The Rime of Marlow: Echoes of Coleridge's The Rime of the Ancient Mariner in Conrad's Heart of Darkness

تمثلات مارلو: أصداء من قصيدة (صقيع البحار القديم) في رواية (قلب الظلام) لكونراد

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Abstract

Romanticism touches the thematic and structural features of Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness. The play of the memory across time and the juxtaposing of an older poet with his younger self are apparent in Conrad's modernist piece. The character-narrator of Conrad is a Buddha-like speaker in a particular and localized outdoor setting speaking with a silent human audience. He begins with a fluent vernacular speech which changes quickly into a very formal one. This makes Marlow's tale a rime in the Romantic tradition of Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner".

Keywords: “Ancient Mariner” syndrome, interposed narrator, frame narrative, mystery, chiaroscuro, quest, solitude.

ملخص البحث

تتجلى خصائص موضوعية وبنيوية رومانسية في رواية جوزيف كونراد (قلب الظلام) ، فالانتقال بالذاكرة عبر الزمن ووقوف الشاعر العتيق جنبا إلى جنب مع ذاته اليافعة واضحة في هذه الرواية الحداثوية. وما الشخصية الراوية في هذه الرواية إلا بودا راويا في مكان عام ، متحدثا مع مستمعين صامتين. فيبدأ هذا الراوي بكلام دارج يتحول سريعا إلى كلام رسمي جدا. إن هذا مايجعل قصة مارلو حكاية تتبع الإرث الرومانسي لقصيدة كوليرج المطولة (حكاية البحار العتيق).

Forward

Romanticism touches the thematic and structural features of Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness (henceforthHD). In HD, the happenings follow the same line M.H. Abrams draws commenting on the connection between romanticism and modernism. The romantic features Abrams identifiesare true about Conrad's novella: a play of memory across time and the juxtaposing of an older poet with his younger self. In a Romantic poem a "determinate speaker in a particularized, and usually localized, outdoor setting, whom we overhear as he carries on, in a fluent vernacular which rises easily to a more formal speech, sustains colloquy sometimes with himself or with the outer scene, but more frequently with a silent human auditor present or absent" (Abrams, 1965: 527). This feature is true if Samuel Taylor Coleridge's"The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"(henceforth AM) is considered.

In Conrad's HD Marlow begins a meditation that rises toward formal speech as easily as the Romantic lyric. The narrator's descriptionof a landscape bears a connection to inner self through memory, thought, anticipation and feeling. These things, the inner and the outer, are interwoven to each other and are not distinct. Another common feature is also an altered mood of the speaker as a result of his meditation. Between the beginning and the end an all-round change happens to the speaker and during his change the following occurrences are experienced: achieving an insight, facing up to a tragic loss, coming to a moral decision, and resolving an emotional problem. Many of Conrad's pieces end as HD ends, just as the Romantic lyric does, "by rounding upon itself" (Ibid).

Romanticism in Conrad

There are technical, structural, methodical and artistic concerns that connect Conrad to Romanticism. There is a so called general – regarding the question of technique and methods of writing – and a particular relationship; the former is the relationship between

Wordsworth and Conrad, and the latter is between Coleridge's AM and Conrad's HD, between Romanticism and Conrad. The relationship to Wordsworth touches upon the aesthetic problems of an artist, for instance how to form a past experience into words authentically, the question of the role of the artist in society or the power and limits of artistic language, while the latter is connected to a comparison of the two works of art abovementioned. Samuel Taylor Coleridge had composed a poem in 1798, more than a century earlier than Conrad wrote his novella in 1902.

Coleridge had a vision of a nightmare sea voyage with metaphysical overtones in his longish poem whereas Conrad's chief preoccupation was depicting man's vulnerability and corruptibility. As first sight, naivety would suggest that there is no connection between the poem and the novella. Although there is a distance in time and genre, a connection between the two works of art can be established. A lot of scholars agree that the Romantic poets worked not according to predetermined schemes that are put on the work of art from outside but under the role of an inner organic law whose swirl makes the work of art come into existence. The artists have worked to the effect of self-intuition's power (Schug, 1979: 31). Some experts of literature, e.g.Charles Schug, write that the modern, twentieth-century novel in this sense has a romantic genesis of the kind.

There is almost a general agreement amongst critics that Conrad is the first modern writer and HD is the first modern novel. For instance David Daiches puts Conrad into his theory of the modern novel. Having been a modern author means the following: as opposed to the Victorian novelists of nineteenth-century England, the modern artists, affected by the historical, social and scientific changes of the twentieth century (psychology, philosophy, change in social and economic factors), do not share the same beliefs of their age in social and personal respect, but the opposite. The fate of the characters and its depiction through the connection between public esteem and true morality was strong in the preceding century. This later aspect fell apart in modern novels. A new concept of time and consciousness affected the flow of the narrative. Daiches believes that in the novels of the nineteenth century the changes in human

events manifested themselves in publicly visible doings, whereas in the modern novels we cannot trace this kind of relationship between the publicly shared selection, the ideology of the "sepulchral city" and significance, Marlow's significance(Daiches, 1960: 5). Only a sensitive avant-garde responded to these new changes that were in the air and it cannot be taken for granted "that their impressions held good for others" (Ibid). To illustrate this state of affairs Conrad used "multiplied points of view" in the telling of the story, but other features are also characteristic of his works. Firstly, for examples, the tentativeness of all patterns of significance is established and, secondly, the truth at the heart of the individual experience remains mysterious. Through the breakdown of the public sense of significance, the techniques of poetry are brought into prose fiction.

It should be saidthat though there is a difference in genre, it does not hinder comparative analyses of literature. AM was published in the volume of Lyrical Ballads by Wordsworth and Coleridge in 1798 and a hundred years later Conrad had his novella, HD, published. The comparison is legitimate since these two works of art, being narratives, share the common origin and that makes the two works of art, a poem and a novella, comparable. So it is their narrative nature by which the ballad and the modern novel are connected. Schug claims that "the modern novel is a work of literature closely resembling in its formal and structural attributes of the great Romantic poems of the early nineteenth century"(Schug, 1979: 18). At the turn of the nineteenth century, the lyric poetry's nature changed in England to ballad, which contains narrative: the success in embodying plain diction, colloquial rhythm and a simple metrical form that display the significance of an intense human experience(Ibid, 14).

The modern novel is also a new kind of narrative that appeared in twentieth century , just as a Romantic lyric was a new narrative of experience. The modern novel with its Romantic form does not offer a traditional narrative of events and characters but a narrative of experience in which events and characters assume a relationship to each other and for the reader. It is different from what we are accustomed to in case of the traditional novel. The lyrical elements are part of the formal means most modern novelists use to

embody their visions of reality (Ibid, 15). According to Schug,HDis one of "Conrad's most significant attempts to explore the mystery of human experience and because it is representative of the kinds of innovative and experimental literary endeavour characteristic of modern fiction in general" the book is alleged to be "a fully Romantic vision of the world"(Ibid, 133).

There are two features that put Conrad's novella into a new category of fiction according to Schug: first of all, Conrad stands out from a group of adventure story writers by narrative experimentation transforming adventure story intoserious literature and he deals with the same kind of subjects to which the Romantics address themselves. Secondly it is Conrad's long-lasting preoccupation to write about the tension between art and life. Conrad has "doubt about the usefulness of the language," he conceives that the complexities of life lie beyond the reach of language (Ibid, 134).

It can be said that HD is Conrad's one version of Romantic fictional outlook. There are also characteristics that are called varieties for a Romantic outlook and are represented by the following techniques: the interplay of the divergent attitudes embodied within them, the implied author's attitude that is very carefully concealed and almost always implicit. The attitude of the nominal narrator, the 'I' of HD and furthermore the attitude of the object of Marlow's ruminations can also be enlisted here (Ibid, 135). The active participation of the reader is called "Ancient Mariner" syndrome, i.e. the reader is involved to a very great degree into the plot.

There are also other artistic devices that disturb the flow of the narrative and for this reason the active participation of the reader is demanded. In fact all the devices are means of controlling the author's or the narrator's distance from his subject. These are the interposed narrator and the interposed reporting witness. In lining up the events there are careful manipulations of chronology put into the text. The flow of the narrative is interrupted by vivid interruptive digressions by the ebb and flow of a meditative wandering intellect. Another method of the author is making sudden movements from the abstract to the concrete and back and a constant narrowing and opening of the lens (Ibid, 136). By using these de-

vices, as the means of creating conflict in the reader, Conrad is set apart from other contemporary adventure writers. Conrad's return character, Marlow is interpreted as one of the most striking and compelling narrative figures in literature. This is an effect created by the tension between sympathy and moral judgment. Demonstrating the truth of personal experience by telling and narrating a story indirectly is finding meaning in the Romantic way and trying to use the narrative itself to impose meaning. The truth is in telling the story. The writers who follow this way of narration use the following basic principle, "If I tell you what occurred you will know what happened to me"(Ibid, 142).

The theme of freedom is at stake for both Marlow and Kurtz. The discovery of freedom and the self are in connection. Marlow becomes free from the illusory conventions of European society and not only does he get his freedom by finding himself, but also he is distanced from the world, in a physical sense as well, from where he has departed. Marlow is shocked at meeting Kurtz because Marlow's conception of himself and the moral nature of the universe are challenged. It is also interesting that before Marlow encounters Kurtz he has already been excited by the fame of Kurtz because Kurtz is a companion of his enforced idleness, a kind of secret - almost Romantic - dream.

Kurtz's self-judgment is rendered totally independent of ordinary morality. Kurtz is the complete Romantic hero. He is written by an amalgam of the evil, an experimenter and an innovator, i.e., Satan, Frankenstein and Prometheus. He dismissed God, lived following the standards of the world he created alone, and behaved as if he were God. Kurtz's experience could not have been another experience as his destiny was his choices, his important experience of human existence was only possible for him by stepping over that certain edge. If he had not been European he would not have been the Kurtz of darkness. That is why he was important and fascinating for Marlow. For him "a process of experience is…a process of self-realization"(Ibid).

There is a striking similarity in the content of HD and AM. The textual juxtaposition is without arbitrariness but is coherent, legiti-

mate and reasonable. Both in Coleridge's poem and in Conrad's novella, a mariner - a wanderer who sees different worlds and gains extra experience - is in the focus. Secondly, both mariners change in temper and attitude because of this crucial experience. The coincidence in and similarity of the content are obviously contingent and they offer a comparative analysis of the two works. There are also other similarities. According to Alan D. Perlis(1982, 167-176), there are "outward similarities" that can be lined up here: in both stories seamen speak about an extraordinary experience in an exotic and hostile territory. Both explain events in such a way that the character transformations of the narrators are reflected by the patterns of events they witness. Both works are psychological tales because their settings are symbolical and represent the change of good and evil in human consciousness. This next feature of Perlis is not that convincing, for he thinks that both narrators return from their stressful journeys with the message of love. It is apparent that Perlis has made a weak point here because love becomes only the message of the ancient mariner whereas just the appearance of it is represented by Marlow. The mariner has aphorism for the guest,

He prayeth best who loveth best

All things both great and small;

For the dear God who loveth us,

He made and loveth all. (VII.614-617)

while Marlow lies love to Kurt's intended. Both tales are "frame narratives"(Schug, 1979: 168).

(What) They See and Hear

Reading Coleridge's poem, the reader is a witness of a purification process of the soul that the ancient mariner has gone through. What concerns us about Coleridge here is to find points of connection with Conrad's novella. Similarities and even identities are discoverable in Coleridge's poem and Conrad's novella. Interestingly the small identity in content lies in the examination and description of the eyes or stances that are the guides to the character's soul. Both authors focus on the mysteries of the soul whose mirror is the eyes and in which there are the secrets of the inner reality of

man, their existence experienced. Condition of the eyes, that is either redemption as in the case of the mariner or fail, i.e. Kurtz's fall to nothingness, and the quality of the speech, the effective rhetoric are the concern of both authors.

What Marlow and what the ancient mariner went through can be connected to the expression of their eyes: the mariner's "glittering eyes" and Kurtz's stare "piercing enough," "a stance embracing the whole universe;" this latter sentence of Conrad is enigmatic. In both works the central figures are affected by eyes and speech, what they see and hear are enigmas for them that they try to decode. Both authors put the eye into their work as the key to discovering the mysteries and secrets of the soul where essential changes occur. This thematic connection is the parallel between Kurtz's eloquence and the mesmerizing speech of the ancient mariner.

Mystery is in focus of Conrad's aesthetic endeavour in HD. The unpredictable happenings and indescribability of the personal experience foreshadow the inexplicable, that is mystery. On the one hand Coleridge's concern for the invisible and on the other hand Conrad's concern for the impenetrable darkness at least show a common belief in the mysterious elements of human existence. The mysterious nature of human relations and of human experience in general is basic in Coleridge as it is in the fiction of Conrad(Ibid, 146). At the beginning of Coleridge's poem, a quotation from a seventeenth-century English churchman, Thomas Burnet, is placed; that is an acknowledgement of the reality of the invisible world, "I easily believe that there are more invisible than visible beings in the universe. But who will tell us the families of these?"(Kermode and Hollander, 1973:238) In Conrad's book, the constant references to darkness, secret forces and inscrutable intentions have the same effect. The difference between the poem and the novella is to be sought in their spirit of the age as it is mirrored in the two texts.

There are Christian allusions in Coleridge's poem whereas modern nihilism appears in Conrad's novella, that is represented by the hollow people and thoughts. In approaching nihilism Conrad's literary means here is irony. Kurtz is the medium of the mysteries of his soul that is indeed in its depth and infinity. Likewise, the mariner

has to face and cope with the secret forces of nature that bring him on the verge of death. The laws of life become clear for him after he stood in the door of death.

The mariner's deed is a sin that is retailed by the secret forces at sea. He also "stepped over"(Conrad's term) that certain edge, or putting it another way he committed hubris – as the earlier name of his vice was - just as Kurtz did. Either literally or regarding only the change in the soul, the mariner was able to return but Kurtz was not. This return is equivalent to the restoration of the unity of the soul, to the redemption of the soul. The following question is asked: would Kurtz have returned or turned back, if he had not died, that meant his victory? Probably his death was the proper answer to what he did, facing hell. Where did Kurtz go astray? After having gone astray, did he have the chance to come back? He uttered what he had experienced twice in the moment of truth when he died (the horror). Despite his famous eloquence and his longish pamphlet that contains his ideal intention, he repeated only a word. This fact suggests that, the innermost experience of his soul, the unutterable appeared to him for a moment. In this famous quotation, Conrad writes about it:

... Kurtz was a remarkable man. He had something to say. He said it. Since I had peeped over the edge myself, I understand better the meaning of his stare, that couldn't see the flame of the candle, but was wide enough to embrace the whole universe, piercing enough to penetrate all the hearts that beat in the darkness. He had summed up - he had judged. 'The horror!' He was a remarkable man. After all, this was the expression of some sort of belief; it had candour, it had conviction, it had a vibrating note of revolt in its whisper, it had the appalling face of a glimpsed truth – the strange commingling of desire and hate. And it is not my own extremity I remember best – a vision of greyness without form filled with physical pain, and a careless contempt for the evanescence of all things-even of this pain itself. No! It is his extremity that I seem to have lived through. True, he had stepped over the edge, while I had been permitted to draw back my hesitating foot. And perhaps in this is the whole difference; perhaps all the wisdom, and all sincerity, are just compressed into that inappreciable moment of time in which

we step over the threshold of the invisible. Perhaps! I like to think my summing-up wouldn't have been a word of careless contempt. Better his cry-much better. It was an affirmation, a moral victory, paid for by innumerable defeats, by abominable terrors, by abominable satisfaction. But it was a victory! That is why I have remained loyal to Kurtz to the last, and even beyond, when a long time after I heard once more, not his own voice, but the echo of his magnificent eloquence thrown to me from a soul as translucently pure as a cliff of crystal.(Conrad, 1994: 101-102)

"The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" in 1899

One of the first articles that focus on the relationship between Coleridge and Conrad was written by Warren Ober in 1965. Ober examines the so-called outward connections: the structural parallelism of the two works. Ober writes that the one-hundred-year-long time between the two authors is not only expressed in the artistic, poetic language and intentions, but also in the spiritual background or the spiritual condition of the Western world or civilization.

Ober examines the similarities and the contrast of the structure, the setting, the characterization and the theme. The fact that supernatural forces appear in Coleridge and the lack of that in Conrad displays the climatic change in the spiritual age. In fact Ober writes about the contrasting attitudes of Romanticism and post-Darwin Victorianism, the revolutionary change in science, philosophy, religion, art and literature which were taking place and these are mirrored in both works.

Kurtz's words, "The horror! The horror!" and "Exterminate all the brutes!" are reflected through the various points of view of Kurtz, Marlow, Conrad's narrator, and Conrad himself. The ambiguities and ironies are therefore profound.Ober finishes his study with the following: Conrad's thoughts about man, man's place in nature and the meaning of existence appear to be a reversal of the theme of Coleridge's AM. He also concludes that Conrad's approach to characterization, setting and structure is strikingly reminiscent of Coleridge's, although it is marked by a greater sophistication, subtlety and complexity (Ober, 1965: 337).

The differences between the two pieces are in their relationship to nature. Coleridge's mariner gets down to hell and goes up to redemption while Conrad's Kurtz stepped into and remained in hell, in the misery of human existence. Kurtz confronts nature; the effect of nature is the decay of Kurtz who is said to be a talent, but a hollow man in his age, for everything depends on the circumstances, and the darker these are, the more evil the individual may become. This is because a talent becomes actual if the circumstances promote his possibilities. Kurtz's "union with Nature, however, brings madness rather than peace"(Ibid, 334).

Kurtz's enlightenment is expressed in his words "The horror!" and "Exterminate them all!." The second statement is written on the sideline of his report about humanizing the brutes. By doing so, Kurtz wiped out his former self. His transformation, his new identity manifestsitself in this statement. It can be said that Kurtz is a mirror of the world then. His behaviour is in harmony with the state of the world.

Kurtz's last cry, "The horror! The horror!", is not only self-knowledge or an insight into the depths of his own evil, but an insight into the potentialities of all men. The last words of Kurtz are the result of "a terrible illumination." Marlow discovers a universal possibility of man and not simply one man becoming evil (Ibid, 335). By means of this experience, Marlow's illumination is the emergence of existential truth, the truth of human nature and human existence. That is why Ober writes, "Conrad's theme, then, becomes powerfully ironic post-Darwin and pre-Golding parody of the theme of The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (Ibid). In Conrad, the image of human being is deprived of its divine origin and considered as an animal – post Darwinian; and the collective sadism of people is mentioned without going into details that human beings are inclined to kill each other, that is the pre-Golding aspect.

The similarity between the two works is the message of love. Both the mariner and Marlow brings home the message of love, although they represent it in different ways. Namely Marlow strives for maintaining the appearance of love towards Kurtz's intended, which seems to be a bit hypocritical however tactfully he wants to

behave. Nonetheless the mariner manifests love without pretention, he thinks that love is the ultimate reason of existence. He achieves this recognition through a severe and enduring suffering.

The "frame device" of Coleridge's poem is a wedding, and the audience is the Wedding Guest. A wedding is the event when two people confess love and get married. Interestingly, the message of the mariner is also love, so there is a match between the frame and the message. This is not the case with Conrad's HD where the audience sits on broad the ship called,Nellie,and the theme, in which the mariner is in the focus, is supported by Conrad's former job that he had been a mariner and he became a writer afterwards. In HD, Kurtz can be represented as the mariner because they both experienced hell and as a consequence they were the subjects of harsh, existential suffering. The two characters, Kurtz and the mariner, are not perfectly equivalent or analogous, even Marlow's inner change, for instance his illumination, and the meaning of the essence of existence are enlightened for both of them and are parallel with the mariner's changes. It cannot be said that there is a one to one relationship between the mariner and Kurtz as Marlow also becomes "the mariner." Both Marlow and the mariner are forced or pressed to tell their personal story. The importance of the frame device is to put the story into a context that affects the essence. Marlow's audience remains silent except for the narrator.

Ober writes about the different attitudes of the two authors. In Coleridge's poem unity with nature, intuitive love and readmission of sins are in the foreground, whereas Conrad speaks about something different. After the mariner's and Marlow's Odyssey, they bring home truth, the mariner the message of love, but for Marlow truth is different from love. In the book of Conrad only Kurtz's intended represents love. The message of love to Kurtz's intended is a lie from Marlow's mouth. Marlow does not pass the experience he went through, he could have found it dangerous to transmit it for some reasons. Comparing Kurtz's last words with what Marlow says to Kurtz's intended, the reader can say the one is truth, the other is social convention, a lie. Kurtz's last words, "The horror," represent truth and that remains in Marlow's mind. He tells the intended that the last words of Kurtz have been her name. This proves to be a

lie and Marlow says this to keep the lady in the illusion of love. He behaves according to the social conventions that make society and human relationships function. So the representation or the effect of truth, that is the truth of the world or the truth of life suggested by Conrad in HD does not fit into the conventions of society (Ibid, 336).

The change and the transformation that the speakers undergo due to certain effects also connects the two works of art. Marlow's change in mood is an effect when he returns to the city and feels slight contempt for its inhabitants. The mariner caught a glimpse of death as his mates fell down from one moment to the other and he survived. Defying the law of hospitality, the mariner had to grievously suffer for a long time. The mariner had to wear the albatross around his neck and the mariner has to fulfill the task of re-and retelling his story,

And till my ghastly tale is told,

This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land;

I have strange power of speech;

That moment that his face I see,

I know the man that must hear me:

To him my tale I teach. (VII. 584 -590)

In HD Kurtz agonizes, he struggles with death. His change is from the civilized to the wild. It is Marlow who changes in mood under his influence, the experience of his voyage made him more mature. Both at the beginning and at the end of the book the name of Buddha is applied to Marlow. His bodily position and mental attitude resemble a Buddha-like being. This name of Buddha is connected with illumination and the elevated state of the mind. At the beginning of his narration Marlow, sitting on the deck of the ship in the pose of Buddha, looks at the people around him differently due to his transformation of the self or mind,

Marlow sat cross-legged right aft, leaning against the mizzen-mast. He had sunken cheeks, a yellow complexion, a straight back, an ascetic aspect, and, with his arms dropped, the palms of hands

outwards, resembled an idol….For some reason or other we did not begin that game of dominoes. We felt meditative, and fit for nothing but placid staring.(Conrad, 1994: 6)

'Mind,' he began again, lifting one arm from the elbow, the palm of the hands outwards, so that, with his legs folded before him, he had a pose of a Buddha preaching in European clothes and without a lotus-flower – ….(Ibid, 9-10)

At the end Marlow's posture is the same:

'The last word he pronounced was - your name.' 'I heard a light sigh and then my heart stood still, stopped dead short by an exulting and terrible cry, by the cry of inconceivable triumph and of unspeakable pain. 'I knew it – I was so sure.'… I heard her weeping….It seemed to me that the house would collapse before I could escape, that the heavens would fall upon my head. But nothing happened. The heavens do not fall for such a trifle. Would they have fallen, I wonder if I had rendered Kurtz that justice which was his due? Hadn't he said he wanted only justice? But I couldn't. I couldn't tell her…. Marlow ceased, and sat apart., indistinct and silent, in the pose of meditating Buddha. Nobody moved for a time. (Ibid, 110 -111) Marlow's meditation also reflects his change when he got back to the city,

'I found myself back in the sepulchral city resenting the sight of people hurrying through the streets to filch a little money from each other, to devour their infamous cookery, to gulp their unwholesome beer, to dream there in significant and silly dream. They trespassed upon my thoughts. They were intruders whose knowledge of life was to me an irritating pretence, because I was so sure they couldn't possibly know the things I knew. Their bearing, which was simply the bearing of common place individuals going about their business in the assurance of perfect safety, was offensive to me like the outrageous flaunting of folly in the face of a danger it is unable to comprehend. I had no particular desire to enlighten them, but I had some difficulty in restraining myself from laughing in their faces, so full of stupid importance. I daresay I was not very well at that time. I tottered about the streets – there were various affairs to settle – grinning bitterly at perfectly respectable persons. I

admit my behaviour was inexcusable, but then my temperature was seldom normal in these days. My dear aunt's endeavour to "nurse up my strength"seemed altogether beside the mark. It was not my strength that wanted nursing, it was my imagination that wanted soothing.'(Ibid, 102)

Clearly, Marlow has gained a fundamental insight which causes him to see life in the civilized world as an accumulation of despicable banalities. In fact, to him this life appears as an "irritating illusion," a childish naïve feeling of security in the face of undreamt danger (Beyer, 1997: 274).

The frame-narrator's role is fundamental here, for he helps the reader to find out as to who is mad or foolish here. He describes Marlow as a Buddha. Paradoxically, Marlow is the enlightened one because he has experienced darkness, "It was the farthest point of navigation and the culminating point of my experience. It seemed somehow to throw a kind of light on everything about me – and into my thoughts"(Conrad, 1994: 11). The reader is to figure out various meanings from Marlow's relation of his journey into the heart of darkness. The frame-narrator's words at the beginning of the tale are of help:

The yarns of seamen have a direct simplicity, the whole meaning of which lies within the shell of a cracked nut. But Marlow was not typical (if his propensity to spin yarns be expected), and to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that sometimes are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine. (Ibid, 8)

The metaphors seem to suggest that Marlow's story should be questioned for its symbolic implications. Indeed, the text offers a clear correspondence between the concrete level of the story and an abstract level of reference. This reading is also hinted at in the analogy between the geographical specification ("the farthest point of navigation") and personal experience ("the culminating point of my experience"). In other words, the journey into the heart of Africa is, on the symbolic level, Marlow's journey into his innermost self. It is a process of self-recognition which is further specified by

a temporal dimension: "We were wanderers on prehistoric earth … we were traveling in the night of first ages, of those ages that are gone, leaving hardly a sign – and no memories" (Ibid, 51). Therefore, the journey from the European metropolis into the interior of Africa stands for the growing awareness of man's suppressed atavistic nature. In this way, it can be said that there is a second inner place revisited which determines Marlow's reaction to the outer place he revisits.

The various stages of the journey represent various stages of Marlow's changing awareness. Two major phases can be distinguished here: on the one hand, the growing distance from the civilized world in Europe, which symbolizes a gradual fading of norms of civilization and, on the other hand, the growing closeness to the wild ('the heart of darkness'), which refers to the gradual realization of the suppressed and forgotten atavistic dimension in man. The first phase is conveyed through the presentation of the whites, the civilized, the second phase through the blacks, the savages. (Beyer, 1997: 275)

Chiaroscuro Description, 'spectral illuminations and widening frames' In his pithy article entitled ''Coleridge and Conrad: Spectral Illuminations, Widening Frames,'' Alan D. Perlis scrutinizes the connection between Coleridge'sAM and Conrad's HD. Perlis examines the similarities between the two works in depth by concentrating on two main points: the narrative frame of the two works and the chiaroscuro style. He quotes the famous sentence about the nature of Marlow's narrative technique from HD, "to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that sometimes are visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine"(Conrad, 1994: 80). This quotation refers to the way of narration that is part of the truth in an episode; the 'how' of writing is as much part of the truth as the 'what'.

Perlis' article is a pioneering one as no one had produced any analysis from this viewpoint: the similarity of the narrative technique between Coleridge and Conrad, the chiaroscuro style and description. So one of the common elements in the poem and the

novella is the chiaroscuro style and composition that make the mariner's and Marlow's illumination appear or "to depict the configurations of consciousness and to suggest relationships between appearance and truth"(Perlis, 1982: 167). Chiaroscuro style helps the author to transmit the ever-changing and transforming perception of the mind through the play of light and shade into writing, to write what is seen and heard; hence, Conrad is a master describer.

Another approach is to regard these two pieces as "descent literature." Perlis suggests that "descent literature" is the kind of literature in which the writer provides even deeper and less accessible levels of consciousness with the help of deeply buried narrative frames and the use of chiaroscuro composition. The poem transmits surreal or even unreal reality that could be attributed to the crime against nature and punishment or revolt of nature when everything becomes upside down; in Coleridge for instance water burns in different colours; one could only know about the existence of the haunting spirit at sea from dreams, for it cannot be seen:

All in a hot and copper sky,

The bloody Sun, at noon,

Right up above the mast did stand,

No bigger than the moon.

Day after day, day after day,

We stuck, nor breath nor motion;

As idle as a painted ship

Upon a painted ocean.

....

The very deep did rot: O Christ!

That ever this should be!

Yes, slimy things did crawl with legs

Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout

The death-fires danced at night;

The water, like a which's oils,

Burnt green, and blue and white.

And some in dreams assured were

Of the Spirit that plagued us so;

Nine fathom deep he had followed us

From the land of mist and snow.(II.111-134)

But Coleridge also uses chiaroscuro composition in the other parts of his poem. Presumably based on his philosophical background, Coleridge makes palpable with his knowledge that reality itself is knowledge that is concluded from something different. Direct experience of man is only a sign of reality or of truth. The "simultaneously vivid and vague description" of the mariner comes along when the snakes appear. These creatures are depicted with "more than two opposing frames of perceptions." The snakes are not seen, but their "patterns of motion" in the sea foam can only be seen. According to Perlis the two frames are the snakes and their after image there under the "spectral illumination of moonlight" :

Beyond the shadow of the ship,

I watched the water snakes:

They moved in tracks of shining white,

And when they reared, the elfish light

Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship

I watched their green attire:

Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,

They coiled and swam; and every track

Was a flesh of golden fire. (IV.272-281)

The beauty of the snakes is perceived "beyond" and "within" the shadow of the ship suggesting the ambiguous visual experience,

the play of the mariner's consciousness. The poem can be interpreted as a descent into consciousness without a final destination. There are four narrative frames (the mariner's, the wedding guest's, the commentator's and the reader's) that are the mirror of levels of consciousness.

Both Marlow and the mariner have unprepared senses and get unprepared experience; the mariner by killing the albatross gets into a new, horrifying universe. There the mariner gets experience under a "spectral illumination," "his story shot through with visual epiphanies developing as quickly as the flash of snakes' tails on moon-lit water"(Perlis, 1982: 167). The role of the narrators in both stories is necessary as the action occurs in a dim and shifting light, and the person cannot fully experience or perceive things on the course of telling a tale. That is why the reader has only an indirect report.

The cardinal role of the play of light and shade is important for the appearance is not reliable enough to accept it as reality due to its constant change. By depicting it, both authors use chiaroscuro composition because they cannot write exact things about the "outside" world, but to make us aware of the insecurity of their extraordinary experience, what Marlow and the mariner had of the shadowy seascapes and landscapes. Insecurity comes from the imperfection of consciousness, "Only then can they begin to understand their relationship to the everyday reality to which they return" (Ibid, 168).

Both Marlow and the mariner begin from the world of repressive social mechanisms which are developed by the civilized worlds in order to contain the atavistic forces. The most important norms of behaviour here are humanity and rationality, which finds expression in the causality and finality of our behaviour (Beyer, 1997: 275).

The ensuing voyage symbolizes, in its growing distance from the civilized world, a gradual dissolutions of its norms. It suggests the gradual loss of the principle of causality. In case of HD, the loss of norms and the increasing insanity is represented by the warship that shells the bush without a concrete target, the explosions carried out for the building of a railway line that can be neither explained in terms of causality, "the cliff was not in the way of anything, but this

objectless blasting was all the work going on"(Conrad, 1994: 22), nor seen as effective in terms of finality, "A heavy and dull detonation shook the ground, a puff of smoke came out of the cliff, and that was all. No change appeared on the face of the rock" (Ibid). The list of the decay of the norms goes on (Beyer, 1997: 275-277). These acts of insanity are not different from the purposeless and wanton killing of the albatross, in case of AM, which is a representation of inhumanity and irrationality.

Perlis thinks the most fruitful comparisons of the two works originate in their similarity between the narrative frames. Information comes to us indirectly.That's why there is no "completely reliable or faithful text" but there is "a woven pattern of subtexts", or juxtaposition of the subtexts. The question here is "what is the nature of truth?" (Perlis, 1982: 168)

Perlis also uses Ober's article. He focuses on the difference between "the pre-Darwinian" and "the post Darwinian" "Ancient Mariner". The phrase post-Darwinian is connected with the obvious place of evil in the human condition (formally speaking, the proclivity to evil); our brute selves are incapable of the "higher love" of the ancient mariner whose "moral is inadequate as the lesson to be learned from his experience," for he is rather obsessed with his unique experience (Ibid, 169).

The mariner (and Marlow) is the "tale as well as the teller" for he is so obsessed with his storytelling it with "glittering eyes" and holding the guest's hand "with his skinny hand". His consciousness and memory are in the focus, the memory of "what a person must suffer as recompense for sins". Perlis also emphasizes the importance of colours in Coleridge's poem. The colours are the result of the play of light and shade and our perception that is a kind of realm of insecurity and change. Coleridge's imagination is coloured by the commentator's superstitions. In thenarrative of the four levels of consciousness mentioned before (the mariner's, the wedding guest's, the commentator's and the reader's), there is an ultimate suggestion of the complex forms of horror that occupy the mind.

Marlow gets horror as retribution for his own curiosity, while the mariner for his wantonness. Concerning the narrative frames,

Marlow's tale is the middle rather than the innermost one unlike the mariner's. As Marlow becomes more and more curious about the one enlightened and benevolent Kurtz and his descent into barbarity and malevolence, he seeks to find the truth behind these myriad impressions (Ibid, 172-173).Marlow enters a realm that resolutely hides its truth in unpredictably play of light and shadow. Now we must look inward the mind for which the jungle has provided the principal metaphor. And it is in the indecipherable hieroglyphic of consciousness that the ultimate inscrutable purpose resides (Ibid, 174).

Throughout his journey, Marlow goes up the river when he soon realizes that a world of straightforward fact would not last long. And at the same time by recognizing this state of affairs he enters into his mind. There his impressions make him acknowledge the looseness of facts. The jungle there can also be applied to his consciousness.

The "multiple-frame narration" and "chiaroscuro description" make both works so called "spectral" tales. In both works there are continually altering impressions, perceptions and shadows that constitute reality, that cannot be grasped or thought of. Chiaroscuro description is intertwined with multiple-frame narration, from one narrative frame to another one gets one kind of impression but never the ultimate one, for it simply does not exist. Perpetual change of impressions captures the mind,

In both stories, what appears as a descent into the hell of consciousness for the purpose of discovering some sort of truth, some sort of universal mechanics, becomes in reality a movement through an infinite regression chamber. What is revealed disappears, and what disappears leaves behind so many impressions that these mental travellers must recapitulate away their lives in an effort to account for their stupefaction. (Ibid, 175)

Conrad's reliance on the suggestive power of language is the centre of the writer's artistic intention. The effect on the readers has to be reached through "suggestively impressionistic language." He also believes that fiction must "'aspire to the plasticity of sculpture, to the colour of painting and to the magic suggestiveness of music'" (Ambrosini, 1991: 25).

Quest

The hero (protagonist) in both HD and AMcan be seen as a questing person and his journey is a mythical one. He is in search of the self to bring back a new truth, a process which involves the experience in alien territory in order to question, analyze, negotiate and re-define assumptions about identity (Hansson, 1998: 2).

At the beginning of his narration on the deck Marlow says,

'I don't want to bother you much with what happened to me personally,' he began, showing in this remark the weakness of many tellers of tales who seem so often unaware of what their audience would best like to hear; 'yet to understand the effect of it on me you out to know, how I got out there, what I saw, how I went up that river to the place where I first met the poor chap. It was the farthest point navigation and the culminating point of my experience. It seemed somehow to throw a kind of light on everything about me-and into my thoughts. It was somber enough, too – and pitiful – not very clear either. No, not very clear. And yet it seemed to throw a kind of light.'(Conrad, 1994: 10-11)

This can summarize the whole issue. Marlow relates his experience journeying up the Congo River in quest of another white man, Kurtz. This enigmatic man, Kurtz, had been received by the natives as if he were a god, but perhaps he had gone into the jungle without knowing himself, and unprepared for the ordeal awaiting him, his misconduct takes him beyond the limits of his heart; thus, he is punished with "madness" and death. On the contrary, Marlow does not transgress his limits and comes back without fully understanding his experience; although the "heart of darkness" tries to exercise its influence on him too, he is able to restrain himself by recognizing its fascination and its abomination, and by resisting his desire to join those unspeakable rites – Marlow is saved because his aim is self-knowledge, the mystery of existence, which demands a great humility (Calleja, 2003, 7). In the same way, the ancient mariner distances himself from inhumanity – the wanton killing of the albatross which symbolizes a crime against humanity – when he blesses the water snakes which are seen in a previous scene as slimy things; hence, he saves himself.

After Kurtz has died his intended asks Marlow for the last words of her beloved one but he answers a lie to her. The truth Marlow experiences far away is different from social life and its conventions that are lies. The truth Marlow faces was the truth of another world that is unbearable for Kurtz. Kurtz peeped into himself and got mad. "But his soul was mad…"(Conrad, 1994: 95). All Kurtz wanted was justice. He burned his past and his relationships by choosing another life far from his home. He became the means that helped Marlow to see truth. The civilized white people facing the "prehistoric" man forgot what they were; all Kurtz has done earlier in his life was crossed. By doing it, it came to Kurtz's mind what natural existence, "a remote relationship," means. Kurtz did what he did for the features he found in himself and the savages had and that he was absolutely deprived of (Ibid, 50-51); "The mind of man is capable of anything – because everything is in it, all the past as well as the future"(Ibid, 52). Having witnessed and known Kurtz, Marlow was affected by him.

Marlow at his departure and Marlow at his return has different personalities. His thoughts about the society in the city change. Owing to meeting Kurtz there is transformation in his personality. Before his departure Marlow stirs uneasily, he thinks as follows:

'In a very few hours I arrived in a city that always makes me think of a whited sepulchre. Prejudice no doubt… a dead silence… Two women…knitting black wool…on one end a large shining map, marked with all colours of a rainbow….I was going into the yellow. Dead in center. And the river was there – fascinating – deadly – like a snake…something ominous in the atmosphere…In the outer room the two women knitted black wool feverishly…I thought of these two, guarding the door of Darkness, knitting black wool as for a warm pall, one introducing, introducing continuously to the known, the other scrutinizing the cherry and foolish faces with unconcerned old eyes. Ave! Old knitter of black wool. Morituritesalutant. Not many of these she looked at ever saw her again – not half, by a long way.' (Ibid, 14-16)

Marlow's personality changes and his acquired knowledge of life makes him a pariah, an individual outcast from society which

he disdains after he returns. The truth of life becomes the truth of Marlow, whose experience of life is catalyzed through Kurtz. This effect is, so to say, inexorable for the "brooding" force, the darkness is impossible to counteract. That is why Marlow is not only an eyewitness of the events, that of "'the merry dance of death and trade goes on in a still and earthy atmosphere as an overheated catacomb"'(Ibid, 20) and remains a neutral observer, but he became a participant of these events, that shaped his morale, even unwillingly. The confession of Marlow makes the affections of the events clear for the readers, '"...the farthest point of navigation and the culminating point of my experience. It seemed somehow to throw a kind of light on everything about me - and into my thoughts."'(Ibid, 11) Marlow puts his ideals and preconceptions together with reality of greed and murder. His crucial experience is that of the participant; that is much more than that of those, for instance the tourists, who would only travel and then return. These people may be in danger but their ideas would still be less than Marlow's impressions and existential experience. Because of Marlow's understanding of Kurtz and Marlow's knowledge of life, the condition of his consciousness changes, Marlow steps to a higher level of consciousness with the consequence of being in his pose of a "meditating Buddha."

The frame-narrator, as an ideal reader is aware of the mechanism of Marlow's and the ancient mariner's story-telling, does not miss a word of what is being told. In case of AM, the listener-narrator is almost mesmerized by the flashing eyes and the skinny hand of the ancient mariner; he cannot choose but listen to him. The same thing happens to the frame-narrator of HD: "His [Marlow's] remark did not seem at all surprising. It was just like Marlow. It was accepted in silence. No one took the trouble to grunt even"(Ibid, 8).

It is worthwhile to note that C.M.Bowra's view about AMapplies to HD. For Bowra, AM presents a series of incredible and mysterious events through a method of narration which makes it not only convincing and exciting but in some sence a criticism of life. The weird adventure of the traveller (the mariner) takes place not in the ordinary gothic setting, but on a boundless sea with days of pitiless sun (Bowra, 1950: 55) in case of the traveller in HD (Marlow), the

adventure takes place on the river, the sea, and the sea of boundless darkness with days of pitiless silence and horrific darkness.

Solitude

The solitude of Coleridge's mariner and Conrad's Kurtz differ significantly. The mariner after having killed the bird has to suffer alone and his mates die. During his period of solitude at sea, he has to go through a hellish experience; he gets from hell on earth to redemption. His solitude is a condition of mind in a course of his personal development. To experience hell as a consequence of his sin makes him recognize what natural laws are and the consequences by defying them would result. However, there is not a total release from his sins. The mariner has to tell others what has happened to him. By doing so he involves people and creates community with them. His eternal penitence is speaking to others, so the mariner's acts, communication, are community- creating.

In Conrad, solitude is also a condition of the human mind, a possibility of madness. Kurtz alone in his solitude went mad. In the state of solitude one tends to go mad without work and company. Although Kurt, after going mad, managed to create a community out of brutes, he cannot be considered as a part of the community, for he was respected among them as a godlike figure. He created and ruled his society, so he was at the top of it. And by the way he was continually preoccupied with the thought of exterminating the subjected ones. Kurtz lost his sense of community, got himself into the jungle and only Marlow is able to keep the appearance of Kurtz's sense of the other when he faces Kurtz's intended.

When Marlow returns to Europe he finds the life of the Europeans a sham or pretence. The community in Europe and his experience in the jungle are in contrast, the one is a society but not a community of civilization, the other is a community in the jungle, in spite of being a harsh one, but no way a society. Inhuman circumstances, horror, fear, madness and death are the products of the Western civilization. Marlow experienced in the heart of darkness the motor of civilization, that is not only beyond the communicable for the many, but it is also inaccessible and has a function contrary to its work in Europe.

The view of self-consciousness for the Romantics and for Conrad differs. Making up a community requires effort or struggle and is a lifelike act. In Conrad the solitary seclusion, solitude, is central. Even in society people live in solitary confinement as community or the acts of social communion are lacking. This is the main experience of Marlow. Understanding Kurtz Marlow sees the defects of European society. That is why Conrad writes in HD that living, just as dreaming, occurs in solitude; human existence is solitary. Conrad had an insight into real social bonds when he served on ships during his early life. There, people because of need and interdependence made a real community. For Marlow, what the people of the European cities do is sheer pretence. In the background there is Marlow's recognition that there is no possibility of making the world go round in the other direction.

Afterword

Though AM and HD were produced with a hundred years difference in time, HD can be considered a parody of AM. Both works offer an ultimate reason for life; there is an ultimate confession of love (AM) and its almost binary opposition, horror (HD). It is this last horrific reality is what makes Marlow a Buddha-like figure who cannot find rest unless he communicates his rime to others.

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