

A STYLISTIC STUDY OF THE LANGUAGE

OF JOSEPH CONRAD'S NOVELS.

by

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ABSTRACT

In this pragmatic approach to Conrad's style emphasis is placed as much on the way Conrad uses certain stylistic features as on the reasons behind his "idiolectal" use of language. That is because I take stylistics to be the means of bringing about the much-needed rapprochement between linguistics and literary criticism. With this in mind, my main interest is in the permanent and non-casual features of Conrad's style, though there may be incidental comments regarding other aspects.

The study falls into ten chapters. Chapter I surveys some of the theories of style-study from the ancients to the present time. It also lays down the lines along which my pragmatic approach to Conrad's style is conducted.

Chapter II discusses the three elements making up Conrad's linguistic background, emphasising, in the process, the importance of the English linguistic and literary tradition on his style.

Chapters III, IV and V deal with speech in Conrad. Chapter III sees punctuation mainly as an aid towards a more realistic transcription of speech. Chapter IV examines the reasons behind the limited range of the varieties of English in Conrad, while Chapter V treats of Conrad's methods of reporting fictional speech.

Chapters VI, VII, VIII and IX deal with Conrad's use of language for purposes of evocation and evasion. Chapter VI is concerned with Conrad's modifiers as a means of evocation; Chapter VII sees Conrad's comparisons as agents of uncertainty or obfuscation; Chapter IX shows the verb phrase to partake of both functions, while Chapter VIII examines Conrad's connectives and their impact on the movement and tempo of his prose.

Chapter X points out the implications of the study and highlights those specific fields of enquiry where more research is needed in so far as Conrad's style is concerned.

The assumption underlying the investigation that follows is that Conrad's stylistic strategy is in keeping with his artistic credo as propounded in the Preface to The Nigger, and elsewhere, which is, "by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel - it is, before all, to make you see."

(N.N. p. x )

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

## CONRAD : FICTION

A.F.	<u>Almayer's Folly</u>
A.G.	<u>The Arrow of Gold</u>
C.	<u>Chance</u>
L.J.	<u>Lord Jim</u>
M.S.	<u>The Mirror of the Sea</u>
N.	<u>Nostramo</u>
N.L.L.	<u>Notes on Life and Letters</u>
N.N.	<u>The Nigger of the "Narcissus"</u>
O.I.	<u>An Outcast of the Islands</u>
P.R.	<u>A Personal Record</u>
R.	<u>The Rescue</u>
R.	<u>The Rover</u>
S.A.	<u>The Secret Agent</u>
T.U.	<u>Tales of Unrest</u> ("The Idiots"; An Outpost of Progress"; "The Lagoon"; "Karain"; "The Return").
U.W.E.	<u>Under Western Eyes</u>
V.	<u>Victory</u>

Reference in the above case is to The Works of Joseph Conrad  
The Uniform Edition, London and Toronto: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1923 - 8.

## CONRAD : LETTERS

L.B.	<u>Letters to William Blackwood and David Meldrum</u> , ed. W. Blackburn, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1958
L.C.	<u>Letters from Conrad</u> , ed. Edward Garnett, London : 1928.
L.C.G.	<u>Letters to Cunningham Graham</u> , ed. Watts, C.T. London : Cambridge U.P., 1969.

## OTHERS

L.L.	Aubry, J., <u>Conrad : Life and Letters</u> 2 volumes, London : Heinemann, 1927.
<u>The Quirk Grammar</u>	Quirk et al., <u>A Grammar of Contemporary English</u> , 4th edn., London : Longman, 1974.

## Chapter I

STYLISTICS BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

This chapter proposes to examine the tenets of some of the various schools of stylistic analysis that have come into being over the past fifty years. It also aims at elaborating what might be termed a workable framework for the stylistic investigation of prose fiction. Such an endeavour would not be convincing without a brief review of the way style-study was conducted long before the emergence of this twentieth-century discipline we call stylistics.

I should make it clear, however, that no attempt will be made to give a complete definition of style. Nor do I mean to get involved in the seemingly never-ceasing polemic about the subtle nuances that distinguish one style from another. For one thing, such an attempt would deflect attention from the main purpose of this study. For another, all similar attempts at a watertight definition of the term tend, in the final analysis, to leave the reader with the uneasy impression that this cannot be the last word on the subject.

Examples that help bear out this last point of my argument are not hard to find. About two thousand years ago, the Roman poet, Virgil, could distinguish between three styles: gravis stylus, humilis stylus and mediocrus stylus. This classification of style into "grand, middle and plain" soon proved too arbitrary to be convincing. Professor Leech questions the validity of the centuries-old assumption when he observes: "The idea that there are just three literary styles seems to have no justification apart from the sanction of tradition. Why should there be three, rather than four, or five, or an unlimited number?" (1) Such criticism, however, cannot obscure the fact that, despite its

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(1) Leech, 1969 : 16 - 17 :



arbitrary nature, this theory did exercise an unmistakable impact on succeeding generations of rhetoricians.

Nor can it be said that such attacks (of which Leech's is but a recent example) have prevented modern scholars from attempting to classify, if not define, style. Middleton Murry, for one, differentiated between "Style, as personal idiosyncrasy; Style, as technique of exposition, Style, as the highest achievement of literature."

(1) Still, Murry, who appears to have been aware of the limitations of his theory, refused to give a definition in black and white of the term in the belief that,

A discussion of the word style, if it were pursued with only a fraction of the rigour of a scientific investigation, would inevitably cover the whole of literary aesthetics and the theory of criticism. Six books would not suffice for the attempt. (2)

But to say that style is hard to define is something totally different from the outright denunciation of any science of style that one finds in books like Gray's Style: The Problem and its Solution. For the book ends on a note of sheer despair, with the writer declaring that "there will be no new science of style", since the whole attempt at establishing such a science (Gray is here referring to the various schools of stylistic analysis) "embodies a simple, logical error that renders it inoperable". (3) Still, the fact that, as a science, stylistics is still in the making does not give Gray the right to deny its existence. Stylistics is not primarily concerned with the definition of terms that have acquired time-honoured, if somewhat precarious, acceptance. It aims rather at the scientific investigation of the different varieties of language. Style is an established fact, and books like Crystal and Davy's (4) give us a convincing analysis of some of the varieties of English.

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(1) Murry, 1922 : 8

(2) Ibid., pp. 3 - 4

(3) Gray, 1969 : 108

(4) Crystal and Davy, 1974

Although stylistics as a scientific discipline is a twentieth-century phenomenon (1), the term itself, as Professor Ullmann tells us, dates back to the early nineteenth-century when it was first attested in German and then in English and French somewhat later on. (2) Hence it could be argued that a study of this science should concern itself with the stylistic theories of the nineteenth century onwards. Still, stylistics studies, among other things, the language habits of one person, or those "shared by a group of people at one time, or over a period of time". (3) In other words, it is concerned with the mode of writing peculiar to a certain writer, a given age, or even a particular genre. As such, it bears a striking affinity to the ancient art of rhetoric which was both an art of literary expression and a method of criticising the creative products of individual writers; so much so indeed that it can be argued that stylistics is the modern art of scientific rhetoric. Consequently, an attempt to place this science in its historical perspective helps to underline the similarity between the new science in its twentieth-century garb and that argumentative art of the ancients. It will also throw into relief the discrepancies between the art that was and the science that is now in the making.

One of the earliest treatises on style is Aristotle's Rhetoric, a book regarded for hundreds of years as the locus classicus on the art of oratory and good writing. Aristotle detected a remarkable resemblance between Rhetoric and Dialectic; the function of Rhetoric being "not to persuade, but to discover the available means of persuasion in each case." (4) Here Aristotle distinguishes between the "persuasive" and the "apparent persuasive". It is this power of discerning the "persuasive"

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(1) Lodge, 1966 : 53, believes stylistics to be largely a "continental phenomenon", and takes Spitzer to be the father of the "New Stylistics".

(2) Ullmann, 1957 : 3 f

(3) Crystal and Davy, 1974 : 10

(4) Aristotle, 1909 : 5



with regard to any given subject that makes him describe Rhetoric "as having the quality of Art in reference to no special or definite class of subjects." (1) He is further of the opinion that, like Dialectic, Rhetoric is useful because it is enlisted in the service of truth and justice. It is corrective, instructive, suggestive and defensive. (2)

Like all the ancients, Aristotle regarded man as a creature faced by a world whose realities antedate man's existence on earth. To understand this world, both thought and language have to be brought into play. Now, since thought is associated with Dialectic, or the art of reasoning, and language being the main concern of Rhetoric, or "the faculty of discerning in every case the available means of persuasion" (3), it follows that Rhetoric must be looked upon as the counterpart of Dialectic. Co-operation between the two helps man understand the superior realities of his world.

The book falls into three parts. Book I tackles rhetoric from the point of view of the speaker himself who has to be "a man who can reason; who can analyse the various types of Character and the Virtues, and thirdly, the Emotions - the nature and quality of each emotion, the sources and modes of its production." (4) Aristotle then proceeds to instruct the speaker as to how he should differentiate and effectively use the various proofs at his disposal. These proofs he divides into two classes: "Enthymemes and Examples", which correspond to the "Syllogism and Induction" of Dialectic respectively. (5)

Book II, on the other hand, is concerned with rhetoric from the point of view of the audience. For Aristotle believes that

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(1) Ibid.  
 (2) Ibid., pp. 4 - 5.  
 (3) Ibid.  
 (4) Ibid., pp. 6 - 7  
 (5) Ibid.



... since Rhetoric has a view to judgment, for, both in debates and in lawsuits, there is judging, the speaker must not only see that the speech shall prove its point, or persuade, but must also develop a (sic) certain character in himself and in the judge, as it matters much for persuasiveness, - most of all in debate, but secondarily in lawsuits too - that the speaker should appear a certain sort of person, and that the judges should conceive him to be disposed towards them in a certain way; - further, that the judges themselves should be in a certain mood. (1)

I have quoted this passage at length because it seems to constitute the core of the whole book. To gain his point, the speaker should "humour" his judges by all the available means. Thus, if one's opponent tries to enlist the sympathy of the judges, it will be one's duty to try to prove to them that his case is one of those cases of "misfortune and disaster, or of non-success, we are to rejoice, or feel no pain (at)." In this way, says Aristotle,

... if our speech bring the judges into these frames of mind, while it proves that those who claim pity, and the things for which they claim it, deserve no pity, but the reverse, it will be impossible to feel pity. (2)

It is Book III, however, that is of direct relevance to this study. Here Aristotle treats of Diction or style in the modern sense of the word. In his opinion, "it is not enough to know what we are to say; - we must say it in the right way:- this contributes much toward determining the character of the speech." (3) What makes the book more interesting for us is that Aristotle is concerned here with the diction of prose, since "The other style has been treated in the Poetics." (4)

According to Aristotle, Diction has to be clear and appropriate. By clearness he means that our language should effectively "express our meaning". By appropriateness, he means that our diction "ought to be neither low nor too dignified, but

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(1) Ibid., p.68

(2) Ibid., p. 94

(3) Ibid., p. 145

(4) Ibid., p. 147

suitable to the subject." (1) Aristotle then proceeds to lay down the precepts that speakers should observe. Thus, "Strange words, compound words, words coined for the occasion, should be used sparingly and rarely." We should also bear in mind that "Accepted terms, proper terms and metaphors, are alone available for the diction of prose." (2) Because of the paucity of the emotive forces at the disposal of prose, it follows that "in prose the greater pains ought to be taken about metaphor". (3) These metaphors, however, should be neither obscure nor too far-fetched.

Aristotle goes on prescribing for the speaker the "stylistic devices", so to speak, by means of which he can make his speech as convincingly persuasive as possible. Time and time again, he warns the speaker against excessive use of compound words, archaic phrases, inordinate epithets or inappropriate metaphors and similes which tend to make one's style too "frigid". (4)

As to the conditions of prose style, these are the proper use of connecting particles, use of special and not general terms, avoidance of ambiguity, observance of gender and number. (5) Style should also be dignified, proper and rhythmical. (6) Rhythm, however, does not mean metre, "for then it (prose) will be poetry." (7) Besides, prose style can be described as being either "running" or "compact". Of the two, Aristotle prefers the latter which is made up of periods (i.e. sentences with beginning and end), since this renders it easier to grasp, whereas the former's "indefiniteness" renders it quite "unpleasing". (8) The rest of the book deals with the classification of style and rhetorical devices like metaphor, simile and hyperbole.

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(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid., p. 148

(3) Ibid., p. 149

(4) Ibid., pp. 152 - 6

(5) Ibid., p. 156 - 8

(6) Ibid., pp. 161 - 3

(7) Ibid.

(8) Ibid., pp. 163 - 4



According to Aristotle, "each branch of Rhetoric has its fitting style." He distinguishes between the literary style of written composition and the "agonistic" style peculiar to debates. This last is further subdivided into "the parliamentary and the forensic style", the former being more emotional than the latter which is mainly ethical in nature. (1) This leaves us with a three-dimensional division of style into literary, parliamentary and forensic.

What should be noted is that Aristotle's book, which was first conceived as an anthology of counsels for litigants, came to be regarded as the thesaurus of precepts, as well as the norm against which all writing should be measured. Together with Cicero's De Oratore and Quintilian's Institutio Oratoria, the Rhetoric continued for centuries to be regarded as the main source and end of oratory.

Running parallel with that notion of good writing in prose was that other notion of literary genres developed by Aristotle in the Poetics, where each poetic creation is relegated to a certain genre with specific peculiarities. A blending of the two arts culminated in what is best known as the "Virgilian Wheel" with its ternary division of style into gravis, humilis and mediocrus. Latin scholars transmitted the theory in its entirety to the Middle Ages, whence it was handed down to the Renaissance, and from thence it has continued to exercise its unmistakable impact on succeeding generations of both rhetoricians and stylisticians. (2)

To grasp the extent of this impact and assess the degree of the contribution made by the ancients to modern stylistic

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(1) Ibid., pp. 176 - 8

(2) Cf. Dixon, 1971

theories, we have to differentiate between their ternary division of style and their classification of the "graces of style" into tropes, each of which has its distinctive linguistic and functional characteristics.

It is true that the three-dimensional concept of style no longer enjoys the prestige and esteem it had, say, two or three centuries ago; still, as a theory of style, its historical importance is quite tangible. Granted that it has its imperfections, but this is something that applies to the most modern of stylistic theories. Besides, the ancients' concern with spoken language is paralleled nowadays by modern stylists' growing interest in it. Moreover, when an eminent scholar like Dr. Fowler highlights the importance of the "interpersonal dimension of language", and stresses the "expressive" and "persuasive" nature of literary works, he tacitly acknowledges his indebtedness to the ancient theory of style. (1)

On the other hand, the ancient system of tropology has had a more striking impact on theories of style down to the present time. In his informative Figures III, Gérard Genette gives us a succinct account of the influence of Aristotle's Rhetoric on eighteenth-century rhetoricians like Dumarsais and Fontanier. Dumarsais made a "chaotic and somewhat redundant list" of some eighteen tropes, which he ultimately based on the three major associative principles of similarity, contiguity and opposition; the three major tropes being metaphor, synecdoche and metonymy, as well as irony. Later on, Fontanier, whom Genette regards as the founder of the Neo-Rhetoric, excluded irony from the class of major tropes, while stressing the paramount importance of metaphor and metonymy and the two principles of similarity and contiguity. (2)

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(1) Fowler, 1977 : 42.

(2) Genette, 1972 : 21 - 7.



Of the modern stylisticians directly influenced by the ancient theory of tropes, one may cite the case of Roman Jakobson, who, in the nineteen fifties, came out with his theory about "The Metaphoric and Metonymic Poles". (1) According to Jakobson, "the principle of similarity underlies poetry", while prose "is forwarded essentially by contiguity. Thus, for poetry, metaphor, and for prose, metonymy is the line of least resistance and, consequently, the study of poetical tropes is directed chiefly toward metaphor." (2) Another stylistician, Professor Leech, devotes more than one third of a book to a detailed investigation of the importance and relevance of tropes in the stylistic analysis of both poetry and prose. (3) And quite recently, a group of French scholars would go so far as to say: "la rhétorique apparaît aujourd'hui non seulement comme une science d'avenir, mais encore comme une science à la mode, aux confins du structuralisme, de la nouvelle critique et de la sémiologie." (4)

This revival of interest in the art of rhetoric should not blind us to the reasons that laid it open to attack and adverse criticism, especially in the eighteenth century. The theory was found wanting on account of its teleological, dogmatic and normative nature. (5) Aristotle, for instance, does not exclude the possibility of resorting to spurious "enthymemes" or crude figures of speech so long as this leads to the persuasion of the audience. Still, by making the end justify the means, Aristotle was apparently reckoning without the refined sensibilities of subsequent generations of rhetoricians. On the other hand, Aristotle's "dogmatism"

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(1) Jakobson and Halle, 1956 : 76 - 82

(2) Ibid.

(3) Leech, 1969 : 131 - 82

(4) Dubois et al., 1970 : 8.

(5) Dixon, 1971 : 64 - 70 ; Guiraud , 1969 : 11-37

shows up in the way he fills his injunctions to prospective speakers or writers with lexical items such as must and should. Besides, the examples he quotes from orators and poets in the course of his study are meant to serve as a norm from which no deviation is tolerated.

The most memorable attack on the time-honoured theory of style came from the French writer Buffon. It is to Buffon's credit that he was the first to give utterance to a theory of style that ran counter to the centuries-old tenets of the ancients. One should not, however, overestimate the value of his theory. Nor should one confuse it with Spitzer's quest for "l'etymon spirituel", for, as will soon be made clear, nothing was farther from Buffon's thoughts.

Buffon's "Discours" sur le Style" delivered to the French Royal Academy of Science in August 1753 is remarkable for the way it extols reason at the expense of passions or affections, as well as for the precedence it gives to thought over form. (1) Buffon begins his "Discours" by making it clear that he is interested in written eloquence and not in spoken eloquence in the manner of Aristotle. He distinguishes between "Talent" and "acquired genius". True eloquence, however, is the direct result of the interplay of these two faculties: "La véritable éloquence suppose l'exercice du génie et la culture de l'esprit." (2) He then attacks the Aristotelian concept of eloquence as a means of effecting the desired persuasion. To Buffon, this talent of oral eloquence is something common to all those whose passions are too strong, the vocal bands too supple and the imagination

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(1) Buffon, 1912 : 463 - 84

(2) Ibid., p. 464 - 5



too prompt. Here, however,

C'est le corps qui parle au corps; tous les mouvements, tous les signes concourent et servent également. Que faut-il pour émouvoir la multitude et l'entraîner? que faut-il pour ébranler la plupart même des autres hommes, et les persuader? Un ton véhément, et patétique, des gestes expressifs et fréquents, des paroles rapides et sonnantes. (1)

Still, true eloquence is not a matter of striking the ears with pompous words; nor is it a question of catching the eye with picturesque idioms, because what one should do is "agir sur l'âme et toucher le coeur en parlant à l'esprit." (2)

Buffon goes on to say that style is the order one imposes on one's thoughts, as well as the way one marshals them. Here Buffon advocates a rigorous method of linking ideas with one another, differentiating in the meantime between principal ideas and subsidiary or intermediary ones. This stringing-of-ideas process makes his editor wonder whether such a mathematical method would not, if applied to literature, divest it of its grace and elegance leaving in its place an exactitude which is more often than not "dogmatique et pesante". (3)

Still, Buffon believes that without this ordering of one's thoughts a writer's style may seem to be eye-catching or fascinating, but, on close scrutiny, the author's lack of this . . . . . knack for organisation is laid bare. It is by meditating the wisdom of God in the creation, by the solemn contemplation of the workings of nature, as well as by trying to imitate the perfections of nature through a wise stringing of its sublime realities that man can form a coherent whole of all this, a whole which is the offspring of reflection. And it is through that that "il établira

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(1) Ibid., p. 465

(2) Ibid., p. 466

(3) Ibid., p. 466 f.

sur des fondements inébranlables des monuments immortels." (1)

It is only when one has thought one's ideas out, put them in order and made a coherent plan of what is to be said that one can take up one's pen to write.

Buffon then proceeds to warn us against the excessive use of figurative language "traits saillants" such as metaphors, similes or hyperboles. This he does in a way highly reminiscent of Aristotle. Buffon, however, constantly stresses the importance of reason, "pour bien écrire, il faut donc posséder pleinement son sujet; il faut y réfléchir assez pour voir clairement l'ordre de ses pensées, et en former une suite, une chaîne continue." (2) He further believes that only well-written works of art can hope to outlive their age. Great achievements, noble deeds, theories of knowledge or striking discoveries cannot make a style outlive its age, because these are all things "hors de l'homme", whereas "le style est l'homme même." By this oft-quoted, and more often than not deliberately distorted, last phrase Buffon apparently meant that style reveals the proper nature of the intelligence that produces it. (3) In other words, whereas the same thoughts or ideas might occur to more than one writer, it is the form a writer gives to his thoughts that really distinguishes him from others.

It will not be hard for a critical reader to note the points of similarity between Buffon and his great predecessor, Aristotle. Both men advocate the necessity for audience-persuasion and the wise organisation of one's thoughts. But whereas Aristotle's call for persuasion does not discriminate between the means used, Buffon seems to believe that only sincere and morally acceptable means of persuasion can touch the soul of his reader and establish

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(1) Ibid., p. 471

(2) Ibid., pp. 475 - 6

(3) Ibid., p. 480



this direct intercourse with his inner spirit. Again, while Aristotle believes the principle of organisation to mean the "arrangement" of one's speech in terms of beginning, middle and end, Buffon stands for a more rigorous method based on the logical connection between the various constituents of one's thoughts.

Aristotle and Buffon, however, appear to be worlds apart in so far as Buffon's identification of style and man implies the necessity of stylistic diversity and variety, something that runs counter to Aristotle's belief in the necessity of maintaining a very limited and fixed number of styles. Buffon, that is, does not suggest to the prospective writer what style he has to model his own on, as does Aristotle both in the Rhetoric and the Poetics. Instead, Buffon gives the writer the freedom to write in the way best expressive of his individuality as a man with distinctive physical and mental characteristics.

Having reached this point in my discussion, the reader will not find it hard to guess at what went wrong in Buffon's seemingly commendable theory of style. It was his terminology that ultimately let him down. When Buffon attacked the ancients' principle of persuasion on the grounds that "il ne suffit pas de frapper l'oreille et d'occuper les yeux; il faut agir sur l'âme et toucher le coeur en parlant à l'esprit", he introduced terms like "soul" and "spirit" to a generation that lacked the insight and perceptiveness of men like Freud and Jung who could tell them what Buffon really meant by such terms. Again, when Buffon identified man with style in his famous phrase, there was no one to tell his subsequent generations of followers that "man" is not simply the sum total of some biographical facts that might have little or no bearing on his style. It was Buffon's fault that he identified style with man at a time when man himself was a riddle whose innermost recesses lay closed to scientific investigation.

Instead of concentrating on the psychology of man, critics laid the whole emphasis on his social or ethnic background in their misguided attempt to relate 'le style' to 'l'homme'. And thus it was that from the time Buffon published his "Discours," to the time Bally published his Traité de Stylistique Française, the history of style-study continued to be as tautological as ever, and theories of genre and the ternary division of style into "grand, middle and plain" remained to the fore.

In 1902 Charles Bally published his Traité, a book which laid the foundations of the first school of scientific stylistics. Bally's main thesis is based on the assumption that all traditional study of language is bound to be "automatic, analytical and historical". (1). This is the negative aspect of his Traité. The positive aspect is based on the principle that a study of a given language cannot be merely the observation of the relationships existing between the various linguistic symbols, but also those which unite speech "parole" to thought "pensée". Language study has its psychological side in so far as it is based on the observation of what happens to the speaker at the moment of expressing his thoughts in words. Still, such a study is of a much more linguistic than psychological nature, since it adverts us to the expressive form of the speaker's thoughts rather than to the thinking process underlying his expressions.

Professor Ullmann tells us that Bally conceived of stylistics as "the study of the emotive resources of language", and that later on this theory gave place to the more comprehensive theory of expressiveness of language (2). Bally himself calls it, for reasons that will soon be pointed out, "la stilistique individuelle", while critics like Guiraud prefer to call it the first school of

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(1) Bally, 1921 : 2

(2) Ullmann, 1957 : 5-6



"descriptive stylistics", since it was the first genuine attempt to employ scientific methods in its description of language in use. (1)

Bally's indebtedness to his teacher, the Swiss linguist Saussure, cannot be overlooked in a study of this type, if only to bring out the slight difference between the two viewpoints. Apart from his well-known distinction between the "synchronic" as opposed to the "diachronic" study of language, Saussure also differentiated between "langue" and "parole". For Saussure, language is a collective phenomenon. It is

... a storehouse filled by the members of a given community through their active use of speaking, a grammatical system that has a potential existence in each brain, or, more specifically, in the brains of a group of individuals. For language is not complete in any speaker; it exists perfectly only within a collectivity. (2)

As for "parole", Saussure tells us that it is "an individual act. It is wilful and intellectual". He is further of the opinion that within the act of speaking or parole

... we should distinguish between: (1) the combinations by which the speaker uses the language code for expressing his <sup>own</sup> thoughts; and (2) the psychophysical mechanism that allows him to exteriorize those combinations. (3)

Saussure thus regards "langue" as a collective phenomenon; whereas "parole" is the individual use, the actualisation of this collective system by a particular person under certain circumstances. Saussure, however, excludes from the choices open to the individual speaker the affective or expressive values that reflect the speaker's emotions. And it is just these expressive or emotive facts of the language that are given a place of

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(1) Guiraud, 1969 : 28  
(2) Saussure, 1960 : 13-4  
(3) Ibid., p. 14

paramount importance in his disciple's stylistic theory.

Bally defines stylistics as a system or discipline that

... étudie la valeur affective des faits du langage organisé, et l'action réciproque des faits expressifs qui concourent à former le système des moyens d'expression d'une langue. (1)

For Bally, stylistics begins with the mother tongue in its most spontaneous form, i.e. spoken language (2). This stems from his staunch belief that language expresses not only the ideas of the speaker, but also his sentiments because a human being is first and foremost "un être essentiellement affectif, que la pensée pure est contradictoire à sa nature propre et aux nécessités constantes et impérieuses de la vie." (3)

Bally then goes on to explain what he really means by the term "langage affectif". The illustrative examples he gives us are strikingly simple and easy to understand. Thus, says Bally, if we happen to hear of the tragic death of someone we know, there are two ways of expressing our reaction. We may respond by saying: "le malheureux.", or "le malheureux!". The first utterance ends with a full-stop, while the second ends with an exclamation mark. The first is hardly likely since it does not reflect the emotive elements of the second. (4) Bally believes that an utterance like "Le malheureux!" constitutes "un fait d'expression très caractéristique; mais il ne fournit matière à observation stylistique que d'une façon particulière." (5)

We can study such utterances from the syntactic standpoint or make an anthology of them, but such an endeavour cannot be called stylistic research. Instead, we may inquire into the nature of the paralinguistic features of such utterances: things like intonation and ellipsis. We may even examine the psychology of

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(1) Bally, 1921 : 1

(2) Ibid., pp. 29 & 44

(3) Ibid., p. 9

(4) Ibid., p. 13

(5) Ibid., p. 13



the utterance itself and say that it expresses pity, for the hapless one on the speaker's part. But the essential thing to note is that, simple as it is, the utterance is charged with emotive elements that overshadow the intellectual content of the idea of pity. Analysis of such factors as intonation and the absence of certain lexical items which the grammatical logic requires help us underline the close correspondence between the construction of phrases and the affective or emotive movements of thought (1).

With this last instance of relatively emotive utterance, Bally contrasts the following example from Augier's play: Le Gendre de Monsieur Poirier, where we come across the sentence, "Eh bien! cher beau père, comment gouvernez-vous ce petit désespoir? Êtes-vous toujours furieux contre votre panier percé de gendre?" (2) The phrase that rivets Bally's attention is the one describing the son-in-law as panier percé, i.e. spendthrift. Here he distinguishes between gendre which can stand on its own and panier percé which comprises two words "inséparables au point de vue du sens." (3) Having thus broken the utterance into two instead of three units, Bally proceeds to examine the general sense of the phrase, the situation, the speaker's character, "en un mot l'entourage du fait d'expression", together with the frequency of occurrence of the same linguistic utterance over a definite period of time. All this will finally tell us that the utterance corresponds to the simple and abstract notion of prodigality. This correspondence, Bally calls, "l'identification d'un fait d'expression" (4).

Such an utterance affects Bally in three different ways. The figurative use of the words moves him because "elle est sensible et concrète", in the sense that it presents itself to his

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(1) Ibid., p. 13  
 (2) Ibid., p. 14  
 (3) Ibid., p. 14  
 (4) Ibid., p. 14

imagination in a vivid and striking manner - an effect that is virtually denied to any other image in the text. Secondly, this utterance affects him because it produces a comic effect which is "un sentiment d'ordre esthétique". And finally it affects him because it belongs to the everyday language, in the sense that it evokes "une forme de la vie et des rapports sociaux où cette expression est particulièrement usuelle." (1) Bally then comes out with the conclusion that to discover, fix and classify those characteristics which, though highly different, are more or less of an affective or emotive nature; in a word, to determine the affective or emotive nature of an utterance, "telle est la première tâche de la stylistique." (2)

A close scrutiny of the above argument will reveal that Bally considers the process of delimiting the expressive utterance and that of defining it in a simple and logical manner to be two intellectual activities that precede the task of determining the nature of the expressive utterance, but that do not lie within the scope of "l'étude stylistique proprement dite." (3) Still, these two activities are essential since it is only through the specification of the logical content of an utterance that its emotive nature is thrown into relief.

To the question whether stylistics should look for, or seek out, these modes of expression in the mechanism of language as a whole or in the language of a certain social group or in the individual "parole", Bally would tell us that "la stylistique individuelle" investigates the speech of an individual who is placed in the same general conditions as the other individuals of his group. (4) For it is by projecting this particular individual's speech against the overall language of his group that

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(1) Ibid., p. 15

(2) Ibid., p. 15

(3) Ibid., p. 16

(4) Ibid., p. 18



deviations are discovered and sustained.

It is when Bally reaches this point in his discussion that his views become more interesting for us. Bally differentiates between his theory of "la stylistique individuelle" and style as a reflection of the man himself. For Bally, to study the language of a speaker in a certain social-milieu is something, and the study of, say, Balzac's style is something else. The first, as already pointed out, is the proper task of stylistics, whereas the other belongs to the domain of aesthetics. We should note, says Bally, that

Il y a un fossé infranchissable entre l'emploi du langage par un individu dans les circonstances générales et communes imposées à tout un groupe linguistique, et l'emploi qu'en fait un poète, un romancier, un orateur. (1)

If asked why, Bally would tell us that it is because one can measure the individual speaker's deviations against the norm established by the community to which he belongs; whereas with the poet, novelist or any writer for that matter, the conditions are different. The man of letters's use of the language is both voluntary and conscious, "volontaire et conscient." (2) What is more serious in Bally's opinion is that a man of letters uses language with an aesthetic intention, "il veut faire de la beauté avec les mots comme le peintre en fait avec les couleurs et le musicien avec les sons." (3) Since the language of the artist can never be like the spontaneous language of the individual speaker, "dans la création artistique la plus spontanée en apparence il y a toujours un acte volontaire", it follows that one has to draw a line of demarcation between "le style et la stylistique".

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(1) Ibid., p. 19

(2) Ibid., p. 19

(3) Ibid., p. 19

How is it then that Bally examines evocative utterances like panier percé which are taken from literary texts? (1) Bally would tell us that, as a means of expression, the image falls within the sphere of stylistic investigation. Here, however, Bally distinguishes between two types of image: the spontaneous and the conscious. An Englishman might use one of the following two images in reference to his girl friend:

My bird is waiting for me at the station.

My girl is a red, red rose.

Of the two images thus created Bally would examine the first only, since the second belongs to literature which does not concern him in the least. He would study the first image, because it evokes a certain social milieu, and can be easily relegated to the common language of everyday spontaneous speech. He examines it, in short, because the intention of producing an image is absent (2).

The above example has shown the principle of opposition to be central to Bally's stylistic theory. The affective nature of an utterance can only be determined through juxtaposition of the term used with the intellectual concept behind it. In like manner, the evocative nature of an imagistic utterance can only be determined by contrasting it with the common language of the social class from which it is derived (3).

It might be argued that Bally's quest for the emotive values of language is a mere rewording of the ancient theory of rhetoric. Still, it should be noted that whereas the ancients concentrated on certain formal characteristics that distinguished certain fixed categories of genres or tropes, Bally treats of the expressive values in language at large. Besides, the ancients saw in these figures of speech or genres a norm against which all writing should

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(1) Ibid., p. 14.

(2) Ibid., p. 179

(3) Ibid., pp. 203 - 5



be measured, while Bally sees in the emotive or evocative utterances not so much a norm as "faits d'expression". Indeed, he calls the second volume of his Traité "Tableau Synoptique de Faits d' Expression". For him, the norm is language at large which comprises within its pale the expressive values cited in the second volume of the Traité.

Bally's exclusion of the literary language from the domain of stylistics deserves a brief comment before one moves to the second school of stylistic investigation. The question that arises is this: to what extent is Bally justified in his belief that the language of literature is not spontaneous - an assumption that seems to contradict Wordsworth's claim about poetry being the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings? Besides, this talk about the spontaneity of everyday language is somewhat misleading, for who would deny that a student talking to his professor, or a cadet to his commanding officer, does not use a special variety of language with a conscious touch about it? Bally apparently believes that some forms of speech are more conscious and voluntary than others, the worst being the language of literature. He would also say that the deviations in such cases should be measured against the language of barracks or academic sessions. Such an argument, however, would hold good for literature as well. For it can easily be said that the language writers use can be gauged against the literary context. - Thus, for instance, the language used by one character in a novel can be dealt with in terms of what we know about his social milieu, his profession, his relation to his interlocutor, etc., that is in terms of Crystal's dialectal dimensions, factors of the social situation as well as idiosyncratic variations. (1)

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(1) Crystal, 1975 : 246 - 259

When all is said and done, Bally's contribution to the theory of stylistic analysis remains quite distinctive for three things: (a) it was the first genuine attempt at a descriptive investigation of language; (b) despite the fact that it aims at seeking out the expressive resources of language, these "faits d'expression" it is after are not intended to serve as fixed categories in the manner of the ancients' classification of tropes or genres; nor are they to serve as a norm, (c) it arbitrarily excludes from the field of stylistic investigation literary language under the pretext that it is both "volontaire et conscient". It remained for Leo Spitzer to vindicate the cause of this important variety of the human language.

Spitzer is commonly regarded as the founder of the school of "literary stylistics", better known in French as "genetic stylistics" or "stylistics of the individual writer". Spitzer tells us that he first conceived of his theory when he was pondering the idea of writing his Ph.D. dissertation. His dissatisfaction with the scholastic type of teaching that prevailed at that time determined his future career as a stylistician. At the end of his first year of graduate studies, he became quite sure that "the science offered ex cathedra was worthless", that he "was not fit for such studies as that of the irrational vowel /i/ in Eastern French dialects, or of the subjecktivismusstreit in Molière" (1). Instead, he turned his attention to the choice of his life: stylistics of the individual writer.

Spitzer's method of analysis is "to proceed on the path that leads from the most routinelike techniques of the linguist toward the work of the literary historian." (2) He, that is, means to combine the descriptive method of the linguist with the evaluative or intuitive ability of the philologist.

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(1) Spitzer, 1962 : 4

(2) Ibid.



Spitzer tries to put his theory into practice by investigating the etymology of the two words conundrum and quandary. Spitzer is an acknowledged authority on Romance philology; and his erudition is brought into play in such a striking way that he convincingly proves that conundrum can be identified with the French word Calembredaine, his original hunch that triggered off the whole idea behind the analysis. He then manages, through a deductive process, to show the correspondence between the "assumed etymon" and the collected data from the semantic and phonetic standpoints. By the time he reaches this stage in his analysis, he is lucky enough to be able to prove that quandary must also be a reflection of calembredaine. (1)

The point to be stressed here is that it all began with a hunch, an epiphany or a click on Spitzer's part. In the concrete example cited above, Spitzer says,

There is no mathematical demonstrability in such an equation, only a feeling of inner evidence; but this feeling, with the trained linguist, is the result of observation combined with experience, of precision supplemented by imagination - the dosage of which cannot be fixed a priori, but only in the concrete case. (2)

It should be borne in mind, however, that this intuitive element is not totally of Spitzer's own invention. Almost half a century before Spitzer's time, the Italian aesthete, Benedetto Croce, had expressed views similar in many ways to Spitzer's. According to Croce,

Knowledge has two forms: it is either intuitive knowledge or logical knowledge; knowledge obtained through the imagination or knowledge obtained through the intellect; knowledge of the individual or knowledge of the universal; of individual things or of the relations between them: it is in fact, productive either of images or of concepts. (3)

It is worth noting that key words like imagination and intellect

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(1) Ibid., pp. 6 - 10

(2) Ibid., p. 10

(3) Croce, 1922 : 1

figure largely in the stylistic theories of both Charles Bally and Leo Spitzer. The latter's indebtedness to Croce stems from Croce's insistence that "In ordinary life, constant appeal is made to intuitive knowledge." (1)

Spitzer's real contribution lies in his belief that the spirit of the individual writer can be examined independently of the historical context. In this he differs from pioneers like Karl Vossler who sought to describe the style of a given writer within the context of a language whose historic evolution has been determined.

Because it would have been rash to compare the whole of a national literature to the whole of a national language (as Karl Vossler has prematurely tried to do). I started, more modestly, with the question: can one distinguish the soul of a particular French writer in his particular language? (2)

For Spitzer believes that stylistics "might bridge the gap between linguistics and literary history." (3) What he had in mind at the time was the idea that the linguist's rigorous methods of description should replace "the casual impressionistic remarks of literary critics", who contented themselves with a chapter at the end of a book, on the writer's style.

The point to be stressed is that in his quest for the soul of the writer through a scientific description of his style, Spitzer was revolting against those literary critics who sought to discover the man himself (*l'homme même*) by digging up his past. Nor was Spitzer the only dissident, for before him writers like Valéry and Lamartine had voiced their resentment against the tenets of those critics who concentrated on the biography of the writer to the exclusion of any other feature of his style.

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(1) Ibid.

(2) Spitzer, 1962 : 11

(3) Ibid.



Guiraud sums up this fact where he tells us that Valéry used to make fun of those who tried to understand a work of art through a study of the author's life by saying:

... Si les circonstances biographiques de la passion de Lamartine pour Mme Charles pouvaient expliquer Elvire nous aurions tous écrit Le Lac; car à qui n'est-il pas arrivé de revenir solitaire, sur les lieux d'un amour perdu. (1)

Valéry, according to Guiraud, goes on to say that "le créateur de l'oeuvre n'est pas la vie de l'auteur mais l'esprit de l'auteur."

(2) It remained for Spitzer to formulate this passing reflection on Valéry's part into the stylistic theory that has since been associated with his name.

This obsession with the soul of the writer stands Spitzer in good stead when he tries to put his theory into practice by attempting to discover the psychological etymon of some writers of his choice, just as it has already succeeded in detecting the lexical etymon of the conundrum-quandary riddle. Spitzer examines Charles Louis Philippe's novel Babu de Montbarnasse. The first linguistic deviation that strikes him is the novelist's particular use of the causative conjuncts à cause de and parce que. Having noted, intuitively noted one should say, these peculiarities in the man's style, Spitzer's intuition tells him that "all these expansions of causal usages in Philippe cannot be due to chance: there must be "something the matter" with his conception of causality." (3) To discover the motive force, Spitzer must needs delve deep into the innermost recesses of the man's psychological make-up with a view to reaching "the radix in his soul" (4). Spitzer's analysis of the writer's linguistic peculiarities leads him to the conclusion that "the pseudo-objective motivation manifest in his style, is the clue to Philippe's Weltanschauung".

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(1) Guiraud, 1969 : 31

(2) Ibid.

(3) Spitzer, 1962 : 13

(4) Ibid.

Strangely enough, his conclusion seems to tally with that of the literary critics before him. Philippe, we are told, "sees, as has been observed by literary critics, without revolt but with deep grief and a Christian spirit of contemplativity, the world functioning wrongly with an appearance of rightness, of objective logic." (1) More important still, Spitzer manages to relate Philippe's fatalism to the general feelings among the masses of the French nation at a particular period of time, the period during which the novel was written.

This backward-forward movement from the details to the whole and then back again to other details becomes the main "modus operandi" of the philological circle of which Spitzer himself is the chief defender. The point to be noted is that here, as indeed in his detailed analysis of Cervantes' Don Quijote or Racine's Récite de Thérèse later on, Spitzer depends on his gift of "seeing part and whole together" (2); a gift which he takes to be "basic to the operation of the philological mind." (3)

The fact that Spitzer's theory of stylistic analysis owes much of its effectiveness to the imaginative or intuitive strain in the "linguistic critic" must of necessity give rise to the question whether this ability is a question of talent or chance. Put another way, can any stylistician, in the Spitzerian sense of the word, embark on this to and fro movement without some sort of heavenly light to guide him on his labyrinthine way? To this and similar questions, Spitzer would say that a stylistician should train himself in the art of detecting the striking linguistic traits that would enable him to delve deep into the psychological make-up of the writer with the purpose of discovering his soul, after which he should go back once again to the periphery to check

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(1) Ibid., pp. 13 - 4

(2) Ibid., p. 25

(3) Ibid., pp. 25 - 6



his results against those obtained by other scholars or critics working in the same field. It is this controlled reading, this rigorous training, coupled with the above-mentioned procedure of verification that guarantee the "objectivity" of Spitzer's method of stylistic analysis.

This, however, is easier said than done, for no matter how intelligently Spitzer might argue his point, the fact remains that, as it is, his theory leaves too much room for subjectivity. Granted that the "click" will occur through discipline and controlled reading; what guarantees do we have that two stylisticians will react to the linguistic peculiarities of a given text in the same manner? Besides, how can we know that in their search for the writer's 'Weltanschauung' the two stylisticians will come out with the same results? It is this idealistic element about Spitzer's theory that makes it the butt of adverse criticism. The "click", if it ever happens, is bound to be eclectic and subjective. More serious still, it can be erroneous and misguided. It seems that for all his erudition, Spitzer has failed to elaborate a watertight method of objective analysis. But then who has? When all is said and done, one has to give him credit for being one of the first linguists to highlight the psychological and sociological factors underlying the individual writer's style. If we add to this the equally important fact that it was he who vindicated the cause of literary style against the highly prejudiced theory of Charles Bally, Spitzer's achievement acquires a magnitude quite its own.

The third school to be examined is that of structural stylistics founded by the Prague Linguistic Circle, of which Roman Jakobson is the most illustrious representative. Piore Guiraud throws some light on the objectives of this school when he tells us:

→ Au sens strict et traditionnel, la notion de structure ne s'applique qu'à la langue; et ni Saussure, Guillaume, Hjelmslev, etc...n'ont posé le problème d'une "structure" de la parole.

→ En bonne méthode, donc, on ne saurait concevoir de stylistique structurale qu'au niveau de la description des états de langue particuliers. (1)

Guiraud further distinguishes between two types of structural analysis of texts: the one concerned with the analysis of paradigms on the level of the language, and that which is interested in the syntagmatic relationships in a given discourse. (2)

Tzvetan Todorov does not contest this seemingly commonplace information about structural stylistics. Still, he holds the view that the Linguistic Circle of Prague had its origin in that current of literary studies that developed in Russia between 1915 - 1930, and that has since been known as "Russian Formalism".

According to Todorov, "Le rapport de l'un à l'autre est incontestable" (3). This similarity between structural stylistics and "Russian Formalism" is summed up by Todorov where he says:

La forme, pour eux, couvre tous les aspects, toutes les parties de l'oeuvre, mais elle existe seulement comme rapport des éléments entre eux, des éléments à l'oeuvre entière, de l'oeuvre à la littérature nationale, etc., bref, c'est un ensemble de fonctions. (4).

The key phrase in Todorov's statement is "c'est un ensemble de fonctions". For what really interests the structural stylistician is the functional relationship among items and not the items in isolation. Jakobson seems to endorse this view when he tells us that "language must be investigated in all variety of its function".

(5) A work of art is thus regarded not as an inventory of lexical items or grammatical structures, each existing in isolation, but rather as a system of values wherein all linguistic signs function

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- (1) Guiraud, 1969 : 51  
 (2) Ibid.  
 (3) Todorov, 1971 : 9  
 (4) Ibid., p. 10  
 (5) Jakobson, 1964 : 353



in opposition to one another, and derive their meaning from the interrelationships existing among them in the totality of the work. Hence it can be said that the form of the message is determined by its constituent parts. As to the various functions of verbal communication, these, according to Jakobson, are: the emotive, the referential, the conative, the metalingual, the poetic and the phatic. (1)

It follows that a sign can have different values according to the place it occupies in the text. Here it is no longer a question of setting apart lexical items with emotive or expressive effects in the manner of Bally; nor is it a question of defining genres or tropes according to fixed rules after the manner of the ancients; it is rather a question of pinpointing the function of each of these items in relation to the other elements of the message. A text is, after all, a message transmitted by a speaker to a listener or reader and reduced to certain form or order by virtue of the rules of the common code. (2) Poetics, according to such a theory, "deals with the poetic function not only in poetry, where this function is superimposed upon the other functions of language, but also outside of poetry, when some other function is superimposed upon the poetic function." (3)

According to such a theory, any linguistic investigation of language, be this on the phonological, syntactical or lexical level, would not be complete without a correlative examination of the relationships between one aspect and another, as well as among the total sum of such aspects. Such an assumption is central to structural stylistics, and was voiced more than thirty years ago by men like Viggo Brondal who wrote, "dans un état de langue donnée, tout

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(1) Ibid., p. 357

(2) Ibid., p. 353

(3) Ibid., p. 359

est systématique." (1) According to Brondal, any language is made up of elements that hold on to one another. To say that language is a system means that it is one coherent whole wherein all elements form one unity and every term must depend on the other. (2) This necessity claimed here for a linguistic system, says Cassirer, "has no metaphysical connotations". It is rather a "relative or hypothetical necessity;" a necessity that Jakobson underlines in the formula:

- "1 - si a existe, b existe aussi  
 2 - si a existe, b manque  
 3 - si a manque, b manque aussi." (3)

According to this school of stylistic analysis, each stylistic feature has its distinctive nature which can be established through the principle of identity in diversity. Just as a phoneme is established in language by opposing it to another that has some similarities with it, the nature of a stylistic feature can be established not only by examining its opposition to, but also its <sup>in</sup>affinities with the whole.

Obviously such a theory puts too much stress on the content of the message. This is clearly demonstrated in Jakobson and Lévi-Strauss's analysis of Charles Baudelaire's sonnet "Les Chats". Here, according to Robert Scholes, the two structuralist stylisticians start by examining "the rules determining the rhyme scheme, the syntactical patterns, and various other patterns in the choice and placement of words." (4) After examining the formal characteristics of the poem, they offer their interpretation of the semantic content" which is not especially dependent on the extensive grammatical analysis." (5) In other words, they begin by determining

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(1) Quoted in Cassirer, 1972 : 82 - 3  
 (2) Ibid.  
 (3) Ibid.  
 (4) Scholes, 1974 : 33 - 40  
 (5) Ibid.



the relationship of each item to the other items in the poem, and end up by examining the meaning of such items in the light of the overall meaning of the item in language. Such an analysis tallies with Jakobson's famous distinction between the syntagmatic axis of combinations existing on the horizontal level of discourse, and the paradigmatic axis of selection existing on the vertical level of language.

Although in his analysis of the same sonnet Michael Riffaterre shifts the stress from the message to the receiver by opposing his own "superreader" to Jakobson and Lévi Strauss's "superpoem"; (1) the fact remains that the structuralists' claim about a literary text being "un système immanent" is largely dependent on the ingenuity of the analyst himself. Such ingenuity implies an awareness on the analyst's part of extra-linguistic factors, or to put it in Robert Scholes's words, "any commentary on a particular poem must attend to more than is present in the verbal structure itself." (2) Here, as in Spitzer's case, the subjective element cannot be totally ruled out.

Having thus briefly surveyed the history of stylistic analysis on the Continent from Aristotle to the more scientific achievements of Bally, Spitzer and Jakobson, let us now have a quick look at the attempts of some English linguists in this field. In England many individual attempts at the stylistic investigation of literature have been made over the past fifty years. These range from the quasi-stylistic analysis of I.A. Richards' Practical Criticism to the more clearly defined scientific analyses of eminent stylisticians like Leech, Quirk, Fowler and Crystal and Davy.

I.A. Richards' Practical Criticism is subtitled "A Study of

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(1) Riffaterre, 1970 : 188 - 230

(2) Scholes, 1974 : 39



"Literary Judgement" (1). Here Richards draws a distinction between the two terms "statement" and "expression". The first is primarily concerned with what the utterances in a poem say or "purport" to say, the second with the writers' mental operations underlying the utterances so described. (2) Richards takes psychology to be "the indispensable instrument" for the proposed inquiry. A close reading of the book will reveal the affinity between him and Bally on the one hand, and Spitzer on the other. With Bally, he believes in the necessity of examining the emotive resources of language; with Spitzer he shares the belief in the importance of controlled reading as a key to the intuitive "click". But, unlike Spitzer, Richards is much more concerned with the way this "click" occurs rather than with its presence as a fait accompli.

On the other hand, he shares the structuralists' belief in the diversity of the functions of language.

Language - and pre-eminently language as it is used in poetry - has not one but several tasks to perform simultaneously, and we shall misconceive most of the difficulties of criticism unless we understand this point and take note of the differences between these functions. (3)

These functions Richards divides into four types: Sense, Feeling, Tone, and Intention. "Sense" is the meaning we have in mind, and which we want to transmit to the hearer. "Feeling" is our own attitude towards the message we want to bring to the hearer's attention. As such, it represents the emotive aspect of the utterance. "Tone" is our attitude towards the listener who receives our message, while "Intention" is the effect we seek to produce on the receiver of the message, i.e. the purpose of the whole message. (4) It is only through a synthesis of all four functions that the meaning of a literary text can be fully grasped.

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(1) Richards, 1929

(2) Ibid., p. 8

(3) Ibid., p. 180

(4) Ibid., pp. 181 - 188

Richards's teachings have attracted a great number of followers who tend to interpret a work of art in terms of the above-mentioned four functions. One salient feature of this school of quasi-stylistic analysis is the absence of any serious attempt at describing the linguistic traits of a given work of art in the orthodox way advocated by either Bally or Jakobson.

Professor Leech, on the other hand, is interested in the contribution made by linguistic description to the critical interpretation of literary texts. In the introduction to his book (1) he makes it clear that "practical criticism" owes much to linguistic evidence. He goes so far as to suggest that literary terms such as metaphor, irony and rhythm "cannot be explained without recourse to linguistic notions". He is further of the opinion that "linguistics and literary criticism, in so far as they both deal with poetic language, are complementary not competing activities," (2) a view that seems to echo Spitzer's main contention about the relationship between linguistics and literary history. (3) And like Bally, Professor Leech relegates "historical linguistics" to those "ancillary branches of linguistics" which have to be distinguished from "Descriptive Linguistics", which is concerned with "the description of linguistic patterns in the abstract, without reference to how, where, when, etc., they are used." (4)

Detailed examination of the book is not necessary here, especially as we shall refer to it on more than one occasion in the course of this study. Besides, Professor Leech sums up the tenets of his philosophy in his essay "Language and Interpretation", in which he tries to practise what he preaches through an analysis of

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(1) Leech, 1969 : 1 - 2

(2) Ibid., p. 60

(3) See p. 24 supra

(4) Leech, op. cit., pp. 40 - 1



Dylan Thomas's poem, "This Bread I Break". The three principal dimensions on which a linguistic analysis of poetry might proceed, according to Professor Leech, are those of cohesion, foregrounding and cohesion of foregrounding. (1)

By "cohesion" Professor Leech means more than one thing. It is "the way in which independent choices in different points of a text correspond with or presuppose one another forming a network of sequential relations." (2) Lexical cohesion, on the other hand, consists in "the repetition of the same item of vocabulary". Choice of items here is largely restricted to those which have a clear semantic connection with other items in the passage. Professor Leech is further of the opinion that "in studying cohesion, we pick out the patterns of meaning running through the text, and arrive at some sort of linguistic account of what the poem is about." (3)

By "foregrounding" is meant "the motivated deviation from linguistic or other socially accepted norms." (4) These two principles, together with that of the "cohesion of foregrounding" whereby "the foregrounded features identified in isolation are related to one another and to the text in its entirety", are the means by which linguistics aims at describing the text; the task of the critical exegesis being "the exploration and evaluation of possible interpretations of the text." (5) A close scrutiny of this approach will show it to have much in common with the structuralist approach. In both cases the context seems to be not only the source of all deviations but also the norm against which all deviations are measured.

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(1) Leech, 1965 : 66 - 75

(2) Ibid., p. 67

(3) Ibid., p. 68

(4) Ibid.

(5) Ibid., p. 72

While acknowledging the indispensable role of linguistics in the description of literary texts, Dr. Fowler holds the view that stylisticians will not be fully fitted for their job until we can make ourselves become, once linguists, "less of linguists". (1) He would have a stylistician be a competent linguist and a sensitive critic at one and the same time, for "blind competence has produced many a fatuous or useless analysis: technical analysis without thought or sensitivity". (2)

The two methods of analysis advocated by Dr. Fowler are the transformational-generative mode of Noam Chomsky and the levels-and categories of Firth, Halliday and others. (3) Although he believes that a linguistic description of any text is bound to be "ideally, absolutely revealing", stylistics does not seek to make a list of the linguistic features of a writer's style. In other words, there has to be some eclectic element in the choice of the features to be examined. Hence the importance of the subjective element in any "verbal analysis" of literary texts.

To analyse usefully (could one say "critically"?) one must know (or have some at least marginally positive clue) why one is undertaking verbal analysis: and this knowledge will inevitably direct the manner of the analysis. (4)

Dr. Fowler indirectly identifies himself with the Spitzerian approach, when he insists on the importance of what he calls "A preformulated literary thesis, ..., or hunch, or feeling" to any productive stylistic analysis. (5)

Although more than ten years had elapsed between the publication of the previous essay and the appearance of Dr. Fowler's latest book, Linguistics and the Novel, the main outline of his

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(1) Fowler, 1966 : 159

(2) Ibid. p.154

(3) Ibid., pp. 155 - 6

(4) Ibid., p. 163

(5) Ibid.



stylistic theory is still the same. Here, as in the aforementioned essay, Chomsky's "transformational" theory and Halliday's "functional" approach are strongly recommended.

Fowler's point of departure is his belief that just as there is a "sentence-linguistics", there must be a "text-linguistics". (1) Just as linguistics distinguishes between "form and content" (Chomsky's surface-structure and deep-structure) on sentence level, the same technique can hold good on text-level. (2) On sentence-level, surface-structure can be of great help in adverting us to aspects of cohesion, paraphrase and ambiguity, while deep-structure (which Fowler divides into proposition and modality) can explain the denotative nature of the utterance, the writer's attitude to his readers and the degree of his involvement with the subject. (3)

Fowler's division of sentence-linguistics into surface-structure, proposition and modality is paralleled in text-linguistics by the schema text, discourse and content. Text is the perceptible aspect of fiction, while both discourse and content constitute its "submarine" elements. (4)

By "Text" Fowler means "textual surface-structure" on the basis of which a linguist studies, for instance, things like the relation between the way syntax is arranged and the nature of the information imparted. By "Discourse", he means to study things like "dialogue", "point of view", the author's beliefs and the relationship between him and his characters, etc. By "Content" he means things like plot, character, theme and setting. (5)

In dealing with the first two elements of text-linguistics (text and discourse) Fowler is still the perceptive self-confident stylistician whose knowledge of linguistics and literary criticism makes his argument both suggestive and illuminating. Although

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(1) Fowler, 1977. : ix - xiii.

(2) Ibid., pp. 5 - 7

(3) Ibid., pp. 7 - 44

(4) Ibid., pp. 45 - 55

(5) Ibid., pp. 57 - 122

one occasionally feels that his views are much more coloured by those of structuralists like Todorov, Jakobson, Lévi-Strauss and Barthes in <sup>a</sup>manner not attested in the essay of the previous decade, he manages to convince us of the plausibility of his approach. It is when he comes to speak of "Content", the third element in his text-linguistics, that Fowler finds himself in deep water, so to speak. For in his attempt to explain plot in terms of verbs, character in terms of nouns, etc., he finds himself unenviably caught up in the tricky meshes of the French structuralists' theory which threatens to undermine the mainstay of his supposedly linguistic approach. This is why he ends Chapter 2 on the disappointing note:

We are not ready to say very much about the content structures of fiction; in the present state of the art, the linguistic study of fiction is best focused on what I have called "text" and "discourse", because these aspects of fiction can be most directly analysed in terms of observable sentence-structure. (1)

Still, Dr. Fowler's contribution to the science of stylistics is remarkable for two main reasons. First, his is the first book that crystallises not only the author's own enlightening views on the subject, but also those of people like Wayne Booth, David Lodge, Propp, Greimas and Barthes into one of the best <sup>mma</sup>progratic approaches to prose fiction that has ever been put forward. Second, the newly acquired continental touch about his approach broadens the horizons of his stylistic theory, and fits in with his call upon stylisticians to try to make themselves "become, once linguists, less of linguists".

Many definitions of the term "stylistics" have been put forward over the past fifty years. Most of the scholars thus engaged seem to agree that stylistics is that discipline which studies the different varieties of language. It is not true,

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(1) Ibid., p. 55



however, that stylistics, as Turner puts it, devotes "special attention to the most conscious and complex uses of language in literature". (1) We have seen how Bally excludes literary style from the domain of stylistics for just those reasons cited by Turner. Besides, many stylisticians choose, for reasons of their own, to deal with other varieties of English than that of literature. Crystal and Davy's attempt in Investigating English Style is a case in point.

In a sense, it can be said that though the three continental schools of stylistic analysis tend to profess tenets and rules that seem to be worlds apart; on closer scrutiny the three schools seem to be complementary. So much so, indeed, that a coherent stylistic approach would be that which can reconcile within its pale the claims of all three schools. An approach that takes from Bally his rigorous descriptive technique of delimiting, defining and identifying the linguistic feature; and from Spitzer his three-dimensional vision of work, artist and age; as well as from the structuralists their ability to see all of this as an organic whole, would be fairly operational. This is the approach I intend to adopt in my investigation of Conrad's prose style. The descriptive analysis will be based on the linguistic theory of the Quirk Grammar (2) regarded by, among others, Halliday and Hasan as "The major source of up-to-date information on English grammar (up-to-date both in terms of the English language and in terms of linguistic scholarship)". (3) In the majority of cases the stylistic feature to be examined will be chosen on the basis of Spitzer's "click theory" or Fowler's "preformulated" literary thesis, or "hunch". Essential to such an approach are the four interdependent principles of choice, deviation, norm and linguistic context.

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(1) Turner, 1973 : 7

(2) Quirk et al., 1974

(3) Halliday and Hasan, 1976 : 357

The principle of choice allows us to look into the nature of the alternatives open to the writer. The second and third principles of deviation and norm allow us to inquire into the reasons behind the writer's conscious or unconscious deviations, be they psychological, aesthetic or otherwise. The fourth enables us to fit the writer's works into the linguistic and cultural context of the age at large.

It is a well-known fact that all exteriorisation of thought aims at communicating part or all of these thoughts to a second party be he listener or reader. In this process of communication many factors are brought into play. The speaker or writer is governed by psychological, social and linguistic factors. If he is intent on impressing his reader, he has to choose the sort of vocabulary or grammatical structure that would help him achieve his end. On the other hand, he has to bear in mind the fact that society is a complex hierarchy wherein each group of individuals creates the style that suits them best. In other words, we should not expect a sailor to use the language of physicians or university dons. Likewise, there is a difference between the language used by babies and that of adults. The linguistic factors governing a writer's choice of words are in the nature of the language itself. This last point refers to the constraints imposed upon us by a time-honoured system of language. It is true that changes happen now and again; still, the choices open to us are relatively fixed. We might tolerate a writer's juggling with word-order, apposition or any other linguistic feature, but only within reasonable bounds.

It is the duty of the stylistician to inquire into the whys and wherefores of such choices. Postposition of adjectives, for instance, is a well-known literary device, especially in poetry. It is the job of the stylistician to point out the difference in meaning between the adjective: faithful in, say "the faithful friend", and in "the friend faithful to his ideals"; the one



indicating a permanent trait of the friend in question, while the other underlines an occasional or temporary characteristic. A stylistician must convince us that the writer uses his adjectives in this or that way because he hopes to achieve a certain end in mind.

This last point can be illustrated by this example from Conrad's Nostromo. After the hero's tragic death, Conrad tells us that Giselle, Nostromo's young and infatuated paramour, "..... heartbroken and childlike, her face veiled in her falling hair, crept up to her (Mrs. Gould's) side". (N. p. 561) Here the adjectival phrase seems to have nothing peculiar about it. A close examination of the sentence will reveal that it refers to a circumstantial characteristic of the girl on that particular occasion, since grief and childhood are known to be of short duration. What helps to bear out this conclusion is that we know Giselle to be a reckless and capricious girl. Thus for Conrad to have told us that "the heartbroken and childlike Giselle, etc." would have amounted to an outright contradiction of his own denunciation of her irresponsibility and rashness.

A stylistician should also be able to tell us why Conrad chooses to make Old Viola, after shooting Nostromo, utter the sentence, "Like a thief he came, and like a thief he fell," (N.p.554) in this particular way. He must tell us of the other choices that were open to the writer, and why he chose to move the adverbial phrase forward. Is it the desire to impress his reader by the structural parallelism created by this foregrounding? Or is it rather the novelist's desire to portray Old Viola as a romantic type of revolutionary with a poetic touch about him?

Likewise, a stylistician should be alive to the subtle nuances of the different utterances on different occasions. Thus, for a Frenchman, "Je ne-peux pas" is not the same as "Je ne puis", the

first being less formal than the second. Only foreigners would be expected to use the second alternative in their everyday speech. The same thing can be said of, "Come along and meet my wife"; and "if you come along, you will meet my wife", the first being more friendly than the second.

Closely connected with the principle of choice is the equally important factor regarding the writer's linguistic background. Nothing could throw this last point into relief than the oft-quoted example of the Arab poet, Ibn IlJahm, who came from the heart of the desert to sing the praises of the Abbasid Caliph, Al Mutawakil. True to his linguistic background, the poet started his poem with these two lines of verse:

You (Caliph) are as faithful as a dog,  
And as ferocious in battle as a he-goat.

Instead of beheading him, the Caliph, who was himself a poet, decreed that the man be permitted to stay in the royal palace for one year, after which period of time, Ibn Iljahm was brought before the Caliph and asked to repeat his poem. This time the poet began with the two lines:

The gazelle-like eyes that I spotted between  
Rasafa and Badur,  
Transported me to worlds of delight known and  
unknown to me before. (1)

Then he indulged in a very moving eulogy of the Caliph. At this, it is reported that the Caliph put to the poet this simple question: "What changed you?". To which the poet replied, "The gazelle-like eyes. O Prince of the Faithful". By this the poet simply meant that it was the company of the Palace maids and Baghdad women that brought about the change. The Caliph's farsightedness in refusing to condemn the man to death, and the poet's reply later on bring out the role played by the interplay of what modern stylisticians call dimensions of province, dialect and time in the man's poetic

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(1) Rasafa and Badur are two spots in Baghdad, capital of the Abbasid empire at that time.



vision. It reveals, that is, the impact of the linguistic background on the man's choice of words.

In Conrad's case, knowledge of the novelist's linguistic background will help to explain the frequent recurrence in his works of French lexical items. It might also help to explain some of the grammatical mistakes in his style. Here, however, one has to distinguish between the choices open to the novelist as narrator, and those open to his characters. Thus, Conrad's modifiers as used in the descriptive passages are to be examined in the light of the novelist's own linguistic background, while those used by the characters should be investigated in the light of what is to be expected from them as reflections of their counterparts in real life.

The second principle upon which this approach is based is that of deviation. It is a commonplace of literary history that writers are influenced by the linguistic climate of their own age, of past ages, or of a particular group of people. A writer may as well indulge in innovations peculiar to himself alone as is the case with T.S. Eliot or Dylan Thomas. It is this last type of practice that forcibly imprints itself on the mind of a stylistician who is after what is known as deviations from a pre-established norm.

One should, however, distinguish between conscious and unconscious deviations. In the case of Eliot's copious borrowings from other languages in "The Waste Land", or Cummings's notorious coinages: "he danced his did", "A grief ago", etc., the deviations are conscious; whereas the Arab poet's description of the Caliph as "a dog and he-goat" is an unconscious deviation from the language of the court. Of the choices open to the Arab poet, one may enumerate 'dog, ram, camel, he-goat', of which he chose "dog" and "he-goat"; the first for his faithfulness, the second for his ferocity. It is clear that the two principles of choice and deviation tend to shade into one another only when the

deviation is a conscious one, but not when it is unconscious as in the case of the Arab poet.

Of the cases of conscious deviations in Conrad's novels, one may cite his peculiar use of modifiers. It is customary for English people to use adjectives either in the attributive slot or in a predicative position after the copula and relational verbs like seem and appear.

She speaks correct English.  
She is beautiful; she seems intelligent.

These are the two normal positions of adjectives in English. So when a novelist like Conrad tells us, "There are faces too - faces dark, truculent, and smiling, etc." (T.U., p.3), we spot a deviation from the norm. Not that postposing of adjectives is not allowed in English; it is simply infrequent.

Again, in English, nouns and adjectives are usually coordinated by means of commas, except for the last conjoin in the series which has to be conjoined to the rest by the explicit co-ordinator, and.

He is honest, intelligent and frank.

But when Conrad writes a clause like, "their eyes brown, black, gray, blue, had all the same stare, concentrated and empty, satisfied and unthinking." (T.U. pp. 118 - 9) we are struck by a deviation from the norm that needs to be accounted for.

As opposed to these two cases of conscious deviation from the norm on Conrad's part, one may cite two examples of unconscious deviations. These come from his first novel, Almayer's Folly.

No sooner she had disappeared, however, than a vague shape flitted out from amongst the stalks of the banana plantation, darted over the moonlit space, and fell in the darkness at the foot of the verandah. (p. 156)

And he pushed away his plate with an impatient gesture on rising from the table. But now Nina heard him not. (p. 65)

In the first example, Conrad fails to effect the subject-auxiliary



inversion required under normal linguistic usage. In the second, he suddenly opts for the non-periphrastic negative form. What makes such unconscious deviations of slight stylistic interest is the fact that they do not constitute a sustained and invariable practice on the novelist's part. In the first case, Conrad soon corrects himself in the novels that follow Almayer's Folly, while his use of the non-periphrastic negative form does not exceed some five such examples as against thousands of sentences negated in the normal periphrastic way. Such casual features of Conrad's style will be pointed out in the course of this study; but the emphasis will be laid on the non-casual stylistic peculiarities, since it is these last that highlight the deliberate and conscious intentions of the writer.

Moreover, one has to distinguish between what might be termed synchronic and diachronic deviations. What one might regard nowadays as a marked deviation might not have seemed so to the people of the age concerned. Inversion was a common practice in Medieval England, due to the inflectional system of the language at the time; and so was Latinism. Nowadays either practice, except in closed circles, would be regarded as an innovation: a deviation from the norm.

This necessitates the application of what one may call the synchrony in diachrony method of analysis. Such a method has the advantage of looking into a linguistic feature with the mind's eye of the age it was written in. Synchronic description will thus examine a particular feature in an objective way underlining the denotations and connotations of the particular sign at that particular age. Diachronic investigation will reveal the change that has come over the sign with the passage of time.

The fact that one is able to spot the deviation presupposes that one is already familiar with the norm. But what is that norm against which one can measure deviations in the light of the

proposed approach? Is it the norm as conceived by the educated elite? Is it the language of everyday speech? Bally and his followers would say that the norm is language with its expressive resources. The deviations will be the choice of items outside, or not modelled on the repertoire of these resources. Jakobson and Lévi Strauss would argue that it is simply the context within which the sign occurs. A more daring alternative is that suggested by Jean Cohen in his Structure Du Langage Poétique.

On peut figurer le phénomène de style par une ligne droite dont les deux extrémités représentent les deux pôles, pôle prosaïque d'écart nul et pôle poétique d'écart maximum. Entre les deux se distribuent les différents types de langages effectivement pratiqués. Au plus près du pôle maximum se trouve le poème, au plus près de l'autre pôle se situe, à n'en pas douter, le langage des savants. L'écart n'y est pas nul, mais il tend vers zéro. Ce que Roland Barthes appelle "degré zéro de l'écriture", c'est dans un tel langage qu'on en trouvera la meilleure approximation et c'est avec lui que nous confronterons le poème, toutes les fois que le besoin s'en fera sentir. (1)

It is against the language of scientists like Pasteur and Berthelot that Cohen measures the deviations in the styles of poets like Corneille, Hugo and Rimbaud. The method to be followed in this thesis is that of measuring deviations against Conrad's linguistic background and that of the common people and writers of his time.

This gives rise to the question of the stylistic context within whose perspective Conrad's works will be examined. It is simply that of the works themselves and similar works by some of Conrad's contemporaries. A sign will thus be viewed in the light of its function in the overall structure of the work under consideration, as well as in relation to the way it is used by other practitioners in the same field.

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(1) Cohen, 1966 : 23



Is there <sup>a</sup> place in such an approach for statistics? As the approach is partly based on the "click" or "hunch" assumption, it is natural that a statistical method of some sort should be applied. Indeed, in some cases it will be essential, since the credibility of the "hunch" can only be verified by giving at least a rough count of the sign's degree of frequency in the particular works. In some other cases, where the importance of the stylistic feature lies not so much in the relative frequency of its various types, but in the peculiar way the novelist uses it, statements of frequency will be rather in informal terms in the manner advocated by Professor Ullmann and Crystal and Davy. (1)

It could be argued that the approach suggested here is somewhat traditional. But is it not true that most of the stylistic theories so far considered have something traditional about them, something even rhetorical? Bally's "Tableau Synoptique" of the expressive resources of language is similar in many respects to Aristotle's storehouse of the various tropes. Unlike Aristotle, however, Bally's expressive resources are not meant to serve as an exhaustive norm. Spitzer reverses the order of genres invented by the ancients and instead of examining a work of art as belonging to a well-defined genre, he investigates the genesis of the work of art as an independent entity with a view to detecting the "spiritual etymon" of the writer. Jakobson, on the other hand, borrows from the ancients his concept of the function of linguistic features. But whereas the ancients saw the function of a genre or figure of speech in terms of an end justifying the means, Jakobson sees it in terms of the structural relationship between cause and effect. Besides, Spitzerian echoes resound in the works of eminent stylisticians like Dr. Fowler and Professor Leech.

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(1) Cf. Ullmann, 1957 : 29 - 30; Crystal and Davy, 1974 : 22

The twelve novels covered in this study are Almayer's Folly, An Outcast of the Islands, The Nigger of the "Narcissus", Lord Jim, Nostromo, The Secret Agent, Under Western Eyes, Chance, Victory, The Rescue, The Arrow of Gold, The Rover. (1)

Occasional reference to the short stories as well as to the two novels Conrad wrote in collaboration with Ford, The Inheritors and Romance, helps underline the fact that the stylistic feature in question constitutes a salient hallmark of Conrad's language as a whole. Consequent upon the proposed pragmatic approach to Conrad's style, the corpus chosen for analysis in the first part of each chapter is rigorously limited to three chapters of a full-length novel or a complete short story or novelette (the only exception being the Chapter on Direct Speech, where the marked paucity of the various aspects of this feature in any limited corpus makes such a procedure quite inoperable). No preconceived stylistic mould is superimposed, in the sense that the feature for discussion is to be examined on its own merits in the particular place it occupies in the text. (2) After being delimited, defined and identified (i.e. described), the feature is then viewed within the stylistic context of Conrad's age. This is usually followed by a brief discussion of the artistic significance of the feature in the overall framework of Conrad's works. (3)

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- (1) See Chronology of Conrad's Works, p. 453 *infra*.
- (2) Although The Quirk Grammar provides us with the linguistic terminology to be used in the course of this study, reference to other stylistic theories is inevitable in order to make up for the inadequacies of that Grammar in certain areas of style-study.
- (3) However, as my approach is partly based on the "hunch" or "preformulated" literary theory, it will be hard in most cases to draw a sharp line of demarcation between the descriptive analysis of the feature in question and the discussion of its stylistic significance. On the contrary, the two processes are bound to be complementary.



That Conrad's style is so complex that it deserves to be investigated is something that most of his readers will not contest. The present study aspires to prove, among other things, that, as a science, stylistics can bridge the gap between linguistics and literary criticism. If one can convincingly describe the main linguistic features of Conrad's style, show how the conclusions reached tie in with the results of one's simultaneous inquiry not only into the psychological make-up of the novelist, but also into the spirit of the age at large, while viewing each of the novels as an organic unit in a larger stylistic context, then the main objective of this study will have been achieved.

## Chapter II

CONRAD'S LINGUISTIC BACKGROUND

Conrad's foreignness has been the subject of wild speculation ever since the publication of his first novel in 1895. Thus, Edward Garnett, the man behind the writing of Conrad's second novel (1), tells us, in his Introduction to Letters from Conrad, that, although he could only slightly detect Conrad's "foreign accent" in November 1894, when Conrad read to him the new written manuscript of An Outcast of the Islands, he mispronounced so many words that Garnett had great difficulty in following him. Garnett soon discovered that Conrad "had never once heard these English words spoken, but had learned them all from books." (2)

The same "foreign accent" was also noted by Ford Madox Ford, Conrad's friend and collaborator in works like Romance and The Inheritors, who wrote, as far back as 1924, that Conrad "spoke English with great fluency and distinction, with correctitude in his syntax... but his accentuation so faulty that he was at times difficult to understand." (3)

Some thirty years later, Visiak commended the novelist not so much for his 'impeccable' English, since his English "was faulty, inferior to that of other foreign novelists writing in English", as for the way Conrad "imagined in English." (4) Visiak, however, chose not to examine the reasons behind Conrad's so called "faulty English". He seems to take for granted that a foreigner's English will be somewhat faulty, no matter how stupendously imaginative he might be. Unlike Garnett or Ford, Visiak extends his criticism of

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(1) In his Author's Note to An Outcast, Conrad tells us that it was Garnett's diplomatic way of coaxing him into having a try at "another novel" that, in a way, decided Conrad's career as a novelist. Cf. O.I., pp., vii - viii.

(2) L.C., p. xix

(3) Ford, 1924 : 34

(4) Visiak, 1955 : 13



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Conrad's English beyond questions of pronunciation to include more important aspects such as syntax and lexicology. His theory is, nevertheless, quite impressionistic in nature, since he fails to substantiate his assumption with extensive concrete examples. Besides, other eminent critics would not share his views. In his "Letter of Commendation to the Royal Literary Fund", Henry James, who is an acknowledged stylist in his own right, wrote:

When I think moreover that such completeness, such intensity of expression has been arrived at by a man not born to our speech, but who took it up, with singular courage, from necessity & sympathy, & has laboured at it heroically (sic) & devotedly, I am equally impressed with the fine persistence & intrinsic success. Born a Pole & cast upon the waters, he has worked out an English style that is more than correct, that has quality & ingenuity. (1)

Questions of pronunciation apart, James's views seem to be in perfect accord with Garnett's and Ford's.

A more analytic approach to the question of Conrad's foreignness has developed over the past fifty years. But instead of any detailed investigation of Conrad's style, critics have contented themselves with references to his cosmopolitan background. Thus, although Ernst Bendz believes that

The suggestion that Conrad's style has a foreign flavour about it does not necessarily refer to technicalities of phrasing or grammar, nor need it imply censure. It may simply mean that Conrad's treatment of English stands for something new and wonderful, something that was not in the language before him, that it conveys a sensation of beautiful and subtle strangeness, or that its inherent rhythmical strain is pleasingly, if vaguely, different from what an English ear is accustomed to. (2)

a little later he stresses the novelist's "cosmopolitan background" when he says:

To pretend to regard Conrad as having made himself independent, even in his style, of his foreign temperament, is a delusion involving all sorts of misapprehensions. His artistic medium is English, but the genius reflected in it is not the English genius. (3)

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(1) L.B., Appendix C., pp. 200 - 1

(2) Bondz, 1923 : 98

(3) Ibid., p. 112

A more interesting viewpoint is that expressed by Professor Leavis in The Great Tradition. For, while stressing Conrad's foreignness, and thus implicitly acknowledging the novelist's cosmopolitan background; Dr. Leavis would, nevertheless, regard him as the direct product of the English literary tradition. Dr. Leavis tells us that, like Henry James, Conrad "brought a great deal from outside, but it was of the utmost importance to him that he found a serious art of fiction in English, and that there were, in English, great novelists to study." (1)

That Conrad was a foreigner writing in a language twice removed from his mother tongue is a fact that he himself owns up to on more than one occasion. In a letter dated 14th January 1898, Conrad tells Cuninghame Graham that he is "shy" of his "bad English" and asks his friend to prepare Frank Harris "for 'a b--y furriner' who will talk gibberish to him at the rate of 10 knots an hour." (2) This letter proves that Conrad did not suffer from any so called 'alien complex' as a result of his decision to write in English. On the contrary, he seems to have derived an immense delight from writing in a language whose "very idioms I truly believe had a direct action on my temperament and fashioned my still-plastic character." (3)

Still, succeeding generations of biographers and critics have tended to set too much store by his fabled 'cosmopolitan background', so much so, indeed, that the stress came to be laid on his Polish origin, or his indebtedness to French stylists like Flaubert and Maupassant, to the exclusion, perhaps, of all other formative elements of the novelist's cultural and psychological make-up. Gustavo Morf's The Polish Heritage of Joseph Conrad is one such book that tries to explain Conrad's achievement in the light of what Professor

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(1) Leavis, 1962 : 17

(2) L.C.G., p. 64

(3) D.P.



Morf calls Conrad's deep sense of guilt at having betrayed his country, Poland, by defecting to France, and thence to England where he would establish for himself a reputation as a novelist. (1)

On the other hand, Paul Kirschner's Conrad: The Psychologist as Artist, seeks to underline Conrad's indebtedness to continental writers like Flaubert, Maupassant, Anatole France, Turgenev and Dostoyevsky out of a deep-rooted conviction that "Conrad's philosophical and artistic tradition was continental." (2)

One cannot overlook the influence of the 'continental artistic tradition' on Conrad. But neither should one overemphasise its importance. Indeed, it is to Professor Leavis's credit that he was one of the first critics to insist on Conrad's being "significantly 'in' the tradition - in and of it". (3) It is one of the contentions of this study that, whereas Conrad's prose is bespattered here and there with some foreign lexical items which Conrad, consciously or unconsciously, incorporated into the texture of his style, a close investigation will help throw into sharper focus the prominent place he occupies in the English linguistic and literary tradition. It is my belief that a stylistic study of the man's language is bound to reveal that the difference between him and some other English novelists is not so much one of kind as of degree.

The main three formative linguistic elements of Conrad's prose are English, French and Polish. In a letter to Charles Chassé, dated 31st January, 1924, Conrad said:

As to formulative influences, I must point out that I do not know the Russian language, that I know next to nothing of Russian imaginative literature, except the little I have been able to read in translations; that the formative forces acting on me, at the most plastic and impressionable age, were purely Western; that is French and English: and that, as far as I can remember, those forces found in me no resistance, no vague, deep-seated antagonism, either racial or temperamental. (4)

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(1) Morf, 1924 : 127 - 203

(2) Kirschner 1968

(3) Leavis, 1962 : 17

In addition to these three elements, his prose reflects the novelist's familiarity with other languages such as Malay, German and Spanish. This chapter proposes to examine the possible influence of each of these elements on his style.

Born in what was then known as Russian Poland, Conrad spent almost seventeen years of his life in his country before he left it for France in 1874. Biographical facts relating to that early period of his life have been well recorded for us by writers like Baines (1) and Jean Aubry (2). What most concerns us here is that, by the time he left for France, Conrad's linguistic background was already formed. The wonder of it is that when he finally decided to write something, he wrote it all in English, a language that he started learning only after he was twenty years of age.

Najder, however, holds the view that Conrad did have a try at writing some plays "invariably of patriotic content", which were performed by his friends during his sojourn in Lvov in the year 1868. (3) Najder also tells us that Conrad liked at that early period of his life "to recite some poems particularly Mickiewicz", and that he acquired a reputation for being "an exceptionally sensitive child and a book-devourer." (4) Najder tries to bear out his argument by citing the names of four "independent witnesses" who would testify to the authenticity of his information. He also quotes Apollo Korzeniowski's words to his friend, Stefan Buszczyński, about the young Conrad's ability to write well. (5) Tenuous as it is, this evidence makes Conrad's decision to write in English instead of Polish, later on <sup>in</sup> his life, more interesting than ever.

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- (1) Baines, 1971  
 (2) Aubry, 1947  
 (3) Najder, 1964 : 10  
 (4) Ibid.  
 (5) Ibid., p. 71



What is more important is that Najder's theory is quite incompatible with Conrad's refusal to write anything in Polish about his sea voyages. In June 1881 his uncle wrote him a letter asking him to write "contributions for the Wędrowiec in "Warsaw" about his travels in the east, contributions which his uncle then believed to be "an exercise in your native tongue - that thread which binds you to your country and countrymen." (1) Despite the uncle's insistence, the young Conrad attempted nothing of that sort.

Conrad's reasons for writing in English will be examined in the last part of this chapter. Whatever these reasons might be, the fact remains that it is quite natural that his English should be affected in some way by his native tongue. In his book, Ford tells us that Conrad made no secret of the fact that Polish was the language of his "intimate, automatic less expressed thoughts." (2) Morf remarks that Conrad translated Bruno Winawer's The Book of Job into English towards the end of his life, a fact which Morf believes to be quite indicative of Conrad's fondness for his mother tongue. Here, again, the argument falls apart for lack of substantial evidence. For one thing, this translation, as Morf himself admits, "has never been published, nor has the play been produced in English." (3)

Conrad's declarations on the subject of his indebtedness to Polish seem to invalidate all these speculations about his constant borrowings from his native tongue. In the Author's Note to A Personal Record, he tells us that if he had not written in English he "would not have written at all." (4)

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(1) Ibid., p. 71  
 (2) Ford, 1924 : 37  
 (3) Morf, 1924 : 189  
 (4) P.R., p. viii

Again, in his talk with Conrad, Mégroz quotes him as saying that he always thinks in English. (1) From this 'talk' with Mégroz, we also know that Conrad corrected one or two grammatical mistakes in the collected edition of his works. Conrad bravely admits that there is "a certain quantity" of these faults in his works; faults "that a very careless man using English as a native language would make." (2) In this way, Conrad ascribes his striking deviations from the linguistic norm to his innate carelessness, rather than to the impact of either Polish or French on his adopted language as many a critic would later do.

Still, interference of the mother tongue in one's second foreign language is something that as often as not happens in an unconscious manner. At least a great portion of what is commonly regarded as conscious borrowings from Polish should be viewed in this light.

Of those Polish writers who exercised some sort of influence on the young Conrad, one may cite his father Apollo Korzeniowski, himself a writer and journalist of sorts in his time, as well as the two poets Mickiewicz and Słowacki. Baines tells us that he was christened 'Konrad' "presumably after the hero of Mickiewicz's epic patriotic poem Konrad Wallenrod". (3)

On the other hand, Najder quotes Conrad as saying in an interview of the year 1914: "My father read me Pan Tadeusz and asked me to read it aloud too. More than once, I preferred Konrad Wallenrod and Grażyna. Later I preferred Słowacki." (4) Of the latter, Conrad is quoted as saying: that Słowacki "est l'âme de toute la Pologne, lui." (5)

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(1) Mégroz, 1931 : 39-40

(2) Ibid., p. 40

(3) Baines, 1971 : 13

(4) Najder, 1964 : 9

(5) Ibid.



Critics have tended to overemphasise Conrad's indebtedness to his Polish background by capitalising on this and similar declarations made by him. Morf, for one, would go so far as to say that Conrad failed in his portrayal of the Western man because of the "common bond between him, the Pole and man of imagination, and the Eastern soul, while there was none between him and the man of facts of the West..." (1) But who would say that Conrad's characterisation of Easterners like Dain Maroola, Aissa or Jewel is more convincing than his portrayal of Westerners like Jim, Razumov or Winnie Verloc?

Speaking of the impact of the Polish language on Conrad's English, Morf tells us that although there are some Polish influences in his style, these are "of spoken, not of written Polish."

(2) Morf believes that Conrad did not master literary Polish on account of, among other things, its highly inflected nature. (3) It is also a language that teems with loan words, mostly French, Russian and German. These two reasons make Morf declare:

To write in Polish would not only have meant for Conrad to translate into another language (and a language then very poor in nautical terms) events lived in English, but to live in Poland, and to wrestle with the language for years. (4)

Morf fails, however, to illustrate his thesis in a convincing way. His claim that the Malays call Jim "Tuan Jim", just as the Polish peasants and servants must have called the young Conrad "Pan Jozef" is too far-fetched to admit of serious consideration. Besides, his allegation that Conrad chose to call the ship boarded by Jim "Patna" is due to the similarity between "Patna" and "Polska", the Polish equivalent of Poland, can hardly stand close investigation (5).

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(1) Morf, 1924 : 123 - 4

(2) Ibid., pp. 206 - 7

(3) Ibid., p. 207

(4) Ibid.

(5) Ibid., pp. 162 - 4

Nor can one unreservedly agree with him that Conrad chose to name the hero of The Rover, Peyrol, and the island where he was born Porquerolles because of these two words' "unconscious association with the words floating then through Conrad's mind: Poland, Pole, Rover, or their Polish equivalents: Polska, Polak, Korsarz." (1) The least that can be said about this argument is that it is not that convincing.

Unlike Morf, Najder is of the opinion that some of Conrad's prose passages, especially in Almayer's Folly and The Rescue, reflect "the influence of Polish syntax and Polish literary conventions." (2) He also hints at the negative and the positive effects of such influence on Conrad's prose. But like Morf, he does not substantiate his thesis with concrete examples from the novels he refers to.

While Polish interference in Conrad's English is a possibility that cannot be overlooked in a study of this kind, one should guard against any exaggeration of its importance. Indeed, while a close investigation of the way Conrad yokes his adjectives in the descriptive passages of his novels might reveal the impact of Polish syntax on his prose, such an assumption would never acquire the status of established fact, unless it could be proved that this practice was never made by a true-born English writer. Once it is proved that novelists like Galsworthy, Ford, or Arnold Bennett indulged in the same practice, this will be enough to rule out any such assumption.

Of the glaring examples of Polish influence on Conrad's prose, one may cite his awkward handling of the definite and indefinite articles in English. In Polish, one says: "Pies to zwierze", which means, "A dog is an animal"; or "Jest pies", which stands for, "There is the dog". Conrad's inability to use the article in

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(1) Ibid. p. 186.

(2) Najder, 1964 : 29



← English correctly is referred to in Bendz (1), where he gives us concrete examples as when Conrad, for instance, speaks of "the element that gave the life and dealt the death," in An Outcast. Because none of Conrad's contemporary English novelists would make the same mistake, one can safely assume such mistakes to be due to the absence of the article in Polish. Still, this happens very rarely in Conrad's prose; and the unconscious nature of such deviations makes them of paramount importance only in an extensive study of the influences on Conrad's prose, which is not the main purpose of this study. Besides, such a task can be undertaken only by a Pole with a good knowledge of both French and English.

Of all the interesting articles on Conrad's indebtedness to his mother tongue, Coleman's <sup>on</sup> "Polonisms in the English of Conrad's Chance" (2) is the most revealing. His reasons for choosing Chance is that the novel possesses "the general characteristics of Conrad's major works, especially his richly colorful style, his lavish use of similes, and in the person of the heroine, Flora, that Slavonic defeatism with which all his writing is permeated." (p. 463)

Coleman's point of departure is that as Conrad began learning English "during the more difficult period of early maturity", it is quite natural that his English should be influenced by Polish, a language he spoke from childhood, and which he continued to speak "fluently all his life." (464) .

Coleman then points out that in the sentences:

Almost at once Fyne caught me up.  
But he would have caught me up.

Conrad's awkward handling of English Prepositions is obvious since,

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(1) Bendz, 1923 : 95 - 7  
(2) Coleman, 1931 : 463 - 8

Each of these is a literal translation of the Polish manner of expressing the idea of catching up with one. In Polish the verb dogonić means 'to catch up with' and is followed by the accusative...(p. 464)

Again, he regards Conrad's description of Flora in, "She no longer looked a child," to be an echo of the Polish equivalent, "wygladala no dziecko," where jak meaning like" is usually omitted. And in some other cases, he manages to show the impact of Polish syntax on Conrad's English in examples like:

I have never seen so many things assembled together out of a collection.

where Conrad obviously means to say, "I have never seen so many things assembled except in a collection." In which case, the use of a genitive construction, as Coleman tells us, "was probably a subconscious reversion to the Polish oprócz 'except' with the genitive." (p. 465)

Here, also, Coleman points out Conrad's awkwardness in handling the article in English; a fact which he also attributes to the influence of Polish. Thus, when Conrad says:

Yet somehow I got irresistible conviction that he was exasperated by something in particular

one can easily see that his decision to dispense with the article is due to the absence of such a convention in Polish. (p.465)

Coleman further suggests that Conrad's notorious elliptical style is the result of Polish influence. As an example of this, Coleman cites:

Followed complete silence

where the absence of the expletive there might be due to the fact that, as it is, the sentence is a literal translation of the Polish, "Nastapila supekna cisza." (p. 466)

The same thing can be said of Conrad's ellipsis of "it" in,

May be that a glimpse and no more is the proper way of seeing an individuality



since in Polish one usually uses może być., may be, without the pronoun it in such constructions as the one given above. (p.466)

When Coleman, however, chooses to question the Englishness of Conrad's use of the word suspect in,

Explain it as you may, in this world the  
friendless, like the poor, are always a  
little suspect

one cannot help wondering whether Coleman is not overstating his point. For he believes that Conrad means to say that the friendless and the poor are "to be suspected", and that he deliberately "clips off" the "-ed" of the past participle of the verb suspect. Still, it could be argued that the word is used here as an adjective in the sense of "inspiring distrust". (p. 466)

Coleman then goes on to point out the influence of Polish tense forms on Conrad's English. He holds the view that

Not only is the English scheme of tense sequence, derived of course from the Latin, strange to him, but the fact that English is concerned mainly with the time of an action and not with its quality is surprising to the Slavonic mentality. (p. 466)

As an example of Conrad's mishandling of tense in Chance Coleman cites the following sentence:

And it shall be a funny world, the world of their arranging, where the Irrelevant would fantastically step in to take the place of the sober humdrum Imaginative. (p. 466)

We cannot help agreeing with Coleman that the future tense in the second clause would be much more pertinent than the conditional which Conrad as a Pole opts for.

Conrad also disregards tense sequence in the sentence:

But to soothe your uneasiness I will point out again that an Irrelevant world would be very amusing if the women take care to make it as charming....

According to Coleman, Polish "finds nothing wrong with Conrad's sentence; a sequence which in normal English would require that

the "would be" of the protasis of this condition be followed by "would take care" in the apodosis. (p. 467)

Coleman then hits upon the sentence:

Like a bird which secretly should have  
lost its faith in the high virtue of  
flying

and gives it to an educated Pole who translates it into Polish as, "Jak ptak, który w głębi serca (potojemnie, w cichości) utraciłby wiarę w wysoką cnotę latania (lotu)", (p. 467) As it is, the sentence in Polish reflects the educated Pole's tendency to use the conditional mood of the verb utracić, "to lose", instead of the future tense.

Coleman would also attribute Conrad's eccentric choice of words and "his turns of speech" to the fact that in these cases his English is tainted by Polish. Here, however, Coleman treads on treacherous ground. He cites two verbs used by Conrad in a "peculiar" way. These are the verbs regret and arrive in

The savings had been coming in to the very last moment. And he regretted them.

He had arrived to regard them as his own by a sort of mystical persuasion. (pp. 467 - 8)

In both cases, Coleman sees the influence of Polish. It is true that an Englishman would say "and he regretted the loss," in the first sentence, and "He had come to regard," in the second; still, these examples cannot be explained solely as the influence of Polish. In French, the verb regretter can also mean, "éprouver de la peine d'avoir pas ou de n'avoir plus." Likewise, "he had arrived to regard them," has the French equivalent, "Il en arriva (or Il en est arrivé) à les considérer." Conrad, as will soon be pointed out, was quite conversant with spoken and written French.

Coleman finally suggests that looseness of sentence structure and word-order might be due to Polish influence. He mentions some nine examples of such "loose" constructions which



he believes to have some touch of the "sonorousness of literary Polish" about them. In this last point, however, he seems to be at loggerheads with Korf who, as already pointed out, believes that Conrad could never master literary Polish. (1)

Whatever the influence of Polish on Conrad's prose might be, I believe that its importance should not be over-stressed. For one thing, a Frenchman might attribute it all to the influence of his language on Conrad. Indeed, some of them have already attempted something of this sort. For another, Conrad himself, as already mentioned (2), frequently asserted that he wrote and thought in English. I believe that had he but cared to study an English grammar book, many of the controversial grammatical constructions in his novels would not be where they are now. (3)

Conrad left Poland for France late in the year 1874. He was barely seventeen at that time. For an ambitious young man of his calibre, intent on making his fortune, France was the natural place he would head for. At that time French culture permeated the upper social strata of most European countries. Of the relations between France and the Poland of Conrad's time Visiak has this to say:

By far the most popular foreign country among the Polish educated classes in Conrad's early days was France. (4)

Born to a noble family, Conrad could not help being steeped in French culture from his early childhood. His father translated Hugo's Les Travailleurs de la Mer, together with some works

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(1) See p. 56 supra.

(2) See p. 55 supra.

(3) In a letter to the Belgian man of letters, Joseph de Smet, Conrad wrote on 23rd January 1911, "But "mastered" is not the right word; I should have said "acquired". I've never opened an English grammar in my life." Cf. L.L., Vol.II, p.125.

(4) Visiak, 1955 : 55

by De Vigny. Recalling these early incidents of his life, Conrad remarks in A Personal Record:

Since the age of five I have been a great reader, as is not perhaps wonderful in a child who was never aware of learning to read. At ten years of age I had read much of Victor Hugo and other romantics. (1)

Again, in a letter dated 14th December 1922, he wrote to George Keating:

Apart from Polish my youth has been fed on French and English literature.

...  
I am a child, not of a savage but of a chivalrous tradition, and if my mind took a tinge from anything, it was from French romanticism perhaps. (2)

He also recalls how he was taught French by his governess when he was hardly five years old. Indeed, he never forgot her words to him when he had to part with her. "N'oublie pas ton Français", were the governess's parting words to the young Conrad, who had to leave with his mother for their exile in Russia.

Despite the fact that French was his first foreign language, a language he continued to practise and use for a considerable period of his life, Conrad never attempted anything of real merit in French, apart from a few letters. The fact remains, however, that French, more than Polish, shows through most of his writings.

In an attempt to explain the reason behind his ultimate preference for English over French as a means of expression, Conrad, in his Author's Note to A Personal Record, wrote:

....though I knew French fairly well and was familiar with it from infancy, I would have been afraid to attempt expression in a language so perfectly "crystallized". (3)

In other words, Conrad found in English expressive qualities that French, for all its perfection, could not afford. What gives

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(1) P.R., p. 70

(2) L.L., Vol. II, pp. 288 - 9

(3) P.R., p. vii



ponderous weight to Conrad's statement is that his two earliest works, The Congo Diary and Almayer's Folly, were written in English.

A stylistic study of his language, however, should neither underrate nor overstress his borrowings from French. I believe that his indebtedness to French has its conscious and unconscious side. Thus, in matters of technique, Conrad's indebtedness to some French writers is a possibility that cannot be easily refuted. This, together with his deliberate use of French idioms for purposes of characterisation, or of adding an air of finesse to his settings, constitute the conscious side of his indebtedness to French. On the other hand, there are those idiomatic borrowings from French which, one may safely assume, were unconsciously resorted to, due to Conrad's reluctance to open an English grammar. (1)

Of those French writers who exercised an influence on Conrad, Baines singles out Flaubert and Maupassant for being Conrad's real "masters". (2) Like Baines, Kirschner detects a striking affinity between Almayer's Folly and Flaubert's Madame Bovary. (3) Still, Conrad denies any indebtedness to Flaubert or Maupassant in his letter of the 7th June 1918.

You say that I have been under the formative influence of Madame Bovary. In fact, I read it after finishing A.F., as I did all the other works of Flaubert, and anyhow, my Flaubert is the Flaubert of St. Antoine and Ed(ucation): Sent(imentale): and that only from the point of view of the rendering of concrete things and visual impressions. I thought him marvellous in that respect. I don't think I learned anything from him. (4)

Faced with such conflicting evidence, one feels at a loss as to whom one should really believe: Conrad or his biographers and critics.

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- (1) Although Conrad is on record as saying that "all my work is produced unconsciously", such a remark applies to thematic or artistic features other than style. Cf. L.L., Vol I, p. 181, (letter to Edward Garnett, 24 Sept. 1895)
- (2) Baines, 1971 : 181
- (3) Kirschner, 1968 : 185 - 91
- (4) L.L., Vol.II, p. 206

On the other hand, Conrad shows his appreciation of Maupassant in the following manner:

The work of Maupassant's hands is honest. He thinks sufficiently to concrete his fearless conclusions in illuminative instances. He renders them with <sup>his</sup> exact knowledge of the means and that absolute devotion to the aim of creating a true effect - which is art. He is the most accomplished of narrators. (1)

Still, Conrad does not explicitly acknowledge Maupassant's influence on him. Nor does he admit any marked influence of writers like Daudet or Anatole France. But this has not stopped scholars from establishing marked affinities between him and these writers, especially from the literary standpoint.

When all is said and done, even a cursory reading of most of Conrad's novels will underline the fact that French idioms and expressions are there for everyone to see; whereas Polish influences cannot be perceived except by those conversant in Polish. The obvious explanation is that Conrad must have realised the dignity and worldwide prestige of French as opposed to Polish, which was and still is a language that has not ventured beyond its territorial boundaries. This is why we find French and not Polish being spoken by Frenchmen like Peyrol of the Rover, Martin Decoud of Nostromo, and the Russian Razumov of Under Western Eyes.

While one would expect the French lieutenant of Lord Jim and Martin Decoud, the Parisian-minded dilettante of Nostromo, to slip now and again into French as an indication of their bilingualism, one would not as readily expect Mr. Vladimir of the Secret Agent to do the same thing. In the first instance, Conrad resorts to French to add that realistic touch to his characterisation which he might have thought quite essential under the circumstances. In the second, however, it seems that Conrad resorts to French to convey to

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(1) N.L.L., p. 31



his readers that air of finesse in speech that people in high positions laid a claim to.

One of the first critics to spot what he calls "gallicisms in Conrad" is, perhaps, J.M. Stewart, who is of the opinion that "numerous oddities can be dug out of his prose, and many of them are gallicisms." (1) Stewart finds it hard to believe that Conrad translated from the French in view of Conrad's repeated denial of such "false" allegations. (2) He nevertheless believes that Conrad is greatly indebted to the French literary tradition. (3)

Stewart underlines the following linguistic borrowings from French. These include, "the celebrated case of the three horsemen 'arrested' in the course of a journey" in Conrad's Mostromo. According to Stewart, Conrad means to say that "the three men came to a halt". In this case, arrested would be a literal translation of the French "s'arrêter". But this is to ignore the fact that one of the possible meanings of the word in English is "to stop", "to bring to a standstill". The contention that a word as used by Conrad does not figure largely in the everyday language of the English people does not mean that he translated from the French. It might rather indicate his determination to exploit to the full the linguistic potentialities of the word. It also testifies to the authenticity of what Edward Garnett said about Conrad's use of words that he had never heard spoken. (4)

Stewart also cites that sentence from The Secret Agent where the word conscience is used in the sense of "consciousness." Here, however, Stewart is justified in his suspicion, for one would not say in English, "A woman has no conscience of how little she had audibly said". However, it seems that, as a multi-lingual, Conrad

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(1) Stewart, 1968 : 20

(2) L.L., Vol. II, p. 206

(3) Stewart, 1968 : 20

(4) See p. 49 supra.

could not help this interference of his first foreign language in his English. Besides, to capitalise on Conrad's unconscious use of some ten or twenty French words in a novel of at least 150,000 words like Notstromo would be absurd.

As I have already pointed out, French influence on Conrad's English has its conscious and unconscious aspects. Let us now examine Conrad's The Rover so that we can determine in a more effective way the extent of Conrad's borrowings from French.

I have chosen to analyse The Rover for three reasons. Firstly, it is a novel about France. Secondly, apart from the setting which is in and somewhere around the approaches to the port of Toulon, all the major characters are French. Thirdly, it is Conrad's last complete novel, and as such, what linguistic borrowings one would unearth would be those which Conrad, consciously or not, could not dispense with for more than a quarter of a century of an active literary career.

On the conscious level, Conrad uses French words because no English word would be quite equivalent in meaning to the word used in the context. Thus, words like sans-culotte and gendarme which he uses in reference to Scevola and other military people cannot be rendered in English in one or two words. The word sans-culotte, especially, is used to refer to those soldiers of the French revolution who wore a special type of tight trousers that distinguished them from other soldiers past and present. (R. pp. 22, 211)

The novel is interspersed with many other French words which Conrad could have easily translated into English, but which he, for some artistic reason, integrated into the texture of his prose. Of these one can mention words like citoyen (p. 3); chef d'escadre (p. 75); salle (p. 79); fermiere (p. 48); sacré Anglais (p. 3); la belle France (p. 207); doucement (p. 67), etc.



The thing to be noted about these French words is that most, if not all, are quite comprehensible to the average educated English reader. We also notice that Conrad usually renders into English those problematical expressions which he feels to be beyond the grasp of the average reader. Scévola is always referred to as "le buveur de sange"; but this is soon dropped for the English equivalent, "blood drinker".

This method of continual resort to French words has the advantage of constantly reminding the reader of the theme of the novel, which is that of Napoleonic France. It also helps Conrad maintain that air of verisimilitude with regard to setting and character portrayal.

Generally speaking, it could be said that conversational French was a mark of finesse or polite affectation that novelists like Ford, Galsworthy, and Henry James used in their novels for purposes of character delineation. Consequently, it seems unfair to reproach Conrad with something that other English novelists freely indulged in.

Conrad consciously uses French words in an Anglicised form, so to speak, as when he translates the mission Real is entrusted with as, "You will make up a packet of dispatches and pretended private letters as if from officers..." (p. 112) Now, Conrad uses the word pretended in the French sense of "pretendu", which in English would be rendered as faked. Whether Conrad uses the word in the full knowledge that he is using an un-English word just to emphasise the foreign nature of the dispatch, or he uses it because he strongly believes pretended to be a synonym of faked one cannot be sure. A few lines later he uses faked instead in, "all these faked letters and dispatches."

Sometimes his conscious use of some English words seems to indicate a desire on his part to exploit to the full the linguistic

potentialities of these words. The word arrest is used by Conrad on four different occasions in The Rover. In the first instance, the word is used in the sense of "to check or stay":

The sound of the mule's hoofs outside caused Peyrol to start but the woman arrested him. (p. 21)

In the second instance, it is used in the sense of "bring to a standstill":

With his head just protruding from under the half deck forward, arrested on all fours... (p. 123)

In the third instance, it is used in the sense of "attract":

But that did not arrest his attention. (p. 214)

In the fourth instance, it is used in the sense of "stop":

He arrested her with a raised hand. (p. 149)

It should be noted that the OED cites all four alternatives among the possible meanings of the word. Still, critics intent on pointing out French influences on Conrad's English would have us believe that such uses of the word have been inspired by the French arrêter or s'arrêter.

In some other cases, however, Conrad uses words that smack of possible translation from the French as in:

Peyrol got up out of his way, but could not restrain himself from asking ... (p. 66)

Here Conrad means to say that Peyrol could not help asking. The way he puts it seems to indicate direct translation from the French "se défendre de", "s'empêcher de", though not necessarily from "se restreindre à".

Other possible French borrowings occur in sentences like:

That doesn't advance you very much, "growled old Peyrol. (p. 11)

He had overstepped the line. (p. 213)

The first sentence seems to be a literal translation of the French, "Ça ne vous avance en rien", while the second is an exact rendering of the French, "Il avait dépassé la ligne". Still, in both cases



one feels that the English wording of the sentences has nothing wrong with it. It could even be argued that Conrad merely wants to enrich the language of his choice.

The same thing can be said in justification of Conrad's use of the word consummate in the sense of "perpetrate" in

Yes, in the days before the crime was consummated... (p. 32)

or of the word came in the sense of "occurred" in:

It came to him that he had never cared for any plunder that fell into his hands. (p. 35)

On the unconscious level, Conrad uses some few words or idioms that betray a marked French influence. Thus for him to write:

"Have you ever tasted of prison, Peyrol?", he asked suddenly... (p. 73)

we realise that the verb tasted of is an unmistakable rendering of the French "gouter de".

Again, when he uses tell to instead of "say to" in the sentence:

He personally could not - or perhaps would not - tell even to himself... (p. 71)

Conrad is here translating the French dire à soi-même into the English tell to, a practice which no English writer would tolerate.

One last such use occurs when he tells us:

Peyrol sat as serious as a judge. "You haven't much to make a living of," he delivered himself at last. (p. 17)

where he uses the word deliver in its French sense of "soulager"; a meaning which the English word has, but which seems eccentric in the context.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the above analysis is that while some of the stylistic eccentricities of The Rover can be ascribed to direct French influence, in most cases Conrad uses his words with the purpose of enriching the medium of expression at his disposal.

Despite the fact that a thorough investigation of any of Conrad's novels will not reveal greater indebtedness to the French linguistic tradition than has been attested in The Rover, some scholars seem to believe that the brightest gems in Conrad's English casket must of necessity be of French origin. One such assumption is that held by Y. Houvouet in his doctoral thesis on "French Linguistic and Literary Influences in the Works of Joseph Conrad". (1)

Houvouet's main contention is that "although Conrad's artistic and philosophical background was indeed European it was in the main French". (2) He tries to bear out his contention by saying:

It may be significant that 'the French', as Retinger recalls, 'were the first foreigners to acknowledge Conrad as a great writer' and that Conrad himself appointed G. Jean Aubry as his literary executor, a man whom he described as a 'Frenchman of Frenchmen'. (3)

This, however, is inconclusive evidence, especially as French recognition of Conrad's talent came after and not before he started writing.

Among the other reasons cited by Houvouet for Conrad's supposed preference for French is that he seems to have realised that "English was a language in which it was impossible to write a direct statement". (4) Here Houvouet is drawing on Ford's reminiscences in his book on Conrad, where he writes:

Conrad's indictment of the English language was this, that no English word is a word: that all English words are instruments for exciting blurred emotions. 'Oaken' in French means 'made of oak wood' - nothing more. 'Oaken' in English connotes innumerable moral attributes: it will connote stolidity, resolution, honesty, blond features, relative unbreakableness, absolute

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(1) Houvouet, 1971  
 (2) Ibid., p. 22  
 (3) Ibid.  
 (4) Ibid., p. 76



unbendableness - also made of oak.... The consequence is, that no English word has clean edges: a reader is always, for a fraction of a second, unconscious as to which meaning of the word the writer may intend. Thus, all English prose is blurred. (1)

Houvouet capitalises on Ford's statement, claiming that Conrad thought in French because of the language's "exactness", its clean edges and its comparative freedom from secondary connotations." (2) Such a statement, however, contradicts Conrad's declaration in his letter of the 7th June 1918 to Hugh Walpole:

You may take it from me that if I had not known English I wouldn't have written a line for print, in my life. C(lifford) and I were discussing the nature of the two languages and what I said was: that if I had been offered the alternative I would have been afraid to grapple with French, which is crystallised in the form of its sentences and therefore more exacting and less appealing. (3)

Contrary to what Houvouet suggests, it was the "blurred" quality of English that attracted Conrad. This is why Gurko rightly believes that English attracted Conrad, "because it expressed, to begin with, the nature of the universe as he conceived it. French remained incompatible with his metaphysics. English was by intrinsic character its perfect linguistic medium". (4)

Ignoring all evidence to the contrary, Houvouet proceeds to give us hundreds of examples from Conrad's novels in a bid to prove that Conrad thought out in French what he later rendered in English. Thus, he tells us that when in The Rover, Arlette calls Peyrol "a horrid sea-wolf", it is because she too "is speaking French and saying 'loup de mer'". (5) He believes that an Englishman would say "sea-dog" and not "sea-wolf". But Arlette is not English.

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- (1) Ford, 1924 : 214  
 (2) Houvouet, 1971 : 76  
 (3) L.L., Vol II, p. 206  
 (4) Gurko, 1965 : 61  
 (5) Houvouet, p. 66

Besides, any English dictionary would tell us that sea-wolf "can mean a large voracious fish, the bass, a viking or a pirate."

The fact that Conrad puts to good use the linguistic resources of English is thus interpreted as French influence.

Houvouet further observes:

One of Conrad's most frequent gallicisms stems from his confusion between 'resumer' and 'to resume' which he uses in the sense of the French word, i.e. 'to sum up'. (1)

He quotes many examples from Conrad's novels to this effect. It is true that the word as used by Conrad means "to sum up" as in the sentence from Hostromo cited by Houvouet, "The O.S.N. superintendent in Sulaco...was very proud of his Company's standing. He resumed it in saying..." (2). Still, among the possible meanings of the word in English are: "to begin again; to renew; to reoccupy; to take up again; to recommence; to summarise."

Houvouet also tells us that when Conrad uses sensible to in such contexts as, "The severity of that reproof did not affect Charles Gould, but he was sensible to the glances of others..." (3), he is definitely using a translated version of the French sensible à, since, according to Houvouet, "in these contexts one would expect 'sensitive to' in modern English." (4) Still, "sensitive to" is one of the possible meanings of the word sensible in English as the OED would tell us. Hence one may safely assume that a novelist who could easily enumerate some seven different meanings of the word oaken must have been fully aware of the possible connotations of the word sensible as, indeed, of many other words which Houvouet attributes to French influence.

More important still, is that Ford, the self-proclaimed finest stylist in English, uses the word sensible to in the sense of "sensitive to" when he observes that writers like himself and Conrad,

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(1) Ibid., p. 106

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid., p. 113

(4) Ibid., p.



"were not rigid even in their own methods. They were sensible to the fact that compromise is at all times necessary to the execution of a work of art." (1) Do we have to assume then that Ford, too, thought out in French what he later rendered in English? The point I would like to stress here is that Conrad's linguistic practice cannot be judged by modern linguistic standards alone. It has to be viewed within the linguistic context of his own times.

The third major element of Conrad's linguist<sup>-ic</sup> background is English; a language he started to learn when he was over twenty. Thus, while he was a native speaker of Polish, and whereas his family took good care to teach him French from the early age of five, he acquired his English only after he had signed as an able-bodied seaman in the English steamer, "The Mavis", on the 24th April 1878.

Before boarding "The Mavis", however, Conrad had come into contact with the English language on two different occasions. In A Personal Record, he tells us that late in the year 1873, he stayed at a hotel at Hospenthal where he soon discovered that

The place was really a boarding-house for some English engineers engaged at the works of the St. Gothard Tunnel; and I could listen my fill to the sounds of the English language as far as it is used at a breakfast-table by men who do not believe in wasting many words on the mere amenities of life. (2)

The first English phrase he had ever heard addressed to him, however, was that made up of the three words "look out there" shouted at him by "the big fat sailor" of the "James Westoll", the first English ship, "on whose side I ever laid my hand." (3) That was late in 1874, soon after he arrived in Marseilles to work in the

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(1) Ford, 1924 : 211

(2) P.R., p. 39

(3) Ibid., p. 135

French Merchant Navy; a career that extended from 1874 to the time he boarded "The Mavis" in 1878.

Nothing would better illustrate Conrad's early fascination with the language of his choice than the way he describes the impact of the last-mentioned event on him.

A few strokes brought us alongside (the James Westoll) and it was then that, for the very first time in my life, I heard myself addressed in English - the speech of my secret choice, of my future, of long friendships, of the deepest affections, of hours of toil and hours of ease, and of solitary hours too, of books read, of thoughts pursued, of remembered emotions - of my very dreams! (1)

What interests us most in the above statement is that Conrad makes it crystal clear that for him English was the language of "books read" and "thoughts pursued". In the light of this and similar other declarations, the claim that Conrad first thought out in French or Polish what he later on rendered in English would not stand close investigation. It would stand more to reason to say that Polish or French interference in his English was something that the multi-lingual novelist could not help at some time or other in his eventful career as a novelist.

As to the way he picked up his English after joining the British Merchant Service, Conrad himself told Mégroz in their interview of the year 1922:

As I had always been a reading boy I remained a reader after going to sea, and reading is the best way to pick up <sup>any</sup> language. But I still absolutely refused to learn grammar, and I picked up my first English by hearing it spoken on colliers along the East Coast. (2)

This simply means that anyone wishing to investigate the language of Conrad should seek its possible sources in the language of the seamen Conrad worked with, as well as in the language of the English writers with whose works Conrad must have been conversant.

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(1) P.R., p. 136

(2) Mégroz, 1931 : 29



The same idea is repeated in that letter of the 23rd January 1911 which Conrad wrote to Joseph de Smet: "my first English reading was the Standard newspaper, and my first acquaintance by the ear with it was the speech of fishermen, shipwrights and sailors of the East Coast." (1) His dedication to the language of his choice is sharply thrown into relief by the fact that, in less than eighteen months, he was able to pass the first examination for officer in the Merchant Service in January 1880, "including a viva-voce of more than two hours." (2)

But since Conrad persisted in declaring that he never opened an English grammar, it seems quite likely that his English was of that self-constructed sort that tried to emulate the writings of those English writers, whose books helped build up that stupendous word-power which finally enabled him to start work on Almayer's Folly. It is no exaggeration to say that the school of the English Merchant Service was the first educational institution wherein Conrad was initiated into the secrets of the "blurred" English language; a process that was complemented by his vast reading of English literature.

Conrad never denied the difficulty he had with English as a medium of expression. This fact is also corroborated by his friend, Galsworthy, who tells us that Conrad "had to subdue to the purposes of his imagination a language that was not native to him..." (3) The equally impressive fact is that Conrad racked his brains for the right word.

This last point can be vividly illustrated by what Conrad had to say with regard to the imprecise language used by journalists:

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(1) L.L., Vol. II, pp. 124 - 5

(2) Ibid.

(3) Galsworthy, 1927 : 89

Before an anchor can ever be raised, it must be let go; and this perfectly obvious truism brings me at once to the subject of the degradation of the sea language in the daily press of this country.

Your journalist, whether he takes charge of a ship or a fleet, almost invariably "casts" his anchor. Now, an anchor is never cast, and to take a liberty with technical language is a crime against the clearness, precision, and beauty of perfected speech. (1)

It was this perfectionist tendency on his part that elicited from Constance Garnett the suggestive words:

A letter of yours which Edward showed me lately has been the warmest and most appreciative praise I have received for my Turgenev and frankly I feel that praise from you who have such mastery of language is worth the praise of forty English reviewers. For I feel, as I have always told Edward, that your brain does not think English thoughts, - as Turgenev's own - it is more delicate, more subtle, richer and more varied than ours. Your use of adjectives - so chosen, fastidious, often ironical reminds me again and again of Turgenev's manner. It is really you that ought to have had the task of translating him. (2)

But even if he had so wished, Conrad would not have been able to translate Turgenev simply because he knew no Russian. It is my belief that whereas Conrad's active sea life on board French and English ships from 1874 till 1894 provided him with the language he was later on to use in his characterisation of seamen and in his descriptions of life at sea, it was his extensive reading of English literature that provided him with the medium he needed for the more ambitious descriptions of exotic settings and other more sophisticated characters.

Indeed, Professor Sherry seems to endorse this view when he tells us that Conrad's readings in Lombroso might have been behind "his choice of features for the Professor of The Secret Agent." (3)

In like manner, Professor Sherry proves that Eastwick's Venezuela

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(1) M.S., p. 13

(2) L.C.; p. 111

(3) Sherry, 1971 : 274 - 85



is behind Conrad's creation of Sir John in Nostromo, just as Frederick Benton Williams's On Many Seas: The Life and Exploits of a Yankee Soldier would account for the whole incident of the lighterful of silver. (1) On the other hand, Martin Decoud's portrait in Nostromo is seen to be a reflection of that of Carlos Martin who is mentioned near the beginning of Masterman's book, Seven Eventful Years in Paraguay. (2)

From among the English writers who could have influenced Conrad's English, one may cite the names of Shakespears; Marryat, Jane Austen, Dickens, Henry James, Galsworthy, Cunningham, Graham, Wells, Byron, Crane and Ford. It is against the background of the English written by these authors that Conrad's language should be investigated.

Conrad read Shakespeare, Marryat and Dickens in abridged Polish translations before he was ten years of age. (3) In A Personal Record, he recalls that his first introduction to English literature was at his father's hands, who translated Shakespeare's The Two Gentlemen of Verona. (4) His first introduction to literary English, however, came many years later when he started reading Anthony Trollop's novels in English. (5)

Of Dickens, Conrad tells us that Madame Delestang "used to make me think of Lady Dedlock in "Bleak House"". This last book Conrad defines as "a work of the master for which I have such an admiration, or rather such an intense and unreasoning affection, dating from the days of my childhood..." (6) Although critics usually put the stress on Dickens's literary influence on Conrad in matters relating to characterisation or sentimentalisation, his linguistic influence

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(1) Ibid., pp. 162 - 6

(2) Ibid., p. 165

(3) P.R., p. 70

(4) Ibid., p. 71

(5) Ibid.

(6) Ibid., p. 124

on Conrad is a possibility that should be taken into account in the present study.

On the other hand, Conrad's friendship with people like Cunningham Graham must have had its effect on his English. According to Watts, Arthur Symons "felt that Graham offered in his tales "a more exciting interest than perhaps any writer of the day, with the one exception of Joseph Conrad of whom his writings sometimes reminds (sic) me." (1)

Moreover, Conrad's collaboration with Ford is a well-known fact. It is worth mentioning that Conrad looked upon his friendship with Ford as a "lifelong habit - of which I am not ashamed, because he is a much better fellow than the world gives him credit for." (2)

The same thing can be said of Conrad's possible indebtedness to Wells, Symons and Henry James. Conrad's letters abound with references to his friends of the literary profession. He learned as much from their criticism of his works as from the examples they set him in writing in English. In a letter to Edward Garnett dated 13th February 1897 he states, "I have already read the book (James's Spoils of Poynton). It is as good as anything of his - almost - a story of love and wrongheadedness revolving round a houseful of artistic furniture." (3) As is quite obvious from this and similar declarations, Conrad not only read the works of his contemporaries, but he also read them critically. It stands very much to reason then to assume that these works affected his English in some way.

Aside from Polish, French and English Conrad's linguistic background seems to have been slightly influenced by his precarious familiarity with Malay, Italian and Spanish. Although Professor Sherry's Conrad's Eastern World<sup>(4)</sup> establishes beyond any doubt Conrad's

(1) L.C.G., p. 28

(2) L.L., Vol. II, p. 25, (Letter dated 20th October 1905 to Wells).

(3) L.C., p. 74

(4) Sherry, 1966



familiarity with the Malay way of life, there is little indication that Conrad knew more than a few words of Malay. However, what little he knew was enough to help him give his descriptions of the exotic settings that air of truth and authenticity they needed. Words like "Tuan", "Rajah Laut" and "Orang Blanda" might seem too few and sparsely distributed to deserve serious consideration; the fact remains, nevertheless, that they give to his works that touch of verisimilitude which no other English word could do if used instead.

The same thing can be said of Conrad's doubtful familiarity with Spanish and Italian. What few Spanish and Italian words that one comes across in novels like Nostromo and The Arrow of Gold seem to suggest that Conrad had a fairly good knowledge of both languages. Still, he is not known to have been conversant with either of them.

Conrad's linguistic background might be made up of more than three major elements; but it is my belief that an investigation of his style should be conducted mainly against the background of the English linguistic tradition. In the meantime, possible indebtedness to any of the other linguistic elements should not be totally overlooked; but neither should it be overemphasized. Only in this way can scholarly objectivity be maintained.

## Chapter III

PUNCTUATION

When, late in the year 1912, Max Beerbohm published a short story entitled "The Feast by Joseph Conrad", which he originally conceived as a parody of Conrad's "The Lagoon", he did not fail to reproduce some of the striking features of Conrad's style. The opening paragraph of Beerbohm's parody reads as follows:

The hut in which slept the white man was on a clearing between the forest and the river. Silence, the silence murmurous and unquiet of tropical night, brooded over the hut that, baked <sup>through</sup> by the sun, sweated a vapour beneath the cynical light of the stars. Mahamo lay rigid and watchful at the hut's mouth. In his upturned eyes, and along the polished surface of his lean body black and immobile, the stars were reflected, creating an illusion of themselves who are illusions. (1)

Beerbohm's 'aping' of Conrad's mode of expression is remarkable for the way it catches the spirit of the great novelist's stylistic peculiarities. It puts into sharp relief what has since been alternately called Conrad's "diffuse descriptions", (2) or "over-rhetorical" prose. (3).

Among the stylistic devices parodied by Beerbohm is Conrad's notorious manipulation of certain punctuation marks, especially commas, dashes and suspension points. Although Beerbohm did not attempt a scientific investigation of Conrad's style, his parody, which was mainly conceived in jest, is of some importance for us, if only because it helps underline the fact that a writer's "diffuse descriptions", or "overrhetorical style" is largely dependent on his careful use of punctuation marks. In order to make his meaning clear, or produce the desired rhetorical effect, he has to master the elusive art of punctuation. Indeed, one can safely say that,

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(1) Beerbohm, 1912 : 125 - 30

(2) Macy, 1906 : 697 - 702

(3) Said, 1966 : 3



like any other stylistic device of a writer's works, punctuation should be regarded as an individualistic trait.

To say that punctuation plays an important part in Conrad's style does not mean that it is the all important feature of his style. On the contrary, compared to other features, punctuation might seem to be the least important from the stylistic standpoint. It is mainly because I regard punctuation as an artistic device that I have decided to begin this study of Conrad's style with it. For I will suggest that punctuation marks are used by Conrad to reflect the subtle nuances of the spoken language. As such, some marks, especially his dashes and suspension points, might well be treated as the equivalent, on the graphic level, of those elements of paralanguage that are found on the spoken level of language.

It is to be regretted that whereas the prosodic and paralinguistic features of utterances have received adequate treatment from eminent linguists like Crystal and Quirk (1), no such attempt has so far been made to discover the psychologist behind the artist manipulating a certain set of punctuation marks. If the "non-verbal phonology" of an utterance (2) is to be investigated by the linguist who is intent on a complete description of the spoken language, there is no reason why a similar investigation of a writer's punctuation should not be conducted along the same descriptive lines. After all, punctuation marks can be as expressive on the graphic level of an utterance as those non-verbal features are on the phonic level. In other words, a writer's dashes, full-stops, commas, colons, etc., should be regarded as the graphic elements of this paralanguage, which should attempt to study, apart from the variations that can occur in respect of loudness, tempo and pitch in a given utterance, (3) a writer's manipulation of his punctuation

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(1) Crystal and Quirk, 1964 :

(2) Crystal and Quirk's equivalent for the "prosodic and paralinguistic features of an utterance." Cf. Ibid., p. 10

(3) Ibid.

marks. These last, I believe, are as indicative of a writer's personality as those other non-verbal features are of a speaker's psychology.

Despite the apparent dearth in the descriptive investigation of individual writers' use of punctuation marks, interest in this stylistic feature dates back to the days of the English dramatist, Ben Jonson whose The English Grammar (1640) contains a small chapter on punctuation, which he entitles "Of the Distinction of Sentences", and which can safely be regarded as the earliest extant treatment of the subject. (1)

From the beginning, Jonson was alive to the grammatical function of punctuation marks as lines of demarcation between one sentence and another. Although his division of sentences into perfect and imperfect - the former being distinguished by either a pause or a period, while the latter is characterised by a comma or semi-colon - might seem too arbitrary if judged by modern linguistic criteria, the tenacity with which he pursues his subject is really remarkable.

Of the then known punctuation marks, Jonson reserves a place of special prominence for the comma, colon and period which he believed to have been invented "as well for the speaker's ease, as for the plainer deliverance of the things spoken." (2) Jonson himself was particularly fond of the semi-colon, so much so indeed that his excessive use of it in his works can be looked upon as highly characteristic.

Jonson's treatment of the subject in his Grammar was meant to meet the needs of a growing number of readers who felt that, with English freeing itself from the inhibiting shackles of Latin-based inflexions, some sort of graphic symbols or marks should be invented, a system that would make it easier for them to discern

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(1) Jonson, 1947 : 551 - 3

(2) Ibid., p. 551.



the logical relationships among the different linguistic elements of a sentence.

T. F. Husband and M. A. Husband throw this last argument into relief when they tell us that "the Christian era was some centuries old before the practice (punctuation) was commonly adopted by scribes and copyists." (1) This they attribute to the fact that highly inflected languages like Greek and Latin "are to a great extent independent of the help that may be given by the division of a text into minute sections." (2)

Thus, so long as writers thought and wrote in Latin, they did not feel a pressing need for a system of marking that could clearly define the relations between the different parts of a sentence. It was only when authors attempted to render in English what they originally thought out in Latin that the real trouble began. For these authors were usually conversant with Latin, with the inevitable result that they imposed on their native tongue constructions which ultimately tended to make the meaning too vague and complicated for the average reader. Such a state of affairs necessitated the invention of a system of marking that could clear up ambiguity. Consequently, one can safely assume that in English prose style the marks of punctuation are signs devised with the purpose of performing in English some of the functions performed by inflexions in languages like Greek and Latin.

Jonson's pioneering attempt in this respect was followed by other endeavours (3) which sought to make it easy for the reader to understand the language in its written form. Still, one hallmark of such attempts which stretched over a period of more than two centuries - right to the beginning of the nineteenth century - is that the system of marking they advocated proved in the final

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(1) Husband and Husband, 1905 : 3

(2) Ibid., p. 33

(3) Cf. Monteith, 1704

analysis to be mainly grammatical, in the sense that stress was laid on the elucidation of the different relations between one element of the sentence and another, rather than on the exploration of the subtle nuances of an utterance beyond its bare meaning. This might have been due to the lingering influence of Latin on English composition, an influence that culminated in the birth of the neo-classical doctrine of the Enlightenment. So it can be said that when Wordsworth and the other romantic rebels later on advocated a return to the more simple diction of everyday language, they were, among other things, calling for the establishment of a system that would deliver the language of the Latin-based heavy constructional convention of marking.

It was with this intention in mind that John Wilson wrote his Treatise on English Punctuation towards the middle of the nineteenth century. Wilson's Treatise is important not only because it was thought to be the locus classicus on the subject till the end of the century, but also for the possible impact it might have had on the writings of the early Conrad and some of his contemporary novelists.

(1)

Wilson introduces his subject with something highly reminiscent of the argument of some modern linguists in defence of what is known as paralangue:

... as oral speech has its tones and inflections, its pauses and its emphases, and other variations of voice to give greater expression to the thoughts which spoken words represent, and to produce on the mind of the hearer a more rapid and intense impression than lifeless enunciation could effect; so written or printed language is usually accompanied by marks or points, to enable the reader to comprehend at a glance the precise and determinate sense of the author, - a sense which without these marks, would in many instances be gathered only by an elaborate and painful process and very often be misunderstood. (2)

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(1) Wilson, 1856

(2) Ibid., pp. 1 - 2



For Wilson, punctuation "is the art of dividing a literary composition into sentences and parts of sentences, by means of points, for the purpose of exhibiting the various combinations, connections and dependencies of words." (1) His Treatise acquires special significance for the way it underlines the rhetorical effect of punctuation. For whereas previous grammarians could only discern the grammatical function of punctuation, Wilson draws a distinction between the grammatical and the rhetorical functions of the art of marking.

According to Wilson, a punctuation mark is grammatical when it focuses attention on the meaning of a sentence by delineating the logical relationship between its parts. To this category belong the comma, the semicolon, the colon and the period. A mark is rhetorical on the other hand when it aids "delivery", that is when it helps the speaker produce a certain rhetorical effect on the hearer, or for that matter on the reader if we regard written language as the graphic representation of a writer's interior monologue. Marks of interrogation, exclamations, parenthesis, and the dash are relegated to the second category, with the important reservation that they also have some grammatical function. Thus they are

... rhetorical, in proportion to the degree in which they exhibit the force and intensity of a style that is rhetorical in its structure; but they are also grammatical because they often serve to indicate, in connection with other marks, the natural construction, and sense of the passages in which they occur. (2)

In addition to these two categories, Wilson speaks of those other marks which "bear more relation to letters and syllables than to words and sentences." (3) These he calls "letter and syllabic marks", which include quotations and what he calls "miscellaneous

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(1) Ibid., p. 2

(2) Ibid., p. 171

(3) Ibid., p. 176

points". Marks like hyphens, apostrophes, brackets and reference marks are part and parcel of this last class.

Conrad could have been influenced by Wilson's views on the subject, for he paid much attention to typographical corrections as will soon be shown. But he could also have been affected by what can be called the psychological approach to punctuation, an approach which was much in vogue at the turn of the century, and which can be regarded as a prototype of the modern liberal views on linguistics.

This approach acknowledges that punctuation marks have both a grammatical and a rhetorical function to perform. Still, unlike Wilson who seems too dogmatic and arbitrary in his views, the psychological approach leaves much room for the individual ingenuity of authors on the ground that it has something to do with the author's 'psyche' or 'gestalt'.

The philosophy behind the new approach was summed up in an article by Garrison in the July number of the Atlantic Monthly, 1906. (1) Garrison's main thesis is that "no two masters of the art would punctuate the same page in the same way;" and that an author's punctuation is "largely determined by his style, or in other words, is personal and individual." (2) He further believes that "if any composition is so pointed as to convey the author's meaning, it is well pointed. If it is, in addition, free from all ambiguity, it is still better pointed." (3)

A few years later, the American C.H. Ward called for what he termed "a crusade against confusion" and differentiated between two types of punctuation. For him, "Genius manipulates punctuation

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(1) Garrison, 1906 : 233 - 9

(2) Ibid., p. 233

(3) Ibid., p. 239



for its artistic purposes, but the system we teach is quite mechanical and arbitrary as the Morse code, quite as exact and completely defined." (1)

The same view was held by Summey in his classic book on Modern Punctuation. Summey declared himself to be an opponent of the "formalistic" and "legislative" approach to the subject out of a deep-rooted conviction that "punctuation is not a matter of mechanical correctness; it is an art." (2) His main contention is summed up in the following quotation:

The fundamental truth is that all structural punctuation marks in straight reading matter are rhetorical points, because they are at once grouping points and (intentionally or otherwise) emphasis points, with effects on movement. (3)

Summey was also of the opinion that "an experienced writer means a point as definitely as he means a word." (4)

A more interesting theory on the artistic values of punctuation has recently been put forward by E.L. Thorndike in an essay on "The Psychology of Punctuation" which puts into sharper focus the tenets of the whole psychological approach to the subject. Thorndike believes that punctuation influences "emphasis, movement and style." (5) He also believes that punctuation is closely related to the writer's personality. He goes so far as to say that "it will be an easy task for any explorer of personalities who is hopeful of important results from any honest examination of symptoms to compare punctuation profiles with biographical facts concerning authors." (6) Still, apart from its suggestiveness, Thorndike's essay fails to show us in a concrete way how punctuation is a reflection of some personal traits of certain authors.

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(1) Ward, 1915 : 452

(2) Summey, 1919 : 6

(3) Ibid., p. 25

(4) Ibid., p. 91

(5) Thorndike, 1948 : 222-8

(6) Ibid., p. 228

In the following pages I will investigate four punctuation marks in Conrad's second novel, An Outcast of the Islands. These are the full-stop, the comma, the dash and the suspension points. This is followed by a statistical account of the punctuation marks in eight other novels extending over the whole period of Conrad's stylistic development. Comparison with four of Conrad's contemporaries will help place him in the stylistic context of the age.

Conrad was a stylist whose constant preoccupation with "le mot juste" made him resort to more than one stylistic device to achieve his end. At one time, he would breathe new life into the almost obsolete meanings of some words. At another, he would draw on the Biblical overtones of some others. His dedication to matters of style shows up in many of his letters. One such letter deserves to be quoted at length; for, here, his fondness for "le mot juste" is too obvious to need further comment. The letter was written in September 1910 to Mrs. E.L. Sanderson as a stylistic review of her Some South African Sketches. The latter part of it reads as follows:

I hope you won't suspect me of the intention of teaching you. You have your own style, your own expression. The alterations on the page are merely illustrative of my saying that your prose wants a little "bracing up". For instance A is a simple re-arrangement, the picture of the lilies starring (sic), etc., etc., being completed before the effect of surprise is mentioned. In B and D, I have erased a few words which detract from the actuality of the impression.

...

G. I re-arranged this passage. I think the construction is better thus. In descriptive writing one must either evoke images or make statements. The words strange presence are neither image nor statement. Power, instead of presence, is I think all right. Compelling I don't like very much. In view of what follows fatal might do.

Lower down I change shores for birthright. Less precise certainly but a more suggestive word. (1)

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(1) L.L., Vol. II, pp. 117-8.



Nor could he as a stylist neglect the important question of punctuation. Indeed, his insistence on doing for himself the proof-reading of his works testifies to the peculiar attention he paid to the slightest details of his style. In one of these letters to his American publisher, Doubleday, he says:

Besides, I felt that in justice to myself, and also to your efforts on my behalf, I must see the proof sheets; not for material alterations, but for the exact setting of the text. I felt this the more because your printers would be setting up from a typewritten copy which I myself had not seen, but which, I am sure, contains the usual amount of errors and mistakes of a kind that cannot be easily discovered by the most conscientious of proof readers. (1)

In a more revealing letter he tells Algernon Methuen:

I am very sensible of your kind attention in warning me of the 2nd impression in time for corrections. There will be five - 3 caused by my faulty proof reading and 2 typographical errors. You will find them on the enclosed sheet of paper, clearly set out. (2)

This letter is significant in more than one respect. It proves that Conrad did the proof reading for the first impression of the novel in question, The Secret Agent. It also proves that he himself spotted the two typographical errors and that he corrected them "on the enclosed sheet of paper". The fact that he attributes the faults in the first instance to his "own faulty proof-reading" might be just a courteous attempt not to put the blame for it on his printers. The important thing to note, however, is that it was he himself who pointed out and corrected the errors.

It could be argued that punctuation is the main preoccupation of printers. This cannot be true all along the line. For one

(1) Ibid., p. 214. (Letter dated 21st Dec. 1918). In the same letter Conrad tells his publisher: "I am perfectly aware that I had no book proofs from you for the previous books, but this was only because then the setting up at Garden City was done from printed texts which were already carefully revised by me." (Cf. pp. 214 - 5)

(2) L.L., Vol. II, pp. 38 - 9 (Letter of 7th Nov. 1906)

thing, Wilson in his Treatise tells us that printers (at least those of Conrad's time) felt loath to use dashes for certain technical reasons. (1) For another, in his essay on "Coordination and the Comma", Raymond Miller is of the opinion that "mechanical rules are uniform in their operation and take no account of subtle variations; least of all do they meddle with the interrelation of independent clauses." (2) Besides, we have seen from Conrad's letters how he insisted on correcting the typographical errors by himself. And Conrad himself acknowledges the principle of change or evolution in his style where he tells Barrett Clark:

My attitude to subjects and expressions, the angles of vision, my methods of composition, will, within limits, be always changing - not because I am unstable or unprincipled but because I am free. (3)

To understand the importance of punctuation in Conrad's works, let us try to unravel the stylistic complexities of this unpunctuated sentence from Under Western Eyes. Razumov is now in General T--'s room where,

Filling a corner on a black pedestal stood a quarter life size smooth limbed bronze of an adolescent figure running

Conrad punctuates this short sentence in the following manner:

Filling a corner, on a black pedestal, stood a quarter-life-size smooth-limbed bronze of an adolescent figure, running. (U.W.E.p.43)

The placing/punctuated version is necessary because it puts into relief the relationship between the head noun phrase of the prepositional phrase, of an adolescent figure, and the modifying participle, running. The effect is both grammatical and rhetorical. It is grammatical because it points out the close relationship between the noun figure and the reduced relative clause running, which could have easily been used in the attributive position in something

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(1) Wilson, 1856 : 237

(2) Miller, 1908 : 317

(3) L.L.. Vol.II. pp. 204 - 5. (Letter of ...)



like, "of a running adolescent figure". It is rhetorical because it draws the reader's attention to the syntactically isolated modifier. First, one cannot help feeling that it was added to the sentence as an after-thought, in which case the dash would be much more effective. Second, it is elliptical in nature: it stands for something like, "which was running". On the other hand, the remaining commas in the sentence underline the syntactic relationship between the foregrounded postmodifying participial phrase, filling a corner, the adverbial phrase, on a black pedestal, and the rest of the sentence. A less complicated reordering of the sentence would read:

A quarter-life-size smooth-limbed bronze of a running adolescent figure stood on a black pedestal, filling a corner.

Here again the comma is necessary to indicate the syntactic relationship between the "running figure" and its postmodifying phrase, filling a corner, which, in the absence of the comma, would be taken for a modifier of pedestal rather than of the whole figure (pedestal included).

As An Outcast of the Islands will be constantly referred to in connection with other features of Conrad's style in the coming chapters of this study, I will restrict myself in the present instance to the three closing chapters of the novel (52 pages). Let us first begin with Conrad's fullstops. Here is how Conrad describes the meeting between Almayer and the Malay, Mahmat, who is going to carry Joanna to her white husband, Willems:

Almayer examined the man thoughtfully. How could he find out whether ...he had it! Lately he had employed that man and his two brothers as extra boatmen to carry stores, provisions, and new axes to a camp of rattan cutters some distance up the river. A three days' expedition. He would test him now in that way. (p. 317)

Here we get four full-stops, each of which is supposed to mark the end of a separate sentence. Still, of the four utterances, three

only contain finite verbs, whereas the penultimate one contains no verbs at all, A three days' expedition. As such, the phrase is inseparably connected to the preceding sentence, and is equivalent to a sentential relative clause like, "which is a three days' expedition". Hence nothing heavier than a comma after river should separate it therefrom.

When Lingard finally deserts Willems to his inevitable fate, the omniscient narrator has this to say:

The bitter peace of the abandoned clearings entered his heart, in which nothing could live now but the memory and hate of the past. Not remorse. In the breast of a man possessed by the masterful consciousness of his individuality..., there could be no place for such a feeling as that of remorse. (p. 327)

Here, again, we feel that the utterance, Not remorse, is so closely connected to the preceding sentence that nothing but a comma or a semi-colon should separate them. Still, as in the preceding example, Conrad uses the full-stop, a practice similar to that of free-lance journalists. In both cases, the use of the full-stop is a rhetorical device aimed at spotlighting one of the many particulars of the statement conveyed by the sentence.

Sometimes the full-stop precedes an utterance which would be treated as a complete sentence in its own right, were it not for the absence of one or more of the syntactical items which the traditional concept of a sentence requires. Describing Willems's hallucinations with regard to his longed-for escape from Sambir, the omniscient narrator says:

He had a terrible vision of shadowless horizons where the blue sky and the blue sea met; or a circular and blazing emptiness where a dead tree and a dead man drifted together, endlessly, up and down, upon the brilliant undulations of the straits. No ships there. Only death. And the river led to it. (p. 230)

Obviously, the first sentence with its main clause and several



dependent clauses is <sup>so</sup> closely connected with the second utterance, No ship there, that only a semicolon together with some concessive co-ordinator like but and the two items, there were, are needed to make them one sentence; in which last case the utterance, Only death, would require just something like, there was, to make it a complete sentence. The conversational tone of the passage seems to justify this peculiar use of the full-stop, for, in a sense, the passage could be construed as a mere reporting of the interior dialogue that went on in Willems's mind on that occasion.

At other times, the full-stop is used as a means of singling out one word in the sentence for special emphasis:

He could stretch out his hands, he could call for aid, for support, for sympathy, for relief - and nobody would come. Nobody. There was no one there - but that woman. (p. 337)

Here, the main reason for the use of the full-stop after the noun, Nobody, is to emphasize the outcast's sheer despair and utter disillusionment.

In the following example the full-stop is used after a clause of some thirty words which, nevertheless, contains no finite verb at all:

And he could see things there! Things charming and splendid passing before him in a magic unrolling of resplendent pictures; pictures of events brilliant, happy, inexpressibly glorious, that would make up her life. (p. 320-)

The whole utterance "Things charming... her life" is simply a clause expanding the object of the preceding sentence. It is nothing but a series of modifiers that are syntactically related to that object. Still, the utterance ends with a full-stop, as though it could be a complete sentence in its own right. The two sentences would be appropriately connected through either a comma or a dash. But, because Conrad is intent on heightening the rhetorical tone of the

passage, he ends the first sentence with an exclamation mark; and having done this, he has no choice but to treat the following clause as an independent unit.

As opposed to these cases where the full-stop is used where it is least needed, there are many examples where the use of the full-stop is deferred to give the descriptive novelist more elbow room to cram more and more details into the texture of his over-taxed prose. Indeed, there is not one single descriptive tableau in the early novels that would not be broken up into twice or thrice the number of the sentences it is made up of. Here is one such tableau made up of one extra-long sentence:

And as he stood in the still night, lost in his enchanting and gorgeous dreams, while the ascending, thin thread of tobacco smoke spread into a faint bluish cloud above his head, he appeared strangely impressive and ecstatic: like a devout and mystic worshipper, adoring, transported and mute; burning incense before a shrine, a diaphanous shrine of a child-idol with closed eyes; before a pure and vaporous shrine of a small god - fragile, powerless, unconscious and sleeping. (p.320)

Reading this seemingly ever-expanding sentence, the reader feels that the full-stop is forcibly being pushed from one place to another. Normally, the sentence should end with the modifier ecstatic. Instead, Conrad opts for the colon which is highly improper in the context. It is as though Conrad felt that some sort of pause should be inserted at this stage in the description, and because he had in mind the host of commas and semi-colons the passage abounds in, he chose the heavier colon to clear up any ambiguity that might result from excessive use of the same marks. Still, the sentence could have ended here with a full stop, and a new sentence could have started with something like, "In this way he was like a devout..., etc.". Apparently, Conrad had the question of stylistic economy

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in mind. That is why he chose the colon, whereas nothing heavier than the comma should have been used. The practice is reminiscent of punctuation in the Old Testament where the colon is used in place of the semi-colon, and in some cases of the comma. Such, however, was not the norm at Conrad's time when the colon was mainly used for the listing of the particulars of the general item preceding it.

It is characteristic of Conrad to let his sentences drag out into a series of prepositional or adverbial phrases that have more often than not a marked effect on the movement of his prose.

He was intoxicated by the subtle perfumes of the night; he was carried away by the suggestive stir of the warm breeze; he was possessed by the exaltation of the solitude, of the silence, of his memories, in the presence of that figure offering herself in a submissive and patient devotion; coming to him in the name of the past, in the name of those days when he could see nothing, think of nothing, desire nothing-but her embrace. (p.338)

And, all at once, it seemed to him that he was peering into a sombre hollow, into a deep black hole full of decay and of whitened bones; into an immense and inevitable grave full of corruption where sooner or later he must, unavoidably, fall. (p. 339)

In the first passage, there is nothing wrong with the use of the semi-colon to connect the first three interrelated clauses. The sentence should have ended then in a full-stop; instead, there follows a series of prepositional phrases which in turn are succeeded by a series of adverbial and postmodifying clauses which render the sentence into the stylistic monster that it really is.

The second sentence should normally end with a full-stop immediately after a sombre hollow or whitened bones at most; instead, the full-stop drags on into that chain of expanding phrases that are out of all proportion to the nature of the information being imparted.

The above-quoted examples have also shown the way Conrad heavily depends on the comma as a means of underlining the grammatical

relationship between the various elements of the sentence. This grammatical function of the comma can be further illustrated by the following short sentence:

Almayer walked to it, and picking it up revived the flame by pulling the wick with his fingers, which he shook directly after with a grimace of pain. (p. 319)

The comma before the relative clause at the end of the sentence highlights its non-restrictive nature. The sentence could also be punctuated in a different way by using two commas to bracket off the participial clause, picking it up, to make the first part of the sentence read: "Almayer walked to it and, picking it up, revived the flame, etc."

The same grammatical function is apparent in sentences like:

Mahmat passed through the gate in silence, but before the bar had been put up behind him he had made up his mind that if the white man ever wanted to eject him from his hut, he would burn it and also as many of the white man's other buildings as he could safely get at. (p. 318)

This concatenation of co-ordinate and subordinate clauses would hardly be comprehensible without the commas. Still, Conrad's method of punctuation is a broad one. A narrow method would place a semi-colon after silence and two commas between but and before, as well as between him and he. Besides, the sentence could be broken into two separate units if a full-stop were put after silence. But this would be reckoning without Conrad's notorious mania for the over-long descriptive sentences.

Apart from its grammatical function, the comma in Conrad serves a rhetorical purpose in those passages where the novelist's temperament or feelings gain the upper-hand. Speaking of Willem's dreams of imminent salvations, the omniscient narrator observes:

He thought of escape -- of something to be done.

...  
There were ships there - ships, help, white men. Men like himself. Good



men who would rescue him, take him away, take him far away where there was trade, and houses, and other men that could understand him exactly, appreciate his capabilities; where there was proper food, and money; where there were beds, knives, forks, carriages, brass bands, cool drinks, churches with well-dressed people playing in them. (p. 329)

As a means of co-ordination, the comma, in the above passage, serves a traditional grammatical purpose. Its rhetorical function lies in the way it mimes the recurrent pauses in Willems's reported monologue. It helps bring out the intensity of his feelings. We also notice that for reasons of clarity the novelist replaces two commas with semi-colons before the two adverbial phrases beginning with where.

The comma is also a salient feature of the novelist's style in those descriptive passages where his fondness for the various types of modification is on full display.

She followed him with a timorous gaze, with a gaze for ever expecting, patient and entreating. And in her eyes there was the wonder and desolation of an animal that knows only suffering, of the incomplete soul that knows pain but not hope; that can find no refuge from the facts of life in the illusory conviction of its dignity, of an exalted destiny beyond; in the heavenly consolation of a belief in the momentous origin of its hate. (pp. 334 - 5)

Here it is no longer a question of indicating the pauses indicative of the agitated nature of the speech of the character concerned.

The interplay of commas and semi-colons is primarily aimed at clearing up the ambiguity that might stem from this peculiar stringing of post-modifying clauses. It also creates some sort of balance among the various elements of the sentence, a balance that is an integral part of the rhythmical pattern of Conrad's prose, especially in the works of the early period. (1)

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(1) This point is dealt with in some detail in the eighth Chapter on "Co-ordinators and Other Connectives".

We now come to Conrad's suspension points which are usually three or more full-stops in combination designed to indicate a long pause or an omission in the speech of the speaker. The way Conrad uses these points in the following passage is quite revealing:

"Let me come in. Why this anger? Why this silence? ... Let me watch .. by your side. ... Have-I not watched faithfully? Did harm ever come to you when you closed your eyes while I was by? ... I have waited ... I have waited for your smile, for your words ... I can wait no more. . . . Look at me ... speak to me. Is there a bad spirit in you? A bad spirit that has eaten up your courage and your love? Let me touch you. Forget all ... All. Forget the wicked hearts, the angry faces ... and remember only the day I came to you . . . to you! O my heart! O my life!"  
(p. 336)

The first set of suspension points made up of three full-stops is clearly indicative of a long pause that followed a complete sentence. The second set consisting of only two full-stops underlines a shorter pause between the elements of the same sentence. There follows a set of four full-stops to indicate that the preceding sentence has come to an end and, the long pause that intervened between it and the following sentence. All this proves that Conrad did not use his punctuation marks indiscriminately. The suspension point in such cases spotlights the intense emotions of the speaker and lends partial credence to what Summey says about suspension points being "vague and emotional". (1)

Sometimes the reader gets the impression that suspension points are used by the omniscient narrator as a means of apologizing for his inability to catch every word uttered by the speaker as in this passage from Willems's monologue:



He thought: she does not know. Almayor held his tongue about Aissa. But if she finds out, I am lost. If it hadn't been for the boy I would . . . free of both of them. . . . The idea darted through his head. Not he! Married . . . . Swore solemnly. No . . . sacred tie . . . . Looking on his wife, he felt for the first time in his life something approaching remorse. Remorse, arising from his conception of the awful nature of an oath before the altar. . . . She mustn't find out. . . . Oh, for that boat! (p. 349)

It could also be argued that the suspension points are used as a means of transcribing the speech of the emotionally disturbed Willems in a realistic manner. Caught up in his own dirty tricks, Willems is torn between his newly-born fidelity to his lawful wife and his soul-searing desire to escape at any cost from his demanding mistress. Willems secretly hopes he could get rid of both. His agony and sheer embarrassment are partly realised through this excessive use of suspension points.

On rare occasions a set of suspension points occurs where a comma is normally used:

And while she begged, entreated, kissed his hands, wept on his shoulder, adjured him in the name of God, to forgive, to forget, to speak the word for which she longed, to look at his boy, to believe in her sorrow and in her devotion - his eyes, in the fascinated immobility of shining pupils, locked far away, far beyond her, beyond the river, beyond this land, through days, weeks, months; looked into liberty, into the future, into his triumph. . . into the great possibility of a startling revenge. (p. 347)

Apparently Conrad uses suspension points here to indicate the dramatic shift in the string of adverbial phrases used. The last of these phrases serves as an unexpected anti-climax to the three that precede the suspension points. As such, this eccentric use of the punctuation mark helps prepare the reader for the sudden shift in tone in a manner that would not obtain if the comma was used instead.

Suspension points are also used to indicate a transition from the narrative style to "free indirect speech", or "le style indirect libre" as it is called in French. (1)

Some way off, Mahmat and his brother exchanged words in calm undertones. . . . This was the strong daughter of the holy man who had died. The white man is very tall. There would be three women and the child to take in the boat, besides that white man who had the money. . . . The brother went away back to the boat, and Mahmat remained looking on. (p. 354)

← Apart from the first and last sentences, which are pure narrative, the middle sentences constitute the reported version of the dialogue between Mahmat and his brother. The shuttle movement between the two modes of style is indicated by a set of four full-stops.

Occasionally such transition in style is accompanied by ellipsis of one or more elements of the sentence:

Willems pushed his wife roughly behind the tree, and made up his mind quickly for a rush to the house, to grab his revolver and . . . Thoughts, doubts, expedients seemed to boil in his brain. (p. 352)

This is immediately followed by a reported version of the man's thoughts. The important thing to note is that the suspension points serve the double purpose of heralding the shift from narrative to reported speech and of indicating the ellipsis of adverbials like suddenly , all of a sudden , etc.

Conrad frequently uses the dash for a variety of purposes. In this example it functions as a substitute for the common mark of parenthesis:

He (Almayer) heard him (Ali) talk with the head watchman - sometimes quite close to him in the darkness - then moving off, coming back, wondering, and, as the time passed, growing uneasy. (p. 316)

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(1) See Chapter V infra.



The use of the dash might be meant to indicate Almayor's astonishment at the reason or the purport of that rapprochement between his servant and the watchman.

In the following example the dash is used in place of appositive indicators like namely and words of similar import:

Now, the Rajah Laut could make himself invisible. Also, he could be in two places at once, as everybody knew; except he - the useless watchman - who knew no more about white men than a wild pig. (p. 317)

The dash also serves the purpose of clearing up any ambiguity that might result from the mixing up of personal pronouns.

Sometimes the dash is used in place of commas as a means of bracketing off a non-restrictive relative clause:

There was a big room. On the floor a small binnacle lamp - that had found its way to the house years ago from the lumber-room of the Flash - did duty for a night-light. (p. 319)

The difference between the dash and the comma in such contexts is that the former is more emphatic than the latter. Besides, it could be construed as a means of highlighting an after thought on the part of the narrator.

Sometimes the dash is used as a means of separating members of a balanced structure from the rest of the sentence for purely rhetorical ends:

Those three human beings abandoned by all were like shipwrecked people left on an insecure and slippery ledge by the retiring tide of an angry sea - listening to its distant roar, living-anguished between the menace of its return and the hopeless horror of their solitude - in the midst of a tempest of passion, or regret, of disgust, of despair. (p. 326)

Although the other shorter phrases in the passage are as well balanced, the two longer post-modifying participial clauses are set apart by means of the dash, and this makes their rhetorical impact the more telling, and highlights their poetic content.

In the following quotation the dashes are used to indicate ellipsis and to introduce a concluding clause upon which other elements of the sentence depend:

He stopped - could not help glancing at her.  
In all the sombre gracefulness of the straight figure, her limbs, features - all was indistinct and vague but the gleam of her eyes. (p. 335)

In the first sentence, the dash is used as a means of dispensing with the use of subordinators like because and the repetition of the third person pronoun. In the second, it is the means of relating the clause containing the only finite verb to the rest of the sentence.

On other occasions the dash is used as a means of bracketing off what is best known in drama as stage directions from the rest of the narrative:

He heard her whispering - her face hidden on his shoulder - of past sorrow, of coming joy that would last for ever; of her unshaken belief in his love. (p. 338)

There is also an element of ellipsis here, since the use of the dash helps the novelist do without prepositions like with or subordinators like while: "with her face hidden", or "while her face was hidden...."

Although the line of demarcation between the dash and suspension points is a vague one, Conrad's use of the two marks in the same passage enhances the impression that he was fully aware of the subtle difference between them. Let us examine closely this dialogue between Willems and his estranged wife, Joanna, towards the end of the novel:

He shouted -  
"How did you come?"  
She answered in hurried words, looking at him intently -  
"In a big canoe with three men. I know everything. Lingard's away. I come to save you. I know. . . . Almayer told me."



"Canoe! - Almayer - Lies. 'Told you - You"  
stammered Willems in a distracted manner."

"Why you? - Told what?"

Words failed him. He stared at his wife,  
thinking with fear that she - stupid woman -  
had been made a tool in some plan of treachery  
. . . in some deadly plot. (p. 345)

It seems that with Conrad the dash was used on such occasions to indicate a pause longer than that highlighted by the suspension points. Besides, as is clear from Willems's reaction to his wife's information, the dash is much more appropriate before echo words as a means of bringing out the speaker's wonder and amazement at the unexpected turn of events.

From the previous analysis one can conclude the following :

1. Although Conrad's full-stops are used as a means of delimiting the boundaries of sentences, they are occasionally used to separate two parts of the same sentence for emphatic or dramatic purposes. On the other hand, especially in descriptive passages, a full stop is more often than not made to drag on into a series of modifiers, prepositional or adverbial phrases that have a marked effect on the movement of his prose.
2. Although his commas are usually used to perform the normal grammatical function of specifying the relationship between the various elements of the sentence, they are also used to perform the rhetorical function of isolating one particular element of the sentence for dramatic or emphatic purposes. In other cases, they serve as a means of highlighting the speaker's intense feelings, and in the case of the novelist-narrator they underline his unconscious involvement with his subject.
3. Suspension points are used to indicate omissions or a sudden turn of thought or as an aid towards a more realistic transcription of a character's speech. They are also used by the novelist-narrator as a means of apologizing to the reader for his inability to report the exact words of the speaker. More peculiar

still, they are used to mark the unexpected transition from narrative style to "free indirect speech".

4. A dash is often used as a means of stylistic variety when it replaces normal marks like parenthesis, commas or apposition markers like namely, that is, etc. It is also used to bracket off parallel structures, stage directions, or to indicate a dramatic turn in speech.

Although these four punctuation marks constitute a strikingly salient feature of the early style, they tend to decrease in number in the novels of the middle and late Conrad. Besides, in the late novels other marks not attested on a significant scale in the early novels are given special prominence.

To prove my point, I have counted the relative frequency of some nine punctuation marks in the first fifty pages of eight of his novels: Almayer's Folly, Lord Jim, The Secret Agent, Under Western Eyes, The Arrow of Gold, Chance, Victory and The Rover. This is not a random choice. Almayer's Folly is Conrad's first novel in order of publication, a fact sufficient in itself to make one assume that here one would meet with the peculiarities of a style in the making. Chance, Victory, The Arrow of Gold and The Rover have been selected because they are supposed to represent that stage in Conrad's development when his style took a turn towards the more simple and less exacting. Lord Jim, The Secret Agent, and Under Western Eyes have been included, the first for acknowledged artistic perfections, the second for being on a different plane in terms of conception and structure, the third for its intermediate position between two stages of stylistic development.

The result of this crude statistical method is significant. Here first is a chart of the information gained:



	A.F.	L.J.	S.A.	U.W.E.	C.	V.	A.G.	<u>R</u>
Periods (Full-stops)	497	576	763	908	903	852	650	657
Commas	999	1033	983	594	597	850	855	780
Semicolons	59	99	89	34	35	59	29	28
Colons	2	27	18	4	13	31	25	19
Parenthesis	8	2	10	6	11	3	40	10
Dashes	79	124	85	167	33	140	61	25
Suspension points	-	15	2	32	12	2	54	18
Question Marks	32	35	56	43	40	72	49	48
Exclamation Marks	52	48	25	44	23	38	19	19

The chart clearly shows the marked difference between the number of commas and periods used in Almayer's Folly and Lord Jim, two of the novels dealing with the Malay Archipelago and those used in the other novels, one of which at least (Victory) also treats of events that took place in the Malay Archipelago. In both Almayer's Folly and Lord Jim the proportion of commas to periods is that of almost two to one. In Victory they are of equal proportion. But in Chance Conrad uses twice as many periods. In the rest of the novels commas and periods seem to be of proportionate number.

It seems that with Chance Conrad's style started to undergo a change towards the less complicated. Chance, as Baines tells us, proved to be "the turning point in Conrad's financial fortunes as a writer." (1) It was through Chance also that Conrad "suddenly became a best seller." (2) The reasons for the novel's success or failure might be those cited by F.R. Leavis and Crankshaw (3)

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(1) Baines, 1971 : 456

(2) Ibid.

(3) Cf. Leavis, 1962 : 222 - 5; Crankshaw, 1963 : 127

who both regard it as a literary masterpiece, or those mentioned by Baines and Oliver Warner (1) who look on it as "one of Conrad's most imperfect novels." (2) There is little doubt, however, that Conrad wrote his works with an eye on the public. Baines goes so far as to say that "Chance was, to a greater extent than Conrad's other novels, decked out to catch popularity." (3) This popularity which his soul hankered after, and to which his letters constantly refer (as far back as 1907 he wrote to J.B. Pinker, "As I've told you my mind runs much on popularity now." (4) was ultimately assured by the appearance of Chance in book form in 1912.

Two illustrative examples from the early and the late Conrad will help put into sharper focus the difference in style in so far as punctuation marks are concerned. It has been established that Conrad uses suspension points in situations of high emotional tension. Two such situations occur in The Nigger (1897) and Victory (1914). Here first is the passage from The Nigger:

He (the nigger) spoke spasmodically in fast rushes with long pauses between, as a tipsy man walks.... 'Cook had just given me a pannikin of hot coffee. . . Slapped it down there, on my chest - banged the door too. . . I felt a heavy roll coming; tried to save my coffee, burnt my fingers . . . and fell out of my bunk. . . . She went over so quick. . . . Water came in through the ventilator. . . . I couldn't move the door . . . dark as a grave . . . tried to scramble up into the upper berth. . . . Rats. . . a rat bit my finger as I got up.... I could hear him swimming below me. . . . I thought you would never come. . . . I thought you were all gone overboard. . . . of course . . . could hear nothing but the wind. . . . Then you came. . . . (p.105)

And here is the passage from Victory:

"Whistles, yells, omens, signals, portents - what do they matter?" He (Heyst) said. "But what about that crowbar? Suppose I had it!

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(1) Cf. Baines, 1971: 455 - 467; Warner, 1951

(2) Baines, p. 458

(3) Ibid.

(4) L.L., Vol. II, pp. 48 - 9 (Letter dated 18th May 1907)



Could I stand in ambush at the side of the door - this door- and smash the first protruding head, scatter blood and brains over the floor, over these walls and then run stealthily to the other door to do the same thing — and repeat the performance. . .?" (p. 361)

In the passage from The Nigger, James Wait speaks after a narrow escape from what looked like inevitable death, and his speech reflects his agitation through a host of suspension points. In that from Victory, Heyst finds himself virtually crippled in the face of the three emissaries of evil, and his utterances betray his bewilderment. Still, in this last instance the number of suspension points is reduced to a minimum. Although commas abound in the second passage in a manner highly reminiscent of the early practice, the general impression one gets from a comparison of the early and late novels is that Conrad's rhetorical marks undergo a growing decline in frequency after the early experimental period of his career as a novelist.

The same contention applies to Conrad's use of the commas in some of his descriptive passages. Thus, if we compare one descriptive passage from Almayer's Folly with a similar one from The Arrow of Gold, we might be able to further differentiate between the two styles. In the following passage from his first novel, Conrad is describing one of the love scenes between Almayer's daughter, Nina, and her Malay lover, Dain Maroola:

His own boat was there anchored by a stone, and he stepped into it, keeping his hand on the gunwale of Nina's canoe. In a moment the two little nutshells with their occupants floated quietly side by side, reflected by the black water in the dim light struggling through a canopy of dense foliage; while above, away up in the broad day, flamed immense red blossoms sending down on their heads a shower of great dew-sparkling petals that descended rotating slowly in a continuous and perfumed stream; and over them, under them, in the sleeping water; all around them in a ring of luxuriant vegetation bathed in the warm air charged with strong and harsh perfumes, the intense work of tropical nature went on;

plants shooting upwards, entwined, interlaced in inextricable confusion, climbing madly and brutally over each other in the terrible silence of a desperate struggle towards the life-giving sunshine above - as if struck with sudden horror at the seething mass of corruption below, at the death and decay from which they sprang. (p. 71)

And here is a similar passage from The Arrow of Gold

Certain streets have an atmosphere of their own, a sort of universal fame and the particular affection of their citizens. One of such streets is the Cannebiere, and the Jest: 'If Paris had a Cannebiere it would be a little Marseilles' is the jocular expression of municipal pride....

There was part of it where one could see as many as five big cafes in a resplendent row. That evening I strolled into one of them. It was by no means full. It looked deserted, in fact, festal and overlighted, but cheerful. The wonderful street was distinctly cold (it was an evening of carnival), I was very idle, and I was feeling a little lonely. So I went in and sat down. (p.3)

The first thing to note here is that the first passage is made up of just two sentences, the second of which contains eight commas, two semi-colons, one colon, two dashes and one period. The role played by commas is certainly grammatical in the first instance, but its rhetorical function shows up in the novelist's insistence on creating balance: through antithesis in over them, under them; through cumulative repetition in shooting upwards, entwined, interlaced; and through synonymous repetition in, at the seething mass of corruption below, at the death and decay from which they sprang. The same can be said of Conrad's use of the comma to give further weight to the synonymous phrases: while above, away up in the broad day, etc.

This, however, does not mean that balance in this and similar passages is solely created by this clever use of punctuation marks, for there is the question of the deliberate foregrounding of certain adverbial phrases and the conscious arrangement of the various elements of the sentence. It is not for nothing that we get this



inversion of subject and predicate in the clause beginning with, while above, away up in the broad day, flamed immense red blossoms, etc. The important point to be stressed here is that in such cases Conrad consciously uses punctuation as an aid towards the creation of rhythm in his novels. This second sentence can be broken down into as much as four or even five short sentences, but then the distinctive rhythm of Conrad's prose would suffer as a result of this mutilating process.

Likewise, one can safely say that Conrad uses the semi-colons to separate clauses which are in their turn heavily punctuated for the same artistic end. One can easily see that the novelist is determined to exhaust, at one breath, the whole physical and spiritual attributes of the situation.

One may even go so far as to liken such passages with their sensuous appeal to Spenser's descriptions of the "Bower of Bliss" with this one difference: in Conrad's passage, the reader cannot help feeling that the novelist is grappling with images or ideas beyond the reach of his still uncertain mastery of his adopted language. Hence the insistence on details and the excessive use of punctuation marks.

On the other hand, in the passage from The Arrow of Gold, the tone appears to be less exacting, in the sense that it does not put too much strain on the reader's ability for comprehension. In this passage, the sentences are short, and although the same insistence on details still shows up in phrases like, festal and over-lighted, but cheerful, the high frequency of commas (as compared with the other punctuation marks in the passage) does not detract from the affable nature of the speaker's voice, who seems intent on winning us over to his side through his easy way of narrating his experiences. Like Conrad himself, the narrator seems to be intent on courting the sensibilities of the reading public.

The Arrow of Gold, however, is distinctive among Conrad's works for the striking number of parentheses it teems with. The interesting thing about it is that Conrad uses this mark in places where he would use the dash in the earlier novels. Indeed, the high frequency of this item in this novel of 1919 appears to be one of the mannerisms of the late Conrad. Here are some illustrative examples:

"I have heard that some dealers in fine objects, quite mercenary people of course (my mother has an experience in that world), show sometimes... (p.38)

"If you stay with me long enough, and I hope you will (I really can't sleep),... (p.40)

"Rita had spotted him out of the corner of her eyes as he passed them, putting his enormous paw in a still more enormous glove, airily, you know, like this." (Blunt waved his hand above his head),... (p.42)

"We had been drinking that straw-coloured wine, too, I won't say like water (nobody would have drunk water like that) but,... (p.46)

It could be said that Conrad uses his parentheses here to keep some parts of the sentence "out of the way", as it were, so that the sentence may run on with the least possible interruption. As such, they (parentheses) are less rhetorical than the dashes and suspension points of the early novels. They are in tune with the easy going conventional tone of the chatty style adopted in this novel. On closer scrutiny, however, this mannerism of Conrad's seems to be part and parcel of the change that came over his style with years. It looks as though he was always experimenting with language in his unswerving quest for the "mot juste", as well as for what might be termed the "marque juste".

This discussion of Conrad's punctuation marks cannot be terminated without touching lightly upon his peculiar use of quotation marks, especially in Lord Jim and to a lesser extent, Chance. The multiple quotation system which Conrad adopts in Lord Jim, for



instance, especially in the rendering of Marlow's thoughts, direct speech, and of other characters' asides makes it hardly credible that the whole Marlow story could be told in three hours time, as Conrad himself used to claim. In fact, if one were to take into account the time needed for Marlow to pause for his numerous commas and other marks (mainly his quotation within quotation within further quotation system of rendering his experiences), one would find it hardly likely that Marlow could finish with his story in three days.

Conrad did not invent his punctuation marks. All other writers of his age used them with varying degrees of frequency. But Conrad's marks, aside from the fact that they tend to be more striking in the early than in the late novels, are also a distinctive feature of his style because they feature prominently in emotional situations. This is what gives him that touch of singularity in so far as punctuation is concerned. As already pointed out in Chapter II of this study, Conrad continually referred in his letters to his friendship with Arnold Bennett; he also liked and collaborated with Ford Madox Ford. Besides, he held Henry James in great esteem, respected John Galsworthy and admired H.G. Wells. And he read them all. Hence a comparison between his punctuation system and theirs might prove interesting.

Let us now take one of those emotionally charged passages from An Outcast and compare it with similar passages from the novels of his aforementioned contemporaries. Towards the end of the novel we come across this dialogue between Willems and his wife, Joanna:

And she pleaded humbly abashed - before him, before the unmoved appearance of the man she had wronged in defiance of human and divine laws. He heard not a word of what she said till she raised her voice in a final appeal - '... Don't you see I loved you always? They told me horrible things about you . . . . My own mother! They told me - you have been - you have been unfaithful to me, and I, . . . ' 'It is a damned lie!' shouted Willems, waking up for a moment into righteous indignation. 'I know! I know - be generous - think of my misery since you went away --- Oh! I could have torn my tongue out. . . . I will never believe anybody - Look at the boy - be merciful - I could never rest till I found you . . . . Say - a word - one word. . . (pp. 349 - 50)

And this is how Arnold Bennett renders a similar dialogue between Marie and Dr. Colpus in The Gates of Wrath: (1)

'I will tell you, then' he cleared his throat, stood up, and walked about the room. 'Have you not noticed, Marie, that one wedding often begets another?'

'What do you mean?'

'I mean,' he continued, 'that the sight of Mr. Forrest's connubial bliss makes me envious of that unexceptional bridegroom.'

'Well?'

'Marie let me entreat you to be sentimental. Marry me - I love you, for your beauty and for your sins. Have I not worshipped long enough at the outer shrine, unrewarded?'

'It was because you loved me I suppose' she remarked with sarcastic emphasis, 'that you haggled with me this morning like a very Jew.'

'My dear girl, one does not haggle over half a million. One haggles over half a crown; but where half a million is concerned we call it negotiation. Besides, I only haggled in order to prove to myself that ---'

'What?'

'That I could twist you round my little finger.' he held up that appendage and shook it at her. (pp. 25 - 6)

These two passages have more than one thing in common with this passage from Ford's The Good Soldier: (2)

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(1) Bennett, 1927.

(2) Ford, 1915



It was one of those moments when thinking was impossible, Leonara said. It was as if stones were being thrown at her from every direction and she could only run. She heard herself exclaim:

'Edward is dying --- because of you. He is dying. He's worth more than either of us ....'

The girl looked past her at the panels of the half-closed door.

'My poor father! she said, 'my poor father.'

'You must stay here,' Leonora answered fiercely.

'You must stay here. I tell you you must stay here.'

'I am going to Glasgow,' Nancy answered. 'I shall go to Glasgow to-morrow morning. My mother is in Glasgow.'

It appears that it was in Glasgow that Mrs. Rufford pursued her disorderly life. (p. 187)

If we look closely at these three passages, we will notice that they all deal with sentimental affairs of some sort or other. Though the three are almost of equal length, the Conrad passage contains twelve dashes and six sets of suspension points as against two dashes only in the Bennett passage and one dash as well as one set of suspension points in the passage from Ford's novel. There can be no doubting the fact that the Conrad passage is the most rhetorical in nature. As to which is more effective from the dramatic point of view, opinions may differ. Still, I believe that Conrad's punctuation system helps bring out the full impact of the woman's agony and the husband's sheer bewilderment. At least this is how primitive people are likely to talk under the strain of emotion. While the lack of the dashes and suspension points in the Bennett passage might be commensurate with the insipid feelings of the rogue, Dr. Colpus, and the aging coquette Mrs. Cavalossi, the lack of these dramatic marks in the Ford passage can only emphasize the artificiality not only of the sentiments expressed but also of this and other similar dialogues in the novel.

The same difference in style can be noted in these three passages from Conrad, Galsworthy and Wells. They have one important thing in common between them. They are all written in the form of

interior monologue within the mind of one or other of the characters of the novels. The first is again from An Outcast. It is the moment when Willem finally meets with his death at the hands of his Malay mistress:

He saw a burst of red flame before his eyes, and was deafened by a report that seemed to him louder than a clap of thunder. Something stopped him short, and he stood aspiring in his nostrils the acrid smell of the blue smoke that drifted from before his eyes like an immense cloud. . . . Missed, by Heaven! . . . Thought so! . . . And he saw her very far off, throwing her arms up, while the revolver, very small lay on the ground between them. . . . Missed! . . . He would go and pick it up now. Never before did he understand, as in that second, the joy, the triumphant delight of sunshine and of life. His mouth was full of something salt and warm. He tried to cough; spat out. . . . Who shrieks: In the name of God, he dies! - he dies! - Who dies? - Must pick up - Night! - What? . . . Night already. . . . (p. 360)

The second passage is taken from Galsworthy's The Man of Property, the first in the series known as The Forsyte Saga. Here Soames Forsyte is being tortured by the uneasy feeling that his wife, Irene, the most prized item in his collection of beautiful things, is madly in love with Phil Bosinney, a penniless architect. On this specific night his agony increases: (1)

And suddenly it shot through his mind, like a sick man's fancy: what is he doing? - that fellow who haunts me, who was here this evening, who's in love with my wife - prowling out there, perhaps, looking for her as I know he was looking for her this afternoon; watching my house now, for all I can tell!

He stole across the landing to the front of the house, stealthily drew aside a blind, and raised a window.

The grey light clung about the trees of the square, as though night, like a great downy moth, had brushed them with her wings.



Yet suddenly, very faint, far off in the deathly stillness, he heard a cry writhing, like the voice of some wandering soul barred out of heaven, and crying for its happiness. There it was again--- again! Soames shut the window shuddering.

Then he thought: 'Ah, it's only the peacocks, across the water.' (p. 211)

The third passage comes from Wells's The Island of Dr. Moreau:

(1)

We went on some way in silence.

'I wonder what can have happened,' he said to himself. Then after a pause, again:

'I did a foolish thing the other day. That servant of mine... I showed him how to skin and cook a rabbit. It's odd... I saw him licking his hands... It never occurred to me.' Then: 'We must put a stop to this. I must tell Moreau.'

He could think of nothing else on our homeward journey. Moreau took the matter even more seriously than Montgomery, and I need scarcely say I was infected by their evident consternation.

'We must make an example,' said Moreau. 'I've no doubt in my mind that the Leopard man was the sinner. But how can we prove it? I wish, Montgomery, you had kept your tast for meat in hand, and gone without these exciting novelties. We may find ourselves in a mess yet through it.'

'I was a silly ass,' said Montgomery. 'But the thing is done now. And you said I might have them, you know.' (p. 96)

In the passage from Conrad we get some eight sets of suspension points and five dashes as against four such dashes in Galsworthy's passage and three sets of suspension points in the Wells' passage.. All this shows that with Conrad the dramatic immediacy of the moment is sharply brought out, whereas with both Galsworthy and Wells the dramatic effect is of a more muffled nature. Conrad's marks are meant to capture the confused thoughts of the moment of the protagonist's death. With Galsworthy, however,

judging by the great attachment Soames felt for his wife, one would expect him to react to his jealous thoughts with utterances separated by pauses as would tally with the man's internal agony. But nothing of the sort happens. The same thing applies, on a smaller scale, to the passage from Wells where the moment of illumination on the narrator's part is given a dramatic tinge which is nevertheless not what Conrad would do under similar circumstances. Still, of the two contemporaries, Wells appears to be the one nearest to Conrad in the use of dashes and suspension points.

Although James avoids suspension points in his style, his sentences can be as complicated and crammed with commas and semi-colons as Conrad's usually are. As a representative example of his peculiar practice here is one such sentence from the second volume of The Ambassadors: (1)

He was conscious of how much it was affected, this sense, by something subdued and discreet in the way she had arranged herself for her special object and her morning walk - he believed her to have come on foot; the way her slightly thicker veil was drawn - a mere touch. But everything; the composed gravity of her dress, in which, here and there, a dull wine-colour seemed to gleam faintly through black; the charming discretion of her small compact head; the quiet note, as she sat, of her folded, grey-gloved hands. (p. 8)

Like most of Conrad's sentences, James's (which is by no means the exception in his style) could be easily broken down into three or more separate units. A host of commas and semi-colons, together with a process of progressive ellipsis relate the various parts of the loosely constructed sentence to each other, the thing that forcibly reminds us of Conrad's practice. Absent from the James passage, however, is the rhetorical tone implicit in Conrad's

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(1) James, 1923



habitual insistence on creating balanced phrases and clauses that betray his dedication to questions of rhythm and suspense-building in a manner that contrasts with James's desire to use his commas and semi-colons as a means of cramming as many details into the texture of the sentence as could be thought of.

This does not mean that James's prose is free from all attempts at producing rhythm, for one occasionally comes across sentences that forcibly remind us of Conrad's method of letting his full-stops run into a series of of-phrases as in:

He had the habit, in these contemplations, of watching a fellow visitant, here and there, from a respectable distance, remarking some note of behaviour, of penitence, of prostration, of the absolved, relieved state; this was the manner in which his vague tenderness took its course, the degree of demonstration to which it naturally had to confine itself. (pp. 5 - 6)

These, however, seem to be more characteristic of the later than the earlier James. Besides, the rhetorical nature of such constructions is not strikingly foregrounded as it usually is in Conrad's case.

This brief comparison has shown the difference between Conrad and his contemporaries to be a question of degree. It has proved, that is, that Conrad merely overindulged in a practice that appears to have been too much in vogue at the time. The fact that writers nowadays (except perhaps in journalistic style) tend to shun such a system of punctuation (1), does not necessarily mean that Conrad was wrong to make a practice of it, for at his time it was normal. Besides, what really matters is Conrad's reasons for his overindulgence in the then prevalent convention.

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(1) It is noteworthy that The Quirk Grammar does not deal with suspension points in the Appendix on Punctuation, while dashes are thought to be only useful where too much use of the comma might result in unnecessary confusion. C.F. Quirk et al., pp. 1054 - 81.

I have purposefully excluded The Nigger of the "Narcissus" from my statistical account of the relative frequency of punctuation marks in Conrad's novels, because, of all his works, this is the one most interspersed with his characteristic marks. Indeed, the most cursory glance at this short novel will not fail to spot the myriads of suspension points, dashes and commas it abounds in. The reasons for this are not hard to guess at. In the first place, unlike his first two novels, The Nigger is told by a sailor-narrator who is himself one of the crew of the "Narcissus". As such, he cannot be expected to overhear, or be party to, every bit of conversation between the various characters. Hence the apologetic nature of his style that shows up in his excessive use of suspension points as gap fillers.

In the second place, the novel is about seamen who before, during and after the famous storm scenes are in the habit of bandying pieces of information and jokes in a manner that would not be realistically transcribed without this peculiar punctuation system which mimes the broken and interrupted nature of such utterances and lends credibility to the narrative tone.

Besides, with the sea serving as <sup>the</sup> /novel's everlasting background, the narrator (who is none other than the young Conrad) gives rein to his poeticised sensations and impressions of his past experience. Hence the preponderance of rhetorical marks like the commas and semicolons.

Here is an example of the Sailors' method of bandying pieces of information:

... The growling voices hummed steady amongst bursts of laughter and hoarse calls. "Here, sonny, take that bunk! . . . Don't you do it! . . . What's your last ship? . . . I know her. . . . Three years ago, in Puget sound . . . . (p. 5)



Here we note the novelist's care to give the impression of the speech being the realistic rendering of what he heard. The third set of suspension points separates the question What's your last ship? from the statement I know her. Apparently the speaker received an answer of some sort to his question, the thing that the narrator did not overhear, and this is where this particular typographical convention stands him in good stead.

On the other hand, excessive use of suspension points in the speech of Mr. Baker helps the narrator draw a comic picture of the first mate of the "Narcissus":

. . . I get the nigger, and will take that . . .  
 Ough! that cheeky costermonger chap in a black  
 frock-coat. I'll make him. . . Ough! . . .  
 make him toe the mark, or my. . . Ough! . . .  
 name isn't Baker. . . ." (pp. 20 - 1)

The unusual recurrence of suspension points in Barker's case is as much indicative of the pauses in his speech as it is of the narrator's desire to poke fun at him.

The narrator's manipulation of the rhetorical quality of his marks shows up in descriptive sentences like:

They (seamen) must without pause justify their  
 life to the eternal pity that commands toil  
 to be hard and unceasing, from sunrise to sun-  
set, from sunset to sunrise;... (p. 90)

where balanced constructions are embedded in the texture of his prose, creating the characteristically Conradian overlong sentences of the descriptive tableaux.

The same attempt at the realistic transcription of seamen's speech through a host of dashes and suspension points is attested, on a smaller scale, in "Typhoon", where emotional tension during the storm scenes makes Captain MacWhirr utter sentences like:

Had to knock him down. . . . This minute.  
You heard, Mr. Rout?" (p. 68)

The elliptical nature of such utterances fits in with the dramatic nature of the situation.

In Jim's speech suspension points are meant to lend credibility to Marlow's claim about Jim being "inarticulate". To Marlow's offer to help Jim, the latter suddenly is overcome with emotion and Marlow tells us:

He snatched my hand as though he had just then seen it for the first time, and dropped it at once. "Why! This is what I - you - I..." he stammered, and then with a return of his old stolid, I may say mulish, manner he began heavily, "I would be a brute now if I ..." and then his voice seemed to break. (L.J. p.184)

On the other hand, Marlow's wonder at Jim's naive optimism is highlighted as much by the exclamation mark as by the set of suspension points in,

"... Jove! I (Jim) feel as if nothing could touch me. Why! this is luck from the word Go. I wouldn't spoil such a magnificent chance!"  
. . . A magnificent chance! Well, it was magnificent, but chances are what men make them, and how was I (Marlow) to know?... (p.241)

Although Nostromo is relatively deficient in dashes and suspension points, the few that one comes across here are not without stylistic significance. To Dr. Monygham's confession of belief in Nostromo's intrepidity, the latter says:

"Ah! And whom am I to thank for that? What are your politics and your mines to me --- your silver and your constitutions --- your Don Carlos this, and Don Jose that ---" (p.456)

The occurrence of the dash before the noun phrase your silver is highly revealing. First, the dialogue between the two men takes place after Nostromo's return from his nocturnal adventure on the Placido and the subsequent death of his co-adventurer, Decoud. That he should pause before uttering the noun phrase shows his determination to keep the silver for himself; but it also shows



that this secret decision was not taken without some short-lived pangs of remorse or hesitation.

Any further discussion of the stylistic significance of punctuation marks in Conrad's novels is not necessary here, especially as this will be indirectly touched upon in the following chapters. The point to be stressed at this stage is that, minor as it is, this feature of Conrad's style has an undoubted function in the overall structure of the novelist's works.

## Chapter IV

DIRECT SPEECH

In Joseph Conrad: The Modern Imagination, Professor Cox quotes G.B. Shaw as saying that Conrad's prose "was too pure for English." (1) The obvious implication is that his English is too literary, a charge that was constantly levelled at him by his own friend and collaborator, Ford. (2) However, there seems to have been no love lost between Shaw and Conrad. On one occasion Conrad told Garnett that Shaw "pretends to be deep but he never gets to the bottom of things but rides off on some tricky evasion." (3) The charge was nevertheless repeated by the eminent Conrad scholar, Douglas Hewitt, who summed up his objections to Conrad's direct speech in the following manner:

His conversations are often 'literary' - not only those of Marlow, where no discordant note is usually felt, but even of such personages as Donkin in The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'. Above all, he can never catch the note of the uneducated. (4)

Still, viewed against the linguistic context of his age, Conrad's fictional speech will be shown to have its debit as well as its credit side. On the one hand, one will have to admit, though not without some reservations, that nowhere in Conrad does one come across the extensive use of regional and class dialects which the novels of men like Dickens, Hardy (and to a lesser extent those of Bennett and Galsworthy), teem with. Indeed, Conrad himself seems to have been quite conscious of his limitations. He once told Garnett that while other writers could "lean on diale

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(1) Cox, 1974, : 7 - 8

(2) Ford, 1924

(3) L.C. p. xxx

(4) Hewitt, 1975 : 110



he had only his impressions to rely on.(1) On the other, one must give him credit for the varied methods of speech presentation brought into play in most of his novels. I propose to examine these two assumptions in two consecutive chapters. For one thing, it is mainly through direct speech that the varieties of English can be represented. For another, I believe that all other methods of speech presentation such as what is commonly known in French as "le style indirect libre", narrated monologue or dialogue, are aspects of reported speech. Direct speech is the subject of the present chapter, while reported speech in all its possible forms will be dealt with in the next.

Generally speaking, fictional speech is the language which a novelist puts into the mouths of his characters in their daily transactions with each other, as well as in their day-to-day reactions to the vicissitudes of life. As to direct speech in fiction we have Page's definition of it as the actual words uttered by characters in "dialogue, monologue or soliloquy." (2) In addition to these three forms of fictional direct speech, one may cite those cases of interpolated direct speech, which are often inserted into the text of the narrative with a view to giving an air of authenticity to reported speech or narrative style. The speech of the French Lieutenant in Lord Jim is one such example of interpolated direct speech. Marlow's technique of giving us the original French version of the actual words uttered by the Frenchman side by side with its English counterpart helps give his narrative that touch of convincingness which it often needs.

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(1) L.C., p. 38 (Letter dated 18 June 1896)

(2) Page, 1973 : 24. The following discussion of the various forms of direct speech is largely based on

Page's book, especially pp. 18 - 24.

In novels, fictional direct speech is linguistically marked by the following features. First, it is usually contained within double inverted commas. In Almayer's Folly, Tom Lingard tells Almayer: "Call me father, my boy. She does," (p. 11). The double inverted commas, however, are not always a necessity. Sometimes direct speech is contained within single inverted commas as is the case with most of Marlow's speech in Lord Jim. In some extreme cases, inverted commas are not used, as when Willems stood before Aissa "looking down on the ground and repeating to himself: I must get that revolver away from her, at once, at once." (O.I. p. 355) Here the commas are replaced by a colon. Such variations are rare in Conrad who sticks for the most part to the convention of containing direct speech within inverted commas.

Second, direct speech as used by novelists is preceded, or followed as the case may be, by a verb of saying. Elegant variations on the traditional verb of saying (words like remarked, observed, suggested and hinted) may also be used. Occasionally Conrad does without the verb of saying, as when Almayer "lifted his head and confronted the anxious yet irate seaman. "I - of course - anything you wish, Captain Lingard." " (A.F. p. 11) In such instances Conrad trusts to the reader's perspicacity to provide the missing element.

Third, fictional direct speech must contain some of the paralinguistic features indicative of stress, pitch or intonation in the reader's voice. This can be effected through the use of capitalisation, italicisation and hyphenation or their stylistic variants, i.e. phrases like he muttered, she shrieked, etc. Indeed, all punctuation marks can be used as aids towards a quasi-realistic representation of direct speech.



One, however, should distinguish between those stylistic variations intended to indicate the paralinguistic features of a speaker's voice and those phrases and clauses used for "stage directions", since while the latter refer to the physical movements accompanying the speech act, in the former case physical action can be only heard and not seen. Stage directions in a novel help make up for the absence of physical gestures that can be easily represented on stage. Thus, when Aissa "caught up the weapon, put it behind her back and cried --- "You shall not have it," " (O.I. p. 359) the clause caught up the weapon, etc., gives the reader a visual image of what would happen, were the scene to be enacted.

Besides, direct speech can be accompanied by what Page calls "attributions to speakers", by which he means those devices a novelist uses to avoid "confusion or tedious calculations on the reader's part." Such devices, Page regards as "an obvious substitution for an element provided in the theatre by the physical presence of the actors." In Nostromo phrases and clauses like "Decoud whispered, lightly," (p. 219), or "Mrs. Gould spoke rapidly," (p. 250) can be regarded as one such device since they help pinpoint the speaker's identity.

Finally, fictional direct speech may be interspersed with "direct comments or moralising" on the novelist's part. Such comments can also be indulged in by one or other of the characters. Marlow in Lord Jim or Chance and the old teacher of languages in Under Western Eyes may be cited as two cases in point.

Like most novelists, Conrad uses direct speech extensively in his works. When all is said and done, the stylistic interest of direct speech in Conrad lies not so much in the way he manipulates its various forms, as in the way he uses it as a means of reflecting the different varieties of English. To throw this

last point into relief let us examine a representative passage from one of his novels.

In Under Western Eyes we come across this dialogue between Razumov and Haldin:

→  
Razumov turned away and strode up and down the room. "It would have been possibly a kindness," he muttered to himself, and was appalled by the nature of that apology for a murderous intention his mind had found somewhere within him. And all the same he could not give it up. He became lucid about it. "What can he expect?" He thought. "The halter - in the end. And I..."

∴ This argument was interrupted by Haldin's voice. "Why be anxious for me? They can kill my body, but they cannot exile my soul from this world. I tell you what - I believe in this world so much that I cannot conceive eternity otherwise than as a very long life. That is perhaps the reason I am so ready to die."

"H'm," muttered Razumov, and biting his lower lip he continued to walk up and down and to carry on his strange argument. (U.W.E. p. 58)

←  
In this passage we have a conflation of interior monologue and direct speech. In both cases the actual words of the speakers are contained within inverted commas. The main difference between the two forms of direct speech is that, from the stylistic standpoint, direct speech proper presupposes the presence of two or more speakers, whereas interior monologue highlights the novelist's preoccupation with the revelation of the character's mind, a process which deals with more than the conscious, verbal level. This stylistic difference apart, we notice that both forms are linguistically marked by the use of the inverted commas, a verb of saying and certain punctuation marks to indicate the paralinguistic features of the speaker's voice. Elegant variations on the traditional verb of saying are represented by words like muttered, thought, or a whole clause: "This argument was interrupted by Haldin's voice." Suspension points, exclamation marks, fullstops, commas and dashes constitute the main paralinguistic markers of their speech. Stage directions are provided by narrative sent-



ences like "biting his lower lip he continued to walk up and down... etc." Conrad, however, was no more extraordinary or unique in this use of these confluences of direct speech than were novelists like Dickens, Bennett or Galsworthy. What really distinguishes him is his limited success in the representation of the different varieties of English in his novels. It is this PARTIAL failure that constitutes the debit side of fictional speech in Conrad.

Conrad made no secret of his desire to use speech for characterisation, i.e. for individuation and typification. In a letter to the Swedish professor, Ernest Bendz, Conrad, referring to The Arrow of Gold, claimed that "the construction of the speech is shaped on purpose to characterise the person." (1) In such a case, linguistic realism demands that the uneducated Tom Lingard's speech should reflect the peculiarities of his Devonshire dialect, as well as of his social standing as a wandering sailor. In like manner, the Goulds of Nostromo should speak a language different in some way or other from that used by the American Holroyd. Besides, the English used by a savage Malay woman like Aissa of An Outcast should be different from that used by a fairly educated foreigner like the Swede, Heyst, of Victory. The fact remains that most of, if not all, Conrad's major characters speak what might be regarded as standard English, while regional varieties and other substandard forms of speech are allocated to minor characters. To do Conrad justice, one should differentiate between the demands of linguistic realism on the one hand, and what Professor Quirk calls "congruence with fundamental intention" on the other. (2) For whereas linguistic realism might require that

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(1) L.L. Vol. II, p. 259

(2) Quirk, 1974 : 1 - 37

a certain character should use a specific variety of English, the aesthetic ends the novelist is out to achieve might dictate something else.

This gives rise to the question: What possible varieties of English can a novelist reflect in his fictional direct speech? According to the linguistic theory of the Quirk Grammar, there are six such varieties: region, education and social standing, subject-matter, medium, attitude, and interference. These varieties share one common core or nucleus, English, and are interrelated in more than one way. (1) Of these six, those varieties of region, education and social standing, and interference are the ones that are fairly represented on a significant scale in Conrad's novels. What is more important, Conrad appears to have been more at ease when dealing with that last variety of interference. Let us first have some idea about the characteristics of each.

Regional varieties or dialects refer to the locality from which a character comes. They are realised either phonologically or, to a lesser extent, grammatically. Thus, a Yorkshireman tends to drop the initial glottal fricative /h/ where a Londoner would keep it. Again, while a Lancastrian pronounces the /r/ sound after vowels, a Yorkshireman would not. Grammatically, a Yorkshireman would say /sɛz/ where a Londoner would rather say "I said". Moreover, while a New Englander might say "I see it", a Pennsylvanian would use "I seen it" and a Londoner "I saw it".

Closely related to regional varieties are those varieties of education and social standing. Here the tendency is to equate regional dialect with uneducated English, while standard English is used to refer to that kind of educated speech which cuts across dialectal boundaries. As far as Conrad's fictional speech is

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(1) Quirk et Al., 1974 : 13 - 32



concerned, one can say that most of his characters speak that kind of quasi-standard English with occasional lapses, either into substandard, or more frequently still, into that kind of literary English which can only show the precarious hold Conrad had on spoken English in general.

Subject-matter varieties refer to the kind of English a certain character might use on different occasions, and according to the nature of the subject he discourses upon. On the other hand, while varieties of medium differentiate between written and spoken English, attitudinal varieties distinguish between formal and informal English, the former being more or less rigid or frozen, as opposed to the latter which tends to be hearty and colloquial or even intimate and slangy.

Finally, as is indicated by its name, interference varieties refer to the impact of a character's native language on the foreign language he has adopted. In this sense a Frenchman speaking English might confuse the palato-alveolar affricate /tʃ/ with the voiceless fricative /ʃ/, just as an Arab might mix up bilabial plosives due to phonological differences between their native tongues and the acquired language. Likewise, a Pole speaking English might find it difficult to use the definite and indefinite articles or even the adjectives, as an Arab might be puzzled by the aspectual contrasts of the English verb, due to grammatical differences between their respective mother tongues and English.

In addition to the above-mentioned six varieties, a writer may individualise one or more of his characters by bringing out certain eccentricities in their speech. This may be realised through eccentric pronunciation, a highly peculiar feature of

syntax or through the continuous repetition of a lexical item or phrase in the character's speech.

Conrad differs from many of his contemporaries in using a very limited range of regional varieties in the speech of his characters. Indeed, with the exception of a sustained attempt at rendering the dialect of West Country sailors in The Nigger (1897) his achievement in this field is remarkably poor. What minor instances of regional dialects that one may come across in the novels before and after The Nigger pale into relative insignificance compared with that one and only sustained venture.

The reasons for this striking phenomenon are not hard to guess at. The Nigger is unique among Conrad's works for being a novel wherein a group of English seamen are crammed into the narrow body of the ship "Narcissus" which is meant to serve as a microcosm of the living world. This fact alone makes the task of differentiating between them on the basis of their respective speech peculiarities of the utmost importance. If it be argued that The Nigger is similar in that respect to "Typhoon", where no such differentiation between the characters' speech occurs, the fact remains that, unlike "Typhoon", the real heroes of The Nigger are minor uneducated characters like Wait, Donkin, Belfast and Charley, whereas in "Typhoon" the real heroes are the relatively educated Captain MacWhirr, his chief mate, Jukes, and the first engineer, Solomon Rout. Besides, in The Nigger Conrad's main interest is in the collective psychology of the seamen peopling the "Narcissus", whereas in "Typhoon" his main interest is in the description of the typhoon and its impact on the relationship between the "literalist" Captain MacWhirr and his chief aides.



This is why The Nigger abounds in dialogue and instances of regional dialects, as opposed to "Typhoon" which has the most straightforward and least metaphorical style among his works. Reading The Nigger one is constantly aware of the novelist's painstaking attempt to differentiate between the speech of the various characters, while with "Typhoon" no such attempt at highlighting the speech peculiarities of the characters concerned is made.

Let us now try to trace those instances of regional varieties in the various novels. Almayer's Folly, with its cast of Dutchmen and Malays, is not likely to reflect any of these varieties. What English is spoken here is the subject of the two varieties of education as well as of interference. The only Englishman mentioned by Almayer in his speech, the Devonshire sea-captain Tom Lingard, hardly puts in an appearance. The same thing can be said of An Outcast where Dutchmen and Malays dominate the scene. Here, however, Lingard finally turns up. Unexpectedly, Lingard's speech has no traces of any peculiar dialect. It can be treated only under varieties of education and social standing. Apart from his tendency to drop the /ə/ sound in utterances like "'Pon my word," phonologically his English is too pure for regional dialects. (p.17)

In The Nigger Donkin's cockney as well as the substandard English of sailors like Belfast, Charley and the nigger are both phonologically and grammatically realised. Like Captain MacWhirr of "Typhoon" Belfast is an Irishman. Here is a sample of his speech:

Belfast shrieked like an inspired dervish: --"  
 . . . So I seez to him, boys, seez I, 'Beggin'  
 yer Pardon, sorr,' seez I to that second mate  
 of that steamer --'boggin' your-r-r pardon,  
 sorr, the Board of Trade must 'ave been drunk  
 when they granted you your certificate!'

'What do you say, you --!' Seez he, comin' at me like a mad bull... all in his white clothes; and I up with my tar-pot and capsizes it all over his blamed lovely face and his lovely jacket. . . . 'Take that!' seez I. 'I am a sailor, anyhow, you nosing, skipper-licking, useless, sooperfloods bridge-stanchion, you!' 'That's the kind of man I am!' shouts I. . . . (N.N. p. 8)

He follows his utterance with:

"Not bad! Not bad!" screamed Belfast. "If it wasn't for us sticking together. . . . Not bad! They ain't never bad when they ain't got a chawnce, blast their black 'arts. . . ." (N.N. p. 9)

Phonologically, Belfast's dialect is realised by replacing the pure vowel with a glide of some sort as in chawnce where the pure vowel /a/ is replaced by the diphthongal glide /av/, while in words like seez the diphthongal /ei/ is replaced by the centring diphthong /ɪə/. (1) One also notes that he tends to drop initial glottal fricatives. Moreover, he replaces velar /ŋ/ with the nasal alveolar /n/. On the grammatical level, we notice that he inflects the present form of verbs for the first person singular as in I shouts, and I seez.

Unlike Belfast, Captain MacWhirr who, we are told, comes from Belfast, suffers from no such irregularities in his speech. Apart from his tendency to replace the /u/ sound with the /i/ in words like you which he pronounces ye when used as a subject or 'ee when used in the accusative or dative case, his English is free from the phonological and grammatical peculiarities of his fellow Irishman Belfast of The Nigger.

Of the other sailors of the "Narcissus", Donkin talks Cockney English. He is always in the habit of using certain lexical items that distinguish him from other cockney speakers in the novel:

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(1) Gimson, 1970. All phonetic transcription is based on Gimson's book.



"That's a fine way to welcome a chap into a fo'c'sle," he snarled. "Are you men or a lot of 'artless cannybals?" --

...

"'Cos why?" he continued very loud. "The bloody Yankees been tryin' to jump my guts out 'cos I stood up for my rights like a good 'un. I am an Englishman, I am. They set upon me an' I'ad to run. That's why. A'n't yer never seed a man 'ard up? Yah! What kind of blamed ship is this? I'm dead broke. I 'aven't got nothink. No bag, no bed, no blanket, no shirt - not a bloomin' rag but what I stand in." (pp. 11 - 2)

Like Belfast, Donkin drops the glottal fricative /h/ in initial position, and replaces the velar /ŋ/ with the alveolar /n/. Unlike Belfast, however, Donkin's dialect is distinctive for the recurrent use of the word bloomin' and the contracted forms of verbs like are not and the conjunct because which he pronounces 'A'n't and 'cos respectively. He also uses the double negative in clauses like I'aven't got nothink. In this last example he replaces the velar /ŋ/ with a compound of both the alveolar /n/ and the voiceless velar plosive /k/.

Donkin's cockney is far from being consistent. For while the preceding examples show that, as a cockney speaker Donkin drops the initial glottal fricative /h/, there are times when Donkin chooses to add one such sound to words where no such sound normally appears. Thus, a little later in the novel Donkin answers Jim's inquiries about the ship he ran away from by saying:

"In course I ran," He (Donkin) mumbled. "They booted the life hout of one Dago chap on the passage'ere, then started on me. I cleared hout'ere. -- "Left your dunnage behind?" "Yes, dunnage and money," answered Donkin, raising his voice a little. "I got nothink. No clothes, no bed. A bandy-legged little Hirish chap'ere 'as give me a blanket...." (N.N. p. 23)

Aside from his way of using phrases like in course in place of of course, Donkin adds an initial /h/ to the words out and Irish.

Conrad later acknowledged his fault in a letter to one of his critics, C.S. Evans by name, where he tells him:

All the phonetics of Donkin's speech are wrong, alas! A real cockney drops his aspirates - but he never adds one. It is the country people who do that. I have for that the undeniable authority of Mr. Edwin Pugh. A cockney will naturally say "ome" for home, but he would never say (for instance) hoperation for operation. What I ought to have done was to take every initial h out of his speeches, since I called him a cockney. (1)

Among other things, this letter helps explain why Conrad never repeated that attempt at sustained representation of regional dialects in any of the novels that followed The Nigger.

On the other hand, young Charley's dialect is contrasted with Podmore's. Charley tells Podmore "I know about gentlemen morn'n any of you. I've been intermit with'em.... I've blacked their boots." Podmore, the self-styled saviour cook of the "Narcissus" shouts at him "Keep your mouth shut when your elders speak, you impudent young heathen, you." (N.N. p. 33) In his speech Charley tries to justify his claim about his familiarity with gentlemanly way of life by drawing on some of the lexical items that a gentleman's repertoire of language abounds with, but he obviously fails to guess at the right word, with the result that words like intermit highlight rather than play down the substandard nature of his speech. In contrast to this, Podmore's English reflects the impact of biblical readings on his language as a whole.

If dialect seeks to reflect the speech habits of a community or group of people, idiolect performs the same function with respect to one speaker only. In The Nigger Mr. Baker's idiolect is not meant to refer to the speech characteristics of a group of people, but rather of Mr. Baker himself as an individual speaker.

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(1) L.L. Vol. II, p. 248



His idiolect is mainly realised through paralinguistic features. The fat mate of the "Narcissus" has this peculiar way of punctuating his utterances with grunts and long pauses which Conrad renders in the following manner:

Now he (Baker) was giving his last orders. "Ough!... You, Knowles! call all hands at four. I want... Ough!... to heave short before the tug comes. Look out for the captain. I am going to lie down in my clothes... Ough!... Call me when you see the boat coming. Ough! Ough!..." (N.N. p. 21)

The recurrent use of ough's and suspension points is meant to underline the man's tone of voice. Excluding this, there is nothing phonologically or grammatically distinctive about Baker's speech.

After The Nigger Conrad virtually abandoned all attempts at rendering dialectal varieties on any large scale in his novels. Lord Jim, for all its artistic perfections, is markedly deficient in terms of phonological or grammatical representation of English. Jim who, Conrad tells us, came from an English parsonage at Essex, speaks a language which lies mid-way between standard or educated English and that other kind of colloquial English which can hardly be attributed to any specific dialect. As a sample of Jim's language one may quote his words to Marlow:

"Jove! Wouldn't do to lose the thing... Would hang the bally-affair round his neck!" (L.J. 234) One may contrast such utterances with his super-literary words to Doramin later on in the novel: "I whom you have tried and found always true ask you to let them go... Call in Dain Waris, your son, my friend, for in this business I shall not lead." (p. 392) The difference between the two utterances is highlighted by the highly colloquial nature of phrases like bally(bloody)affair, jolly well, (p. 125) etc. These, however, are the sort of words a foreigner is likely to pick up from books or by listening to the radio.



I mean there is nothing Essex-like about them.

The only significant instances of dialectal representation occur in the speech of Chester who offers Jim a job after his disgrace. Chester's dialect is realised grammatically through his tendency to inflect the verb say for <sup>the</sup> first person singular, and lexically through his constant use of slangy words like in a jiffy, grub, cabby and screw. (L.J. pp. 164-7) The same thing can be said of Captain Jones, commander of "The Fire Queen", who inflects verbs for the first person singular in "Says I, "Dont'you mind old Jones, sir,...", "I may be a hard case," answers I and <sup>uses</sup> the colloquial contracted form ain't in "but I ain't so far gone", as well as colloquial lexical items and phrases such as like a fighting cock, a Punch and Judy show and dunnage. (p. 63)

These minor instances apart, Conrad sometimes uses italicisation to indicate the speaker's tone of voice. Chester tells Marlow "Do think about it", and Jim, referring to Stein, wonders how "he came by" the flintlock pistols which he gave to Doramin. (L.J. p.264) Conrad intends italicisation to indicate the pitch prominence given to the verb do and the pronoun he in Chester's and Jim's speech respectively. When all is said, such instances can hardly make up for the apparent paucity of dialectal variety in a novel of Lord Jim's calibre.

Despite the fact that most of the characters in The Secret Agent are English, the only case of regional variety is that of the London cabman who drives Stevie, his sister Winnie and their mother to the old people's charity home. The cabman tells Stevie:

"Look 'ere, young feller. 'Ow'd you like to sit behind this 'oss up to two o'clock in the morning p'raps?"

Stevie looked vacantly into the fierce little eyes with red-edged lids.

"He ain't lame," pursued the other, whispering with energy. "He ain't got no sore places on

'im. 'Ere he is. 'Ow would you like --" (S.A. p. 166)

On the phonological level, the cabman's dialect is similar in many



ways to that used by Donkin. Like him, the cabman is inconsistent in his pronunciation of the initial glottal fricative /h/. Sometimes he drops it as in 'ere and 'oss; at others he keeps it as in he. He differs in that he does not mix up alveolar and velar nasals. Nor does he pronounce the frictionless continuant /r/ before the alveolar fricative /s/, and geminates this latter sound instead as in 'oss. On the grammatical level, his dialect is characterised by the use of the contracted form of the copula as in 'ain't which stands in his speech for either "is not" or "has not". He also uses the double negative 'ain't no in place of the more grammatical "has not got any". Here Conrad uses italicisation in the underscored words to indicate the pitch prominence in the man's tone of voice.

Like the rest of the English in The Secret Agent, all English speaking characters in both Nostromo and Under Western Eyes have nothing to distinguish them in terms of regional varieties. There is that kind of English which can be best dealt with under varieties according to education and social standing. Captain Mitchell of Nostromo might feel at a loss as to which adjective he should use in his description of people or events ("Certain forms of death are - er - distasteful to a - a - er-respectable man". p. 13), and the old English teacher of languages in Under Western Eyes might use italicisation to indicate pitch prominence in his speech; still all these are paralinguistic features common to all varieties of English.

Conrad's attempt to transcribe the English Ricardo's dialect in Victory suffers from a terrible inconsistency. In his conversation with Schomberg, Ricardo says: "It surprised you, didn't it? That's why I am giving you this yarn of how he came to be with us, like a sort of dog-dashed sight more useful, though." (V. p. 142)



He also chooses on occasions to inflect the present form of the verb for the first person singular: "Anyhow, 'I tells him,' he wants to be killed some way or other." (V. p. 143) He uses slangy phrases and words like "settle your hash" (133) to mean "put an end to your life", twig to mean "steal" (p. 138) and swag which, in his dialect, means "plunder" (p. 297). Later on, Ricardo slips into a more outspoken form of dialect when he tells Mr Jones:

"I am sup-prised at you, sir! It's the very way them tame ones - the common 'ypocrits of the world - get on. When it comes to plunder drifting under one's very nose, there's not one of them that would keep his hands off. And I don't blame them. It's the way they do it that sets my back up. Just look at the story of how he got rid of that pal of his! Send a man home to croak of a cold on the chest - that's one of your tame tricks. And d'you mean to say, sir, that a man that's up to it wouldn't bag whatever he could lay his hands on in his 'ypocritical way? What was all that coal-business? Tame citizen dodge; 'ypocrisy - nothing else. No, no, sir! The thing is to 'extract it from him as neatly as possible. That is the job..." (V. pp. 264 - 5)

Judging by Ricardo's previous utterances, one notes here that, contrary to what was observed on those occasions, Ricardo finds it difficult to pronounce the frictionless continuant /r/ in words like surprise, or keep the glottal fricative in initial position for words like hypocrite. In this last example Ricardo drops the /r/ sound and geminates the voiceless bilabial plosive /p/ instead. He also drops the initial /h/ in hypocrite but keeps it in other words like hand and home; a fact which would suggest some eccentricity in his speech, were it not that he displays no such eccentricity in the previous examples.

No further instances of regional dialects are met with in The Shadow Line or The Arrow of Gold. In the Rover, the English crew of the "Amelia" speak that sort of fairly educated language which is occasionally marred by sporadic lapses into slang. This, however, is mainly realised through the use of certain



lexical items. Symons tells Peyrol "Do you think they tell a boat's crew? Go and ask our officer. He went up the gully and our coxswain got the jumps. He says to me 'You are light footed, Sam', says he; 'you just creep round the head of the cove..." (R. p. 130) Aside from clauses like got the jumps, there is nothing in the crew's speech to indicate dialects of any sort.

Finally, one may mention the speech of the loafer in Chance, and of Shaw in The Rescue as fine examples of idiolect representation. Both Symons and the loafer of Chance drop initial /h/s. Symons tells Captain Powell "I was only wondering where this 'ere gentleman 'ad gone to, sir", (C. p. 15) and the loafer tells young Powell "Let's carry your things in, Capt'in! I've got my pal 'ere" (C. p. 26) Both seem to be cockney speakers, but they have some eccentricity of speech peculiar to each one of them. Symons has this habit of dropping the bilabial nasal /m/ and geminating the /s/ sound in words like himself which he pronounces 'isself; and the loafer adds a frictionless continuant /r/ to the /ó/ sound in words like officer which he pronounces orficer (C. p. 27). On the other hand, Shaw, first mate of "The Flash" in The Rescue, has that eccentric way of cutting polysyllabic words <sup>mostly</sup> into chunks of one syllable each. Locality is pronounced lo\_ca-lity, authorities becomes au-tho-ri-ties, and condemned becomes con-dem-ned, (R. pp. 18, 22, 25)

Conrad also uses the habitual phrase or clause to individualise certain characters. Shaw's "I am always there" (R. p. 25), Jim's "On the square" and "Jove!", Carter's "By the Lord Harry", and Tom Lingard's "If you monkey with me" (R. p. 40) are four such examples of this linguistic technique. The same thing can be said of Captain Mitchell's recurrent use of the appositive adjectival phrase The incorruptible in reference to Nostromo, and Ricardo's use of the word Joe-miny. (V. 398).

While being aware of his limitations with respect to the regional dialects of his characters, Conrad was also alive to the fact that characters can be typified not only through regional dialects but also through their respective social, occupational or philosophical backgrounds. Hence the importance of what the Quirk Grammar calls "varieties according to education and social standing" in the speech of his characters. In this case, however, characters are typified not so much through particular locutions and systems of grammar, or even through a peculiarity of pronunciation, as through certain lexical items derived from the speaker's register.

It is quite natural that sailors like Tom Lingard, Shaw, Marlow and Captain Anthony should draw upon the repertoire of sea language which their occupation provides them with. The unnatural thing is for such men to speak at length without now and again using certain lexical items peculiar to their profession in life. Conrad's fictional direct speech proves that such a fact did not escape his notice.

Tom Lingard, the English sea-captain of "The flash", figures largely in the Rescue and to a lesser extent in An Outcast. In his speech he uses adjectival and adverbial phrases that smack of the sea in some way or other. In An Outcast he tells Willems that he "will see this thing through... And I will have it square and ship-shape." When he shouts at one of his sailors he calls him "son of a crippled mud-turtle." (O.I. p. 40) He also tells the exasperated Almayer: "You scold like a drunken fish-wife." (O.I. p. 163) And when Almayer asks him to send Willems's wife back to where she belongs, Lingard expresses his helplessness by using an adverbial phrase: "I am jammed on a lee-shore this time, if ever I was." (O.I. p. 190)



On the other hand, Shaw, Lingard's mate, describes his captain as a man with "bottom-upwards notions" (R. p. 12) Both Lingard and Shaw come from humble families. Both have had little education. Lingard, we are told, "seldom read. Books were not much in his way, and he had to work hard navigating, trading and also, in obedience to his benevolent instincts, shaping stray lives he found here and there under his busy hand." (O.I. p. 198) This fact shows through their speech. In The Rescue we come across this dialogue between Lingard and Shaw:

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'Had you, sir,?' said Shaw without enthusiasm.  
Now give me a big ship - a ship, I say, that  
one may ---'  
"And later on, some years ago," interrupted  
Lingard, 'I chummed with a French skipper...  
His English was difficult to understand, but  
he could sing songs in his own language about  
ah-moor - Ah-moor means love in French-Shaw." (R. p. 20)

Lingard's inability to pronounce correctly the French word l'amour confirms his ignorance of any language other than English. It is no mere coincidence that the word amour is the only foreign word that Lingard utters in the three novels he turns up in.

Again, Shaw tells Lingard about a story he once heard from a passenger "about them <sup>old-time</sup> Greeks fighting for ten years about some woman. The Turks kidnapped her or something", to which Lingard retorts "I have read the tale. She was very beautiful." (R. 22) In both cases colloquial lexical items like chum, and noun phrases like them Greeks give their talk an informal touch. Taken as a whole their speech, on such occasions, is indicative of their humble origin and lack of education.

Marlow is also fond of sea language. In Chance he tells the omniscient narrator of the novel:

"No, it isn't necessary," said Marlow feeling the check to his eloquence, but with a great effort at amiability. "You need not even understand it. I continue: with such disposition, what prevents

women - to use the phrase an old boatswain of my acquaintance applied descriptively to his captain - what prevents them from 'coming on deck and playing hell with the ship', is... femininity' (C. p. 63)

As an experienced sea captain Marlow has this habit of thinking back to his early adventures at sea, drawing in the meantime on the lexical repertoire his experience has enriched his register with. In the same novel Marlow sums up Flora's predicament by saying that she "had been made to feel that there was somebody beside her in the bitter water." (C. p. 222) where the adverbial phrase in the bitter water is preferred to other phrases like "in the same tight corner".

When talking about "the shore gang", Captain Powell, the retired sea-captain of Chance says:

"They see," he went on, "that no matter what they do this tight little island won't turn turtle with them or spring a leak and go to the bottom with their wives and children!" (C. p. 4)

Verb phrases like won't turn turtle, or spring a leak and go to the bottom can be only used by a man whose linguistic register has been coloured by the nature of his calling. An ordinary speaker would put the same idea in the following manner: "Those shore people see that no matter what they do this tight little earth won't come tumbling round their ears or swallow them up with their wives and children." Here, also, Captain Anthony, the son of the poet, expresses his sympathy for Flora in her agony by telling her that it is plain that she is "on a lee-shore eating her heart with worry." (C. p. 223) Such nautical terms, adjectival and adverbial phrases highlight the linguistic impact of a man's profession or occupation in life on his register.

In his typification of the Arabs of the Malay Archipelago Conrad gives us a literal translation in English of some of their speech habits. In An Outcast Babalatchi greets Syed Abdulla with



the words: "Allah gladdens our hearts!" (p. 114) which is the Arabic equivalent of the English formulaic phrase of greeting "Welcome" or "How do you do." Omar Elbedevi laments his daughter's attachment to Willems by crying: "The hand of the compassionate is heavy on my head, Oh! my calamity! Oh! my shame!", a declamatory way of talking which is typical of some Arabs suffering from a deep sense of shame. (O.I.p.104)

In Almayer's Folly, on the other hand, Babalatchi tells Lakamba that Dain Maroola "ran down to the river like a man possessed of the Sheitan himself",/referring by this to the Arab custom of likening a person's mischievous nature to the Sheitan's or devil's. When the corpse of what was thought to be Dain Maroola is discovered, Babalatchi tells Almayer's men to "lay him there. He was a Kaffir and the son of a dog." (A.F. p. 104) The word Kaffir is usually used by Arabs in reference to a person who does not profess a God-sent faith, while "son of a dog" is the Arabic equivalent of "bastard". In these and similar other examples speech is used to typify the speech habits of a whole nation and not only that of Babalatchi.

It is commonplace knowledge that coded jargon is part and parcel of the register of policemen and people of the secret service. Conrad appears to have had this in mind while working on his two novels: The Secret Agent and Under Western Eyes. In the former novel, we come across this dialogue between the Assistant Commissioner and Mr Toodles. The assistant commissioner, we are told,

interrupted the apprentice statesman.

"Yes. Yes. But a sprat is also thrown away sometimes in order to catch a whale."

'A whale. Phew' exclaimed Toodles, with bated breath. 'You're after a whale then?

'Not exactly. What I am after is more like a dog-fish. You don't know perhaps what a dog-fish is like.'

'Yes; I do. We're buried in special books up to our necks - whole shelves full of them - with plates....' (S.A.p.216)

To the uninitiated, lexical items such as sprat and noun phrases like witty fish are riddles. To people like the Assistant Commissioner and Mr. Toodles sprat means "Mr. Verloc", while whale and witty fish refer to Mr. Vladimir of the foreign embassy.

In Under Western Eyes General T-- tells Razumov that "the bird might have flown while Mr.-Mr. Razumov was running about the streets." (U.W.E. p.44) He then tells Prince K-- "We want that bird alive. It will be the devil if we can't make him sing a little before we are done with him." (p. 46) In both cases the word bird is meant to stand for Haldin, while the verb sing means that General T-- is decided to make Haldin betray his associates before he is executed.

The German Schomberg of "Falk", Lord Jim and Victory is one further example of how a man's register is made to show through his speech. In Victory Schomberg tells the English girl, Lena, of his intention to send his old wife back to her people in Europe:

"We'll soon get rid of the old woman" he whispered to her hurriedly, with panting ferocity. "Hang her! I 've never cared for her. The climate don't suit her; I shall tell her to go to her people in Europe. She will have to go, too! I will see to it. Eins, zwei, March! And then we shall sell this hotel and start another somewhere else." (V. p. 94)

Schomberg, as Conrad tells us, had been a lieutenant of the reserve in the German army. His speech reflects this fact in that he cannot help drawing on the military terminology his experience in the army had provided him with. Eins, zwei, march. is just the sort of phrase that every soldier is likely to hear every day of his active service.

The speech of high class people is reflected in the language used by the wealthy business man, Mr. Travers, of the Rescue. Of all Conrad's characters, Mr. Travers appears to be the only one who speaks that kind of educated English which, aside from his



use of the contracted form of the verb to be, has nothing colloquial or slangy about it. Still, Mr. Travers's insistence on using certain lexical items of some pedantic nature is expressive of the pompous and verbose style of the social class to which he belongs.

Mr. Travers voices his indignation at the way the yacht's mate, Mr. Carter, has made a mess of his job in this dialogue between the owner and the mate of the yacht:

→  
"I perceive now you were totally unfit for the mission I entrusted you with," went on the owner of the yacht.

"It's he who got hold of me," said Carter.

"Haven't you heard him yourself, sir?"

"Nonsense," whispered Mr. Travers, angrily.

"Have you any idea what his intentions may be?"

"I half believe," answered Carter, "that his intention was to shoot me in his cabin last night if I ---"

"That's not the point," interrupted Mr. Travers, "Have you any opinion as to his motives in coming here?" ( p. 126)

Instead of the verb see, which is much more fitting from a semantic point of view, Mr. Travers opts for the more cognitive perceive. Besides, his intentional variation on the question, "have you any idea...", "Have you any opinion as to..." shows the importance he attaches to his choice of words.

More important still is his choice of lexical items that humble people like Carter and Lingard would not use in their everyday life. Left to himself, Mr. Travers, Conrad tells us, "thought: I must put an end to this preposterous hectoring." (R. p. 127) On the other hand, he tells Lingard: "I don't see my way to utilize your services." (p. 129) Words like preposterous hectoring, utilize have a distinctive pedantic aura about them. They belong to the lexicon of a class of people who believe themselves to be too distinguished to use the more simple language of day-to-day life.

No peculiarities of pronunciation or special grammatical systems are used in the individuation of Americans in Conrad's novels. Holroyd the American financier of Nostromo tells Charles Gould:

Tact and a stiff upper lip is what you 'll want; and you can bluff a little on the strength of your backing. Not too much though.... You must understand that under no circumstances will we consent to throw good money after bad. (N. p. 79)

where lexical items like bluff, backing and good money after bad can be said to belong to the financier's specialised register. However, no Americanisms of any sort are there to give the man's speech that American peculiarity of tone which the American Hallorson of Galsworthy's Maid in Waiting reflects through his speech. Hallorson uses words like bunk, husky and phrases like to get raw which have something distinctively American about them. (1) In Conrad, neither Holroyd nor Captain Blunt of The Arrow of Gold are given the opportunity to make their speech reflect their American origin. Instead of Americanisms, Captain Blunt's speech is interspersed with French words and phrases which show him up for the cosmopolitan gentleman adventurer that he really is, but which reveal nothing of his American origin.

Of the other varieties of English represented by Conrad in his fictional direct speech, the one that is extensively used is that of interference. Here, also, Conrad meets with qualified success. For despite the fact that such a variety of English can be as well represented through phonological peculiarities or grammatical locutions as through lexical items, the insistence is mainly on this last type of interference.

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(1) Galsworthy, 1931. In Hallorson's speech, bunk stands for "rubbish" (p. 27); cinch for "easy task" (p. 56; husky for "sturdy fellow or horse" (p. 83); got raw for "got angry" (p. 111). He also uses the archaic past participle gotten instead of the more English got. (p. 84)



Conrad has a host of foreign characters in his novels. The strange thing about them is that, whether they are Malays or Arabs, Dutchmen or Swedes, Frenchmen or Germans, they all speak English with varying, though hardly perceptible degrees of correctness. So much so indeed that without their occasional slipping into their respective mother tongues, the reader would not be able to distinguish between, say, the Dutchman, Willems, and the Swede, Heyst; or between that last and the English sea-captain Tom Lingard. The thing becomes more obvious in the case of people like Almayer, the Dutchman, or Razumov, the Russian, who, because of Conrad's ignorance of their native languages, are allowed to speak English with impeccable correctness.

On the phonological level, we get those minor instances of the Dutchman, Hudig, in Almayer's Folly, the two Germans of Lord Jim and the two Chinamen of "Typhoon" and Victory. Thus, in Almayer's Folly Hudig greets Tom Lingard with this utterance:

"Welcome, Captain; ver'you come vrom? Bali, eh?  
Got bonies? I vant bonies! Vant all you got;  
ha!ha!ha! come in!" (A.F. p. 6)

In this example, Conrad capitalises on the well-known fact about English-speaking Germans, and Dutchmen for that matter, who tend to mix up velar plosives or confuse semi-vowels with labiodental fricatives. With Hudig the voiceless plosive /k/ becomes the voiced velar /g/. He also uses the voiced fricative /v/ instead of the semi-vowel /w/ in words like want which he pronounces vant as well as in place of the voiceless fricative /f/ in words like from which becomes in his speech vrom.

Likewise, the German skipper of the "Patna" in Lord Jim confuses velars; he, however, is unique among Conrad's German characters in that he also mixes up alveolar plosives and confuses alveolar fricatives with palato-alveolar ones. He tells Marlow:

"Bah the Pacific is big, my friendt. You damned English men can do your worst; I know where there's plenty room for a man like me; I am well aguainted in Apia,

...

What are you to shout? Eh? You tell me? You no better than other people, and that rogue he make Gottam fuss with me.

...

That's what you English always make - make a tam' fuss for any little thing, because I was not born in your tam' country." (L.J. p.41-2)

In this example the velar voiceless plosive /k/ becomes the velar voiced /g/. The alveolar voiced plosive /d/ is added to its voiceless counterpart /t/. He also confuses the voiceless palato-alveolar /ʃ/ with the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ in "A man like me don't want your <sup>verfluchte</sup> certificate. I shpfit on it." (L.J. p.42)

In an earlier utterance the same German skipper mixes up the voiced interdental fricative /ð/ with the alveolar plosive /d/ when he says to his new mate "Look at dese cattle." (L.J. p. 15) Like many of Conrad's characters, the German skipper suffers from this inconsistency in his speech habits, for, at times, he correctly pronounces the voiced alveolar plosive /d/, while, at others, he seems unable to do so.

On the other hand, the German Stein who, we are told, learned his English in the Celebes, is in the habit of confusing bilabial plosives and labiodental fricatives. Marlow tells us that he pronounced love as lof, thus confusing the voiceless /f/ with its voiced counterpart /v/. Among the Germans of Conrad's novels, Stein is the only one that mixes up bilabial plosives. He pronounces poet as boet thus replacing the voiceless /p/ with the voiced /b/. (L.J. p. 211) Apart from this, Stein speaks that kind of English which is remarkably correct from the semantic and



syntactic standpoints. (1)

As an extreme of this variety of interference we get the English spoken by the two Chinamen of "Typhoon" and Victory. In "Typhoon" there is that Chinaman, John, who puts in a very short appearance. Like Germans he mixes up <sup>the</sup> semi-vowel /w/ with the labiodental voiced fricative /v/ in utterances like "Velly good". To speak with him Jukes, we are told, "having no talent for foreign languages mangled the very pidgin English cruelly". (T: p. 13)

The other Chinaman, Wang, of Victory provides us with a more sustained example of Pidgin-English. Contrary to what is known about the Chinese way of confusing the interdental voiceless fricative /θ/ with the voiceless alveolar plosive /t/, Wang does not do such a thing. He correctly pronounces the /θ/ sound in thlee, but seems unable to pronounce the post-alveolar frictionless continuant /r/ and replaces it with the alveolar lateral <sup>e</sup>/<sub>k</sub> /l/. When Heyst asks him about the reasons behind his sudden decision to leave him, Wang answers:

"Yes. Me no likee. One man; two man, thlee man - no can do! Me go now." (V. p. 310)

...  
 "Yes. Me savee them",...  
 "Me savee plenty." (V. p. 311)

His Pidgin-English is marked by its tendency to lengthen vowels in final positions as in words like savee and likee. Grammatically, it is marked by the replacement of the pronoun I with its accusative form me. Lexically, his speech is coloured by pidgin words like savee which stands for the English know. Conrad's very limited familiarity with this inferior, "bastardized version(s)

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(1) Stein's romantic nature is reflected in the man's fondness for syntactic inversion. Here are just two representative examples from his speech. "One thing alone can us from being ourselves cure!" (p. 212); "... No! I tell you !The way is to the destructive element submit yourself," (p. 214). The literary overtones of such utterances are quite unmistakable.

of older, longer established languages" (1) makes him restrict its use to the two Chinamen of "Typhoon" and Victory.

Grammatical interference of Conrad's characters' native tongues is scarce indeed. Hudig does not use operators like do in his question "Ver you come vrom?" (A.F. p. 6) On the other hand, the German skipper of Lord Jim does not inflect the present simple of the verb make with third person singular: "and that old rogue he make Gottam fuss with me." (He also drops the preposition of with transitive adjectives like plenty in "I know where there's plenty room for a man like me." (L.J. p. 41-2)

As a boy Willems speaks this kind of English:

"me want stop here; not want go home. Get money here; home no good." (O.I. p. 15)

Willems uses the accusative me for I, dispenses with the to of the phrasal verb want to and does without operators like "do" in "not want go home" and the copula be in "home no good". A comparison of the English Willems speaks in the above example, with the English he speaks after spending some years in the company of Tom Lingard will reveal a striking difference between the two types.

In the Rover an attempt is made to reflect Peyrol's poor command of English. To Symons's inquiry about Peyrol's reasons for hitting him, the Frenchman answers: "Because you put your head where you no business." (p. 129), where the lexical verb had is omitted. Conrad, however, seems to have got tired of the whole thing, and Peyrol's subsequent speech with the Englishman shows him up for a man highly conversant in English, which he is not.

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(1) Todd, 1974 : 1. Cf. also Cassidy, 1971.



On the lexical level, Conrad spatters his foreign characters' speech with various lexical items drawn from their respective mother tongues, with a view to giving us a convincing representation of their English. Here his well-known mastery of French seems to have stood him in good stead.

The French lieutenant is the man who piloted the "Patna", after being deserted by its crew, safely into the Port of Aden. That he speaks good, though somewhat Frenchified, English is indicated by the fact that Marlow now and again draws our attention to certain English words which help betray the Frenchman's foreignness. Thus, Marlow tells us that the French lieutenant "had remarked 'her (Marlow's ship) - a pretty little craft." (L.J. p.144) The word remarked is an English word. Still, it is of French origin, and this is why the French lieutenant prefers it to words like noticed or spotted which might be more in keeping with the spirit of English on such occasions.

Again the Frenchman, after a period of silence, cries out "Mon Dieu! how the time passes!" (L.J. p. 143) which, apart from the lexical interference of the mother tongue in the word Mon Dieu!, also betrays the French Lieutenant's precarious knowledge of English. An Englishman would say: "How time passes!", whereas in French one has to use the definite article with the word temps in "Comme le temps passe!". Hence the French lieutenant's deviation from certain grammatical rules in his English.

The fact that he is a bilingual is brought out by Marlow's copious quoting of lexical items used by the Frenchman in their lengthy conversation. The Frenchman tells Marlow that "man is a coward,". To make his meaning more precise he slips into French saying: "L'homme est/poltron." (L.J. p.147) Like most of Conrad's French characters, his English is full of French

lexical items given us in the form of interpolated direct speech.

The other foreigners in Conrad's novels use lexical items from their mother tongues on a very small scale in their speech. His Malays and Spaniards draw very little on their respective languages. Indeed, words like Tuan, Mem Butih, Anak Butih or Spanish lexical items like amigo, chica, gringo and sombrero are too few to be compared with French borrowings. On the other hand, the German Schomberg of Victory or Stein of Lord Jim can hardly be said to have a vast repertoire of German lexical items at their disposal. Schomberg might call Heyst Schwein Hund (V. p. 47), and Stein might quote two or three lines from German poetry, but such borrowings pale into insignificance beside the French Lieutenant's copious quotations from his native language. Conrad also tries to make up for his ignorance of Russian by making his Russian characters as remarkably conversant in French as are most of his foreigners in the novels; but this is not so much a virtue as it is a further indication of his limitations in this respect.

From the above investigation of direct speech in Conrad's novels one can come out with these two general conclusions. First, Conrad did try to represent in his works some of the varieties of English. His inability to represent regional and class dialects on a large scale in his works might be attributed to his own precarious familiarity with these dialects. It can also be attributed to the fact that most of his novels have for a setting exotic places like the Malay Archipelago or the South American Continent, where one would not expect dialects to be too much to the fore, as they are in Hardy's or some of Bennett's novels which have England for their scene of action. Besides, most of his characters (especially in the earlier novels) are non-native speakers of English for whom standard English is the best reasonable medium



of expression. His limitations in this particular respect are more striking in novels like The Nigger, where the novelist's insistent attempt to differentiate between his English characters on the basis of phonological or grammatical peculiarities in their speech habits, is marred by those inconsistencies in Donkin's speech as has already been attested in our analysis of the novel. When all is said and done, however, one has to admit that despite his obvious limitations, what minor instances of the varieties of English that one may come across in his works help, in the final analysis, give that touch of local colour to his settings, as well as linguistically individuate some of his characters in such a way as to make it possible for the aesthete in Conrad to achieve his artistic ends. Indeed, while some of the dialect speakers can be said to provide the novels they turn up in with that comic relief much acclaimed in tragic situations, others serve as butts for the novelist's satire or caricature.

Second, Conrad's qualified success with some of his minor characters in terms of the varieties of English they represent is overshadowed by the fact that most of his major characters have a very limited repertoire of everyday language at their disposal, with the result that a stylistician reading his works would not find it hard to detect the author behind the characters in most of them. For such characters are usually distinguished from each other on social rather than dialectal grounds. It is through the use of some odd words or distinctive turns of expression indicative of a certain social milieu that Conrad tries to differentiate between the speech of the characters concerned,

That last point of my argument can be clearly illustrated by comparing the following excerpts from the speech of Babalatchi, Jim, Marlow, and M. George respectively.

"Indeed I have kept my word," murmured Babalatchi, earnestly. "This morning Bulangi went with a canoe to look for him. He is a strange man, but our friend, and shall keep close to him and watch him without ostentation.

...

"Not alive!" muttered Babalatchi to himself. "And do you doubt your power," he went on in a louder tone - "you that to him are more beautiful than an houri of the seventh Heaven? He is your slave."  
(O.I. p. 105)

"Jim remained thoughtful. 'Well?' I said. 'What did I care what story they agreed to make up?' he cried, recklessly. 'They could tell what they jolly well liked.

...

I did not turn my head. I heard them palavering together. (L.J. p. 125)

... he stood on the brink of a vast obscurity, like a lonely figure by the shore of a sombre and hopeless ocean.

...

His back was no longer shaken by his gasps; he stood straight as an arrow, faintly visible and still; and the meaning of this stillness sank to the bottom of my soul like lead into the water... (L.J. pp.173-4)

"Not for Legitimacy," I interrupted the inquiry lightly. "But what's the use asking such questions? It's like asking the veiled figure of fate. It doesn't know its own mind nor its own heart. It has no heart. But what if I were to start asking you - who have a heart and not veiled to my sight?" She dropped her charming adolescent head, so firm in modelling, so gentle in expression. (A.G. p. 92)

The literary strain in Babalatchi's speech is highlighted by his use of lexical items such as ostentation and post-modifying relative clauses like you that to him are more beautiful, etc. In Jim's case words like palavering and turns of expression like "The sun could not make me mad. . . . Neither could it kill me." have a distinctive literary tone about them. On the other hand, lexical items like brink, obscurity, sombre, hopeless ocean, in Marlow's speech, and turns of expression such as veiled figure, firm in modelling, gentle in expression in M. George's are too stylised to belong to the language of everyday speech. In other words, none of these four characters can be said to be linguistically distinguishable from the rest. The difference in their



respective speech is a question of social standing rather than phonological or grammatical peculiarities. In the foregoing excerpts, only a Babalatchi would use a word like hour in his speech, while a colloquial phrase like jolly well helps to individuate Jim who uses it extensively in his speech. On the other hand, Marlow's use of the three sea-images (underlined in the above quotation) is meant to body forth the nature of his calling as a sea-captain. This method of social distinction between the characters' speech is of little avail in M. George's case, for his sophisticated use of images in the above excerpt spotlights not so much the slight difference as the striking similarity between him and Conrad's "preposterous" narrator, Marlow.

If one were to divest the four quotations of odd words like hour, the characteristically Marlovian sea-images or nautical terms, and Jim's habitual phrase, one would be left with homogeneous utterances wherein all distinction between one speaker and another is obliterated. In a novel like Dickens's Oliver Twist the reader finds it easy to distinguish between Oliver, Fagin, Bill Sikes, the artful Dodger and Nancy on purely linguistic grounds (i.e. phonological or grammatical peculiarities), whereas with Conrad the emphasis is invariably laid on odd or foreign lexical items, or some characteristic phrase from the speaker's register to effect the needed distinction between the speech of the various characters.

Such a defect in the speech of his major characters Conrad appears to have tried to play down by bringing into play as many forms of reported speech in his works as could be mustered. The important thing to note is that the direct speech of Conrad's major characters cannot be used as a basis for a linguistic differentiation between them except on a very limited scale. What is more significant is that they all tend to react to situations

of high emotional tension in almost the same way. For when faced with a situation where a certain artistic effect is aimed at, Conrad usually accompanies this with a shift in his characters' speech. In such cases they are made to speak a language which borders on the poetic. It seems that Conrad believed in Gokak's assumption that "the language of daily life cannot express profound emotions." (1)

Let us now examine the literary implications of Conrad's linguistic individuation of some of his minor characters through their speech. It could be argued that Mr. Baker's recurrent ough's and lengthy pauses between utterances are meant to give us a comic portrait of the mate of the "Narcissus". The same thing could be said of Conrad's individuation of the German hotel-keeper Schomberg whose eins, zwei, march, together with his constant readiness to vilify that Swede with a series of appositive adjectives and noun phrases (vagabond, impostor, swindler, ruffian, Schweinhund, (V. p. 47)) can be regarded as Conrad's way of providing his readers with that comic relief which is badly needed in anticipation of "that" Swede's impending tragedy.

Captain Mitchell's repetitive use of the appositive noun phrase the incorruptible in reference to Nostromo may also be regarded as Conrad's way of satirizing the Captain's lack of imagination through his speech. If the essence of satire, as Dryden defines it, lies not so much in "the slovenly butchering of a man" as in "the fineness of a stroke that separates the head from the body, and leaves it standing in its place," (2) Conrad's satire must be a very mild one indeed.

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(1) Gokak, 1952 : 159  
 (2) Dryden, 1946 : 137



On the other hand, if irony, in its simplest form, is that kind of speech which says one thing and means something else, then it could be argued that Conrad's irony in The Secret Agent is partly effected through the language he puts into the mouths of his characters. Michaelis's anarchist jargon, his use of high-sounding abstract nouns like idealism, prophetic phantasies, and freedom mean one thing for the audience but something totally different for Michaelis, Ossipon and their likes who are after their own selfish ends. (S.A.p.41)

Conrad's tendency to endow his major characters with a poetic turn of mind shows up in his linguistic individuation of the English sea-captain Tom Lingard, the Italian Nostromo and the Malay woman, Aissa. Conrad originally intended Tom Lingard to pose as a self-styled agent of providence, an imaginative adventurer who thinks that he can make other peoples' fortune:

In such acts performed simply, from conviction, what may be called the romantic side of the man's nature came out; that responsive sensitiveness to the shadowy appeals made by life and death, which is the groundwork of a chivalrous character. (R. p. 74)

This is why, when faced with a situation where he is betrayed by one of his protégés, Tom Lingard (the man of little education) turns poet under the shock of Willems's infidelity:

—→  
"You shall stay here" continued Lingard with sombre deliberation. "You are not fit to go amongst people. Who could suspect, who could guess, who could imagine what's in you? I couldn't! You are my mistake. I shall hide you here."

...  
To me you are not Willems, the man I befriended and helped through thick and thin, and thought much of... You are not a human being that may be destroyed or forgiven. You are a bitter thought, a something without a body and that must be hidden... "You are my shame." (O.I. p. 275)

One cannot help noting the highly literary nature of lexical items like amongst, through thick and thin, the figurative use of noun phrases like my mistake, my shame or the rhythmical quality implicit in the counterpointing of rhetorical questions like who could suspect, who could guess, who could imagine... Opinions might vary as regards the credibility of Lingard's speech under such conditions. Still, one has to admit that on such occasions Conrad's linguistic individuation of the man tallies with his own fundamental intentions regarding his character.

In like manner, Conrad makes Nostromo speak that sort of poetic language which is not quite consistent with what we know about the Italian's poor education or with his occupation as foreman of the jetty workers of Sulaco. This poetic touch in the man's speech is brought into play whenever he is faced with a situation of a sentimental nature. Nostromo calls Mrs. Gould "the shining and incorruptible Senora", and describes Giselle as "an airy soul. Bright and warm like sunshine, soon clouded and soon serene." (N. p. 559). Still, Conrad originally conceived him as the lover "magnificent and carelessly public in his amours". As such, Nostromo lives up to his reputation till the last moment of his life, and like Cleopatra's Anthony who, on his death bed, asks her not to shed a tear since one tear is "worth all that is lost and won", the dying Nostromo yearns for one last kiss from his Giselle, "one kiss is enough if there is no time for more". (p. 559)

Aissa's case in An Outcast is one of those rare cases where the novelist's own fundamental intentions are defeated through his characteristic idealisation of women in his works. In Aissa's case, Conrad appears to have been carried away by his innate poetic bent. According to Gordon, Conrad's declared ambition in writing An Outcast was to portray "L'esclavage physique



de l'homme par une femme absolument sauvage." (1) The man in question is the Dutchman, Willems, who falls for the beautiful Malay woman, Aissa. Conrad's use of direct speech in Aissa's case frustrates his original purpose because, instead of Aissa the lustful and savage woman, the reader gets the impression that he is in the presence of a clairvoyant, a poetess of sorts and a tragic heroine par excellence.

Here is Aissa, the clairvoyant, whose lucidity of vision few civilised women would not envy her:

"What is that land beyond the great sea from which you come? A land of lies and of evil from which nothing but misfortune ever comes to us - who are not white." (O.I. p. 144)

One wonders at the rhythmic quality of the woman's prose style. She does not say "a land of lies and evil" since that absence of the preposition of would break the rhythm of her speech. Besides, how could such a supposedly savage woman sum up in these few words the tragedy of her people?

On closer acquaintance with Aissa, we meet in her the poetess of sorts imploring Tom Lingard to leave her white lover alone:

"He is all! Everything. He is my breath my light, my heart. . . Go away. . . forget him He has no courage and no wisdom any more. . . And I have lost my power. . . Go away and forget. . ." (p. 253)

Until we finally meet with Aissa, the tragic heroine, crying in her agony at the deceit her false lover has subjected her to:

"What have you made of me?" She cried, 'You lying child of an accursed mother. What have you made of me? The slave of a slave.' (p. 358)

And on being told by her lover that he has to go back to his half-caste wife whom he is tied to by the law of Heaven, a fact which he in his days of infatuation had kept from Aissa, this last retorts:

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(1) Quoted in Gordan, 1963 : 193

Your law. . . or your lies? What am I to believe?

...  
You lied to me with your lips, with your eyes. You crooked heart... Ah! (p. 255)

Reading this, the reader cannot help feeling for and sympathising with the love-sick woman, who, despite her prophetic nature and poetic turn of mind, was originally conceived as a woman "absolument sauvage."

It appears that Conrad was given over to the idealisation of women's speech in general. This applies as much to Aissa, Mrs. Gould (Nostromo), Lena (Victory) and Rita (The Arrow) as it does to minor characters like Jewel (Lord Jim) or Natalia (Under Western Eyes). Jewel, for instance, learned her English from Jim. As such, she would not be expected to speak that impeccably correct language displayed in her short dialogue with her white lover, after Gentleman Brown's fatal victory over him. Another case that invites comparison with Jewel's is that of Lena, the orchestra girl in Victory, whose speech does not betray in the least her humble English background.

While it is true that on these and similar occasions the direct speech of Conrad's characters does not come up to the requirements of linguistic realism as it is understood by linguists, one has to concede that what is lost in this respect is made up for in terms of the artistic tragic finale such poetic shifts in their speech usually achieve. Granted that people like Tom Lingard, Nostromo, Axel Heyst and Jim would not talk in real life that sort of elevated language which Conrad puts into their mouths; still, these are noble characters whose speech cannot be marred by the mundane, down-to-earth grammatical locutions or phonetic eccentricities of minor characters like Hudig, Donkin and Ricardo. Such irregularities would detract from their nobility and make



the reader feel no sympathy for them. In this they are like the heroes of a Shakespearean tragedy whose elevated language is part and parcel of their tragic design. Besides, such irregularities might end up by making them appear not so much tragic or romantic as comic or even grotesque. What one can hold against these characters is that their hold on the language of everyday life is not firm enough to make them linguistically distinguishable the one from the other. Tom Lingard tells Almayer that he is "jammed on a lee-shore", which last expression is also used by Captain Anthony of Chance in reference to Flora. Axel Heyst, the Swede, is as sophisticated in his speech as is the Marlow of Lord Jim and Chance. The same applies to the old teacher of languages in Under Western Eyes. Besides, were it not for the fact that Aissa now and again uses one or two Malay words in her speech, she would hardly be different from the Lena of Victory or Mrs. Travers of The Rescue.

Conrad was no Dickens, George Eliot or Hardy. Compared with such Titans, he would appear at an obvious disadvantage in as much as concerns regional or class dialects phonologically or grammatically represented. Nor can he hold a candle in this particular respect to contemporaries like Bennett or Galsworthy. A close look at Bennett's Anna of the Five Towns or Galsworthy's Maid in Waiting will be enough to convince us of the gap between them and Conrad. In the first we find that the publisher has explained in the footnotes certain idioms or lexical items used by the dialect speakers. In the second, Galsworthy is keen on representing the speech peculiarities as much of the English Lady Mont as of the American Professor Hallorson. With Conrad the stress is very often laid on the lexical aspect of the character's speech:

a word or phrase with some colloquial or slangy overtones about them, by means of which the novelist tries to convince us of the life-like quality of his characters' speech. The fact remains, however, that, like their creator and his surrogate narrators, most of his characters are hardly distinguishable the one from the other.



## Chapter V

REPORTED SPEECH

Like his direct speech, Conrad's reported speech has its distinctive linguistic features and stylistic significance in his novels. Why both Conrad and Ford preferred "indirect speech" to what the latter called "conversations" (1) will be discussed later on in the present chapter which falls into two parts. The first is concerned with the investigation of the linguistic features of reported speech in the three opening chapters of Almayer's Folly, together with a comparison between Conrad's practice and that of some of his contemporary novelists. The second is devoted to the stylistic significance of Conrad's manipulation of more than one form of reported speech in his novels.

Almayer's Folly begins with one utterance in direct speech: "Kaspar! Makan!". It is Mrs Almayer calling on her husband to come in for his dinner. The utterance is contained within quotation marks and retains the exclamation marks indicative of the woman's tone of voice. This is immediately followed by a narrative sentence that prepares us for the sudden shift from the direct speech of the first sentence to the reported speech of the third:

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The well-known shrill voice startled Almayer from his dream of splendid future into the unpleasant realities of the present hour. (p.3)

Having thus introduced his readers to the day-dreaming protagonist, Conrad proceeds to report the man's unspoken thoughts, which he soon resumes in spite of his wife's exhortations.

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(1) See p.213 infra.

This is how Conrad reports Almayer's unspoken utterances:

An unpleasant voice too. He had heard it for many years, and with every year he liked it less. No matter; there would be an end to all this soon. (p.3)

The first thing one notes about this passage is the absence of the reporting clause "Almayer thought that...". He also dispenses with the anticipatory It and the copula which should precede the utterance "An unpleasant voice". In other words, Conrad's reported version of the man's thoughts treats the various utterances as independent units. Still, as in traditional indirect speech, first person pronouns change to third person. Verbs and modal auxiliaries are back-shifted: the present perfect and simple present of the second utterance are respectively changed to past perfect and simple past, while the present form of the modal auxiliary will of the third utterance is replaced by would. An exact reproduction of the man's actual utterances would read:

An unpleasant voice. I have heard it for many years, and with every year I like it less. No matter; there will be an end to all this soon.

One notes, however, that the demonstrative this is not distanced in the reported version.

One more revealing example of this form of reported speech occurs on the next page. No sooner does Almayer wake up to the hard facts of life, which his wife's "unpleasant voice" recalls him to, than he delves once more into the subconscious regions of his mind:

They would live in Europe, he and his daughter. They would be rich and respected. Nobody would think of her mixed blood in the presence of her great beauty and of his immense wealth. Witnessing her triumphs he would grow young again, he would forget the twenty-five years of heart-breaking struggle on this coast where he felt like a prisoner. All this was nearly within his reach.



Let only Dain return! And return soon he must - in his own interest, for his own share. He was now more than a week late! Perhaps he would return to-night. (pp. 3 - 4)

Here, again, Almayer is talking to himself. As in the preceding passage, first person pronouns in "I and my daughter" become "he and his daughter", and we changes to they. Both verbs and modal auxiliaries are backshifted in time. However, both the demonstrative this and the time adverbials now and to-night retain the direct form. In proper indirect speech the last two utterances of the passage would read: "He thought that Dain was then more than a week late and added that perhaps he would return that night." Apart from this, all utterances are treated as independent units which are not subordinated to any reporting clause. Emotive elements such as exclamations and question marks are preserved intact as in the direct version, a technique which enables the novelist to dispense with stylistic variations like, "He exclaimed", or, "He asked himself", which are usually used in proper indirect speech. (1)

From the analysis of the method of speech presentation in the preceding quotations, one can propose the following conclusions. Firstly, in both instances the character's thoughts cannot be regarded as proper interior monologue, mainly because of the transposition of first and second person pronouns to third person, the back-shifting of verbs, and the absence of inverted commas. Nor can they be treated as (proper) indirect speech because of the lack of subordination. Hence one may call this form of speech "narrated monologue". As such, narrated monologue is characterised by: 1- independence of units (i.e. clauses are not subordinated to a main reporting clause); 2- transposition

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(1) For further instances of this form of reported speech see pp. 7, 10, 11, 14, 22, 29, 32, 42.

of pronouns (first and second person changing to third);  
 3- distancing of verbs, though not necessarily of adverbials  
 or demonstratives; 4- preservation of emotive elements such  
 as exclamations and question marks.

Another form of reported speech that one comes across in  
 the opening chapters of the novel is that which may be termed  
 "reported dialogue". Both narrated monologue and reported  
 dialogue share the same linguistic features. The difference  
 between them is notional rather than grammatical. For, where-  
 as narrated monologue is the reported version of one character's  
 unspoken thoughts, reported dialogue is concerned with the  
 rendering of one, or a group of characters' spoken utterances  
 on a given occasion. An illustrative example of this form of  
 speech occurs in the second chapter of Almayer's Folly.

After marrying Almayer to his adopted daughter, Tom Lingard  
 sets out on one of his sea adventures. Almayer is left enter-  
 taining the hope that one day Lingard would return laden with  
 immense riches. Instead, Lingard returned

... ill, a ghost of his former self, with the  
 fire of fever burning in his sunken eyes, almost  
 the only survivor of the numerous expedition.  
 But he was successful at last! Untold riches  
 were in his grasp; he wanted more money - only  
 a little more to realise a dream of fabulous  
 fortune. And Hudig had failed! Almayer  
 scraped all he could together, but the old man  
 wanted more. If Almayer could not get it he  
 would go to Singapore - to Europe even, but  
 before all to Singapore; and he would take the  
 little Nina with him. The child must be  
 brought up decently. He had good friends in  
 Singapore who would take care of her and have  
 her taught properly. (p. 26)

Apart from the first and fifth sentences which are purely narra-  
 tive, the rest of the passage is reported dialogue. As in  
 narrated monologue, utterances are treated as independent units,  
 while verbs and pronouns are distanced. A reconstruction of



Lingard's dialogue with Almayer would read:

But I am successful at last! Untold riches  
are in my grasp; I want more money - only a  
little more to realise a dream of fabulous  
fortune. And Hudig has failed!

...  
If you cannot get it, I will go to Singapore...

It is quite clear, from the above examples, that one of the advantages of this form of reported speech is that it helps the novelist achieve that brevity in narration which cannot be realised through the traditional method of indirect speech, with its insistence on a reporting main clause and stylistic variations like, "he wondered" or, "he exclaimed", which are replaced in the two free forms by the appropriate punctuation marks.

A third form of reported speech used by Conrad in the novel is that which one may call "narrative indirect". Here Conrad uses a reporting clause, "he said" or "he declared" as the case may be, but he dispenses with the connecting "that" which is used for subordination in proper indirect statements. So much so indeed that the reporting clause assumes the function of a comment clause within the reported independent unit. In the second chapter of the novel *Lakamba* pays Almayer an unexpected visit. "He came; he said, to buy a couple of brass guns as a present to his friend the chief of Sambir Dyaks." (p. 32)

In proper indirect statement such a sentence would read:

"He said that he came to buy a couple of brass guns as a present to his friend, etc." In the quotation, the man's utterance is given an independent status despite the fact that pronouns and verbs are distanced.

Slight as the difference between this form of reported speech and proper indirect speech might seem to be, it is important because Conrad uses it freely in his other works. For

instance, Captain Mitchell's dialogue with Mrs. Gould in Nostromo is reported in narrative indirect:

He did not know what he would have done without his invaluable Nostromo, he declared. Those confounded Costaguana politics gave him more work - he confided to Mrs. Gould - than he had bargained for. (p. 136)

As in the previous example from Almayer's Folly, we get two reporting clauses he declared and he confided to Mrs. Gould which, as a result of the absence of the connecting "that", may be taken for comment clauses.

When Conrad tells us that at the end of his visit to Almayer's compound, Abdulla "wished his friend Almayer "a thousand years", and moved down the steps, helped dutifully by Reshid" (p.46), we get an example of the fourth form of reported speech in Conrad. This one may call "coloured indirect". Abdulla's words to Almayer might have been, "May God make you live a thousand years", or simply, "A thousand years my friend Almayer". In the reported version, Conrad provides the reporting clause, He wished his friend, and incorporates the actual words of Abdulla into the body of the clause as object complement. He retains the inverted commas in "a thousand years" to indicate that this was the actual phrase used by Abdulla on that occasion.

Reduced indirect is the fifth form of reported speech used by Conrad in the opening chapters of Almayer's Folly. On such occasions the argument or dialogue is reduced to a minimum. The novelist gives us the gist or main points of the argument without going into unnecessary details. Captain Ford is the man who brought back Nina from Singapore to live with her father, Almayer, in Sambir. When asked by Almayer to explain the reasons behind his daughter's arrival, Captain Ford "said little beyond



generalizing in vague but violent terms upon the foolishness of women in general, and of Mrs. Vinck in particular." (p. 30)

The reported version of the two men's dialogue relative to the subject of Nina's return gives us only the main reason which is "the foolishness of women in general, and of Mrs. Vinck in particular". The details are given in direct speech. It all boils down, however, to the self-same reason. In reduced indirect we have a reporting clause, transposed pronouns and verbs and a subordinated clause which sums up the speaker's opinion or line of argument.

Generally speaking, reduced indirect is used to replace a lengthy dialogue that has little effect on the development of the novel's plot. One such dialogue occurs between Abdulla and Almayer. Conrad reports the two men's conversation in the following manner:

He (Abdulla) began by neatly complimenting Almayer upon the long years they had dwelt together in cordial neighbourhood, and called upon Allah to give him many more years to gladden the eyes of his friends by his welcome presence. (p. 44)

Abdulla's way of complimenting Almayer is not given us in detail. The dialogue between the two men on that particular occasion, being somewhat marginal to the overall plot of the novel, is summed up in that one long sentence of the above quotation. In such cases, the characters' spoken utterances are reported in a very concise form.

Proper indirect is usually accompanied in Conrad's novels with what is known in drama as stage directions. The linguistic features of this form of speech presentation are: 1 - a reporting clause followed by "that" in statements; 2 - pronouns and verbs are distanced as in narrated monologue; 3 - absence of emotive elements like questions and exclamations which are replaced in

this particular respect by the equivalent stylistic variation. Two instances of proper indirect occur in the third chapter of Almayer's Folly.

When Almayer inadvertently praises English wisdom to his Dutch visitors, these last are far from pleased with their host's lack of politic wisdom. This is why Almayer's demand for protection is turned down by the chief of the Dutch Commission who,

... told him (Almayer) significantly that the Arabs were better subjects than Hollanders who dealt illegally in gunpowder with the Malays. (p. 36)

In this quotation, we have a reporting clause The chief of the Commission told him. We then get the speaker's words subordinated in the form of a that clause to the main one. Both verbs and pronouns are distanced.

The second example occurs during that dialogue between Abdulla and Almayer. After the introductory words of greeting, Abdulla starts to talk with Almayer about his nephew Reshid.

And, speaking with well-bred politeness, he explained further to the dumbfounded Almayer that, if he would consent to the alliance of his offspring with that true believer and virtuous man Reshid, she (Nina) would be mistress of all the splendours of Reshid's house, the first wife of the first Arab in the Islands, when he - Abdulla - had been called to the joys of Paradise by Allah the All-merciful. (p. 45)

Here, again, we have a reporting clause, he explained further to, preceding the reported version of the speaker's utterances which are subordinated in the form of a that clause to the main one. While verbs and pronouns are distanced as in all forms of indirect, emotive elements are replaced by stylistic variations like "significantly" in the preceding example and "speaking with well-bred politeness" in the above quotation.



So far one can easily see that there are two linguistic features common to all six forms of indirect. Firstly, in all cases, first and second person pronouns change to third. Secondly, verbs, and some adverbials at least, are distanced in time. They differ from each other in that both narrated monologue and reported dialogue retain the emotive elements of the direct form without accepting a reporting clause. On the other hand, while all remaining four forms accept a reporting main clause, narrative indirect turns the reporting clause into a comment clause void of grammatical function. Besides, coloured indirect retains some of the lexical items of the original conversation within quotation marks, reduced indirect condenses the whole argument into one or more main points, and proper indirect has a reporting main clause to which the character's rendered speech is wholly subordinated.

Apart from these six forms of indirect which participate in more than one linguistic feature, there is that form of peripheral indirect which bears very slight affinity to proper indirect. This last form, however, is not represented in the three opening chapters of Almayer's Folly. Because Conrad uses it on a large scale in his novels, one might as well refer to that example of it which occurs in the fifth chapter of the novel. On the way to Lakamba's compound Babalatchi's unspoken utterances are reported in the following manner:

He was not in a hurry; his master, Lakamba, was surely reposing at this time of the day. He would have ample time to cross over and greet him on his waking with important news. Will he be displeased? Will he strike his ebony wood staff angrily on the floor, frightening him by the incoherent violence of his exclamations; or will he squat down with a good humoured smile, and, rubbing his hands gently over his stomach with a familiar gesture, expectorate copiously into the brass siri-vessel, giving vent to a low, approbative murmur? (pp. 60 - 1)

This is a case of peripheral indirect because, contrary to what has been observed in the other six forms, here only pronouns are transposed, "Will he (Lakamba) strike his ebony wood staff angrily on the floor, frightening him (Babalatchi), etc." Judging by the sequence of tense which should follow the narrative sentence, He was not in a hurry, the absence of quotation marks indicative of direct speech, and more important still, the transposition of the objective pronoun me to him, this can only be a case of reported speech. Since only this question of pronoun transposition relates it to the indirect form, one will do well to call it "peripheral indirect" to distinguish it from the other forms.

The difference between the various forms so far identified can be thrown into sharper focus by the following diagram:

x = present

-- = absent

Form of reported speech	1	2	3	4	5	6
narrated monologue	x	x	x	-	-	-
reported dialogue	x	x	x	-	-	-
narrative indirect	x	x	-	-	x	-
coloured indirect	x	x	-	x	-	x
reduced indirect	x	x	-	<u>x</u>	-	-
proper indirect	x	x	-	x	-	-
peripheral indirect	x	-	x	-	-	x

1: transposition of pronouns

2: backshifting of verbs

3: preservation of emotive elements

4: reporting clause

5: reporting clause taking the form of a comment clause

6: preservation of some of the original lexical items and turns of expression



Having so far underlined the various forms of reported speech that one can come across in Conrad's novels, it remains to be seen to what extent the conclusions reached tally with the views of grammarians and stylisticians on the linguistic features relevant to each of these forms. Interest in speech as a stylistic feature of a writer's language is a recent phenomenon. According to Professor Ullmann, Charles Bally was the first stylistician to draw attention to the presence of what later on came to be known as "Le style indirect libre" in Flaubert's novels (1). A close examination of the linguistic peculiarities of this form will show the striking affinity between this form and the two free forms found in Conrad: narrated monologue and reported dialogue. Professor Ullmann, however, overlooks the fact that before Bally could spot the presence of this form in Flaubert's novels, the grammarian Otto Jespersen had already referred to it as "represented speech" in his book, The Philosophy of Grammar (2). Still, it was Bally, not Jespersen, who pointed out the stylistic potentialities of what has since been called "Le style indirect libre".

Since Ullmann is concerned in his writings mainly with French writers, one can do no better than to quote at some length from a relatively recent book on the subject. In his Speech in the English Novel, Norman Page sums up and enlarges Ullmann's definition of "Le style indirect libre". According to Page, this form of reported speech is characterised by the following:

- 1 - Transposition of verbs: as in indirect speech, if the narrative is in the past tense, the verbs will change, the present becoming the preterite, the preterite the pluperfect, etc., though it is possible to find exceptions to this.

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(1) Ullmann, 1957 : 95.- 7

(2) Jespersen, 1924 : 290 - 2

- 2 - Transposition of pronouns: again as in indirect speech first and second persons change to third.
- 3 - Absence of subordination: each sentence appears as an independent unit, not as a subordinate clause so that there is no 'key verb' on which it is syntactically dependent.
- 4 - Preservation of such 'emotive elements' as questions, exclamations, interjections, colloquial language, slang and vulgar terms together with an attempt to imitate, 'the inflexions and intonations of the speaking voice'. (1)

It is quite clear that "le style indirect libre" as defined by both Ullmann and Page participates in the same linguistic features of Conrad's "narrated monologue" and "reported dialogue". It does not, however, highlight the notional difference between the two closely related forms. Nor can one agree with Dorrit Cohn's suggestion that a replacement of the term "le style indirect libre" with the appellation "narrated monologue" will satisfactorily solve the problem (2), since, as has already been noted, the term "narrated monologue" can only apply to the reported version of one character's unspoken thoughts, but it can hardly accommodate the free reporting of two or more characters' spoken utterances. Although the Quirk Grammar seems to uphold Dorrit Cohn's theory where the authors suggest that free indirect speech (the English translation of the French term) very often "represents a person's stream of thought rather than actual speech" (3), in a stylistic study of Conrad's novels one has to stick to the terms "narrated monologue" and "reported dialogue", if only to maintain the notional difference between the two forms.

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(1) Page, 1973 : 37  
 (2) Cohn, 1966 : 97 - 112  
 (3) Quirk et al., 1974 : 789



More important still is the fact that neither designation, i.e. "le style indirect libre" or "free indirect", can be applied to that freer form of speech which I have chosen to call "peripheral indirect", since, as is made clear by the example on page 172 of the present study, only pronouns are transposed despite the whole narrative being in the past. Besides, while it is true that Conrad observes the rules regarding the backshift of the verb, together with equivalent shifts in pronouns in his use of narrated monologue and reported dialogue, he, contrary to what the Quirk Grammar advocates, very rarely makes similar shifts in his determiners or adverbs.

Apart from free indirect speech, the only other form of reported speech which interests grammarians is what I have called proper indirect. The Quirk Grammar, for instance, tells us that as opposed to direct speech, proper indirect is distinguished by the subordination within the reporting clause of the actual words of the speaker in the form of a that-clause for statements, a dependent wh-clause for questions and exclamations and a to-infinitive clause for commands, together with corresponding shifts in verbs, modals, pronouns and determiners and adverbials. (1) This division of reported speech into free indirect speech and proper indirect can hardly work in fiction, for, as has been noted earlier, Conrad's reported speech cannot be said to conform to the rules laid down by grammarians. Indeed, fictional reported speech is too complex a feature of any writer's style to be judged by just these two forms.

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(1) Ibid., pp. 785 - 9

Page seems to uphold this view when he tells us that,

... a substantial task of analysis and definition remains to be undertaken in the field of categories of speech-presentation, and that it may be almost as misleading to limit the number to four (including the 'free' forms) as to follow traditional grammarians in restricting it to two. (1)

However, such a difficulty does not discourage Page from attempting some tentative definitions and classifications. Hence his division of fictional reported speech into proper indirect, free indirect, parallel indirect, coloured indirect and submerged speech. I have already demonstrated how and why the term "free indirect" should be replaced by terms like "narrated monologue", "reported dialogue" and "peripheral indirect". Like Cohn, Page seems to overlook the notional distinction between narrated monologue and reported dialogue. On the other hand, he would regard that example of peripheral indirect quoted on page 172 as a case of free direct, because he seems unable to distinguish clearly between free indirect and free direct as is shown by the example from Edwin Drood quoted on page 37 of his book. But this is part of the difficulty inherent in all such attempts at providing hard and fast rules for the classification of speech in general.

Page's proper indirect and coloured indirect are characterised by the same linguistic features already highlighted in the examples from Conrad's novels. Nevertheless, his theory about parallel indirect is purely hypothetical. For he does not give us a concrete instance of any writer's use of this form to substantiate his claims about its presence as a separate form with distinctive linguistic peculiarities. Instead, he quotes one

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(1) Page, 1973 : 38



of the direct utterances of Mrs. Gamp of Dickens's Martin Chuzzlewit and proceeds to transform it into what he believes to be parallel indirect (1). Besides, is it not question begging to say that parallel indirect is linguistically marked by its "lexical faithfulness to the original" direct utterances, since proper indirect is supposed to be just that? Granted that the reported version of Mrs. Gamp's utterances is different from proper indirect in that her pronunciation of words like "creatures" and "back'ards" are preserved intact, still this would be regarded as a case of coloured indirect without any further need to complicate the already complex issue.

The term "submerged speech" is used by Page to accommodate those instances where "the supposed dialogue has become absorbed by the narrative, with consequent likely changes of lexis as well as a grammatical form different from that of indirect speech (since it lacks the subordinate clause or clause dependent on a verb of saying)". (2) Under the circumstances, "submerged speech" would seem to be an "unhappy" term, for in the example from Almayer's Folly, Abdulla's words to Almayer are not submerged by the author's narrative style. We are informed that "Abdulla wished his friend Almayer a thousand years". If we were to reconstruct Abdulla's actual utterances they would read: "May my friend Almayer live a thousand years!", to which the only indirect transformation would be either "Abdulla wished his friend Almayer a thousand years", as Conrad reports it; or "Abdulla wished that his friend Almayer might live a thousand years". Since we cannot be sure what Abdulla's exact words on the occasion were, the appropriate term to use for such examples is "reduced indirect" and not "submerged speech".

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(1) Page, 1973 : 34

(2) Ibid., p. 32

Moreover, Page's classification does not take into account those cases of indirect where, despite the speaker's utterances being rendered in the indirect form, the reporting clause functions as a comment clause to which the reported utterances are not subordinated. This has been called "narrative indirect", in view of the fact that it is a form of indirect speech which is extensively used in fiction.

Narrated monologue, reported dialogue, narrative indirect, coloured indirect, reduced indirect, proper indirect and peripheral indirect are the seven forms of reported speech that one comes across in Conrad's novels. The terms suggested in this chapter are not meant, however, to apply to all works of fiction, for writers have been known to experiment with the ways of speech presentation (James Joyce and Virginia Woolf may be cited as cases in point). What they seek to provide us with is a workable framework for the stylistic investigation of reported speech in Conrad's novels. Novelists like Conrad do not use these varied forms of reported speech just to show how adept they are at juggling with a jumble of linguistic features. They do this, as Conrad himself would say, "from conviction". Before discussing Conrad's "convictions" relative to the subject, let us first see in what way he is different from his contemporary novelists.

Reported speech in its various forms features prominently in the works of two of Conrad's contemporaries: Galsworthy and Bennett. Galsworthy's Over The River is one of those dramatic works in which dialogue and other forms of direct speech add up to more than three quarters of the verbal expression in the novel. However, the narrative is undertaken by an omniscient narrator whose predilection for reported speech in



its various forms reminds one of the Conrad of the middle period where reported speech is not as foregrounded as it is in the early novels.

The following passage occurs in Chapter II where the omniscient narrator shifts his attention for a moment from the characters' direct speech for the sake of reporting the secret thoughts of the two sisters: Dinny and Clare. (1)

After that there was a long silence, Dinny thinking about Clare and Clare thinking about herself. Presently, she grew tired of that and looked across at her sister. Had Dinny really got over that affair of hers with Wilfrid Desert of which Hubert had written... with such relief when it was off? She had asked that her affair should never be spoken of, Hubert had said, but that was over a year ago. Could one venture, or would she curl up like a hedgehog? 'Poor Dinny!' she thought: 'I'm twenty-four, so she's twenty-seven!' And she sat very still looking at her sister's profile. (p. 12)

The first two sentences are pure narrative style. Reported speech (of the type already identified as narrated monologue in Conrad's case) begins with the third sentence and lasts till the end of the fifth. The sixth sentence is interior monologue (direct speech) and the last is narrative.

Two pages later Clare is left alone at her window where,

The last of the sunlight was stirring in what yellowish-green foliage was left, so that the tree had an enchanted look. Seventeen months since she had stood at this window and looked down over that mulberry tree, at the fields and the rising coverts. Seventeen months of foreign skies and trees, foreign scents and sounds and waters. All new, and rather exciting, tantalising, unsatisfying. No rest! Certainly none in the white house with the wide verandah she had occupied at Kandy. (pp.15.- 6)

Apart from the opening narrative sentence, the rest of the passage bears all the linguistic markers of narrated monologue already

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(1) Galsworthy, 1933

discussed in reference to Conrad's practice. As such, narrated monologue is the dominant form of reported speech in Galsworthy's novel. Although such a practice compares favourably with Conrad's practice in, say, Lord Jim or The Secret Agent where the role of reported speech is somewhat played down, Conrad's resourcefulness shows up in the way he brings into play as many forms of reported speech in the same passage as could be mustered. Besides, if we compare Over the River with Conrad's dramatic novel, Under Western Eyes, we find that, in the latter case, the role played by reported speech in its various forms is as essential to the tragic pattern of the novel as that of direct speech. Indeed, the dramatic immediacy of Razumov's personal tragedy is brought out not so much by his lengthy dialogues with the other characters, but rather by the way the inner workings of the man's mind are reported to us. The difference between Galsworthy and Conrad on such occasions is similar to that between the sudden flash of lightning and the constant brightness of daylight.

Galsworthy, however, fares better with short stories like "The Juryman" where, in addition to narrated monologue, we find confluences of the various forms of reported speech in a manner that matches the Conrad of "The Return", if not of fully-fledged novels like Almayer's Folly or An Outcast. This change in technique on Galsworthy's part seems to be dictated by the nature of the subject under investigation. In "The Juryman", he is mainly concerned with the thoughts of Mr. Henry Bosengate relative to his domestic affairs and the ill-fated prisoner, whose fate he in collaboration with his fellow jurymen has to decide. Unlike the full-length novel, the short story does not contain



much dialogue, and this accounts for the relative density of reported speech in it.

Bennett's Elsie and the Child is rich in reported speech. Here Bennett's method of reporting Elsie's interior monologue is remarkable for the way he makes the reported version a close reflection of the original thoughts. Elsie's thoughts regarding her employers, the Rastes, are rendered as follows: (1)

She (Elsie) ran up the stairs, putting on a new demeanour as she approached the levels where dwelt the feared, worshipped and incalculable rulers of the universe. A strange caste; they were unhappy if they could not have a bath everyday! And they would not eat simply; their meals were made as complicated as a church service,.... They could not eat their fill of one dish. Oh no! They would peck at a dish and then have it changed for another one, and so on. . . .

Then your voice, the way you had to speak to them! As a charwoman, and even as "general" to the most respectable Earlforward couple in Riceyman Steps - them as died one after the other the same day, poor things! - Elsie had always used her natural voice." (pp. 2 - 3).

Narrated monologue begins with the phrase, A strange caste.

The fact that Elsie is a dialect speaker is reflected in the narrator's rendering of her thoughts. Instead of the standard appositive clause, those who died, we get the colloquial them as died. The reported version also contains other colloquial turns of expression such as, pick at a dish, which show Bennett's keenness to preserve the spirit of the original monologue.

The density of reported speech in this and other novels by Bennett seems to match, and sometimes exceeds, its use by Conrad in some of his novels. Still, we somehow miss the stylistic variety attendant upon the interplay of the various forms which constitutes a marked characteristic of Conrad's practice. Besides, as will soon be pointed out, it is the way Conrad uses reported speech for a variety of aesthetic purposes that sets him

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(1) Bennett, 1924

apart from contemporary co-practitioners.

Both James and Ford are more sparing in their use of narrated monologue than either Galsworthy or Bennett. With James, however, this is more true of novels like Roderick Hudson than The Ambassadors. In the first, James uses freely the more traditional forms of reported speech. On very rare occasions he opts for narrated monologue as when he tells us, (1)

Once Rowland passed an angry day. He had dreamed - it was the most substantial of dreams - that she had given him the right to believe that she looked to him to transmute her discontent. And yet here she was throwing herself back into Roderick's arms at his lightest overture, and betraying his own half fearful, half shameful hopes! (p. 360)

The underlined sentence bears the linguistic markers of narrated monologue: transposition of pronouns, backshifting of verbs (though not of adverbials) and the preservation of the exclamation mark. Still, the scarcity of such forms in the novel is one of its marked features. It is in the late James that such forms are really foregrounded.

Ford's The Good Soldier abounds in traditional forms like proper indirect speech and narrative indirect, but contains not one single instance of either narrated monologue or reported dialogue, a fact which underlines the gap between Conrad's stylistic strategy and that of his close friend and occasional collaborator.

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(1) James, 1961



One would not expect a writer like Conrad to take immense pains with the reporting of his characters' speech just for the sheer fun of experimenting with the various methods of speech presentation, for Conrad, as Crankshaw rightly suggests, "was always calculating his effect." (1) Indeed, Conrad himself implicitly acknowledges this charge (if it could be so called) where he tells us that his task as a novelist is "by the written word to make you hear, to make you feel-it is, before all, to make you see." (2) Perhaps this is why he was "... haunted, mercilessly haunted by the necessity of style." (3)

Conrad has been successively called exoticist, impressionist, romanticist, romantic realist, tragic novelist, nihilist and forerunner of the absurd. So much has also been written on Conrad's reported speech from the standpoint of literary criticism. The emphasis has been laid on his use of narrators like Marlow, Dr. Kennedy, and the old teacher of languages for the reporting of actions and impressions in a way that would help the novelist achieve the detachment needed for the maintaining of the reader's willing suspension<sup>sion</sup> of disbelief. David Daiches tells us that Conrad uses Marlow as a means of satisfying "his desire for artistic objectivity and aloofness" (4). On the other hand, Seltzer holds the view that Marlow and his fellow narrators were resorted to by Conrad because the omniscient point of view displayed in the first two novels had to be discarded (5). Thus, it seems that from the literary point of view the subject has been exhausted.

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(1) Crankshaw, 1963 : 10

(2) N.N. p. x

(3) L.C. p. 127

(4) Daiches, 1960 : 58

(5) Seltzer, 1970 : xxi

On the stylistic level, Charles Jones's article, "Varieties of Speech Presentation in Conrad's 'The Secret Agent'" (1) is the only treatment so far of the subject under investigation. Still, it is limited in scope and purpose to one novel out of a host of other, and perhaps more stylistically interesting, novels. Mr. Jones, who is apparently influenced by the critical stance that relates Conrad's stylistic innovations to Flaubert's impact on him, claims that Conrad's use of free indirect style in his novels is "very similar and even, perhaps, an imitation of Flaubert's method of speech presentation by a novelist writing in English." (2) Mr. Jones, however, rejects Professor Ullmann's "rigid" classification of reported speech into proper indirect and free indirect, and prefers to stick to the traditional direct and indirect speech, apart from which two forms, "there exists a continuum or 'cline' of 'mixed' types" (3). His main thesis is that the novelist's use of this "spectrum of possibilities lying between 'spoken' dialogue and reported narration" helps the reader, in the final analysis, change "his viewpoint of, and relationship to the characters and situations, the exact nature of which he is, on almost all occasions, completely unconscious" (4). Although I disagree with Mr. Jones's views regarding the uselessness of what he calls the "rigid" classification of the various possible forms of speech presentation, I acquiesce in his argument about the stylistic advantage to be gained from the conflation of the methods of speech presentation used by the novelist. Indeed, one's ambition in this part of the present chapter is to prove that Conrad uses the different forms of reported speech for purposes

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(1) Jones, 1968 : 162 - 76

(2) Ibid., p. 164

(3) Ibid., p. 166

(4) Ibid., p. 176



of irony, authorial detachment, character-portrayal, brevity and stylistic variety.

Conrad's reporting of Almayer's unspoken thoughts in the opening pages of Almayer's Folly is charged with ironic overtones. In the passage already quoted on page 165. of this study Almayer's reported utterances, "All this was nearly within his reach. Let only Dain return! And return soon he must - in his own interest", are highly ironic. For a while, Almayer seems to be quite justified in his belief that Dain Maroola must return, since he very soon turns up as expected. Dain returns because he knows this to be in his interest. However, it soon transpires that Almayer's and Dain's interests are worlds apart. Almayer is thinking of the help Dain would offer him for the recovery of Lingard's treasure; but Dain thinks only of Nina for whose sake he comes back to Sambir. This is the type of irony Sedgwick defines as Sophoclean or tragic, (1) where the characters are unconscious of the possible interpretations of their own utterances, interpretations which are made intelligible to the reader by the author. What makes it easy for the novelist to add this ironic touch is the ease with which he incorporates Almayer's narrated monologue into the body of his narrative. As already mentioned, the passage begins with a sentence in straight narrative. Suddenly the reader awakes to the fact that somebody has begun to talk. He soon realises that the man does not talk in the first person and that his utterances are being reported. The dramatic impact resulting from this alternation of narrative style and reported speech is thus achieved without any jarring effect on the easy flow of the narrative.

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(1) Sedgwick, 1968 : 5 - 26. Here Sedgwick distinguishes between seven types of irony. These are irony of rhetoric; of allegory; of fate; of understatement; of Socratic dialectics; of detachment and irony tragic, Sophoclean or dramatic.



The irony becomes more striking through Conrad's contrapuntal technique of juxtaposing Almayer's thoughts and Dain's unspoken utterances on the subject of the latter's return to Sambir. Reporting Dain's thoughts, Conrad informs us that Dain,

... felt tolerably secure as he sat meditating quietly his answer to the Rajah's (Lakamba's) blood-thirsty speech. Yes, he would point out to him the aspect of his position should he - Dain - fall into the hands of the Dutch and should he speak the truth. He would have nothing more to lose then, and he would speak the truth. And if he did return to Sambir, disturbing thereby Lakamba's peace of mind, what then? He came to look after his property. Did he not pour a stream of silver into Mrs. Almayer's greedy lap? He had paid, for the girl, a price worthy of a great prince, although unworthy of that delightfully maddening creature for whom his untamed soul longed in an intensity of desire far more tormenting than the sharpest pain. He wanted his happiness. He had the right to be in Sambir. (p.83)

While the introductory sentence is straight narrative, the rest of the passage is narrated monologue. Syntactically, there is no difference between the narrative sentence and the reported utterances in so far as in both cases the sentences are treated as independent units. From the context, however, the reader knows that, starting from the second sentence, he is being offered a reported version of Dain's thoughts. Dain's thoughts are marked by an apparent lexical faithfulness to the original. Apart from the transposition of pronouns and verbs which underline the novelist's intervention with the man's original utterances, only Dain would regard Almayer's Nina as his "property". Such thinking is typical of Easterners who pay for their prospective wives with a "stream of silver". Still, the reader also notes that the author intervenes with the reported utterances for reasons of explicitness and clarity. Conrad adds the appositive proper noun Dain after the third person he in the second sentence to dispel any doubts from the reader's mind as to the identity of



the person mentioned. Again, the attributive adjective untamed is undoubtedly Conrad's since, savage though he is, Dain would hardly describe his soul as being "untamed" or even "undeveloped". The passage is also remarkable for its ironic contrast with the preceding one narrating Almayer's thoughts on the same subject.

The same contrapuntal technique of juxtaposing his characters' reported speech is used by Conrad to throw into relief the irony inherent in Almayer's and Nina's hallucinations relative to Dain Maroola's faked death. Nina, who knows quite well that Dain is still alive, meditates on her forthcoming planned elopement in the following manner:

While the sun shone with that dazzling light in which her love was born and grew till it possessed her whole being, she was kept firm in her unwavering resolve by the mysterious whisperings of desire which filled her heart with impatient longing for the darkness that would mean the end of danger and strife, the beginning of happiness, the fulfilling of love, the completeness of life. It had set at last! The short tropical twilight went out before she could draw the long breath of relief; and now the sudden darkness seemed to be full of menacing voices calling upon her to rush headlong into the unknown; to be true to her own impulses to give herself up to the passion she had evoked and shared. He was waiting! In solitude of the secluded clearing, in the vast silence of the forest he was waiting alone, a fugitive in fear of his life. Indifferent to his danger he was waiting for her. It was for her only that he had come; and now as the time approached when he should have his reward, she asked herself with dismay what meant that chilling doubt of her own will and of her own desire? (pp. 147 - 8)

With perfect ease Conrad shifts from his description of Nina's surroundings to this expressive exploration of Nina's thoughts. The first utterance in narrated monologue, "It had set at last!" is sandwiched between two narrative sentences. Nina's reported utterances in the sentences that follow reflect some of the characteristics of the original speech. Exclamation and question



marks are retained so as to bring out the dramatic immediacy of her hallucinations. Besides, being consumed with fleshly desire, her speech acquires a poetic touch quite in keeping with her agitated state of mind. Locative adverbials like In the solitude... In the vast silence, etc., are made to occupy initial positions. So is the manner adverbial Indifferent to his danger... . Again there is the implicit emphasis in the cleft sentence, "It was for her only that he had come", which reflects the love-sick woman's desire for security and certainty in her disturbed mind. Finally, in a bid to relieve the monotony of the successive independent units of the woman's narrated monologue, Conrad rounds it off with an utterance that consists of a reporting clause, together with all the other linguistic markers of proper indirect, excepting the preservation of the question mark. Such alternate use of various reporting methods helps remind the reader of the fact that Nina's thoughts are being narrated, while maintaining the dramatic quality of the whole situation.

The passage stands in sharp contrast to Almayer's hallucinations about his daughter Nina and her supposedly dead lover Dain. In his sleep Almayer hears voices,

... and in the space between him and the obstinate phantom floated the murmur of words that fell on his ears in a jumble of torturing sentences, the meaning of which escaped the utmost efforts of his brain. Who spoke the Malay words? Who ran away? Why too late - and too late for what? What meant those words of hate and love mixed so strangely together, the ever-recurring names falling on his ears again and again - Nina, Dain; Dain, Nina? Dain was dead, and Nina was sleeping, unaware of the terrible experience through which he was now passing. Was he going to be tormented for ever, sleeping or walking, and have no peace either night or day? What was the meaning of this? (pp. 159 - 60)



The preponderance of questions coupled with the relatively concise nature of the utterances *is* meant to reflect the man's bewilderment at this portent of his imminent catastrophe. The repetition of Dain's name indicates Almayer's mental trepidation. Still, his ignorance of his daughter's infidelity to him and of Dain's betrayal to their joint interests, which is reflected in his utterance, "Dain was dead, and Nina was sleeping," enhances the tragic irony achieved at the expense of the man who has been let down by his adoptive father, Lingard, his half-caste wife, his Malay friend, Dain, and his own beloved daughter, Nina.

The same contrapuntal technique is used in the reporting of Willems's thoughts in Conrad's second novel, An Outcast. On the way home Willems gloats over the success that awaits him by saying to himself,

And now he was looking at the shadow of the confidential clerk of Hudig & Co. going home. How glorious! How good was life for those who were on the winning side! He had won the game of life; also the game of billiards. He walked faster, jingling his winnings, and thinking of the white stone days that had marked the path of his existence. He thought of the trip to Lombok for ponies - that first important transaction confided to him by Hudig; then he reviewed the more important affairs: the quiet deal in opium; the illegal traffic in gunpowder; the great affair of smuggled firearms, the difficult business of the Rajah of Goak. (pp.7-8)

Here we have a conflation of two types of reported speech: narrated monologue and reduced indirect. These follow a sentence in straight narrative style. Emotive elements like exclamations abound in the case of narrated monologue. Reduced indirect which begins with the reporting clause "he thought of the trip to . . ." gives us a resumé of the man's thoughts on various topics relating to Hudig's business transactions. One notes the way



Conrad resorts to more than one verb for the reporting of these conflicting thoughts. There is, first, the reporting clause, he thought, which is replaced later by he reviewed. The sudden shifts in the protagonist's thoughts parallel the mechanism of spoken language especially in the use of successive appositive phrases like, the quiet deal in opium; the illegal traffic in gunpowder, etc.

In its literary implications the passage looks forward to another reported passage in chapter two where the protagonist is made to see his latest action in its true light, a perception that heightens the tragic irony of the situation. For in less than five pages Willems, the successful and confidential clerk of Hudig & Co., is sacked from his employer's service.

Idiotic indiscretion; that is how he defined his guilt to himself. Could there be anything worse from the point of view of his undeniable cleverness? What a fatal aberration of an acute mind! He did not recognize himself there. He must have been mad. That's it. A sudden gust of madness. And now the work of long years was destroyed utterly. What would become of him?  
(O.I. pp. 22 - 3)

Apart from serving as an ironic comment on the preceding passage, the above quotation is further remarkable for the way it reflects Conrad's ability to transform his protagonist's internal monologue into some sort of unspoken dialogue, through this process of question and answer between the character and himself.

The irony becomes much more telling when we compare Willems's self communions, relative to his relationship with his wife, before and after his dismissal from Hudig's service. At first, Willems's reported self-communion reflects his unbounded confidence in himself:

Now he would go home and make his wife get up and listen to him. Why should she not get up? - and mix a cocktail for him - and listen patiently. Just so she shall. If he wanted



he could make the whole Da Souza family get up.

...  
They would. However, his wife would do -  
for tonight. (p. 8 - 9)

Somewhat later we are informed that as Willems,

... walked towards the town slowly, his mind reviewed the events of the day and he felt a sense of bitter loneliness. His wife had turned him out of his own house. He had assaulted brutally his brother-in-law, a member of the Da Souza family - of that band of his worshippers. He did. Well, no! it was some other man. Another man was coming back. A man without a past, without a future, yet full of pain and shame and anger. (p. 30.)

Both passages participate in the same linguistic features characteristic of narrated monologue. Still, in the first passage one is likely to notice one glaring deviation from the rules regarding the transposition of verbs. For while all Willems's utterances in both passages are backshifted in time his utterance "Just so! She shall," remains the same in the reported version. A superficial glance would dismiss it as a linguistic lapse on the part of a foreigner writing in English. A close scrutiny would, however, reveal that of all the possible choices open to the novelist, he chose the most expressive and economical from the stylistic standpoint. In his conceit Willems is quite sure that his wife SHALL. "She shall", this is what he actually says. Conrad could have reported it either as "She would", or "She should". In either case the emphatic nature of the original utterance would be lost on us, since neither the modal past would nor the putative should would convey the same degree of emphasis. The only other alternative would have been for the novelist to add either a reporting clause like "he assured himself that she would", or a comment parenthetical phrase like "Just so she should (placing a special stress on the modal used)".

Because either alternative would interrupt the easy flow of the narrative and undermine the dramatic effect of the reported version, Conrad decided to keep the original utterance as it is.

Apart from this one difference between the two quotations, one remarks an obvious similarity between the reported version and the actual utterances in terms of the sentences used. They are short and elliptical "They would, He did. Well, no! It was some other man." Clause co-ordination and dashes, indicative of the pauses in the man's speech, abound. Besides, the ironic contrast between utterances like "Why should she not get up?... Just so. She shall", and his unspoken thoughts, "His wife had turned him out of his own house", is too evident to need further comment. It is this structural device of making every utterance serve as a possible comment on the utterances preceding or following it that gives Conrad's novels that unity of texture which some literary critics have already established with respect to his images.

In The Secret Agent Conrad's declared ironic treatment is partly realised through the medium of reported speech. One such instance of irony shows up in the contrast between Winnie's narrated monologue before and after Stevie's death. Watching her husband and Stevie walking down the road, Mrs. Verloc thinks:

"Might be father and son," she said to herself. She thought also that Mr. Verloc was as much of a father as poor Stevie ever had in his life. She was aware also that it was her work. And with peaceful pride she congratulated herself on a certain resolution she had taken a few years before. It had cost her some effort, and even a few tears. (p. 187)

In this passage we have a conflation of direct speech in the first sentence, followed by a sentence in proper indirect, consisting of a reporting clause and a subordinate one bearing all the linguistic markers of proper indirect already defined in this study.



The third and fourth sentences are of the type we call "reduced indirect", since we are given just the main points of Winnie's self-communion. The last sentence is narrated monologue. As such, the passage has nothing ironic about it. Still, when we compare it with the woman's thoughts after her brother's death the irony becomes quite obvious.

Having heard of her brother's tragic end, Winnie indulges in a spell of sinister thoughts:

It was not an ordinary stroke of death. Moreover, it was not death that took Stevie from her. It was Mr. Verloc who took him away. She had seen him. She had watched him, without raising a hand, take the boy away. And she had let him go, like - like a fool - a blind fool. Then after he had murdered the boy he came home to her. Just came home like any other man would come home to his wife....  
(246-7)

The quotation carries all the linguistic features of narrated monologue. The shortness of the sentences used parallels the agitated state of the woman's mind. The hallucinatory nature of Winnie's thoughts is brought out through/use of dashes to indicate the woman's bewilderment in her search for the appropriate adjectival clause that would best express her rash action. The tragic irony is achieved at the expense of Winnie who, ignorant of her husband's evil designs, had let him lead the boy to his tragic end without her "raising a hand" in his defence.

In the following example Conrad manages to bring out the ironic contrast between Winnie's and Mr. Verloc's speech through a conflation of more than one type of reported speech. This happens in the wake of hapless Stevie's death. Mr. Verloc is confident that everything will be all right.

He also thought it good policy to display all the assurance he could muster. It would put heart into the poor woman. On his liberation, which, harmonizing with the whole tenor of his life, would be secret, of course, they would

vanish together without loss of time. As to covering up the tracks, he begged his wife to trust him for that. He knew how it was to be done so that the devil himself--- (p. 250)

On the other hand,

→  
The self-confident tone grew upon Mrs. Verloc's ear which let most of the words go by; for what were words to her now? What could words do to her for good or evil in the face of her fixed idea? Her black glance followed that man who was asserting his impunity - the man who had taken poor Stevie from home to kill him somewhere. (p. 250)

The opening sentence of the first passage is reduced indirect.

The second is narrated monologue. The rest of the passage is narrated dialogue, for here Verloc switches from self-communion to speak to his wife. The whole predicate of the adverbial clause of the last sentence is ellipted in a bid on the novelist's part to give us a faithful reporting of the man's utterances.

The second passage begins with a narrative sentence which is connected towards its end with Mrs. Verloc's narrated monologue. The same thing happens in the last sentence which begins in a narrative tone and ends with an appositive adjectival clause defining Mr. Verloc as the man who is directly responsible for Stevie's death. From the structural standpoint the two passages display the immense disparity in outlook between husband and wife. By reporting to his readers Mrs. Verloc's secret thoughts in the face of her husband's unshakable belief in his wife, Conrad achieves that sort of tragic irony which depends for its effectiveness on the main protagonist's (Mr. Verloc's) ignorance of his impending fate, a fate already made known to the reader through this reporting of Winnie's secret thoughts.

Like Winnie Verloc, Axel Heyst of Victory believes that things "do not stand much looking into". In accordance with



his father's sceptical philosophy, he decides to give up the faculty of observation, which once got him mixed up with the unfortunate Morrison for whose death he was held responsible. However, when Heyst sees the beautiful orchestra girl, Lena, he forgets for a while his determination not to get involved with any mortal.

The big woman, advancing, concealed the girl from his sight for a moment. She bent over the seated youthful figure, in passing it very close, as if to drop a word into its ear. Her lips did certainly move. But what sort of word could it have been to make the girl jump up so swiftly? Heyst, at his table, was surprised into a sympathetic start. (V. p. 71)

Here we get one sentence of narrated monologue wedged between four narrative sentences. From the linguistic point of view, the fourth sentence observes all the rules of narrated monologue: transposition of pronouns and verbs, as well as preservation of the question mark. Simple as it is, this unspoken utterance on Heyst's part is of great structural value, for it casts ahead to that narrated monologue Heyst indulges in after observing Lena's nod of warning in the presence of Ricardo.

→  
He looked across the table at the girl. What did it matter whether she had nodded or not? As always when looking into her unconscious eyes, he tasted something like the dregs of tender pity. He had decided to go. Her nod, imaginary or not imaginary, advice or illusion, had tipped the scale. He reflected that Ricardo's invitation could scarcely be anything in the nature of a trap. It would have been too absurd. Why carry subtly into a trap someone already bound hand and foot, as it were? (V. p. 366)

In the first place, we get a sentence of narrated monologue sandwiched between some three sentences of straight narrative. The sixth sentence is indirect proper containing the reporting clause, He reflected, to which Heyst's utterance is subordinated. After this, he once again switches over to narrated monologue



which carries all the linguist~~ic~~ markers of the form. In the first passage, Heyst's instinct gets the upper-hand over his intellect. This is why he decides to observe and look into things contrary to his father's warnings. In the second passage, it is his intellect that makes him give way to that self-destructive scepticism of his which ultimately leads to Lena's death and his suicide. The irony is levelled at Heyst, the self-proclaimed sceptical recluse, who is always wavering between the claims of his instinct and the demands of an overpowering intellect. As such, the structural connection between the two passages embodies the hero's tragic dilemma.

Although reported speech can be a good means of achieving ironic effects of some sort or other, it is in the domain of authorial detachment and character-portrayal that it can be most helpful. Indeed, Conrad's irony at the Almayers, Willemses and Verlocs of his novel, derive, much of its effectiveness from the fact that it is not the omniscient narrator who mercilessly pokes fun at his characters, but rather the characters themselves who betray their own inadequacies through speech.

It was Conrad's desire for impersonality that prompted him to create narrators like Marlow, Dr. Kennedy and the old teacher of languages. It can also be said that this was the main reason for his experimenting with the different methods of speech presentation in his novels. Such a manipulation provides the novelist with the multiple perspectives he needs to maintain the necessary detachment from his subjects. This is what Frederick Karl means when he tells us that Conrad's artistic devices "if they were to be listed categorically, would perhaps come together under the major classification of aesthetic distance or impersonality". (1)



If we now take a close look at some of Conrad's characters we find that Almayer, Willems, Jim, Nostromo, Decoud, Freya, Winnie Verloc, Razumov, Axel Heyst, and Peyrol are partly portrayed through the medium of reported speech. A man like Almayer, for instance, could be portrayed either directly through the omniscient narrator's one-sided angle of vision, or indirectly, though more objectively, by narrating the man's thoughts on several occasions. Conrad obviously preferred to let the man give himself away through his own reported speech, thus shifting the responsibility of the man's characterisation from the shoulders of the omniscient narrator on to the character's. This has the obvious advantage of enhancing the author's detachment from his subject and helps, in the final analysis, towards a more credible and objective portrayal of the man.

Although Conrad informs us in the opening sentence of the novel that Mrs. Almayer's voice startled her husband "from his dream of splendid future into the unpleasant realities of the present hour," (p. 3) he refrains from passing judgement on the man. He does not tell us that he is a highly imaginative person. Instead, he lets Almayer betray this self-destructive attribute of his by narrating his inner thoughts. The passages already quoted from Almayer's Folly bear witness to the importance of the role played by reported speech as a means of character portrayal. Nor does Almayer give up this day-dreaming habit of his after the collapse of his hopes relative to the abortive gold-hunt. From beginning to end he remains the same. Towards the end of the novel, meditating upon his daughter's imminent elopement with the Malay Dain Maroola, Almayer's narrated monologue reads:

"... only one idea remained clear and definite - not to forgive her; only one vivid desire - to forget her. And this must be made clear to her - and to himself - by frequent repetition. That

was his idea of his duty to himself - to his race - to his respectable connections; to the whole universe unsettled and shaken by this frightful catastrophe of his life. (p. 192)

On the linguistic level, Almayer's narrated monologue in this passage is distinguished by the excessive use of gap-fillers like dashes which reflect the sudden shifts in the man's thoughts. It also underlines Conrad's predilection for inter-sentence connectives like and which Conrad uses in most cases to link narrative style with reported speech, a habit which might be partly attributed to Flaubert's tendency to use et for the same purpose in Madame Bovary and some other novels, and partly to the prevalent convention at Conrad's time, since instances of its use by men like Bennett and Galsworthy are not hard to find. The passage is much more important as a means of character delineation. Occurring as it does in the closing chapter of Almayer's Folly, this quotation highlights the fact that Almayer is still the self-deluded, imaginative protagonist of the opening chapters. It is Almayer's reported speech, in this final chapter of the novel, that deprives him of any claim to being a tragic hero, for, as is evident from the passage, he does not attain that self-awareness which is part and parcel of the tragic design. Despite his sheer discomfiture, he still believes that he should not forgive his daughter because this would run counter to his idea of duty to "himself - his race - to his respectable connections; to the whole universe unsettled and shaken by this frightful catastrophe of his life." The irony might be termed tragic, but the man himself fails to measure up to the essential requirements of the tragic hero. And it is through his own narrated speech that Almayer's inherent weakness is brought out.



Although Conrad informs us that Willems's successes "amazed, almost frightened him, and ended - as he got over the succeeding shocks of surprise - by making him ferociously conceited", it is through the reporting of Willems's inner thoughts that this image of the man is indelibly imprinted on the reader's mind.

Willems had the street to himself. He would walk in the middle; his shadow gliding obsequiously before him. He looked down on it complacently. The shadow of a successful man! He would be slightly dizzy with the cocktails and with the intoxication of his own glory. As he often told people, he came east fourteen years ago - a cabin boy. A small boy. His shadow must have been very small at the time;... (O.I. p. 7)

The reader might find it difficult to accept the author's qualified judgement of Willems as a conceited man; but he can hardly question the convincingness of the evidence which the man's narrated monologue puts into sharp relief. It is utterances like "the shadow of a successful man!", "Horrible! Of course he could not abandon her and the child to certain misery or possible starvation. The wife and the child of Willems. Willems the successful, the smart;...", that leave us in no doubt at all as to Willems's sheer complacency and self-satisfaction.

Like their direct speech, Conrad's characters' reported speech in Almayer's Folly and An Outcast is characterised by the relative absence of colloquialisms. However, in reporting Aissa's thoughts on Willems's sudden estrangement from her, Conrad says: "She stood near the doorway. He was there - alone in the gloom of the dwelling. He was there. He spoke not. What was in his mind now? What fear? What desire? Not the desire of her as in the days when he used to smile... How could she know?..." (p. 286) It seems that Conrad believed utterances like "He spoke not" and "Not the desire of her" to have colloquial overtones about them.

As such, they testify to the novelist's desire to make reported speech retain some, if not all, of the linguistic peculiarities of the original speech. Thus, the reported utterance, "He spoke not" is a faithful representation of the words "He speaks not", while "Not the desire of her" is a faithful rendering of Aissa's words "Not the desire of me..." In other words, the novelist does not interfere with his characters' speech. He does not, for instance, render "He speaks not" as "He did not speak".

That Conrad was keen on representing the speech peculiarities of his characters can be well illustrated by quoting some of the reported speech of dialect speakers in his novels. In Victory, Ricardo's speech is full of colloquialisms and slangy terms. This has been shown to be an important feature of his direct speech. In reporting his utterances, Conrad has this fact always in mind.

→  
 One of Ricardo's hands, reposing palm upwards on his folded legs, made a swift thrusting gesture, repeated by the enormous darting shadow of an arm very low on the wall. It broke the spell of perfect stillness in the room. The secretary eyed moodily the wall from which the shadow had gone. Anybody could be made quiet, he pointed out. It was not anything that the Chink could do; no, it was the effect that his company must have produced on the conduct of the doomed man. A man! What was a man? A Swedish baron could be ripped up, or else holed by a shot, as easily as any other creature;... (V. p. 273)

While the first three sentences are straight narrative, the remaining sentences are reported speech of one form or another. The fourth is narrative indirect where we get the reporting clause, he pointed out, in the wake of the quasi-independent utterance "Anybody could be made quiet". Because of the lack of subordination, the reporting clause performs the function of a comment clause. Apart from this, Ricardo's speech is of the type already defined as reported dialogue. Ricardo is talking to plain



Mr. Jones. What makes his reported speech that important is the recurrence of words like Chink, rip up, holed which have a slangy touch about them. This objectivity in representing the man's speech lends much credence to Conrad's characterisation of Ricardo as a ruthless, unscrupulous desperado.

Likewise, Marlow does not forget to indicate the special emphasis Jim gave to certain parts of speech. In order not to interrupt the easy movement of his reported speech Marlow resorts to italicisation to bring out this peculiarity of Jim's original utterances. Rendering Jim's dialogue with reference to the Patna affair, Marlow tells us:

He stood still looking at these recumbent bodies, a doomed man aware of his fate, surveying the silent company of the dead. They were dead! Nothing could save them! There were boats enough for half of them perhaps, but there was no time. No time! No time! (L.J. p. 86)

The quotation starts with a narrative sentence which is definitely Marlow's. This is followed by Jim's reported dialogue. Because Jim laid much stress on the copula in his sentence "They were dead", Marlow gives it the same pitch prominence through italicisation. Jim's bewilderment which is reflected in his repetitive use of phrases like no time is reserved in the reported version. It is further enhanced by the retaining of exclamations as in the direct speech.

Most of the reported speech in Lord Jim and Chance is of the type already defined as reported dialogue. The claims of objectivity necessitated that Marlow be told what thoughts the character in question had on a given occasion, either by the character himself or by some other person who stood within hearing distance of a dialogue between two or more characters. Unlike the omniscient narrator, Marlow could not undertake the responsibility of reporting thoughts or dialogues that he had not been party to. Like

his creator, Marlow is determined to reflect in his reported speech the speech habits of his characters. Jim is famous for the colloquial nature of his utterances. This peculiarity Marlow retains in his rendering of the man's speech:

I was on the point of entreating him to take things seriously when he dropped his knife and fork (he had begun eating, or rather swallowing food, as it were, unconsciously), and began a search all round his plate. The ring! The ring! Where the devil... Ah! Here it was.... He closed his big hand on it, and tried all his pockets one after another. Jove! wouldn't do to lose the thing. He meditated gravely over his fist. Had it? Would hang the bally affair round his neck! (L.J. p. 234)

Jim's actual speech can be reconstructed as follows:

The ring! The ring! Where the devil...  
Ah! Here it is. Jove wouldn't do to lose  
the thing. Have it? Will hang the bally  
affair round my neck!

The highly elliptical nature of the man's speech is as obvious in the reported version as it is in the original utterances. The whole predicate of the third utterance, "Where the devil..." is ellipted. So is the anticipatory it in "Wouldn't do". The first person pronoun I is dispensed with in, "Have it", and "Will hang the bally affair round my neck". The reported version is characterised, however, by the transposition of first person pronouns (my becoming his) verbs and modal auxiliaries. The colloquial nature of the reported dialogue is preserved through the retaining of Jim's oath word Jove!, where the devil..., and the bally affair. One notes that Conrad still does not transpose adverbials in the reported speech of his characters. Whereas Jim's "Here it is" should be rendered "There it was", Marlow, like the author of Almayer's Folly and An Outcast, reports it as "Here it was". The fact remains that Conrad's reported speech in novels like Lord Jim and Chance is more colloquial than that of the early novels.



The desire for authorial objectivity on Conrad's part also shows up in his reporting of Shaw's speech in The Rescue. One such example of Shaw's reported speech is that wherein Shaw meditates the advisability of Lingard's capture of the Travers' yacht.

Perhaps - it flashed upon him - the yacht's gentry will hear I stood up for them. This could conceivably be of advantage to a man who wanted a lift in the world. "Owner of a yacht - badly scared - a gentleman - money nothing to him." Thereupon Shaw declared with heat that he couldn't be an accessory either before or after the fact. Those that never went home - who had nothing to go to perhaps - he interjected, hurriedly, could do as they liked. He couldn't. He had a wife, a family, a little house - paid for - with difficulty. He followed the sea respectably out and home, all regular, not vagabonding here and there, chumming with the first nigger that came along and laying traps for his betters. (R., p. 190)

In this quotation Shaw is supposed to be talking to Tom Lingard, who, in Shaw's view, "is vagabonding here and there, chumming with the first nigger (Hassim and Imada), and laying traps for his betters (the Traverses)". The first sentence in this reported dialogue is proper interior monologue of the type defined in the previous chapter. The rest of the passage is reported speech. The sentence beginning with "This could conceivably..." is narrated monologue, which observes all the linguistic rules of this form of speech except that the demonstrative This, as always happens under similar circumstances, is not distanced in time. Then follows an utterance in proper direct contained within quotation marks, which is in turn followed by a sentence in proper indirect made up of a reporting clause declared with heat, and a subordinate that-clause. The contracted modal auxiliaries, together with the repetitive use of gap-fillers (dashes) and colloquial lexical items like vagabonding and chumming confirm the theory that Conrad tends to retain the speech peculiarities

of the original utterances in the reported version. As an aid towards a realistic portrayal of the character concerned, the advantage of such a technique can hardly be questioned. On the other hand, by making Shaw, who is Lingard's friend and mate, utter these words, Conrad's indictment of Lingard's misguided romanticism becomes the responsibility not so much of the novelist as of Shaw himself. In other words, such reported passages leave one with the impression that this is mere rendering of other peoples's views by a novelist who is keen on maintaining utter detachment from his subjects.

Jocelyn Baines tells us that Conrad wrote in Richard Curl's copy of Nostromo that his ambition in writing the novel was "to render the spirit of an epoch in the history of South America" (1). The enormity of the task confronting Conrad in this novel made him resort to a variety of artistic and stylistic techniques. Apart from the omniscient narrator, Conrad uses people like Teresa Viola, Martin Decoud, Captain Mitchell and Dr. Monyngham as commentators and part-time chorus on the novel's actions and its picturesque hero, Nostromo. More important still is Conrad's determination to maintain his authorial objectivity by keeping aloof from his characters preferring, as Crankshaw rightly suggests, to describe them from the outside and making them give themselves away with their own speech and gestures. (2) It is through this structural process of juxtaposing his characters' speech on different occasions that their true intrinsic peculiarities are put into relief. Here also reported speech is of great help in the objective portrayal of men like Nostromo, Decoud, and to a lesser extent, Dr. Monyngham and Captain Mitchell.

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(1) Baines, 1971 : 363  
 (2) Crankshaw, 1963 : 151 - 8



Although direct speech is Conrad's main method of delineating the character of Decoud and Nostromo prior to their fateful venture on the Golfo Placido, he switches over to reported speech in the chapters following the disastrous incident. Left alone with the silver on the Great Isabel, Decoud indulges in thoughts which Conrad narrates in a variety of ways:

Not a living being, not a speck of distant sail, appeared within the range of his vision; and, as if to escape from his solitude, he absorbed himself in his melancholy. The vague consciousness of a misdirected life given up to impulses whose memory left a bitter taste in his mouth was the first moral sentiment of his manhood. But at the same time he felt no remorse. What should he regret? He had recognized no other virtue than intelligence, and had erected passions into duties. (N. p. 498)

Only towards the evening, in the comparative relief of coolness, he began to wish that this cord would snap. He imagined it snapping with a report as of a pistol - a sharp, full crack. And that would be the end of him. (pp. 498 - 9)

He picked up the belt with the revolver, that was lying there, and buckled it round his waist. The cord of silence could never snap on the island. It must let him fall and sink into the sea, he thought. And sink! He was looking at the loose earth covering the treasure. In the sea! (p. 499)

The reader might find it difficult to extract Decoud's speech from the narrative structure of the three passages. However, the man's actual utterances could be reconstructed as follows:

"What should I regret? I have recognized no other virtue than intelligence, and have erected my passions into duties."

"I wish that this cord could snap....  
And that will be the end of me."

"It must let me fall and sink into the sea.  
And sink!  
In the sea!"

In the first quotation Decoud's narrated monologue follows two narrative sentences. First person pronoun is replaced by the third person. Verbs are backshifted in time. \_\_\_\_\_



The question mark underscores the fact that it is Decoud, not Conrad, who speaks. In the second, there is an alternation of narrative sentences and narrated monologue. The third begins with two narrative sentences which are followed by an utterance in narrative indirect consisting of a reporting clause functioning as a comment clause and the independent utterance, "It must let him fall and sink into the sea". This, in turn, is followed by two elliptical utterances (And sink! Into the sea!) with a narrative sentence in between. Apart from the stylistic variety resulting from this alternate use of narrative style and reported speech, the reported utterances help maintain the dramatic immediacy of the situation through the preservation of emotive elements like questions and exclamation. Besides, the relatively short nature of the utterances, together with the repetition of elliptical utterances like "And sink! In the sea!" help underline the man's agitated mental condition. Decoud's reported utterances also underscore the fact that he has finally realised, through this process of soul-searching, that he has "recognized no other virtue than intelligence, and has erected his passions into duties." Such ironic awareness could not have been objectively outlined by the novelist without Decoud's giving himself away with his own speech.

On the other hand, by reporting Nostromo's speech in the wake of the nocturnal adventure on the Golfo Placido, the reader is admitted into the secrets of the hitherto unknown side of the man's complex personality. Nostromo is no longer the simple, careless and happy-go-lucky Capataz de Cargadores. His reported self-communions provide us with various perspectives not only on the man himself but on some of the principal characters as well, perspectives that are the more objective because of the novelist's implied impersonality.



Nostromo's self-encounter is highlighted in the following narrated monologue:

→  
 The facts of his situation he could appreciate like a man with a distinct experience of the country. He saw them clearly. He was as if sobered after a long bout of intoxication. His fidelity had been taken advantage of. He had persuaded the body of Cargadores to side with the Blancos against the rest of the people; he had had interviews with Don José; he had been made use of by Father Corbelán for negotiating with Hernandez; it was known that Don Martin Decoud had admitted him to a sort of intimacy, so that he had been free of the offices of the Porvenir. All these things had flattered him in the usual way. What did he care about their politics? Nothing at all. And at the end of it all - Nostromo here and Nostromo there - where is Nostromo? Nostromo can do this and that - work all day and ride all night - behold!

...  
 The Europeans had given up, the Caballeros had given up.

...  
 Everybody had given up. Even Don Carlos had given up. (N. p. 417)

Barring the first three sentences which are straight narrative, the rest of the quotation is narrated monologue. As such, it is made up of two distinctive parts. The first of these is the very long sentence beginning with, "He had persuaded", and ending with "the Porvenir". This sentence contains some five independent utterances that are held together mostly by <sup>the</sup> semicolon. In view of the fact that the opening utterance of the narrated monologue, "His fidelity had been taken advantage of", ends with a full stop, the subsequent cramming of five independent units into one long sentence through punctuation acquires special significance. The obvious and most likely reason is that Nostromo's awakening to the hard facts of life was accompanied by a proportionate agitation in his mind. The first utterance: "My fidelity has been taken advantage of" was apparently said when the awakening was in its nascent state. Hence the longer pause in his speech represented by <sup>the</sup> full-stop. As this consciousness of his situation



became more acute and soul-searing, the agitation in his mind gained momentum and his utterances followed one another in a quicker way that necessitated the use of a relatively short pause marker, the semicolon.

When Nostromo shifts from mere statement of facts to self cross-examination, this is accompanied by a similar shift in the technique of speech presentation. The narrated monologue becomes some sort of narrated internal dialogue:

"What do I care about their politics?

Nothing at all.

And at the end of it all - Nostromo here and

Nostromo there -

Where is Nostromo?

By this time the man's agonizing self-encounter has reached its limit. Utterances become shorter. The dramatic intensity is further emphasized through the use of myriad emotive elements. The hallucinatory quality of the closing utterances is brought out through the repetition of the same predicate in "The Europeans had given up; the Caballeros had given up. Everybody had given up. Even Don Carlos had given up". What is more significant is that, although Conrad transposes verbs and pronouns in his reported version of Nostromo's speech, there is one utterance that is left intact: "Where is Nostromo?" "Nostromo can do this and that... behold!". A close scrutiny of the two utterances will reveal that Conrad did not backshift the verbs because Nostromo is repeating to himself the white peoples' propitiating words in the days of his vainglorious and groundless optimism. Had Conrad backshifted the verbs in these two utterances, the speech would have been construed as undoubtedly Nostromo's, and the distinction between the man's and his oppressor's tone of voice would have been lost on us. On the other hand, "Where is Nostromo?" can be viewed as Nostromo's own ironic comment on a life wasted in the service of the *hombres finos* who, as he himself tells us on



the next page, "keep us and encourage us as if we were dogs born to fight and hunt for them" (418). As such, it would serve as a fitting epitaph to the man's misguided life, a fact which the transposition of the verb on Conrad's part would deprive of much of its dramatic intensity. X

Nostromo's reported speech with regard to other characters betrays a subtle perceptiveness in the man, which his direct speech does not reflect. His reflections relative to his patron, Captain Mitchell, underline the latter's inherent weaknesses:

→  
As to Captain Mitchell, Nostromo, after the manner of trusted subordinates, considered him as a person fitted by education perhaps to sign papers in an office and to give orders, but otherwise of no use whatever, and something of a fool.

...  
That old Englishman had no judgement, he said to himself. It was useless to suppose that, acquainted with the true state of the case, he would keep it to himself. He would talk of impracticable things.

...  
He had no discretion. He would betray the treasure. And Nostromo had made up his mind that the treasure should not be betrayed. (p. 419)

The quotation begins and ends with two sentences of reduced indirect which sum up Nostromo's views on the subject of Captain Mitchell and the hidden treasure. In between, we get a sentence of narrative indirect consisting of a comment clause, He said to himself, and the reported utterance, That man had no judgement. This is followed by four sentences of narrated monologue marked mainly by the transposition of verbs and modal auxiliaries. We also note that demonstratives such as this have been distanced, which is a rare occurrence in Conrad's reported speech. The significance of the reported speech in this quotation is that it provides the reader with a totally new perspective on Nostromo, a man who has hitherto been deemed quite incapable of such enlightened perception, thus heightening the complexity of the protagonist's psychological constitution.



In The Rover, Conrad's last completed novel, reported speech in the opening chapter of the novel sums up the novel's theme, and serves in the final analysis as an ironic comment on the protagonist's wishful thinking. After an eventful life of adventure in the south seas Peyrol reaches Toulon:

There he reported himself to the proper officials as master of a prize taken off the Cape by Citoyen Renaud, Commander-in-Chief of the Republican Squadron in the Indian Seas. He had been ordered to make for Dunkerque but, said he, having been chased by the Sacrés Anglais three times in a fortnight between Cape Verde and Cape Spartel, he had made up his mind to run into the Mediterranean where, he had understood from a Danish brig he had met at sea, there were no English men-of-war just then. And here he was; and there were his ship's papers and his own papers and everything in order. He mentioned also that he was tired of rolling about the seas, and that he longed for a period of repose on shore. (R. p. 1)

The quotation begins with a narrative sentence. This is followed by narrative indirect wherein the reporting clause assumes the function of a comment one (said he), while the man's utterance is treated as an independent unit with all the linguistic markers of indirect speech with respect to the transposition of verbs and pronouns. The novelist's determination to report the man's speech in as brief a way as could be makes him resort to co-ordination and adverbial clauses to connect the dependent utterances to the main independent unit, which last is connected to the penultimate utterance through the use of the inter sentence connective and. The penultimate utterance is in its turn held together through a series of clause co-ordinators. The fact that Peyrol used in his original speech the locative adverbs here and there as place referents induced Conrad to retain them intact in his reported speech for lack of any other possible alternative. The last sentence of the quotation is a case of proper indirect consisting of a reporting clause, he mentioned, followed by the old seaman's



utterance subordinated in the form of two that-clauses which are co-ordinated through the use of clause co-ordinator and. One notes also that the reported version is coloured with some French lexical items designed to underline the fact that the man spoke French, and that the novelist is not only reporting but translating the man's utterances as well. Besides, one cannot help observing the novelist's care not to have one reporting verb only, for whereas he uses "said he", in the first reported utterance, he uses "he mentioned", in the last one, preferring in the interim to rely heavily on co-ordinators and adverbials for the holding together of the other utterances.

Contrasted with Peyrol's reported speech in the last chapter of the novel, the ironic touch implicit in the man's reported speech of the previous example becomes quite obvious.

Dead, or only scared to death? And Michel? Was he dead or dying, that man without friends whom his pity had refused to leave behind marooned on the earth without even a dog for company? As to that Peyrol felt no compunction; but he thought he would have liked to see Michel once more. He tried to utter his name, but his throat refused him even a whisper. (R. p. 268)

The narrated monologue in this passage reflects back on the man's utterances in the opening chapter of the novel. Peyrol, who claimed to have come back because he was "tired of rolling about the seas", finds no solace in shore life and decides of his own free will to go back to the sea, this time to die a heroic death. Here, as elsewhere in Conrad's novels, reported speech is manipulated in such a way as to make it easy for the novelist to portray his characters, and achieve other aesthetic effects, without compromising his declared ambition of holding himself aloof from his subject.



In an attempt to explain Conrad's preference for reported speech in his novels, Ford Madox Ford gives us this enlightening distinction between direct and reported speech:

→  
Then again, directly reported speeches in a book do move slowly; by the use of indirect locutions, together with the rendering of the effects of other portions of speech, you can get a great deal more into a given space. There is a type of reader that likes what is called conversation - but that type is rather the reader in an undeveloped state than the reader who has read much. So, wherever practicable, we used to arrange speeches much as in the paragraph devoted to Mr. Slack above. But quite often we compromised and gave passages of direct enough speech. (1)

The paragraph devoted to Mr. Slack is given us mostly in indirect speech. The question that remains to be answered is: to what extent does Conrad's manipulation of the various types of reported speech help him achieve that economy of narration and stylistic variety which he as a stylist "calculating his effect" must have had in mind. To do this I will quote one or two passages of reported speech from Conrad's novels. I will then reconstruct the direct utterances of the speakers, which I will report in traditional indirect. Finally, by comparing the three versions I hope to come out with results that might bear out the validity of my assumption.

The first quotation is taken from An Outcast. It is that reported dialogue between Lakamba, Sahmin and Bahassoen:

The venerable Sahamin, as became his advanced age, found his delight in speculation as to the activities of a rather remote future. He would buy praus, he would send expeditions up the river, he would enlarge his trade, and, backed by Abdulla's capital, he would grow rich in a very few years. Very few. Meantime it would be a good thing to interview Almayer tomorrow, and profiting by the last day of the hated man's prosperity, obtain some goods from him on credit. Sahamin thought it could be done by skilful wheedling. After all, that son



of Satan was a fool, and the thing was worth doing, because the coming revolution would wipe all debts out. Sahamin did not mind imparting that idea to his companions, with much senile chuckling, while they strolled together from the riverside towards the residence. The bull-necked Lakamba without a gleam in his dull, bloodshot eyes shuffled slowly across the courtyard between his two guests. But suddenly Bahassoen broke in upon the old man's prattle with the generous enthusiasm of his youth... Trading was very good. But was the change that would make them happy effected yet? The white man should be despoiled with a strong hand!... He grew excited, spoke very loud, and his further discourse, delivered with his hand on the hilt of his sword, dealt incoherently with the honourable topics of throat-cutting, fire-...ing, and with the far-famed valour of his ancestors. (O.I. pp. 136 - 7)

Apart from the underlined narrative sentences which will remain unchanged in all three possible types of speech presentation, the actual utterances of the speakers are given us in the form of reported dialogue, excepting the last utterance which is a case of reduced indirect. The original speech can be reconstructed in the following manner:

Sahamin said: "I shall buy praus. I shall send expeditions up the river. Yes I shall enlarge my trade, and, backed by Abdulla's capital, I shall grow rich in a very few years. Yes very few". He went on to say, "Meantime it will be a good thing to interview Almayer tomorrow and, profiting by the last day of the hated man's prosperity, I shall obtain some goods from him on credit. I think it can be done by skilful wheedling. After all, that son of Satan is a fool, and the thing is worth doing, because the coming revolution will wipe out all debts."

Bahassoen then interrupted Sahamin saying: "Trading is very good. I wonder however, whether the change that will make us happy is effected yet? The white man should be despoiled with a strong hand. We should cut their throats. We should set their houses afire. This is what people like us should do. We are the descendants of great, brave people. This is what our fathers did in the past, etc."

Compared with Conrad's reported version, the reconstructed direct speech is at an obvious disadvantage. In the first place, cumbersome reporting clauses like, He said, or, went on to say,



together with the quotation marks precluding direct speech establish a distinction between the narrative style and the direct speech, a rupture which is structurally imperceptible in the reported version where both narrative and reported speech are easily interwoven. On the other hand, the reported version is more economical from the stylistic standpoint (it does without the reporting clauses and sums up the main ideas of Bahassoan's hypothetical concluding argument about his ancestors which is structurally irrelevant.) Besides, the reported version retains the dramatic urgency implicit in direct speech by preserving its emotive elements. Finally, there is the stylistic variety inherent in the alternation of reported dialogue and reduced indirect which does not obtain in the direct version.

If we now report the passage in traditional indirect we get something like this:

Sahamin said that he would buy praus, and added that he would send expeditions up the river. He further said that he would enlarge his trade, and that backed by Abdulla's capital he would grow rich in a very few years. He repeated that it would be in very few years, etc.

...  
Bahassoan interrupted him saying that trading was very good. He wondered whether the change that would make them happy was effected yet, etc.

This reported version is clearly different from Conrad's in many ways. First, there is that cumbersome repetition of reporting clauses which the Conrad version is free from. Second, in traditional indirect no emotive elements are allowed to remain, hence the need for such stylistic variations as He wondered whether, he exclaimed, the first in the case of reported question, the second in exclamation. Unlike the Conrad version, the traditional indirect version is syntactically different from the narrative sentences. The Conrad version has the further advantage of being the more concise and dramatic. Besides, in



traditional indirect time adverbials like to-morrow have to be replaced by the next day or the following day, whereas in the Conrad version "Meantime it would be a good thing to interview Almayer to-morrow" the retaining of the adverbial in the direct form helps maintain the illusion in the reader's mind regarding the fusion of the preterite of the narrative and the forthcoming actions with their present connotations.

The second example is from Romance. Castro, the narrator informs us,

... looked at the water gushing from the rock, bubbling up, sparkling, running away in a succession of tiny heaps. Why should he fear? Was he not old, and tired, and without any hope of peace on earth? What was death? Nothing. It was absolutely nothing. It comes to all.  
(p. 379)

The direct monologue would read:

Castro said to himself: "Why should I fear? Am I not old, and tired, and without any hope of peace on earth? What is death? Nothing. It is absolutely nothing. It comes to all."

To which the traditional indirect version would be:

Castro asked himself why he should fear. He wondered whether he was not old, and tired, and without any hope of peace on earth. He also asked what death was. To this he answered that it was nothing, absolutely nothing, and added that it comes to all.

Of the three possible versions: Conrad's narrated monologue, the hypothetical direct or interior monologue and the traditional indirect version, Conrad's is the shortest and most expressive at that. The third version is the most cumbersome from the stylistic standpoint. For one thing, the Conrad version dispenses with the reporting clauses: "Castro asked himself, he wondered whether, he also asked himself, to this he answered that, and added that," which are imperative in traditional indirect. For another, the Conrad version preserves intact the dramatic quality of the original monologue by retaining its emotive elements, the



thing that cannot be admitted in traditional indirect. On the other hand, it differs from the direct version in that it is shorter (it takes no reporting clause such as "Castro said to himself"), and evinces some syntactic homogeneity with the narrative sentence preceding it, which the direct version is incapable of. Besides, it is as dramatic as the interior monologue. The fact that Conrad does not transpose the verbs in "it comes to all", shows that he was aware of the grammatical rules which make it clear that, while in reported speech verbs have to be back-shifted so long as the context has a past referent, universal assertions retain the present form of their verbs. Apart from this, we notice that the Conrad version achieves a certain degree of stylistic variety with minimum effort. The quotation begins with a narrative sentence, and moves on to Castro's narrated monologue which bears a striking affinity to reported dialogue, so much so indeed that such cases of reported speech may be called narrated internal dialogues. After this process of self-examination, there follows a statement of universal truth. Conrad thus moves with perfect ease from one form of reported speech to another, achieving that stylistic variety which was an extension to, if not a marked improvement upon, previous practice by some English novelists in the same field.

It has been argued earlier that Conrad's ambition to maintain aesthetic distance from his characters was, perhaps, the main reason as much for his experimentation with the various types of reported speech, as it was for the creation of fictitious narrators like Marlow, the old teacher of languages, Dr. Kennedy and Davidson. While a foolproof statistical survey of instances of reported speech in Conrad's novels would not be a practicable endeavour, due to the complexity arising from the interweaving of narrative style and the various forms of speech presentation (we have seen



how one sentence can begin as a narrative and end as speech of some sort or other), a rough count of these instances will show that Conrad's reported speech takes the form of a trajectory with successive ups and downs.

As such, the graph is at its highest in Almayer's Folly and An Outcast where reported speech is used on one out of every three to four pages in both novels. It declines to its lowest ever in The Nigger of the "Narcissus" where it is virtually extinct. It rises once again in Lord Jim and Nostromo where it shows up on some sixty pages of the former and seventy of the latter. In the Secret Agent the ratio is higher judging by the relatively small size of the novel - it is used on some fifty-five pages. It declines sharply in Under Western Eyes where it figures only on thirty-five pages. It rises for the last time in Victory where the ratio is as much as that of the first two novels. After this, it declines very sharply in The Arrow of Gold, less so in The Rover and almost disappears in The Shadow Line.

Among the other possible reasons for Conrad's manipulation of various types of speech presentation in his novels was his conviction that "truth alone is the justification of any fiction which makes the least claim to the quality of art or may hope to make its place in the culture of men and women of its time." (1) Conrad, however, believed that truth is an elusive thing that cannot be directly reached. This is what he obviously meant by his censure of Arnold Bennett's realism

You stop just short of being absolutely real because you are faithful to your dogmas of realism. Now realism in art will never approach reality. (2)

(1) U.W.E., p. viii

(2) L.L., Vol. I, p. 303 (Letter dated 10th March 1902)

A character's direct speech might give us a clue to the speaker's personality, psychological make-up or way of thinking. In such cases, however, we get to know that side of the man's character which he himself is intent on revealing. Such an outside or superficial truth was not apparently what Conrad aimed at. By resorting to stylistic involutions like reported speech, Conrad hoped to reach that reality about life and human beings, which he knew to be beyond the reach of direct and straightforward presentation. It was F.R. Leavis's failure to perceive that what he called Conrad's "adjectival insistence" was part and parcel of the novelist's attempt to attain to the inner truth of things that made him condemn it as hollow and irrelevant. The fact remains that just as some forms of reported speech could help the novelist objectively portray his characters from the inside, the adjectival mode was no less effective as a means of constructing the verbal images needed for the exploration of other aspects of reality.