good people who behave in a proper way, rather they are vague, quite unexplorable, uncivilized, barbaric and cynical. The Russians are what the Westerners are not. Neither the Russian's language is clear nor is their aim. Thus, Russians are but only terror

provoking who have nothing but darkness in their minds and hearts. Russians are the influenza and the pests who only ruin others.

Conrad, however, in ironizing the Russians, is not free from his prejudices. It is the Russians who cannot put up with the colonial rules in their country, who are ironized. Conrad can't recognize their deeds any longer good because they oppose and threaten the colonial rules. It is Russians who are not the Westerners, rather Orientals who are ironized in both the novels—*The Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes*.

Conrad actually is Poland born and later migrated to Britain. Conrad does not at all seem positive towards his neighbouring country Russia, rather, Russia is the country which, in his views, most probably, hinders Poland from being developed. Russia, again, is the country, which opposes British colonial rule in its land. Then Conrad ironizes nobody but those who oppose the British colonial system.

Conrad's stereotypical representation of the revolutionaries who, as the contextual background to the novels makes clear, have gathered from the colony to take on the colonizer. His stereotypic representation and ironic dismissal of the activists as morally bankrupt can not then, just be taken at their textual face. That Conrad does not project a single anarchist as a complex psychological character but as a mere type can not be divorced from the attempt by the British Imperial Establishment to give no voice to the activists against the imperial rule and instead project them as anarchists in league with the much-maligned Russians. Despite all the irony obtaining in Machaelis's speech, its foregrounding of economic forces controlling human history throws a flood of light on the politics of imperialism and modernism in the text in a way that at the same time betrays Conrad's own position vis-à-vis imperialism. Economic necessity,. The prime reason for the colonization of the world, has plunged Europe in the rivalry for imperial supremacy.

The rivalry, in turn, has given rise to a spurt of spying activities, which have started to corrode the social and moral basis of the administrative center of the imperialized world, rendering London as a waste land beyond redemption. The moral degradation of London is symptomatic of the weakening of the imperial grip of Britain owing to the inroads made against it by the revolutionaries. Such revolutionaries, who are but called the anarchists, thus never identify themselves as what they have been called by the governments.

Conrad on the one hand severely ironizes espionage as a foul and dirty game and on the other hand, ironizes the Orientals i.e. Russians because, they have damaged England both socially and politically. Conrad thus, foregrounds the challenge to the imperial rule through a trenchantly ironic representation because it subverts the British control to keep its society and the imperial rule intact. Thus, the politics of Conrad's ironic reduction of espionage as a dirty game covertly aligns him with the colonizer, and reinforces his avowed imperialistic stance.

Since Conrad aligns himself with the colonizer, needless and obvious to say, he sides himself with the Occidentals and denounces the Orientals. To borrow Edward Said's words, he sees the Orientals only barbaric, uncivilized, rude, unexplorable and wild and so forth. Conrad neither understands the language of the Russians, nor does he recognize their works meaningful. Whatever the Orientals do and speak they are all uncivilized and mean nothing to Conrad.

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