

MAILER AND CONRAD: PART ONE— TRADITION AND NARRATIVE

RAYMOND M. VINCE

IN DARKER MOMENTS, I THINK MY DANTE-LIKE DOOM may be analyzing Venn diagrams that never intersect. In November 2019, I suggested to Phil Sipiora that I would write on Norman Mailer (1923–2007) and Joseph Conrad (1857–1924). Back then, it seemed a good idea. I began by searching for Conrad’s name in the indices of the “four Gospels” of contemporary Mailer scholarship.¹ There, I found this one citation, somewhat oblique,

“Like another Polish emigrant, Joseph Conrad, Malaquais had taught himself to write with elegance in a nonnative language”
(Lennon, *Norman Mailer: A Double Life*, 100).

The whisper of a hint, but no intersection. My comparison of Mailer and Conrad was vanishing fast. Looming near, I felt the landscape of *Dante’s Inferno*,

Midway on our life’s journey, I found myself
In dark woods, the right road lost. To tell
About those woods is hard—so tangled and rough
(*The Inferno of Dante*, tr. Pinsky, Canto 1:1–3).

But I must press on. We are not unaware that since late 2019—in many and various ways—the world has shifted dramatically. Like Moses, we may feel that we “have become an alien living in a foreign land (Exodus 2:22, NEB). Normality is but a distant concept. So, the context in which we read Mailer and Conrad has changed—along with everything else. For me, this prompted several questions, suggesting *four themes* in Conrad’s writing.

These themes seem to have some resonance now and suggest they parallel with Mailer. That is my hope.

QUESTIONS AND CONTEXTS

First, acknowledging my non-existent Venn diagram, I begin by examining Conrad and *tradition*, asking how Conrad relates to the English literary tradition—a tradition defined *ex cathedra* by F. R. Leavis in *The Great Tradition* (1948). How does a Polish-born sailor, with English as his third language, become recognized as an *English* novelist—and one of the greatest? The answer is complicated, but the tradition has attracted “displaced, migrant souls, half in and half out of English society” (Eagleton 1). That describes Conrad well, and his position as one of the great English novelists appears secure.

Second, we look at *narrative*, as developed in Conrad’s *Lord Jim* (1900). We encounter the narrator, Charlie Marlow, arranging a multitude of voices and cultures, each with their perspective, telling the story of Jim. We hear a recurring refrain that Jim was “one of us” (*Lord Jim* 32). The phrase neatly encapsulates human loneliness (one) with the quest for human solidarity (us). We examine what is innovative about Conrad’s narrative. Jim’s wanderings suggest *Lord Jim* is a modernist odyssey but, unlike Odysseus, Jim cannot return home.

Third, we examine the power of *myth*. In 2020, we found ourselves in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The answer is complicated, but the tradition has attracted “displaced, migrant souls, half in and half out of English society” (Eagleton). Despite these appalling facts, many dismissed the crisis as a hoax, as myth. On 25 May 2020, the brutal police execution of a black man named George Floyd occurred. That event—with similar events before—precipitated a wave of protest in the US and globally. This prompts my next question. What are the connections between Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1899) and tectonic shifts in race a century later? Conrad’s book and today’s protesters demand that we re-examine our national myths of race, slavery, and colonialism. For hundreds of years, such myths have comforted white society. Increasingly, the myths are being challenged. I believe the Joseph Conrad who wrote *Heart of Darkness* would recognize those challenges—and the rejection of such challenges from the Right.

Fourth, there is a theme of *skepticism* in Conrad. We live in a global era, caught in the Web—connected and estranged. We order supper on smart

phones, our consciousness wired into social media. Although all knowledge seems accessible, we are tempted by skepticism, haunted by conspiracies. To what extent did the process of globalization begin in Conrad's world? Does his fiction "embody" that process—as Maya Jasanoff has suggested?² What is the connection between globalism and skepticism—and the emergence of "ironic cultures" (Gellner 193)?

A global perspective is evident in *Lord Jim*, but a novel that illustrates this better may be Conrad's *The Secret Agent* (1907). Globalism and terror mark our post-Cold War era, and *The Secret Agent* had a peculiar resonance after the 9/11 attacks.³ Ironically, as Frank, Shulevitz, and others have pointed out, after 9/11 the ostensible "message" of Conrad's novel was often misread.⁴ Conrad's novel is less about terrorism and more about the corruption of power—what in Mailer has been called "the Ahab within."⁵ Conrad's tale reveals a profound skepticism, particularly of political solutions. The skepticism is also epistemological, extending to the categories of human existence, including time itself. Yet Conrad is not a nihilist, although sometimes charged as such. We need to examine his skepticism.

In this article, I shall examine just the first two themes—*tradition* and *narrative*—with a focus on Conrad's relationship to the English tradition and on the novel *Lord Jim*. In a subsequent article in *The Mailer Review*, I hope to deal with themes of *myth* and *skepticism*, seen in *Heart of Darkness* (1899) and *The Secret Agent* (1907). I shall note comparisons with Mailer as they occur, but I will conclude Part Two with a fuller discussion. While there are interesting parallels between the two authors, Mailer operates largely in a different universe of discourse. Both writers, however, in complementary ways are relevant to our current era.

CONRAD, TRADITION, AND THE ENGLISH NOVEL

What is Conrad's relationship to the English literary tradition? A literature that runs from Beowulf through Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, to George Eliot and beyond, is not reducible to a few simplistic themes. So, how do we characterize English literature, or *any* national literature? Here is a good description from Pat Rogers,

For a nation achieves through art self-recognition, self-awareness, self-definition. In literature a race—which here means a linguistic community—confronts its own aspirations and de-

spairs. Here we shall find its conversation with itself, its quarrel with others, its inner thoughts and its outer experiences, its private meditations and its public utterances. (Foreword, v)

Rogers' words could describe Mailer's nuanced relationship to the culture, language, and politics of America. They can also apply to Conrad's relationship to the English tradition. We turn now to Conrad.

Joseph Conrad (1857–1924) was born in the Ukraine as it was under Tsarist domination. As with many Poles, his second language was French, and he did not learn English until his twenties. His early life was traumatic:

Born in 1857 in the Ukraine as Josepf Teodor Konrad Naleez Korzeniowski, he was orphaned at the age of ten. His father, Apollo, a poet and member of the underground Polish nationalist movement, was arrested by the Russians when Conrad was three and was exiled to the north of Russia with wife and child. Five years later, Conrad's mother's health failed in exile, and she died, to be followed to the grave in 1867 by Apollo . . . Conrad left Poland and went off to sea at age seventeen. (Ryf 10)

Despite or because of these traumatic beginnings, Conrad is now considered one of the great writers in the English tradition. The degree to which his European background, his experience of loss and loneliness, and his linguistic heritage influenced his work is the subject of critical debate. That these qualities are important factors is agreed by all. However, his status as an essentially *English* writer—and a novelist of the first order—was not always recognized. He could be dismissed as merely a teller of sea stories. One reviewer of his early work thought that Conrad “might become the Kipling of the Malay Archipelago” (qtd. Jasanoff 134).

It was largely F. R. Leavis (1895–1978)—the controversial Cambridge critic—who changed our reading of Conrad. Recognizing his foreign status, Leavis emphasized Conrad's vital contribution to the English tradition, and his choice to write in English.⁶ In magisterial and dogmatic fashion, Leavis defined the “great English novelists” in *The Great Tradition* (1948) with these famous words,

The great English novelists are Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James, and Joseph Conrad—to stop for a moment at that comparatively safe point in history. Because Jane Austen, for special reasons, needs to be studied at considerable length, I confine myself in this book to the last three. (9)

Some dismissed Leavis. Most recognize now that his critical judgment “transformed the intellectual landscape of his time” (McCrum 1).⁷ The book’s appearance after World War Two came at a time of *kairos*. In 2009, the anonymous writer in *The Times High Education*, wrote this,

The date is important. It helps explain the central aim of the book, to determine the significance of the novel after the war, the atom bomb and the concentration camp. Leavis’ central criterion of great writing, that it has a “vital capacity of experience and kind of reverent openness before life, and a marked moral intensity” is a clear reaction to an age characterized by the ideologies of fascism and communism. (“The Canon: The Great Tradition” 1)

We might be reminded of Mailer’s similar words in “The White Negro” (1957), “Probably, we will never be able to determine the psychic havoc of the concentration camp and the atom bomb upon the unconscious mind of almost everybody alive in those years” (qtd. in Mailer, *Mind of an Outlaw*, 42). The aftermath of both World Wars was indeed profound.

We return to Leavis’ bold claim: “The great English novelists are Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James, and Joseph Conrad” (*The Great Tradition* 9). A remarkable thesis, when you reflect that two women—one using a man’s name—and two foreigners—an American and a Pole—could in some sense “represent” the English literary tradition. Later, Leavis would add Lawrence to his pantheon, in his book *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist* (1955).⁸

In a 1950 review of *The Great Tradition*, the irony of Leavis’ list was remarked upon, namely the “prima-facie difficulty in accepting as the central part of an English tradition three novelists of whom only one was English” (Robson 380). Going farther, Claudia Johnson pointed out that even the “lone English novelist, George Eliot, was a pariah in her own century, and was derided as turgidly Teutonic” in the next (204). Since Eliot translated

the works of two German radicals, Feuerbach and D. F. Strauss, the label Teutonic may be warranted but “turgid” she was not. To Victorians haunted by mid-century doubt, George Eliot seemed an *agent provocateur*, introducing Continental radicalism into traditional English culture.⁹

I argue that most creative innovations in a literary tradition come from those seen as *outsiders*—those on the margins. That proved to be true of Conrad. With Polish roots, he wanted to be seen as an English gentleman, yet “remained indelibly foreign in appearance, manners, gestures, speech and dress” (Meyers, *Joseph Conrad: A Biography* 128). Mailer was American-born, but he knew that as he was finding his own voice, he was becoming separated from both his Jewish Brooklyn roots and his literary ancestors.¹⁰

Terry Eagleton has cogently argued that the 19th century English novel did not “spring from the privileged and powerful” but from the margins of English society.¹¹ Moreover, the eclectic nature of that English tradition was not only in class and gender. Linguistic community and national origin were also involved. Increasingly, the English tradition included expatriates, immigrants, and actual foreigners.

From the end of the 19th century, these internal émigrés of literary England receded before a wave of literal expats. James, Conrad, Wilde, Shaw, Yeats, Joyce, Pound, Eliot, Beckett: if these are the chief luminaries of modern English literature, how come there isn't a decent, God-fearing Englishman among them? . . . Most of these émigrés were displaced, migrant souls, half in and half out of English society. . . . But all had rich cross-cultural resources at their disposal, and forged their art out of them. (Eagleton 1)

The England of the British Empire was “primly closed to artistic experiment,” so it was necessary to “import its modernism” (Eagleton 1). For that reason, Conrad the Pole takes his place among the Irish and the Americans in creating English modernism, and in changing England’s “conversation with itself” (Rogers v). As Allan Simmons has pointed out,

An immigrant in an age of Empire, Conrad’s biography is bound up with the national struggles of England, whose changing face is reflected in these sea and land tales. Inevitably, the nation’s

sense of itself is indebted to the image of itself as seen by one of its greatest outsiders. (“One of Us” 1)

It is true that Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence were English-born, but they too were outsiders to the dominant culture.¹² In Lawrence’s *The Rainbow* (1915)—one of the most English of novels—Tom Brangwen decides to marry not a local girl but a Polish widow, Lydia Lensky. England has long been an island: it has not always been insular. According to the UK 2011 Census, Polish was the second most spoken language in England.¹³ The English literary tradition was indeed able to draw on “rich cross-cultural resources” (Eagleton).

The claim of Leavis, that Conrad is one of the “great English novelists,” is now generally accepted. Also largely accepted is his parallel thesis, “In these great novelists . . . we have the successors of Shakespeare; for in the nineteenth century and later the strength—the poetic and creative strength—of the English language goes into prose fiction” (*D. H. Lawrence: Novelist* 18). What then did Conrad achieve? In an article on Conrad and his legacy, Jeffery Meyers wrote,

His techniques and themes, his passionate concern with the “tragedy of existence, the weakness of human nature . . . and the rigid demands of art” [Najder] as well as his serious, vital ideas—moral transgression and individual responsibility, lost honor and personal redemption, the terrors of loneliness and consolation of the secret sharer—have profoundly appealed to the modern sensibility, which he helped to create. (“Conrad’s Influence” 186)

Indeed, Conrad did do much to create this sensibility—this shift in consciousness called modernism. He changed the possibilities of the English novel. But how did a Polish outsider, writing in English as his third language, achieve this? Here is a summary from Daniel Schwarz, “He understood the potential of the novel for political and historical insights and thus enlarged its subject matter. In dramatizing the search for meaning in an amoral universe, he addressed the central epistemological problem of the twentieth century” (*The Secret Sharer* 3).¹⁴ We shall return to the issue of epistemology later, but some of Conrad’s achievement is in narrative technique, especially in the novel *Lord Jim*, to which we now turn.

THE NARRATIVE COMPLEXITY OF CONRAD'S *LORD JIM* (1900)

Lord Jim is about a good man who falls. Quite literally, he jumps ship. As First Mate of the *Patna*, in a crisis he abandons both ship and passengers. Subsequently, he is judged by an Official Inquiry, and is disgraced. He wanders the Malay Archipelago. Through the intervention of Marlow and his friend Stein, Jim is sent to Patusan, where he receives from the local inhabitants the honorific title *Tuan* or Lord Jim.¹⁵ Finally, somewhat tragically, he is killed.

The story of *Lord Jim* is simple; the telling is not. Conrad's *Lord Jim* is undeniably a complex work. Leo Gurko writes that it is "the first of his books to introduce the full Conradian orchestra, replete with motifs and variations" (122). A crucial part of that "orchestra" is the presence of Charlie Marlow—one of the most significant narrators in modern literature, on whom, claims Meyers, "Nick Carraway is modeled" ("Conrad's Influence" 190).¹⁶ In a 1965 article, Raymond Malbone states,

Marlow is the main character in *Lord Jim* and the theme of the novel rests in what Jim's story means to Marlow rather than in what happens to Jim. . . . Marlow is not a hero as Jim thought of heroes in books, but Marlow is the character in the novel who learns most and the one for whom the action has the most significance. (172)

Max Hermens argues that Marlow is an "invented author," believing that "Conrad uses Marlow to examine the work of authorship, the function and place of language in society and its effectiveness of conveying particular philosophical attitudes" (159). So who is Charlie Marlow?

Marlow appears in several of Conrad's works, first appearing in the short story "Youth" (1898). There, we meet him sitting around "a mahogany table that reflected the bottle, the claret glasses, and our faces" ("Youth" 71). The same group of men, based on Conrad and his friends, would reappear a year later in *Heart of Darkness* (1899). "Youth" is based on Conrad's first voyage to the East, "as second mate of the *Palestine* in 1881–83" (Watts, Notes 196). The men of the original *Palestine* were drawn from a half-dozen nationalities. However, as Cedric Watts points out, "in the fictional *Judea*, the men are depicted as distinctively and courageously English"—they had "the right stuff" (Introduction xvii). Watts comments,

'Youth' illustrates, thereby, the process of patriotic myth-making. It is also a tale concerned to memorialize, with vividness, lyrical romanticism, wry humour, and an eye for local absurdities, the trials and dour heroism of life under sail in the merchant navy. The nostalgia is frank and unashamed: a middle-aged Marlow looks back indulgently on the ardent optimism of his younger self. (xvii)

The Marlow of *Lord Jim* strikes a very different note from the Marlow of "Youth." The romanticism is still there, but focused now in Jim, not Marlow. In *Lord Jim*, we see Conrad becoming skeptical of simplistic narratives, contrived plots, the myths in which individuals and societies find comfort. In a similar way, maybe, Norman Mailer spoke of "real life versus plot life."¹⁷ Reality is complex, unpredictable, mysterious. Even in modern physics, the universe has become "vaguer and cloudier."¹⁸ Conrad and Mailer try to do justice to that complexity.

A tone of authorial skepticism runs through this novel. It appears in the first few pages of *Lord Jim*, when we learn that Jim's father is a parson,

Originally he came from a parsonage. Many commanders of fine merchant-ships come from these abodes of piety and peace. Jim's father possessed such certain knowledge of the Unknowable as made for the righteousness of people in cottages without disturbing the ease of mind of those whom an unerring Providence enables to live in mansions. (4)

This is the author's exposition; Marlow is not yet on stage. The voice is skeptical with an ironic tone. The phrase "such certain knowledge of the Unknowable," along with its class consciousness, is worthy of Jane Austen or George Eliot. Conrad may be Polish-born, but in *Lord Jim* he is becoming assuredly part of that English tradition. Yet, we are also conscious that Conrad is a gateway to modernity, and perhaps in a way that Austen or George Eliot could never be.

There is another factor. At the heart of this novel is a *friendship* between Jim and Marlow—but a very modern friendship. As Ian Watt has emphasized,

Conrad's novel could hardly have been called "Charlie and Jim," but it is nevertheless the tale of a friendship. That friendship, however, is dominated by elements of separateness, incompleteness, and misunderstanding which are reflections . . . of some of the characteristic social and intellectual divisions of the modern world. (335–336)

Reading about Jim and his friend/narrator Marlow, I am reminded of Prufrock in T. S. Eliot's poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1915)—except that poor Prufrock had no Marlow. Unfriended and alone, Prufrock can but wonder, "Do I dare / Disturb the universe?" (Eliot).

Gatsby, on the other hand, does have Nick Carraway and Jim has Charlie Marlow.¹⁹ Within the novels, each friend/narrator has a similar function: to listen to and to *understand*—as if it were possible—the title character. In both works, there is more than a little irony in using the terms "Lord" or "Great."²⁰ There are more parallels between Jim and Gatsby. They are described as "a pair of romantic Jims" (Martel and Vernon 61), both appearing as ambiguous and mysterious figures.

Both Jim and Gatsby conceal or alter their last names in order to flee from past endeavors of which they are not proud, and both characters' successes require that they remain incognito. . . . Unlike Gatsby, who is known almost exclusively by his last name (albeit an altered one), Jim's surname is never given. (Martell and Vernon 61)

Conrad is highlighting the complex nature of *all* story-telling—and, in particular, the crucial place of the *narrator*. In this, Fitzgerald follows his lead. As we have said, the story of *Lord Jim* is simple: the *telling* is complicated.

Myths and illusions—whether individual or cultural—tend to be simplistic, promising certainty. Maybe, for that reason, they can appear more comforting to the average person. Narrative—in the *praxis* of Joseph Conrad—proves to be far more complex and disturbing, as is reality itself. *Lord Jim* is not easy reading. Both Mailer and Conrad were attempting a new "attack on reality."²¹

So, the story of Jim will be told—*must* be told—through multiple voices, framed and reframed, in a profusion of words—interspersed with silence—

to reveal the inadequacy of language. As Marlow says, “There is never time to say our last word—the last word of our love, of our desire, faith, remorse, submission, revolt” (*Lord Jim* 163). At the end of the story, we are left “with a sense of the unutterable residing at the heart of facts, of language” (Dauncey 35). Leavis, by the way, was unhappy with Conrad’s profligate use of adjectives like “unutterable,” but that criticism is for another day.²²

All narratives are set in the matrix of time itself. So, part of Conrad’s narrative innovation is how he deals with the concept of time. It seems likely that his experience of time was shaped by his life as a sailor, as Jasanoff suggests,

The novel’s meandering narrative, too, owed much to Conrad’s maritime perspective. When you’re on a ship at sea, you’re cut off from almost everything that gives incident to a day in a life onshore. . . . This gives a sailor at sea a particular relationship to time. . . . Shipmates build familiarity in fragments over weeks. (146)

This theme of time is another significant link between *Lord Jim* and Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, as several critics have noted. Jim and Gatsby share an illusion that they can manipulate time, albeit in contradictory ways. Robert Stallman, in a 1955 article, writes this,

Mending the clock—that is the idea not only of *Lord Jim* but also of *The Great Gatsby*. “Can’t repeat the past?” he cried incredulously. ‘Why of course you can. . . . I’m going to fix everything just the way it was before,’ he said, nodding determinedly. ‘She’ll see.’” (GG, 133). To reinstate the past, that is Gatsby’s illusion; to obliterate the past, that is Jim’s illusion. (9)

John Peters also investigates Conrad and the experience of time. Dealing with what he calls the “epistemology of temporality,” Peters argues that “Conrad consistently shows that time for human beings is not the regularity of the metronome but rather the irregularity of human experience” (431).²³

Time resists our attempts to manipulate it: we can neither reinstate nor obliterate the past. The reason is connected with the Second Law of Ther-

modynamics and the concept of entropy.²⁴ If science is language in the *indicative* mood, mapping “what *is* the case,” then literature would seem to be—in part—language in the *subjunctive* mood, charting “what *might have been*” or “what *could be*.” Robert Ian Scott sees literature “making concrete” the tragic truth of life and death: that “moments, chances, choices” in the end are lost in time (81).²⁵ That is the reality that Jim cannot accept—neither could Gatsby. This romantic longing, this “landscape of loss” (Robinson xi), was partly in Scott Fitzgerald himself, as one critic has suggested.²⁶

Conrad was certainly tempted by such romanticism. Indeed, that is Stein’s interpretation of Jim’s problem, “I understand very well. He is romantic” (*Lord Jim* 153). Conrad’s romanticism, however, is tempered by his skepticism. Another way of expressing this is to use the term doubt—another feature of modern consciousness.²⁷ That doubt was a feature of the Victorian era—reflecting the impact of geology, Darwin, Marx, Freud, and biblical criticism. We can hear such poignant doubt in Tennyson’s “In Memoriam” (1950) and Matthew Arnold’s “Dover Beach” (1867). Conrad, in his adopted country, moves from Victorian and Edwardian doubt to a recognizably modern variety. He believed that if a story is to be told *true*, its narrative complexity must be included. Conrad foreshadows the modernists of the 1920s. He understood, intuitively, the narrative constraints of modernity—including epistemological doubt.

A MODERNIST ODYSSEY IN *LORD JIM* (1900)

Lord Jim is about a journey—an odyssey. But this is not the classical world of Homer, so *Lord Jim* is very much a *Modernist* odyssey. The same could be said of *Heart of Darkness* (1899), with its ambiguous title and symbolic river voyage. Any series of sea voyages interspersed with land adventures could suggest Homer’s *Odyssey*—or indeed other classical texts. Furthermore, if Homer, Virgil, and Dante are in some sense foundation texts for Western literature, it would be hard for any writer to totally avoid their influence. Critics have shown interest in such intertextuality. Terrence Bowers, for example, compares Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* to Virgil’s *Aeneid*,

Virgil is the first great Western poet of empire, the writer who constructed a mythology of empire, gave voice to its ideals, and planted the West’s most deep-seated beliefs about empire building as a noble and heroic activity. It is thus appropriate—indeed

essential—that the relationship between his foundational poem of empire and Conrad’s treatment of empire be analyzed. (116)

Alison Wheatley examines the function of epithets in Conrad, comparing them to those applied to Homer’s Odysseus and Tennyson’s Ulysses.

This aggressive Odysseus would seem to be creating his identity, except that his assertion is a recapitulation, a reclaiming of a fixed self, rather than a remaking. With his culture, he is a complacent believer in name-magic whereby names and epithets transcend description to produce the characteristics they describe. (15)

She goes on to argue that “Conrad’s characters typically oscillate between the Odyssean and Ulyssean models, in the gap between authoritative and internally persuasive discourse” (Wheatley 16). In *Lord Jim*, she maintains, “the questions are epistemological” and “Jim is an Odysseus constrained by circumstances to try to become Ulyssean, without success” (16).²⁸ That has a ring of truth. Whether we call Jim a “romantic,” as does Stein (*Lord Jim* 153), or “inscrutable at heart” as does Marlow (*Lord Jim* 304), he appears as a man of fixed illusions in a complex, fast changing world. Jim is a very modern Odysseus.

Why is he wandering? When people become aware of his fall, the “original sin” of jumping from the *Patna*, Jim would leave that place in shame—travelling farther east, toward the rising sun. With Stein’s help, he ends up in the land of Patusan. So, like Homer’s Odysseus, Jim is a wanderer. Fleeing lost honor, he is also fleeing himself. Here is the opening to *The Odyssey*,

Tell me about a complicated man,
Muse, tell me how he wandered and was lost
When he had wrecked the holy town of Troy,
The Odyssey, tr. Emily Wilson, Book 1, 1–3.

Odysseus, of course, is trying to return home—hindered by gods, humans, and monsters. As a veteran of the Trojan Wars, he is also dealing with the trauma of war, as Emily Wilson suggests.²⁹ Jim, however, cannot return home—“He could never go home again now. Not he. Never” (*Lord Jim* 161).

In Patusan, at first he is honored by the people as *Tuan*—Lord Jim. But a tragic miscalculation over Gentleman Brown causes many to die—including his friend Dain, the Chief's son. So Jim walks knowingly to his own death. Is this suicide, or an ancient payment of “an eye for an eye”? His death seems as ambiguous as his life,

Yet it is also an atonement, in public, to a father and ally for the death of his son. This is why, for the first time in his life, Jim is able, before he falls, to cast ‘a proud and unflinching glance’ at all the faces around him. (Bertoud xxx)

The odyssey in *Lord Jim* is both external and internal, a voyage across an ocean but also a journey into the human heart. We see this double odyssey, of course, in *Heart of Darkness*, published the previous year. So *Lord Jim* portrays a geographical journey to Patusan, but also an inward pilgrimage of Jim and Marlow. For both men, a significant aspect of their journey is psychological and epistemological.³⁰ As with the *Odyssey*, it is also mythological. There may be a “landscape of loss” (Robinson xi) in *Lord Jim*, but that loss occurs in an uncomprehending Universe, where all struggle to find meaning.

In the words of Daniel Schwarz, “In dramatizing the search for meaning in an amoral universe he addressed the central epistemological problem of the twentieth century” (*Secret Sharer* 3). Culturally and linguistically, Conrad is a forerunner of World English, for Jim's fall is argued over by a polyglot, multi-cultural world.³¹ But, writing at the same time as Freud and Einstein, Conrad is a pioneer also in epistemology.

But what is this “central epistemological problem” that Conrad addresses? The novel gives several answers, but Stein's words, reflecting a German misreading of Hamlet, may be the most significant, “How to be! *Ach!* How to be” (*Lord Jim* 153). In such a universe, *how* shall we live? In answer, we turn to a phrase that runs throughout the novel.

Early on Marlow tells us this about Jim, “He was of the right sort; he was one of us” (*Lord Jim* 56). The phrase “one of us” appears at least eight times, including the final sentence of the 1917 Author's Note.³² It is true that “one of us” could be interpreted as a trope of class or race, but Conrad's novel goes far deeper than the traditional novel of manners.³³ *Lord Jim* is about a human fall—with consequences that haunt Jim like an “original sin.” So

there might be an echo of the Story of the Fall in Genesis, as we hear the LORD God reflecting, “The man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:22, NEB).³⁴

We can go deeper. The phrase “one of us,” it seems to me, beautifully brings together two *motifs* that are in tension both in Conrad’s life and his writing: human loneliness (one) and the search for solidarity (us). Here is Marlow, reflecting on his attempt to help Jim,

It is when we try to grapple with another man’s intimate need that we perceive how incomprehensible, wavering, and misty are the beings that share with us the sight of the stars and the warmth of the sun. It is as if loneliness were a hard and absolute condition of existence . . . there remains only the capricious, inconsolable, and elusive spirit that no eye can follow, no hand can grasp. (*Lord Jim* 130)

As we lend a hand to another, we realize that we exist in a state of aloneness, “as if loneliness were a hard and absolute” (130). A related idea is voiced in *Heart of Darkness*, when a manager says to Marlow, “We live, as we dream—alone” (*Heart of Darkness* 130).

Yet we still desire that human connection. So, what is the significance of Jim as a character? Why does Conrad focus on this specific young man? His dishonor may be tragic for him, but why should a seasoned master mariner like Marlow care—and in turn why should we? We care, maybe, because we may learn from his story, or because in Jim we see ourselves. Ostensibly, Jim’s story is his: on another level, it is *our* story. It is the story of Mankind,

No man is an island, intire of itself;
everyman is a peece of the Continent, a part of the maine . . .
any man’s death diminishes me,
because I am involved in Mankinde.

(Donne, “No man is an island”)

We are involved precisely because Jim is “one of us,” as Marlow keeps reminding us. In Chapter VIII, as Jim explains to Marlow what happened that fateful night, Marlow becomes aware that—willy-nilly—he is being drawn into a conflict in Jim’s soul. Somewhat reluctantly, Marlow is called to be a

witness, an ally, a friend. Having heard the story, he must pass it on. What begins as a narrative device becomes a moral imperative, a duty—as it was for Harry in “The Snows of Kilimanjaro.”³⁵

For Marlow, Jim’s story becomes also a disturbing revelation, not simply of one man’s fault but of “the true essence of life” (*Lord Jim* 67). A cosmological curtain is drawn aside,

I was made to look at the convention that lurks in all truth and on the essential sincerity of falsehood. He appealed to all sides at once—to the side turned perpetually to the light of day, and to that side of us which, like the other hemisphere of the moon, exists stealthily in perpetual darkness . . . He swayed me. I own to it, I own up. The occasion was obscure, insignificant—what you will: a lost youngster, one in a million—but then he was one of us; (*Lord Jim* 68)

Jim’s odyssey in the Malay Archipelago was very different from that of Odysseus, many millennia earlier. But the “complicated man” that is Odysseus (*The Odyssey* 105) is not too unlike the man who is Jim, “inscrutable at heart” (*Lord Jim* 304). For both men, the odyssey is partly geographical and partly psychological/mythical.

There are many other themes and perspectives in *Lord Jim*. But, if a national literature enables a people to confront “its own aspirations and despair” (Rogers v), then within the English tradition Conrad’s novel fulfills that task. Today, in a fragmented America, following the bitter 2020 election, we still wrestle with the implications of Conrad’s phrase “one of us.” We struggle to find solidarity amid division and estrangement, sensing that our divisions are ultimately epistemological. The world of *Lord Jim* is not so very different from our own.

SOME TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS

Conrad, with his complex European roots, has enlarged the English literary tradition, bringing new depths to the English novel. His peers were George Eliot and Henry James, and the modernists of the 1920s like Lawrence and Woolf. His use of Marlow as narrator, and his recognition that Jim’s odyssey is both geographical and psychological/mythical, ensures that his voice will continue to be heard.

Norman Mailer operates in a wholly different universe of discourse, shaped by a very different American culture, and influenced initially by writers such as Dos Passos, Farrell, Steinbeck, Melville, Twain, and Fitzgerald. Early influence is one thing, but in both narrative innovation and subject matter, Mailer soon left his literary roots, becoming his own person and *persona*. He changed the American novel, as Conrad had changed the English novel. There is no obvious counterpart to Marlow in Mailer's writing, but the narrative complexities of *The Executioner's Song* (1979), *Harlot's Ghost* (1991), and *The Castle in the Forest* (2007)—to name just three works—are considerable and demand closer examination.

To a degree, both Mailer and Conrad began as cultural outsiders. Even when they had moved into the literary mainstream, they continued an uneasy relationship to the dominant culture. In ways explicit and subtle, both men could and did criticize their national myths.³⁶ That critique may be seen in a comparison between *The Secret Agent* and *Harlot's Ghost*, which I shall examine in Part Two of this article.³⁷ In both nations, there is a symbiosis between the intelligence communities and the myths of Empire—as both authors were aware.

Finally, as both the United Kingdom and the United States encounter serious problems of governance and social cohesion in the 2020s, the political skepticism of both Mailer and Conrad—whether justified or not—would seem to ensure their continuing relevance today.

NOTES

1. What I call the “four gospels” of Mailer criticism are Phillip Sipiora, editor, *Mind of an Outlaw* (2013), J. Michael Lennon, *A Double Life* (2013) and *Selected Letters* (2014), and *Works and Days: Revised* (2018), edited by Gerald Lucas.
2. “Conrad wouldn’t have known the word ‘globalization,’ but with his journey from the provinces of imperial Russia across the high seas to the British home counties, he embodied it” (Jasanoff 7).
3. “In the aftermath of the attacks on Sept. 11, Joseph Conrad’s *Secret Agent* became one of the three works of literature most frequently cited in the American media” (Shulevitz).
4. “One of the great narrative ironies of Conrad’s novel is that the Greenwich bombing is supposed to look like an act of terrorism, but that it really is a perverse act of counterterrorism instigated by state actors. The irony was lost on several American commentators in the immediate aftermath of 9/11” (Frank 152).

5. "The most important of the direct influences is that the egoistical lust for power, the character trait that Mailer focuses on in all his novels, is so directly derived from *Moby-Dick* that it may be justly labeled, 'the Ahab within'" (Horn 381).
6. Leavis writes, "Rather we have to stress his foreignness—that he was a Pole, whose first other language was French. I remember remarking to André Chevrillon how surprising a choice it was on Conrad's part to write in English . . . And I remember the reply, to the effect that it wasn't at all surprising, since Conrad's work couldn't have been written in French . . . Conrad's themes and interests demanded the concreteness and action—the dramatic energy—of English" (*The Great Tradition*, pp. 27–28).
7. "For about half of the 20th century, the English literary tradition was arbitrated by a critic whose ideas transformed the intellectual landscape of his time, and whose influence lingers still. . . . And it's perhaps even harder to recognize how completely Leavis, and the literary consensus associated with his name, has been swept aside since his death in 1978" (McCrum 1).
8. This book, *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist*, was my first introduction to Leavis—and to Lawrence criticism—in 1970, while writing an MA thesis on D. H. Lawrence and Søren Kierkegaard.
9. George Eliot translated Feuerbach's *Das Wesen des Christenthums* (1841) as *The Essence of Christianity* in 1854 and D. F. Strauss's *Das Leben Jesu kritisch bearbeitet* (1835–36) as *The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined* in 1846. Colin Brown writes, "The Christ of Feuerbach's *Das Wesen des Christenthums* . . . was the projection of man's wish fulfilments . . . the expression of the self-consciousness of man in his vain movement towards a reality which could only be found in man himself" (140). Colin Brown was one of my first teachers.
10. "I was, after all, having a form of twentieth century experience that might become more and more prevalent—I was separated from my roots. People who suffer such an identity crisis generally have to take all sorts of curious steps to locate who they are" (*The Spooky Art* 114).
11. "Dickens wasn't a jailbird, but his feckless father was; George Eliot was the daughter of a farm bailiff, Thomas Hardy the son of a builder. . . . As provincial lower middle class women of Irish descent, the Brontë sisters had the distinction of being quadruply marginalized. Jane Austen was gentry, but from the dingier end of the scale. They were all in-betweeners, caught between upper class and underdog, urban and rural, province and metropolis" (Eagleton).
12. "The only great home-grown English modernists were a radical feminist at odds with the male establishment and married to a left-wing Jew (Woolf), and the son of a provincial coalminer who hitched up with a German aristocrat and beat the hell out of England as soon as he could (Lawrence)" (Eagleton).
13. Data from the 2011 UK National Census found that "Polish was the most common language after English with 546,000 people (1.0 per cent of the population) reporting it as their main language" ("Languages in England and Wales: 2011"). Lawrence's choice of the Polish widow Lydia Lesnky in *The Rainbow* is not that surprising. Tom recognizes a "logic of the soul," as Lawrence "poignantly describes the aura of otherness of Lydia Lensky" (Balbert 251).

14. "He recognized the role of repressed desires, unconscious motives, and unacknowledged impulses in human conduct and brought a new psychological and moral intensity to the English novel's traditions of manners and morals" (Schwarz, *The Secret Sharer*, 3).
15. "By sending Jim to Patusan, Stein and Marlow gamble that in its inaccessibility Jim will find himself beyond the reach of his disgrace and recover his self-respect. And he indeed proves quickly and spectacularly successful. . . . Jim, in this and so much else like James Brook of Sarawak . . . acquires semi-divine prestige with the villagers and peasants . . ." (Berthoud xxvi-xxvii).
16. "This influence can be seen in Fitzgerald's style, symbolism, plot, narrator (Nick Carraway is modelled on Charlie Marlow), and theme of romantic disillusion" (Meyers 190).
17. "One could make the case that our love of plot—until it gets very cheap indeed—comes out of our need to find the chain of cause and effect that so often is missing in our own existence" (Mailer, *The Spooky Art* 89).
18. Max Born, who won the 1954 Nobel Prize in Physics, wrote "We have sought for firm ground and found none. The deeper we penetrate, the more restless becomes the universe, and the vaguer and cloudier" (277).
19. However, in neither case does the title character—Jim or Gatsby—survive the story.
20. "Lord" and "Great" suggest irony, but not cynicism. Both Charlie Marlow and Nick Carraway believe there *is* something "lordly and great" in Jim and Gatsby—despite their damaged reputations. And each narrator may persuade us that there is some truth in their acquittal.
21. "The twentieth century artist who conceivably had the most influence on my work was not a writer but Picasso. He kept changing the nature of his attack on reality" (Mailer, *The Spooky Art* 156).
22. "The insistence betrays the absence, the willed 'intensity' the nullity. He is intent on making a virtue out of not knowing what he means. The vague and unrealizable, he asserts with a strained impressiveness, is the profoundly and tremendously significant" (Leavis, *The Great Tradition* 207).
23. "In the end, Conrad identifies a gap between objectivity and subjectivity when experiencing time: he consistently reveals that time can only be accessed through the medium of human consciousness . . ." (Peters 420).
24. "In 1928, Arthur Eddington (1882–1944) described the Second Law as occupying the 'supreme position among the laws of nature' (74), for it alone revealed what he called 'time's arrow' (69). . . . Entropy would seem to suggest that, despite mankind's best efforts, time is irreversible and the universe is running down" (Vince 92).
25. Robert Scott continues, "In *The Great Gatsby*, we see the Second Law of Thermodynamics made concrete by examples of the corrupting effects of time and wealth, which disorganize and then destroy the ecology, the complex sensitive sets of relationships on which life and hope depend" (81).
26. "What is more beautiful than the landscape of loss? What is more heart-breaking, more haunting, more romantic? F. Scott Fitzgerald saw the world as a place of unbearable beauty and un-

- limited glamour. . . . He was a romantic, and the greatest of his writings is charged with feeling and haunted by a longing for something irretrievable" (Robinson xi)
27. "What pervades *Lord Jim*, and what makes Jim most significantly 'one of us,' is doubt. Of course we have doubts about Jim's character. But beyond this there is another doubt we might have, one that it is our natural tendency to resist but which the novel moves us to recognise: a doubt about our own character, *a doubt about ourselves*" (Taylor 84).
 28. "How does Jim know what is true? Is truth of language stable or volatile? What is the basis for his knowing how to act?" (Wheatley 16).
 29. "In modern terms, we can see Odysseus as a veteran soldier with his own version of PTSD: he is moody, prone to weeping, often withdrawn, and liable to fits of aggression" (Emily Wilson, Introduction. Homer, *Odyssey*, 67).
 30. "At first, *Lord Jim* explores the response to the objective world by two seemingly diametrically opposed men: Jim, the captive of his own imagination, and Marlow, the rational empiricist who speaks for the very values that Jim has implicitly, by the nature of his deeds, renounced when he jumped from the Patna. Then the novel dramatizes the gradual movement of Jim towards Marlow's position and the countermovement of Marlow towards Jim." (Schwarz, "The Journey" 442).
 31. "This enables [Conrad] to deploy an astonishing range of responses to Jim—Alsatian, Swiss, Australian, French, Scandinavian, Portuguese, Malay, Indian, German (two versions), and at least five Anglo-Saxon attitudes in Marlow, Brierly, Brown, Denver, and the so-called 'privileged man' who receives in London the papers documenting Jim's end" (Berthoud xviii).
 32. In the novel itself, the phrase "one of us" appears on pp. 32, 56, 68, 78, 162, 236, & 303. The Author's Note ends with this sentence, "It was for me, with all the sympathy of which I was capable, to seek fit words for his meaning. He was 'one of us'" (306).
 33. The "privileged man" to whom Marlow sends the end of his story (Chapters XXXVI to XLV) certainly sees this in racial terms, regarding "all mankind with skins brown, yellow or black" as equivalent to "selling your soul to a brute" (246), but Marlow—and presumably Conrad himself—implicitly criticizes such racial tropes.
 34. Jeffrey Meyers also sees a reference to Genesis 3:22 (*Joseph Conrad: A Biography* 197).
 35. "There was so much to write. He had seen the world change; not just the events. . . . He had been in it and he had watched it and it was his duty to write of it; but now he never would" (Hemingway, "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" 17).
 36. It is true that Conrad would often look at colonialism in a non-British context—the Dutch and Germans in *Lord Jim*, the Belgians in *Heart of Darkness*. But *The Secret Agent* is set in London—the heart of the Empire. The British are certainly not immune from criticism—especially the Home Office and the Metropolitan Police. *Heart of Darkness* begins on the River Thames—a metonymy perhaps for the ubiquitous linking of British trade and conquest in a global world, with an allusion to the Roman Empire and a foreshadowing of Marlow's journey up the Congo

River. Of Kurtz, we learn that his mother “was half-English, his father was half-French. All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz” (*Heart of Darkness* 154).

37. There are also interesting comparisons between Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* and Mailer’s *The Executioner’s Song* and *The Castle in the Forest*. All three works, in various ways, attempt to deal with the category of evil within the borders of a modernist and post-modern world view.

WORKS CITED

- Balbert, Peter. *D. H. Lawrence and the Marriage Matrix: Intertextual Adventures in Conflict, Renewal, and Transcendence*. Cambridge Scholars, 2016.
- “The Canon: *The Great Tradition* by F. R. Leavis.” *Times Higher Education*, 14 May 2009.
- Berthoud, Jacques. Introduction. *Lord Jim* by Joseph Conrad. Ed. Jacques Berthoud. Oxford UP, 2002, xiii–xxxi.
- Born, Max, *The Restless Universe*. Dover, 1951.
- Bowers, Terrence. “Conrad’s *Aeneid*: *Heart of Darkness* and the Classical Epic.” *Conradiana*, Vol. 38, No. 2, Summer 2006, pp. 115–142.
- Brown, Colin. *Jesus in European Protestant Thought: 1778–1860*. Labyrinth Press, 1985.
- Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness and Other Tales*. Ed. Cedric Watts. Oxford UP, 2002.
- . *Lord Jim*. Edited by Jacques Berthoud. Oxford UP, 2002.
- . *The Secret Agent*. Ed. Peter Lancelot Mallios. The Modern Library, 2004.
- . *The Secret Sharer*. Ed. Daniel R. Schwarz. Bedford, 1997.
- . “Youth.” *Heart of Darkness and Other Tales*. Ed. Cedric Watts. Oxford UP, 2002, pp. 71–99.
- Dauncey, Sarah. “‘Something Else Besides’: Uttering the Unutterable in *Lord Jim*.” *Conradiana*, Vol. 43, No. 1, 2011, pp. 23–38.
- Donne, John. “No man is an island entirely of itself” qtd. Poets Pen by James B. Young. *Methodist DeBakey Cardiovascular Journal* Vol. 14, No. 4, 2018, p. 308.
- Eagleton, Terry. “The Center Cannot Hold: From Dickens to Joyce to Rushdie, Outsiders are the Literary Mainstream.” *The Guardian*, 22 Jun 2001.
- Eliot, T. S. “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.” *The Complete Poems and Plays: 1909–1950*. Harcourt Brace, 1980, pp. 3–7.
- Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby* [1925]. Scribner, 1995.
- Frank, Michael C. “Terrorism for the Sake of Counterterrorism: Undercover Policing and the Specter of the Agent Provocateur in Joseph Conrad’s *The Secret Agent*.” *Conradiana*, Vol. 46, No. 3, 2014, pp. 151–177.
- Gellner, Ernest. *Legitimation of Belief*. Cambridge, 1974.
- Gurko, Leo. *Joseph Conrad: Giant in Exile*. Frederick Muller, 1965.
- Hemingway, Ernest. “The Snows of Kilimanjaro.” *The Snows of Kilimanjaro and Other Stories*. Scribner, 1995, pp. 3–28.
- Hermens, Max. “More than a Voice from the Darkness: Charlie Marlow and the Posture of an Invented Author.” *Neophilologus* Vol. 101, No. 1, Jan 2017, pp. 159–174.

- Horn, Bernard. "Ahab and Ishmael at War: The Presence of *Moby-Dick* in *The Naked and the Dead*," *American Quarterly* Vol. 34, No. 4, Autumn 1982. Republished in *The Mailer Review* Vol. 10, No. 1, Fall 2016.
- Homer, *The Odyssey*. Tr. Emily Wilson. Norton, 2018.
- The Inferno of Dante*. Tr. Robert Pinsky. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997.
- Jananoff, Maya. *The Dawn Watch: Joseph Conrad in a Global World*. Penguin, 2017.
- Johns Hopkins University & Medicine. "Coronavirus Resource Center." <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/>.
- Johnson, Claudia L. "The "Great Tradition" of the English Novel and the Jewish Part." *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, Vol. 56, No. 2, Sept 2001, pp. 198–227.
- Kaplan, Carola M. "Sudden Holes in Space and Time": Trauma, Dissociation, and the Precariousness of Everyday Life." *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, Vol 33, No. 4, Sep/Oct 2013, pp. 467–478.
- "Languages in the United Kingdom—Statistics & Facts." Office for National Statistics. *Statista*. 5 Jun 2018. <https://www.statista.com/topics/2288/languages-in-the-united-kingdom/>
- Lawrence, D. H. *The Rainbow*. [1915] Edited by Mark Kinkad-Weekes. Penguin, 1995.
- Leavis, F. R. *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist*. Penguin, 1964.
- . *The Great Tradition: George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad*. [1948]. Penguin, 1972.
- Lennon, J. Michael. *Norman Mailer: A Double Life*. Simon & Schuster, 2013.
- . *Selected Letters of Norman Mailer*. Edited by J. Michael Lennon. Random House, 2014.
- Lennon, J. Michael, and Donna Pedro Lennon. *Works and Days: Revised, Expanded Edition*. Ed. Gerald R. Lucas. The Norman Mailer Society, 2018.
- Mailer, Norman. *Mind of an Outlaw: Selected Essays*. Ed. Phillip Sipiora. Random House, 2013.
- Malbome, Raymond Gates. "'How to Be': Marlow's Quest in *Lord Jim*." *Twentieth Century Literature*, Vol. 10, No. 4, Jan 1965, pp. 172–180.
- Martel, Jessica, and Zackary Vernon, "'Of Great Gabasidy': Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*." *Journal of Modern Literature* Vol. 38, No.3, Spring 2015, pp. 56–70.
- McCrum, Robert. "The 100 best nonfiction books: No 31—*The Great Tradition* by F. R. Leavis (1948)." *The Guardian*, 29 Aug 2016.
- Meyers, Jeffrey. "Conrad's Influence on Modern Writers." *Twentieth Century Literature*, Vol. 36, No. 2, Summer 1990, pp. 186–206.
- . *Joseph Conrad: A Biography*. Cooper Square, 2001.
- The New English Bible* (NEB). Oxford Study Edition. Oxford, 1976.
- Peters, John G. "Joseph Conrad's 'Sudden Holes' in Time: The Epistemology of Temporality. *Studies in the Novel*, Vol. 32, No. 4, Winter 2000, pp. 420–44.
- Robinson, Roxana. Foreword. *The Best Early Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*. Ed. Bryant Mangum. The Modern Library, 2005, pp. xv–xvi.
- Robson, W. W. Review of *The Great Tradition*. *The Review of English Studies*, Vol 1, No. 4, Oct 1950, pp. 377–380.
- Rogers, Pat, editor. *The Oxford Illustrated History of English Literature*. Oxford UP, 1987.

- Ryf, Robert S. *Joseph Conrad*. Columbia UP, 1970.
- Schwarz, Daniel. "The Journey to Patusan: The Education of Jim and Marlow in Conrad's *Lord Jim*." *Studies in the Novel*, Vol. 4, No. 3, Fall 1972, pp.442–458.
- , editor. *The Secret Sharer* by Joseph Conrad. Bedford, 1997.
- Scott, Robert Ian. "Entropy vs. Ecology in *The Great Gatsby*." *Gatsby*. Major Literary Characters. Ed. Harold Bloom. Chelsea, 1991, pp. 81–92.
- Shulevitz, Judith. "Chasing After Conrad's Secret Agent." *Slate*, 27 Sept. 2001. <https://slate.com/culture/2001/09/chasing-after-conrad-s-secret-agent.html>
- Simmons, Allan H. "'One of Us': Conrad and English Politics and Culture." *Culture*.pl. 27 Sep 2007. <https://culture.pl/en/article/how-joseph-conrad-formed-an-identity-as-an-english-novelist#>
- Stallman, Robert Wooster. "Conrad and *The Great Gatsby*." *Twentieth Century Literature* Vol. 1, No. 1, Apr 1955, pp. 5–12.
- Taylor, Craig. "Literature, Moral Reflection and Ambiguity." *Philosophy*, Vol. 86, No. 335, January 2011, pp. 75–93.
- Vince, Raymond M. "*The Great Gatsby* and the Transformations of Space-Time: Fitzgerald's Modernist Narrative and the New Physics of Einstein." *The F. Scott Fitzgerald Review* Vol. 5, 2006, pp.86–108.
- Watt, Ian. *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century*. U of California P, 1979.
- Watts, Cedric, Introduction and Explanatory Notes. *Heart of Darkness and Other Tales*. Joseph Conrad. Oxford UP, 2002.