

CONRAD AND MASCULINITY

by

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Worship, And The Heroic In History (1841) are entitled 'The Hero as Man of Letters. Johnson, Rousseau, Burns' and 'The Hero as King. Cromwell, Napoleon: Modern Revolutionism' (Carlyle 1993).

If we consider writers like Haggard, Buchan and the *Boy's Own* authors, it is plain that the heroic literature of Conrad's era tends towards something of a revival of the hero as social and normative - and Conrad is often read, on the surface, as roughly continuing in this tradition. However, we have already begun to discover that the view of Conrad as fitting comfortably into the traditional genres of his time is flawed. We often, in fact, find in him something very different from the normative, story-book hero: for instance, the deviant hero taken to an extreme that is Falk. For all his horrific past, Falk has a hugeness and purity of instinct that are not present in the surrounding normal members of civilized society. The standards Hermann evokes to judge Falk are fastidious and petty, and not an equal opposition to the grand scale of Falk's actions:

he wanted to know from Falk how dared he to come and tell him this? Did he think himself a proper person to be sitting in this cabin where his wife and children lived?[....He had never heard] tell of such impudence (178-179).

To talk of 'proper persons' and 'impudence' to a cannibalistic multiple murderer is to take a pea-shooter to a tank: in the end, it is of Falk, not Hermann that the Captain will exclaim - as of a hero - 'What a man!' (180). At the outset, the Captain talks of 'my enemy Falk and my friend Hermann', yet Conrad quite deliberately dissolves and confuses the traditional normative-heroic triad of hero, hero's enemy and hero's

ABSTRACT.

The thesis seeks to demonstrate that Conrad does not fit at all into the manly-heroic tradition which his work is often approached as belonging to. By tracing the entwining of masculine and homoerotic imagery in his major and minor works, as well as in the often neglected late novels, it is possible to discover ample evidence to suggest that he would be more accurately - if somewhat shockingly for critical tradition placed in the tradition of homosexual literature.

Appended to the main body of the thesis is a glossary of homosexual codewords - words that were widely understood to refer to what was then the otherwise unmentionable crime of homosexuality from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This glossary is drawn both from the homosexual prose and poetry of the era, as well as from what evidence we have of wider public usages in contemporary newspapers, court-reports, diaries, letters, etc.. At present, there is no recognition of, or collation of, the vast majority of these words in any dictionary of historical or sexual slang.

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A NOTE ON THE TEXT.

In any quotation from Conrad's writings, dots within square brackets - [...] indicate an omission I have made from Conrad's text; dots not enclosed within square brackets - ... indicate an ellipsis already present in Conrad's text. Conrad's writings are peppered with such ellipses and hence some distinction between his ellipses and my omissions needed to be made. However, as the frequent irruption of such brackets does tend to detract somewhat from a smooth passage for the eye across the page, and as no other writer I quote uses ellipses with anything like Conrad's liberality (hence making any confusion between ellipsis and omission unlikely) I have not pursued this policy with the other writers from whom I quote.

Double quotation-marks within single quotation-marks - "......" , or single quotation-marks within an indented quotation, are used as customarily, to indicate when the material quoted is direct speech within a text. However, once again, Conrad constitutes a special case: many of his novels, or parts of his novels, are presented in the form of lengthy direct-speech narrations by one character (as, for instance, with Marlow's narration of *Heart Of Darkness*). In the case of quotations from a passage spoken by any narrator of a work (or of a substantial part of a work), if the passage forms part of the main body of his narration rather than a conversation taking place within that narration, or a conversational exchange with his listeners I have omitted the extra quotation-marks.

In the Glossary Citations, bold type indicates the word or phrase whose use the quotation is intended to illustrate. An asterisk following a word or phrase elsewhere in the quotation indicates that the word or phrase so marked is itself a homosexual codeword and that it appears

elsewhere in the Glossary. To avoid unnecessary repetition, the quotation in which the asterisked word appears will not always be repeated under the subsequent or previous citations for that word: such repetition only occurs where the use of the original asterisked word is a particularly significant or striking one.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.

For full details of the texts referred to below, see Bibliography under 'Works By Joseph Conrad'.

<i>Folly</i>	<i>Almayer's Folly: A Story Of An Eastern River</i>
<i>Outcast</i>	<i>An Outcast Of The Islands</i>
' <i>Narcissus</i> '	<i>The Nigger Of The 'Narcissus': A Tale Of The Sea</i>
<i>Jim</i>	<i>Lord Jim: A Tale</i>
' <i>Tether</i> '	' <i>The End Of The Tether</i> '
<i>Darkness</i>	<i>Heart Of Darkness</i>
<i>Record</i>	<i>A Personal Record</i>
' <i>Preface</i> ' to <i>Record</i>	' <i>A Familiar Preface</i> ' in <i>A Personal Record</i>
<i>Eyes</i>	<i>Under Western Eyes</i>
<i>Arrow</i>	<i>The Arrow Of Gold: A Story Between Two Notes</i>
<i>Notes</i>	<i>Notes On Life And Letters</i>

I hate set dissertations - and above all things in the world, 'tis one of the silliest things in one of them, to darken your hypothesis by placing a number of tall, opaque words, one before another, in a right line, betwixt your own and your reader's conception - when in all likelihood, if you had looked about, you might have seen something standing, or hanging up, which would have cleared the point at once - 'for what hindrance, hurt, or harm doth the laudable desire of knowledge bring to any man, if even from a sot, a pot, a fool, a stool, a winter-mitten, a truckle for a pully, the lid of a goldsmith's crucible, an oil bottle, an old slipper, or a cane chair?' I am this moment sitting upon one. Will you give me leave to illustrate this affair of wit and judgement, by the two knobs on the top of the back of it?

Lawrence Sterne: *Tristram Shandy*, 3, 20:179.

INTRODUCTION.

Masculinity, Heroism And Conrad.

'Conrad is a *macho* novelist' (Batchelor 1982, 43); 'as masculine as Kipling, but without that parade of masculinity which Kipling loves' (contemporary reviewer, *Manchester Guardian*, quoted, with no further ascription, in Watts 1993, 30); these two comments, separated by a century or so, sum up the unchanging heart of mainstream Conrad criticism: Conrad and masculinity are inextricably linked. Under such a critical view Conrad is 'a writer in the line of Marryatt and Stevenson and Kipling' (Thorburn 1974, 4) and writes, despite 'the complexities of his narrative method' (Hough 1960, 220), simple, manly tales about simple, manly heroes: his is an 'essentially simple, heroic vision' (Hough 1960, 220); he writes of the 'great simple heroic themes' (Bradbrook 1941, 7); he has 'a tendency to discover... heroic possibilities' everywhere (Thorburn 1974, 15). Not surprisingly, then, Conrad's favourite narrator, Marlow, is seen as the essence of this Conradian celebration of manliness: 'Marlow is a generous, virile temperament' (Batchelor 1982, 44); it is his 'maleness, his generous virility' that fills the vacuum of negation surrounding him in *Heart Of Darkness* (Batchelor 1982, 42).

This kind of critical approach to Conrad, as far as it goes (and to do some of the critics I have quoted justice, some of them go a lot further), certainly seems to be supported by the texts themselves. Take Jim, for instance:

an inch, perhaps two, under six feet, powerfully built, and he advanced straight at you with a[...] fixed from-under stare which made you think of a charging bull. His voice was deep, loud (*Jim*, 3);

fair of face, big of frame, with young, gloomy eyes,
he held his shoulders upright (32);

an upstanding, broad-shouldered youth[...] clean-
limbed, clean-faced (40).

He seems to have stepped from the pages of an exemplary narrative of manly heroics; he is the protagonist from any contemporary tale of simple, manly adventure. We might be reminded of Leo Vincey in Haggard's *She*:

he was very tall, very broad, and had a look of power.... a good face as well as a beautiful one....
His forehead broad, and his face... clean-cut
(Haggard 1978, 1, 17);

or Sir Henry Curtis in Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*:

the biggest-chested and longest-armed man I
ever saw.... clear-cut features, and large grey eyes
set deep in his head....
A low deep voice....
His large grey eyes [with].... anxiety in them
(Haggard 1965, 25, 28, 29);

or Sir Walter, in Buchan's *Thirty-Nine Steps*:

he was a huge man....
[with] a square, cleft jaw and broad, lined brow
and the firm folds of cheek.... blue eyes [that]
seemed to go very deep (Buchan 1991, 89, 90).

Many of the plot-elements of Conrad's tales, too, are the stock-in-trade of this kind of simple, manly adventure-story: buried treasure, mutiny, sinister hags, corpses, explosions, smuggling. indeed, Conrad himself, although he detested Buchan as a plagiarist of Kipling's tales¹ is never slow to admit his delight in traditional adventure-literature: at the age of eleven, he declared that all his favourite books were by James

Fenimore Cooper (Green 1984, 36); he surrendered to the spell of Marryatt at an early age and 'never regretted his surrender' (*Notes*, 78).

However, one cannot quote Conrad on his own work for very long, in order to prove that he works in such traditional areas. The writer whose aim it is to be always 'bringing to light the truth' ('Preface to *'Narcissus'*, xxxix) , does not find in the heroic adventure-story much to do with life's truths:

life [is] the incomplete[...] heroism[....] Events crowd and push and nothing happens. You know what I mean. The opportunities do not last long enough. Unless in a boy's book of adventures. Mine were never finished (letter to Garnett, 29 November 1896, quoted in Ingram 1986, 31).

indeed, Conrad, wanting above all to be taken seriously as a writer, becomes rather irritable at comparisons of his writing with the traditional adventure-story:

I have heard[...] that i am regarded [in translation, in Sweden...] as literarily a sort of Jack London[...] One doesn't like to be taken for what one is not (letter to Bendz, 7 March 1923, in Jean-Aubry 1927, 2: 295).

Curle reports that in his last years, Conrad found it 'galling[...] to think that many people who read him in translations regarded him as a blood-and-thunder writer of adventure stories' (1928, 166).

Even those critics most determined to portray Conrad as a writer of simple, manly literature sense that he is nevertheless somehow different. Contemporary reactions ranged from the approving awareness revealed in the addendum 'but without that parade of masculinity that Kipling loves', to downright disapproval: 'a feeling of disappointment that what promises to be a tale of sturdy adventure in an unfamiliar and picturesque world, should turn into a long-drawn

story of despair is natural enough' (anonymous review of *Folly, The Sketch*, ii, 1895, 314, quoted in Thorburn 1974, 10). Conrad himself uses the term 'homo duplex' (letter to Waliszewski, 5 December 1903, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 3:89) to describe himself - and this split, this idea of two men in one, of the double writer, is picked up by many later critics : Ingram sums up in his reference to Conrad's ability to achieve 'the rendering of the material of adventure in a way that brings out quite other features than the adventurous' (Ingram 1986, 8). Conrad's psychological interests, his determination to touch on the dark side, do not belong to the writer of plain heroic adventure stories. What is happening in Conrad's exploration of masculinity and heroism is something more complex than in the usual run of such stories, then. I want to discover what this is; but before attempting that, it is necessary to have some understanding of the social, cultural and literary milieu, in which his thought and work took shape.²

The Edwardian Background: Reason, Confidence And Doubt.

Conrad firmly declares, 'I am *modern*' (letter to Blackwood, 31 May 1902, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 2:418); Watts describes him more accurately (with the benefit of hindsight) as an 'intermediary between the Romantic and Victorian traditions and the innovations of Modernism' (1993,184). Certainly Conrad was writing in an era aware of - and insistent on its own transitional status, in a way that would not have occurred to, say, Dickens half a century earlier. H. G. Wells' comment in 1911 is typical:

we live... in a period of adventurous and insurgent thought, in an intellectual spring unprecedented in the world's history. There is an enormous criticism going on of the faiths upon which men's lives and associations are based, and of every standard and

rule of conduct (1914, quoted in Edel and Ray 1958, 147).

The publication of Darwin's *On The Origin Of Species* in 1859 hastened what was later seen as the disappearance of God: 'nothing seemed real to the moods of that time. It was a world of lost or faded beliefs' (Wells 1920, 597, writing of the years around 1913). As Ellmann (1973, 120) notes, the capitalized word for the Edwardians (and beyond) is now no longer 'God' but 'Life': 'Life, for ever dying to be born afresh, for ever young and eager, will presently stand upon this earth as upon a footstool, and stretch out its realm amidst the stars' (Wells 1920, 608) - Life has taken on the prerogative of Biblical hyperbole.

This latter quotation from Wells could not for a moment be mistaken for something from Conrad, yet it is nevertheless the familiar, non-fictional face presented to the public, of the literary milieu Conrad was working in. However, the fiction of the era, as we shall see, often seems to erupt from somewhere beneath this public stance of ebullient optimism:

at any rate, you will say, it betrayed him in the end. But did it betray him? There you touch the inmost mystery of these dreamers, these men of vision and the imagination. We see our world fair and common, the hoarding and the pit. By our daylight standard he walked out of security into darkness, danger and death.

But did he see it like that?

The dark uncertainty here could well, at first glance, be something from, say, the end of *Lord Jim*. It is in fact the H. G. Wells (1906b, 183) of the earlier scientific hyperbole. The Edwardian era is nothing if not complex, janus-faced.

With God gone, concepts such as truth and knowledge became open to question. Responding to and continuing this process, writers

like Wells, Bennett and Galsworthy promoted an analytical mode of life, operating (as far as possible) beyond culture altogether: Bellamy has described the Edwardians as 'post cultural' (1971, 9); Eagleton is perhaps more accurate (although only because it is to an extent true of any era) when he says that the Edwardians were 'incapable either of embracing, or transcending, the [late Victorian] society to which they represented a critical reaction, and yet with which they shared a common basis of assumptions' (1970, 14).

This tendency towards analysing culture, life and thought was only increased by the flourishing of psychiatry and the psychoanalytic approach (as popularly disseminated - for instance, the idea of reading the arts as pathological symptoms), both of which were hailed at this time as methods of analytical certainty. However, with the vogue for an a-cultural, analytic approach, came the anxious possibility of analysing oneself out of a belief in anything at all. Conrad's Decoud is certainly not alone in the uneasy intimation that any love, for another human being, that can be analysed as separate is not a real love at all:

even his passionate devotion to Antonia into which he had worked himself up out of the depths of his scepticism had lost all appearance of reality (*Nostramo*, 267).

Decoud's sense of dissociation finds echo more than once among Conrad's men³ and turn of the century literature as a whole is littered with the cast-adrift and alienated⁴.

Perhaps as an attempt to escape such fearful results of wielding the analytical tool, the popularity of the Freudian analytical technique also stimulated interest in the actual dream-material analysed: even so organized a thinker as Wells speaks with zest of 'peering into remote

and mysterious worlds ruled by an order logical indeed but other than our common sanity (1911, iv, quoted in Bellamy 1971, 31) and he is sufficiently influenced by the vogue for the irrational as even to be able to suggest approvingly that Edwardian society is

on the eve of man's final emancipation from rigid reasonableness, from the last trace of the trim clockwork thought of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (1891, 111, quoted in Bellamy 1971, 61).

Conrad, then, was not at all unusual in his interest in extreme states of mind. The literary alternative to the highly analytical approach to Edwardian cultural anxiety was to go to the other extreme - fantasy. Bellamy feels that the flourishing of the short story in this era is no coincidence: 'the massive centre of fiction, the submerged bulk, was made up of a wide range of quasi-daydreams' (1971, 27). Wells certainly did some of his finest work in this area, and one only has to think as far as the dream-like weirdnesses of 'The Secret Sharer' or 'The Inn Of The Two Witches', to see how true Bellamy's statement is for Conrad.

However, fantasy was not enough to allow late Victorian and Edwardian society to outrun a cultural anxiety that the human 'sense of an ending' (Showalter 1990, 2, quoting Kermode) seems to project most powerfully at the end of a century. Spengler's *Decline Of The West* (1914) and Nordau's theory of degeneration (*Degeneration*, 1891)⁵ influenced late nineteenth and early twentieth century pessimism about the state of mankind:

in our days there have arisen in more highly-developed minds vague qualms of a Dusk of the Nations, in which all suns and all stars are gradually waning, and mankind with all its institutions and

creations is perishing in the midst of a dying world
(Nordau 1993, 2)

Nordau saw humanity as in decline, finding in 'the fin-de-siècle disposition... two well-defined conditions of disease... viz. degeneration (degeneracy) and hysteria' (1993, 15). Lombroso's gloomy linking of creativity with insanity, *The Man Of Genius* (1891), was similarly influential, and discussions on the (supposedly) disproportionate rise in the rates of suicide and insanity became widespread (Stokes 1989, 116-143): Conrad's numerous literary suicides and perhaps even his own (rather half-hearted (Meyers 1991, 43-44)) suicide attempt, seen in this context, are not as remarkable as they might have been, say, half a century earlier.

It would, however, be misleading to suggest that pessimism was universal, in an era when thinkers as far removed from one another as Wells and Chesterton could share a deep vein of optimism, even if, in the case of the former, and many of his fellow Utopianists, the optimism was of a kind that actually sprang from gloom about the present state of affairs:

through all the world spreads the suspicion that this scheme of things might be re-made, and re-made better, and that our present evils need not be....

A time when all... good things will be for all men may be coming more nearly than we think. Each one who believes that brings the good time nearer; each heart that fails delays it (Wells 1920, 597-8, 608).

Conrad was not to be so easily encouraged. Optimism is a quality not at all apparent in his fictional works (although its shadow as fashionable mode of expression is perhaps more visible in the jauntiness of tone that surfaces in much of his non-fictional work⁶). Ultimately for Conrad, a happy belief in 're-making', in 'progress', can do no more

than sound impressive - and beg the question: progress towards what? Against the Utopian belief that 'if the world does not please you, *you can change it*' (Wells 1910, 283, quoted in Bellamy 1971, 137), Conrad might place the opening pages of *Heart Of Darkness*, where 'progress' is seen as potentially circular: the Roman soldier and the modern colonist, the civilized Thames and the undeveloped Congo, are dangerously close. And the Thames, famously, seems to lead off only 'into the heart of an immense darkness' (121).

Moments of absolute darkness and explorations of its effects on men occur with an almost liturgical frequency in Conrad, and Edwardian pessimism generally seems to find some special release in images of utter darkness. Conrad himself associates this phenomenon with, amongst other things, the current awareness of cultural transition: 'the discovery of new values in life is a very chaotic experience; there is a tremendous amount of jostling and confusion and a momentary feeling of darkness' ('Author's Note' to *Outcast*, 7). Wells sums up the Edwardians' heightened sense of the unknown with an image of darkness not wholly unlike some of Conrad's:

science is a match that man has just got alight. He thought he was in a room in moments of devotion a temple - and that his light would be reflected and pillars carved with philosophical systems wrought into harmony. It is a curious sensation, now that the preliminary splutter is over and the flame burns up clear, to see his hands lit and just a glimpse of himself and the patch he stands on visible, and around him, in place of all that human comfort and beauty he anticipated darkness still (1891, 111, quoted in Bellamy 1971, 61-62).

Wells's 'In The Avu Observatory' (1894, 241-249) and 'The Red Room' (1896, 502-512) are fictional explorations of the same fear⁷. Forster is still

grappling with the same problem in 1924, in the darkness of his Marabar Caves (1983, 137-164).

In an era dominated by such uncertainty, Conrad is distinctive only in degree his doubt occasionally peaking in episodes of near-madness:

I am paralysed by doubt and have just sense enough to feel the agony but am powerless to invent a way out of it[....] It is as if something in my head had given way to let in a cold grey mist. I knock about blindly in it till I am positively, physically sick[...]| ask myself whether I am breaking up mentally[....]

Everything seems so abominably stupid. You see *the belief* is not in me - and without the belief the brazen thick-headed, thick-skinned immovable belief nothing good can be done (letter to Garnett, 5 August 1896, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990,1: 296-297).

Edwardian Doubt: Literature And Uncertainty.

An air of certainty does occasionally surface in Edwardian literature a practical certainty as to what social measures should be undertaken for the advancement of mankind. Bellamy goes too far when he disqualifies the literature of social certainty from the realms of art altogether, but he nevertheless manages to convey the sensation produced by many lesser Edwardian novels:

the post-1900 fiction of Wells, Bennett and Galsworthy is still perhaps responding too directly to sensed crisis to be 'great art' or even 'art' at all. Virginia Woolf said that after reading their books she felt that she ought to finish the process by joining a society or writing a cheque (1971, 23).

However, even this certainty is uneasily founded, like the period's fragile optimism, on an underlying sense of anxiety. More often, though, the gloomy (albeit invigoratingly gloomy) effect of thinkers such as Nietzsche, in particular, on Conrad and his literary

contemporaries is more direct: the literature of the period is marked by a newly-vivid awareness of the hollowness at the heart of thought, society and man. Henry James's tale, 'The Middle Years', is, as Bellamy notes, full of phrases that seem to convey the uncertain essence of the fin-de-siècle effort at literary production for any writer: the writer works in 'this dark void'; his writing is 'the completion of a sinister process', dogged by 'the sense of ebbing time'; he has soon 'forgotten what his book was about' (James 1893, 55, quoted in Bellamy 1971, 33-34). Thus, Muir distinguishes the Edwardian from the Victorian novel specifically because the Edwardian is 'less ambitious, less comprehensive' (1979, 116) less expansive and less convinced of its ability to contain and convey the fullness of human experience: indeed, human experience may be full of nothing at all - the universe as 'a tragic accident' and hence 'nothing matters' (Conrad, letter to Cunninghame Graham, 20 December 1897, in Kari and Davies 1983-1990, 1:425).

It is in these ways that the turn of the century's consciousness of flux, and its uncertainty, penetrate even into the underlying literary approach of the time. Gissing, for instance, can turn the doubt-induced loss of confidence of the Edwardian novel into a newly acquired literary virtue:

Thackeray and Dickens wrote at enormous length... their plan is to tell everything and leave nothing to be divined. Far more artistic, I think, is the latter method of merely suggesting (letter to Algernon Gissing, August 1885, quoted in Showalter 1990, 16).

Conrad is a novelist of the half-spoken, the suggestive, the obscure, but so - albeit often to a lesser extent - are his contemporaries. Symons summed the situation up when he wrote in 1898 'we have no longer the mental attitude of those to whom a story was but a story' (quoted,

with no further ascription, in White 1981, 5): literature was no longer founded on the twin Victorian pillars of clarity and realism. White has traced how this came about partly through what happened when the new sciences of psychology and psychoanalysis were applied specifically to literature. Thinkers like Nordau and Lombroso popularised the practice of connecting the psychological condition of a writer with his literary productions. Arthur Machen voices the trend: 'I am strangely inclined to think that all the quintessence of art is distilled from the sub-conscious and not the conscious self' (1902, 120, quoted in White 1981, 48). As a result, the twin practices of what might be termed psychoanalytic (or 'symptomatic', as White calls it) reading and writing grew up, each stimulating the other:

the author was suddenly placed at a disadvantage by the sophistication in reader response, he became vulnerable to a certain kind of knowing smile which found in his words the insufficiently disguised evidence of his most intimate preoccupations (White 1981, 45).

The only response was to write partially in expectation of such a reading (and White (1981, 9) specifies *Heart Of Darkness* as a novel doing just that) and to adopt a literary 'deflective strategy and enigmatic method' (White 1981, 54). Writers such as James, Meredith, Lawrence, Wilde, Machen and Woolf did exactly this.

An anxiety about society's knowledge of one's 'most intimate preoccupations' brings us to the whole question of social and literary freedom and repression at this time and in particular, the repressions surrounding that most 'intimate' of Victorian and Edwardian 'preoccupations' sexuality. Sexual repression is fundamental to the wider repressions (and to the ambiguities) of the time and this whole area is vital to the study of Edwardian literature because although the

relationship between freedom and repression is, of course, specific to any age – at this time, the two hung briefly in so strange and convoluted a relationship that they strongly marked both surrounding thought and modes of literary expression.

Some easing of the Victorian silence on sexual matters had begun by the end of the nineteenth century. Wells was able to write, in 1906: 'the great terror of the eighties and early nineties that crushed all reasonable discussion of sexual relationships is, I believe, altogether over' (1906a, 39, quoted in Batchelor 1982, 120) – but perhaps he was a little too optimistic. A conflict between repressive and liberating attitudes continued throughout this period and in some ways only increased in violence even as what Hynes calls 'the Edwardian sexual revolution' (1991, 171) got fully under way.

The effects of uncertainty, the impact of psychoanalysis and the tension between freedom and repression ensured that writers were now highly aware of the dark material in their minds, which they and their audiences were beginning to understand and to need to communicate, but it was nevertheless still socially unacceptable to speak of such things directly. Obscurity was the result. Obscurity is protective, the 'linguistic defence of vulnerable offenders against public codes' (White 1981, 36). If a writer does not say something openly, he can not be vilified for it: Symons suggests that it might be 'the finest epitaph for a self-respecting man of letters to be able to say, even after the writing of many books: I have kept my secret, I have not betrayed myself to the multitude' (1898, 678, quoted in White 1981, 53). But the need for obscurity runs deeper than this. The remnants of Victorian repression linger in the writer's own mind as well as in society. If a writer does not say something openly, he does not have fully to know it himself – there are some things he may prefer to hide even from

himself. Thus at this time a writer's public work became also his most private secret:

'And now you quite like it,' I risked.
 'My work?'
 'Your secret. It's the same thing.'
 'Your guessing that,' Vereker replied, 'is a proof
 that you're as clever as I say' (James 1896, 283,
 quoted in White 1981, 51).

A text which is still a text - that is, still disclosing something but which yet contains a secret - something not to be disclosed - must involve a certain amount of deception - whether merely disguise or actual untruth. Once again, Edwardian thought and literature coincide on this matter: Nietzsche, Ibsen, Strindberg, Mallarmé, Maeterlinck - all make 'an extraordinarily consistent linkage' between "'necessary" deceptions, unconscious drives and social convention' (White 1981, 69); Edwardian literature is threaded through with an almost obsessive awareness of the lies necessary to keep a hollow society going. It is the necessary social lie that sits at the heart of *The Nigger Of The 'Narcissus'*: the crew eagerly participates in Wait's fiction of wilful malingering, to avoid the horrible truth of the unwillied, uncontrolled illness that is killing him, and the knowledge that this would bring home to them all of their own impotence before fate. Their loyalty to this lie is what prevents the social disintegration of the group. This concept of the necessary lie echoes throughout the literature of the early part of the century: White lists Marlow, Wait, Razumov, Clara Middleton, Diana Merion, Rose Joceiyne, Natalia Radnor, Maggie Verver, Kate Croy, Densher, Strether and Milly Theale as just some of the characters that find themselves forced to embrace a lie while simultaneously attempting to tell the truth (1981, 62). Obscurity avoids the awful necessity of the direct lie - White shows how Edwardian writers flocked to emulate the behaviour

of James's Peter Brench, of whom 'it was nowhere on record that he had... on any occasion and in any embarrassment, either lied or spoken the truth' (1900, 93, quoted in White 1981, 67).

With lies and secrecy must come duality: the gap between the public and the private, between the allowed speakable and the forbidden unspeakable. Miller notes a revival of duality in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century:

during these years, which are sometimes mistaken for the inaugural years of the subject, [there is] a hunger for pseudonyms, masks, new identities[;].... the single life was found to harbour two' (1987, 209).

The double man is a central figure in the literature of the period: Machen, Stevenson, James, Meredith all, like Conrad, are ineluctably drawn to examine the concept of the 'homo duplex'.

Duality, too, often lies at the centre of the Edwardian novel's construction - the central fact is often carefully avoided, as with Kurtz's 'horror' and unspeakable rites, or Amerigo and Charlotte's affair in *The Golden Bowl* and Milly Theale's unopened letter to Merton Densher in *The Wings Of The Dove*. Such a deliberate avoidance of narrative certainty soon begins to exclude the kind of reader that expects it: already we are approaching the possibility of a work written with perhaps two different audiences in mind - the mass and the initiate. Indeed, in James's 'The Figure In The Carpet', Vereker's novels are specifically only 'for the initiated' (1896, 282). There was already considerable concern at the end of the nineteenth century about the gap that was forming between mass culture and high culture (a problem that the Victorian writers such as Thackeray, Dickens, Collins, and Eliot - simultaneously popular and critically highly esteemed - had not encountered.) The idea of some kind of dual audience, then,

whether divided in this way, or another, is certainly not alien to Edwardian culture. Writing that is for a dual audience, each reading the work in a slightly different way, will probably involve some duality of language too: indeed, some degree of such linguistic duality is automatically presupposed in the symptomatic writing and reading so common at this time. White goes so far as to say that 'the antagonism between an inner and outer language which results from defensive introversion is of paramount importance in the period' (1981, 36). In a writer as simultaneously evasive yet truth-oriented as Conrad, it seems likely that we shall find some such linguistic dualities. (For a more detailed examination of one area of linguistic duality, see the Glossary.)

The Edwardian novel, both in narrative-structure and in language, is frequently avoiding a central secret fact. Given that the Victorian idea of the unspeakable was so often the sexual, it is not surprising to find that the avoided central fact is often a specifically sexual fact. White's analysis of James is accurate in its specific details (about voyeurism and intrigue) concerning James, and in its general approach it also indicates the kind of effect that occurs in other writers of the period:

the work shows in its form what it cannot say, and it is the silence of the unsaid which gives it its existence. James could never say 'I have a voyeuristic fascination for sexual intrigue which I mediate into the most refined and sophisticated forms of discourse,' but the novels and stories obliquely show this again and again (1981, 28).

Edwardian Manliness, Edwardian Homosexuality.

Concepts of manliness and of male heroism were in an unprecedented state of flux in the Edwardian era: Dellamora speaks of a 'crisis of masculinity' (1990, 194) at this time and Gagnier emphasises

the all-embracing nature of this crisis: 'a crisis... of the male on all levels - economic, political, social, psychological, as producer, as power, as role, as lover' (1986, 98, quoted in Showalter 1990, 9). The Victorian age had passed on its emphasis on the importance of being manly, but not the relatively stable social and religious bedrock on which to build such manliness: 'one of the persistent, shared intuitions of the major Edwardians is that the modern world is inhospitable to heroism' (Batchelor 1982, 23). Even in the most conservative areas, the ideal of manliness was undergoing change: Springhall notes

a basic shift in the concept of manliness during the second half of the nineteenth century and after, moving away from the strenuous moral earnestness and religion of Dr. Thomas Arnold, headmaster of Rugby from 1827-1839, to a much greater emphasis on athleticism and patriotism (Springhall, in Mangan and Walvin 1987, 61).

And he underestimates it - even patriotism was no longer a safe ground for masculinity: with imperial policy now under question from writers as diverse as Lawrence, Conrad and even the apparently staunch imperialist, Kipling, the kind of manliness needed for empire was also now under sceptical re-examination. The hollowness of manhood that Conrad finds in imperial types like Kurtz is often discovered by his contemporaries, too - such as D. H. Lawrence, in *The Rainbow* (1915), for example:

'It's about the most serious business there is, fighting.... You either kill or get killed - and I suppose it is serious enough, killing....

'I would fight for the nation'....

'It seems to me,' she answered, 'as if you weren't anybody - as if there weren't anybody there, where you are. Are you anybody, really? You seem like nothing to me' (Lawrence 1983, 356-357).

Given the flourishing of the psychological preoccupation with motive, wider-reaching concerns with manliness tended to devolve onto questions involving male sexuality. This was, in the Victorian era, already 'an area of deep anxiety' (Hampson 1992, 28), and by the turn of the century, the masculine role in the sexual régime was under increasing stress from the political upheavals surrounding women: the concept of the New Woman and the Suffragist movement were both received with considerable anxiety by many Edwardian men, as was made apparent in the literary world by the violent reaction ('alarmed and offended' (Hynes 1991, 198)) that greeted Wells's novel about a New Woman, *Ann Veronica*, in 1909. Hardy's portrayal of another New Woman, Sue Bridehead in *Jude The Obscure*, had created a similar furore in 1896, and her character highlighted the shifting and blurring of sexual roles that was beginning: George Gissing referred to the 1880's and 1890's as decades of 'sexual anarchy' (quoted, with no further ascription, in Showalter 1990, 3); men and women were no longer as clearly sexually separated and identified as they had been:

A new fear my bosom vexes;
To-morrow there may be no sexes!
Unless, as end to all the pother,
Each one in fact becomes the other (*Punch*, 27
April 1895, 203, quoted in Schmidgall 1994, 210)

As this quotation suggests, it was not shifts only in women's perceptions and expectations that challenged the male sexual role. A number of highly publicised sexual scandals involving men, during the 1890's, ensured that questions of masculinity and masculine sexual behaviour were suddenly under intense scrutiny. As Dellamora notes, 'scandals provide a point at which gender roles are publicly, even spectacularly, encoded and enforced' (1990, 194) and as neither the objects of this public attention nor the public themselves were ready to

accept and agree on such coding passively, the scandals inevitably produced, as a by-product, a 'public contest over the meaning of masculinity' taking place 'in the press and courts' throughout the 1890's (1990, 193-194). Showalter usefully sums up the widespread upheaval:

by the 1890's... the system of patriarchy was under attack not only by women, but also by an avant-garde of male artists, sexual radicals, and intellectuals, who challenged its class structures and roles, its system of inheritance and primogeniture, its compulsory heterosexuality and marriage, and its cultural authority (1990, 11).

Before we can understand the effects of such convulsions on the literary world, though, we need to establish the underlying ideals of Edwardian masculinity, in society and literature, against which such upheavals took place.

For the reactionary majority, then, Edwardian thought (or, more often, unconscious assumption) about masculinity was merely sunk more deeply into its conservative position by the surrounding turmoil of general uncertainty: God might have gone, but some things were too sacred for a gentleman to question. The traditional ideals of manliness that were the backdrop for Conrad's exploration of masculinity are evident in the pronouncements of those whose job it was to form gentlemen – the public-school masters, working in what Tolson has described as an atmosphere of 'obsessive masculinity' (1977, 35-36, quoted in Roper and Tosh 1991, 15). This latter description is lent credibility by the almost mantra-like invocation of the sacred word in the title of a regular *Boy's Own Paper* feature of the 1890's: 'Some Manly Words For Boys By Manly Men' (quoted, with no further ascription, in Springhall, in Mangan and Walvin 1987, 66). G. G. Heywood is typical:

the ideal boy is the one who makes the most of his natural gifts of mind and body... a boy who can work hard and play hard... yet behind all this he possesses the virtues and characteristics which we all associate with a Christian gentleman. He is unselfish, modest, frank and honourable and although he does his best to conceal it, he has a foundation of true religion (quoted in Mangan, in Mangan and Walvin 1987, 136);

or the Reverend H. W. Moss, headmaster of Shrewsbury:

the public schoolboy... is as manly, as public-spirited, as devoted a lover of justice and fair-play,... as honourable and straightforward as those who have gone before him (quoted, with no further ascription, in Mangan, in Mangan and Walvin 1987, 136).

The emphases are on action and work: 'all we can do is to learn how to do our work... and never to be afraid of anything' (Kipling 1988, 76) an attitude which finds a (hazy kind of) reflection in Marlow's upriver concerns with both these issues in *Heart Of Darkness*.

The turn of the century man, exemplified by Baden-Powell's scout who 'Smiles and Whistles under all circumstances' (1908, 49), was also taught to scorn emotions:

a public school[boy].... will learn... the power... of a hard coarse temperament and he will discover the immunities which a light heart and a thick skin confer on their possessors. He will learn how to go through life without undertaking what he is not fit for, without repining at what cannot be helped (Fitzjames Stephens, *Edinburgh Review* 107: 217, quoted in Mangan, in Mangan and Walvin 1987, 139).

Intelligence, too, is often seen as a hindrance to true manliness: Conrad's unreflecting heroes like Singleton find their counterparts amongst Kipling's soldiers and engineers. Spirituality is viewed as,

though pardonable, rather effeminate: muscular Christianity - or, as its chief proponent, Charles Kingsley, preferred to call it, 'manly Christianity' was the only proper religion for the truly masculine gentleman. But the body was as vital as the soul: from public-school 'blood' to imperial war-hero, muscular masculinity was prized. Conrad's lingering descriptions of strongly-built male physiques have their counterparts throughout much of the literature of the period, from Haggard to Lawrence. After the previous era's humiliating defeat in the Boer War, ideals of manliness were more greatly concerned with the qualities needed to sustain an empire. Hence the stress on the public-school's ability to inculcate the boys' 'capacity to govern others and control themselves, their aptitude for combining freedom with order, their public spirit, their vigour and manliness of character' (schools report, quoted in Bristow 1991, 67). The opening declarations of Baden Powell's digest of manliness in the making, *Scouting For Boys* follow the same ideal: 'every boy ought to learn how to shoot and to obey orders, else he is no more good when war breaks out than an old woman' (1908, 3, quoted in Mackenzie, in Mangan and Walvin 1987, 176);

all are... real *men* in every sense of the word...they understand living out in the jungles, and they can find their way anywhere... strong and plucky, and ready to face any danger, and always keen to help each other. They are accustomed to take their lives in their hands, and to fling them down without hesitation if they can help their country by doing so (1908, 1-2, quoted in Bristow 1991, 170).

This same ideal lies behind the literary popularity of the imperial adventurer at the turn of the century, in Rider Haggard's stories, A. E. W. Mason's *The Broken Road* and Buchan's *Prester John*, for example. The Edwardian empire was seen as 'a place where adventures took place

and men became heroes' (Green 1979, 37). Such, then, are the attitudes against which a Jim must measure himself.

In the public-school idea of 'forming' gentlemen, though, a nasty double-bind is revealed (and one that, to a lesser extent, still dogs concepts of masculinity). Manliness is the only natural way - anything unmanly is stigmatized as unnatural - but at the same time, true manliness does not arise naturally, but must be striven for: 'a man can hardly ever assume he has become a man' (Norman Mailer, quoted in Schwenger 1984, 17); 'despite the myths of omnipotent manhood which surround us, masculinity is never fully possessed, but must perpetually be achieved, asserted, and renegotiated' (Roper and Tosh 1991, 18). This paradox of a natural manliness that must actually be learned recurs throughout the turn of the century literature of masculinity:

God made men to be men....

We badly need some training for our lads if we are to keep up manliness in our race instead of lapsing into a nation of soft, sloppy, cigarette suckers (Baden-Powell 1922, 11-28, quoted in Warren, in Mangan and Walvin 1987, 203).

And of course, in the Edwardian atmosphere of 'obsessive masculinity', these very problematic achievements and assertions of masculinity were all the more vigorously expected and enforced: it was considered to be a man's own fault if he did not achieve true manliness. Thus, the *Boy's Own Paper* is full of exhortations as to what a boy must do 'if he wants to become a real man' (1909, 286). Another magazine editorial typifies the mood of the time:

in these days of cheap education, cheap standard literature, of cadet volunteer corps, cricket-clubs and gymnasia; in these days when even with unaided self-help you may achieve such

wonders, it is your own fault if you do not grow up wise and strong men... with these bright examples before you, brave boys, let your motto ever be 'Excelsior!' onwards and upwards (quoted in Bristow 1991, 33).

No wonder, after all this, that the whole subject was fraught with particular anxiety for a boy - and approvingly assumed to be so by his older male mentors:

there is probably no feeling so deeply rooted in a public school, none so common alike to the highest and lowest form, as the wish to be accounted manly.... Nothing that sends the glow of satisfaction tingling through your veins so much as the thought that your companions, or those who are near you, think you conspicuous for manliness (*Boy's Own Paper* 1894, quoted, with no further ascription, in Springhall, in Mangan and Waivin 1987, 65).

The Edwardian obsession with manliness expressed itself in the literary arena with the powerful resurgence of the manly novel written for men: after what was seen as the extended predominance of women in the novel from Jane Austen to George Eliot, a 'concerted movement amongst conservatives' (Bristow 1991, 118) arose, to reclaim romance for men :

in place of the heterosexual romance of courtship, manners and marriage that had been the specialty of women writers, male critics and novelists extolled the masculine... 'romance' of adventure and quest (Showalter 1990, 79).

Stevenson and Haggard were in the forefront of this movement, as Koestenbaum shows (1989, 143-177), and Conrad's desire to join in this reclamation is evident in his highly romantic and almost exclusively male-populated collaboration with Ford, *Romance*. In general, the Conradian novel's tendency to ignore women (with a few carefully

planned exceptions, like *Chance*) is a common literary phenomenon of the era. Only stories with little or no female involvement could be truly manly: Stevenson carefully noted about the success of his first adventure-story, 'women were excluded' (1985, 195). Haggard firmly dedicated *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) only to 'all the big and little boys who read it' (1965, 5); Conrad, if a little more exclusive in his imagined audience, is still as single-minded concerning their sex writing of his being published in *Blackwood's Magazine* (affectionately known as *Maga*) he notes that it gives him a 'good sort of public': 'there isn't a single club and messroom and man-of-war in the British Seas and Dominions which hasn't its copy of *Maga*' (letter to Pinker, November 1911, quoted in Watt 1979, 131). Critics expected no differently: Kipling is praised for putting

women in their place, whether the kitchen or the drawing-room. And because he does so, the woman who appreciates any but his stories of children is a rarity (Frankau 1928, quoted in Green 1971, 365)).

This latter quotation also illustrates the effect of the obsession with manliness on Edwardian literary attitudes to the female. Any definition is enhanced by an 'other' to define itself against and, as Roper and Tosh (1991, 1) point out, Edwardian masculinity is no exception to this rule. In a manly universe, the ultimate other is woman.

Any hint of effeminacy in a man is shunned and abhorred by the masculine rubrics of the early twentieth century: the *Boy's Own Paper* enjoins its readership to scorn the

sort of boy... who has probably been badly fed from his infancy, and who has consequently become nervous and namby-pamby. This sort... is often a perfect little self-conscious coward at heart, and will readily do whatever bigger boys tell

him - be it good or bad (*Boy's Own Paper* 1909, 351).

Male portrayals of women themselves seek to emphasise, in a suitably 'manly' fashion, women's extreme and dangerous otherness. Conrad has often been criticized for his female characters, but his attitudes, and his difficulties, in this area are typical of much literature of the period. The Victorian view of woman as both other and weaker than man, and hence available to be both despised and cherished, continued into the Edwardian era, and nowhere more so than in the literature of imperial adventure: what else is an empire but the 'other' to be overcome, writ large?; 'the association of African darkness with European female sexuality was a nineteenth-century commonplace' (Bristow 1991, 134). Haggard, like many of his contemporaries, 'equates whiteness with male power, and blackness with female weakness' (Bristow 1991, 133). However, for him, as for others, it proves very difficult to keep these hierarchies in place - as demonstrated by the unnervingly dominant native females, She and Gagool; the same difficulty is vividly present in Conrad's *Heart Of Darkness*, with the feminine wilderness that constantly threatens to overwhelm the men who have come to subdue it (e.g. 61), or Kurtz's native Mistress, more warlike and threatening than any of the males, white or black, around her (e.g. 101).

As a result of all this, then, the Edwardian ambivalence towards women - simultaneously cherished, despised, feared - is particularly strong: Conrad is not alone in the strangely equivocal attitude indeed, the often barely-concealed hatred that his work displays towards his women. Batchelor's appraisal of Galsworthy's eponymous Jocelyn (1898) (Galsworthy 1976) irresistably recalls Conrad's Mrs. Travers: Jocelyn may be 'ostensibly an irresistably feminine and passive

victim', yet she actually 'comes over as frigid and sexually cruel' (Batchelor 1982, 186-187). Repeatedly, the Edwardian literary hero is attracted to, even dependent on, woman, yet must be, and is, repelled by her too, for the sake of the survival of his masculinity: 'while mummy, matron and the maids serviced [a boy's]... physical and emotional needs, the achievement of manhood depended on a disparagement of the feminine, without and within' (Roper and Tosh 1991, 13). Lingard's experience with Mrs Travers and Heyst's fears about Lena both find echo - even to the recurrent metaphors of flood-tide and drowning - in Lawrence's Will Brangwen:

he clung to [Anna]... fiercely and abjectly.

And she beat him off, she beat him off. Where could he turn, like a swimmer in a dark sea, beaten off from his hold, whither could he turn? He wanted to leave her, he wanted to be able to leave her. For his soul's sake, for his manhood's sake, he must be able to leave her.

But for what? She was the ark, and the rest of the world was flood (Lawrence 1983, 228)⁸.

The literature of the early twentieth century, then, is littered with anxious portraits by men of supposed 'heroines' who are actually rather fearsome, terrifying in their unconscious but utter power over men. Thus, perhaps Conrad has been rather unfortunate - often critically reviled for attitudes towards women that in other writers are accepted, or even valued, as central to their art: Kurtz's Intended shares everything - saving only the explicitness of the description - with Lawrence's Ursula Brangwen:

Ursula... was the awful, arrogant queen of life, as if she were a queen bee on whom all the rest depended. He saw the yellow flare in her eyes, he knew the unthinkable overweening assumption of primacy in her. She was unconscious of it herself. She was only too ready to knock her head on the

ground before a man. But this was only when she was so certain of her man, that she could worship him as a woman worships her own infant, with a worship of perfect possession.

It was intolerable, this possession at the hands of woman
(Lawrence 1972, 270-271).

It is not a long step from such ideas of a woman who can damage one's manhood, to images - again, such as we find in Conrad of the woman as castrator: such images have appeared throughout literary history, with varying intensity, and the beginning of the twentieth century is no exception. Even so straightforward a narrator of adventure-tales as Rider Haggard has Allan Quatermain rendered 'impotent' by the 'overpowering' encounter with the feminine in *Sheba's Breasts* (1965, 80- 81); even Shaw has his anxiously-named *Undershaft* and *Shotover*, both dominated by women; in writers more symbolically inclined in the first place - Hardy, James, Lawrence and Forster - castratory images are vivid and frequent: Conrad is not alone.

Of course, as we might begin to deduce from the scorn directed at male effeminacy, the second 'other' that Edwardian manliness chose to define itself against (like manliness in many eras) was homosexuality⁹ - forms of male to male sexual behaviour that deviated from the patriarchal majority's idea of the heterosexual norm.

But being the defining 'other' can have a paradoxical effect on the despised group: as Weeks points out, the Edwardian restriction of acceptable sex to heterosexual sex 'does not indicate an ignoring of [homosexuality]... ; rather it underlines the growing concern with it. As Edward Carpenter [himself a homosexual] put it in 1908 "the subject has great actuality and is pressing upon us from all sides"' (Weeks 1990, 47, quoting Carpenter 1952, 9). Havelock Ellis makes a similar point about the homosexual persecution of 1895, noting that it had

generally contributed to give definiteness and self-consciousness to the manifestations of homosexuality, and to have aroused inverts to take up a definite attitude (Ellis 1928, 352).

Awareness of homosexuality, both as a term and as a concept, was of relatively recent genesis. In 1885, the Criminal Law Amendment Act outlawed sexual relations - acts of 'gross indecency' between men, but before the 1890's, there was in Britain

no conception of the homosexual as a type of person. Sexual relations between men were defined [solely] in terms of activity - buggery or sodomy - which were punishable by death until 1836 (Bristow 1991, 82).

Sexological research was, by the last two decades of the nineteenth century, beginning to produce various accounts of the 'male deviant', and indeed, within homosexual circles, the late 'eighties and early 'nineties marked a flourishing in homosexual awareness: 'by the 1880's... the Victorian homosexual world had evolved into a secret but active subculture, with its own language, styles, practices, and meeting places' (Showalter 1990, 106). Such awareness was not solely restricted to a 'subculture' mainstream Edwardian culture was touched by it too, as Dellamora notes:

it is still easy to underestimate the efflorescence of culture, positive about male-male desire, just before the Wilde trials. In 1894, Edward Carpenter gave a public lecture at Manchester on the topic of homogenic love. Writers like Symonds and Carpenter and others like Douglas used written language quietly to campaign on behalf of decriminalizing male homosexual behaviour. Brian Reade points out that 1894 marks the high water mark of publications that valorized male homosexual feeling (1990, 209).

However, it was not until the Wilde trials of 1895 with their necessary emphasis on homosexual behaviour as an all-encompassing way of life rather than a discrete activity - through Queensberry's specifically charging Wilde with 'posing as a sodomite' (sic) that the idea of the 'homosexual' as a distinct type becomes widely disseminated. Weeks sums up the importance of the Wilde trials: '[they] were in effect labelling processes of the most explicit kind drawing a clear border between acceptable and abhorrent behaviour' (1989, 103).

At the heart of the mainstream patriarchal group in power so carefully thus defining itself, lay what Sedgwick (1985) has termed 'homosocial' society: upper-middle class Victorian and Edwardian England were founded on - and depended on for their survival - all-male institutions: 'the public-school, the university, the armed forces, the church, parliament, the club, the City' (Richards, in Mangan and Walvin 1987, 100). The homosocial had hence to be carefully nurtured and protected - but, as Dellamora points out, because the

continuing dominance of bourgeois males also required that they marry and produce offspring, the intensity and sufficiency of male bonding [within the homosocial network] needed to be strictly controlled by homophobic mechanisms (1990, 195).

Hence a ghastly dilemma arose facing those who desired to protect the homosocial nexus in the Edwardian era: as Sedgwick (1985) has thoroughly demonstrated, the homosocial was often very close indeed - to the point of blurring and even crossing-over - to the homosexual. Thus, 'the most intimate male bonding' (Sedgwick 1986, 152, quoted in Dellamora 1990, 195) was prescribed - often in highly charged terms: the *Boy's Own Paper* peppers its essay admiring the friendship of Lamb and Coleridge with such phrases as 'the other dear heart which was so

much loved'; 'such friendships, so beautiful, so delightful'; 'the ever-loving, ever-faithful Coleridge', after whose death Lamb's 'broken heart did not have to wander long searching for its bosom friend' but soon 'passed heavenward to rejoin his beloved... in everlasting day' (*Boy's Own Paper* 1909, 139-140). However, at the same time, any actually or suspectedly - homosexual expression of this same male bonding was rigidly proscribed. A glance at the literature of the period soon reveals the difficulty and confusion that hence became attendant on distinguishing between homosocial and homosexual. Consider, for instance, this passage from Forster:

the brotherhood of man.... is accomplished at the expense of the sisterhood of women. Why should you not make friends with your neighbour at the theatre or in the train, when you know and he knows that feminine criticism and feminine insight and feminine prejudice will never come between you! (1985b, 53).

The same problem of a woman's ability to come between a contentedly bonded male pair is also raised in Conrad's *The Rover* (with Arlette's effect on the relationship between Peyrol and Real). Yet Forster's agenda is plainly a homosexual one - making friends with a man in a train has a very specific meaning for Maurice (1972, 136) - while Conrad's agenda is supposedly that of manly adventure. Two very different agendas have somehow rather surprisingly managed to end up inhabiting the same ground. We can also find something of the same surprise even when dealing with a single author: Batchelor talks with mild bemusement about the 'unmistakable, though presumably unconscious, homoerotic excitement' (1982, 20) with which Laputa is presented in Haggard's *Prester John*.

The recent genesis of the term 'homosexual' added to the potential confusion: with no real sense of this as a specific type, the boundaries

were less clear – a man might cross to and fro with a less vivid awareness. How might a homosocial crusader – or indeed any man distinguish between the exclusively male for 'many' reasons and the exclusively male for sexual reasons? An uneasy continuum came to exist between the two.

Writers of this period were certainly aware of this closeness of the homosocial to the homosexual (even if they did not think in quite these terms). Farrar describes a beautiful friendship between two boys, but is soon moved to the anxious comment:

I am glad to dwell on such a picture knowing, O Holy Friendship, how awfully a schoolboy can sometimes *desecrate* thy name! (Farrar 1896, 26-27 quoted in Richards, in Mangan and Walvin 1987, 113. Farrar's italics.)

Thus, with the homosocial and the homosexual so close, the situation arose where mainstream Edwardian society – if only as a means of self-preservation – became anxiously and obsessively determined to discover and root out the homosexual. The male homosocial structure had been rendered 'inherently unstable' (Dellamora 1990, 196) as some men inevitably refused to relinquish the homosexual bonding they had encountered at school – which refusal threatened the very masculinity so carefully formed within the schools 'as the visible sign of and prerequisite for the exercise of power' (Dellamora 1990, 196). The result was what Dellamora describes as an 'acute crisis' (1990, 196) over male homosexuality. Weeks goes as far as to refer to a general Edwardian 'moral panic' (1989, 103) concerning homosexuality in the 1890's, and other critics and historians, though perhaps less sensational, are not far behind him¹⁰.

The sensational homosexual court-cases of the 1880's and 90's are, as we have noted, the more spectacular manifestation of this panic, but

the extent of sheer day-to-day obsession with the subject is better seen in the constant and determined sexual policing of the upper-middle class boy - the future vessel of homosocial power - in this period. Thus, for example, a circular was sent out in 1884 and again in 1885 by the Revd. J. Robertson, the headmaster of Haileybury, urging parents to warn their boys against 'talk, example or impure solicitations' at school (quoted in Richards, in Mangan and Walvin 1987, 111). Masturbation had previously been regarded as the most heinous public-school crime, but now anxiety about possible homosexual behaviour came to supersede it¹¹: Robertson does mention 'solitary vicious habits' but is careful to add a warning about 'any form of moral evil in which two are leagued together' (quoted in Honey 1977, 181). Such was the extent of this obsession that other Edwardian anxieties served only to feed it: even the Empire was dragged in, with J. M. Wilson calling for 'Social Purity' for 'the good of your nation and your country', making a suggestive link between past vice and historical doom - 'Rome fell; other nations are falling' and finally closing with the extraordinary pronouncement: 'if England falls, it will be this sin... that will have been her ruin' (1885, 7, quoted in Weeks 1989, 87 and Showalter 1990, 3-4).

We might expect to encounter the subject of homosexuality on the problem page of the *Boy's Own Paper* (even if the surrounding problems concern nothing more controversial than harness blacking, stamp collecting and joining the navy): the unfortunate 'BAD HABITS' is told to 'heed not what your "friend" says . When he is thirty he may wither like a thistle that has shed its down' (1909, 192). A section on 'Doings For The Month: July', is perhaps a less likely place to find an exhortation to 'avoid those bad school habits that are the first form of suicide [and which].... coupled with a taste for drink, are filling our gaols, and our hospitals, and our mad-houses, all through the length

and breadth of this beautiful land' (1909, 623). However, the true ubiquity of concern about homosexuality only begins to become apparent when we come across 'A Song Of The Departed Summer', with its sudden movement from happy references to 'the garden nook and the well thumbed book, in the shade of a leafy tree', to the anxious irruption in the closing lines of 'the life (so short) with the oar and the bat in the games that are *straight and clean*' (1909, 18. My italics) a reference whose spectacular and obsessive irrelevance is only capped by the author (Dr. Gordon Stables, R. N.) of 'Doings For The Month: January', who, in the lead-in to a series of tips for pigeon-fanciers and gardeners, seems scarcely able to restrain himself after a perfunctory first sentence:

I trust you all enjoyed your early autumn holiday; but I am sure you did. Ah! youth is a glorious time, if not mis-spent, as, alas! it too often is by the idle and thoughtless. And yet future health depends on what you do in your young days. You may believe me, for my experience has been vast. The boy who gives way to bad habits, especially the vice of schools, is likely to find himself one day in an asylum or a gaol, if indeed he does not fill an early grave. I speak fearlessly - perhaps terrifyingly - but I have the courage of my convictions, and there is never a week passes that I do not receive letters from young men thanking me for the timely warnings I gave them (1909,206).

Having encountered this constant undercurrent of anxiety about homosexuality, we can begin to comprehend the strength of the public embargo upon any homosexual manifestation literary or otherwise - at the turn of the century. In 1885, the infamous Labouchere amendment to the Criminal Law Act was passed 'a piece of legislation so broad in scope as to make illegal virtually all male homosexual activity or speech, whether in public or private' (Dellamora 1990, 200). Dellamora talks of a 'literature of masculine crisis'

at this time, adducing (varyingly) crypto-homosexual productions by Stevenson *The Strange Case Of Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde* (1886); Wilde - *The Picture Of Dorian Gray* (1890); and James 'The Beast In The Jungle' (1903) (1990, 196).

As far as Conrad's own degree of awareness of the homosexual embargo is concerned, in addition to the evidence of its general unavoidability, it is relevant to note that sailors (or former sailors) were more likely than most to be alert to it: in February 1816, four members of the crew of the *Africaine* were hanged for buggery after a major naval scandal, and in the navy generally,

the death penalty was ruthlessly applied you were more likely to be hanged for buggery than for mutiny or desertion and sentences of a thousand lashes were not uncommon (Weeks 1990, 13).

The Cleveland Street homosexual scandal of 1889-1900 and the Wilde trials of 1895 only reinforced this embargo, providing in an 'entirely male-defined social space' and 'for the benefit of a male public' (Cohen 1987, 811) a vivid demonstration of the seemingly inevitable downfall and ignominy attendant on homosexual association: 'scandals provide a point at which gender-roles are publicly, even spectacularly, encoded and enforced' (Dellamora 1990, 194). Edward Carpenter's experience suggests the depth of the Wilde trials' effects on the literary world. Having prepared a book (*Love's Coming Of Age*, 1895) he hurriedly withdrew a chapter on 'Homogenic Love' in the aftermath of the Wilde trial, only to find that T. Fisher Unwin nevertheless was now sufficiently panicked to refuse to publish any portion of the book, and even to withdraw an already published and unrelated work of his from their list: 'the "boycott" has set in already'

(Carpenter, letter to George Huskin, 31 July 1895, quoted in Weeks 1989, 172).

We have already noted the particular tendency of Edwardian literature towards ambiguity and obscurity, and with these boycotts and embargoes in place, we are once more returned to this question of ambiguity, this time specifically as surrounding homosexual existence as a whole: Weeks asserts that 'it was possible to lead a successful homosexual life' from the 1890's onwards, but only in 'the interstices' of the wider society: 'the keynote of the homosexual world was [hence] ambivalence and ambiguity' (1989, 114); Showalter speaks in similar terms of the 'double life' that the upper-middle class homosexual tended to be forced to lead, adducing Symonds's journal-entry about his own 'habitual' adoption of a 'dual life' and Wilde's references to the necessity of 'Bunburying' to allow the male double lives in *The Importance Of Being Earnest* (1990, 106). The Edwardian homosexual, like the Edwardian author, was in a position of simultaneously keeping hidden and speaking out.

Reading Ambiguity And Sexuality.

How often there is an involvement between this Edwardian homosexual ambiguity and Edwardian literary ambiguity is a question with which this thesis will of necessity find itself involved. If something is ambiguous, it is by definition delicately balanced: we must tread very carefully in these areas.

Moving from author to text and from surface to depth, during my attempt to approach and understand Conradian ambiguities, I shall, amongst other things, need to borrow some elements from psychoanalytic reading – the very kind of reading it seems likely that Conrad, as we have seen, in the intellectual climate of the time, is

defending against and yet paradoxically simultaneously expecting. (Indeed, as Hampson shows, Conrad was familiar with the psychoanalytic theories of his day and it seems likely that he made use of them in his writing (1992, 4-6).) Such an approach to his work involves taking the texts and examining them as signs of something that perhaps could not be said directly. Anxieties and conflicts within the writer, or between the writer and his society, under such a reading, appear displaced in various themes, images, scenes or structures in his text. Such displacements will naturally be clearest at the level of the writer's whole oeuvre, rather than in a single novel or story: we will be examining 'the apparently compulsive repetition of certain patterns in the overall sequence of a writer's work' (White 1981, 4). Thus, finding one such moment for the first time, we might read it simply as a realistic detail of the scene in hand, but if we find it repeated several times in different contexts, we might begin to sense that its appearance is more to do with the psychology of the writer himself rather than the specific character to whom it happens to apply on any one occasion. Working in such ambiguous areas, we inevitably encounter the phenomenon of finding what are too few instances of a certain pattern to stand as definite proof of displacement, but are simultaneously too many to be able to dismiss as mere coincidence.

The question of whether an author intends any ambiguity or veiled implications in his work (let alone whether his awareness of them matters) is a vexed one - perhaps insoluble - and one to which we shall inevitably return. Hampson rightly expresses unease with the kind of psychoanalytic approach that ignores the fact that 'the literary text is not dream-material' and that, hence, 'whatever is supplied by the subconscious is mediated through various conscious artistic decisions and... quasi-autonomous literary... conventions' (1992, 4). For the

moment, it is sufficient to note that there is certainly a huge spectrum of authorial intent. If we consider just the homosocial-to-homosexual literary continuum, there is the 'presumably unconscious' of Haggard's homoeroticism surrounding Laputa. Then there is the awareness merely in order anxiously to deny a possible homosexual interpretation – as in, for example, Waipole's 'Mrs. Lunt'. Two men are awaiting the return of the malicious and powerful dead wife:

I let him hold me close to him.... We sat there, for I know not how long, through the gathering dark.... Ridiculous, perhaps, as I look back at it. We sat there, I in a chair close to his, hand in hand, like a couple of lovers; but, in real truth, two men terrified, fearful of what was coming (in Hampden 1939, 314-315).

Finally, there is the probably full and rather anarchically delighted intent, as in the case of Forster's all-male nude bathing scene in *A Room With A View* (1985a, 148-152), in which he manages to smuggle what Batchelor sums up as 'a discreet subversive homosexual orgy' into 'the middle of the respectable world' (1982, 225). Where any one author or any one work falls in this continuum is a difficult and controversial question. However, we must accept that we are operating in the uncertain and misty regions glimpsed 'behind the veil' (Conrad, 'Preface' to *Record*, xiii); we can at least allow that such undeterminable cases may be suggestive.

The psychoanalytic is only one of several routes into Conrad's works that I shall be taking, but it is perhaps the most open to abuse. It is vital, while still attaining the insights offered by a psychoanalytic reading, to avoid the temptation to regard the actual scenes and events of the text as a mere surface, to be discarded accordingly, once we have begun to penetrate behind them: too many readings of *Heart Of Darkness* in particular, have foundered on this literary-critical reef¹². The

surface of a text is not a code that can be solved. Duality and obscurity of meaning are integral to what the work is:

the refusal to open communication is fundamental to the narrative and authorial positions inscribed within [such a work]....

Total clarity, even had it been possible in these intensely private and resistant areas, would have engendered a lesser achievement (White 1981, 21, 24).

The urge merely to 'solve' - abandoning one half of the text's ingrained duality altogether, is a fatal one.

Another aspect of my approach to Conrad (and one on occasion integral to the psychoanalytic approach, too) will involve, as with any author, much close reading and a particularly concentrated attention on individual words¹³. This area, too, is fraught with risks, and even more so, for a modern reader of the literature of previous eras; and still further, when working in the area of sexual emotion, and especially of forbidden sexual emotion. Questions of authorial intent weighed up against the naked text's actual (or ambiguous) effect upon the reader, questions of changes in language and modes of expression, and questions of potential critical bias - all necessitate the careful establishment of perspective and examination of context. These tasks are initiated in part in this introduction and continued in detail in the main body of the thesis itself. Obviously, to consider just one of these questions, words have changed their meaning, or more often (and more difficultly), have simply undergone a slight shift in the emotional load they carry, and I have worked hard to be sensitive to such changes: the Glossary, in particular, will, I hope, be useful in establishing Edwardian contexts and hence contemporary subtleties of implication.

However, some changes in meaning and even in implication are more plainly traceable; and in the midst of the Edwardian obsession with homosexuality, we can clearly see that many previously more generalized terms did come to centre almost exclusively on that subject. For instance, Honey (1977, 167, 194) has noted the shifting burden of terms like 'vice', 'sin' and 'immorality' in the nineteenth century. Thus, during the first half of the century, they meant no more than general indiscipline and misbehaviour (often involving drunkenness). By the 1860's, they had begun to take on more sexual connotations, with the emphasis now being on masturbation although even at this stage they could still be used without any sexual implication: Honey adduces a sermon on 'secret sins' by Temple of Rugby at this time, which is about indolence and untruth with only a vague passing reference to anything that might be remotely understood to be sexual (1977, 167). However, by the 1880's, 'fears about... homosexuality' start to 'intrude' (1977, 194) and, at least in the public-schools Honey is studying, the word 'immorality', for example, had 'narrowed down' (167) to one particular homosexual - implication.

Some of my readings of words, phrases and passages, in this thesis, might be considered open to the charge of prurience: in my defence, I would offer two facts and the conclusion they prompt. During his trials, Oscar Wilde was persistently questioned by the prosecution, and often with little other evidence brought, about the ages of the men he consorted with¹⁴; in a similar vein, Honey records that at the turn of the century, it was a matter for punishment if a boy associated with others more than one form senior or junior to himself, at Westminster, and that similar prohibitions existed at Clifton, Harrow, Eton, Charterhouse, Rugby and elsewhere:

indeed in some schools by 1900, if such boys [i.e. distinguished only by one being older and one younger] were even seen speaking, "immorality would be taken for granted" (Honey 1977, 183, quoting Raven 1928, 28).

In such an era, one might wonder if the prurience lies in the society and its productions as much as in those who later come to examine them.

Conrad And Homosexuality.

Even at this early stage in the thesis, it is apparent that I am, at some points, juxtaposing Conrad's works and questions of homosexual expression. This may seem a bizarre juxtaposition in a critical arena largely centred, as we have seen, on Conrad as a literary bulwark of manliness. However, questions concerning the relation of homosexuality both to Conrad's life and his works have arisen.

As far as Conrad's life is concerned, it is, of course, a temptation for any psychoanalytic reading to speculate on the author's own psychological makeup - and may indeed occasionally be useful, as reflecting some light back on to the text; but it can only be useful as long as it remains at the level of speculation. To presume to draw firm conclusions on the personal preferences and intentions of the author that may lie behind the text is a patent (but sometimes attractive and interesting) impossibility. Hodges has probably gone the furthest in what has remained a literary/biographical backwater, tentatively initiating an exploration of homosexuality in relation to Conrad's life, although making clear the necessarily limited degree to which such matters are critically useful:

the questions, whether Conrad ever made love to another man and whether he implies any of his

fictional characters actually make love to members of their own sex, are irrelevant to my thesis that homosexuality is an important element in both his life and writings (1979, 380).

Hodges touches on possible biographical evidence, referring to, amongst other things, Conrad's suggestively filial relationship with his wife; his early sea career and possible attraction to a member of his crew; his relationship with the older, heroic Dominic Cervoni; his associations with Ford, Cunninghame Graham, Bertrand Russell and Stephen Crane, all of which are very emotional and expressed in very romantic terms ; his friendship with two known homosexual writers Norman Douglas and Andre Gide (Batchelor adds Walpole to this list (1994, 269)); and his friendship and sudden break with Roger Casement. Meyers (1973) also considers this latter relationship at some length, exploring the possibility that Conrad knew of Casement's homosexuality and only repudiated his friendship with him when Casement proved indiscreet, on the police discovery of his frankly homosexual diaries.

As far as the question of homosexuality in relation to Conrad's writings is concerned, some general points can be made at this stage. Showalter suggests that to an extent, all colonial romance of this period can be read, in varying degrees, as having some degree of latent homosexuality:

these stories represent a yearning for escape from a confining society... to a mythologized place elsewhere where men can be freed from the constraints of Victorian morality (1990, 81);

they are about 'the flight from marriage' (Koestenbaum 1986, quoted in Showalter 1990, 82); they are an attempt to 'evade heterosexuality altogether' (Showalter 1990, 82), allowing an escape from

the kinds of threatening encounters [strongly homosocial men]... felt forced to seek in the "homophobic" civilized world. In the wilderness, they no longer needed to practise compulsory heterosexuality (Sensibar 1988, 582, quoted in Showalter 1990, 82).

Certainly, too, Conrad's writings and his pronouncements on them seem to have some broad general aspects that recall similar aspects we have found in some of the contemporary literature that lies on the homosocial/homosexual cusp. Thus, for instance, writing and sex his sense of his own sexual manhood seem to be closely entwined for Conrad (as Batchelor (1982, 90) too, notes):

I am still at *Jim*[...] I am old and sick and in debt but lately I've found I can still write *it comes it comes!* - and I am young and healthy and rich (letter to Garnett, 26 March 1900, in Karl and Davies (1983-1990, 2: 257).

Moreover, we do not have to look very far for evidence of duality of utterance - the concept of two separate worlds with separate meanings and languages - in Conrad's writings. Ford, Conrad's occasional collaborator, certainly sees their writing in some such way, as involving the duality of 'us' and 'them', when he describes their work as a 'conspiracy against a sleeping world' (Ford 1924, 38, quoted in Koestenbaum 1989, 168) and Conrad strikes the same strange notes of the unlawful and the conspiratorial, in his own comment on their relationship: 'you cannot really suppose that there is anything between us except our mutual regard and our partnership in crime' (quoted in Koestenbaum 1989, 168). Conrad himself also suggests that there are at least two kinds of communication happening in his work:

a work of art is very seldom limited to one exclusive meaning....

All the great creations of literature have been symbolic, and in that way have gained in complexity, in power, in depth and beauty' (letter to Clark, 4 May 1918, in Jean-Aubry 1927, 2: 205).

He goes further and places the pull between the two halves of 'homo duplex' at the centre of the literary creation: 'the only legitimate basis of creative work lies in the courageous recognition of all the irreconcilable antagonisms that make our life so enigmatic' (letter to *New York Times*, 2 August 1901, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 2: 348). One such antagonism is between the social and the secret sides of a man's life: 'a man's most open actions have a secret side to them' (*Eyes*, 53). Conrad seems to suggest that he himself has a secret side to veil:

a novelist lives in his work. He stands there, the only reality in an invented world, among imaginary things, happenings, and people. Writing about them, he is only writing about himself. But the disclosure is not complete. He remains, to a certain extent, a figure behind the veil; a suspected rather than a seen presence – a movement and a voice behind the draperies of fiction ('Preface' to *Record*, xiii).

Conrad is admitting, here, not only to the duality involved in a story's being both just a story and a psychological revelation of the author but also to the duality inherent when an author is simultaneously trying to reveal and conceal the truth about himself. Conrad seems to see his work as functioning both at the level of the story and beneath that level, the dark half of himself communicating with the dark half of his audience:

the artist descends within himself, and in that lonely region of stress and strife, if he be deserving and fortunate, he finds the terms of his appeal. His appeal is made to our less obvious capacities: to that part of our nature which, because of the

warlike conditions of existence, is necessarily kept out of sight within the more resisting and hard qualities - like the vulnerable body within a steel armour[....]

The artistic aim[...] is to reach the secret spring (Preface to *'Narcissus'*, xxxix-xli).

Hodges notes that while Moser (1957) and Meyer (1967) both raised the issue of a homoerotic element in Conrad's work, both refused to pursue it, and I think rightly - attributes this reluctance on their part to Conrad's manly literary reputation (1979, 379-380). Little has changed in the thirty to forty years since these works appeared: Batchelor dismisses speculation on this subject, for similar reasons, as mere 'wishful thinking' for which he can find 'no evidence' in support, by literary critics with a 'homosexual political conviction' (1994, 21-22). Hodges' brief and tentative suggestions (1979) remain the seminal work in this area, although more recently, Koestenbaum has touched on Conrad's collaborations with Ford as a possible expression of displaced homosexual desire (1989, 166-173) and Meyers (1977, 76-89) has written on the possible homosexuality of Heyst, and the evident homosexuality of Jones, in *Victory*; Watts (1984, 107) also mentions the latter as a plainly homosexual character.

The man who said:

those who read me know my conviction that the world, the temporal world, rests on a few very simple ideas; so simple that they must be as old as the hills. It rests notably, among others, on the idea of Fidelity ('Preface' to *Record*, xix),

also said:

there is no morality, no knowledge and no hope
(letter to Cunninghame Graham, 31 January 1898,
in Kari and Davies 1983-1990, 2: 30).

This is the kind of conflicting thought that makes Conrad so hard to grasp, the kind of thing that makes Forster conclude that Conrad's casket of genius is probably empty, containing only a vapour (1945, 135); it is certainly typical Conrad. Yet what happens if we do try to grasp him? If we ask, in relation to his themes of manliness and heroism, what this kind of duality of attitude is doing? Conrad is not purely enough a nihilist for us to believe that such internal disagreements are merely an empty pose of cynicism directed even towards himself; we must conclude, then, that something more complex is going on. Why are both attitudes towards man simultaneously necessary in his writing? 'Conrad is a *macho* novelist'. How is he? Is he at all?

Notes.

1. See, for instance, Conrad, letter to William Blackwood, 8 November 1899, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 2: 215-217.
2. Conrad's writing-career spans the years from 1895-1924 (not including those works first published posthumously, which would take us up to 1927.) Much ink has been spent on what period exactly the terms 'Edwardian' and 'turn of the century' refer to. Merely for brevity's sake (to avoid the lumbering repetition of the phrase 'in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century', which is actually the period I am referring to), I shall sometimes use both these terms rather loosely, to refer to the span of Conrad's career. This is not, I hope, unreasonable, given that if the Edwardian era is taken as ending with the First World War - the bulk of Conrad's work was produced in Edwardian times.
3. e.g. *Nostromo*, Heyst, the Marlow of *Heart Of Darkness*, the Lingard of *The Rescue*.
4. e.g. Forster's *Leonard Bast* (1978), Woolf's *Septimus Smith* (1968), Hardy's *Jude* (1985).
5. Conrad was certainly familiar with Nordau's theory: see Watts 1979, 40.
6. e.g. 'Flight' (1917), 'Well Done' (1918), 'Confidence' (1919) (all in *Notes*).
7. Conrad almost certainly read both stories: he immensely admired Wells's short stories, writing frequently to congratulate him on his latest publications - he particularly enjoyed the volume containing 'The Red Room' (letter to H. G. Wells, 6 January 1900, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 2: 239)- and referring to his 'astounding gift' in that genre (letter to H. G. Wells, November-December 1903, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 3: 79).
8. Compare Lingard in *The Rescue*:

[having agreed to do what Mrs. Travers says] he felt like a swimmer who, in the midst of superhuman efforts to reach the shore, perceives that the undertow is taking him to sea. He would go with the mysterious current; he would go swiftly - and see the end, the fulfilment both blissful and terrible (184);

when she stood up, still holding his arm, they confronted each other, he rigid in an effort of self-command but feeling as if the surges of the heaviest sea that he could remember in his life were running through his heart (324);

or Lena's relationship with Heyst in *Victory*:

she would try to rise above herself, triumphant and humble; and then happiness would burst on her like a torrent, flinging at her feet the man whom she loved (353).

9. I must allow some force to recent arguments that see male homosexuality as less of an 'other' to heterosexuality than was previously assumed: Sedgwick suggests that much homosexual behaviour is actually *not* separated from heterosexual behaviour by its 'dependence on a defining *sameness* between partners', but in fact shares with heterosexuality the need to be 'structured around some diacritical difference - old/young, for example, initiator/initiate, or insertive/receptive whose binarizing cultural power would be at least comparable to that of gender' (1994, 57). However, this seems to come perilously close to the homophobic argument that all homosexual relationships involve one 'male' and one 'female' partner, and are hence merely heterosexual relationships *manqués*. Frye also links homo- and heterosexual as not 'other' than each other, although even less persuasively (perhaps she describes one *kind* of homosexual existence?), when she makes the startling assertion that 'gay men generally are in significant ways... only more loyal to masculinity and male-supremacy than other men' (1983, 129, quoted in Showalter 1990, 185). However, whatever weight we lend such arguments, the relevant point, as far as our current thesis is concerned, is that homosexuality was, in Edwardian times (and since) certainly generally *perceived* as the 'other' (see Glossary: 'another/other' (372-374)).

10. e.g. Honey refers to an Edwardian 'obsession' (1977, 167) with the subject of homosexuality and asserts that 'in England around 1900... there was a new self-consciousness about the expression of "love" between males' (193). He also notes the particular increase in anxiety about homosexuality in the nurturing-grounds of homosociality - the boys' public school: 'the 1880's were significant for... an increasing suspicion of friendships between boys, because of their implications for "morality"' (178). Dellamora (1990) makes similar points in more detail and refers to the widespread 'sacrifice of homosexuals' (194) on the public altars of newspaper and court-room in the 1890's (193-195). Koestenbaum similarly specifies the period 'between 1885 and 1922' as a 'historical moment in which men were increasingly pressed to defend their friendships against imputations of homosexual feeling' (1989, 2). Richards notes of the late 1880's and early 1890's 'the increasing concern about and attention paid to the question of homosexuality' (in Mangan and Walvin 1987, 111).

11. See Weeks (1989, 40 and 1990, 25) for more detail on this progression.

12. Most notably, in my view, and for very different reasons, Stephen A. Reid (1963-1964), who, with a disarming earnestness, carefully rests his analysis on Frazer's anthropological work, *The Golden Bough*, and purports to have solved *Heart Of Darkness*, declaring that it is actually about human sacrifice and attendant cannibalism; and (surprisingly) Albert Guerard (1958, 33-48), who loses his way early in his analysis of *Heart Of Darkness*, with the fatal declaration: 'on this literal plane, and when the events are... abstracted from the dream-sensation conveying them, it is hard to take Marlow's plight very seriously' (39).

13. See Introduction to Glossary (353-361) for more detail.

14. See e.g. Hyde 1962, 202-203 and Glossary, 'Older Man With Younger Man', entry under Wilde Trials (456-457).

CHAPTER ONE.

'I AM JUST THE MAN THEY TAKE ME FOR' (267): MASCULINE IDENTITY IN
NOSTROMO.

Rather than shackle ourselves with the convenient but purely external logic arbitrarily imposed by the chronological approach, if we want to discover what sort of novelist Conrad is, it is necessary to go directly to the heart of his novelistic achievement, with the novel most frequently cited as his greatest: *Nostramo*.

Nostramo looks, on the surface, like a political novel, and criticism has traditionally approached it as such. Berthoud (1978), Schwarz (1980) and Watt (1988) all confidently categorise it alongside Conrad's 'other political works' (Watt 1988, 72) *The Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes* - as one of Conrad's 'novels about politics' (Schwarz 1980, 133). F. R. Leavis firmly declares that '*Nostramo* has a main political or public theme' (1983, 219) and that all the novel's stories of individuals are actually 'subsumed in the public historical drama... of... the founding of the Occidental Republic' (225). Berthoud refers to *Nostramo* as 'Conrad's profile of a neo-colonial state [and]... the emergence of a discontented urban proletariat' (1978, 95), locating its 'suspense' wholly in 'the question of whether the province of Sulaco will be able to achieve secession from its parent Republic' (98). Carabine goes even further:

the novel is both an analysis and a prophecy of the issues and conflicts which have dominated Third World countries. It examines the attempt to graft Western capitalist enterprise, cultural norms, and political institutions, upon the stock of a peasant, superstitious, economically underdeveloped country (1984, ix).

Yet, when we come away from the novel, is this really what we feel our experience of it has been about?

Conrad's spectacularly complicated time-scheme ensures that the politico-historical events of *Nostramo* can be put together (and hence understood) only with the greatest difficulty - as witness the critical works that feel obliged to include a painfully pieced-together chronological summary of events (e.g. Watt's tabular 'Nostramo Chronology' (Watt 1988, xii-xv); or Berthoud 1978, 98-99). No such difficulties, by contrast, surround the tracing of individuals' stories. This might suggest that Conrad does not wish the heart of our attention to be with the political events of the novel.

Nostramo, then, may look on the surface like a political novel, but a slightly closer examination suggests that the politics are merely a means to explore human action, in a novel that is actually about something else. 'Preserved[...] identity' (82), 'personality[...] lost' (434), 'betrayed individuality' (418), 'affecting his[...] identity'(66), 'doubt of his own individuality' (497): as Johnson notes (1971, 117) Conrad's vocabulary emphatically proclaims this to be a novel about personality, about identity. When Nostramo decides to keep the treasure for himself, Conrad does not pursue the obvious, even clichéd, theme for such a moment - the battle of will versus passion - but instead, treats it simply and solely as another question of identity. Nostramo sits gazing with desire at the treasure, and we do not see him struggling to honour his trust; we are simply told that the Capataz is a 'victim of[...] disenchanted vanity' (501). Or again, we are shown the roots of Gould's fascination with the mine, not as being in any political ideals but - through several pages of detailed early narrative - as simply springing from his relationship with his father: he finds to his surprise that his father's death 'closely affect[s...] his own identity', and he is driven to

make a success of the mine by the resultant need to 'disobey' his dead father's most 'solemn wishes' (66).

The emphasis on the father-son relationship suggests what soon becomes clear in the novel as a whole, that this is not only a novel of identity, but specifically of male identity. The political background only stresses this politics at that time, of course, being an exclusively male activity, and hence an arena for exclusively male concern with image-projection and self-image. Johnson (1971, 122) puts forward the idea that the whole novel is a series of plays on the name 'Nostromo', and that it is for this reason alone, rather than for any marked centrality to the sprawling plot, that the novel is called after that character: the word 'Nostromo' - 'nostro uomo', 'our man' - is one that again raises the question of the specifically male identity. Conrad's cuts for the later editions of the novel are telling in this respect. Speaking of Nostromo and how a 'subjective nature' feels any 'strong check to its ruling passion' as like 'death' - the ultimate dissolution of identity - 'itself' (417), Conrad removes a few lines including the sentence: 'he was like many other men of southern races in whom the complexity of simple conceptions is much more apparent than real' (first edition, 353-354) . It is as if Conrad wants to remove the explicit reference to Nostromo's foreignness to make all this apply not just to 'men of southern races' but to men, mankind, the male identity, in general.

That this is a novel of the specifically male identity can be seen most clearly if we glance across at its women. We might at first think that the women are simply not important enough to Conrad for him to explore their identity problems. In a novel where even the gatekeeper, a man whom we have never seen before and never see again, gets a page and a half of biographical detail (382-383), Nostromo's young girl in town, the generically-named 'morenita', is dismissed with half a

paragraph of description, not even of her selfhood, but just of the way her skirt sits over her swaying buttocks - how she looks to a man (127). However, when we do find a woman whose mind Conrad chooses to explore in some depth, it is soon apparent that identity is specifically not her problem:

a great wave of loneliness [...] swept over her head. And it came into her mind, too, that no-one would ever ask her with solicitude what she was thinking of[....] No-one[...] who could be answered with careless sincerity in the ideal perfection of confidence (521).

Mrs Gould simply wants someone understanding to be there to ask her her thoughts; she is not afraid that there is no 'she' there to be having the thoughts in the first place. Whether or not we agree with the veiled sexism, in *Nostramo* woman's concerns are clearly with relationships, not with identity.

What, then, are the male concerns with identity in this novel?

Monygham's words to Mrs. Gould perhaps best illustrate the roots of such concerns:

'really, it is most unreasonable to demand that a man should think of other people so much better than he is able to think of himself' (44-45).

Belief in oneself as a man is hard. Decoud's experiences in the boat in the darkened Golfo show how easily a man's belief in himself, even to the very roots of male identity, can be shaken.

When his voice ceased, the enormous stillness, without light or sound, seemed to affect Decoud's senses like a powerful drug. He didn't even know at times whether he were asleep or awake. Like a man lost in slumber, he heard nothing, he saw nothing. Even his hand held before his face did not exist for his eyes. The change from the agitation, the passions and the dangers, from the sights and



the sounds of the shore, was so complete that it would have resembled death had it not been for the survival of his thoughts. In this foretaste of eternal peace they floated vivid and light (262).

This passage is filled with Decoud's need to hold on to a sense of self, to his sense of his own existence, his identity at the most basic level.

Unease starts with the ceasing of his voice - that most intimate of identity-markers: it is the thing often used, through metonymy, to signify the person, the person's will; it is the means by which a man projects his identity to enable himself and others to have immediate sensible knowledge of it. The horror is the ceasing of this voice. Hence, by the time we get to the word 'senses', there is already a hint not just of 'senses' as in 'the five senses', but 'sense' as in 'sense of' things, 'sense of self' as much as anything else - he is starting to lose this basic sense. This hint is picked up and confirmed by the next sentence: the effect of the drug-like thing on his senses is that he is not sure whether he is 'asleep or awake' - the old question of identity at the most basic level - can you even tell whether you are awake or dreaming?¹ So, when we get to 'a man lost in slumber', it has become not just a figure of speech, but almost literal: Decoud is 'a man lost'; Conrad is talking specifically of a man, a man's sense of being a man, and his literal lostness - his loss of his self-identity, his selfhood, his consciousness. Decoud hears nothing, he sees nothing - is he himself nothing? Does he exist at all? Then we have the rapid sequence of 'his... his... his', the male possessive pronoun several times within one sentence. This is an insistence, almost ironic in the circumstances, upon the necessity of masculine possession, of his possessing himself, of his having his identity. Yet - 'did not exist': it is not just a question of Decoud's not being able to see his hand, in the face of this need for literal self-possession; at this extremity of the need to have his identity confirmed by his senses, his hand does

not exist for him. This is annihilation of self, death-like - only it is worse than death, because he is still there ('the survival of his thoughts') to be conscious of this utter loss of identity. If life is like this, a constant struggle to retain a sense of self, a sense of identity as a man, then death - the ending, for Conrad, of the possibility of identity - might well seem a haven of 'peace'.

The man who could stop the constant worrying about his manhood would achieve, by comparison with his unemancipated brothers, great things, an idea Conrad puts forward in his comment on the great Don Pépé:

there was in that man a sort of sane, humorous shrewdness, and a vein of genuine humanity so often found in simple old soldiers of proved courage who have seen much desperate service (99).

It would be hard to think of any writer before Conrad who would use 'simple' in a sense so free from (pastoral) condescension or any hint of pejorativeness. The whole description recalls *Lord Jim's* Stein, too, whose unquestionably heroic past frees him to pursue his (un-macho) love of butterflies and philosophy, and thereby to achieve an approach to solutions of the problems of existence with a degree of success unparalleled by other Conradian characters. Men like these have nothing to prove about their manhood and are freed for greatness.

The more common man still feels he has much to prove, and proof needs a witness: Conrad explores in this novel how deeply a man's identity is invested in others' opinions of him, as in the case of Nostromo himself. His is an extreme case, but bearing Conrad's cuts in mind, Nostromo can be taken as a representative of a general masculine behaviour-pattern.

Nostromo is a man whose identity, as the novel begins, is utterly invested in others' opinions: he can see himself only in the 'reflection from the admiring eyes of men' (525). For a long time, in the early stages of the book, we see nothing of Nostromo other than mysterious glimpses of his surface-appearance: 'a phantom-like horseman mounted on a silver-grey mare' (95) ; a 'horseman[...] silent on a motionless horse' (96) ; an unmoving figure 'quietly in the shade of the house' (124), whose mere arrival is enough to spur the men out of slumber into work. He acquires an almost mythic status from these dramatic glimpses. Then suddenly, we see him abruptly de-mythologised: for instance, within the space of a few lines, the phantom horseman has become 'Nostromo, now dismounted and in the checked shirt and red sash of a Mediterranean sailor, bawling orders from the end of the jetty in a stentorian voice' (96). Soon, then, we realise that Nostromo is nothing but surface: there is no mythic reality beneath the mythic appearance. He is always "on the spot whenever there is something picturesque to be done" (224), Decoud notes - not 'something noble', or 'beautiful': his deeds are described purely in terms of their look 'picturesque'. Nostromo is an *apparent* hero, a hollow man, a man with 'enormous vanity, that finest form of egoism which can take on the aspect of every virtue' (300).

Nostromo's highest aspiration is to confirm society's image of him: "they shall learn I am just the man they take me for" (267). This is maleness as surface, maleness as doing the picturesque, maleness as society's image of one maleness as performance-art. Nostromo's twice-repeated strangeness of phrasing emphasises this: "I am resolved to make this the most desperate affair I was ever engaged on in my whole life"; and again, "I am going to make it the most famous and desperate affair of my life" (255-6, 265). Surely, in normal speech, an

adventure is either desperate or not, by itself - it cannot be made so. That would be a forcing of events. Being a man involves such forcing, then, an active decision to make things manly and to perform. The link is strongly and repeatedly made between performance and Nostromo's manhood. It is the thought of his manhood's being threatened - Teresa's opinion of him is poor - that spurs him on to perform the adventure: "she died thinking I deprived her of Paradise, I suppose. It shall be the most desperate affair of my life" (268). That it is specifically his manhood that is threatened here is emphasised by the strong Oedipal undercurrents between Teresa and Nostromo. She is almost his adoptive mother, yet (while, perhaps frustratingly, married to a man much older than herself) she is pronounced by Monygham to be "in love with" (319) Nostromo. An encounter between Nostromo and Teresa has a strangely erotic element for a boy's visit to his adoptive mother (252-257). Thus, for instance, on his arrival at Teresa's bedroom door, Nostromo is described in purely physical terms, stressing his sexual maleness: 'bushy whiskered, his muscular neck and bronzed chest bare[....] broad shouldered, narrow-hipped and supple'; and this description runs straight into one of Teresa in traditional vampish pose:

[...] and supple, looking at the large bed[...] with a profusion of snowy linen, amongst which the Padrona sat, unpropped and bowed, her handsome, black-browed face bent over her chest. A mass of raven hair[...] covered her shoulders; one thick strand fallen forward half-veiled her cheek (252).

After this, we are not surprised to hear of the closeness of 'intimacy' (253) between the two of them. So this woman is involved twice over as mother and as unacknowledged lover with the very root of Nostromo's maleness, yet she criticises him - an occurrence that must hence do serious damage to his sense of manhood.

However, as a means of protecting the sense of manhood, performed manliness - just because it is a performance and not a reality - must be doomed to failure. Nostromo could not possibly live up to his mythic status, could not possibly be who they say. The gap between performed masculine surface - 'the aspect of every virtue' and the actual person beneath, is made plain in Nostromo's case: the man supposed 'incorruptible' (127, 221, 432, for example) is the man who steals the treasure he was entrusted with. At the end of his heroic ride to fetch Barrios's men, Nostromo is congratulated for those very qualities which we know that, with his hidden treasure, he has not got: "devotion[...] fidelity[...] perfectly fearless and incorruptible" (483).

In Nostromo's case, we are also shown the damage that is done to a male identity when the wholly inaccurate - social gaze is turned elsewhere. He awakens in solitude, except for the watchful vulture, in the ruins of a fort. He must not be seen in town yet and moreover, has failed miserably in his adventure with the silver. Up until this moment, he 'had lived in splendour and publicity' (414); even acts performed away from the public eye, such as his giving his last dollar to a poor old woman, still have these vital externals, these elements of performance about them: 'without witnesses, [they...] had still the characteristics of splendour and publicity' (414). But now, he is utterly deprived of an admiring audience, or even the possibility of one, for the first time in his life. This deals a shattering blow to his sense of self - he feels as if he has 'gone out of existence' (419), been 'destroyed' (420), he is 'as if dead' (413) - and the damage is specifically to his identity: he has 'gone out of existence on an issue in which his personality had not been taken into account' (419-420), he has 'no intellectual existence or moral strain to carry on his individuality, unscathed, over the abyss left by the

collapse of his vanity' (first edition, 353-354). His experience reminds us of what Almayer so feared:

if he attempted to move he would step off into nothing, and perish in the crashing fall of that universe of which he was the only support (*Folly*, 128).

Nostromo has come to feel that he has as much identity as a corpse: 'the Capataz[...] felt himself of as little account as the indistinct, motionless shape of the dead man whom he saw[...] disregarded, forgotten, like a terrible example of neglect' (435).

Nostromo must hence try to create a new identity: 'Nostromo, the miscalled Capataz de Cargadores, had made for himself, under his rightful name, another public existence' (527) but it has all the same insubstantiality as the old one: it is a merely 'public' surface-identity, and it is not natural, he must 'make' it. However, although it is less perfect than his old one 'less picturesque, more difficult to keep up' (527) he initially seems successful: 'Captain Fidanza was *seen*' (527) - his one desire. Yet even the hopeful words that follow this sentence also suggest the fragility of his identity: 'the generation that would know nothing of the famous ride to Cayta was not born yet' (527) but the implication is there that they will be one day; his created identity is doomed to destruction eventually. We are shown Nostromo's failure with the treasure in detail; his successful ride to Cayta we only hear of after the fact: perhaps this is because the failure is what actually affects the man within; the success merely allows him to continue, after a fashion, a male pose he has already found to be hollow. The result is not hard to guess: a man 'as if dead' on discovering the utter flimsiness of an identity founded on other people's opinions, yet who nevertheless goes on and 'makes' another existence, must end up, as

even Nostromo sees (it is he who makes the comparison) 'neither dead nor alive' like 'the legendary Gringos' (526) with whose tormented ghosts the book opened. Just as the gringos were 'bound down to their conquest of unlawful wealth' (526), so Nostromo dies enslaved to his reputation: he dies because he is a thief – mistakenly shot by Viola, as he sneaks back for more silver. And yet even with his final words, he is still desperately 'making' a more picturesque version of himself, explaining his return in terms of romantic heroism: "'it seemed as though I could not live through the night without seeing thee once more – my star, my little flower'" (554).

This pattern of male 'making' is continued on all levels throughout *Nostromo*. 'His talents must have been great [since....] Gould[...] called him Excellency' (90): this pompous and selfish old windbag whom Charles visits in San Francisco is called 'the great man' (78, 80) so often that we are not only aware of the irony of the term, but come back to considering its reality². Perhaps it is exactly such a performed male superiority that is all it takes to be a 'great man' in society, so far from the truth is the social gaze.

This man is great because he is called 'Excellency': manhood becomes a matter of mere nomenclature, something that is subtly emphasised as Conrad dwells – for slightly longer than we expect on the titles of the men he introduces:

it was Basilio, Mr. Gould's own mozo[...] who[...] announced [Don P  p  ] once in the solemn words, 'El Senor Gobernador has arrived.'

Don Jos  [...] was delighted beyond measure at the aptness of the title[....] and El Senor Gobernador he had remained (99);

The Excellentissimo ('the hope of honest men,' as Don Jos   had addressed him...) (117-118).

Indeed, Conrad sometimes approaches incomprehensibility, so keen is he to stress this question of male nomenclature:

he seemed to argue that Montero's (he called him The General) intentions were probably not evil, though, he went on, 'that distinguished man' (only a week ago we used to call him a *gran' bestia*) 'was perhaps mistaken' (237).

Nostromo himself is, of course, the most extreme case: Gian Battista, The Capataz, Fidanza, Nostromo. The latter is a "name that is properly no word" (23), as Teresa points out: to call him 'our man' is no indication of possession of his own identity at all. However, it is at least more accurate about him than what is apparently his real name: 'Fidanza', with such overtones of 'faithfulness', is hardly appropriate for the traitor of the silver. Nostromo hovers amongst a list of names, with no true identity of his own.

Nostromo's awakening in the fort is only one of a number of occasions in the book where men are made to experience how flimsily-founded their identity is, as their sense of self swiftly departs under the assault of changes in what they had previously assumed to be mere external circumstances. Consider Monygham's experiences under torture, or what happens to Don José in the Army Of Pacification, where he sees 'men of position, of education, of wealth' learn 'to fight among themselves for scraps of rotten beef' (137). This loss of identity begins for Decoud, as we have seen, on the lighter in the dark and it is interesting to note how many of Conrad's other works also contain scenes of men confounded in darkness: Jim in the lifeboat; the crew of the *Narcissus* during the night of the storm; Marlow in the jungle looking for Kurtz.

Male identity is under threat at a level even more basic than those we have already examined, though at the level of a man's very

consciousness of himself, of consciousness itself. Twice, Decoud cannot tell whether he is 'asleep or awake', (262, 249). If the question is extended to the even more basic one of being able to tell whether you are alive or dead, the answer is even more undermining of confidence in consciousness: 'it was part of a living world since, pervading it, failure and death could be felt at your elbow' (283). You can only tell you exist because non-existence is imminent.

So, a man's sense of identity is threatened by the revelation that he has no way of knowing whether that sense is real; and that even if he can know, it is only because he is soon to have that identity extinguished. Yet the things around a man do not share in the alarm this realisation may create. Again and again, throughout Conrad's writings, human consciousness finds in this indifference a potentially overwhelming reminder of its own insubstantiality - the 'crushing, paralysing sense of human littleness' (433) that all the main male characters in *Nostromo* will encounter. Conrad takes the stock descriptive phrase about 'staring at nothing' and re-invests it with an appalling power of literal meaning. It is not merely a figure of speech to say that Nostromo's eyes are 'fixed upon nothing from under a thoughtful frown' (412) when he awakens at the fort: nothing, the fact of nothingness, is exactly what he is encountering. Likewise, Gould's stare past Emilia's head, on learning news identity-shattering to any man of his father's death, is 'at nothing' (63). Decoud on the island, too, finally comes literally to 'believe[...] in nothing' (500). The Golfo, as Royal Roussel (1971, 131-132) points out, is symbolic of this crushing threat: it is utterly indifferent, it transcends and negates consciousness - 'no intelligence could penetrate the darkness of the Placid Gulf' (275) and it hence makes identity impossible too. Its darkness confounds everyone and everything into one homogeneous obscurity:

sky, land, and sea disappear together out of the world when the Placido[...] goes to sleep under its black poncho [...] your ship floats unseen under your feet, her sails flutter invisible above your head (6-7);

all things are 'merged into the uniform texture of the night' (302). The Golfo here is very like Forster's Marabar Caves: 'if one had spoken vileness in that place, or quoted lofty poetry, the comment would have been the same - ou-boum' (1983, 160). Decoud's response to his island resembles Mrs Moore's conclusion after her visit to the caves: 'pathos, piety, courage - they exist, but are identical, and so is filth' (160).

Nostromo, though, with his huge ego, is in the end 'possessed too strongly by the sense of his own existence' (526) to fall apart completely:

the thought that it was no longer open to him to ride through the streets, recognised by everyone, great and little, as he used to do[...] ; or to sit in the place of honour [...], made it appear[...]

at the end of this catalogue, and especially bearing his own and Decoud's identity-shaking previous experiences in mind, we might expect '[...] made it appear as if *he* did not exist', but his ego is too strong for that. It copes: as far as he is concerned, if no-one can see him, it is *they* that have ceased to exist, and so the passage actually finishes

[...] made it appear to him as a town that had no existence (414-415).

Decoud, in similar circumstances, on the island, with less of an ego than Nostromo, loses everything and kills himself. The process of Decoud's dissolution is unnervingly rapid and easy. He is brought to a

place where it is impossible to avoid noticing the otherness and indifference of the non-human: 'for some good and valid reasons beyond mere human comprehension, the sea-birds of the gulf shun the Isabels' (496). Here is life that is just as important as (or maybe even more important than - 'beyond') ourselves; life that is 'good' and 'valid' in a way quite outside and indifferent to us. Conrad's men must face this knowledge again and again. Mariow finds it in the jungle:

the great wall of vegetation, an exuberant and entangled mass of trunks, branches, leaves, boughs, festoons, motionless in the moonlight, was like a rioting invasion of soundless life, a rolling wave of plants, piled up, crested, ready to topple over the creek, to sweep every little man of us out of his little existence. And it moved not (*Darkness*, 61).

Nature is huger and more powerful than man, through her very impassibility telling him of his littleness. The crew of the *Narcissus* encounter it at sea:

on the black sky the stars, coming out, gleamed over an inky sea[....] Remote in the eternal calm they glittered hard and cold above the uproar of the earth; they surrounded the vanquished and tormented ship on all sides (*'Narcissus'*, 77)

Decoud is swamped by the non-human, by nature's vastness, by this huge, indifferent life:

after three days of waiting for the sight of some human face, Decoud caught himself entertaining a doubt of his own individuality. It had merged into the world of cloud and water, of natural forces and forms of nature (497)

until he is 'swallowed up in the immense indifference of things' (501). Perhaps Conrad, in the apparently haphazard construction of the book, for which he was much criticized when it first appeared ('the

sequence of events has to be sought painfully through the mazes of irrelevancy' (Buchan 1904, 36)) is in fact simply illustrating Decoud's man's experience of tiny swampedness in the huge, on-rushing stream of other life. Garnett's comment of the structure of the novel best describes how the novel achieves this:

this dramatic pageant of life[....] Nature as a ceaselessly-flowing infinite river of life, out of which the tiny atom of each man's individual life emerges into sight, stands out in the surrounding atmosphere, and is lost again in the infinite succession of the fresh waves of life into which it dissolves (1904, 37-38).

The whole book is Decoud's encounter with a Nature in which he is lost and into which he finally dissolves. Decoud pitches lifeless into the sea from his boat: 'the great gulf burst into a glitter all around the boat', and he dies in 'this glory of merciless solitude' (500). The uninvolved beauty surrounding a human tragedy like the stars around the *Narcissus* - only further confirms man's utter unimportance.

Decoud acquires a sense of meaninglessness from this universal merging and confounding in which he is lost. Decoud dies 'from[...] want of faith in himself and others' (496), but so deeply has the meaninglessness struck at the roots of his belief in his identity, even beyond, to his belief in his consciousness, that this 'want of faith' is not what we would expect in this context, simply the common-or-garden inability to have trust in himself and others, but shockingly, something far more profound (more like what the phrase 'want of faith' would imply if applied to God) : he has ceased to believe in their, or his own, very existence. Are they there or not: 'Nostromo was dead[....] He no longer dared to think of Antonia. She had not survived.'? Is he there or not?:

[even] if she survived he could not face her[...] (it had occurred to him that Antonia could not possibly have ever loved a being so impalpable as himself) (498).

These are moments Conrad considers important enough (and relevant enough - they could happen, on lesser levels, to any man) to press hard on: just as the structure of the book mimes Decoud's experience on the island, so do individual passages, sometimes with a horrible proleptic irony - from much earlier in the book. For instance:

Martin Decoud, the dilettante in life, imagined himself to derive an artistic pleasure from watching the picturesque extreme of wrongheadedness into which an honest, almost sacred, conviction may drive a man. 'It is like madness. It must be because it's self-destructive,' Decoud had said to himself often. It seemed to him that every conviction, as soon as it became effective, turned into that form of dementia the gods send upon those they wish to destroy. But he enjoyed the bitter flavour of that example with the zest of a connoisseur in the art of his choice. Those two men [Decoud and Father Corbelan] got on well together, as if each had felt respectively that a masterful conviction, as well as utter scepticism, may lead a man very far on the by-paths of political action (200).

I shall return to the actual content of this passage later, but what is relevant at the moment is the way it, though, like Decoud's world, apparently solid and simple at first glance, actually flies apart as we look at it - a characteristic encountered throughout Conrad's prose. For a start, the passage undermines conviction in itself. Thus, 'imagined himself', 'seemed to', 'as if', 'may': are the things it describes the case, or not; are they so, or are we being told merely the way they look? Moreover, things that are normally contradictories, or at least far distant from each other on the spectrum of meaning, are shoved up against each other here, as things that are equivalent or concurrently

the case: 'effective' is paired with 'dementia', 'conviction' with 'scepticism'. It is almost impossible to nail down a solid meaning for this passage: it will come apart. Any remaining security we might find in it is shattered on coming across the passage while reading the book for a second time: we might manage to skim across the surface of the passage and settle that it is saying that Decoud sees these other people as 'self destructive' and suffering from 'dementia' but this is then utterly undercut by the fact that in the end, it is Decoud who goes mad and kills himself. The passage has fallen apart completely.

Decoud ultimately kills himself specifically as a non-individual: 'he acted as if accomplishing some sort of rite'; his 'aspect was that of a somnambulist'; he acts 'without a pause, as if doing some work done many times before' (499). These are phrases to describe an automaton, not a man: Decoud's self has died long before he actually kills himself³.

Conrad presents all this very compellingly, but he does not necessarily endorse Decoud's decision to end his life. Indeed, there is a clear suggestion that Decoud is wrong. We are shown Gould drawing a similar conclusion of meaninglessness from his similar experience of things being utterly merged and confused: Gould finds himself in

the mire of corruption that was so universal as to almost lose its significance. He was prepared to stoop for his weapons (85).

And yet, that 'almost' is vital: the merging mire does not remove meaning from things; and 'corruption' does *not* lose its 'significance' it only 'almost' does so. The strength of this 'almost' will come back to haunt Gould, as we see the 'stoop'ing he does on the strength of ignoring it cause him and his wife irreparable damage. However, though Conrad may throw significant doubt on some of Decoud's responses, he nevertheless shows Decoud as utterly right about some

matters - the Gouids' marriage, for instance. Indeed, there is a gentleness and compassion (almost as if to Conrad's own past suicidal self) in the way the writing quietly points to an extenuating circumstance that his characters, in their misery, fail to see - namely, how greatly mere physical circumstances, such as exhaustion or shock, can twist a man's thinking. Thus, Decoud remembers 'with profound indifference' a mistake 'that he had not eaten anything yet since he had been left alone on the island' (497); immediately before his suicide, 'sleeplessness had robbed his will of all energy' (498). Similarly, Monygham's despair at what he sees as his cowardice under extreme torture is 'a conception which took no account of physiological facts' (375). Captain Mitchell's only supreme moment of stupidity in imprisonment comes when

the suddenness, unexpectedness and general inconceivableness of [the...] experience had confused his thoughts. Moreover, he was physically out of breath (331).

As his sympathy in these cases shows, Conrad does not despise, nor does he disown - either for himself or for men in general - moments of extreme identity-loss.

After seeing all the traumas to which a man's consciousness is open, it is no surprise to find that Conrad came to regard consciousness as a terrible burden:

Man must drag the ball and chain of his individuality to the very end. It is the [price] one pays for the infernal and divine privilege of thought (letter to Poradowska, 20 July (?) 1894, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 1: 162-163.)

Or consider his description of Nostromo's awakening:

handsome, robust, and supple, he threw back his head, flung his arms open, and stretched himself with a slow twist of the waist and a leisurely growling yawn of white teeth, as natural and free from evil in the moment of waking as a magnificent and unconscious wild beast. Then, in the suddenly steadied glance fixed upon nothing from under a thoughtful frown, appeared the man (411-412).

Here, beasts are natural and free from evil; it is man that is not, and man becomes man as soon as he exercises his consciousness, as soon as he thinks - 'glance fixed[...] thoughtful frown'. Such thinking is a pointless exercise anyway, as 'upon nothing' there is nothing to think about, it is all meaningless.

In *Nostramo*, many men turn to the material silver in an attempt to escape the evanescence of their otherwise immaterial identities. Attempts to take identity from the other extreme than the material the utterly immaterial, abstractions seem to fail. Viola has 'the spirit of self-forgetfulness, [and] the simple devotion to a vast humanitarian idea' (31) and yet, for all his carefully identifying writing on his house, he still seems merely a constantly harking-back and rather deluded old man, not a vital or relevant living identity. For Conrad, the male identity/matter nexus is the heart of the novel: '*Nostramo* has never been intended for the hero of the Tale[...] Silver is the pivot of the moral and material events' (letter to Ernest Bendz, quoted in Jean-Aubry 1927, 2: 296) :the novel, then, is about 'the "contest of man interlocked with matter"' (letter to Edward Garnett, in Garnett 1928, 84).

The matter, silver, is seen as permanent and permanently valid it will 'keep its value for ever' (300) unlike a man's fragilely-founded identity. Long after Decoud's sense of self is on its way out, 'the fascination of all that silver, with its potential power, survive[s...] alone outside of himself' (499). The temptation for a man is hence to imitate matter. Conrad

shows this process of temptation and imitation particularly clearly in two cases: Nostromo and Gould.

We know that Nostromo awakens by the fort to discover that he has lost the possibility of glory, by failing in his mission. He already suspects what Monygham and the others will unwittingly confirm on his return to town, that no-one particularly cares about the silver or him - any more, anyway. It is for this reason that Nostromo begins to see the permanent value of the silver as peculiarly attractive: 'his courage, his magnificence, his leisure, his work, everything was as before, only everything was a sham. But the treasure was real' (523-524). He wants - almost literally - to take it into himself - to 'clasp, embrace, absorb, subjugate in unquestioned possession' (529), and gain a borrowed permanence of self in that way. Of course, what happens, in such an unnatural relationship, is that far from his possessing the silver, it comes to possess him: he 'become[s] the slave of a treasure with full self-knowledge' (523). From being 'our man', he simply changes to being the silver's man, as its lure proves fatally stronger than the threat of death; dying enslaved to it he never achieves a real identity of his own.

In Gould's case, the identity-matter link is more complex but even stronger. In the chaos of Costaguana of life - the language surrounding Gould's hopes for the silver 'security' (84), 'order and stability' (110), 'symbol[...] of abstract justice' (402), 'rift in the darkness' (84) - echoes with ideas of permanence, incorruptibility, stability, purity. On its mountain the silver is literally and metaphorically above the transience and messiness of human affairs. Hence, Gould wants to entwine his identity with its, until he too can be valid for and in himself alone - an unshakeable identity. He actually starts off in life far more involved with ideas, with the non-material, than Nostromo ever was; though even this, Decoud (but perhaps only because of his habitual

scepticism) sees as mere self-deceit: '[Gould] could not believe his own motives if he did not make them first a part of some fairy-tale' (215). Nevertheless, despite this beginning, Gould will become just as materially entangled as Nostromo. He makes the fatal mistake of thinking he can establish ideas with the silver, give them - the offshoots of his mind, and hence in some way bound up with his identity - some permanence in the chaos of life: "what is wanted here is law, good faith, order, security. Anyone can declaim about these things, but I pin my faith to material interests" (84). This is the moment of his fatal slide into the ('almost' meaningless) corruption about him. His vision contracts from ideas of using the mine to create rational justice, to the mine's being an end in itself: an ideal of political justice becomes obsession merely with the security of the mine itself and from there slides into mere determination that if he cannot have the mine, no-one else will. 'He was prepared to stoop for his weapons' (85); maybe so, but he will find he cannot get up again. He becomes less and less human, more and more involved with silver, to an almost sexual degree: Mrs. Gould is childless, but this is hardly surprising as we repeatedly see her husband riding off to spend his nights at the mine. She herself, in her thoughts, significantly describes the mine as 'a terrible success for the last of the Goulds' (522). Conrad hammers the point home mercilessly, as we see her forced to attend what becomes, through the sexual and parturient terms he uses, the birth of the only kind of child she will ever have. As the first silver is produced from the mine, Emilia feels the only sexual gratification she will achieve: standing hand in hand with her husband looking at the 'erection', she feels a 'thrill of[...] emotion' and goes 'cold all over with excitement', and refuses to 'retire to rest'; after this 'conception', the silver is born 'yielded to the hazards of the world by the dark depths' of the Gould

concession, and she touches it with a mother's emotion, laying 'her unmercenary hands' upon it, the ingot 'still warm' from the mould, with 'an eagerness that made them tremble' (106-107). The heavy overtones of sexuality and fertility in the vocabulary only go to underscore by contrast the utter barrenness of the moment.

Gould begins as a feeling, eager young man; the kind of man who rushes to his betrothed to blurt out his emotions

'I've come to you I've come straight to you - ',
without being able to finish his phrase[....] He
caught hold of her hand, raised it to his lips (62);

- but the vivid personality we see here gradually petrifies under his passion for the mine, the material, until he becomes the rigid figure who - to the same woman - utters utterly impersonal, well-used monolithic blocks of phrases:

'I thought we had said all there was to say a long time ago. There is nothing to say now. There were things to be done. We have done them; we have gone on doing them. There is no going back now' (207).

By the last stages of the book, we hear less and less from him: he has progressed further and further towards the impassive material he so covets, progressed into monosyllables and then silence. Mrs. Gould herself is left to describe his materialisation by the mine: the non-material 'inspiration of their early years' turns into a wholly material and utterly dehumanizing 'wall of silver bricks' between them (221-222). No wonder the rallying cry of Gould's early days should become his wife's cry of despair when she bitterly acknowledges to herself what has happened: "'material interests!'" (522). His absorption into the material is what has ruined both their lives; and absorption it is. There is no hint that he has achieved the political success he aspired to in his pact with the

silver: his momentary success in bringing stability to Costaguana is soon overshadowed by the chaotic revolution that the very success of the mine provokes, and then by the knowledge that the revolutions, the chaos, will continue – the attempt to bring peace to Costaguana is like 'ploughing the sea' (187) and the book ends looking towards a time when 'all that the Gould Concession stands for shall weigh as heavily upon the people as the barbarism, cruelty, and misrule of a few years back' (511). Furthermore, there is no hint that Gould has achieved the firm identity he desired from his silver: quite the opposite – he becomes known as the 'embodied Gould concession' (203): the silver does not embody him, but vice-versa; he loses individuality and becomes it.

We have seen, then, Nostromo, Decoud and now Gould all deceived in their search for male identity, and become in some way grotesquely transformed into mere matter – both the drowned Decoud and the thieving Nostromo actually die literally 'weighted [down] by the bars of San Tome silver' (501). It is noticeable that the other theme these materialists share is their turning away from women: Gould's abandonment of Mrs. Gould for his mistress the mine; Decoud's ultimate failure of belief in Antonia; Nostromo's final destruction of his plans for Giselle through his eagerness to secure riches before securing her. Later, we shall see how this turning away from women becomes significant.

It is significant, too, that the material these men turn to is silver, not gold. Silver has none of the tradition of near-supernatural attraction that gold has – these men are victims of nothing like gold-fever (silver has no equivalent): it is not the silver itself that is dangerous, but their attitudes towards it. Thus Nostromo (albeit perhaps with proleptic irony) is closely associated with silver throughout the book: he is introduced to us riding a 'silver-grey mare' ((124) – and her colouring is referred to

repeatedly), wearing a hat and coat with 'a silver cord and tassels[....] enormous silver buttons' and with 'silver plates on headstall and saddle' (125) but the silver has no power over him yet. He is simply interested, like the other young men, in silver as a means: "old or young, they like money, and will speak well of the man who gives it to them" (247). Only later, as his attitude changes and he grasps at silver as a surrogate identity, will he be destroyed by it.

To grasp so desperately at silver for identity does seem quite an emotional act for men who are, or become, so stolid. Perhaps Decoud was right in his diagnosis of Gould's (and by extension, all the others') materialism as actually a kind of "sentimental" behaviour (216).

Materialism as sentimentality seems almost an oxymoron: materialism is far more commonly seen as a kind of practicality. In our surprise, we are brought to question how we look at characteristics traditionally associated with masculinity. To seem very practical is certainly a traditional macho pose, and Conrad himself is entangled in this. Consider any of his writings, as he gives us accurate detail on detail (fascinating and utterly evocative though they are) on exactly how the men sail the boat/ bury the treasure/ escape from the stockade, or whatever it is. One neglected aspect of this obsession with practical detail is best described by Schwenger's comment on a Hemingway short story:

we are given all the practical details of [whatever the activity is]... These are familiar male rituals, but the excessive attention paid to them hints at obsession, compulsion. Practicality protests too much, and thus betrays the presence of something opposed to it... Yet he provides us with ways of sensing the nature of the thing left out. Subtle, half-buried symbols abound (1984, 46-47).

The purely practical approach does not seem to work: Conrad's attempts to see morality solely in practical terms fall down. For instance, Sotillo can be deceived by Monygham because he takes it as a matter of course that Monygham will 'sell his countrymen and Charles Gould, his employer, for some share of the San Tomé silver' (350). Sotillo does not allow for Monygham's sense of duty. Conrad hence goes on to try and show morality (merely) as a practical necessity – useful to prevent exactly this kind of mistake:

the Colonel's want of moral sense was of a profound and innocent character. It bordered upon stupidity, moral stupidity. Nothing that served his ends could appear to him really reprehensible (350).

Morality here is a solely practical (its absence can be 'innocent') requirement to prevent 'stupidity'. However, the implications of Conrad's comments, for all their macho practicality, just do not hold water: they do not account for the beauty that we as readers – and in his treatment, Conrad as writer – find in Monygham, as against the ugliness of Sotillo. There is more of a difference between the two men than mere borderline 'stupidity'.

However, this is more of an unexplored confusion in Conrad's treatment of the episode, rather than any carefully provided 'way of sensing the nature of the thing left out' in his very practical writings. He certainly does provide such ways, though. Nothing is more practical than success, and yet, at the very opening of *Nostramo*, the ghosts of the gringos are supposed to haunt the treasure 'under the fatal spell of their success' (5); and Mrs. Gould repeats the idea: 'a terrible success for the last of the Goulds' (522). In *Nostramo*, practicality seems almost something to be feared: 'Charles Gould was competent because he had no illusions' (85). Illusion is opposed to practicality, while

competence is its zenith: yet we see the disaster to which his practical 'competence' brings Gould. Decoud may not always be right, yet we know that the sceptical and cosmopolitan Conrad empathises with much of his thought - and it is Decoud who connects the practical becoming 'effective' with the utterly useless 'dementia' (200). Decoud himself is proud of being the practical man:

'but I don't matter, I am not a sentimentalist, I cannot endow my personal desires with a shining robe of silk and jewels. Life is not for me a moral romance derived from the tradition of a pretty fairy-tale. No, Mrs. Gould; I am practical. I am not afraid of my motives. But, pardon me, I have been rather carried away. What I wish to say is that I have been observing[...]' (218).

Here, Conrad seems aware that practicality (perhaps including his own) can be over-protected. This is the only time the cynically-detached Decoud gets 'carried away': he vaunts his practicality like a man obsessed. The main point, though, is that Decoud's proud declaration "I am practical" is ultimately dangerous: the down-to-earth "I don't matter", with which this speech starts and which is here clearly connected in his mind with his practicality, becomes literally true for Decoud. The fate of this practical man is to feel utterly that he doesn't matter to kill himself.

Action (as against contemplation) is the ultimate in practicality (although, of course, in different circumstances, it can border on the unpractical, too - as when performed purely for show - as with much of Nostromo's activity). For Conrad, it is, too, a specifically masculine thing. A man's instinct, if his identity is threatened, is to re-affirm his machismo with action, as Gould's response to news of his father's death shows:

this consideration, closely affecting his own identity, filled his breast with a mournful and angry desire for action (66).

This is, for Conrad, a specifically male response: the novel contrasts 'woman's instinct of devotion' as against 'man's instinct of activity.' (74). Conrad's personal hatred of inaction, as leading to indolence, is well-known. Guerard describes Conrad's fear that in the mystic and easier-paced East, he would succumb to a sense of yawning meaningfulness (1958, e.g. 19-20, 26, 30), and Johnson refers to Conrad's care lest he slip into a 'neurotic immobility' (1965, 273). So it is not surprising that again and again in his writings Conrad commends action. Thus, Jim, for instance, as a newly-recruited sailor, is so busy day-dreaming of heroism that he misses his first real chance to attain heroic status through a brave deed (*Jim*, 7-8). Action is an escape from (unmanly) brooding and preoccupation: action is amnesia. However, by the time of *Nostromo*, Conrad is questioning the usefulness of this idea⁴: 'action is consolatory. It is the enemy of thought and the friend of flattering illusions' (66). Action may be consolatory, but it is pointless: 'illusions' surely cannot be much help in solving the real problems a practical man may face. And this is serious: Nostromo's downfall is directly caused by his initial addiction to action-generated 'flattering illusions'.

It would be wrong to suggest that Conrad ever utterly abandons his love of practical activity. When Nostromo and Decoud are in the boat together, confounded in darkness, the danger of their sinking and the need for activity to avoid this, are seen only as good: 'but this peril, this only incontrovertible truth in which they shared, seemed to act as an inspiration to their mental and bodily powers' (295).

Nevertheless, in *Nostromo*, we repeatedly find male action to be pointless, doomed. If ever it is successful, it is so only at a great price: Mrs. Gould is forced to concede that 'there [is...] something inherent in the necessities of successful action which carry[s...] with it the moral degradation of the idea' (521). But very little of the male action in *Nostromo* is successful: I have already discussed the futile fleetingness of Gould's attempts to establish law and order and of Nostromo's mission with the silver. Mrs. Gould actually tells Nostromo as he dies, "no one misses it now" (560). Nostromo may be corrupt in taking the silver but he does not even manage to achieve the status of villain - a man can be doomed for actions even while those actions are still in themselves pointless.

Here we suddenly find, then, that Conrad is doing something quite unlike what we would expect of a supposed novelist of masculine simplicities. *Nostromo* undermines the very basis of the traditional masculine role - casting doubt on the usefulness of the traditional path set out for men whereby they must seek identity in activity and practicality. Identity is not to be found there. Does the text, then, seem to favour the opposite? Practicality (and activity, if it is to be effective) deals with the real, the actual: does *Nostromo* seem to favour dealing instead with the unreal, the imaginary, the illusory? Conrad's approach to such matters in this novel is a strange one, as the text seems simultaneously both to fear and to embrace them. The depiction of Mitchell and his imagination best illustrates this duality. Mitchell is brave under the horrors of imprisonment by the unpredictably violent Sotillo, not so much through 'firmness of soul as [through] the lack of a certain kind of imagination' (338). Mitchell has no imagination: he is certainly not praised for this - he is generally portrayed with the kind of mild fondness for pompous idiocy that sometimes borders on contempt; yet

he is not condemned for it either - indeed, if he had been a man with an imagination, his experience would have been far worse.

A man with no imagination, or (to come to an even less practical subject) no illusions, is doomed to problems with his identity. Decoud proclaims himself to be a man without "fairy tale[s]" (218) - and yet is not Decoud exactly the kind of sceptic Stein describes in *Lord Jim* (212-217), trying to climb out of the "destructive element" of dreams and ideals into which "man[...] is born" (*Jim*, 214), and denying that they are a necessary part of our humanity? Decoud dies in the way Stein's philosophy says such a man would - by drowning. It is almost as if the dream takes revenge at Decoud's end: he does not make the "deep, deep sea" of dreams "keep [him...] up" (*Jim*, 214), as Stein advises, by allowing the dreams. Instead, he denies meaning in them, and hence, when left with nothing to distract him from his element of the dream, drowns in meaninglessness.

Thus, Conrad, for all his love of practicality, must end up, though praising practical activity, doing so in a non-practical way - praising it because it is an illusion: 'in our activity alone do we find the sustaining illusion' (497). Illusion can be good, as in the case of (Conrad's idea of) love, which he describes as something which 'to the most sensible minds appears like a triumph of good over all the evils of the earth' (74). Equivocation comes in with 'appears', here: is this a condemnation of otherwise sensible minds; does 'appears' imply that they are wrong, or merely that about such a thing, no-one can know? Putting the equivocation aside for the moment, if love is good, it is so while being utterly unpractical, while being undoubtedly an illusion: in *Nostramo*, love is 'the supreme illusion' (189), 'the strongest of illusions' (74). Love is the opposite of practical success - a 'misfortune' yet Morygham can still think of it as an 'enlightening and priceless

misfortune' (513). If a man denies the good of love's illusion, he puts his identity in jeopardy. Decoud sees love as 'a ridiculous fatality' (155), and it is surely not insignificant that one of the very last things to go before he kills himself is his passion: 'even his passionate devotion to Antonia[...] lost all appearance of reality' (267). Decoud's macho, dispassionate pose 'indifferentism' (152), the novel calls it - is fatal. Intellectual posturing, intellectualism - the far extreme from love, from passion - is useless to a man searching for his identity: '[Decoud] had pushed the habit of universal raillery to a point where it blinded him to the genuine impulses of his own nature' (153).

Passion is, then, perhaps surprisingly, a great thing in Conrad's canon of manhood: 'a man possessed of passion is not a bankrupt in life' (140). Decoud, writing to his beloved sister says:

'[...] don't really know whether to count myself with the living or with the dead. ' *Quien sabe?*'[...] But no! feeling for you is certainly not dead'(249).

Passionate feeling is here able to solve (for a time at least) the identity undermining problems of consciousness. Generally, though, Decoud and Nostromo have no passionate belief in anything much: Decoud frequently speaks of them as alike in this:

'that Genoese sailor who, like me, has come casually here to be drawn into the events for which his scepticism as well as mine seems to entertain a sort of passive contempt' (246).

They are sceptics, not believers, and thus they are doomed. It is not the traditional areas of machismo - practicality, activity - but something like the opposite - dream, illusion, passion - that will save a man's identity.

There is one important male character I have not yet dealt with in depth - Monygham. His character and fate are markedly different from

any we have looked at so far. How does this difference bear on the way he deals with the problems of male identity?

Monygham's difference is immediately apparent. Unlike any of the other major male characters we have looked at so far, the first impression he gives does not fit him into any of the traditional heroic moulds:

his limping gait and bowed head[....] old, ugly, learned - and a little loco (45);

with his twisted shoulders, drooping head, sardonic mouth, and side-long bitter glance, [he] was mysterious and uncanny (102).

Immediately, with his twisted and limping body, we can see that this man will not solve his problems through manly activity: his bodily incapacity gives him the kind of psychological strength through suffering - notable because so in contrast with the accompanying physical weakness - that can be found in non-macho, non-heroic heroes through literature from Oedipus to George Eliot's Philip Wakem.

Monygham does not have faith in men, and the cause of this he shares with the other male characters we have looked at - a lack of faith in himself:

only Mrs. Gould could keep his unbelief in men's motives within due bounds; but even to her[...] he had said once, 'Really, it is most unreasonable to demand that a man should think of other people so much better than he is able to think of himself' (44).

Monygham too, like Nostromo and Decoud, has experienced a destructive awareness of human unimportance: he is

well aware of the most dangerous element common to [all dangers...]: of the crushing,

paralysing sense of human littleness, which is what really defeats a man struggling with natural forces, alone, far from the eyes of his fellows.(433)

Like Nostromo and Decoud, he has had the identity-shattering encounter with his own powerlessness as a man, through seeing his deepest wishes frustrated:

'I should certainly have liked to ease the last moments of that poor woman. And I can't. It's impossible. Have you met the impossible face to face?' (318)

Monygham, again like Nostromo and Decoud, has seen how easily everything a man considers of most importance, most deeply grounded in himself, can fall away. In his torture at the hands of Bento's men, he becomes well acquainted with the 'sort of pain which makes truth, honour, self-respect, and life itself matters of little moment' (373). He has found himself, even more than Decoud and Nostromo ever do, at the bottom of the heap, the lowest of all possible men:

the doctor, pathetically enough, believed that he had forfeited the right to be indignant with anyone - for anything(453) -

and finds in himself 'that indelible blot which made him fit for dirty work' (453).

Yet, despite all this, he is utterly honourable, hugely brave. For a man who has been tortured for information before, and almost wholly physically and psychologically destroyed by that torture, to lie to Sotillo, evidence of whose methods he has seen in the tattered corpse of Hirsch dangling from a beam, and to do so, knowing that he must eventually be found out and punished, is an act of consummate

courage. When asked how long he will continue to deceive Sotillo, his answer is simple: "I can tell you exactly. As long as I live" (437).

By making him so brave, Conrad ensures that Monygham, by his very character, shatters what we might call the Nostromo-myth:

the doctor [...] had, amongst the populace of Sulaco, the reputation of being an evil sort of man. It was based solidly on his personal appearance, which was strange, and on his rough, ironic manner – proofs visible, sensible, and incontrovertible of the doctor's malevolent disposition (454).

Nostromo has all the reputation for incorruptibility and bravery, Monygham, with a reputation as an evil man, has all the actuality of honesty and courage. 'The value of a sentence is in the personality which utters it, for nothing new can be said by man or woman' (181): whether we agree with it or not, this is perhaps a particularly hard saying for a writer, yet one that Conrad nevertheless thinks worth uttering. Men repeatedly fail to see this supreme importance of the personality, of the real self above and beyond what someone might say or showily do, a failure most spectacularly demonstrated in Nostromo himself. The importance of the real man is left to the women to point out: Mrs. Gould is 'disenchanted' when Gould suggests that his good reputation and his ability to make 'a favourable impression' (77) safeguard the Gould concession, rather than his 'policy' – what he actually does (143). Antonia corrects him more bluntly: "it is your character that is the inexhaustible treasure which may save us all yet; your character, Carlos, not your wealth" (361).

Monygham, then, has been through the same, and sometimes worse, identity-crushing experiences as Nostromo, Decoud and Gould, and yet he survives with an identity, survives as an honourable and brave man, where they do not. How does he do it?

We watch him solve the very same problems of identity that we have seen destroy the other men. He is, as they are, deeply unsure of himself and his identity - "it is the last thing a man ought to be sure of" (310) yet where the others manufacture facades, or sink into despair, he uses this very unsureness to free himself: if he knows he is worthless, he has nothing to live up to, nor any facade to harrow him with the gap between it and himself. He is left free to act as he wishes, free to succeed. His consummate act of bravery is shown to spring directly from his freeing use of this very lack of faith in himself: "I am the only one fit for that dirty work" (439). Mitchell spells it out: "he saved us all from the deadly incubus of Sotillo, where a more particular man might have failed" (481) . Monygham makes use of the negative elements in his publicly-perceived image, elements that the other men destroy themselves in trying to flee, to enable him to act bravely: "let me try to serve you [Mrs. Gould] to the whole extent of my evil reputation" (410). In thus solving the first problems of the fragile male identity, Monygham achieves, in the end, the opposite of what Nostromo, Decoud or Gould manage: 'the doctor's self-respect marked inwardly by the almost complete disappearance from his dreams of [his torturer] Father Beron' (508). He has used his masculine lack of faith in himself liberatingly, and paradoxically regained that faith, in a form purged of selfishness: he has 'self-respect', where the others are merely self-obsessed.

Monygham solves, too, the deeper problems of a man's identity - those involving consciousness itself. Decoud could tell he was alive because death was so close (283). Rather than like Decoud being appalled at this knowledge of death's proximity and surrendering to it with self-obsessive suicide, Monygham shows that it is possible to use it. A man can act with no fears at all, when he is at ease with the possibility of the self-liberating and positive opposite of suicide:

martyrdom. Where Decoud has the despair of self-slaughter, Monygham finds 'the exaltation of self-sacrifice' (461): this is no death-or-glory, machismo-inspired posturing:

his simplicity was such that, though he had no sort of heroic idea of seeking death, the risk, deadly enough, to which he exposed himself, had a sustaining and comforting effect (439).

He is freed, with no need to cling to identity or to consciousness, actually to draw strength from death's proximity.

It is typical of Conrad's determination to continue to probe beyond any tentative approach to conclusiveness that elsewhere in *Nostramo* there is the suggestion that a man can be freed, though perhaps to do lesser things, even if he has not solved the problem of consciousness - through the lack of consciousness instead. For instance, Mitchell never harrows himself with thoughts of what he is made of within, nor has he ever the least idea of what is really going on at any point in the book, yet he can show a 'resolute and ready spirit' (335) in the face of danger, and the moment when he responds to Sotillo's threats of torture and death with "Bosh!" (337) is one of the most moving in the book. Moreover, the things which a man may do in such cases may be lesser only in that the man is not aware of their greatness, as with the hugely heroic and utterly unconscious Singleton of *The Nigger Of The 'Narcissus'*.

Monygham comes through the threats to a man's identity, posed by the temptations of materialism and over-vaunted practicality, with great success. The text suggests the rightness of Monygham's attitude towards material things, contrasting his attitude with the others' and their obsession with the silver. It does so with a rather untypical, Victorian obviousness, referring to Monygham's love for Mrs. Gould as

'the inexhaustible treasure of his devotion drawn upon in the secret of his heart like a store of unlawful wealth' (504). However, the 'unlawful wealth' reminds us irresistably of Nostromo and his stolen treasure, and that comparison does much to disperse the lumbering obviousness of the contrast being made here. It casts an aura of doubt over the rightness of Monygham's devotion even in the moment of praising it: is it somehow illicit, something unclean, for all its surface-appearance of wholesomeness? Yet the comparison with Nostromo, here, is in the end still inescapably (and successfully) a contrast - where Nostromo's treasure brought himself and others nothing but harm, Monygham has found true treasure. He is thus freed to be the only man in the novel actually to speak out against the evils of materialism:

'there is no peace and no rest in the development of material interests. They have their law, and their justice. But it is founded on expediency, and is inhuman; it is without rectitude, without the continuity and the force that can be found only in a moral principle' (511).

Even here, though, we can see again the tangles Conrad's attempts to praise morality on practical grounds can get him into: what are 'force' and 'continuity' in themselves, that they should recommend morality? Both could just as well be found in tyranny. Nevertheless, this speaking-out is a relief, after the blinkered attitudes of the other men, and is exactly the kind of thing that at that time, perhaps, only a good *man* could do: Mrs. Gould comes to feel a similar disgust with material interests, but cannot speak out, from loyalty to her husband.

Monygham, for all his spiritual superiority, is not utterly unpractical, though. He is active, like the practical men - he exposes himself to terrible risks, but in a new way: he takes the risks, not in a desperate bid to enhance his self, but to serve others. He has the passion that,

contrary to the traditional critical view, we have found Conrad to believe so necessary; and this passion saves Monygham, gives him exactly the firm identity that the other men, in looking for, paradoxically lose: 'the truth of [Monygham's...] nature consisted in his capacity for passion' (520). Monygham achieves this passion without jettisoning the degree of practicality Conrad is more traditionally acknowledged to be attached to: he has 'the exaltation of self-sacrifice', but it is a 'reasonable exaltation, determined not to lose whatever advantage chance put into its way' (461). This practical passion allows him, despite mere appearances (which Conrad found so utterly misleading in the world of men) to achieve true humanity, true compassion: something that, in the topsy-turvy world of macho images, can be seen as a lack - as Conrad ironically points up in his phrasing: Monygham lacks

the polished callousness of men of the world,
the[...] easy tolerance for oneself and others; the
tolerance wide as poles asunder from true
sympathy and human compassion(520).

Monygham solves the problems of identity through love. It is a special kind of love - peculiarly Conradian. It partakes strongly of the Conradian eternal verity of fidelity: Mrs. Gould tells Monygham: "[I] put my faith in your good heart long ago" (513). This faith from her is what has elicited the saving faithful devotion in return from him. 'Intent upon a task of love and devotion' (461), he is able to use the things which crush other men's identities.

This special love may be based in the familiarly Conradian virtue of fidelity, but its main element is far from familiar in the Conradian critical canon. The love is actually based not in the traditionally male, but deeply in the female: what makes Monygham different from the other,

doomed men in this novel is only his love for Mrs. Gould and hers for him. Exactly why the other men's turning away from women should be fatal begins to become clearer. Thus, woman, the female, is here given an unexpectedly central place in Conrad's search for a real solution to the problems of male identity.

In *Nostromo*, we are brought to an awareness of the danger of a man's forced habitation exclusively of the male world of outer things, the world Forster sums up in *Howard's End* as that of 'telegrams and anger' (1978, 41) the world of identity-projection, material success, pure practicality. Mrs. Gould's life and Gould's is ruined by a concentration on these outer things. Mrs Gould silently thinks:

was it for this [material success] that her life had been robbed of all the intimate felicities of daily affection which her tenderness needed as the human body needs air to breathe? And the doctor, indignant with Charles Gould's blindness, hastened to change the conversation (512).

Mrs. Gould misses the inner world her husband does not recognise - and Moryham confirms that she has every right to . The outer male world is not enough. Conrad portrays the female world as utterly different from this male world:

a woman with a masculine mind is not a being of superior efficiency; she is simply a phenomenon of imperfect differentiation - interestingly barren and without importance (66-67).

Whatever we may think of the surface-sexism of the sentence, it is still clear that the underlying thought characterizes the two sexes as in utterly separate worlds. Woman, the female, is something good for a man to hold onto, because of her separateness from the man's own identity-crushing world . As Decoud's self slowly dissolves away on the

island, the last thing we hear of before his decision for suicide is his loss of belief in Antonia and in her love for him: it is surely significant that this is the moment that marks his doom.

When Conrad comes to portray women of frank sexuality, he frequently does so in terms of horror and disgust - for instance (one of many), the girl in 'The Inn Of The Two Witches' (119-146) and he is no different in *Nostromo*. Linda is unattractive, dutiful and good; Giselle, physically seductive, is simply 'a danger. A frightful danger' (535). Yet we can gather how important the role of the feminine in the male world is to Conrad, in that he shows how even Giselle could be of some use to Nostromo. She calls out to him:

'I love you! I love you !'

These words gave him an unwonted sense of freedom; they cast a spell stronger than the accursed spell of the treasure (540-541).

A woman's love, even a woman as repugnant to Conrad as Giselle, is nearly enough to prevent Nostromo losing himself in slavish materialism. Nearly, but not quite: her words and love come too late. He chooses the treasure above her - he must 'grow rich first' (541).

Men cannot survive in an exclusively male world: Nostromo's doom is that he lives the kind of life 'whose very essence, value, reality, consist[s] in its reflection from the admiring eyes of men' (525) but men the masculine - cannot help. Monygham is saved by the feminine, Mrs. Gould's admiration and love; a look from her eyes that is actually specified:

the silent enquiry of slightly widened eyes and the merest ghost of a smile[...] which was very fascinating to men by something subtly devoted, finely self-forgetful in its lively readiness of attention (157).

There is some mockery of men's desire for adoration here, but could it not also be the case that men are fascinated by this look because some part of them recognises it as something that they urgently need for salvation? And the novel is not advocating a one-way traffic of female giving: 'self-sacrifice' and 'devotion' (461) are exactly what Mrs. Gould receives from Monygham, as well as gives. Perhaps it is simply that the women initiate the possibility of these things - the opposite of the outer, male world of 'telegrams and anger': Mrs. Gould must have faith in Monygham's good heart before he can be capable of devotion to her, the devotion that frees him - unlike any other man in the book - to achieve true and honourable identity as a man.

Conrad has come a long way from the traditional ideals of macho heroism, here: he is dwelling on the vital importance of the presence of the feminine for, and in, the male. Monygham's bodily weakness may be a transferred reference to the (perceived) weakness of the partly feminized male (we might compare Forster's similarly damaged Rickie in *The Longest Journey*.) In Monygham, then, the feminized male is not debarred from success - he successfully achieves a solidity of identity that none of the other more traditionally macho characters even approach. This less 'manly' man is the closest thing in *Nostramo* to a hero.

In *Nostramo*, then, men, and specifically men - not women - are unsure of their identities, both at the level of their image in public and at the deeper level of consciousness. These insecurities lead them to turn to 'material interests' for a borrowed security, and to vaunt their practicality and activity (as against contemplation) in a kind of macho pose that Conrad comes no longer to value without question. *Nostramo* explores how a turn away from these (traditionally) male areas, and the outer male world, towards the inner, more (traditionally)

feminine world of less concrete things - illusion, dream - is necessary as a move towards achieving a real identity. In particular, a man can have a devotion, a concentration on something, or rather someone, other than himself called from him by a woman's faith and love. This devotion frees him to use the very things that would destroy another self-obsessed man's identity, as sources of strength which, purely incidentally to his devoted service of others, allow him paradoxically to achieve the very reality of identity he is no longer particularly looking for. The feminine in the male is thus of vital importance.

And yet - in the end, is my summary here, really what the novel says? I think not. It is more a description of a line of thought that it is possible to piece together from *Nostramo* and present as a whole. The text itself is never so certain. Monygham is not the most important man in the book, nor is he put forward as a model for a Conradian New Man. Monygham is a success, in that he finds identity and a peaceful self-respect by the end of the book - something that no other male character in it achieves. Yet he is still just a middle-aged, occasionally bitter-tongued man with a limp. Monygham is not a blue-print for manhood; he is a man who happens to embody in his person aspects of behaviour and attitude that might be helpful to other men. Conrad remains determinedly the kind of writer about whom one cannot write a neat conclusion, perhaps because he himself found the world to be a place that does not allow for such things: dream and illusion are necessary to get through, and neither is open to a logical tying up. Passages which seem solid enough initially, but which unravel as one examines them (like Decoud's thoughts on 'conviction' and 'dementia' (200)) abound. However, Decoud's fate indicates perhaps that there is not much to be gained by having a Decoud-ish attitude to such passages, or to Conrad's works as a whole, and hence simply slipping,

overwhelmed, beneath the surface of the carefully inexplicable. It is better to do something, to try to read and describe Conrad, even if we must admit occasionally to casting in iron, works whose very nature lies partly in their vaporousness, and even if we cannot tell whether our efforts are wholly successful: whether we are Monyghams or merely Mitchells.

Notes.

1. This whole area of questioning is also familiar from its frequent occurrence in Romantic thought. I am indebted to Tony Davies for drawing my attention, in particular, to the intriguing resemblances between the passage under discussion and Keats' 'Ode To A Nightingale'. For instance, Conrad's 'without light' for Keats' 'here there is no light'; Conrad's 'powerful drug' for Keats' 'drowsy numbness' of 'hemlock' or 'some dull opiate'; Conrad's 'even his hand held before his face did not exist for his eyes' for Keats' 'I cannot see what flowers are at my feet / Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs (and, incidentally, compare too, with the latter, 'Your ship floats unseen under your feet, her sails flutter invisible above your head', from a few pages earlier (6-7) in *Nostramo*); Conrad's 'the agitations the passions and the dangers' for Keats' 'the weariness, the fever and the fret'. These similarities of diction and content are so close that we are not surprised to find both passage and poem culminating in kindred philosophical probings: Keats' 'Was it a vision or a waking dream?' for Decoud's similar uncertainty. Furthermore, the thought of the passage and the poem also both culminate in movements towards suicide: Decoud is reduced by moments such as this to his happy contemplation of suicide as 'eternal peace' from such questions of selfhood and his desire to hear 'the cord' of his existence 'snap' (498) is that of a man 'in love with easeful death', desiring 'to cease...with no pain'. Both Keats (or his poem's speaker) and Decoud must, though, for the moment, suffer the return from perceived peace to the problems of an insecure yet, paradoxically, inescapable selfhood: Decoud's 'strange sensation of his soul returning to his body' (262), just after my passage ends, for Keats' 'toll me back from thee to my sole self'. Of course, it is impossible to know how conscious these Keatsian parallels are on Conrad's part, but conscious or not, the reverberations into Romantic thought they set up assist our sense of the moment's strangeness, and of the self's insecurity, as we read the passage.

2. Watts notes Conrad's use of a similar technique in *Almayer's Folly*, with the phrase 'the elder statesman of Sambir' as applied to Babalatchi (1984, 51). See my Chapter Two, 101, for something similar in 'Falk'.

3. Conrad builds many similarities to himself into the character of Decoud. Like Conrad, Decoud is an observer, a writer and a foreigner and thus the perpetual outsider that Conrad always considered himself to be. Where the thematic construction of the novel requires only that Decoud should drown himself (his sinking into the sea signifying his finally being overwhelmed by the vast and indifferent nature around him), Conrad adds the detail of Decoud's shooting himself, and specifically shooting himself in the chest - 'the revolver...pointing at his breast' (500-501). This is exactly the method Conrad himself had used in his own suicide-attempt as a young man. The similarities between the two men even include the detail of their accents: 'Decoud had dropped easily into English, which he spoke with precision, very correctly, but with too many 'z' sounds'; visitors to Conrad's house were always amazed that such a master of the English language should speak it with such a poor accent. The emotions Conrad expresses in letters written while he was actually producing *Nostramo* are strikingly close to Decoud's on the island:

I feel myself strangely growing into a sort of outcast. A mental and moral outcast. I hear of nothing I think of nothing I reflect upon nothing - I cut myself off and with all that I can just only keep going[...] - and always deeper in the mire (letter to Galsworthy, 22 August 1903, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 3: 54).

There seems, then, to be evidence of a relatively close link between Conrad's own thoughts and experiences and those he portrays in Decoud.

4. And indeed, it is in its probing of the idea of action that the novel returns most nearly to being the political novel that it first appears to be. 'Action' was a word with an important political context in this era: consider Maurras' 'Action Française'; Yeats' cult of 'cleansing violence'; or the activity inherent in post-*risorgimento* patriotism in Italy (d'Annunzio as an instinctive do-er, like the animal-Nostromo before he is fully awake at the ruined fort). Conrad was certainly familiar with Sorel's action-based proto-fascism in *Reflections On Violence* (1915). However, the idea of action also firmly returns us to the heart of the novel's less overtly political concern with male identity: action was central to English concepts of ideal manliness in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (see, e.g. Greenslade 1994, 211-214).

CHAPTER TWO.

'I DID NOT KNOW HOW GOOD A MAN I WAS TILL THEN' ('YOUTH', 36): THE HEROIC MALE IDENTITY IN EARLY CONRAD - 'FALK', 'YOUTH' AND 'THE END OF THE TETHER'.

Our examination of *Nostramo* (1904) has established some of the central strands of Conrad's approach to the linked issues of masculinity and heroism. Turning to a selection of Conrad's short tales of the sea 'Falk' (1903), 'Youth' and 'The End Of The Tether' (both 1902) - we can trace the emergence of these themes in his earlier fiction. *Heart Of Darkness* (1902), though originally published in one volume with 'Youth' and 'Tether', is so central a Conradian text as to warrant examination in a chapter of its own.

Conrad's stories of the sea are told by men to men, often in the exclusively masculine surroundings of mess-room, smoking-room, or club. Repeatedly, the tales open with scenes of male camaraderie that highlight the homosocial milieu around and behind the tales. The men themselves seem consciously to create and enhance this unity:

several of us, all more or less connected with the sea[....]

That flavour of salt water which for so many of us had been the very water of life permeated our talk[....] one or two of us ('Falk', 105).

Thus the opening of 'Falk': five group-references in no more than a dozen lines and the uniting power of sea-experience hammered home - and 'Falk' is by no means atypical. 'Youth' is even more insistent:

this could have occurred nowhere but in England, where men and sea interpenetrate[....]

We were sitting round a mahogany table that reflected[...] our faces as we leaned on our elbows [...] We all began life in the merchant service. Between the five of us there was the strong bond of the sea, and also the fellowship of the craft ('Youth', 3).

The men are like one man, here - 'we leaned on our elbows.' They carefully exclude other people:

a charm that those who have not lived with the ships, in the ships, by the ships of that generation can never know ('Falk', cancelled passage, quoted in Johnson 1965, 270).

- and this exclusion extends even to the imaginative sympathy an outsider might attempt:

the fellowship[...] which no amount of enthusiasm for yachting, cruising and so on can give, since one is only the amusement of life, and the other is life itself ('Youth', 3).

This determined emphasis on the bondedness, the unity, of the male group is so irresistible as to be almost overwhelming, perhaps to the point of suggesting some anxiety beneath the surface of camaraderie. The nature of such an anxiety is indicated in the behaviour of the characters within the tales these narrating male groups tell, and seems to centre around the pressures generated by membership of such a group. It is the anxiety, later raised to the level of obsession in the character of Nostromo, about being seen to be masculine, being seen to be worthy of membership of (and seen to be so by) the exclusively masculine-heroic group.

Central to 'Youth', then, is the young Marlow's struggle to discover and achieve social manhood in this group: he is careful to note that he finds himself lasting the test out 'as well as any of these men' (12). At the heart of the tale is the conflict between Marlow and the current ruler of the masculine clique, Captain Beard. Even the latter's name suggests mature masculinity, especially for the young and whiskerless Marlow, who later has even the few signs of hairy masculinity he has managed to achieve - hair, eyebrows, moustache - blown off: he must start his climb to manhood from scratch.

In 'Falk', too, the young Captain's insecurity in the dominant male role is patent:

altogether I was not getting on. I would discover at odd times (generally about midnight) that I was totally inexperienced, greatly ignorant of business, and hopelessly unfit for any sort of command (115).

He wants only to be seen as a man amongst men, one of the 'us':

I did my best to preserve a cool appearance, but, all the same, I must have shown how much taken aback I was. We were talking in the middle of the room. Suddenly, behind my back some ass blew his nose with a great noise and at the same time another quill-driver got up and went out on the landing hastily. It occurred to me I was cutting a foolish figure there (146).

His very language reveals that it is masculinity that is at the heart of his embarrassment. His irritable 'some ass' distinctly belongs to public-school, male-grouping jargon. It emerges quite suddenly and specifically at this moment: it is impossible to imagine language as acquired as this being used in the midst of an elemental Conradian

storm scene. It is language exclusive to men: for a woman to use such a term at this time would be improper, unfeminine - unthinkable. The young Captain's dismay at his difficulties in getting his ship towed out also centres on how his masculinity will be perceived:

how insignificant and contemptible I must appear,
for the fellow to dare treat me like this (137).

A robbery, in a passage that Conrad later cancelled (perhaps as repeating something already clear), worries the Captain only in this same way:

suddenly I found myself as naked as a fakir.
Therefore, I argued to myself, my imbecility was
demonstrated - immense, overwhelming. My
general unfitness too (quoted in Johnson 1965,
270).

The whole of a young man's life is a quasi-Darwinian trial of his 'fitness' to belong to the male peer-group: 'to me[the ship...] was[...] the trial of life ('Youth', 12). Young Marlow's final achievement of his own mini-captaincy is seen in similar terms - as proof: 'I did not know how good a man I was till then' ('Youth', 36).

Yet what does manhood, once achieved, have to recommend itself, in the Conradian world. 'Good' in young Marlow's comment here is plainly not a term of moral value but only of expertise. Indeed, manhood and the then current *Boy's Own* ideals of 'manly' behaviour are often emphatically separated in Conrad: the need to belong to the male peer group seems to override considerations of decency and morality. Thus, the Captain in 'Falk' is upset at 'cutting a foolish figure' at the naval office, even though he can disparage the men who mock him there as

mere 'quill-driver's; or, again, he is anxious to make a good impression on the head man there, even though the latter is 'sickly, thin, and short, with wrists like a boy of ten' (146). The Captain's behaviour follows the same pattern with Faik himself:

[Falk's] conduct in matters of business[...] seemed to me totally unrestrained by morality or even by the commonest sort of decency. How insignificant and contemptible I must appear, for the fellow to dare treat me like this (137).

He recognises Falk as morally repugnant but is still concerned about the impression he will make on him.

Similarly, the fear of expulsion from the male peer group overrides the manly virtues of friendship and fair-play that supposedly connect the group in the first place – as is demonstrated in Elliott's response even to the mere possibility that Whalley is no longer one of the happy few:

[Elliott] shook with laughter[....] But suddenly he stopped laughing. A vague recollection had crossed his mind. Hadn't he heard it said[...] that poor Whalley had been cleaned out completely.

[It....] struck him suddenly that Captain Whalley, unstimulating and without a word, seemed to be awaiting something – perhaps expecting.... He gathered the reins at once and burst out in bluff hearty growls -

'Ha! My dear boy. The men we have known - the ships we've sailed - ay! and the things we've done....'

The pony plunged – the syce skipped out of the way. Captain Whalley raised his arm.

'Good-bye' ('Tether', 200, 210).

A whispering court of male peers is in action here: 'heard it said'. Elliott uses specifically (and almost exclusively) masculine behaviours to paper over the unspeakable possibility of Whalley's fall. With 'bluff hearty

grows', he carefully brings up images of their shared male heroics from the past - "'the men we have known the ships we've sailed - ay! and the things we've done"' - before hastily abandoning Whalley in case he is indeed no longer one of 'us'.

Already, then, we encounter warning-signs that male identity in the eyes of other men may not be worth the winning. In 'Youth', the older Marlow's male-group identity is firmly established in the narrative present of the tale 'between the five of us there was the strong bond of the sea, and also the fellowship of the craft' (3) and yet despite this, he yearns for the times when his manhood was still uncertain, still to be put to the test. What he gained in the episode he narrates is tiny - the captaincy of a fourteen-foot rowing boat and the first insult-strewn arrival at an obscure and unlighted Eastern port - yet to him, now, it is everything: he yearns for the past and 'pass the bottle' (10, 12, etc.) - is disillusioned with his present. The beauty of youthful ardour - 'oh youth! The strength of it, the faith of it, the imagination of it!' (12) - reflected in the struggle to achieve a firm identity within the male-heroic peer group, seems greater than what is being struggled for:

to me [in my youth] she was not an old rattle-trap carting about the world a lot of coal for a freight to me she was the endeavour, the test, the trial of life (12).

The beauty of the ardour behind the struggle is greater than the struggle and the attained identity itself. That this is so vitiates even the original ardour, for the grown man: the Marlow in the narrative present of the tale is forced to dismiss his own past feelings as 'charming', 'silly' (34) and

ultimately 'deceitful' (37). They are the faith and imagination needed to sustain a mere dream.

Conrad himself seems to dislike the necessity for a specific male-heroic identity because of the consciousness of self that the desire for and (even more so) the achievement and sustainment of such an identity must entail. As we have already seen, he gloomily refers to his sense of his selfhood as a 'ball and chain' that one 'must drag[...] to the very end' (letter to M. Poradowska, 20 July (?) 1894, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 1: 162-163). He specifically chooses the *Narcissus's* Singleton for praise - and Singleton is a character who has no conscious awareness of his identity as a man amongst men, but who instead simply exists:

he was in perfect accord with his life[....] Would you seriously, of malice prepense cultivate in that unconscious man the power to think. Then he would become conscious - and much smaller - and very unhappy. Now he is simple and great like an elemental force[....] Would you seriously wish to tell such a man: 'Know thyself'. Would you? (letter to Cunninghame Graham, 14 December 1897, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 1: 423).

As *Nostramo* will later go on to demonstrate again, more amply, there is anyway no such thing as a real identity for a man:

the truth is[...] that one's own personality is only a ridiculous and aimless masquerade of something hopelessly unknown (letter to Garnett, 23/4 March 1896, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 1: 267).

Moreover, no action is possible for man to allow him to achieve manhood:

you fight, work, sweat, nearly kill yourself, sometimes do kill yourself, trying to accomplish something - and

you can't. Not from any fault of yours. You simply can do nothing, neither great nor little - not a thing in the world - not even marry an old maid, or get a wretched 600-ton cargo of coal to its port of destination ('Youth', 4).

The true attainment of a manly identity before your peers is not possible.

Thus, the whole idea of a male identity rests on pretence, as the Captain in 'Falk' acknowledges without a second thought, in his automatic behaviour in a crisis. He gains the control of a situation he was previously losing, by putting on a performance of a whole range of specifically masculine acts (157-159). He assumes the traditional masculine role of dominant, guiding walker (rather than the passively walked) - '[I] walked him out by the arm' (157) ; he orders drinks, he orders cards, he does not hesitate to pretend to play cards. Here, masculinity, masculine superiority within the male peer-group, is clearly (as we have seen in *Nostramo*, too) a performance-art.

In 'Falk', we are guided towards the conclusion that what we traditionally elevate as good, manly behaviour is no more than a mere amalgamation of Darwinian drives; man is seen as nothing but a vessel of the biological drive to survival, invalidating any attempt at altruism or heroism. Again and again, it is insisted that the 'best' men survived on Falk's ship: the Captain fails to shake Falk's categories:

'the best men would live.'

'The toughest, you mean.' [...]

'Yes,' he asserted at last. 'The best' (186-187).

The big Carpenter is

the best man of the lot, helpful and ready as long as there was anything to do, the longest hopeful,

[preserving...] to the last some vigour and decision of mind (192)

- and it is this same 'best man' who

summoning all his strength, aim[s] with a crowbar a blow at the base of [Falk's...] skull (193).

Again, Falk grimly acknowledges that 'the best man shall survive' (193) in the struggle between the two of them; and at the end, 'the best man had survived' (194). 'Best' has indeed now become merely 'toughest'. This phrase 'best man' is so insistently repeated that we come to wonder whether it contains, not only the obvious meaning, in context, of 'the best of these males', but also the suggestion of 'the best at being a man'. (Something similar happens, as we saw, with the use of the phrase 'the great man' in *Nostramo* (my Chapter One, 58).) The suggestion is suddenly that this vile behaviour is the best we can expect in a man, that it is, indeed, the horrid ideal behind what society traditionally demands of a real man. The 'best man' does the worst act.

This suggestion continues in the character of Falk. Again and again, he is seen as the essence of masculinity, the essence of what it is to be a man: he has 'a virility of nature' (172), and, says the Captain, his 'big frame embodied to my senses[...] hard, straight masculinity' (170). Indeed, with all the Darwinian and primeval imagery abounding, the implication is that Falk is in fact what is the very basis of all men: the Captain says of Falk's desire for Hermann's niece:

I think I saw then the obscure beginning, the seed germinating in the soil of an unconscious need, the first shoot of that tree bearing now for a mature mankind[...] the infinite gradation in shades and in flavour of our discriminating love (184).

So when Hermann, in his disgusted recoil at Falk's confession of cannibalism, calls him "Beast!" (178), the ironic result is that we are made only too aware that this is exactly what Falk is not; his horrific behaviour is specifically not that of a beast but that only of a man.

However, these tales are not explorations solely of manhood, but specifically of heroic manhood. Like *Nostromo* later, they deal with the two subjects entwined.

As Watts notes, Conrad likes 'invoking a convention only to question or complicate or subvert it' (1993, 176). This is the case with heroism in all three tales: in 'Youth', we see the struggle to achieve heroism and the attained heroism is then itself questioned; in 'Tether', we see the struggle against a loss of heroism; in 'Falk', heroism is present, but we are unsure as to where it lies. Never do we get a simple portrait of the heroism itself.

Conrad himself is plainly uneasy with the concept. He directs *The Inheritors* (1901, with Ford) specifically against calls to heroism - against

the self-seeking, [...] the falsehood that had been (to quote the book) 'hiding under the words that for ages had spurred men to noble deeds, to self sacrifice, and to heroism' (letter to *New York Times*, 24 August 1901, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 2: 347).

Indeed, the tale that is the most harrowing to traditional ideals of heroism, 'Falk', seems told specifically with that purpose in mind. The Captain introduces the story into a conversation extolling 'heroism at sea' (106) and emphatically states at the beginning that he is changing the conversation's course: 'not at all[...] No hero at all' (107). The

narrator notes that both Falk and the Carpenter, in their revolting struggle, have

displayed pitiless resolution, endurance, cunning and courage - all the qualities of classic heroism (194)

- yet at this point in this tale of cannibalism, such 'classic heroism' can only repel us.

The literary tradition of heroism has tended, since the Renaissance (or since late antiquity, if we consider Classical literature), to split into two divergent streams. The first deals with the hero as social and normative, just like us, only better and braver (men such as Malory's Arthur), what I shall call the story-book hero. The second deals with the hero as solitary and deviant, the Satanic or Byronic hero, the doomed, outcast *héromaudit* of late Romanticism (men such as Emily Brontë's Heathcliff), what I shall call the dark hero. Conrad, in his writings on heroism, is plainly fascinated by these two divergent streams: 'egoism is good, and altruism is good' (letter to Cunninghame Graham, 31 January 1898, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 2: 30.) and both are potential bases for the heroic man to act upon. Thus, in 'Youth':

I preferred the soldier to the philosopher at the time; a preference which life has only confirmed. One was a man, and the other was either more - or less (7).

This distinction between soldier and philosopher refers back, as Conrad is aware, to the twin streams of heroism as laid out in Carlyle, the principal popular theorist of the heroic for readers of Conrad's generation¹: for instance, lectures V and VI of Carlyle's *On Heroes, Hero-*

Worship, And The Heroic In History (1841) are entitled 'The Hero as Man of Letters. Johnson, Rousseau, Burns' and 'The Hero as King. Cromwell, Napoleon: Modern Revolutionism' (Carlyle 1993).

If we consider writers like Haggard, Buchan and the *Boy's Own* authors, it is plain that the heroic literature of Conrad's era tends towards something of a revival of the hero as social and normative - and Conrad is often read, on the surface, as roughly continuing in this tradition. However, we have already begun to discover that the view of Conrad as fitting comfortably into the traditional genres of his time is flawed. We often, in fact, find in him something very different from the normative, story-book hero: for instance, the deviant hero taken to an extreme that is Falk. For all his horrific past, Falk has a hugeness and purity of instinct that are not present in the surrounding normal members of civilized society. The standards Hermann evokes to judge Falk are fastidious and petty, and not an equal opposition to the grand scale of Falk's actions:

he wanted to know from Falk how dared he to come and tell him this? Did he think himself a proper person to be sitting in this cabin where his wife and children lived?[....He had never heard] tell of such impudence (178-179).

To talk of 'proper persons' and 'impudence' to a cannibalistic multiple murderer is to take a pea-shooter to a tank: in the end, it is of Falk, not Hermann that the Captain will exclaim - as of a hero 'What a man!' (180). At the outset, the Captain talks of 'my enemy Falk and my friend Hermann', yet Conrad quite deliberately dissolves and confuses the traditional normative-heroic triad of hero, hero's enemy and hero's

friend, during the tale: the Captain ends up admiring and identifying with Falk, and querying Hermann's values.

In the drafts of the story we can see Conrad carefully de-romanticising Falk. The reference to Falk's being

driven to unveil some secrets of the sea by the
power of a simple and elemental desire (116)

originally read 'impelled[...] by another elemental force - the force of love' (quoted in Johnson 1965, 271). Falk loses the traditional hero's driving-force of love, but at the same time becomes huger, earthier the darkest of dark heroes. Conrad heaps every taboo conceivable onto him: even his towing away of the *Diana* is made to suggest the 'idea of abduction, of rape' (130); in the explanations of Falk's attraction to Hermann's niece (she has 'so much bodily magnificence' (160), 'the masterful power of flesh and blood' (161)) there is more than a hint of the gourmand's desire as well as the romantic's: Falk as rapist and as unreformed cannibal, as well as lover.

It is as if Conrad delights in piling on the repugnant possibilities while still forcing us to retain this man as some sort of hero. He wants to explore the complexity involved in calling anyone a hero, to show how far he can go while still creating the (possibly more truthful) dark hero. Despite his cannibalism, Falk is again and again described in terms far from the pejorative. 'Simple' (116), 'natural' (123), he has 'courage' (194) and 'there[is...] no duplicity in that man' (163); he becomes a Titan, a natural force. In his simplicity, he avoids the consciousness of self that Conrad felt so vitiated a man:

to be part of the animal kingdom under the conditions of this earth is very well - but as soon as you know of your slavery the pain, the anger, the strife - the tragedy begins. We can't return to nature, since we can't change our place in it (letter to Cunninghame Graham, 31 January 1898, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 2: 30).

Yet Falk does seem to have managed to go back to Nature:

he was a child. He was as frank as a child, too. He was hungry for the girl, terribly hungry, as he had been terribly hungry for food.

Don't be shocked if I declare that in my belief it was the same need, the same pain, the same torture. We are in his case allowed to contemplate the foundation of all the emotions - that one joy which is to live, and the one sadness at the root of innumerable torments (184).

Indeed, part of Falk's (darkly heroic) triumph over consciousness lies in exactly this (otherwise rather disturbing) similarity of his desires for food and for Hermann's niece. Consider where Conrad, writing outside fiction, places his ideal:

egoism is good, and altruism is good, and fidelity to nature would be the best of all (letter to Cunninghame Graham, 31 January 1898, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 2: 30).

In the description of Falk, Conrad seems to suggest that Falk has achieved such fidelity to nature, a going back to nature: there is no dreaded consciousness, only the mere will to exist of the earliest forms of life. The Captain spells it out:

self preservation was [...Falk's] only concern. Not selfishness, but mere self preservation. Selfishness presupposes consciousness, choice, the presence of other men; but his instinct acted as though he

were the last of mankind nursing that law like the only spark of a sacred fire (158) .

Falk has escaped the ball and chain.

If there were any doubt of Falk's intended heroic status in Conrad's eyes, it is scotched by Falk's also fulfilling another of Conrad's ideals. One of Conrad's greatest fears, as we have already seen in my Chapter One (75), is accidie, 'the menace of emptiness' referred to in *The Shadow Line* (58). Conrad felt that the East and its attitudes, in particular, stimulated such lassitude:

that old skipper must have been growing lazy for years. They all grew lazy out East here[...] they got slack all over ('Tether', 249).

At one point, in 'Falk', the Captain is alternately looking at Hermann's ship, 'the faithful nurse of Hermann's progeny' and then yawning

towards the distant temple of Buddha, like a lonely hillock on the plain, where shaven priests cherish the thoughts of that Annihilation which is the worthy reward of us all (170).

As Johnson points out (1965, 280), one would expect a contrast to be drawn between the home of Western civilization and industry, and the home of the religious attitude which, for Conrad, lies at the heart of Eastern lassitude. However in the original draft, surprisingly, the two are brought together:

my good friend Hermann upright in his chair in the cabin door, his thick hands resting on his round knees had a staring serenity of aspect (a bit vacuous perhaps) as though he had that very moment issued all complete out of Buddha's thigh (quoted in Johnson 1965, 280).

The Captain dwells on Hermann's middle class propriety: aboard his ship, there is 'a sentimental excess, as if dirt had been removed in very love' (117). In the draft, he elaborates:

there was not one twinge of tummy ache amongst her whole ship's company of stalwart quiet young fellows; there was no undesirable clause in her charter party, no subtle flavour of embezzlement in her accounts, no Mathilda in her history (quoted in Johnson 1965, 280).

Conrad implies that such middle-class fastidiousness (note the nursery coyness of 'tummy ache') and propriety is no different from Buddhism, with its supreme act of 'Annihilation' (170), in that they both seek unnaturally to deny the supremacy of the will to live, and in so doing, shackle or destroy man's busy-ness, man's ability to act. It is Falk alone - not the East, nor civilization - who escapes this 'menace of emptiness'. His existence counters Conrad's fear that one 'can simply do nothing'. Falk alone in his 'simple development' has become 'a gigantic force' (183):

'do you think I would have allowed my life to go for the drawing of lots?' (186);

'I would not die. All died, all! under this terrible misfortune. But was I, too, to throw away my life?[....] Only the best man would survive' (195).

He survives.

in so determinedly putting forward Falk as the dark hero of this tale, Conrad questions every assumption about manhood and masculine heroism: it is almost as if so intimate a dealing with the ultimate taboo of

cannibalism has enabled him to slip the bonds of other responsibilities too. The questioning probes assumptions usually considered to be the unshakeable heart of Conradian thought. For instance, a reader who has become familiar with the much-vaunted (by critics and Conrad alike) theme of male fellowship and fidelity in Conrad can only be surprised by one aspect of Falk's dark heroism that we have already touched on:

self-preservation was his only concern. Not selfishness, but mere self-preservation. Selfishness presupposes consciousness, choice, the presence of other men; but his instinct acted as though he were the last of mankind nursing that law like the only spark of a sacred fire (158)².

Falk here is utterly the loner, utterly removed from other men, and his hugeness of effect, his status as hero is utterly bound up with that isolation, that absence of fellowship. The Captain is talking of Falk in terms of awe, stressing the absolute in his character, and this awe and this absolute both arise specifically from his behaving 'as though he were the last of mankind', ignoring 'the presence of other men'.

Conrad's questioning of traditional heroic values and probing of the hollowness of male identity seems to have led him towards an abandonment of belief in his beloved fidelity and fellowship because, in a world like this, they can only be hopeless.

On board Falk's ship, too, we see the sense of male fellowship crumble only too quickly:

[sailors] coming out one by one from their hiding-places at the seductive sound of a shot (195)

(and the 'seductive' here is almost unforgivably horrid.) It is plain that

the organized life of the ship had come to an end.
The solidarity of the men had gone (191).

Perhaps this is what the story is about: this is what happens when the solidarity between men goes - they eat each other. The bond between men is revealed as hollow:

Schiff-führer: Ship conductor. That's how they call a Master Mariner in Germany. I prefer our way. The alliteration is good, and there is something in the nomenclature that gives to us as a body the sense of corporate existence (107).

It is 'the alliteration', 'the nomenclature', that does all this - the sounds rather than sense, the words rather than any true substance. The men do not even achieve a corporate existence - only 'the sense' of it. Is the whole thing a fantasy?. Perhaps the famous emphasis on fidelity, solidarity, the 'us' amongst men, is not a glorious option but rather a sordid necessity. The solidarity so prized is to be striven for merely because man's nature - even among the best of men - is so abominable that without it, no depth will be left unplumbed. There is a darker irony to the statement about 'the solidarity of the men' involved in Falk's cannibal experience. In one way, their solidarity is still very much in evidence - they are all this low, this horrific, capable of this ugliness. Perhaps for Conrad, the real solidarity of any band of men is a solidarity of darkness.

Obviously, though, the traditional view of Conrad's love of fellowship is utterly groundless. His position on the matter in passages such as those I have been discussing from 'Falk' is not a position Conrad can sustain with ease: his own more positive experiences at sea give him too much material with which to attack his own pessimistic view. In 'Youth', for

instance, (much of which, he says in the Author's Note, is straight from 'memory', and 'a record of experience' (xxxv)) the 'battered and bandaged' crew of a ship that has been blown almost to pieces and is now beyond repair, nevertheless are quick to obey and put

a neat furl on the sails of that ship doomed to arrive nowhere [and to...] drop the bunt of the foresail twice to try and do it better (28).

They have 'no professional reputation - no examples, no praise' (28), but they do it anyway and, Marlow believes, do so specifically because of 'something in them, something inborn and subtle and everlasting' (28). This is a tribute to fidelity, fellowship, the heroism of the sea - and made in the teeth of Conrad's thorough exploration of the other side of the coin. Nevertheless, after such an exploration, so tenaciously pursued, any heroism he presents can only really be a dark kind of heroism - less dark than Falk, perhaps, but still certainly tainted.

It is this tainting that is central to the whole question of heroism in Conrad. It is this tainting that produces the specifically Conradian hero. Such a hero is something that is not the normative, story-book hero, but also, not simply the absolute opposite of this, the solitary *héro-maudit* (that we find, say, in the character of Falk³). The Conradian creation is something altogether more subtle and convoluted than this - more like the complex figures that populate the Russian literature with which we know him to have been familiar: Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky. It is, incidentally, interesting to note that Conrad's attitude to both authors (especially Dostoyevsky) was highly complex (Meyers 1991, 255-257), involving a simultaneous 'revulsion... and attraction' (256). This might indicate that Conrad was aware of the conflicting pulls between the traditional and

the disillusioned within his treatment of heroism. Thus, when he found a similar disillusionment in the work of others (and Meyers suggests rather surprisingly that Conrad disliked Dostoyevsky for his 'monotonous dealings with persons suffering with pre-Freudian complexes, [and] the way he has of wallowing in the tragic misadventures of human dignity' (Nabokov, quoted in Meyers 1991, 256) - both of which surely describe much of Conrad's own work) Conrad would on a public level reject that disillusionment, yet on a private level be attracted to it, as capturing what lay at the heart of his own more difficult beliefs.

However this may be, Conrad's non-fictional theorising on heroism certainly brings the two streams within it carefully - and unusually - together:

egoism, which is the moving force of the world, and altruism, which is its morality, these two contradictory instincts of which one is so plain and the other so mysterious, cannot serve us unless in the incomprehensible alliance of their irreconcilable antagonism (letter to *New York Times*, 24 August 1901, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 2: 348).

Thus, the Conradian hero is never an obvious hero, neither utterly good, nor utterly bad⁴. The Conradian hero is strangely both normative and non-normative - and hence unnervingly double.

Imagery of doubleness, used for such a specifically Conradian end, surrounds the heroes of these tales. Consider the young Captain in 'Falk'. While below decks, he hears a command given which reveals that Falk has done the inconceivable and left him behind. He is plunged instantly and unexpectedly into incomprehension and a world of twisted motives and hidden passions:

'go ahead' are not particularly striking words even when pronounced with a foreign accent; yet they petrified me in the very act of smiling at myself in the glass (129).

The unimaginable, dark thing happens at the very moment he is looking at his double. The irony is that he is smiling at himself: he thinks he can see his double and be complacent, he thinks he can smile at the other-half world; but he is immediately brought up short by the actuality of this other world - it is shocking, upsetting. He has had revealed to him, as he admits later, 'all the fatuous unreason, of our complacency' (129).

The doubling, entwining, of story-book hero with dark hero is even plainer in Whalley's case. Whalley walks away after agreeing to work for Massy:

the honesty of it was indubitable: he meant well by the fellow; and periodically his shadow leaped up intense by his side on the trunks of the trees, to lengthen itself, oblique and dim, far over the grass - repeating his stride (213).

Here is the perfect image of the Conradian entwining of story-book hero and dark hero. Whalley does mean well - he is or was a hero - but in the end he will stoop to dishonesty and let his partner down, through sheer desperate devotion to his daughter - the complex behaviour of a typically Conradian hero. Indeed, Conrad thinks of his work with Whalley constantly in terms of shadowing. Thus, when one reviewer saw Whalley as pure story-book hero, finding him only 'touching, tender, noble, moving', Conrad voiced his utter disgust - 'Let us spit!' (letter to Garnett, 22 December 1902, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 2: 468) and wrote of his true intent for Whalley that there should always be, for all his wicked

acts, 'just that *shadow*, that *ghost* of justification which should secure the sympathy of the reader' (letter to Meldrum, August or September (?) 1902, in Kari and Davies 1983-1990, 2: 441, my italics). Conrad emphatically repeats the procedure of original and shadow again and again throughout the tale. Thus, we have a description of Whalley and his bravery in the terms of the traditional story-book hero:

the thought of death [came to him]. He pushed it aside with dislike and contempt. He almost laughed at it; and in the unquenchable vitality of his age only thought with a kind of exultation how little he needed to keep body and soul together (214).

This is the cliché Kipling/Conan Doyle/Rider Haggard hero's laugh in the face of death. However, immediately crushed against this, in the same paragraph, we have:

he was not to lose any of her money whatever else had to go - a little dignity - some of his self-respect. He had never before allowed anybody to remain under any sort of false impression as to himself. Well, let that go - for her sake. After all, he had never *said* anything misleading - and Captain Whalley felt himself corrupt to the marrow of his bones (214).

Hard upon Whalley as traditional hero, is this Whalley - more complex, more morally dubious: 'let that go' is morally repugnant (if also tragic, given his upright past); 'for her sake' is morally beautiful. That he can feel himself corrupt makes him at once worse (he is going against his better knowledge) - and better (he has delicate moral discernment). Even while castigating himself for having deceived 'the poorest sort of devil on earth' (299), he nevertheless resolves to 'cling to his deception with a fierce determination to carry it out to the end' (324). Like the regularly,

carefully drunken second engineer so awe-inspiring to the lascar (224), while Whalley's action itself is morally repellent, there is, in the unflinching decisiveness with which he carries it out, something hugely impressive. We are moved to honour him at the moment of his horrible decision for suicide, by the sheer boldness with which he does it, as he slips the very weights that have ruined him into his pockets, because it 'was unseemly that a Whalley, who had made up his mind to die, should be beguiled by chance into a struggle' (333). This is utter heroism at the moment of utter failure. We are without doubt looking not at the simple dark or story-book hero, but at the specifically Conradian hero - and the shadow-imagery duly returns at the end of the earlier passage:

no [thinks Whalley]. On the whole, men were not bad - they were only silly or unhappy[...] No; there was not much real harm in men: and all the time a shadow marched with him, slanting on his left hand - which in the East is a presage of evil (215).

His optimism is misplaced: there is evil in men, and the evil he will encounter will not only be in others like Massy (who perhaps commits the most unpardonable sin of all in Conrad's world of ships and the sea, in deflecting the compass) and Sterne, but finally in himself. The man will always have his shadow - the secret sharer that must ultimately vitiate any hero. Sterne looks at Whalley after he has discovered his secret, and sees in him simultaneously the man who used to overawe him and the new man of his discovery, flawed and weak: he sees the story-book hero and the tainted hero. It is almost as if Sterne is seeing two men at once:

the *abrupt* and *faltering* intonations of the deep voice; the *taciturnity put on like an armour*; the

deliberate, as if guarded, movements; the long immobilities, as if the man he watched had been afraid to disturb the very air (253).

My italics mark the old heroic, my underlinings mark the new realisations. Sterne re-reads what he previously saw as purely heroic and does not simply put the new information on top and destroy the old view; he is still looking at the same man, still seeing a hero, but the new, pejorative information is as indissolubly part of that hero as the shadow is of a man. Towards the end of the story, Sterne sums this double vision of Whalley up: 'he was a wonderful man when all was said and done' (323). The latter half of the sentence is the necessary mild qualifier: we are looking, not at a hero, nor at an anti-hero, but at the complex, tainted Conradian hero.

The closer examination of such tainting leads us to something still more outrageous to the traditional view of Conrad - more surprising than his use of the extreme of dark heroism, more surprising even than the strange doubleness around his heroes.

Our gradual awareness of this surprising element begins simply enough, with the discovery that the doubleness, the tainting, does not only occur in microcosm within single characters, but macrocosmically - across society itself. Falk's crime, for example, against all traditional polarisation of hero and anti-hero, good and evil, is not restricted to him. Images of cannibalism abound throughout 'Falk', until we cannot avoid seeing Falk's crime spreading beyond that individual into all civilized men: there is a ghastly irony in Schomberg's insistence:

'a white man should eat like a white man, dash it all [...]. Ought to eat meat, must eat meat. I manage to get meat for my patrons all the year round' (134).

it is just this sense of "ought to eat meat, must eat meat" that first drives Falk to cannibalism; and yet here it is placed firmly at the heart of what was then the heart of civilized society: "a white man should eat like a white man". Falk is firmly brought in to the circle of white men, of civilized men: 'he was as respectable as any white man hereabouts'(165) - by this stage, we understand that this also means that no white man is any more respectable than Falk. Falk may be seen as primeval and hence raw, uncivilized, but the later coming of civilized men is seen as even worse:

I don't mean the worn-out earth of our possession, but a young Earth, a virginal planet undisturbed by the vision of a future teeming with the monstrous forms of life, clamorous with the cruel battles of hunger and thought (112).

Our faith in civilized society is subtly but constantly undermined. Even clothes on a washing line become pregnant with horrors:

all that crowded mass of clothing, with its vague suggestions of drowned, mutilated and flattened humanity. Trunks without heads waved at you arms without hands; legs without feet kicked fantastically with collapsible flourishes[...] long white garments[...] became for a moment violently distended as by the passage of obese and invisible bodies (109).

Already there are proleptic suggestions of the suicides and cannibalism that will go on on board Falk's ship - 'drowned, mutilated[...] humanity'; there is violence and butchery in 'trunks without heads[...] arms without hands; legs without feet.' So, even in the heart of the domestic peace of civilized society - the family washing - the violent, the horrific, the taboo

lies just beneath the surface: civilization is a facade. The proleptic mutilations abound, not just here, but throughout the civilized society we see in 'Falk':

the tug herself without [...Falk's] head and torso on the bridge looked mutilated as it were (122).

Like the 'trunks without heads', 'head and torso' is a strangely butchering form of reference, with its suggestion of anatomical parts, where Conrad could just as easily have had some far less meatily suggestive term: 'body', 'person', 'figure', 'presence'. Nowhere, then, is there a refuge from horrors.

Nor is this unexpected refusal to contain the crime solely to the dark hero a mere quirk of this one, rather extreme, story. In 'The End Of The Tether', Whalley is blind and acts immorally in not disclosing this dangerous fact, but soon the metaphors of unseeing multiply out onto the rest of the principal male characters: Sterne notes that Massy is 'very stupid and could not see' (256) the danger; Sterne is himself so wrapped up in his plotting that 'his stony unwinking stare [is...] fixed on the planks of the deck' (257). All the civilized men are blind and none disclose it.

Conrad's discovery of the darkness within civilization, though obviously damaging to any naive view of his works as belonging in the *Boy's Own* tradition, is nevertheless still a critical commonplace. However - more is to come. Perhaps surprisingly - for those who have only read of Conrad's love of the band of sailorly heroes, without taking into account the complexity, the subversion of homosocial tradition, that is equally close to his heart - even the men of the close-knit male-bonded groups with which his tales begin, the 'us', the sailors, are found to be

contaminated. Falk, far from being solely (and safely) an outsider something other than the heroic male band with which the tale begins - is instead quite specifically brought into that male circle, and precisely at the moment of his revelations of cannibalism:

and then I was a sailor, too. Falk thought that a sailor would be able to understand certain things best (165).

Conrad undermines even his own group: the seamen 'us' of the beginning is shown to contain the most monstrous behaviour, cannibalism.

Conrad emphasises his point relentlessly in the tiniest of details. There is a ghastly, proleptic pun in the Captain's stressing that the band of sailors has 'as a body the sense of corporate existence' (107) playing on 'body' (group) and 'body' (human remains), and 'corporate'/corpse: in a few moments we will find out that that - and no more - is exactly what such men can become to each other at sea. The archetypal male group - the smoking-room men - are seen as a gaggle of idiots rather than a noble brotherhood: at Schomberg's club, the terrifying male peer-group is dismissed as an unthinking pack of prurient gossips, rowdy fools:

the unspeakable idiots inside were crowding to the windows, climbing over each other's backs behind the blinds, billiard-cues and all. Somebody broke a window-pane (157-158).

Rather than being a group of men close-knit against the common enemy that is the sea, the dangers the sailors confront are shown ultimately to come from within their group:

it may[...] have been Hermann's skilful seamanship, but to me it looked as if the allied oceans had refrained from smashing these high bulwarks, unshipping the lumpy rudder, frightening the children, and generally opening this family's eyes out of sheer reticence[....] The ruthless disclosure was, in the end, left for a man to make (116).

In not specifying Falk, but saying 'a man', Conrad opens out the terms of the danger. It is not the sea, but his own sailorly kind, that Hermann should fear.

Although this is already outrageous to the more conventional view of Conrad, in 'Falk' especially, I think the reader dimly senses some still greater outrage taking place just beneath the surface of the incremental series of littler outrages we have already discovered. I think we find 'Falk' more disturbing, on a first reading, than the sum of its visible parts; and in particular, the early sections of the story are unnerving even before we know that the secret is cannibalism. 'Falk', as we have seen, takes the concept of the dark hero to an extreme. The dark hero in that he is both what is forbidden (the dark) and what is desired (the heroic) always by nature carries something of an erotic charge. In the strange doubling that surrounds all three tales to a greater or lesser extent, it is possible to see such an eroticism taking on a specifically homosexual slant⁵.

Certainly this seems to explain the strange loadedness we encounter in 'Falk'. Before it is specified that Falk's crime was cannibalism, we are somewhat suggestively told in quick succession that his secret concerns an ultimate, unspeakable crime, committed when he was a young man, and which stands in the way of his marriage⁶; the nature of the crime leaves Falk having to make 'an utterly mysterious allusion to the necessity

for peculiar domestic arrangements' (166) within his married life; the unspeakable thing happened on board a ship, and he can confide only in a sailor (a group notorious for homosexuality, if only in popular folklore), as 'a sailor would be able to understand certain things best' (165)⁷. Perhaps, then, 'Falk' can be read as a crypto-homosexual tale. In this case, Falk's being so carefully brought into the heroic, sailorly narrative-group 'us', with which the tale opens, is particularly explosive material for Conrad to be handling. The homosocial - Conrad's famously beloved homosocial narrational background - is blurred with that from which it felt most driven to distance itself - the homosexual⁸. Moreover, bringing the dark hero and the story-book hero together in an arena of potential homosexuality ultimately destroys both types of heroism: Falk is left no longer separate enough from the others to be heroic; the surrounding story-book manly types are left perhaps not very manly at all. There is no place left from which heroism can come. Or at least, not any traditional view of heroism.

However, even leaving aside such questions of possible homosexual suggestiveness in 'Falk', Conrad's position in these tales is still a very difficult and complex one. Obviously, the critics who see Conrad as writing in the manly heroic tradition are not wholly mistaken - they are merely one-sided. The image of the sailors heroically struggling to put a neat furl in the sail ('Youth', 28) is, as we saw, lovingly placed at the heart of a tale that otherwise takes a very bleak view of the possibility of real heroism. Disillusionment and idealism are both strongly present in all these tales - and thus Conrad is left in a dialectical no-man's land. Thus, one cannot help but feel that the mere 'vapour' which Forster (1945, 135) sadly finds Conrad's literary casket to contain is, in cases like these

stories, quite deliberately achieved, being the only possible accurate rendering of the impossible position in which he finds himself.

Certainly, Conrad does determinedly wreath the vapour of uncertainty around the questions of masculinity and heroism - and in the end, we can (and must, if we are to remain true to Conrad's effect) only be left in uncertainty ourselves. With Marlow's ever more frequent cries of 'Pass the bottle' ('Youth', 10, 12, 16, 24, etc.) we are left wondering if even the whiff of heroism we encounter amongst the men of the *Judea* is simply the creation of a drunken mind. At the end of 'Falk', with the aspersion cast on men's ability accurately to tell a tale -

there was some vague tale still going about the town of a certain Falk, owner of a tug, who had won his wife at cards from the captain of an English ship (200)

- we are left wondering whether our version is any more reliable. In the end, perhaps heroism or its opposite are just names: the moral questionables in 'The End Of The Tether' multiply one upon the other, until they emerge as perhaps merely a question of 'nomenclature':

'And you had that courage?'
'Call it by what name you like' (300).

Notes.

1. For instance, in *Sartor Resartus* (1833-1834 (Carlyle 1871)), with its energetic propaganda for hero-worship, as well as in other later works. Conrad was certainly familiar with *Sartor Resartus* (Watts 1989, 47.)
2. The 'dark hero' is traditionally self-conscious to excess - Byronically brooding, introspective and resentful. Conrad's different version of the type here looks forward instead to the explicitly de-humanized protagonists of twentieth century animal-romance - Jack London's *White Fang*, Henry Williamson's heroic-instinctive salmon and otter: as we have seen, Falk's horror for us partly lies in the fact that he is not a beast.
3. Although even Falk could be said to be something rather unusual and perhaps peculiarly Conradian, simply because his darkness is taken to such an extreme and in a setting, unlike some other Satanic heroes, that is otherwise so determinedly everyday.
4. Hence my substitution of the term 'dark hero' for the reductive - and in Conrad, usually strangely inapplicable - term 'anti-hero'.
5. Indeed, Freud's theory of homosexuality (since widely challenged, but current during the early part of this century) saw narcissism a form of doubling, in that it involves loving one's own double - as the basis of homosexual love: '[homosexuals] take *themselves* as their sexual object. That is to say, proceeding from a basis of narcissism, they look for a young man who resembles themselves and whom *they* may love as their mother loved *them*' (Freud 1991, 56, n.1). Karl Miller's *Doubles* (1987) examines how the literature of the 1880's and 1890's made use of doubling as a means of exploring homosexuality, in a chapter entitled 'Queer Fellows'. See also my Chapter Four 195-216, on doubling in 'The Secret Sharer'.
6. Conrad's homosexually suggestive short story 'The Duel' also contains a man with a crime instigated in youth and involving another man, which comes to stand in the way of his subsequent marriage.
7. And see Glossary for 'peculiar' (464-465) and 'understand' (499-505) as particularly homosexually loaded terms.
8. The implication here could be read as a confessional one for Conrad: the 'us' includes the homosexual: 'we' are (I am?) gay.

CHAPTER THREE.

HINTS FOR NIGHTMARES' (41); CONFUSION AND MANHOOD IN *HEART OF DARKNESS*.

The 'unfathomable enigma' (76); the 'curious, inexplicable note' (76); the 'vague forms[...] indistinct, incomplete, evanescent' (81); and of course, the 'unspeakable rites' (86): *Heart Of Darkness* is not a tale of certitudes. Its elusiveness carries over into the bulk of writing about it, as it seems to slide from any definite critical grasp.

Conrad himself was undergoing one of his periodic bouts of near-pathological uncertainty while writing the book:

sometimes I lose all sense of reality in a kind of nightmare effect produced by existence (letter to Cunninghame Graham, 2 February 1899, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 2: 155).

the more I write the less substance do I see in my work (letter to Garnett, 31 March 1899, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 2:177);

I am like a man who has lost his gods. My efforts seem unrelated to anything in heaven and everything under heaven is impalpable to the touch like shapes of mist[...] Even writing to a friend[...] does not give me a sense of reality. All is illusion the words written, the mind at which they are aimed, the truth they are intended to express, the hands that will hold the paper, the eyes that will glance at the lines. Every image floats vaguely in a sea of doubt and the doubt itself is lost in an unexpected universe of incertitudes (letter to Garnett, 16 September 1899, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 2: 198).

That last sentence so accurately describes the experience of reading *Heart Of Darkness*, that the connection between Conrad's state of mind and the tale's insubstantiality is unavoidable. However, *Heart Of*

Darkness is not merely a case of a confused man writing a confused book: it is anything but chaotic and there are indications that the confusion we experience has been carefully engineered.

The story works towards Kurtz's final words -"The horror! The horror!" (111) as the climax of the experience, the summing up of everything, the clue to the maze. Yet we are never told what these words actually mean: indeed, as Watts' analysis shows (1979, 42-43), Marlow proffers (at least) four interpretations of Kurtz's utterance, all of them mutually contradictory. We are warned openly of the ambiguous nature of the work at the outset: it is to be 'one of Marlow's inconclusive experiences' (32). 'Reality' is presented as, at once, both something 'in[...] work', which work gives you the 'chance to find' (59), and, only a few pages later, something that work causes to 'fade' and be 'hidden'(67). We are told at the outset that Marlow does not believe in 'the meaning of an episode' being 'inside like a kernel', but rather that it is 'outside, enveloping the tale' as when 'a glow brings out a haze' (30); yet Marlow refers more than once to meaning's being contained in just such a kernel-like 'inner truth' (67).

Page after page of such intellectual wrong-footing and we are soon proceeding in a haze of uncertainty and confusion. Conrad's own comment on *Heart Of Darkness* confirms our suspicion that this must be a deliberately engineered effect: 'the *idea* in it is not as obvious as in *youth* (sic) or at least not so obviously presented' (letter to Blackwood, 31 December 1898, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 2:139). So the absence or Forsterian 'vapour'¹ at the heart of the novel is not an authorial failure to deliver the narrative goods, as Forster's (and others'²) disappointed tones on peering into the 'casket' of Conrad's work suggest. Rather, it is a deliberate frustrating of meaning and of expectation of meaning.

Let us first look at the text in the very simplest terms, to find what there is that we *can* say with some certainty about it. Some subjects crop up again and again: in this loosest sense, then, what does the tale seem to be about?

Maleness and masculinity are so placed as to dominate our first perceptions of the tale. This is a man's story, told to a group of other men, whose occasional interruptions or comments ensure that we never completely forget this exclusively male audience. Male bonding is strongly emphasised as the story opens - the first pages are a mass of 'us'es and 'we's, as the men's friendship and community is stressed: 'we four affectionately watched his back'; 'the lawyer - the best of old fellows'; 'we felt'; 'we looked' (27-28). Soon the male bonds are openly stated: 'between us there was[...] the bond of the sea[....] holding our hearts together' (27). Moreover, there is no question, in this context, of 'man' being the sort of 'man' that means 'mankind': women are seen as utterly removed from this world, utterly elsewhere

it's queer how out of touch with truth women are.
They live in a world of their own, and there had
never been anything like it (39);

they - the women I mean - are out of it[...] in that
beautiful world of their own (84)

Women are 'they', as opposed to 'we men' (39): 'man' is specifically 'men'.

More specifically, male selfhood is central to the book. Marlow may claim at the outset that he does not 'want to bother[...] much with what happened to me personally', yet not only does his intensely personal story contradict this, but even his immediate comment - 'yet to understand the effect of it on me you ought to know how I got out there, what I saw, how I went' (32) - completely undermines it.

Knowledge of the self is seen as the apex of achievement: 'the most you can hope from [life...] is some knowledge of yourself' (112).

Heart Of Darkness is also a tale about telling. It is a tale told of a tale told (a device Conrad frequently uses) and the act of telling or speaking is repeatedly stressed. Marlow sometimes feels that he desires to reach Kurtz 'for the sole purpose of talking with' him (83); Kurtz's importance is repeatedly stressed specifically as 'a voice! a voice!' (110). Marlow tells us openly of his struggles with telling:

do you see him? Do you see the story? Do you see anything? It seems to me I am trying to tell you a dream - making a vain attempt, because no relation of a dream can convey the dream-sensation[...] it is impossible to convey the life-sensation of any given epoch of one's existence (57);

absurd![...] This is the worst of trying to tell... (84).

The final ellipsis is Conrad's, not mine: it indicates that the speaker has broken off, but also throws more emphasis onto the non-specific verb, 'tell'. It is not *what* is being told that is important and difficult, but the very act of telling, itself.

Manhood, selfhood and telling or speaking are central issues in *Heart Of Darkness*, then but why is the treatment of these matters surrounded with such a deep air of doubt and uncertainty?

'We live, as we dream - alone' (57): a man is isolated, so it is very hard to know anything about any other man. This is demonstrated again and again throughout the book. We encounter not only incomprehension between men of different races and traditions, such as Marlow's struggle with the 'mystery' (76) of the cannibals' behaviour, but also between men of identical race and tradition: Marlow has 'no

point of contact' (40) with the other Europeans on the first part of his upriver journey.

From problems with knowing men, it is but a short step to problems with knowing man, what manhood consists of, generally. The colonials treat the natives disgracefully; the starving cannibals on the boat forbear from eating the colonials, even though they could easily overwhelm them: which group is truly the civilized, the gentlemanly? This is the 'unfathomable enigma' (76). In such confused circumstances, defining male status becomes impossible: 'he called them enemies!' (41); 'these men could by no stretch of the imagination be called enemies. They were called criminals' (43). Marlow stresses that this is just 'call'ing a man something, not any true definition of the man's place. Similarly, Kurtz and the cannibals are both referred to as 'fine fellows' (64 and 67 respectively) what real meaning can a term have that applies to such disparate creatures; are they really that disparate after all; and does it truly apply to either? Marlow refers to the steersman as a 'really fine chap' (70), yet only a few lines earlier, he has also looked at him as a 'dog' and a 'specimen'. Soon Marlow is driven to using inverted commas to indicate the calledness, the meaningless labelling, that is involved in the use of any general term for men: 'the "scoundrel" had reported that the "man" had been very ill' (64).

Marlow, then, is unable to comprehend other men or their status, even though he is himself one: manhood - membership of the manly group - is not something acquired simply by virtue of being born male. From the start, Marlow's narrative is peppered with phrases about being 'man enough' (69), being 'as much of a man' (69) as others: manhood is something measured in degrees, partial, to be striven towards. This striving, though constantly enjoined, is just as constantly undercut at the same time. For instance, during his wrestling with the

problem of who the real men are - the natives or the colonists - Marlow talks of the horror induced by the natives' howls and dances onshore:

it was unearthly, and the men were No, they were not inhuman. Well, you know, that was the worst of it - this suspicion of their not being inhuman[....] They howled and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces; but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity - like yours the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. Ugly. Yes, it was ugly enough; but if you were man enough you would admit to yourself that there was in you just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise, a dim suspicion of there being a meaning in it which you you so remote from the night of first ages - could comprehend (69).

'If you were man enough': this is the key phrase here, the goal that the passage presents as to be striven for. Yet the same phrase also marks its own logical undercutting: being 'man enough' also involves admitting that you are 'kin' with the display, that it is a part of you and your manhood; but as the display is what has caused doubt of manhood in the first place (it is 'the worst', it causes a thrill, it is 'ugly'), to admit that it is part of one is to admit that one is not a man. The admission removes the very toehold being 'man enough' by which one gained the strength to make the admission in the first place. Being enough of a man, here, is not logically possible.

As the passage continues, Marlow seems to shift, with no acknowledgement, to an admission of what has been implicit in these previous undermining sentences:

if you were man enough you would admit to yourself that there was in you just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise [....] Let the fool gape and shudder the man knows, and can look on without a wink. But he must at least be as much of a man as these on the shore. He must meet that truth with his own true stuff - with his own inborn strength (69).

To face the horrible truth of shared manhood with the natives, one must be 'as much of a man as these on the shore' (unlike the gaping fool) - but this is just saying that to admit that you are equal with (of the same degree of manliness as) the natives, you must be equal with (of the same degree of manliness as) the natives: there is no dialectical progression here, at all. Again, in the last few lines I quoted above, a man must 'meet that truth' of his 'kinship' with these natives with 'his own true stuff - with his own inborn strength'. Yet look at 'own', and even more so, 'inborn' : these are the same stuff as the 'kinship' they are supposed to battle - namely, what is inherent in a man. By this argument, the man ends up with nothing separate with which to meet the horrible 'truth'. With arguments like these behind it, the possibility of ever actually being 'man enough', in this world of circularities, recedes further and further; it is never possible to be man enough.

If manhood is probably unattainable, there is little chance of male heroism. We do not have to look far for the cause of Marlow's disillusionment with heroism:

when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration (33)

but as such exploration has turned out to be mere 'robbery with violence', the heroic glory has gone: 'the glamour's off' (33). The men 'going at it blind' (thus bringing their own darkness, too) mean that any unknown 'blank spaces' on the maps 'for a boy to dream gloriously over', are now merely 'place[s] of darkness' (33). Perhaps even the boyhood dreams of heroism were wrong: in a writer so concerned with the search for a male 'self' and in a text centering on one man's

(Kurtz's) destruction of his self, Marlow's choice of the phrase 'lose myself' (33), to describe his boyish aspirations to heroism, becomes a rather disturbing one.

Marlow's expectations of what the reality of 'heroism' will look like sink lower and lower throughout the book. In the Company's head office, Marlow says that the red (of the British Empire) on the map is good to see because 'one knows that some real work is done in there' (36). Yet when he gets to one of these places, what does he find?

I could not help asking him how he managed to sport such linen. He had just the faintest blush, and said modestly, 'I've been teaching one of the native women about the station. It was difficult. She had a distaste for the work.' Thus this man had verily accomplished something. And he was devoted to his books, which were in apple-pie order (46).

The 'real work', something 'verily accomplished' by 'this man' (and note the greater emphasis on gender here than if Marlow had merely said 'he') turns out to be a rather sordid story of native suffering for trivial ends - perfect linen and 'apple-pie' accounts. This is not the glory of the explorer, this is not heroism - and the passage's ability to disturb lies in Marlow's laconicism of tone, suggesting he had expected no better.

It is, incidentally, possible to trace a link between Marlow's thoughts here and Conrad's own. Conrad's disillusionment with the world of the male hero centred itself on the colonization of the Congo:

the vilest scramble for loot that ever disfigured the history of human conscience and geographical exploration. What an end to the idealised realities of a boy's daydreams (*Last Essays*, 25).

This could just as well be a continuation of any of Marlow's own speeches on the matter.

Once again, in *Heart Of Darkness*, the term 'great man' is only ever an irony, a joke (see my Chapter One, 58). The Station Manager is 'of middle size and of ordinary build'; he is 'a common trader,[...] nothing more'; he inspires 'neither love nor fear, nor even respect'; he has 'no genius for organizing, for initiative, or for order even'; he has 'no learning, and no intelligence' - but: 'But he was great' (50). This conclusion is surely a nonsense, but Marlow sticks with it and specifies why the Station Manager is 'great':

he was great by this little thing that it was impossible to tell what could control such a man. He never gave that secret away. Perhaps there was nothing within him (50)

- secrecy, emptiness: these are not usually considered attributes of male greatness, of male heroism; this is not *Boy's Own* stuff. Again, the passage's horror is in its matter-of-fact tone: perhaps in the world Marlow is trying to show us, such unpleasant attributes are all that is needed to become a 'great man'; perhaps there is no realer heroism for a man than this. By the time we read that Kurtz is not merely a 'great', but 'an exceptional man' (51), on the next page, so debased have our ideas of superlative manhood become that the description can only terrify.

Even the most positive of Marlow's comments on man's potential heroism fall to pieces as he speaks. Near the beginning of the book, the *Boy's Own* audience are probably still innocent enough to lean forward in eager anticipation of a suitably rousing conclusion to Marlow's otherwise rather unsuitably anti-heroic comments on (the Roman) colonization as 'robbery with violence', when he begins to talk about 'what redeems' all this:

what redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretence but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea (32).

A bit cerebral, perhaps, but this is more like the Rider Haggard/John Buchan noble heroics we might have been looking forward to. Yet as Marlow goes on without a pause, it is as if the veneer of his hopes suddenly cracks and reveals the horrid truth of what his experience of heroes has actually been:

'and an unselfish belief in the idea - something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to...'
He broke off (32).

His breaking off suggests that his tongue has run away with him, into regions he would rather not re-explore: in a book like *Heart Of Darkness*, setting something up, bowing down and sacrificial offerings can only recall the moral obscenity of Kurtz's 'unspeakable rites'. Marlow's attempt at restoring the paean to heroism crumbles involuntarily instead into a harrowed indictment of it.

Disillusionment continues as we are shown the best of men, good, heroic material, nevertheless still failing to behave at all heroically. Fresleven - apparently the 'gentlest, quietest creature' (34) and a good man - meets his death while inflicting a merciless beating on a native in a row over a few hens. Fresleven himself is only a prelude to the bigger picture of this process we see in Kurtz, the ideal man - cultured, intelligent, a painter, writer, musician, political orator, an idealist and one who is nevertheless practically successful - yet when we meet this paragon, he is a monster. Marlow's experiences, too, though less spectacular than Kurtz's, are actually even more subversive of the concept of heroism, both for us and, presumably, for Marlow himself. Marlow does achieve some heroic behaviour in his passage upriver

keeping his head when the natives attack, valiantly steering the boat amidst a hail of arrows though standing in his helmsman's blood, and finally driving away the attackers by thinking to sound the steam-whistle (79-82). The climax of any hero's experiences comes a little later: 'I have wrestled with death' (112) - vigorous, physical, classic heroic activity. Yet what does Marlow find at this climax?

It is the most unexciting contest you can imagine. It takes place in an impalpable greyness, with nothing underfoot, with nothing around, without spectators, without clamour, without glory, without the great desire of victory, without the great fear of defeat, in a sickly atmosphere of tepid scepticism, without much belief in your own right, and still less in that of your adversary (112).

'Impalpable greyness,[...] nothing underfoot,[...] nothing around' this is the disorienting confusion we encounter throughout the book. There is nothing as definite as heroism here. 'Without spectators, without clamour, without glory' - nothing could be further removed from George and the Dragon, from the heroic tradition, unless it were Marlow's own utterly unheroic state of mind: 'without much belief in your own right, and still less in that of your adversary'. Conrad is not alone here - a vein of disillusionment with heroism, and specifically this sense of its purposelessness, runs through much late Victorian literature: Arnold's 'ignorant armies', Browning's Childe Roland³. Nevertheless, the traditional approach to Conrad would not expect to find him in such company: as far as Marlow's thought here is concerned, Rider Haggard's conventionally heroic Leo Vincey would be appalled. The apex of Marlow's move towards heroism is to find that there is no apex, no defining moment of defeated evil and achieved heroism - just the 'impalpable greyness' of continuing confusion and doubt.

Why should this all be the case, though why should heroism, or even manliness, seem so far from possible? The problem lies with man himself. One image of men is presented repeatedly throughout the book:

this papier-mâché Mephistopheles (56);

they seemed to be tugging painfully uphill their two ridiculous shadows of uneven length, that trailed behind them slowly over the tall grass without bending a single blade (65-66).

These are pictures of the apparently substantial (the incarnation of evil; something that has to be 'tug[ged...] painfully'), that actually turns out to be insubstantial (papier-mâché; something that does not bend even a blade of grass). The apparently solid man is flimsy, hollow:

it seemed to me that if I tried I could poke my forefinger through him, and would find nothing inside but a little loose dirt, maybe (56).

These images of hollowness, of emptiness, multiply fastest around Kurtz: he is a 'Shadow' (107); he has a 'deficiency', there is 'something wanting' in him, things 'echo' within him because he is 'hollow at the core' (97). Yet why should emptiness be so threatening, here; why should it not at worst just be neutral? The descriptions of Kurtz's hollowness blend into ones of hunger and greed:

I saw him open his mouth wide - it gave him a weirdly voracious aspect, as though he wanted to swallow all the air, all the earth, all the men before him (99) .

This is as if the man's hollowness must, yet cannot be, filled, thus giving rise to illimitable greed. Yet the horror of man's emptiness runs deeper than this. Again and again, absence is portrayed not merely as the

negative not-being-there of something, but, rather unnervingly, as a positive state in itself. Consider Marlow's description of the jungle's silence: 'the silence driven away by the stamping of our feet flowed back again from the recesses of the land' (60-61). The usually negative thing, silence - the absence of noise - is here seen as a positive entity in itself: it is what 'flows back' and the men's actively created noise is dismissed merely as an evanescent interruption. Kurtz's active evil is emphatically described in purely Thomist terms of absence:

[the heads on posts] only showed that Mr. Kurtz lacked restraint in the gratification of his various lusts, that there was something wanting in him - some small matter which, when the pressing need arose, could not be found under his magnificent eloquence (97);

or again:

I saw the inconceivable mystery of a soul that knew no restraint, no faith, and no fear, yet struggling blindly with itself. I kept my head pretty well; but when I had him at last stretched on the couch, I wiped my forehead, while my legs shook under me as though I had carried half a ton on my back down that hill. And yet I had only supported him, his bony arm clasped round my neck and he was not much heavier than a child (108).

In the second passage, Kurtz's soul is described only in terms of a list of absences 'no restraint, no faith,[...] no fear' and yet there is, mysteriously to Marlow, still something sufficiently and substantially present about his soul to allow it to struggle blindly with itself. The absences - the man they have made of Kurtz - paradoxically make Kurtz not lighter but heavier (and heavier than he actually is): this is absence with nevertheless a kind of substance; the uncanny and impossibly actual presence of absence. Perhaps I can clarify with a reference to Conrad's private description of his difficulties with writing

(suggesting that the positive presence of absence is as much Conrad's thought as it is Marlow's). The description comes from the letter already quoted (this Chapter, 124), written while he was working on *Heart Of Darkness*⁴:

the more I write, the less substance do I see in my work. The scales are falling off my eyes. It is tolerably awful. And I face it, I face it but the fright is growing on me. My fortitude is shaken by the view of the monster. It does not move; its eyes are baleful; it is as still as death itself and it will devour me. Its stare has eaten into my soul already deep, deep I am alone with it (letter to Garnett, 31 March 1899, in Kari and Davies 1983-1990, 2: 177).

On a first reading, this passage quietly disturbs us while yet making us unsure that we have quite grasped its meaning. On a second reading, we find that this is because the passage takes for granted something we would normally consider a paradox. Conrad sees (and fears) something of dwindling substance, the insubstantial 'the less substance do I see'; yet this is at the same time, a very substantial 'monster' - substantial enough to have baleful 'eyes' that 'stare', to 'devour' Conrad, to 'eat[...] deep' into him - again, the positive presence of absence. In a similar fashion, the 'grove of death' (47) perhaps Marlow's first real contact with the Congo's darkness (both literal and metaphysical) - at first appears to be empty, just a place to 'stroll in[...] the shade', yet when Marlow is in, he suddenly finds it to contain a scene from 'some Inferno', full of horrifically maltreated dead and dying natives in the gloom (44). The wilderness's 'hidden evil' (65), its 'vengeful aspect'(66), its menace, are all specifically linked with, come from, its constantly re-iterated 'silence', 'stillness', 'darkness', 'solitude' (passim, e.g. 60, 65, 66, 68, 97, etc.) - absences of various kinds.

Marlow's revelation of absences, of hollowness, at the heart of men has disturbing implications in the Conradian world, then. If there is an absence at the heart of men, some monster is probably (but only probably: we are not even allowed the comfort of certainty) lurking there. This point is suggested again and again:

believe me or not, [Kurtz's...] intelligence was perfectly clear concentrated, it is true, upon himself with horrible intensity, yet clear[...] But his soul was mad. Being alone in the wilderness, it had looked within itself, and, by heavens! I tell you, it had gone mad. I had[...] to go through the ordeal of looking into it myself (108).

The essence of a man, the thing at his heart his 'soul', 'himself', his 'intelligence' is something so horrible that it is a punishment - or even a threat to sanity ('gone mad') - to look at it. Moreover, what has happened to Kurtz is not something utterly specific to him:

I had to deal with a being to whom I could not appeal in the name of anything high or low. I had, even like the niggers, to invoke him himself his own exalted and incredible degradation. There was nothing either above or below him, and I knew it. He had kicked himself loose of the earth. Confound the man! he had kicked the very earth to pieces. He was alone (107).

Kurtz has not only done something to himself, but has also destroyed the earth for Marlow (and for everyone else) 'kicked the[...] earth to pieces'. Marlow knows that what happened to Kurtz could happen to any man. It happened to Kurtz because 'he was alone', 'being alone in the wilderness' - and Marlow knows that we all 'live, as we dream alone' (57).

Much of Marlow's (and perhaps also Conrad's) apparent adherence to the male-heroic values of more traditional adventure stories comes from a desire to flee from or solve this awareness of something rotten at

the heart of man in particular, his devotion to practical work and the fellowship of other men.

Marlow becomes uneasy as soon as he cannot work. When the fog descends and forces a stop, he is 'annoyed beyond expression', even while recognising that he feels this distress 'most unreasonably' (73). The practical is for him a refuge from the doubts and confusion surrounding his journey: 'what I really wanted was rivets[....] and rivets were what really Mr. Kurtz wanted, if he had only known it' (58-59) work is something solid, practical, like rivets it will hold things together. Work, as against the untrustworthiness of thought, is vociferously praised:

I don't like work. I had rather laze about and think of all the fine things that can be done. I don't like work, - no man does - but I like what is in the work, the chance to find yourself. Your own reality - for yourself, not for others (59).

When Marlow is faced with the 'overwhelming' eeriness of 'this strange world of plants, and water, and silence' (66), on his upriver journey, even his syntax reveals how important his work is in preserving his sense of male self:

you thought yourself bewitched and cut off for ever from everything you had known once - somewhere - far away[....] There were moments when one's past came back to one, as it will sometimes when you have not a moment to spare to yourself (66).

There is an uneasy shifting between the already indefinite 'you's and 'one's, here, to refer to Marlow's self and experiences. He only finds his way back among solidly consistent 'I's and the sharper sense of self they and their consistence imply when he talks of getting back to work:

[the wilderness] looked at you with a vengeful aspect. I got used to it afterwards; I did not see it anymore; I had no time. I had to keep guessing at the channel; I had to discern, mostly by inspiration, the signs of hidden banks; I watched for sunken stones (66).

So important is work to him, Marlow comes to prefer even the monstrous world of Kurtz to the 'flabby' (43) and unproductive world of the Station Manager, where 'nothing happened. Nothing could happen' (41). This is unquestionably the world of civilized Europe, too. Marlow uses many of the same pejorative words and concepts to describe the Stations as he uses to describe the 'sepulchral city' on his return to England: 'folly' (43 and 113); 'common' (50) and 'commonplace' (113); the people in one place have 'black[...] confidence' (65), the others have a similar 'assurance of perfect safety' (113); both have a 'stupid importance' (114; compare 50-51). In a world where manhood is hard to achieve, real work with its manly associations (especially for Marlow, whose most casual references to work still see it as an exclusively male area 'I don't like work, no man does') is helpful to restore the fugitive sense of manliness.

It is being 'cut off' (66) in the strange world of plants and water that seems to trigger the temporary descent into the identity-confusion of 'you's and 'one's I have discussed. Solitude is feared and on Marlow's interpretation of Kurtz's experience, rightly so: 'his soul was mad. Being alone in the wilderness, it had looked within itself, and[...] gone mad' (108). Male fellowship would seem to be a desirable alternative.

Yet, even as he proffers the potential solutions of work and fellowship, Marlow simultaneously shows their flimsiness - again undercutting the very values of traditional male heroism that so many readers see Conrad and his world as representing. For all Marlow's talk of liking work because it allows you 'to find yourself' (59), what it actually does is to

save him from penetrating anywhere so deep - 'there was surface-truth enough in these things to save a wiser man' (70). Work is helpful to a man only in the same specious way that a narcotic is helpful: all Marlow's acts of potential heroism occur only when his work has so absorbed him that he is unable to recognise what danger he is in

then I had to look at the river mighty quick, because there was a snag in the fairway. Sticks, little sticks, were flying about[....] We cleared the snag clumsily. Arrows, by Jove! We were being shot at! (80);

or again,

something big appeared in the air before the shutter [....] and the man stepped back swiftly[...] and fell upon my feet. The side of his head hit the wheel twice, and the end of what appeared to be a long cane clattered round[....] It looked as though after wrenching that thing from somebody ashore he had lost his balance in the effort. The thin smoke had blown away, we were clear of the snag[;....] my feet felt so very warm and wet that I had to look down. The man had rolled on his back[...] both his hands clutched that cane. It was the shaft of a spear (81).

The frenzy of work leaves only enough of Marlow's mind free to see in the most basic, unmeaningful way: lethal arrows are merely registered as 'sticks, little sticks'; a fatal spear is merely 'something big', 'a long cane'. The real meaning of what he has seen, the reality of danger, is only apprehended after the immediate practical necessities for work are past: 'we cleared the snag'; 'we were clear of the snag'. Later, Marlow discusses the 'stuff' that hinders moral behaviour:

and there[...] your strength comes in, the faith in your ability for the digging of unostentatious holes to bury the stuff in - your power of devotion, not to yourself, but to an obscure, back-breaking business (86)

- again, 'back-breaking' work is a means only of 'bury'ing the problem, not of solving it. Indeed, an utter disillusionment with all things practical - scandalous in the world of traditional manliness - is implied in Kurtz's being the only man who achieves true practical success, in this book, sending in as much ivory 'as all the others put together' (47). There are 'no practical hints' in Kurtz's report (86-87) until the 'note' at the end; and this, the document's only practical moment is also the only horrific one: 'exterminate all the brutes!'.

Male fellowship is equally flimsy. Marlow may refer to 'the black fellows of our crew' (74), but he knows that this 'fellow'ship' is no more than a figure of speech. One of the cannibals suggests his men be allowed to eat the jungle natives: "'aha!" I said, just for good fellowship's sake' (74). 'Fellowship' is utterly ironic here: Marlow makes a meaningless noise in response to a request that is patently utterly alien to him. He later indicates the real reason for the necessity of fellowship - and it is far less glamorous and more specious than heroic tradition would suggest: fellowship is necessary merely because of the sordid dangers of solitude. Kurtz has only taken a 'high seat amongst the devils of the land' because he has been 'untrammelled' in 'solitude' (85). Marlow's listeners are prevented from understanding this horrific process only because they, unlike Kurtz, are safely surrounded by 'kind neighbours ready to cheer [them...] or to fall on [them...], stepping delicately between the butcher and the policeman' (85). This is close to outright mockery of fellowship. No wonder Marlow's choice of male fellowship - either with the useless colonials or the monstrous Kurtz - is only 'a choice of nightmares' (103).

Work and fellowship, then, merely cover over the problem: the engineered confusion in *Heart Of Darkness* increasingly seems

provoked by the desire to suppress and conceal. Real knowledge is utterly undesirable: 'the appalling face of a glimpsed truth' (113) is no desirable alternative to 'the saving illusion' (119). Kurtz penetrates the 'mysteries' and is hence doomed, left only with 'diabolic love and [...] unearthly hate' fighting 'for the possession of [his...] soul' (110). When the 'veil' in this book is finally 'rent' (as much as it can be, this side of death) all it reveals is 'the horror! The horror!' (111). We begin to see the need for Marlow's frequent laconicisms of style - for instance, 'I felt I was becoming scientifically interesting' (49) to describe his fear that he is losing his mind. The 'glimpsed truth' must be held at bay, lest its 'horror' engulf him utterly. No wonder images of burial recur throughout the book.

The question of burial, of some sort of covering over, of the ability to have restraint, is central to this text - but still provides no clear solution to the problems of manhood. Marlow shudderingly criticises Kurtz and the hysterical helmsman for having 'no restraint' (88,108). Yet he praises the natives for the very opposite of restraint - for being 'natural and true' (40) and for their 'frankness' (69). Nor is the division even as simple as restrained whites, unrestrained natives: later, Marlow encounters the starving cannibals' inexplicable 'restraint' in not attacking the pilgrims (76). When Marlow cries despairingly to his listeners, 'mustn't a man ever - ' (83), the emphasis is pushed, by the omission of the final words, away from any specific act that a man has or has not to do, onto the very fact of a man's state of having-not-to in the first place - the importance (or not) of restraint.

Work, fellowship, restraint - however highly vaunted traditionally, they do not solve anything. However, we have one other area, more important than any of these to Marlow, still to consider, and it involves

matters that are thematically central to *Heart Of Darkness* - the voice and utterance.

These matters come to the fore when Marlow is first made aware of his unnerving kinship as a man with the howling and dancing natives:

an appeal to me in this fiendish row is there? Very well; I hear; I admit, but I have a voice, too, and for good or evil mine is the speech that cannot be silenced (69).

This is, momentarily, a reassuringly manly cry of defiance from Marlow. Yet the appeal of the natives clearly does make him uncomfortable, despite his attempt at a cool explanation along the popular-Darwinian lines of racial memory:

you you so remote from the night of first ages[....]
The mind of man is capable of anything - because everything is in it, all the past as well as all the future (69).

His tone of irritable self-justification throughout his discussion of the matter reveals an awareness of the flimsiness of his argument. All he can say is that he - both as the narrator of the tale, as against his powerless listeners (like another Ancient Mariner), and as a European, as against the powerless blacks - cannot 'be silenced'. There is no logical victory here, merely 'might is right' - and we have already seen how little Marlow thinks of that philosophy. He even admits - albeit carefully shrouded in glorious rhetoric - that his voice's strength is not necessarily something good: 'for good or evil'. Soon Marlow comes to acknowledge that any solution centred in his 'voice' is meaningless: 'it occurred to me that my speech or my silence[...] would be a mere futility' (72).

Nevertheless, our curiosity is roused: why should Marlow propose however unsuccessfully - a voice or speaking as a solution to the

problem of manhood, in the first place? The whole of Marlow's first meditation on utterance (69) is shot through with references to men and manhood as well as speech: 'man', 'the mind of man', 'the man knows' and so on. More importantly, it is with frank unhindered utterance that being sufficiently manly is specifically linked: if you were 'man enough', if you were 'as much of a man as these on the shore', you could face the 'stripped' 'truth' of the natives' cries. Only this belief in the link between manliness and utterance explains the fact that Marlow feels, not frustration, nor grief, nor fear, nor surprise, but specifically 'humiliation' (112, his second meditation on utterance) when he finds that even at the moment of death, he would 'have nothing to say'. Speaking or utterance has definitive importance for Marlow as a *man*.

Again, there is a link with Conrad's own thought here. He, too, seems to fear utterance: *Heart Of Darkness* is greater to him when unwritten

it could never be so fine to anybody as it is fine to me now, lurking in the blank pages, in an intensity of existence, without voice, without form but without blemish (letter to Ford, 12 November 1898, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 2: 119).

Like Marlow, Conrad's fear of utterance is possibly related to the frailty of his sense of manliness. Of the art of the fiction-writer, he says:

action [is] its essence, [it...] may be compared to rescue work carried out in darkness against cross gusts of wind swaying the action of a great multitude. It is rescue work[....] The demand of the individual to the artist is, in effect, the cry, 'Take me out of myself!' meaning really, out of my perishable activity into the light of imperishable consciousness (*Notes*, 15-16).

This is a strange passage: surely we get the feeling that Conrad protests too much. It is as if the ex-sailor feels that writing is not manly, not

workmanlike, enough⁵, and so to compensate, he makes this rather exaggerated image of writing as a macho act of (probably sailorly) heroism: 'rescue work[...] carried out in darkness against cross gusts'.

The source of Conrad's anxiety may be reflected in Marlow's unnerving discovery. He finds that his own near-death experience of 'tepid' and 'impalpable' greyness (112), which deprives him of the certainty necessary to speak, is not the universal one: perhaps it is just he who is insufficiently manly. The previously non-committal and rather idiotic helmsman, at the moment of death, suddenly looks at Marlow in 'an extraordinary, profound, familiar manner' (81), then:

in the very last moment, as though in response to some sign we could not see, to some whisper we could not hear, he frowned heavily, and that frown gave to his black death-mask an inconceivably sombre, brooding, and menacing expression (82).

This may be an unpleasant or dark certainty, but it is some kind of certainty nonetheless. And it allows at least the possibility of vital utterance: 'it looked as though he would presently put to us some question in an understandable language'(82).

Similarly, Kurtz's moment of death is a potential moment of solid truth: 'perhaps all the wisdom, and all truth, and all sincerity, are just compressed into that inappreciable moment of time' (113). His death is something definite, a genuine boundary - he has 'stepped over the edge', 'over the threshold' (113). The awful, unheroic quality of Marlow's brush with death lay in the 'impalpable' - 'tepid scepticism', 'without much belief' (112); Kurtz, on the other hand, has 'conviction' and 'some sort of belief' (113). The certainty death seems to offer might explain the death-wish we find in Conrad and some of his protagonists. Repeatedly suicide is perceived as a desirable option: consider the

fifteen (at least) suicides, or possible suicides, in Conrad's works - among them Decoud, Whalley, Jim, perhaps the Secret Sharer.⁶ Conrad himself attempted suicide in 1878. In the face of the deep uncertainty of a man's life (and the consequent unmanly inability to speak) perhaps any certainty, even if it is bought at the price of death, is desirable. Kurtz's death does result in his ability to utter - "the horror!": he makes a 'pronouncement'; he can 'say' (twice); he 'said!'; he 'summed up'; he gives 'expression' all in a matter of nine lines (112-113). For Marlow, despite the cry's negativity, it is thus nevertheless 'an affirmation' (113). When Marlow refers to Kurtz as 'a voice! a voice!' (100), we can hear a relief as great as in the Ancient Mariner's cry of "a sail! a sail!"⁷: 'he had something to say. He said it' (112). Manhood and utterance have become inextricably linked:

I found with humiliation that probably I would have nothing to say. This is the reason why I affirm that Kurtz was a remarkable man. He had something to say. He said it[....] He had summed up he had judged. 'The horror!' He was a remarkable man (113).

This is why Kurtz becomes a kind of hero for Marlow 'that is why I have remained loyal to Kurtz to the last, and even beyond' (113) because he has shown that utterance and definite belief, and hence manhood in this form, are possible.

However, we would know the novel and Conrad but poorly if we expected a positive closure here. Kurtz has paid a high price - as Marlow must acknowledge:

his was an impenetrable darkness. I looked at him as you peer down at a man who is lying at the bottom of a precipice where the sun never shines (111).

Kurtz may have achieved a certainty that enables utterance, but it is the certainty of darkness; he may indeed have successfully penetrated the 'surface-truth' but only to go down into the abyss.

The image of the abyss⁸ tells us as much about Marlow as it does about Kurtz. Peering over the edge of a precipice, as Marlow is, one would feel concern for the man at the bottom, but also indubitably fear lest one fell in there oneself. Indeed, when Conrad uses the abyss-image elsewhere, the onlooker's fear of falling is clear: in *An Outcast Of The Islands*, Willems looks

down into the deeper gloom of the courtyard. And, all at once, it seemed to him that he was peering into a sombre hollow, into a deep black hole full of decay and of whitened bones; into an immense and inevitable grave full of corruption where sooner or later he must unavoidably fall (274).

Conrad sees himself at times as having fallen in:

I am alone[...] in a chasm with perpendicular sides of black basalt. Never were sides so perpendicular and smooth, and high. Above, your anxious head against a bit of sky peers down - in vain - in vain. There's not rope long enough for that rescue (letter to Garnett, 31 March 1899, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 2: 176).

This is written from the viewpoint of a Kurtz looking up at a Marlow. Yet Conrad does not tell the version of *Heart Of Darkness* that would be from Kurtz's viewpoint, despite the empathy with him here, but instead a version from the viewpoint of an unheroic looker-on - Marlow. Perhaps Conrad, from his brief experience with the abyss, is like Marlow and has learned to fear (and hence bury any suggestion of) being a big man, a 'hero' like Kurtz, because the price a big man must pay is too high. Marlow 'draw[s] back' his 'hesitating foot' (113) from the

edge Kurtz has crossed. He seems to know the dangers even before he meets Kurtz: what other explanation is there for his cryptic comment on his upriver journey? -

millions of trees, massive, immense, running up high; and at their foot[...] the little begrimed steamboat, like a sluggish beetle crawling on the floor of a lofty portico. It made you feel very small, very lost, and yet it was not altogether depressing, that feeling. After all, if you were small, the grimy beetle crawled on which was just what you wanted it to do (68).

The suggestion is that things would be very different - your passage impeded, yourself menaced - if you were big.

The ending of *Heart Of Darkness*, then, is not a positive one as far as a man's attaining understanding is concerned. Some men can be 'heroic' and know and utter; but, as they are men, and hence probably bad at the core, and as the universe that they are trying to know is so too, any understanding will probably be of something horrible and any heroism thus achieved must be of a nightmarish kind. Moreover, while Kurtz may succeed in his 'affirmation' of the possibility of seeing something definite and hence achieving a manly ability to say it, this 'affirmation' does not really spread to Marlow, or to us: we cannot understand his monumental summing-up 'The horror! The horror!' even when he has made it. The world is no less dark and confused for those Kurtz leaves behind.

One question remains to be asked? Is there any way of finding out what the suspected ghastliness at the heart of things, the suspected, glimpsed, *Heart of Darkness*, is?

In a book that concentrates with such near exclusivity on the male, one could propose that the 'unknown' may well be to do with the female. Conrad's comments on the tale, and the tale's structure itself,

back up such a hypothesis. For Conrad, the interview between Marlow and the Intended is the most important part of the story, opening out the tale, yet at the same time encapsulating what it has really been about:

the last pages of *Heart Of Darkness* where the interview of the man and the girl locks in as it were the whole 30,000 words of narrative description into one suggestive view of a whole phase of life and makes of that story something quite on another plane than an anecdote of a man who went mad in the Centre of Africa (letter to Blackwood, 31 May 1902, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 2: 417).

It is this interview between 'a man and a girl' (indeed, the only woman with any proper speaking-part) that makes the book more than just an anecdote of 'a man'. Conrad is here pointing us towards the significance of something between the two sexes, then; women, though barely featuring in it, are important to this book another (or perhaps *the*) absent presence. Are they as sinister as the others?

they - the women I mean - are out of it - should be out of it. We must help them to stay in that beautiful world of their own, lest ours gets worse (84).

Women are different, are the other, in this man's world; but the undertones of this passage suggest something far more surprising. 'Are' the women out of the world, or 'should' they be? The 'should' is vital here. It may simply be confirming the rightness of the women's being out of it - 'should' as confirmatory positive: they are out of it, as they should be. But it simultaneously raises the very opposite possibility 'should' as concessionary negative: they are actually not out of it, despite the fact that they should be. 'Help them', too, is strange. Like 'should', it suggests the possibility that the women may not stay in their

other world - they need to be helped to stay there and that this possibility must be avoided. What reason is given that women 'should' be out of the man's world? It is 'lest ours get worse'. Again, this time with 'lest' as the pivotal word, this could be just a comment on the likely fate of the man's world generally, but the logical connection of 'lest' may be intended as a closer one than that, opening the possibility of taking the passage to mean that the man's world would get worse *if women came in* that they are capable of worse than men, or will somehow otherwise damage the men's world. This whole passage writhes with the full Conradian ambivalence of horror and adoration towards women. The veneration is most clear on the surface of the passage and the horror is in the potential undertones, in the availability of a reading that hints that it is, for some reason, necessary to keep women in their other world. Women are feared. Are there any clues as to why this should be so?

More than once in *Heart Of Darkness*, women are fearsome because they are stronger than men. Kurtz's mistress is inscrutably threatening to Marlow and his fellow men, as the Harlequin's anxious response to her appearance near the ship confirms:

'if she had offered to come aboard I really think I would have tried to shoot her,' said the man of patches, nervously (101).

She is impressively warlike in her appearance:

she carried her head high; her hair was done in the shape of a helmet; she had brass leggings to the knees, brass wire gauntlets to the elbow[...] She must have had the value of several elephant tusks upon her. She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent (100-101).

This is more manly than any of the men we have encountered. The superior strength is not restricted to the savage woman, either:

the men said 'My dear fellow,' and did nothing
Then - would you believe it? - I tried the women. I,
Charlie Marlow, set the women to work - to get a
job. Heavens! Well, you see, the notion drove me. I
had an aunt, a dear enthusiastic soul[....]
I got my appointment - of course (34).

Even in the male world of 'fellow'ship and the male bastion, work, the woman succeeds for Marlow where the men did not. For all his patronizing tone in this passage, the women are more powerful than the men.

Women might also be feared merely because they are the other, the mysterious - as becomes increasingly apparent in Marlow's repeated embodiment of the unknown, dark wilderness as female. The 'colossal body of the fecund and mysterious life' that is the wilderness looks at Kurtz's mistress 'as though it had been looking at the image of its own tenebrous and passionate soul' (101). A sexual fear of women is plain in terms like 'impenetrable' (103) and 'fecund' (101). This link with the wilderness is not restricted to Kurtz's mistress but extends to the Intended, for all her supposed civilization (and hence, perhaps, to all women). Her voice

seemed to have the accompaniment of all the other sounds, full of mystery, desolation, and sorrow, I had ever heard - the ripple of the river, the sighing of the trees swayed by the wind, the murmurs of the crowds, the faint ring of incomprehensible words cried from afar, the whisper of a voice speaking from beyond the threshold of an eternal darkness (119).

The first few things in this string of comparisons could apply to anywhere, but might also specifically refer to Marlow's experience of

the wilderness on his river-journey; the latter two comparisons, and especially the last, can really refer only to the river journey: the Mistress's cry, Kurtz's whisper. Indeed, in this book about the mystery of darkness that is feared, yet half-desired (for knowledge, for speech and hence for manhood), there are suggestions that it is woman herself who is the darkness:

suddenly she opened her bared arms and threw them up rigid above her head, as though in uncontrollable desire to touch the sky, and at the same time the swift shadows darted out on the earth, swept around on the river, gathering the steamer into a shadowy embrace (101)

This link with the darkness is again not left to Kurtz's native Mistress alone, but extends to the Intended: she stretches her arms 'black and with clasped hands across the fading and narrow sheen of the window', and is specifically compared 'in this gesture' with Kurtz's darkness-hastening Mistress (220). Again, if it can apply to her, too, we feel it could apply to any woman.

The one attitude of Kurtz's by which Marlow adjudges him specifically to have 'glimpsed truth' is 'the strange commingling of desire and hate' (113) in him; yet it has been abundantly clear throughout the text, as I hope I have shown, that exactly this mingled attitude is often Conrad's, and certainly Marlow's, attitude towards women. If woman is the unknown darkness at the heart, it would explain the attitude of desire and hatred towards her. Suddenly it becomes clearer why knowledge of the ultimate mystery, and the ability to speak of it, is so equated with masculinity throughout the book: if woman is the mystery, it would be a demonstration of manhood to understand (even, punningly, to penetrate) that mystery.

With all this in mind, then, let us return specifically to the crucial interview with the Intended to see if she - and womankind in general might indeed be the source of the abomination at the core of things.

The term 'intended' (which is all the name this woman is ever given) suggests utter passivity, both grammatically and in its meaning: she is intended for someone else, not herself. This attitude towards a woman is hardly surprising for the period (especially as this was also a time of considerable male anxiety about female emancipation). However, there are suggestions of something else beneath the unsurprising surface; something more complex and, for a man, more sinister. The passage on women's having to be 'out of it' runs straight - without even a change of paragraph - into a strange mingling of Kurtz's death-in-life state with the necessity for the Intended's being 'out of it':

[...] lest ours gets worse. Oh, she had to be out of it. You should have heard the disinterred body of Mr. Kurtz saying, 'My Intended'. You would have perceived directly then how completely she was out of it. And the lofty frontal bone of Mr. Kurtz! They say the hair goes on growing sometimes, but this ah - specimen, was impressively bald (84).

There is (as we might now expect from Marlow in so sensitive an area) confusion and lack of clarity here, but there is no question that death for Kurtz is present here, implicit in the word 'disinterred' and the reference to the idea that the hair continues to grow after death, and more shockingly - that for Marlow this death is interwoven specifically with the Intended's presence or otherwise. In the case of something as horrific as Kurtz's death-in-life, a woman, according to the traditional picture of her, could not possibly be involved - hence the intended 'had to be' out of it. But the very over-emphasis on this fact - in 'directly', 'how completely', and the anxious repetition of the key phrase 'out of it' - actually suggests a fear of quite the opposite: that in

fact she is somehow closely involved in Kurtz's horrific state. Marlow's comments here are really a continuation of his habit of using the irony of overstatement for protection: the Intended is 'out of it' in this situation, in the same way that the Manager has 'verily accomplished something' with his immaculate appearance - i.e. not at all.

The disturbing implications about women only multiply as the paragraph continues. Immediately after the suggestion that Kurtz's future wife may be involved in his ghastly state, we have a strangely sexual description of the wilderness's assault on him:

the wilderness had patted him on the head, and, behold, it was like a ball an ivory ball; it had caressed him, and lo! he had withered; it had taken him, loved him, embraced him, got into his veins, consumed his flesh, and sealed his soul to its own by the inconceivable ceremonies of some devilish initiation. He was its spoiled and pampered favourite (84).

Marlow portrays the wilderness as a sexual female here, and its actions on Kurtz are those of sexual love or, in the 'seal[ing] his soul to its own' with 'ceremonies', perhaps even of marriage hence again recalling the Intended. Yet the effect of the sexual actions of the wilderness is deadly: 'it had caressed him, and lo!- he had withered'; 'got into his veins, consumed his flesh' implies disease (perhaps in this context, venereal disease⁹). Marlow has made an inescapable link between sexual involvement with a female and death; the sexual woman in these images is fatal¹⁰. For Marlow, the Intended, then, like the wilderness, must be fatal too.

Double images, praising the Intended yet continuing this suggestion, multiply: we are in the arena of 'the strange commingling of desire and hate' (113) for women. Thus, the Intended is 'a soul as translucently pure as a cliff of crystal' (113). Her beauty and purity are clear here; yet

beneath, there is also something mildly sinister in the idea of 'cliff[s] of crystal': such cliffs would surely be smoothly unclimbable, unattainable; they might even remind us of the unscalable sides of the precipice at the bottom of which Kurtz is lying, or Conrad's own chasm, with its smoothly perpendicular sides. The image of the Intended-as-cliff is all the more disturbing because it follows on so closely, with no change of paragraph, from all the allusions to 'the edge' off which Kurtz has fatally fallen: 'I had peeped over the edge' (112); 'he had stepped over the edge, while I had been permitted to draw back my hesitating foot' (113). Marlow offers us no other high place from which Kurtz could step off; the suggestion, in their proximity, that the fatal edge off which Kurtz has stepped, and the Intended's cliff, are the same thing, is hard to avoid.

Marlow's ambivalent attitude to the Intended grows as he decides to enter her house. He gives his reason for visiting her:

all that had been Kurtz's had passed out of my hands: his soul, his body, his station, his plans, his ivory, his career. There remained only his memory and his Intended (116).

The implication cannot be avoided that Marlow wants to have the Intended, too, in his hands, and images of Marlow as penetrating and violating follow immediately:

the vision [of Kurtz and the wilderness] seemed to enter the house with me[...] - the heart of a conquering darkness. It was a moment of triumph for the wilderness, an invading and vengeful rush (116)

- undertones of rape - whether by Marlow or by what accompanies him - are present. Of course, the surface of Marlow's comments is all admiration, chivalry and protection towards the woman:

an invading and vengeful rush which, it seemed to me, I would have to keep back alone for the salvation of another soul.

Yet how protective are these comments? Is his keeping the wildness back a matter of acting as a barrier - traditionally heroic, protective behaviour; or is he rather admitting a more threatening possibility- that the wildness is his, hence his ability to control it, and that the danger he is holding back from attacking the Intended is actually himself. 'Alone' could be mildly heroic - the hero as the lone remaining bastion between the heroine and evil; but the word has acquired such strong associations with megalomania and madness from Marlow's comments on Kurtz, that by now it can only make us uneasy. And is Marlow as good as he says he will be, here, anyway? Does his famous lie to the Intended indeed protect her, or is it not rather a way of spitting into the 'light' (117) and 'truthfulness' (115) he finds in her face?

Marlow's duality of attitude towards women comes from a duality perceived (or feared) in the women themselves. Throughout his encounter with the Intended, the imagery with which Marlow portrays her is double-edged. Again and again, he pictures her as the light place in darkness:

'you knew him best,' I repeated. And perhaps she did. But with every word spoken the room was growing darker, and only her forehead, smooth and white, remained illumined by the unextinguishable light of belief and love (118).

This is, on the surface, simply an image of suitably feminine separateness through beauty and purity - but, as usual, strangeness lurks just beneath. 'With every word spoken the room was growing darker': there is a half-suggestion of cause and effect ('*with every word*') - that the words spoken, the conversation, are causing the room

to grow dark. Then follow dim suggestions that it is the Intended herself who is connected with the increasing darkness:

she stood up; her fair hair seemed to catch all the remaining light in a glimmer of gold (119).

Here, we have the idea that she is taking all the light as well as saving it, depriving Marlow by grabbing the light to herself. Such suggestions run throughout the encounter: 'only her forehead[...] remained illumined' (118); 'as if all the sad light of the cloudy evening had taken refuge on her forehead' (117). Both these phrases could suggest that she is draining the light to herself, jealously keeping it and leaving Marlow none. As their conversation continues, suggestions that the Intended is causing the darkness, that she indeed is the darkness, are intensified (as we saw) in the comparison of her stretched-arm gesture with the Mistress's beckoning in the darkness (120, compared with 101). So far from being a source of light, the Intended has become a 'Shade' (120). She gives a cry of 'triumph' (121) as Marlow leaves, just as the darkness has a moment of 'triumph' (119) as Marlow arrives.

It soon becomes clear, moreover, that the sinisterness resides in the Intended herself and not just in Marlow's perception of her. This woman intended for man is inherently threatening. If we listen to what she actually says, rather than going with the narrative-surface of the passage and simply assuming her to be the traditional acme of female passivity and self-sacrifice, much of it is rather unpleasant. She looks at the whole of Kurtz's life and death merely from the point of view of her self: "'I have survived'" (118); "'I must speak. I want you[...] to know I have been worthy of him'" (118); "'I understood him better than anyone on earth'" (118); "'what a loss to me to us!" she corrected herself with beautiful generosity' (119) (there may well be irony in Marlow's

comment here, too - would a truly generous person have made such a mistake in the first place?); "I believed in him more than anyone on earth - more than his own mother, more than - himself. He needed me! Me!" (120). Her unconvincing assertion, during all this, that "it is not pride", is contradicted completely, anyway, by her very next words: "it is not pride... Yes I am proud". When told that Kurtz's last words were her name, she utters a cry that is purely egotistical, the 'cry of inconceivable triumph[....] "I knew it - I was sure!" - and Marlow stresses her unsuitable exuberance by the irony of his understated, quiet repetition of her words: 'She knew it. She was sure'(121). No wonder, after all this, that Marlow feels something 'like a chill grip' (120) on his chest. She is obsessed only with herself, never really seeing Kurtz as a separate being at all. Indeed, Marlow's earlier hearing 'the echo of [Kurtz's...] magnificent eloquence' (113) from the Intended, especially when Kurtz's eloquence has already been marked as part of his egotistical hollowness, suggests that her solipsism could equal Kurtz's: she is potentially as monstrous as he.

Crowning all these sinister suggestions in and around the Intended, is the (now critically famous) fact of Marlow's translation, whether conscious or unconscious, of Kurtz's cry of "The horror!" into "your name": "the last word he pronounced was - your name" (121). This replacement could be just the first thing that Marlow thinks of, a mere coincidence; but it could also imply that he knows that the Intended or she as representative of all sexual women - is herself the dark 'horror' so dreaded.

We can go further here. Her status as 'Intended' - that is, solely as Kurtz's marriage-partner - might indicate that it is she, specifically as representative of the female entry into the male world - the

conjunction of the male and the female - who is 'the horror'. Certainly it is this conjunction that is stressed in this passage:

I saw her and him in the same instant of time - his death and her sorrow[...] Do you understand? I saw them together - I heard them together (117-118);

my strained ears seemed to hear distinctly, mingled with her tone of despairing regret, the summing-up whisper of his eternal condemnation (118).

And always, this perception of man and woman together is portrayed as something horrible: seeing and hearing the two together, Marlow expresses utter revulsion:

I asked myself what I was doing there, with a sensation of panic in my heart as though I had blundered into a place of cruel and absurd mysteries not fit for a human being to behold (118).

Of course, we could understand the cruel mystery merely to be the contrast between the monstrous Kurtz and his pure and beautiful Intended, but after all the unpleasant implications that have hovered round the Intended, it is not possible to accept this as the only meaning of these words: there is no longer enough of a contrast between the two people to sustain such a reading. There is the suggestion again, then, that it is in fact woman, or more specifically, the conjunction between woman and man, that is the cruel mystery the nameless dark thing at the heart of the book.

The next step becomes inevitable. In a work so deeply involved with inaccessible manliness and the all-male world, and one which expresses, beneath the expected devotion, such suppressed fear and hatred of the sexual woman, or at least, sees her as such an alien

creature, one is forced to ponder the question of a possible homosexual element in *Heart Of Darkness* again, an aspect of the work entirely neglected by the traditional critical approach. Such a latent homosexual content might be one explanation for some of the book's strange evasions and engineered confusions, at a time when it was required that homosexuality be kept as an unspeakable secret.

There are plain suggestions of homosexuality in the relationship between Kurtz and the rather flighty Harlequin:

they had come together unavoidably, like two ships becalmed near each other, and lay rubbing sides at last (94).

This is already a strange image: surely we expect it to be the ships that lie 'rubbing sides' - yet grammatically, the phrase is actually attached to Kurtz and the Harlequin. Read in this way, the passage leaves us with an image of two men lying together rubbing sides with each other. Especially alongside the relief suggested in 'at last', this image is - unexpectedly - really rather a sexual one. Then we find that Kurtz and the Harlequin talk all night together, and the language describing this talk is the language, not of the run-of-the-mill friendship, but of the love-affair:

'we talked of everything,' he said, quite transported at the recollection. 'I forgot there was such a thing as sleep. The night did not seem to last an hour. Everything! Everything!... Of love, too.' 'Ah, he talked to you of love!' I said, much amused. 'It isn't what you think,' he cried, almost passionately. 'It was in general. He made me see things - things' (94)

If we read this passage in isolation, unaware of the Harlequin's gender, we would almost certainly assume it to be a woman talking of a man (or vice versa) and the romantic night they shared. Given that it is

actually a man talking of another man, it is hard to put any construction on the Harlequin's denial at the end "it isn't what you think" - other than that it is a denial (rather unconvincing, moreover) of a homosexual element in their relationship. Marlow's comments on the Harlequin's relationship with Kurtz follow the same pattern: if we did not know the context, we would assume the comments referred to romantic love - so perhaps they do: 'it was curious to see his mingled eagerness and reluctance to speak of Kurtz' a classic trope of romantic love - 'the man filled his life, occupied his thoughts, swayed his emotions' (95). And all this of the man so unnerved by Kurtz's mistress - a female rival? - that he wants to shoot her.

More surprisingly, for a character so traditionally taken as an icon of heroic masculinity, if we turn our attention to Marlow and his relationship with Kurtz, we find even more pronounced homosexual undertones. There is the kind of doubling between them¹¹ that seems, in works such as 'The Secret Sharer', to be linked in Conrad with homosexual attraction - a man's attraction to his own reflection, that is, to his own sex¹². Thus, for instance, though Kurtz is the one repeatedly credited with 'eloquence', it is not he but Marlow whom we see weaving a spell and holding an audience with words. Similarly, the descriptions of Marlow, when the book opens, as being emaciated and like an 'idol' (28), are later applied by Marlow to Kurtz (86, 99, etc.). Marlow himself admits that there is a very close psychological (and psycho-sexual?) link between the two of them:

and it is not my own extremity I remember best[....]
No! It is his extremity that I seem to have lived
through (113)

and 'lived through', while it could be a 'through' of duration, meaning 'lived during and come out of', could equally well be a 'through' of

dependence, meaning 'lived by means of' - as one lover lives only through the other.

As in the case of the Harlequin, many of Marlow's statements about Kurtz would not be at all out of place in the context of romantic love. For instance, when he fears that he will never meet Kurtz, Marlow's 'sorrow' has 'a startling extravagance of emotion' (83). There is a strange implication in Marlow's description of his approach to Kurtz being like that to 'an enchanted princess sleeping in a fabulous castle' (77): we notice first the weird gender-shift in making Kurtz the princess and then the fact that the whole image puts Marlow in the position of the prince - who is always the one who ends up marrying the princess. Or again:

I was anxious to deal with this shadow by myself alone, - and to this day I don't know why I was so jealous of sharing with anyone the peculiar blackness of that experience (105).

This is extraordinarily suggestive: two men 'alone', involved with something 'black' that one can get 'jealous' about (and 'peculiar', too, may have homosexual connotations¹³). Marlow goes on to make a strange connection:

indeed he could not have been more irretrievably lost than he was at this very moment, when the foundations of our intimacy were being laid (107).

To link moral 'lost'ness with male 'intimacy' at this stage of our reading can only suggest forbidden homosexuality. Perhaps Marlow, who, as we have seen, may fear it is not possible ever to be manly enough, or to be a hero, is attracted to Kurtz precisely because Kurtz, for all his sins, is at least a big enough man to be heroic. Certainly (and as ever with Conrad), while any one of these suggestive passages would alone not

be enough to convince us of a latent homosexual content in this text, nevertheless, such passages are too many and too consistent in implication to be the result of mere coincidence. On one level, then, we can fill the lacuna in 'mustn't a man ever - ' which, significantly for this point, occurs in Marlow's justification of his 'extravagant emotion' over Kurtz with the surrender to homosexual love; we can see the abyss which Kurtz is in as the moral abyss of having given rein to forbidden homosexual desires.

Marlow's relationship with Kurtz thus seems to follow a pattern found elsewhere in Conrad - compare 'The Secret Sharer', and, to a lesser extent, 'Falk' and *Lord Jim* and, partially, 'The Partner'. An insecure and isolated narrator meets another man who is even more isolated than himself - morally isolated through some terrible crime. The two men are doubled with each other in a potentially homosexually suggestive way. Despite his being more of an outcast than the narrator, the new partner seems paradoxically somehow greater or bigger than the narrator. This idea of a man's devotion to a (sort of) hero who is nevertheless secret and sinful can be seen as a metaphor for a forbidden (yet nevertheless superior) homosexual devotion.

It can only be inconclusive, but is nonetheless interestingly suggestive to note, in this latter context, Conrad's own tone in the very letter where he pictures himself in an abyss like Kurtz's. As is the case with many of Marlow's utterances, if one did not know it to be a letter from one man to another, one could well assume it to be a love-letter:

Dearest Garnett.

What do You think of me? Think I love you though I am a dumb dog or no better than a whining dog. There's not a bark left in me[....] Mc.Clure[...] came for the night. A decent little chap I say if I got to die for it!

Is trying to ram the *Rescue* into the Atlantic
 Monthly[....]
 Are You angry with me?
 if so learn that I am so hardened by adversity
 that your anger glides off me as a dart glances off
 a turtle's back, and I still continue to radiate
 affection on You (letter to Garnett, 31 March 1899,
 in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 2: 176).

Apart from the more obvious romantic manifestations 'dearest', 'I love you' and so on there is much else in this letter recalls a love-letter: the capitalized 'You', and indeed the whole concentration on what the state of this person's emotions is towards him, including the lover's anxious enquiry 'Are you angry with me?'. There is the frivolity of imagery in the first and last paragraphs and in the latter, the pretended disdain, intended only to show further actual devotion - all these are commonplaces of the love-letter. In the last sentence of the first paragraph and in the second paragraph, there is possibly even a species of that great lovers' standby, baby-talk (although it could perhaps be read instead as - still frivolous - cod-cockney). We must, of course, allow that there is an element of facetious teasing, here - but even so, it is significant that the teasing takes this specific romantic form. I am certainly not for one moment suggesting that Conrad had an avowedly homosexual relationship with Garnett, or even consciously realised the sexual ambiguities of his tone here. Nevertheless, the association of such potential homosexual feeling, here, with Conrad's powerful description, only a few lines further on, of his personal (and admittedly only half-comprehended) abyss, is suggestive of a psychological connection between the two things. This is a connection Conrad could have carried over into *Heart Of Darkness*.

Whatever we may conclude about Conrad's personal involvement in these matters, the running homosexual undercurrents in *Heart Of Darkness* cannot help but make us wonder, then, if the hidden

'unspeakable' is actually the taboo of homosexuality. Kurtz's rites are 'unspeakable' - yet elsewhere in the novel, Marlow (and indeed Conrad, in stories like 'Falk') is quite happy to speak of, say, cannibalism. In the era which sentenced Wilde to hard labour for homosexual acts, perhaps the only real 'unspeakable' left is homosexuality. (Indeed, the Wilde trials of 1895, with their unnameable crimes and references to 'the love that dare not speak its name', were very fresh in memory when Conrad was writing *Heart Of Darkness*.) Perhaps, then, we can adduce a half-acknowledged homosexuality in Conrad's creation of Marlow, as part of the explanation for his original readiness to attack (what he would in these circumstances, hence want to see as 'the myth of') traditional manly heroism. Homosexuality may be the reason for the book's constant need to veil and confuse homosexuality, then, may be the repressed subject of the text; or even with more conscious intent - embodied in a coded, allusive message for those readers attuned to its suggestions¹⁴.

Finally, we cannot leave *Heart Of Darkness* without a brief glance at Marlow's other great tale, *Lord Jim*, published only a year later¹⁵. I shall, of course, deal with *Lord Jim* fully in a separate chapter, but for a study of *Heart Of Darkness*, there are some interesting points of comparison between the two works that throw some light onto Marlow's thoughts on manhood in *Heart Of Darkness*.

Once again, then, in *Lord Jim*, Marlow comes up against the difficulty of ultimate and complete utterance:

I have given up expecting those last words, whose ring, if they could only be pronounced, would shake both heaven and earth (225)

- and again, he pleads rather unconvincingly, that there is 'never time' to say such words (compare *Darkness*, 66). It is in this same passage,

too, that Marlow returns to thoughts on how 'safe' it is to have 'no illusions' like his unimaginative friends: this kind of safety is surely akin to *Heart Of Darkness's* saving 'surface-truth'. He develops the idea, going on to talk of the danger of having illusions but here it is spelled out that they are dangerous simply because they are 'shortlived' - confirming our conjecture that Marlow's agony in *Heart Of Darkness* is in losing his treasured childhood dreams of male heroism. These are the same dreams which, in *Lord Jim*, we see Marlow wishing he could still manage, and which (while thinking it unwise) he half admires Jim for his attempts to sustain.

Another later passage from *Lord Jim* is also relevant to our understanding of *Heart Of Darkness*:

I did not look again at the shore till I had clambered on board the schooner [Jim....] remained persistently visible with the stronghold of the night at his back[....] He himself appeared no bigger than a child then only a speck, a tiny white speck, that seemed to catch all the light left in a darkened world....And suddenly, I lost him (335-336).

If we return to the surface-thought of Marlow's encounter with the Intended - women as pure and light and beautiful, and men as unclean and dark this passage in *Lord Jim* looks like an attempt to heal this same breach between men and purity, to allow a man, too, to be a thing of light in an otherwise dark world. However, it is entirely supportive to the hypothesis of Marlow's dismay with the male nature in *Heart Of Darkness*, to note that here, the Jim shown as able to be a light-bearer is, throughout the book, not portrayed as a particularly manly man at all. He has a propensity to blush, a hairless chin and pouting lips (74) - a rather womanly man; and even in this passage, immediately before the reference to his being light, far from his

masculinity being stressed, he is compared with a child - the pre-sexual, the non-manly. Moreover, there is anyway some confirmation of Marlow's strange dual attitude to the supposedly pure and feminine, in that, as with the Intended, Jim is seen 'catch'ing the remaining light, which could suggest a jealous grabbing to oneself; the feminine apparently pure may actually be something dangerous.

Finally, it is possible to see Stein as a 'clean' re-working of Kurtz: both are oracular and (albeit for widely differing reasons) unlikely heroes, and both utter vital words beyond our and Marlow's comprehension. Yet in *Lord Jim*, positive thought makes a difference: Stein, while no less knowledgeable than Kurtz, is far more optimistic about man's chances, and - as a result? - where Kurtz is at the bottom of an abyss, Stein is merely 'away there' amongst the 'shadows' and butterflies (214) - though unattainable, far less dismally lost. Perhaps Kurtz's abyss of the certainty of wrong has been filled by the "'deep, deep sea'" (214) of doubt and dream upon which Stein manages to keep himself up, while suggesting that we do likewise.

However, these are merely intriguing comparisons. With or without them, we have already found that many of *Heart Of Darkness's* deliberate and often sinister confusions are intended to veil (in the truest sense of that word, in that they reveal that they are concealing, and hence half-provoke investigation) problems centering around manhood and masculinity; and with its themes of the unattainability of traditional ideals of manhood, and the alienness of the sexual female, it is possible - but not indispensable - to see in *Heart Of Darkness* a homosexual element. This latter would, with its taboo status, again further explain the book's often deliberate confusion as a tactic of concealment: Marlow is the man who openly admits that he wants to 'forget' what he 'hate's (57).

With Conrad, though, as we have come to expect, there is always an 'and yet' another possible approach: especially in this carefully shifting and confusing novel, no conclusion can really call itself final. In this case, the 'and yet' centres around the idea of the impossibility of utterance because of the unknowableness of man and the universe. Marlow is constantly implying that he knows nothing and can say little. Yet he is the Narrator – the whole tale is a monument to Marlow's ability to say; and he at least knows enough to say that he knows nothing, which is more than his fellow civilised men can manage – which, in itself, is something Marlow also knows and says: in the 'sepulchral city', the people's 'knowledge of life' is

an irritating pretence[....] offensive to me like the outrageous flauntings of folly in the face of a danger it is unable to comprehend. I had no particular desire to enlighten them (113-114)

but the implication is that 'enlighten' them he could. Moreover, we can find this same paradox in Conrad himself, as, for instance, in his letter about his inability to sense any reality or certainty, even in 'the hands that will hold the paper, the eyes that will glance at the lines'. Yes, this passage conveys his disintegration into the experience of utter loss of belief in communication, into insubstantiality and doubt – but the passage belies itself even as he writes it. The product of this supposed chaotic disintegration is not in itself what we would expect, is not in itself chaos. The whole letter is put together with care and accuracy; the experience is described vividly and coherently. In the end, then, both Conrad and Marlow cannot evade the realisation that their art belies their professed experience of chaotic negativity and of the dominance of the unknowable and unsayable: despite that experience, they must see that they can say. Perhaps their seeing this is

the reason why they continue to try, continue to function a glimmer of hope in a gloom-filled Marlovian or Conradian universe.

Perhaps, though, this insight is quite the opposite of a ray of hope. The coherence of Marlow's or Conrad's narratives, despite their claims of incoherence, could simply suggest that they cannot possibly even know for sure that they do not know. Perhaps this is what they have seen undermining the last firm place (albeit of unknowing) upon which to stand.

Notes.

1. 'These essays... suggest that [Conrad]... is misty in the middle as well as at the edges, that the secret casket of his genius contains a vapour rather than a jewel; and that we need not try to write him down philosophically, because there is, in this particular direction, nothing to write' E. M. Forster 1945, 135.

2. Leavis (1983, 200-258) is most prominent amongst these others. Watts (1979, 42-46) feels that Marlow's self-contradictions concerning the interpretation of Kurtz's utterance are a 'weakness' (43), a 'local failure in Conrad's ability to co-ordinate... insights' (46), and he even anxiously wishes that there had been 'a further sceptical interruption by Marlow's hearers on the yawl, to show that Conrad was preserving a critical authorial awareness of his character's oscillations of judgement' (43). According to my reading, any such episode would have been disastrous, allowing us the relief of a firm place to stand, rescuing us from the abyss of uncertainty into which the tale so carefully and almost imperceptibly lures us: the lack of the reassurance of an omniscient author-figure behind the 'indistinct'nesses (*Darkness*, 81) and 'solitude's (85) of the story is central to its theme of knowledge that is unknown or unavailable.

3. In particular, *Heart Of Darkness* shares with these earlier poetic disenchantments the atmosphere created by the supposedly heroic encounter's taking place in 'impalpable greyness' - a general air of crepuscular anticlimax. Compare the passage from *Heart Of Darkness* (112) with, for instance:

All the day
Had been a dreary one at best, and dim
Was settling to its close, yet shot one grim
Red leer to see the plain catch its stray....

the safe road, 'twas gone! grey plain all round!
Nothing but plain to the horizon's bound.
I might go on; nought else remained to do
(Browning, 'Childe Roland To The Dark Tower', ll.45-54);

or

the world...
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and
flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night (Arnold,
'Dover Beach', ll.30-37).

At least Browning's poem still has its Roland, even Arnold's has its comforting 'we': the modernistic difference in Conrad is that the scepticism is directed inward as well as outward - the hero (and perhaps even the author; see note 2, above) is gone.

4. Conrad is here referring not to *Heart Of Darkness* itself, but to troubles with *The Rescue*.
5. In *Romance* (written with Ford), the narrator's father's literary pursuits are firmly linked to images of inaction, impotence and uselessness:

in the family my mother counted; my father did not
 [...He was] a dilettante, and a bit of a dreamer,
 too[....] His purse had not held out. So my
 mother[...] had insisted upon a return to our farm,
 which had been her dowry[....]

My father used to sit all day by the fire, inscribing
 "ideas" every now and then in a pocket-book. I
 think he was writing an epic poem, and I think he
 was happy in an ineffectual way[....] He used to
 spend his days in a hooded chair. My mother
 managed everything (5-6);

or again:

I had need of all [my mother's...] resoluteness now.
 And I remembered the figure of my father in the
 big chair by the ingle, powerless and lost in his
 search for rhymes (140).

We can only speculate as to whether this intentionally recalls Conrad's own 'huge wingchair' which stood 'by the fire' in his study and which was 'the focal point' of his family's attempts to guess his mood (Borys Conrad 1970, 20). The novel is dedicated to the two authors' wives, and it is hard to believe that the reference could escape them. At the end of the novel, the father's skill with words comes into play, at the trial, but even then, the narrator fears that it is 'absolutely useless' (532) and 'futile' (534).

6. Meyer (1967, 274) lists the following Conradian suicides:- Kayerts, Jim, Decoud, Whalley, Renouard, Heyst, Peyrol, Susan, Brierley, Linda, Winnie, Erminia, Sevrin, de Barral, Jorgenson.

7. The reminiscence of Coleridge may be intentional: Watts notes that the 'Rime Of The Ancient Mariner' was 'a particularly strong literary influence' for Conrad (1989, 46; see also his 1984, 94-96).

8. Batchelor (1982, 6-7) notes the frequency with which images of the abyss occur throughout the literature of the turn of the century, although he limits his discussion to the image's symbolism in questions of class-anxiety, rather than its representation of more generalized fears.

9. And incidentally, Conrad may well have known that baldness is one of the secondary symptoms of syphilis.

10. There is some indication that Conrad himself shared this fear. He was convinced that his marriage to Jessie would be followed immediately by his death (see e.g. Batchelor 1994, 55).

11. Watts (1984, 84) also notes the doubling between Kurtz and Marlow.

12. See my Chapter 2, note 5 (123).

13. See Glossary for 'peculiar' as a homosexual codeword (464-465).

14. See the Introduction to the Glossary for more detail on the existence of a homosexual code of language at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century (353-361).

15. *Heart Of Darkness* first appeared serialised in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1898-1899; *Lord Jim* first appeared, also serialised in *Blackwood's*, in 1899-1900.

CHAPTER FOUR.

'ON THE EDGE OF OUTER DARKNESS' ('KARAIN', 34); 'SOMETHING ELSE BESIDES' (*JIM*, 31): CONRAD AND THE MASCULINE HERO IN *LORD JIM*, 'KARAIN', AND 'THE SECRET SHARER'.

Lord Jim (1900), as I have already noted (Introduction, 1-2) opens with descriptions of its hero that could come from a text-book of manly heroics: Jim is 'an upstanding, broad-shouldered youth[....] clean-limbed, clean-faced' (40) - and so on. By now in our examination of Conrad's attitude to the *Boy's Own* man, we might suspect the apparent simplicity of these descriptions of Jim¹. They seem to adhere too smoothly to the rubric of manly perfections: we sense something approaching parody. Jim's own daydreams are of being just such a perfect, text-book hero:

he would[...] live in his mind the sea-life of light literature. He saw himself saving people[....] always an example of devotion to duty, and as unflinching as a hero in a book (6).

The phrase 'saving people' confirms our unease with the idea of Jim as traditional hero: saving people, the heroic act, is what Jim so conspicuously fails to do on the *Patna*.

He is doomed before this failure, though: the heroism of his dreams is subverted even while he is dreaming:

at such times his thoughts would be full of valorous deeds: he loved these dreams and the success of his imaginary achievements. They were the best parts of life, its secret truth, its hidden reality. They had a gorgeous virility, the charm of vagueness, they passed before him with a heroic tread (20).

- 'valorous', 'heroic', 'success', 'virility': this is all manly enough; but then the emptiness of merely 'imaginary' achievements being nevertheless the best and only 'reality' unnerves us, as does the hollow 'charm of vagueness', till, by the time we reach the slightly unlikely phrase 'heroic tread' how do heroes walk? - the passage has collapsed into parody. Moreover, Jim's state of dreaming could not be further from the whirl of masculine activity he pictures for himself; it is instead a passive, hence rather feminine stasis.

This hint of femininity beneath his surface becomes increasingly apparent. Jim blushes throughout the novel, and does so particularly like a girl:

the red of his fair[...] complexion deepened suddenly under the down of his cheeks[....] His lips pouted a little, trembling as though he had been on the point of bursting into tears (74).

The resolutely manly figure we see, with 'his shoulders upright' (32) in the witness-box, is an outer shell: all the while, 'his soul writhed within him' (32); he has an 'exquisite sensibility' (4).

The use of 'exquisite' here, like the earlier use of 'gorgeous' in the phrase 'gorgeous virility' (of his dreams) alerts us to something more than mere femininity, though. Both words could be used with effeminate or even homosexual overtones, almost as turn-of-the-century homosexual codewords - words to refer to the then unspeakable crime of homosexuality. (See Glossary: 'gorgeous' (427)). We do not yet know what it is that Jim has done to disgrace himself, but seeing him involved in a case so notorious that there are 'no end of discussions' about it (36), and where the 'facts' cut him off from the 'rest of his kind' (31), standing

in a witness-box repeatedly denying that he is like 'that queer lot' (36) or 'one of them' (80) (the rest of the *Patna's* crew), can only - especially for *Jim's* first readership - recall the unprecedentedly publicised Wilde trials, with their central issue of homosexuality. They took place just three years before *Jim* came out².

Whatever suggestions of homosexuality there are around *Jim*, however, are delicately created: Meyers speaks of Conrad's 'discreet but quite intentional sexual allusions' (1977, 76); Koestenbaum sums up their effect (and the resultant difficulties for a critic) beautifully: 'double meanings that can never be justified and that sustain a dreamy half-life, impossible to dismiss and impossible to prove' (1989, 173). This is the sort of effect that Conrad aims at:

explicitness, my dear fellow, is fatal to the glamour of all artistic work, robbing it of all suggestiveness, destroying all illusion[....] Nothing is more clear than the utter insignificance of explicit statement, and also its power to call the attention away from things that matter in the region of art (letter to Curle, quoted in Curle 1928, 77.)

An aura of possible homosexuality is created with just such an avoidance of explicitness, around *Jim*. Sometimes single words concerning him stand out as irrelevant or even incomprehensible - unless we understand them as homosexual. Thus, Marlow at one point refers to 'the jungle village, where [Jim...] had elected to conceal his deplorable faculty' (5): what *Jim* is trying to conceal is his past, his unheroic behaviour on the *Patna*, yet 'faculty' describes not an event, but a characteristic, a way of being, a propensity. The words are not easily applicable to *Jim's* experience on the *Patna* - so what are they there for? They become comprehensible only by raising the possibility of

homosexual shame, - a homosexual tendency, faculty. This reading of the phrase is strengthened by its being immediately preceded by a statement that Jim 'had, of course, another name, but was anxious that it should not be pronounced' (4). 'Pronounced' is slightly strange here: would we not rather expect, of an ordinary incognito, that Jim would desire others not to *know* his real name, rather than not to *say* it. We are in the area of 'impossible to dismiss, impossible to prove', but surely there is a suggestion here not of real-name concealment, but rather of nick-name calling, of Jim's being taunted with another name, a label - a suggestion of the 'love that dare not speak its name'. (See Glossary: 'unmentionable' (507), 'unspeakable' (510-512).)

Sometimes, entire passages concerning Jim verge on the incomprehensible, unless read acknowledging a homosexual import. Consider Marlow's comments on Jim:

nothing more awful than to watch a man who has been found out, not in a crime but in a more than criminal weakness. The commonest sort of fortitude prevents us from becoming criminals in a legal sense; it is from weakness unknown, but perhaps suspected, as in some parts of the world you suspect a deadly snake in every bush (42-43).

'Unknown, but perhaps suspected' takes us into patterns of thought that were at that time deeply entwined with the prevalent attitude towards the homosexual: all the key words to describe homosexuality centred on its psychic unapproachability - it is the 'unspeakable' vice, the 'unmentionable', the 'indescribable', the ultimate 'secret' - something in a man that would hence always be 'unknown, but perhaps suspected'. (See Glossary: 'unspeakable' (510-512), 'unmentionable' (507), 'indescribable' (433-434), 'secret' (479-483).) As we read on, the

passage becomes less and less comprehensible unless you allow that Marlow is speaking of homosexuality. No intelligible alternatives suggest themselves.

in every bush - from weakness that may lie hidden, watched or unwatched, prayed against or manfully scorned, repressed or maybe ignored more than half a lifetime, not one of us is safe. We are snared into doing things for which we get called names, and things for which we get hanged[....] And there are things [...] by which some of us are totally and completely undone. I watched the youngster there. I liked his appearance[...] he was one of us (43)

- and a few lines later Marlow will mention exactly the kind of temptations he's talking about: 'the might of nature, and the seductive corruption of men' (43). By now, there is little to guide us away from a homosexual interpretation.

Specific homosexual codewords abound here, too. Conrad himself will come to use 'weakness' very bluntly, later: Heyst in *Victory*, who has "never[...] loved a woman" (212) and is "the same" (378) as the openly homosexual Jones, constantly refers to his "hidden weakness" (197); Jones's 'partner' (128, and *passim*), too, has his "little weaknesses"(237). A similar use is found in other writers of the early twentieth century: in Forster's *Maurice* (written 1913-1914), Dr. Jowett, who already suspects homosexuality in the pair, tells Maurice that Clive's outbreak of weeping has been caused by "the weakness" ("oh, give it your own name", says Maurice) (Forster 1972, 96). Throughout that novel, Clive, as a homosexual, is 'weak' (41, 97, etc.); Maurice submits to Scudder at his "weakest" (187). Wilfred Scawen Blunt, writing a memoir of Wilde, glosses his description of Wilde's 'little weaknesses', precisely as 'sodomy' (quoted in Ellmann 1988, 302). (See Glossary: 'weakness' (520-525).) In

the passage from *Jim*, 'criminal', too, is a loaded term. Again, in *Maurice*, Clive makes an unsuccessful pass at Maurice and then anxiously asks him not to mention his "criminal morbidity" (57) to anyone else; 'Hall had said he was a criminal, and must know' (70). Not one newspaper during the Wilde trials (as Cohen's fascinating account (1993) points out) used the word 'sodomy' yet everyone understood what the trials were about: the papers could repeatedly describe the technicality of Wilde's being initially accused only of 'posing as' a sodomite by saying 'there was no accusation[...] of criminal offence' (*Evening News*, 3 April 1895, quoted in Cohen 1993, 147) ; his suspect works were 'merely poetry, not indicative of crime' (*Pall Mall Gazette*, 3 April 1895, quoted Cohen 1993, 151-152). Marlow speaks of Jim's being found out in specifically a 'more than criminal' weakness: the idea of something worse than an ordinary crime suggests a moral crime perhaps, for an Edwardian readership, what they would see as the immorality of homosexuality. The idea of an uttermost criminal act, or more than criminal act, is also at this time a homosexually loaded one. (See Glossary: 'crime' (388-391).) Marlow's 'manfully scorned' evokes 'manliness' - by Edwardian times, this had become the virtue specifically opposed to homosexuality: Wilde and his fellow homosexuals are damaging the 'manly, simple ideals of English life' (*Evening News*, 25 May 1895, quoted in Hyde 1962, 18); in *Women In Love*, Lawrence's Birkin and Crich will not 'be so unmanly' as to admit their homosexual love for each other (1972,83). Marlow's reference to 'things for which we get hanged', as well, would have had a particular resonance in the sailorly mess-rooms Conrad was writing for: as Weeks (1990,13) records, not only was sodomy still a hanging offence in the

navy, it was also the single crime - more than desertion, murder or mutiny - for which a sailor was most likely to be hanged.

As for 'seductive corruption of men', the homosexual undertones are already quite strong, even before we discover that at this time 'corruption' meant almost nothing else: a newspaper's poem about a notorious homosexual scandal immediately before Wilde's can intelligibly refer to 'cash-corrupted boys' (*North London Press*, 1889, quoted, with no further ascription, in Cohen 1993, 250); indeed, that homosexuality was 'corrupt' had been enshrined in the Obscene Publications Act since 1857; Clive 'dare never be friends with a young man again, for fear of corrupting him' (Forster 1972, 70); Hallward lists Dorian Gray's young, almost exclusively male victims, and then as the sinister implication dawns on him, anxiously begs - "'don't tell me that you are bad, and corrupt'" (Wilde 1985, 187). (See Glossary: 'corrupt' (386-388).)

With the possibility of homosexuality hovering around a character who is otherwise so completely involved (and desires so deeply to be involved) in the manly society, the question of a connection between the gentlemanly camaraderie of mess-room masculinity - what Sedgwick (1985) has usefully termed the 'homosocial' and the homosexual, inevitably arises³.

A tendency to blur between the homosocial and the homosexual can be seen in Conrad's works even before *Jim*, in 'Karain' (1898). Karain's manly comradeship with Pata Matara is close -

we had shared hunger, danger, fatigue, and victory. His eyes saw my danger quickly, and twice my arm had preserved his life[....] He was my friend (38);

but the language of this oneness soon becomes like that of lovers. Each sees the other's need - 'his eyes saw my danger' (38) till they become a single unit, a couple - 'we saw[....] we said[....] we landed' (42): the relationship between the two men moves into the environs of Whitmanesque manly homosexuality.

By the time of *Jim*, though, the homosocial/ homosexual blurring is clearer. For instance, the pairing of the *Patna's* 'gorgeous' (37) Captain and 'abominable' (53) Chief Engineer is plainly homosexual : both men are 'queer' (36) and have "'done together pretty well everything you can think of"' (23) (and see Glossary: 'gorgeous' (427), 'abominable' (366-369).) So, as we might expect, Jim repeatedly emphasises his superiority to these two:

he wanted me to know he had kept his distance;
that there was nothing in common between him
and these men (103).

Yet Marlow goes on to describe this very separation from the other two in terms that actually only strengthen the link between Jim and them:

it is more than probable he thought himself cut off
from them by a space that could not be traversed,
by an obstacle that could not be overcome (103-
104)

- Jim is not 'cut off' but 'thought himself cut off': the implication in the mildly patronising opening words is of a gap between what Jim thought and what was actually the case. And, on the next page:

he discovered at once a desire that I should not confound him with his partners in - in crime, let us call it (79-80).

'Partners' is a homosexually loaded term and there is a potentially homosexual reading of Marlow's delicate hesitancy - 'in - in[...] let us call it' - over naming what it is that links Jim with these men, even if we ignore the fact that the link is 'crime' - again, a homosexually loaded term (see Glossary: 'partner' (462-464), 'ellipses, omissions and hesitations' (414-416), 'crime' (388-391)). Jim's involvement with the two homosexuals is made physically tangible in the repeated punning emphasis laid on Jim's ending up 'in the same boat' (125) with the Captain and Engineer.

The blurring of homosocial and homosexual in *Jim* is often achieved more subtly than this, yet simultaneously far more outrageously to manly convention, in Conrad's constant playing with the terms 'one of us' and 'one of them' - outrageous because the former phrase is one so traditionally associated with the heart of the homosocial clique⁴. Marlow initially accepts Jim as 'one of us' (e.g. 43, 93, 106, 416) and not, like the Captain and Engineer, 'one of them' (46, 154). Yet the apparently clear division between the proper manliness of the homosocial clique and the improper unmanliness of the outsiders crumbles as we read on: does 'one of us' here mean a decent chap, a gentleman, or quite the opposite, a member of that tightly-bound 'us' minority of homosexuals? A little later, for example, Marlow comments on Jim: 'he was too much like one of us not to be dangerous' (106). The sentence is utterly ambivalent. Does it mean that Jim was too much like 'one of us' in the sense of too gentlemanly and hence dangerous because his gentlemanly (and thus disarming) appearance conceals a personality

that is anything but gentlemanly; or is there instead - again Koestenbaum's dreamy half-life of meaning - a simpler suggestion of homosexuality in the linking of 'one of us' with being dangerous; a dangerous 'one of us' could be a homosexual; Jim is too much like 'one of us', we homosexuals, not to be one, not to be dangerous like us. There is, here, an ironic play with such extreme opposites of meaning - gentlemanly masculine hero versus homosexual - in the phrase 'one of us'.

The blurrings of homosocial and homosexual are often a little more visible than this, though. Consider Jim's relationship with Mr. Denver. Marlow thinks to help Jim on with his career, and sportingly packs him off to this friend for a job. But within this apparent example of homosocial networking, homosexual elements begin to emerge. Thus, Jim is to earn money - doing what is, unnervingly, never quite specified working for Denver - a 'more than middle-aged bachelor, with a reputation for eccentricity' (187), who lives 'alone' (187). Soon the bachelor moves Jim in with him, and soon after that, he is overcome with the young man, writing happily to Marlow to 'enlarge[...] upon Jim's perfections' (187); Jim is like a 'girl', 'blooming - blooming modestly - like a violet' (187), with "'the dew[...] yet on him'" (188); Jim's fond behaviour makes the bachelor feel "'less withered[...] more in touch with mankind'" (188). "'Ridiculous, isn't it?'" (188), he castigates himself after these effusions - with what sounds like an older man's ruefulness over the effects of young love. He does not know what Jim's "'little scrape'" (188) in the past has been, but weirdly (from the point of view of intelligibility) asks whether "'it'" (his italics) is much worse than anything he and Marlow have got up to in the past: "'it is such a long time since we both turned

saints that you may have forgotten we, too, had sinned in our time" (188). What is he talking about? Then Jim leaves him. He describes this, like any jilted lover, as "heartless" (189). Should Marlow have "some more mysterious young men in reserve" (189) (and by now, Marlow sounds like a procurer), the bachelor does not want to know: "I have shut up shop definitely and for ever. This is the last eccentricity I shall be guilty of" (189). By the end of the episode, his utterances have become meaningless, except in a context of homosexuality: "do not imagine for a moment that I care a hang; but[...] for my own sake I've told a plausible lie at the club" (189). What about? To hide what?

Just before Marlow sends Jim off to this 'eccentric' friend, he muses, somewhat in the style of Symonds, or any of the more enthusiastic Uranian poets (and as he tends to throughout the book) on Jim's boyish lusciousness: 'the down on his cheek, the colour mantling warm under the smooth skin of his face', all of which he finds 'outrageously heartrending' (153). He says, again quite incomprehensibly for the surface, manly discourse of the book, that in sending Jim to the bachelor, he has 'subtle intentions of[...] immorality' (153). The implication of this is nearly unavoidable - and becomes even more so when one finds that 'immorality' had received unmissably widespread use specifically as a homosexual codeword. Every other headline-writer on the Wilde trials takes it for granted that every time the paper says 'immorality', the public will understand 'homosexuality'. So: 'MR. CARSON Q.C. ... OPPOSES THE PLAY OF OSCARISM WITH DIRECT SUGGESTIONS OF IMMORALITY' (headline, *Morning Leader*, 4 April 1895, quoted in Cohen 1993, 134); to describe an associate of Wilde's procuring young men for him, the papers need only say: 'he spoke to them of immoral practices

and mentioned... Wilde's name' (*Evening News*, 6 April 1895, quoted in Cohen 1993, 189). *Dorian Gray*, held against Wilde for its homosexual suggestiveness, is reported in every paper (in the words of the charge) as 'a certain immoral and indecent work' (*Evening Standard*, 3 April 1895, quoted in Cohen 1993, 153); 'a certain immoral and obscene work' (*Star*, 3 April 1895, quoted in Cohen 1993, 153); Wilde, through works like this and his own behaviour, has, like the other decadents 'perverted' art into 'the immoral, the morbid and the maniacal' (*Westminster Gazette*, 6 April 1895, quoted in Cohen 1993, 168. See Glossary: 'immoral' (431-433)).

By now we can see that the blurring of homosocial and homosexual is taken even further in Jim's relationship with Marlow. Both men feel an instant masculine fellowship with each other - as sailors, gentlemen who believe in honour - but it is nevertheless described in terms that hover on the edge of sexual love-at-first-sight. The moment of their first meeting of eyes is returned to again and again:

[Jim] met the eyes of the white man. [He....] forgot himself (32-33);

my eyes met his for the first time at that inquiry (35)

then it was that our glances met. They met[....] the look he gave me[....] Very soon after that exchange of glances (69)

Their first prolonged conversation shimmers with this same suggestiveness. Is Marlow's observation of Jim during it just an intent stare, or does it partake of something of the lover's delight in the physical detail of his beloved?:

all the time I had before me these blue, boyish eyes looking straight into mine, this young face, these capable shoulders, the open bronzed forehead with a white line under the roots of clustering fair hair (78).

Just a few pages earlier, Marlow has said that Jim's 'appearance alone' adds 'a touch of personal concern' (51) to his interest in Jim's case.

Marlow accepts Jim into fellowship with him: 'he was of the right sort; he was one of us' (78), but as we might expect by now, the latter phrase is loaded because of the lovers' gaze that has gone before, and becomes even more so in the light of Jim's actions immediately after:

he darted his arm across the tablecloth, and clutching my hand by the side of my plate, glared fixedly. I was startled[...] I stammered, confused by this display of speechless feeling.

[All this....] caused two well-groomed male globe-trotters at a neighbouring table to look up in alarm from their iced pudding (78)

- and indeed, there does seem to be something that might well alarm men in this behaviour (especially when we recall the sexual importance of a clasp of the hand for Conrad⁵). The touch, the confused stammer, the speechless feeling, the intense gaze; all this is traditionally romantic behaviour. Later Marlow 'own[s] up' to being 'swayed' (93) by Jim, as if it were a crime. By this stage the homosexual implications are unmistakable. Watts (1984) explores Conrad's masterly use of what he terms the 'covert plot' throughout his works: *Lord Jim* seems to be a particularly clear example of Conrad's use of such a technique, and in a consistently homosexually loaded fashion. Conrad is, with his characteristic extreme discretion, probing the ideals of masculine

bonding, and in partially discovering, for himself and us, the (what would then have been considered) disreputable homosexual roots of these matters, begins to subvert them.

Repeatedly, in *Lord Jim*, the paramount importance, not of innocence, but of discretion is emphasised and in this context of the blurring of masculinities that is taking place, this otherwise slightly strange emphasis makes sense: in a latently homosexual but ostensibly homosocial world, it is not innocence, but seeming innocence that is vital. Marlow sees Jim as linked inextricably to such degenerates as the Captain and the Engineer, yet is fascinated with - and in some ways admires - him, where he despises them: the only difference between the pair and Jim is that Jim believes in the importance of his seeming innocent to others, of his not being 'confounded[...] with' (79) the 'queer lot' (36), where the pair do not care. When Jim falters in his discretion - he protests too much, over-eagerly defending himself against the imputation of being a 'cur' (70), when the term had not in fact been applied to him - Marlow is as seriously appalled as at Jim's original *Patna* experience:

there had never been a man so mercilessly shown up by his own natural impulse. A single word had stripped him of his discretion - of that discretion which is more necessary to the decencies of our inner being than clothing is to the decorum of our body (74).

He is appalled, not that Jim has something to show up - that he is not innocent but that Jim has allowed himself to be shown up - that he has failed in the outer appearance of innocence. This in turn recalls the strange emphasis in Marlow's earliest statements of Jim: 'nothing more

awful' - not 'than to commit a crime' or having 'a more than criminal weakness' - but, rather unusually, than 'to watch a man who has been found out in' a 'more than criminal weakness' (42).

In this world of seeming, then, being a gentleman or a hero is merely a matter of play-acting. Whether or not we fully recognise the presence of the specifically homosexual undercurrents, there is an obvious subversion of the ideals of masculine heroism. Marlow could only value discretion - the appearance of innocence - in Jim so highly and give actual innocence so little place, if he believed that no-one was really innocent, no-one was really heroic. Heroism, gentlemanliness, lose any solid reality and become merely the kind of behaviour that is expected by society:

his moral identity[...] this precious notion of a convention, only one of the rules of the game, nothing more (81).

The 'moral identity' referred to here - gentlemanliness, heroism - is quite apart from the real man, the natural man:

only one of the rules of the game, nothing more, but all the same so terribly effective by its assumption of unlimited power over natural instincts (81)

- and notice the ambiguity in 'assumption': it could mean the taking up of power, but it could just as well mean the conventionally presumed: the masculine ideal may have very little real power over natural instincts.

Thus it is that for all Jim's attempts at gentlemanly heroism,

there had never been a man so mercilessly shown up by his own natural impulse (74).

No-one is naturally a gentleman, naturally a hero and, for Conrad, the natural man beneath the facade is quite the opposite of the manly heroic ideal: the French lieutenant suggests that "man is born a coward" (147); hence, perhaps, it is that the oracular Stein puts forward death as the only solution - "one thing alone can us from being ourselves cure" (212). That this idea of the facade is Conrad's rather than only Stein's or Marlow's belief is shown by its persistence throughout Conrad's works - we are already familiar with it from our examination of *Nostromo* (my Chapter One, 54). In 'Karain', too, Karain is the ultimate native hero, yet his over-riding quality is not bravery, masculinity, but his ability - like Nostromo 'to appear clothed in the illusion of unavoidable success' (7) . to be 'word perfect in his part' (8).

Masculine heroism, then, must be an acquired characteristic, a kind of behaviour one learns - and we can see the process in Jim. On his first ship, when he has hesitated and watched a brave rescue party leave without him, the Captain consoles him - "better luck next time. This will teach you to be smart" (8) and only then does Jim realise that he must see this as a missed chance of glorious heroism: 'now he knew what to think of it' (8); and the phrase is repeated a few lines on for emphasis - 'he knew what to think of it' (9); we are watching him learning the conventions of manly thought.

It is not just Jim. The men who are usually seen as lying at the heart of Conrad's portrayals of heroic manliness are vitiated too:

we aren't an organized body of men, and the only thing that holds us together is just the name for that kind of decency (68).

There is a shattering ambiguity here: we are uncertain as to whether the 'just' means 'exactly' - as in 'that specific kind of name for heroism' - or whether it means 'merely', 'solely' - that is 'only the name for heroism', not the actuality. Suddenly we find ourselves reading one of the most-quoted passages on Conrad with an entirely different emphasis than is usually given it: in the first part, Marlow talks of his membership of the male peer-group of sailors:

an obscure body of men held together by a community of inglorious toil and by fidelity to a certain standard of conduct (50)

and in the second part, says that he is probing the question of Jim's heroism so deeply because he hopes

for the impossible - for the laying of what is the most obstinate ghost of man's creation, of the uneasy doubt uprising like a mist, secret and gnawing like a worm, and more chilling than the certitude of death the doubt of the sovereign power enthroned in a fixed standard of conduct (50).

It is easy to read the complete passage with too little attention given to the first part I quoted: the second part is taken as a self-contained unit and we place the emphasis where (by a knee-jerk reaction through over-accustomedness to the late nineteenth-century literature of religious doubt) we expect to see it - namely on 'the doubt of a sovereign power enthroned' - that is, the doubt that there is a sovereign power enthroned, that God exists: we assume this is just another gloomily agnostic passage. However, the emphatic repetition of a phrase from the first part, in the second part 'certain standard of conduct' (repeated as 'fixed standard of conduct') should give us the

clue as to where the true emphasis lies. The doubt is of 'a sovereign power enthroned in a fixed standard of conduct' the question is not simply whether there is a God, but whether there is a power that fixes a standard of conduct is there such a thing as a true fixed standard of conduct; do the things that bind these men together in fidelity - masculine decency, heroism really exist, have any real basis?

The dubiously-based facade and beneath it the unsatisfactory natural man: this is a picture of a double man, and this double man haunts Conrad's works. Indeed, Conrad seems to experience this essential male doubleness personally. Watts notes that Conrad received warnings from his guardian throughout his youth that he was 'a double man, ... a janiform personality' (1989, 16) and the adult Conrad expresses again and again in private his sense of his own facade, his own duality: 'I feel a great humbug' (letter to Cunninghame Graham, 7 October 1904, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 3: 169); 'I feel a great fraud' (letter to Cunninghame Graham, 31 October 1904, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 3: 175); he refers to his personality as 'only a ridiculous and aimless masquerade' (letter to Garnett, 23/24 March 1896, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 1: 267) (and Garnett himself refers to Conrad's dual nature, in a way that suggests a sexual duality, asserting that he 'had never seen before a man so masculinely keen yet so femininely sensitive' (quoted in Watts 1989, 55). In his non-fictional writing, Conrad assumes the doubleness of man as a matter of course: he speaks of 'the duality of man's nature' (*Notes*, 18), of 'man's warring impulses' (*Outcast*, 111), of 'homo duplex' (letter to Waliszewski, 5 December 1903, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 3: 89). The idea penetrates even his tiniest pieces: 'The Inn Of The Two Witches' (1915), as its title suggests, involves

double after double including Byrne, so close in his partnership with Tom that the man inhabits Byrne's head: Byrne hears his voice long after Tom is dead. In 'Karain', the eponymous hero has a guard who 'shared his food, his repose, and his thoughts' (14) and this double is in turn to protect him from the deeper double, his inescapable pairing with the pursuing malevolent spirit of his betrayed comrade, Matara:

I ran to the sea. He ran by my side without
 footsteps, whispering, whispering old words
 whispering into my ear in his old voice (33).

Conrad's involvement with the thought of his time is plain in the repetition of this concern in other literature of the era: Dr. Jekyll (1886) speaks of the 'profound duplicity of life' (Stevenson 1979, 81) and mentions, with phrasing similar to Conrad's, 'man's dual nature' (81), in a novel that devotes itself to probing this very question. Dorian Gray (1891) is fascinated with his portrait because it, like Jekyll's drug, allows him a clear view of his other self:

there would be a real pleasure in watching it. He would be able to follow his mind into its secret places. This portrait would be to him the most magical of mirrors. As it had revealed to him his own body, so it would reveal to him his own soul (Wilde 1985, 136).

In both these cases, the double is seen as uncanny, frightening. Marlow's speech about Jim's appeal to the side of him 'that exists stealthily in perpetual darkness' suggests the same fear and Marlow's 'darkness', here, is the same darkness as that in *Heart Of Darkness* or 'Karain's 'edge of outer darkness' (34). Jim goes deep into Patusan to try and exorcise his natural weaker and fearful double - making his second leap out of

the Rajah's stockade, to live the heroic dream and escape his other self of the first leap. Gentleman Brown is little more than a representation of the other self Jim fears, and (like Jones to Heyst later), his power lies in his ability to address himself to 'the repressed aspect of Jim's self' (Hampson 1992, 126). Karain's terrifying double is more obvious - his guilt haunts him in his twin Matara and like Jim, he leaps for escape:

I came here... I leaped out of my stockade[....] I ran
in the night[....] I left him[....]
I ran to the sea. He ran by my side ('Karain', 32-33).

The roots of Jim's and Karain's fear are not hard to find. Something so unknown, yet so close is unnerving - 'he ran by my side[...] whispering into my ear' (33). Moreover, this unknown is also the natural - hence lawless - so who knows to what (homosexual?) depths it might sink?

Throughout *Lord Jim* the doubling continues: Brierly is the apparent perfect hero (fulfilling, incidentally, the exact heroic requirements that Jim has made such a mess of in his career):

he had never in his life made a mistake, never had an accident, never a mishap, never a check in his steady rise, and he seemed to be one of those lucky fellows who know nothing of indecision, much less self-mistrust[....] He had saved lives at sea, had rescued ships in distress[....] He presented to[...] the world a surface as hard as granite (57-58).

Yet at this stage we are no longer surprised by the ghastly bathos that follows: 'he committed suicide very soon after' (58).

Often the doubling is explicitly homosexual - as we've seen in the case of Jim:

he was not speaking to me, he was[...] in a dispute with an invisible personality, an antagonistic and inseparable partner of his existence - another possessor of his soul (93).

Jim is possessed by two 'phantoms':

the reputable that had its claims and[...] the disreputable that had its exigencies (93).

Marlow is aware that 'the facts' (30) the enquiry is trying to elicit have 'something else besides' (31) them; and in his description of what this might be, the thought seems to move away from the idea of a duality within the abstract facts themselves and towards a duality within an individual human being:

something else besides, something invisible, a directing spirit of perdition that dwelt within, like a malevolent soul in a detestable body (31).

With the closing imagery, we are diverted from the facts and ineluctably drawn back towards Jim's mysteriously troubling, doubling 'deplorable faculty' (5) - his hidden homosexuality? The 'something else besides' the facts may itself be Jim's own 'something else besides', Jim's doubleness. This darkly doubling slide into plain suggestions of homosexuality appears even in Marlow. He talks of the 'mixed nature' (93) of his feelings for Jim:

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 other hemisphere of the moon, exists stealthily in perpetual darkness, with only a fearful ashy light falling at times on the edge (93).

Marlow has two sides, and one of them must always be hidden, stealthy, fearful. (See Glossary: 'other side' (460-461).)

The link between the doubled and the homosexual reaches its height a little after *Lord Jim*, in 'The Secret Sharer': a story of such complexity and so central to the examination of Conradian masculinities (and so often critically misread⁶) that it demands a close examination of its own.

Not from compunction certainly, but, as it were mechanically, I proceeded to get the ladder in myself. Now a side-ladder of that sort is a light affair and comes in easily, yet my vigorous tug, which should have brought it flying on board, merely recoiled upon my body in a totally unexpected jerk. What the devil!...I was so astounded by the immovableness of that ladder that I remained stock-still, trying to account for it to myself like that imbecile mate of mine. In the end, of course, I put my head over the rail.

The side of the ship made an opaque belt of shadow on the darkling glassy shimmer of the sea. But I saw at once something elongated and pale floating very close to the ladder. Before I could form a guess a faint flash of phosphorescent light, which seemed to issue suddenly from the naked body of a man, flickered in the sleeping water with the elusive, silent play of summer lightning in a night sky. With a gasp I saw revealed to my stare a pair of feet, the long legs, a broad livid back immersed right up to the neck in a greenish cadaverous glow. One hand, awash, clutched the bottom rung of the ladder. He was complete but for the head. A headless corpse! The cigar dropped out of my gaping mouth with a tiny plop and a short hiss quite audible in the absolute stillness of all things under heaven. At that I suppose he raised up his face, a dimly pale oval in the shadow of the ship's side. But even then I could only barely make out down there the shape of his black-haired head. However, it was enough for the horrid, frost-bound sensation which had gripped me about the chest to pass off. The moment of vain exclamations was past, too. I only climbed on the spare spar and leaned over the rail as far as I could, to bring my eyes nearer to that mystery floating alongside.

As he hung by the ladder, like a resting swimmer, the sea-lightning played about his limbs at every stir; and he appeared in it ghastly, silvery, fish-like. He remained as mute as a fish, too. He made no motion to get out of the water, either. It was inconceivable that he should not attempt to come on board, and strangely troubling to suspect that perhaps he did not want to. And my first words were prompted by just that troubled incertitude.

'What's the matter?' I asked in my ordinary tone, speaking down to the face upturned exactly under mine.

'Cramp,' it answered, no louder. Then slightly anxious, 'I say, no need to call anyone.'

'I was not going to,' I said.

'Are you alone on deck?'

'Yes.'

'The Secret Sharer' is characterised by Johnson and Garber (1987, 628) as a tale whose every rift is loaded with 'or': we constantly feel the symbolic pressure of its descriptions and events, yet at the same time no single interpretative hypothesis seems to fit. It is a tale that has been analysed and re-analysed by critics, keenly if somewhat unproductively; yet Conrad seems deliberately to proffer it for just this over-analysis. He draws endless possibilities before us: Leggatt as the Captain's double, as his opposite, as his projection, as his fantasy, his unconscious id, his ego ideal; Conrad dwells on the 'brand of Cain' (94) that marks Leggatt, the 'gateway of Erebus' (124) that the island resembles, the 'clear, untroubled, as if symbolic, flame' (89) of the riding light. For every one reading put forward, another is made equally possible - the doubling dominates the tale at every level - and we are left only with a sense of unvoiced meaning and doubt.

The passage quoted above is an important one in the story: the Secret Sharer's first arrival. It is also a strange one, but strange in ways that seem

to typify the strangeness in 'The Secret Sharer' as a whole. I want to start, then, by looking closely at the passage, perhaps to find in its detail an entrance into what is happening in 'The Secret Sharer' itself.

The Captain is isolated, shut within himself, before Leggatt's arrival (and just before our passage begins), to the point of self-reflexivity: 'I asked myself' (86), 'I was vexed with myself' (86); so in our passage: 'I proceeded to get the ladder in myself' - and in the very idea of this action there is a further move towards isolation, a sense of drawing up bridges for safety, cutting off lines of communication, making oneself secure from any relationship. The attempt, of course, fails.

'Not from compunction[...] but, as it were mechanically': there is a moving away from conscious thought ('compunction') here, and the surrendering to the mere functioning of the body ('mechanically'). The body, as opposed to the intellect or the conscience, subtly but surely grows to dominate the passage. Thus, when the Captain tries to pull the ladder in: '[the] tug[...] merely recoiled upon my body'. It is strange - and noticeable - that Conrad here carefully specifies 'body', rather than simply 'me' or 'myself'. Further, the Captain thinks he sees 'a[...] corpse' - a body - and moreover a 'headless' corpse: again, the utterly bodily, non-intellectual.

The tug the Captain gives the ladder is specified as 'vigorous'- strong, perhaps with a rather masculine activeness about it. This masculine behaviour fails: it 'merely recoil[s...] upon' his body. As we have seen, in Conrad (as elsewhere) action is an outward manifestation of masculinity (whether accurately reflecting what is within, or not). It is thus significant that a few moments later, the Captain 'remain[s...] stock still' : this is a

feminine stasis (like Jim's in his daydreams) which seems to possess him for most of the tale.

The Captain's masculinity is undermined most dramatically in the moment of his actually seeing Leggatt for the first time: 'the cigar dropped out of my gaping mouth with a tiny plop'. When he first got the cigar, it was to strengthen an assumed mood of assurance, of masculine achievement in his command of his female ship. The ship is constantly referred to as 'she', and described as possessing a 'waist' (85), and her feminine aspects are stressed through and beyond these traditions, to become almost personal: '[she] seemed[...] very fine under the stars. Very fine, very roomy for her size, and very inviting' (85). The cigar could be seen as a symbol of masculine, phallic control of a female ship, and in our passage, when he sees the naked Leggatt, the Captain loses that phallic control.

The loss of control seems linked with the non-intellectual aspects of the Captain's behaviour. The ladder is 'immovable': for all his efforts, he cannot draw it up and cut himself off from the outside. Again, later, he tries to remain 'stock still' and reason things out, but 'in the end, of course, I put my head over the rail'. In both cases his desire to withdraw the ladder, his desire to think calmly to himself his intellectual desires are over-ruled by some 'of course'-compulsion. Already there are hints that this compulsion may be involved with that deep source of non-intellectual drives, sexual compulsion - and in this case, sexual compulsion between two men.

Whatever we make of this moment, the homosexual hints become gradually stronger. Thus, the Captain sees not just 'a body', 'someone', or even 'a man' but 'the naked body of a man'. They 'talk[...] only with

[their...] eyes' (108) ; the Captain wants to 'bring [his...] eyes nearer to that mystery' (and see Glossary: 'mystery' (452-453)): there is something of the lovers' gaze in the prolonged mutual regard, especially in the latter description, whose language verges on a lover's poeticism. The Captain and Leggatt soon adopt a traditional lovers' pose: 'the face upturned exactly under mine'. In their exchange

'Are you alone[...] ?'
'Yes.'

- we hear echoes of the oldest of conversations between lovers: the necessity for privacy, the 'yes' of submission, admission, sexual consent. The Captain has not pulled the ladder of communication in, but opened himself to a relationship in conditions of intimacy.

Then we have the glow:

a faint flash of phosphorescent light, which seemed to issue suddenly from the naked body of a man, flickered in the sleeping water with the elusive, silent play of summer lightning in a night sky.

The glow, like 'summer lightning', has only beauty and mystery about it here, yet just a few lines further on, this has changed utterly - the same glow is now 'greenish cadaverous': this is ugly, even slightly horrific. The previously delightful flash of sexual summer lightning now becomes a death-glow. The idea is of something beautiful but deadly, the forbidden fruit: something at once desired and lovely, and yet ugly and fatal. This dual attitude continues in the final reference to the glow:

the sea-lightning played about his limbs at every stir;
and he appeared in it ghastly, silvery, fish-like.

The first part of this description is that of an almost god-like beauty, and again, there is a potentially erotic delight in the man's body : 'the sea-lightning played about his limbs'; but it immediately modulates into something more ambiguous. The distaste is there in 'ghastly', then the beauty in 'silvery', and then again the otherness and partial horror in 'fish-like'. Yet 'fish-like', especially when used by a sailor of a naked man in the sea, cannot avoid recalling the sailor's legend of the mermaid - or in this case, merman. The homosexual element is inescapable - the mermaid is the traditional sexual fantasy of sailors, and by tradition, something again simultaneously both desired and feared. A sense of homosexuality as shameful and low, lingers in the emphasis on Leggatt's being on the 'bottom rung' and 'down there' - the latter, in particular, almost being a euphemism for the genital, the sexual and the shameful. (See Glossary: 'down' (403-408).)

Looking back over the passage as we have read it, the final strange thing about it is how the numerous moments of amazement, of mystery, of unknowing, arise solely from erotic incidents. The Captain is 'astounded' when he cannot draw up the ladder; the glow issues from Leggatt 'before [the Captain...] could form a guess'; and is itself 'elusive'; the naked Leggatt in the sea is 'that mystery floating'; most notably, the Captain finds the thought that this merman might 'not want to' come on board 'strangely troubling': troubling in a way he can not know or analyse. The question whether this is a 'can not' or a 'will not' analyse or elucidate, is perhaps raised by the Captain's suggestion that language speaking out - is not appropriate now: 'the moment of vain exclamations was past'.

There is evidence that this was a key story for Conrad, in which he felt he had truly managed to express something: 'every word fits and there's not a single uncertain note' (letter to Garnett, 5 November 1912, in Garnett 1928, 243). This comment seems at first incomprehensible about a story where multiple symbols and suggestions are deliberately generated to the initial confusion of the reader, unless we take the comment as referring to the deeper levels of the story that we are attempting to examine. It is not insignificant for a homosexual reading of the tale that Conrad associates his sense of 'The Secret Sharer's success with its exclusive maleness:

the Secret Sharer, between you and me, is *it*. Eh? No damned tricks with girls there. Eh? Every word fits[...].

Conrad inserted into this story the at first sight irrelevant, yet memorable and strangely specific, detail of the scorpion drowned in the inkwell (83): it is a picture of a deadly thing tamed by ink, perhaps of the writer's ability to convey a dangerous truth - here, that of what were then morally unacceptable homosexual desires - while rendering it harmless in ink, by disguising it in the details of a story. Read in this way, there may indeed not be a single uncertain note in the story: again, the possibility is raised that the unsaid may not be unsaid because of any inability to say it - there is no uncertainty - but because of a will not to say it out loud.

As the story unfolds, the homosexual undertones of Leggatt's position as Secret Sharer become more and more insistent. The narcissism involved in the Captain's enjoyment of Leggatt's company -

anybody would have taken him for me.
I was fascinated by it myself' (101) -

seems to have a homosexual undercurrent⁷: 'the excitement of that queer sense of whispering to myself' (101) - even before we notice the homosexual codeword 'queer' (see Glossary: 'queer' (471-476)). There is, too, a sexual undertone in the Captain's decision to hide Leggatt in his bed, and the writing around these bed-scenes only strengthens this sexual suggestiveness, as the couple are repeatedly described in terms, and shown performing actions, most appropriate to lovers. A reader coming fresh to any of the following phrases might well assume that they came from a straight description of an affair.

Our eyes met; several seconds elapsed, till, our
glances still mingled, I extended my hand and
turned the lamp out (119)

- the careful, prolonged and intense mutual gazing, the reaching out of the hand, the plunging of them both into the intimate, shared privacy of darkness. Or again:

at night I would smuggle him into my bed-place,
and we would whisper together (110-111)

-and note especially that the Captain is 'extremely tired, in a peculiarly intimate way' (98) by this whispering and later decides that he 'could not have stood the excitement' (101) of any more of it. (See Glossary: 'peculiar' (464-465), 'intimacy' (434-437), 'whispering between two men' (527-529).) Many of their exchanges are those of lovers: Leggatt speaking of their meeting tells the Captain, with a lover's sense of fatedness, "you seem to have been there on purpose[....] It's very wonderful" (115). The Captain speaks of Leggatt in phrases a man will use of his wife or lover: 'the[...] sharer of my cabin and of my thoughts'

(124) - and 'share' is anyway a highly homosexually charged term (see Glossary:'share' (485-487)); 'I felt less torn in two when I was with him' (107). The sexual possibilities explain the Captain's otherwise inexplicable and unnecessary concentration on Leggatt's body. He refers to this 'naked man from the sea' (88); instead of simply saying that Leggatt 'dressed himself' in the sleeping suit, he reminds us of Leggatt's nakedness, with a hint of regret at its ending in the idea of Leggatt's hiding it: 'he[...] concealed his damp body in a sleeping suit' (88). The temptation to sate a forbidden, homosexual desire is almost palpable in what, again, is an otherwise inexplicably strange scene:

I took a peep at my double, and discovered that he had not moved, his arm was still over his eyes; but his chest heaved; his hair was wet; his chin glistened with perspiration. I reached over him and opened the port.

'I must show myself on deck,' I reflected. Of course, theoretically, I could do what I liked, with no one to say nay to me within the whole circle of the horizon (99).

Again, we have the Captain's lingering gaze at a man lying in his bed; the dwelling on tiny, bodily details after the manner of a lover 'his chest heaved; his hair was wet; his chin glistened with perspiration' chest, (wet) hair and perspiration are all erotic details. Then too, there is the intimately close approach to this man in the small sleeping space - 'I reached over him'. Finally, there is something like an acknowledgement of temptation, as the Captain chooses this moment of illicit sexuality to state his freedom from any restriction 'I could do what I liked' and specifically from restriction on things usually forbidden - here there is 'no-one' to tell him 'nay'.

There is a similarly strange scene as the Captain and Leggatt are scrambling in a 'tiny dark passage' (119) (again, the closeness in intimate darkness) towards Leggatt's point of departure. The Captain, thinking of Leggatt's 'mere flesh' (123) (again, the physical fascination), tries to put a hat on him:

he dodged and fended off silently. I wonder what he thought had come to me before he understood and suddenly desisted. Our hands met gropingly, lingered united in a steady, motionless clasp for a second... No word was breathed by either of us when they separated (120).

What, indeed, could Leggatt be imagining to dodge and fend off the Captain's hands like this? It is reminiscent of the behaviour involved in shy or forbidden love. There is, too, the unspoken, suggestive moment in Conrad's ellipsis ('...'): what happens here? The clasp, too, is a romantic one - 'gropingly', in the intimate darkness, and lingering steadily. Biographical evidence only heightens the already strong sexual charge of this scene. In his 'Author's Note' to *Nostramo*, about his first love, Conrad describes saying a final goodbye to a girl:

I received a hand-squeeze that made my heart leap and saw a tear that took my breath away
(*Nostramo*, xvii)

and the hand-clasp is significant again in a cancelled passage from *The Arrow Of Gold*:

it was very little that she had done. A mere pressure of the hand. But he had remembered it for five and thirty years of separation and silence (quoted in Tennant 1981, 15).

Tennant says of the 'Author's Note':

to the end of his life Conrad would record no other occasion on which his heart leaped or his breath was taken away, and indeed it may be that in a sense this was his deepest sexual experience (1981, 15);

Tennant's (1981) whole chapter on Conrad's youthful sexuality is called 'A Squeeze Of The Hand'. It seems, then, that Conrad has deliberately put a strong, specifically sexual charge into the final scene between the Captain and Leggatt, with their squeeze of the hand, even if some of the details of its significance were only for himself.

This homosexual reading of 'The Secret Sharer' in general, and this handclasp in particular, is strengthened by a glance at other of Conrad's works. Conrad himself writes of *The Arrow Of Gold* as if it were autobiography: Batchelor (1994, 258) notes that Conrad refers to it as if it were as close to autobiography as *The Shadow Line*. Moreover, three major authorities on Conrad - Meyers (1991, 32, 39, 293, 326), Karl (1979, 159) and Meyer (1967, 35) - all read *The Arrow Of Gold* interchanging Conrad and George, as if the book were almost pure autobiography, and the latter two both discuss the possibility that Rita is based on Conrad's own first love. What is of importance to us here is that, with the freedom of fiction, Conrad has chosen to portray Rita as a substitute for a man⁸, giving George's love for her (and hence Conrad's first love and his delight in the handclasp) strong homosexual overtones. George gazes adoringly at Rita's 'delicately masculine head' (275); her voice is a 'deep contralto' (199); she is 'masterful' (97); he fantasises about her as a 'gay and fearless' (138) companion (and 'gay' is a potentially loaded word to use, here - see Glossary: 'gay' (420-422)) on board a ship,

wearing 'some sort of sailor costume, a blue woollen shirt open at the throat' (139); he watches her enveloped in animal-skins, 'like a charming and savage young chieftain' (275). Furthermore, the arrow of gold which she wears is like a Cupid's dart that pierces George's heart; the arrow comes with Rita, is her: when George seizes it, he gains her as well. The homoerotic suggestiveness is plain: the arrow is a symbol of passion, but very clearly of phallic passion. It is homosexual desire that is portrayed in the desire for Rita and homosexual desire that is concentrated into her clasp of the hand - perhaps into all Conradian handclasps.

On discovering Leggatt to be a murderer, the Captain says of looking at him:

it was[...] as though I had been faced by my own reflection in the depths of a sombre and immense mirror (89).

The very idea of involvement in a crime through a man who is a mirror-image of oneself is suggestive of the (then) criminality of homo-narcissistic desire. The sense of criminality lingers around the repeated repressions, lockings up and hidings in the story, which are suggestive of the compelled secrecy surrounding homosexuality for any respectable member of society at this time Leggatt being almost literally, then, a figure of closet sexuality. We have already noted the homosexual loadedness of the word 'share'; 'secret', too, carried a homosexual charge at this time (see Glossary: 'secret' (479-483)); the implications of the story's very title become inescapable.

In 'The Secret Sharer' and *Lord Jim*, Conrad is touching on matters that would usually have been kept hidden, a hiding necessary in order to

avoid the censure of the male peer-group and to allow a man still to fulfil his performance-rôle as 'manly'. The latent homosexual content of *Jim* seems more obvious than that of 'The Secret Sharer', closer to the surface, more immediately visible to the reader, with less symbolic intervention between the homosexual content and its actual expression (consider, for instance, the strangely blatant sexual content of Jim's relationship with the bachelor Denver). It is possible that Conrad is able to be this open in the earlier work, *Lord Jim*, precisely because he is less conscious of what it is he is writing about. By the time of 'The Secret Sharer', Conrad is perhaps far more consciously aware of the latent homosexual content. He realises he is peering into closets that are usually left closed - hence his (otherwise inexplicable) sense of the story as a particularly clear and open one; but hence, at the same time, too, the far greater caution with which he treats the material (because this time it is recognised as dangerous), the greater symbolic intervention between the homosexual content and its final expression.

In both works Conrad is, and desires to be, saying yet not saying: he must be, because of his position caught in the blur between homosocial and homosexual. We can see this same duality about speech and the desire for speech in 'The Secret Sharer's' Captain:

in consequence of events of no particular significance, except to myself, I had been appointed to the command (83).

There is duality in the thinking behind this statement: businesslike and busy, the hard masculine realist, the Captain dismisses the events as 'of no particular significance', despite the fact that they are the most important occurrence in his life yet; but running utterly against this mode

of thought is the quietly personal - almost defiantly so 'except to myself'. He is at once playing the part of mess-room masculinity and yet simultaneously excepting himself from it. This process is repeated more noticeably after each repetition - throughout the tale:

my position was that of the only stranger on board. I mention this because it has some bearing on what is to follow. But what I felt most was my being a stranger to the ship (83).

After the possibly weak and unmanly mention of personal detail 'my position was' - the Captain hurries to class it as the merely businesslike detail necessary solely for the telling of the story - 'I mention this because it has some bearing on what is to follow' - and like Conrad at times, the Captain here seems to protest too much: we had not felt anything to be amiss in the inclusion of the personal detail in the first place. However, he immediately breaks out (with a contradictive 'but') of the self-imposed impersonality (just as he did with the 'except to myself' before) into the realm of his personal feeling 'but what I felt most': it is as if he has tried to suppress the inner, feeling, less overtly masculine being, but it has come out despite him.

There is a sense throughout the story that the Captain's status as stranger, his 'strangeness', does not merely refer to his lack of familiarity with the ship and its inhabitants: 'my strangeness, which had made me sleepless' (84): the phrasing here seems deliberately ambiguous. The obvious meaning, in this context, of 'my lack of accustomedness', is run a close second by the more usual meaning, in any other context of 'my weirdness', of his being a strange person: the sense of the less overtly masculine homosexual as outcast from the mess-room circle is not far

from the surface here a sense enhanced when we consider the homosexually loaded status of 'stranger'. (See Glossary: 'strange', 'stranger' (488-496).) At one point, the Captain even speculates on the steward's explanation of his 'strange' behaviour, by using another homosexually loaded term, rather noticeably marked out in inverted commas:

there was a sort of curiosity in his eye that I did not like. I don't know whether the steward had told them that I was 'queer' only, or downright drunk (99).

(See Glossary: 'queer' (471-476).) Moreover, in some of the uses of 'strange', we are made to feel that the Captain's 'strangeness' is directly to do with his relationship with Leggatt. Thus, for instance, concerning himself and Leggatt together in his bedspace, he reflects that if the Mate were to see them,

he would think he was seeing double, or imagine himself come upon a scene of weird witchcraft; the strange captain having a quiet confabulation by the wheel with his own grey ghost (91).

Here, the 'strange' is definitely inclusive of 'weird' and is intimately involved with the Captain's being with Leggatt, with another man.

As we saw from the long passage first quoted, Leggatt is portrayed as at once delightful and yet a danger to the Captain: he is - vamp-like - both feared and desired. Indeed, there is something of the vamp's or succubus's sinister and destructive sexual career in Leggatt's life even before he reaches our Captain. His previous opposite number, or partner, is the man he struck on the *Sephora*. Leggatt's relationship with that first man is a literal rendering of his relationship with our Captain as

his hidden double: we are told that Leggatt 'closed' with the man, that they were 'jammed together', 'gripped' together (90) and that the crew 'had rather a job to separate' (92) them (recalling our Captain's realisation that his ship's mate would be unable to tell him from - separate him from - Leggatt and that he would think he were seeing double). As in the case of the vamp or succubus, the result of this close relationship is the destruction of the partner, the *Sephora*-man: it does not seem to bode well for our Captain - and we have already seen, in our passage, how Leggatt's arrival emasculates him of his cigar. Something of the precariousness of the Captain's position is indicated by his strange statement on Leggatt:

the self-possession of that man had somehow induced a corresponding state in myself (87).

The Captain regards his new-found self-possession as a gift from Leggatt; yet how can the Captain regard himself as self-possessed, if that quality is dependent on someone other than himself? He must be, in that case, quite the opposite of self-possessed.

The male-vamp, Leggatt, fulfils the classic vamp-role of delinquent sexuality attempting to destroy a rightful relationship by coming between the innocent young man and his new bride: in this case, the Captain and his female ship. The Captain's language becomes almost explicitly that of the nervous, sexually inexperienced bridegroom, as he talks of his fears for his relationship with his ship since Leggatt's intrusion:

I could not feel her[...] I did not know her. Would she do it? How was she to be handled?(122)

- the latter two questions heavy with sexual double entendre. The idea is of a young man of homosexual attractions coming between a groom and his bride:

I was not wholly alone with my command; for there was that stranger in my cabin. Or rather, I was not completely and wholly alone with her (109).

· a groom torn between the homosexual love of his youth and the duty to heterosexual love of his manhood. This theme seems an important one for Conrad: as we have seen⁹, he returns to handle it in a different guise in 'Falk', where the eponymous hero cannot get engaged until he has told of his shameful past involvement with other men (and a similar situation arises in 'The Duel').

The beginning of the Captain's safe return to his dutiful relationship is marked by his forced preoccupation with the safe navigation of the ship - 'I forgot the secret stranger' (122); 'I hardly thought of my other self' (123) - and we see him, of necessity, transfer his lover's gaze from the man to the sea, as the latter becomes the object of his 'strained, yearning stare'. Just as earlier his feminine stasis at the hands of Leggatt was marked by his retreat from the action of exclamation 'the moment of vain exclamation was past' (86) - so his return from feminine stasis to his dutiful life of masculine activity is marked by his active exclamation, when he sees the floating mark and is enabled to take full control of his ship: 'shift the helm!' (123). By the end of this nautical manoeuvre, his growing up is completed, his youth, his life with Leggatt - marked by his final gift - is already in the past: 'I [caught...] an evanescent glimpse of my white hat left behind' (124). He finishes in a dutiful relationship with his

ship, described in tones that are those of a husband talking of his newly-won wife, of sexual correctness:

and I was alone with her. Nothing! no one in the world should stand now between us, throwing a shadow on the way of silent knowledge and mute affection (123).

The Captain's ambivalent feelings towards this fulfilment of duty, as well as towards Leggatt and the possibilities he offered are suggested by the strange note on which 'The Secret Sharer' ends:

the spot where the secret sharer of my cabin and of my thoughts, as though he were my second self, had lowered himself into the water to take his punishment: a free man, a proud swimmer striking out for a new destiny (124).

More than one critic¹⁰, refusing to read further than this ending's apparent illogicalities, has simply dismissed it as an easy way to finish off the tale, a piece of mechanical and inappropriate rabble-rousing on Conrad's part - an explanation which does not sit happily with Conrad's view of the story as having not a single word out of place. The point of confusion in this ending is the strange conjunction in 'to take his punishment: a free man' - the combination of the utterly negative and utterly positive views of Leggatt's fate, which lies at the heart of the sentence. Why should Leggatt be described as both punished and free? Perhaps it is related to the homosexual aspects of the story. Leggatt, then, could be seen as accepting his punishment for deviancy from the mess-room norm, voluntarily embracing his banishment from society (thus lowering himself), but in doing so, thus also making himself free, free to pursue his desires, to continue with perhaps a third in his

sequence of partners - unlike the Captain, who must stay with his bride-ship and propriety, albeit with this wistful glance at the possibilities he has denied himself. The floating applicability of 'as though he were my second self' (124), describes not only (the previous clause) Leggatt's sharing of the Captain's cabin, but also (the succeeding clause) Leggatt's departure into the waters of sexual mystery: Leggatt departs in a way the Captain's 'second self', his other self beneath the 'masquerade' of masculinity, would like to.

Conrad thus situates Leggatt at a vanishing-point of moral decidability - is he hero or villain? If we sympathise with the Captain's actions at the end of the tale, regarding it as acceptable to risk the loss of a ship and her crew in order to save the life of one man, then we must simultaneously condemn them, as they save a man who held the opposite view that it was acceptable to kill one man in order to safeguard a ship and her crew. Leggatt himself is unconscious at the moment of the murder; the actual truth of the original scene on the *Sephora* is irrecoverable - it exists now only in its contrary re-tellings by Leggatt and Archbold, or rather, only in the Captain's re-tellings of these re-tellings. We are deep into the realms of dual possibilities, doubleness, doubt. The Secret Sharing, the doubling, expresses not only the narcissistic basis of homosexuality - the falling in love with one's own reflection 'in the depths of a[...] mirror' (89) but also the doubt, the confusion - the mirror is 'sombre and immense' - engendered for a homosexual youth by homosexuality's status as naturally desired but simultaneously socially rejected.

The Captain's hat comes to assume a vital importance at the end of the tale. It is seen as supplying something that the Captain lacked in the beginning. The story opens with the Captain noticing

the straight line of the fiat shore joined to the stable sea, edge to edge, with a perfect and unmarked closeness (81);

but in the course of the story, the Captain must learn that nothing, least of all the sea (of sexuality) is stable, and as the simplicity of his opening view is replaced with complexity, he must find 'a mark' - and the hat is referred to as such three times (123-124) - to guide him. The Captain, despite his decision to follow the path of duty with his bride-ship, does not lose the sense of complexity, of doubt, that he has encountered through his experiences with Leggatt. Instead, we see him beginning to learn to live (in a typically Conradian way) in and through that very doubt: his fate is tied to a hat that is both his and not his (in that he gave it to Leggatt and yet gets it back again) and a hat that is, moreover, not a fixed point, but floating on Stein's "deep, deep sea" (*Jim*, 213) of dream and doubt, and he must accept this floating mark as his only guide.

The concept of doubt, however, brings us back to the question that our original passage seemed to raise: is the unanalysable whatever-it-is at the heart of things in Conrad's world - like the crime/non-crime that 'The Secret Sharer' centres on, or the doubt-laden hat that the Captain must trust - unanalysable in a 'can not analyse' or a 'will not analyse' sense? It is a question of the unsayable as opposed to the merely unmentionable.

There are strong indications that the unsaid is unsaid simply because it is unmentionable. Throughout 'The Secret Sharer' as a whole, moments involving the unsaid are consistently sexually prompted, that is, prompted not by no knowledge, but by sexual knowledge. Leggatt describes how he saw the Captain looking over the rail at him in his nudity: "I didn't mind being looked at. I liked it" (97). This is an almost explicit statement of homosexual pleasure and it is surely not coincidental that it is the occasion of one of Leggatt's only two verbal hesitations in the whole tale: "I liked it" - he hesitates on the brink of mentioning the unmentionable. The other hesitation comes in his emotionally charged farewell to the Captain:

'you have [understood]. From first to last' - and for the first time there seemed to be a faltering, something strained in his whisper (118):

again, by this stage, we can only think he hesitates because the feelings he wishes to express about the Captain's 'understanding' are sexually unmentionable - a suspicion once again strengthened by the use of what was then a homosexually loaded term (see Glossary: 'understand' (499-505)). In neither of these cases do we feel that Leggatt's hesitation is caused by simply not knowing what he wants to say, by doubt - thus, the hesitation itself is homosexually charged. (See Glossary: 'ellipses, omissions and hesitations' (414-416).) The sexuality of these moments of not saying, then, suggests that it is the unmentionableness of homosexuality - the love that dare not speak its name - that is the cause. In 'Falk', Conrad is quite happy to deal with the taboo of cannibalism in some detail: we are brought to ask what other unspeakable is left for, say, Kurtz's carefully unspecified 'abominable terrors, [...] abominable

satisfactions' (*Darkness*, 113) except that of homosexuality? The Captain comes as close as possible to stating the truth, the reason for silence, in his comment on his whispered conversation - culminating in the lover's "it's very wonderful" with Leggatt, in the bed space:

in the same whisper, as if we two whenever we talked had things to say to each other which were not fit for the world to hear (115).

'Not fit for the world to hear'. In Conrad's wrestling with doubt under these circumstances, we are reminded of Forster and his cryptic 'ou-boum' (1983, 160); Forster wrote the unmentionable in *Maurice*, but would not allow its publication until after his death. Perhaps, then, Conrad is in some ways a similar case, his epistemological journey leading him not to the nothingness, emptiness, or utter doubt he might seem sometimes to suggest, but to a recognition of his sexuality - which he cannot say; or rather, cannot say out loud: he must drown the scorpion in the inkwell.

To Conrad, then, the text-book masculine hero is actually a man of mere facade; beneath, he is riven with possibly homosexual desires, naturally (like all men) a coward, and terrified of being revealed to the judgmental gaze of his powerful male peer-group; his fears alone drive him to learn doubleness, to project the masculine image that conforms with the homosocial ideal. The doubled half is feared; all men are double: the traditional concept of the gentleman or hero is utterly subverted. Does Conrad, then, offer any possibilities of a replacement, a different kind of male ideal?

It is Stein whose oracular utterances are reverently placed at the heart of Lord Jim, and it is his cryptic judgement on Jim - "he is romantic" (212) - that is the only one Marlow allows us to accept. Stein certainly seems to possess a solidity of heroism unknown to any other man in the novel:

in conjunction with an upright and indulgent nature, this man possessed an intrepidity of spirit and a physical courage that could have been called reckless had it not been like a natural function of the body - say good digestion, for instance - completely unconscious of itself (203).

At last we have a man utterly free (- almost: Conrad cannot bear to abandon his theory of duality utterly and so even this description of Stein's bravery is introduced with a few lines on his 'learned appearance' (202) and hence the phrase 'under this exterior' (203)) of any of the pained doubling that so plagues the apparently manly heroes in Conrad. Stein's bravery is not a facade, not something overlaid upon the natural coward beneath; quite the opposite, in fact - it is 'like a natural function' (203) of his body and as a result he is not riven by a self-reflexive awareness of duality: it is 'completely unconscious of itself' (203). Far from the heroic he-man whom Jim initially seems to resemble, Stein has 'a student's face' (202), with 'eyebrows nearly all white, thick and bushy' (202), a 'slight stoop' and 'an innocent smile' (203). He is utterly absorbed in 'his collection of *Buprestidae* and *Longicorns*' (203), a quiet entomologist, his mind slowly questing along the more tortuous paths of humanist philosophy. A gentle, learned man, he is not at all the traditional embodiment of male heroism. We are reminded of the crippled yet strangely heroic Monygham¹.

There is, though, perhaps a hint of Conrad's wish to have his cake and eat it, in his quietly giving Stein a past that is straight out of the 'light literature' (6) whose heroes he has so carefully undermined. It is a past Conrad only reveals in hints (possibly because he is aware of the danger of the very accusation I make here): thus, he says of Stein's pale face that it is

as of a man who had always led a sedentary life -
which was indeed very far from being the case
(202);

and of Stein's 'early[...] existence in the East' that he behaved not merely as 'a man [who...] carries his life in his hand', but rather as a man 'playing ball with it' (203). As an old man, Stein still has the traditional 'resolute, searching glance' (202) of the hero. More remarkably still, Stein's past contains glimpses of an element otherwise extremely scarce in the Conradian canon (a scarceness that is significant, given that this element usually accompanies the traditional manly hero) - namely, an uncomplicated heterosexual romance. Stein reminisces about his 'princess' who worries about his safety and gives his hand the 'one squeeze' that is so sexually and emotionally loaded for Conrad (208-209), as we have seen. It is as if Conrad - after all his subversive portrayals - cannot quite bear to leave the traditional male ideal behind.

Stein is different, then - genuinely heroic and yet not altogether untraditional either. He dominates the book in his brief appearance and Conrad, with his dramatic presentation of him, is clearly working hard to ensure just this :

his eyes seemed to look far beyond the wall at
which they stared[.]

[He passed...] out of the bright circle of the lamp[...] as if those few steps had carried him out of this concrete and perplexed world[....]

His voice leaped up extraordinarily strong, as though away there in the dusk he had been inspired by some whisper of knowledge[....]

[He] suddenly appeared in the bright circle of the lamp[...] and the austere exaltation of a certitude seen in the dusk vanished from his face (208, 213-214).

Stein is all the more imposing for being seen only in glimpses like these: like the Yahweh of the Old Testament, he is too great to be seen in entirety - and indeed, knowing Conrad's trust in the literarily inexplicit, we are tempted to notch him higher and higher in the scale of importance the more shadowy his figure becomes. Are we being presented with a true heroic ideal, then?

Conrad makes it impossible for us utterly to accept Stein as an unassailable - if different - masculine ideal. There are touches in the book that, albeit on an infinitely tinier scale than Conrad's subversion of the traditional hero, chip away at any secure belief in Stein's achievement of the ideal. Stein's own loss of certainty at the end of his vision is one such touch (although it simultaneously increases his shadowy glamour.) Elsewhere, we have seen Marlow dismiss the idiotically repugnant Chief Engineer of the *Patna* by describing how he speaks 'with the imbecile gravity of a thinker evolving a system of philosophy from the hazy glimpse of a truth' (24); it is unnerving for admirers of Stein to hear behaviour perfectly matching Stein's used as a simile for 'imbecile gravity'. Jim has a moment of illumination almost identical in particulars to Stein's epiphanic experience 'away there in the dusk' (214):

[Jim's eyes had] a still, far-away look[....] He was very far away from me who watched him across three feet of space[....] A strange look of beatitude overspread his features, his eyes sparkled in the light of the candle burning between us (83)

and yet Jim's experience is utterly unreal, hollow, based only on what might have been if Jim had not deserted the *Patna*. We fear Stein's uncertainty at the end of his illumination might be as well-grounded as Jim's, whom Marlow is easily able to deflate with a sarcastic verbal slap "if you had stuck to the ship, you mean!" (84).

However, in a writer of such carefully maintained doubt and in-explicitness as Conrad, we could hardly expect him to offer us an unquestionable replacement-hero in Stein. The undermining touches around Stein, though not unimportant, are nevertheless small: it is plain that Stein comes close to some kind of Conradian heroic ideal and can offer us some pointers. Indeed, Stein's having these potential little flaws actually illustrates the point he is trying to make: namely that it is necessary to continue the heroic attempt, despite your flaws; to recognise that the whole ideal is a mere dream but worth pursuing for its beauty anyway, and pursuing without fearing its difference from your flawed natural self - the fearful doubling that has defeated all the other potential heroes we have examined. Such a fear leads to self-reflexive splitting (or 'drowning', as Stein puts it) as we saw.

The pursuit of the dream is of more value than anything else that may be attained:

'a man that is born falls into a dream like a man who falls into the sea. If he tries to climb out into the air as inexperienced people endeavour to do, he drowns [....] No! I tell you! The way is to the

destructive element submit yourself, and make the deep, deep sea keep you up [...]

'That was the way. To follow the dream, and again to follow the dream - and so - *ewig - usque ad finem*' (214-215).

Karain comes close to putting this ideal fully into practice - and we regard him as, though flawed, definitely heroic by the end of his tale: he is 'loyal to a vision' (55); his narrator speaks of the power of Karain's 'invincible illusions that can make life and death appear serene, inspiring, tormented, or ignoble' (56) that is, illusions they may be, but they nevertheless do possess the power to make life seem these things. As Hollis says, to quiet his sniggering friends as he knowingly prepares the placebo, "'this is no play'" (64) : it is fake, yet still real. To pursue the dream fearlessly, knowing its illusoriness and your own flaws, demands a sensitivity and awareness from the true Conradian hero (and Stein's learning and philosophical questing are emphasised) that is quite different from the he-man tradition of masculinity with which our exploration began.

Jim's second chance at heroism in Patusan is, as Hampson notes (1992, 130-131) full of phrases that recall the manly story-book world that Jim had dreamed of inhabiting: Jim delightedly comments that the business with the ring is "'like something you read of in books'" (233-234); Doramin and Dain Waris are "'like people in a book'" (260). This second attempt is seemingly successful for a long time:

it was immense[...] the conquered ground for the soles of his feet, the blind trust of men, the belief in himself snatched from the fire[...] All this, as I've warned you, gets dwarfed in the telling[...] His fame[...] was the greatest thing around for may a day's journey (272).

But, in the end, and as the return of the unreal story-book note might have warned us, he apparently loses even this chance of heroism, as he breaks his promise to his people and leaves them to their fate. Perhaps, though, this second attempt at heroism had to be lost, was still too close to the subvertible, empty traditional masculine ideal. Conrad, dimly, almost imperceptibly offers us this as a possible interpretation in Marlow's subtle underminings of this description of Jim's second success: the passage opens with 'no doubt it was immense' (272) a gently sceptical phrase that introduces the very possibility of doubt it pretends to scotch, a possibility that runs through the rest of the passage: Jim's isolation 'seemed only the effect of his power' (272); it is 'as though he had been one of those exceptional men' (272). The emphasis is on appearance, not necessarily substance.

Jim's final actions after this second attempt are as shadowy to interpretation as Stein's certainty 'away there in the dusk', but perhaps, as for Stein, their very shadowiness is an indication of their value: like Stein's 'certainty', the image of a true hero could be just beyond our range of vision, apprehensible only in the dusk, visible in our intellect's circle of lamplight only as a mystery. In his final actions, we can see Jim take a different path toward heroism: this time he does not make a mighty leap as he did at the outset of his exploits with the *Patna* and again at the outset of his exploits in Patusan. Instead of such a macho physical conquest of obstacles, he has the gates opened for him and walks quietly through them (410). He goes out, not into the heroic ideal of survival against all odds, but to an undefended death - "upon my head[....] I am come in sorrow[....] I am come ready and unarmed"

(415). Perhaps the dim Christ-like echoes here are to recall the possibility that such self-surrender can be magnificent, huge, heroic.

Jim dies by phallic/penetrative pistol-shot, at the hands of his beloved and revered comrade, whose ring he received, a ring that, with echoes of bridehood, 'opened for him the door of[...] love' (415): in these events there is perhaps a half-conscious enshrinement of homosexuality as part of this new kind of non-macho heroism - Jim's death as a kind of homosexual fulfilment. Whether or not we acknowledge the homosexual possibilities, Marlow is certainly inclined to see new-heroic possibilities in Jim's actions: Jim ignores the pleas to fight because

there was nothing to fight for. He was going to prove his power in another way (410)

and perhaps this hidden/to-one-side 'another way' (a homosexually loaded phrase - see Glossary: 'another/other' (372-374)) in the most suitable weapon against the hidden/to-one-side 'something else besides' (31); again Marlow seems to hope so:

he was going to prove his power in another way and conquer the fatal destiny (410).

It is possible (though difficult, given the huge differences in emphasis and phrasing) to see Jim's deliberate death as a suicide like Brierly's, a mere giving up. To be true to his recognition that 'absolute Truth' is 'elusive, obscure, half submerged, in the silent still waters of mystery' (216), Conrad has to allow us the presence of this doubt. There is nevertheless an obscure glory about Jim's death, the possibility that he has found the way to a new sort of heroism, a new ideal of masculinity (possibly a homosexual one: 'one of us', 'another way'), 'a shadowy ideal

of conduct' (416), as Marlow puts it - it is an ideal, but 'shadowy', in the sense of 'dark', 'secret', 'shady' . Ultimately, his death takes him beyond our knowledge of his success or failure:

Is he satisfied - quite, now, I wonder? We ought to know. He is one of us[....] Was I so very wrong after all? [....]
Who knows? (416).

Notes.

1. Conrad is certainly alert to the literary possibilities within an artistic transformation of *Boy's Own* material, as is clear from his comments to Blackwood on 'Youth':

the favourable critics of that story, Q[uiller Couch] amongst others remarked with a sort of surprise 'This after all is a story for boys yet- - - -'

Exactly. Out of the material of a boys' story I've made 'Youth' by the force of the idea expressed in accordance with a strict conception of my method (letter to Blackwood, 31 May 1902, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 2: 417).

2. In his 'Author's Note' to *Lord Jim*, Conrad defends the book against charges, made by 'a lady' in Italy, that 'it is all so morbid': he declares that no Latin temperament would perceive 'anything morbid' in it, and he can 'safely assure' his readers that Jim is 'not the product of coldly perverted thinking' (xxxiii). It is, of course, impossible to say whether Conrad intends a veiled reference to any possibly homoerotic undertones in the book (see Glossary: 'morbid' (450-451), 'perversion' (468-471)). However, light is cast on the force of any denial in this Note, when we consider his equally defensive and wholly unconvincing statement concerning 'Falk', that his 'intention in writing [it...] was not to shock anybody' ('Author's Note' to *Typhoon And Other Stories*, Ingram 1986, 93-94).

3. Conrad had himself experienced the nearness of the homosocial to the homosexual in his own relations with men. Whitmanesque 'manly' homosexuality based on 'the love of comrades' (Whitman, quoted in Reade 1970, 280) is very close to Conrad's avowed delight in the 'fellowship' of 'an obscure body of men' (*Jim*, 50). Conrad had a close relationship of 'extreme intimacy' (Ford, quoted in Koestenbaum 1989, 166) with his occasional co-writer, Ford Madox Ford. They attempted to keep their masculine togetherness undiluted, rarely mentioning women or allowing them to appear in their prose - and Ford, who regarded Conrad as a 'he man' (Koestenbaum 1989, 167), never once mentioned the existence of Conrad's wife in his memoir of Conrad. Conrad himself hovers on the extreme edges of homosexual suggestiveness about this relationship: in his description of it

you cannot really suppose that there is anything between us except our mutual regard and our partnership - in crime (letter to Ford, 20 July 1902, quoted in Karl 1979, 521)

he puts the idea of some impropriety forward, in a Jim-ish manner, by his very denial of it (compare Jim's repudiation of the term 'cur', when no-one had actually applied it to him(70)), raising the idea of 'anything

between us' (a romantic phrase) in rejecting it; and then he playfully re-introduces this very idea having just scotched it - 'partnership - in crime'. Something similar happens in Conrad's reference to Ford as 'a lifelong habit of which I am not ashamed' (letter to Wells, 20 October 1905, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 3: 287) in unnecessary denial, he raises the otherwise unsuspected possibility of his relationship with Ford's being some kind of shameful habit. However, if homosociality was ever openly merged into homosexuality, Conrad would recoil instantly. Thus, his intimate friendship with Roger Casement, whom he found 'very sympathetic' ('The Congo Diary', 13 June 1890, 7), was suddenly and completely terminated by Conrad in terms of utter dislike (Meyers 1973, 67) when Casement's frank homosexual diaries were exposed by Scotland Yard. He later terminated his relationship with Ford for reasons that have never quite been clear. Again, then, we come across Conrad's insistence on discretion; he does not recoil from toying with the suggestion of homosexuality around himself, but any open declaration is abhorrent to him.

The question of Conrad's own sexual orientation is raised by these responses. It is perhaps as well to touch on it while we are here. Despite his marriage to Jessie and production of two sons, his responses here do suggest some semi-conscious homosexual tendencies. Repeatedly, we see attraction to homosexuals, then excessive horror on discovering their orientation, a horror perhaps arising from the fear that it was their very homosexuality that had attracted him in the first place. Conrad's uneasy reactions to women, veering between extremes of the desire to worship and the desire to look down on, I shall touch on in more detail later, but even in these extremes we can find a suggestion of homosexual possibilities. As far as Conrad's background is concerned, sailors were traditionally regarded as more likely than most to be homosexually experienced at this time: for instance, as Bristow (1992a, 53) notes, Wilde specifies rumours of Dorian Gray's having been 'brawling with[...] sailors' (Wilde 1985, 173), for the added scandal lying in the one transgression's implying a further one - what else had he done with the sailors? Conrad himself makes typically veiled references to the peculiarities of the naval sex-life:

the marital relations of seamen would make an interesting subject, and I could tell you instances.... However, this is not the place, nor the time (*Jim*, 156). [The suggestive ellipsis is Conrad's, not mine.]

He also touches on something unmentionable and sordid that a young boy must face on being introduced to the true sea-life:

there is such magnificent vagueness in the expectations that had driven each of us to sea[....] What we get well, we won't talk of that[....] In no other kind of life[...] is the beginning *all* illusion - the disenchantment more swift[....] The memory of the

same cherished glamour[is carried] through the sordid days of imprecation (129).

I do not wish to over-stretch my point, but the Freudian implications in the imagery of penetration and man-boy relationships with which the passage continues are homosexually suggestive to say the least:

what wonder that when some heavy prod gets home the bond is found to be close; that besides the fellowship of the craft there is felt the strength of a wider feeling - the feeling that binds a man to a child (129).

Note that of the three working captains we encounter in *Lord Jim*, two, that of the *Patna* and that of the *Pellion* (a 'little popinjay[....] drowned in scent[....] tiptoeing, ruffling all his pretty plumes' (63)) are both plainly homosexual.

4. The phrase 'one of us', if taken on its own also, of course, refers back to the Biblical episode of the knowledge of good and evil (cf. Genesis 3:22). See Watts 1984, 57 for more detail on this.

5. See this Chapter, 204-206.

6. See, e.g. Graver 1969, 149-58, Williams 1964, 626-630, both of which, if not actually mistaken, seem rather irrelevant to the central issues raised by the story.

7. See my Chapter Two, note 5 (123) on the theory of a psychological link between narcissism and homosexuality.

8. For more on the use of women to stand in for a forbidden male love-interest, see my Chapter Six, 310-312 and my Chapter Six, note 8 (342-343).

9. See my Chapter Two, 120-121 and my Chapter Two, note 6 (123).

10. e.g. Graver dismisses the ending as 'a triumph of grandiloquence over the facts of the case' (1969, 158); Guerard is uneasy about it: 'whatever the logic or illogic of the ending' (1958, 26).

11. See my Chapter One, 78-79.

CHAPTER FIVE.

'NOT EXACTLY A STORY FOR BOYS' (*CHANCE*, 311): HETEROSEXUAL LOVE AND THE ROLE OF WOMEN FOR THE MALE HERO IN *CHANCE*, *VICTORY* AND OTHER LATER WORKS.

Chance (1914) is Conrad's first popular success - as he had intended from the start: he describes it as

the sort of stuff that *may* have a chance with the public. All of it about a girl and with a steady run of references to women in general all along (letter to Pinker, 1913, quoted in Baines 1960, 381).

With it, then, we move from his explorations of the isolated masculine outsider, with their veiled and tortured homosexuality, into the commoner light of straightforward heterosexual romance. *Chance* is the only one of Conrad's novels to end on an optimistic note, and this attempt at a happy ending takes a specifically heterosexual form, as an unusually benevolent Marlow sees to it that Powell gets the girl and she gets a second chance at being married happily ever after.

Conrad had a severe mental breakdown in 1910 and a relapse early in 1911, followed by several episodes of hypochondria. In a man whose work so dominated his daily life and thought, it is not difficult to conclude that something about the materials he was dealing with in *Chance* disturbed him deeply.

What that something might have been soon emerges. Conrad's characters have often expressed the feeling that 'the inner truth is hidden luckily, luckily' (*Darkness*, 67); any clear vision or understanding in Conrad is

a destructive process[....] It is not the clear-sighted who lead the world. Great achievements are

accomplished in a blessed, warm mental fog
(*Victory*, 91-92).

Indeed, by the time of *Chance*, Marlow is expressing this preference for the unlifted veil almost to the point of self-parody:

it was one of those dewy, clear, starry nights,
oppressing our spirit, crushing our pride, by the
brilliant evidence of the awful loneliness, of the
hopeless obscure insignificance of our globe[....] I
hate such skies[....] cloudy soft nights are more
kindly to our littleness (50);

a delicious day, with the horror of the Infinite veiled
by the splendid tent of blue (64).

However, ever since 'The Secret Sharer' and another Conradian Captain's rescue of a naked and strangely attractive male bed-partner from 'down there' (68) in the sea, and concealment of him 'down there' (107) in his cabin, the half-hidden, half-seen 'down there' has been a sexually loaded term in Conrad. And in *Chance*, the story centres on the moment when Powell does "away[...] with[...] restraints" (414) - the safe 'mental fog' is removed - and takes a look "down there" (412), into the forbidden, sexual area of the Captain's bedchamber:

'I could see right into that part of the saloon the
curtains were meant to make particularly private.
Do you understand me?' (410-411).

The central thrust of these later works, then, is to draw back the protective veil and peer boldly at what 'there is to be found' in a man 'at bottom, quite deep down, down in the dark (in some cases only[to be found] by digging)' (*Chance*, 371). This time, the sexuality Conrad uncovers is not that of male solitaries but of heterosexual couples: Conrad is examining the effect of women on the manly hero.

It is impossible to judge these later works, so different are they in material and approach, by the same critical criteria as the early ones: it is by making that mistake that Moser (1957) joins the ranks of critics¹ who have come to see Conrad's later work as a decline. I hope to show that it is not. It is simply a change.

The later works contain far greater symbolic and Gothic elements than anything Conrad has written hitherto, possibly confirming our hypothesis that he is dealing with material that disturbs him. For instance, there is *Chance*, with its strange recurrent images of Flora drowned (222, 265, 384, 430); its dwelling on grotesque detail, almost to the point of Poe-ian horror-fantasy at moments of crisis

'she had pushed her face so near mine and her teeth looked as though she wanted to bite me. Her eyes seemed to have become quite dry, hard and small in a lot of horrible wrinkles' (120) ;

the unsettling and emphatic doubling between such an apparently unlikely pair as de Barral and Anthony; a suicide by poison; or eerie details like the Freudianly loaded appearance of de Barral's hand round the bedroom curtain 'fumbling with the dark stuff' (417). It stretches coincidence too far if we see no connection between this dramatic increase in Gothic imagery and the beginning of Conrad's newly open examination of heterosexuality. Sexuality is a dark and difficult subject for Conrad and he explores it through such dark and difficult images.

Dark and difficult it may be, but Conrad is determined to plumb its furthest reaches. Beneath the surface of traditional heterosexual romance in these later works, Conrad seems almost obsessively to explore (what were then) the more dangerous areas of disreputable sexual behaviour. Flora's governess shows mild sexual impropriety,

harboring 'a secret taste for patronizing young men of sorts - of a certain sort' (*Chance*, 73). Hampson (1993, 115) notes the disturbing suggestion of sexual abuse of a minor in Marlow's reference to public assumptions about Fyne's rescue of Flora in Brighton:

what might have been their thoughts at the spectacle of a middle-aged man abducting headlong into the upper regions of a respectable hotel a terrified young girl obviously under age, I don't know (125).

Hampson also notes (1993, 115) the slight undertones of pederastic homosexuality that accompany young Powell's relationship with the older Powell, who is the means of his accomplishing his rite of passage into an adult masculine identity (second mate on the *Ferndale*): the older Powell is described as "resembl[ing...] Socrates", to which Marlow sardonically adds that Socrates was indeed "a true friend of youth" (13). Later, mildly homosexual implications surround both Franklin's and the now adult Powell's attitudes to Anthony. Franklin, with his talk of a cosy "we two" (emphatically four times in only ten lines) (303) in the days before Flora displaced him in Anthony's affections, is like a jilted lover - he "can't get him back" (303); Powell finds Anthony 'such an attractive and mysterious man', has a 'sort of depraved excitement' (416) in looking at him, and feels an inexplicable desire to have 'another peep at him' in his bedroom (416). Around Mrs. Fyne, there are stronger lesbian implications: she has masculine clothes (39); she is obsessed with her 'girlfriends' (42, 43, etc.); and she has doctrines of 'things not fit for a man to hear' (59) and 'lurid, violent, cruel reveries' that surround a 'practice of feminine free morality' with her girls (65-66). There are implications even of incest in de Barral's relationship with his daughter and Carleon Anthony's with his. De Barral in prison experiences the kind of 'lurid visions [that] haunt secluded men, monks,

hermits' (362) but with his own child as the subject: she is 'the only outlet for his imagination' (371). His 'terrible[...] fixed idea' about Flora has 'another name men pronounce with dread and aversion' (377). His 'jealous rage' (360), on hearing of her marriage, is plainly sexual: he tells her he would "hate" her if she ever "'loved" Anthony (381), and is tempted to strangle Anthony every time the latter looks at Flora (432). He even fears, like an unwanted lover, that Flora has been "'leading [him...] on" (433). Carleon Anthony is portrayed as 'a savage sentimentalist' with 'his own decided views' of 'his paternal prerogatives'; his daughter is 'in bondage' to his 'selfishness' and 'perverse[...] refinement' (38-39), while she lives at home.

However moving away from such obviously controversial areas - more surprisingly, even the apparently traditional heterosexual relationships are a little strange. Both *Chance* and *Victory* (1915) centre on a couple with a relationship that is marital in type, yet celibate. The Steward on Anthony's ship refuses to refer to Flora as Anthony's wife, because of his own wife's discoveries as Flora's lady's maid:

'I know what I know. My old woman has not been six months on board for nothing' (*Chance*, 390).

Similarly, in *Victory*, Heyst has 'never[...] loved a woman' (212); he only ever comes out of Lena's arms feeling 'a baffled man' (324); although he does 'not obey' Lena's command to 'leave her alone' (215), soon afterwards she is still disappointedly telling him, in the context of 'physical intimacy', to "'try to love" her (221), and he is still painfully aware of the 'physical and moral[...] imperfections of their relations' (222). In both cases good, chivalrous reasons - in accordance with ideals of male heroism - are given for the man's insistence on celibacy. Yet in both cases we are shown quite clearly that this celibacy is utterly

disastrous to the relationship and the couple involved. Why should Conrad want to explore so strange and esoteric a situation and twice?

We are by now familiar with Conradian criticism of the general ideals of masculine behaviour. In these two works, though, it is more specifically male sexual ideals - sexual chivalry, sexual repression that are under attack. Counsels of restraint bind Anthony and Heyst - the repression in Anthony's "say nothing. Don't move" (*Chance*, 338), eerily echoing Heyst's received "look on make no sound" (*Victory*, 175) and these restraining counsels are in both cases specifically linked for the men with the concept of behaving as an ideal male, with obeying what their fathers have handed down as the male role: Heyst's father's philosophy; Anthony's father's idealist romantic poetry. Even de Barral's horrible perversion, it seems, may spring not from an extreme of sexual freedom and frankness, but merely from extreme repression and restraint: his incarceration is the first occasion of his unnatural sexual desire for Flora and, throughout the book, he is shown - simultaneously with his perversion - as being the most extremely restrained character in the book:

his walk[...] as level and wary as his voice. He walked as if he were carrying a glass full of water on his head (*Chance*, 386);

he had his hands in the pockets of his jacket, his arms were pressed close to his thin, upright body, and he shuffled across the cabin with his short steps (425);

speaking in his low voice from under his hand (368);

his peculiar voice, as if filtered through cotton-wool (394).

Moreover, the sexual restraint involved in even the attempt to conform to the chivalrous masculine ideal is shown as impossible.

Anthony finds himself

trying to act at the same time like a beast of prey, a pure spirit and 'the most generous of men'. Too big an order clearly (*Chance*, 415).

Neither sex can escape the sexual imperative. Conrad has explored the idea of the inevitable impurity of altruism, in Kurtz's behaviour in *Heart Of Darkness*, or Lingard's in *Almayer's Folly* (1895), *An Outcast Of The Islands* (1896), and (later) in *The Rescue* (1920). Now he re-examines the same idea from a more explicitly sexual viewpoint. Thus, Lena wants to help Heyst simply in order that 'happiness would burst on her like a torrent, flinging at her feet the man whom she loved' (*Victory*, 353). Anthony's response to Flora shows how far away from the ideal of genuine altruism the sexually adulterated form can take a man. Marlow, though aware of Anthony's 'rare pity' for Flora, nevertheless is forced by his behaviour to conclude that the 'vanity' concealed in his 'generosity' must 'have been enormous' (*Chance*, 331).

Chivalrous sexual restraint actually damages the men who attempt it, then. Anthony wildly underestimates the power of his attraction to Flora, almost to the point of his own destruction:

his force, fit for action, experienced the impatience, the indignation, almost the despair of his vitality arrested, bound, stilled, progressively worn down, frittered away by Time[....]

It would occur to Anthony at the end of such meditations that death was not an unfriendly visitor after all (*Chance*, 396-397).

Heyst, too, finds himself at risk, in danger of 'spiritual starvation', because his is 'a spirit which[...] renounced all outside nourishment, and was sustaining itself proudly on its own contempt of the usual coarse aliments which life offers to the common appetites of men' (*Victory*, 177).

Even more ironically, the very attempt to achieve sexual chivalry actually renders men incapable of fulfilling any real chivalrous role of protecting their women. Flora needs to be rescued from her thralldom to a sexually predatory father and her low opinion of her own attractiveness, yet for most of the novel, so poor is Anthony's understanding of his manhood, that he deliberately prevents himself from taking the sexual initiative which would save her. Flora, in her desperation (and with, in some ways, a clearer understanding of what is needed) eventually comes as close as she can to offering herself openly to satisfy Anthony's sexual needs: "neither am I keeping anything back from you" (*Chance*, 343); but Anthony, 'in his blind generosity' (343) and utterly misled by his own obsession with his chivalric pose, misunderstands her - thinking merely that she means she has no secrets from him - and fails to take the sexual route out of their difficulties that she has just offered him:

he saw she was swaying where she stood and restrained himself violently from taking her into his arms, his frame trembling with fear as though he had been tempted to an act of unparalleled treachery (375).

Anthony is 'bound in honour', Flora is 'bound in honour' (341); he 'meant well', she 'meant well' (309), yet with the hollow repetition of these phrases, Conrad emphasises that these 'noblest sentiments and intentions' (309) are useless: there is no real communication between the couple and so, despite their identical intents, neither honour, nor

well-being result from their behaviour. In such a breakdown of communication, the women end up feeling only insulted: after Anthony's rejection of her offer of sex, Flora reaches 'the very limit of her endurance as the object of [his...] magnanimity' (427) and, 'quite unable to understand the extent of Anthony's delicacy', says to herself that 'he didn't care' (396). Poor Lena goes through the same process, believing in Heyst's habitually assumed tone of distant playfulness and never realising that she gives Heyst 'a greater sense of his own reality than he had ever known in all his life' (*Victory*, 200) all to Heyst's hastily and fatally concealed amazement, when she asks him to try to love her:

'but it seems to me ' He broke off, saying to himself that if he loved her, he had never told her so in so many words. Simple words! They died on his lips (221).

In examining these men's mistaken sexual renunciations, Conrad comes to realise and enunciate an anxiety that has hovered beneath the surface of his texts since his earliest works. Anthony is 'possessed by most men's touching illusion as to the frailness of women and their spiritual fragility', and he thus feels that

he would be destroying, breaking something very precious inside that being. In fact nothing less than partly murdering her (*Chance*, 332-333),

if he initiated sexual behaviour with her. The idea is spelled out a little earlier:

men, i mean really masculine men, those whose generations have evolved an ideal woman, are often very timid. Who wouldn't be before the ideal? (217).

A man's belief in the traditional ideal of woman - perfect, unsullied, on a pedestal, 'in a world of [her...] own[...] too beautiful altogether' (*Darkness*, 39), will make his having a sexual relationship with her impossible: who could (or would dare to) sully the light of perfection in a darkened universe? As our reading of *Heart Of Darkness* alone has already suggested, there is ample evidence that Conrad sees men as something disgusting - and specifically sexually so. Of his first love, he says:

we [the schoolboys] used to look up to that girl [...] as the standard-bearer of a faith to which we were all born but which she alone knew how to hold aloft with an unflinching hope ('Author's Note', *Nostromo*, xlvi).

The men ('we') are in a group together; the woman quite removed, separate and unapproachably ideal.

Moreover, once a woman venerated as apart in a world of beauty and goodness, a world 'too beautiful altogether' (*Darkness*, 39), has made herself sexually accessible, she can no longer be this beautiful, separate - saving - thing and is hence no longer desirable. Once the Captain in 'A Smile Of Fortune' (1911), for instance, has stolen his sexually symbolic kiss from Alice, seizing her 'as one snatches at something falling or escaping' (63), he suddenly finds he has lost all interest in her:

she was not afraid; but I was no longer moved[...] only a sense of my dignity prevented me fleeing headlong from that catastrophic revelation (71).

Conrad goes on to touch on the unsettling possibility that, even with so little chance of success, sex may still be so vital in the relation between men and women that a sexual response from the worst of sources is still better - and certainly more welcome to the recipient

than no sex at all. Consider Flora's experiences. If she cannot get the sexual response she needs from the right place Anthony - she will take it from wherever she can. She takes it (emotionally) from her incestuously motivated father. Thus, she is anxious not to upset her father, solely because he is 'the only human being that really cared for her, absolutely, evidently, completely to the end' (*Chance*, 380): unlike the traditionally chivalrous others around her,

there was in [her father...] no pity, no generosity, nothing whatever of these fine things - it was for *her*, for her very own self, such as it was, that this human being cared. This certitude would have made her put up with worse torments (380).

Why the sexual response should be so important in these novels seems to lie in its being something unrestrained, uncerebral, not concerned with ideals at all. Heyst lives in a too-cerebral world controlled by the fastidious intellectualism of his father's philosophy. He is almost all mind: he has Wang to attend to bodily matters - it is Wang who provides food, gets married, takes the (sexually symbolic) gun. In the end, Heyst seems to realise the inadequacy of this one-sided existence, when he curses his 'fastidious' nature (*Victory*, 406) for being still unable to embrace Lena even when she is dying. He must burn all the 'relics' (177) of his father's philosophy - the books, the study, the portrait and himself with flames that symbolise consuming passion: in his fire, Heyst is warmed up, not frigid, sexualized at last. Perhaps his realisation of his lack and the act it triggers in him is, for Heyst, the (typically Conradian, tragi-comic) 'victory' of which the book's title speaks. In a similar vein, Anthony is unable to fight de Barral's hold over Flora all the time he is acting with ideal heroic restraint. He must instead set his sexual instinct free and 'possess' Flora in the fullest sense:

as he had said himself he could not fight for what he did not possess; he could not face such a thing as this for the sake of his mere magnanimity (*Chance*, 429).

His unrestrained sexual instinct is the only thing strong enough to overcome de Barral's perverted power over Flora: 'the normal alone can overcome the abnormal' (429). Flora's unrestrained cry of love frees Anthony for sexually frank and uninhibited behaviour: he at last enters with Flora into her previously virginally forbidden bedroom, all his physical restraint gone

[Flora] looked as if she would let go and sink to the floor if the captain were to withhold his sustaining arm. But the captain obviously had no such intention (430).

The vital aspect of sexual love for a man is in its distance from the damaging traditions of masculine sexual heroism - the ideal, the cerebral and in its being instead quite the opposite - random and emotional. Flora, unlike the 'fastidious' Heyst, can give vent to a saving love-cry at the crucial moment, because that cry comes straight 'from her heart' (429) and because she has allowed herself to be directed by her need for 'that something arbitrary and tender' (374) in love.

It is in this area of the imperfect, confused, arbitrary, then, that the main significance of unrestrained sexuality lies in these later works. These are novels no longer about the possibility - or otherwise - of a man's being an ideal individual, but about the far muddier and more mixed-up business of sex, of pairing-off. *Chance* is a book where Conrad (perhaps anxious not to end up as bitterly withdrawn as Heyst's father) steps slightly back from his close involvement with Marlow and occasionally allows other characters to mock Marlow gently (36, 42, 93-94, etc.). Nevertheless, it is impossible to doubt the genuineness of

feeling behind Marlow's carefully-worded and vigorous comments on the utter necessity of a man's pairing-off:

of all the forms offered to us by life it is the one demanding a couple to realise it fully, which is the most imperative. Pairing off is the fate of mankind (426).

And this is a specifically sexual pairing-off Marlow is talking of:

and if two beings thrown together, mutually attracted, resist the necessity, fail in understanding and voluntarily stop short of the the embrace, in the noblest meaning of the word, then they are committing a sin against life, the call of which is simple. Perhaps sacred (426-427).

To pair off successfully, then, a man must be prepared to be both unrestrained and arbitrary - that is, unideal in order to be able to get involved in this muddy business. Geddes (1980, 66-71) finds that in this context, Heyst's casual tale of a "mud-shower" (*Victory*, 192), during his first proper conversation with Lena on the island, is highly significant. It is notable that the mud-shower arises from a confused combination of opposing elements (the fire of a volcanic eruption and the water of a tropical storm): this is perhaps symbolic of the sexual mixing of those Conradian elemental opposites, the male and the female. Geddes feels that Heyst's anecdote shows how Heyst's attraction to Lena lies in her earthiness, her being a creature of the mud, so that with her he is able to recapture, or at least sense, the (mixed) humanity which his father's single-minded idealist philosophising has stolen from him. Geddes argues that Conrad is showing that Heyst, to find fulfilment (indeed, the fulfilment that the novel's imagery of him as a secular Christ-figure suggests) must become a new Adam a man that God made from mud and breathed life into. When Lena is struggling to get

the knife from Ricardo (a knife which has the 'sting of death' (399) in it: this scene is an altered but still recognisably Edenic one, and returns us to the idea of an Adamic, mud-made man), Jones is outraged specifically by the sexual import of the scene:

'mud souls, obscene and cunning! Mud bodies, too - the mud of the gutter! I tell you we are no match for the vile populace' (392).

The scene suggests both the necessity for the muddy and messy heterosexual bonding of a man and woman, and a horror of the opposite - the clear-cut, over-clean, fastidiously idealising world of the purely homosocial, even homosexual. Jones, in his revulsion from male-to-female pairing, is a representative of the masculine ideal world taken to its logical extreme - and he is, at the same time (perhaps Conrad wishes to demonstrate the underlying illogicality of such a world) also all the things hated by that very world - a sociopathic homosexual. It is not a mere accident of slang that allows Conrad repeatedly to call Jones a perfect 'gentleman'² (128, 130, 265, 316, etc.; see Glossary: 'gentleman' (422-427)). He means it: Jones is in some ways the extreme expression of what, throughout these later novels, traditional, restrained gentlemanly perfection will inevitably produce a man unfitted for any real existence in a world with women.

Pairing off, then, is vitally important, and so a new, deeply-felt central image displaces that of Conrad's previous works: they were concerned with Stein's lone swimmer, a man struggling to "make the deep, deep sea keep [him...] up" (*Jim*, 214). Now, though very similar, the picture is no longer of an individual:

that girl was, one may say, washing about with slack limbs in the ugly surf of life with no opportunity to strike out for herself, when suddenly she had been made to feel that there was

somebody [a man - Anthony] beside her in the bitter water. A most considerable moral event for her; whether she was aware of it or not (*Chance*, 222).

There is a new level of awareness of the uselessness of the solely masculine. Fyne is accused by Marlow of being 'hopelessly' masculine, and hence 'helpless', 'bound and delivered' (146). Pairing-off is important because of the admixture of the feminine it allows a man. The male comradeship that has so dominated Conrad's earlier works hence massively loses status in these later ones. Franklin, an unmarried, male-bonded sailor who is utterly devoted to Anthony, would surely, in an earlier novel, have been given far greater importance than his fleeting appearances and Marlow's detached handling allow him in *Chance*; certainly it is shown that Anthony can and must get what he needs (as far as that is possible in any novel by Conrad) ultimately not from this male comrade, but from a woman - Flora. Similarly, in *Victory*, Heyst's masculine isolation - in some ways typical of a protagonist in Conrad's earlier works - is emphasised before he meets Lena: it is 'the very essence of his life to be a solitary achievement' (90); he is 'invulnerable because elusive' (90). Yet it is only when - unlike Conrad's earlier men - Heyst abandons (albeit imperfectly) this isolation and allows a woman, Lena, into his life, that he achieves a degree of the very thing all those earlier protagonists were after - 'a greater sense of his own reality' (200). Although he never fulfils the promise of this discovery, his near-miss converts him (again - perhaps the 'victory' of the title) from being a believer in the superiority of male isolation

'I only know that he who forms a tie is lost. The germ of corruption has entered into his soul' (199-200)

to a belief in a man's need for quite the opposite, the leap in the dark that is love for another:

'woe to the man whose heart has not learned
while young to hope, to love - and to put its trust in
life!' (410).

Earlier in Conrad's career, Jim goes away 'from a living woman to celebrate his pitiless wedding with a shadowy ideal of conduct' (*Jim*, 416), and at that stage, while we feel sorry for Jewel in her desolation, there is nevertheless something fitting in the fact of this isolated, unreachable man's going to meet his fate at the hands of another man, in a strange rite of male bonding and expiation for falling short of the masculine ideal. By the time of *Chance* and *Victory*, though, the rights and wrongs of the situation have shifted completely: Heyst's salvation - as he himself knows - would lie in his being able to abandon his theories of the ideal and bind himself to a woman, Lena, in a relationship of trust and love; Anthony's (and Flora's) happy ending is only to be reached by Anthony's turning away from the male chivalric role and freeing his sexual instinct with Flora. By the time of *Chance*, Marlow is enunciating more clearly something that he has already implied in *Lord Jim*:

there are several kinds of heroism and one of them
at least is idiotic. It is the one which wears the
aspect of sublime delicacy (*Chance*, 328).

Morrison says Heyst was "'sent by God in answer to[...] prayer'" (*Victory*, 17), and believes in 'the infinite goodness of Heyst' (22); Conrad notes of Schomberg's hatred for Heyst, with ironic Biblical echoes, that 'whenever three people came together in his hotel, he took good care that Heyst should be with them' (26). There are similar

parallels for Anthony: on his renunciation of any sexual relationship with Flora, Anthony feels that he has achieved

something as incredible as the fulfilment of an amazing and startling dream in which he could take the world in his arms - all the suffering world not to possess its pathetic fairness but to console and cherish its sorrow (*Chance*, 348);

Powell's comment on Anthony echoes John the Baptist on Christ: "I wasn't fit to tie the shoe-strings of the man" (440). Both Heyst's and Anthony's Christ-like (that is, traditionally ideal) qualities are, however, dangerous and destructive. It is only at the moment when Heyst feels himself to have fallen into a state of 'apostasy' (*Victory*, 177) from his father's (Father's?) ideals, that we are shown him moving towards a chance of happiness and achieving some good, making a loving connection with another human being. Similarly, Anthony's Christ-like qualities are specifically what disqualify him from being part of the happy ending: staying on a sinking ship, as his male-heroic duty would dictate, he dies. It is Powell, in the end, the less ideals-driven character (he is not averse to stooping and peering where he should not), who gets the ultimate traditional hero's reward - for being so untraditional and marries the girl. In a similar reversal of traditional morality, Anthony and Flora are like 'the first man and the first woman' (*Chance*, 210) and it is 'as if they both had taken a bite of the same bitter fruit' (342): they are like the fallen Adam and Eve but rather unusually, in their case, fallen because they are *not* having sex³.

Of course, Conrad is a reformed ex-romantic himself, like so many of his characters - such as Heyst's father who 'had begun by coveting all the joys' (*Victory*, 91), or Marlow, who used to 'dream gloriously' (*Darkness*, 33) over his boyhood maps. Hence Conrad still has, and will always have, to a degree, a sympathy and half-admiration for 'idiotic'

chivalry as something that, though wrong, is nevertheless still attractive and endearing. It would be foolish to conclude from what we have seen so far that Anthony is the villain of the piece. We are still moved by him: there is plain authorial affection in the poignant and beautiful detail of Anthony's carefully keeping Powell near him, merely because he knows Powell once managed to make Flora laugh (*Chance*, 393).

We have explored what these later novels show as damaging (and anyway not possible) in masculine behaviour: ideals-driven restraint, especially sexual restraint, and much of the morality of the heroic tradition. What do they present in a more positive light?

Lena gives us the clue. Although merely a woman, she is more successful than Heyst in dealing with the catastrophes they face together on the island because, through the ultimate involvedness of her choosing to love Heyst, she is able to take the necessary steps of other involvements and thus tackle problems head-on, often with a very sexual physicality - as in her fights with Ricardo. Heyst never fully takes the first step of involvement, of loving Lena, and fails accordingly.

Repeatedly, the need for unidealistic, earthy involvement is demonstrated. Mrs. Fyne has ideals that are actually pro-woman, yet is still shown as unable to help Flora as a direct result of idealism: she cannot forgive Flora "for being a woman and behaving like a woman" (*Chance*, 188); "in dealing with reality Mrs. Fyne ceases to be tolerant" (188); 'an offended theorist dwells in her bosom somewhere' (190). Indeed, the 'quiet, matter-of-fact attentions' of a ship's stewardess (183), earlier in the novel, are shown as the most vital help Flora has yet received - they actively prevent her from suicide - and it is made quite plain that the stewardess's behaviour is sheer, earthy practical sympathy in action. The stewardess has no ideals : she is seemingly

unaware 'of other human agonies than seasickness', she talks only 'of the probable weather', and she insists on making Flora comfortable only 'in a professionally busy manner[...] as though she were thinking of nothing else but her tip' (183).

Despite his repulsiveness, de Barral is repeatedly, and rather unexpectedly, twinned with the far more sympathetic Anthony (*Chance*, 276, 284-285, 290, etc.) and the reasons behind this twinning indicate the other positive factor these later works portray as an absolute necessity for a man. The thought here centres around the idea that, on its own, even lack of restraint (or purely instinctive behaviour) is not enough. For instance, Heyst envies Wang's simple 'obedience to his instincts' (*Victory*, 181). Yet at the same time, Wang is rather lifeless, inhuman, disloyal to Heyst and useless in the crisis - and moreover, so little does he engage our feelings, in his 'almost automatic' behaviour (181), that we cannot even work up enough feeling to despise him for his betrayal. At the hotter end of the spectrum of instinctive behaviour, we find Ricardo. Indiscriminately lustful, he has had a homosexual relationship with his partner Jones, yet simultaneously pursues the chance of a heterosexual relationship with Lena. He is driven by his desires - his 'will having very little to do with it' (286). While he is trying to pass Lena's bungalow, she is able to act on him like a 'concealed magnet', so that he 'deviated' towards her: 'though his movements were deliberate, his feral instincts had[...] sway' (285-6). This hotly instinctive man cannot leave us unmoved like the cool Wang; but we still have no admiration for him, just horror and disgust. Below either of these, neither cold nor hot, functioning on animal instinct alone, is Pedro, and he is merely subhuman and ultimately rather dull. Jones takes the point a little further: he is, rather than instinct, almost all brain - the arch-plotter of the villains, and so

psychologically fastidious as to be unable to bear even to be in the same room as a woman. All four of these characters are highly dangerous to others and (excluding Wang) destructive to themselves: any unmixed, all-or-nothing nature - whether restrained or not - is ultimately vitiated.

What Anthony and de Barral can have in common thus becomes plain. Both have extreme, unmixed natures and so (a little like Jekyll and Hyde), each has something without which the other is incomplete. At the outset of *Chance*, Anthony is well-intentioned and good, but does not have the (sexual) force to act: he cannot do what is necessary and impose his sexual will on Flora, to save her. De Barral, on the other hand, is ill-intentioned and wicked, but does have the (sexual) force to act: his perverted lust for Flora prompts him to attempt the poisoning. By the end, Anthony is still good, but has - through the series of events initiated by de Barral, and hence in some ways following de Barral's example of active sexual determination acquired, or rather let loose, the sexual force he needs to act. Now it is safe for de Barral to die off: Anthony has taken on what he needed from that half of the twinning.

In these later works, of course, the ultimate goal of such male success is pairing-off with a woman - and initially, it does seem as if these works do sympathise with women more than the earlier works. Even Marlow has by now become sufficiently aware of women's troubled social position to be able to state it in plain - if still rather unemotional - terms:

women can't go forth on the high roads and by-ways to pick up a living even when dignity, independence or existence itself are at stake (*Chance*, 172);

In this world as at present organized women are the suspected half of the population (327).

It is true that Marlow does finish this latter statement, with a typically Marlovian piece of misogyny, 'there are good reasons for that', and there are numerous far more extensive bursts of misogyny throughout. Yet we have already seen how in *Chance*, Conrad often distances himself from Marlow - and hence Marlow's views - more than usual.

Women are now portrayed as in some ways the victims of the eternal male quest for ideal machismo:

if he [Schomberg] only had that girl with him he would have been masterful and resolute and fearless[....] Whereas the possession of Mrs. Schomberg was no incitement to a display of manly virtues (*Victory*, 109);

what he [Schomberg] needed was a pair of woman's arms which, flung round his neck, would brace him up for the encounter (120).

In this kind of world, women are forced to regard their sexuality as just a matter of trade with men, for survival: Flora feels the 'extreme arduousness of the business of being a woman' (*Chance*, 365) and that the financial pun was intended is confirmed on the next page: 'the trade of being a woman was very difficult' (366); in *The Secret Agent* (1907), Winnie Verloc kills her husband and only then is 'her body[....] all her own', because at last 'the bargain' is 'at an end', the 'contract' is 'broken' (261-262).

Marlow has in the past mentioned the possibility of women's being superior to men, but rarely, and only in a manner stressing their resultant fearsome ability to dominate a man (like the Intended, for instance). In *Chance*, though, such references are a little more

frequent and a little less intimidating: sometimes women simply have a 'superior essence' (146).

There is stronger evidence even than all this of Conrad's determination to make *Chance* a novel showing men's involvement with women as saving, evidence that simultaneously provides an explanation of Marlow's slight slackening of misogyny. We have already seen the unexpected in *Lord Jim*. This time, Marlow falls in love with a woman - Flora. Some critics⁴ find Marlow changed and often obtuse, in these later works, mistakenly attributing this - with little evidence- to a decline in Conrad's powers. If we trust our author and attempt to see why Marlow has changed, a solution presents itself. Marlow has changed because he has something to hide his love for the heroine: and what with her unattainability, sex's untellableness and his own off-stated conviction that one must 'never confess!' (*Chance*, 212), it is not surprising that he is a little less forthcoming than usual. Still, reading closely, proof of his feelings is abundant. Marlow seems to recall, with lover-like devotion, every occasion on which his and Flora's eyes meet (almost a non-controversial re-run of his feelings for Jim):

it so happened that in their wanderings to and fro
our glances met (206);

and then our eyes met once more, this time
intentionally. A tentative, uncertain intimacy was
springing up between us two (207)

- and he goes on repeatedly to drop the word 'intimate' into descriptions of his relationship with Flora. The kind of details he remembers about her face, too, are those long-familiar in any lovers' canon: her 'downcast eyes', her 'very lips, her red lips' (229). He gets a 'thrill' and is 'rigid with attention' (215, 216) when she speaks to him. He even admits when talking of her that 'in every man (not in every

woman) there lives a lover' (217) - and he does not exclude himself from this statement. He goes so far as to describe how Flora would appeal specifically to a sailor - and who more sailorly than he? plainly empathising with Anthony's passion:

I understood the desire of that man to whom the sea and sky of his solitary life had appeared suddenly incomplete without that glance which seemed to belong to them both (231).

Finally, of course, there is Marlow's mysterious sudden departure after this 'intimacy' with Flora ends:

as usual the unexpected happened to me. It had nothing to do with Flora de Barral. The fact is that I went away. My call was not like her call. Mine was not urged on me with passionate vehemence or tender gentleness made all the finer and more compelling by the allurements of generosity[....] No, it was just a prosaic offer of employment on rather good terms which, with a sudden sense of having wasted my time on shore long enough, I accepted without misgivings. And once started out of my indolence I went, as my habit was, very, very far away and for a long, long time. Which is another proof of my indolence. How far Flora went I can't say. But I will tell you my idea: my idea is that she went as far as she was able - as far as she could bear it - as far as she had to...(252-253).

This bears all the hall-marks of a man going away to forget. Why else should he link, even in denial, the subjects of his departure and Flora, so closely: 'it had nothing to do with Flora[....] My call was not like her call[....] How far Flora went I can't say' ? There is even a touch of regret in the detail with which he specifies that his call was not a call to love, like hers 'not urged on me with passionate vehemence or tender gentleness made all the finer and more compelling'. His sudden sense of 'having wasted[....] time' in 'indolence' on shore (especially when he has been far from idle) suggests a realisation of unreturned love,

especially as 'indolence' is immediately repeated in a semantic context that makes it even more of a mere euphemism for being in love: he goes 'very, very far away and for a long, long time', which is 'another proof' of his indolence. It is impossible to make sense of the cause and effect stated here ('proof'), unless this is the talk of a love-sick man - and note that 'going far' is given a specifically sexual meaning, immediately after this, by Marlow's applying it to Flora's wedding plans: 'she went as far as she was able - as far as she could bear it as far as she had to'. So, after all this, Marlow ends up 'rather lonely[...] sometimes[...] thinking of the girl Flora, of life's chances' (258) - a typically close-mouthed Marlovian statement, not putting himself or his emotions centre-stage, but with the implications of lost love clearly there.

And yet we pause again. Is Conrad's manipulation of Marlow's adventures here, truly evidence of a softening in his attitude towards women? Marlow's love is shaky, half-hidden and anyway unrequited: could this whole episode not just as easily indicate an incompleteness in Conrad's determination to favour women in this novel?

If we look a little closer, despite the book's superficially heterosexual, pro-female gloss, Conrad seems unable to resist undermining that gloss at a deeper level. For instance, some - if not all - Marlow's feelings for Flora are (strangely) apparently prompted merely by the fear of otherwise looking homosexual:

I am not even what is technically called 'a brute'. I hope there's enough of a kid and an imbecile in me to answer the requirements of some really good woman eventually - some day... Some day. Why do you gasp? You don't suppose I should be afraid of getting married? That supposition would be offensive (*Chance*, 150-151).

Soon we find, then, that many of these works' apparently pro-female comments actually turn out to have a solid bed-rock of Marlovian, or even Conradian, misogyny beneath them. Roberts notes that chivalry towards women, of the sort that we have seen Marlow exhibit in this novel, is itself often not very far from misogyny in its underlying assumptions:

both attempt to fix and essentialize female identity in accordance with male conceptions or fantasies of the nature of women. While the idealizing, chivalric conception is superficially more complimentary, it can be an even more efficient tool of oppression. The ideal woman is required always to behave in accordance with what a man imagines to be an ideal pattern, and her humanity is thereby denied (1993, 101).

Often the misogynistic subtext of Marlow's apparently chivalrous comments is quite clear. Thus, for instance, women may be trapped and handicapped by their social position but in the end they are still far more powerful than men, and hence to be feared by them: women are 'a force of nature, blind in its strength and capricious in its power'; a man may master a woman, but only to the same extent that he has mastered electricity - both may 'turn on him and burn him to a cinder' (*Chance*, 327).

Moreover, for all Marlow's supposed surface-sympathy with women's difficult social position, any women who do attempt to break free from their traditional place are portrayed very harshly. Mrs. Fyne, with her 'air of[...] resolution', her 'masculine shape', and her 'aggressive' revolt (*Chance*, 56, 59, 58) against male domination, is dismissed as being merely a horrible sexual anomaly: any idea of her attractiveness can only be 'quaintly marvellous' (51). Marlow goes on to imply that as Mrs. Fyne is not suppliant to her husband and is able to watch a superior man - Marlow - leave 'with perfect detachment' on her part, she must

be unresponsive to sex altogether: 'that woman was flint' (52). While Marlow manages imaginative sympathy for the worst and, in the story, most damaging of male deviants - de Barral ('try to enter into the feelings of a man' (87)) he does not even attempt it with the far better intentioned and less destructive Mrs. Fyne: he ensures she remains an alien figure.

The fact that the choice as to who should receive sympathy here is so very irrational, might imply that the dislike of women - women who do not display suitable feminine passivity, who are 'masculine' in these later novels, is motivated by fear; and this does seem to be the case. The immediate cause of fear is soon obvious; in *Heart Of Darkness*, women - The Intended - possess the 'great and saving illusion' for men, before which Marlow 'bow[s...his] head' (119). Nothing has changed by the time of *Chance*: women are the custodians of 'certain[...] illusions, without which the average male creature cannot get on' (94). For beings other than man to possess something so vital to man gives such beings great power over men, whether the men like it or not: to have such power is to be feared.

Women are also feared as usurpers. This is not a new development in these later works. Throughout Conrad's writings there has been an awareness of the female potential to usurp male friendships, the danger women pose to homosocial fellowship. Thus, for instance, the eponymous Karain's love for a woman he has never even spoken to spurs him to betray and murder his longtime male companion, Matara. Moreover, Karain's later deeds of apparent homosocial bonding and bravery are revealed as utterly hollow, because solely motivated by fear - fear of a woman - after his flight from Matara's sister:

'I wanted men around me! [...] I sought danger, violence, and death. I fought in the Atjeh war, and

a brave people wondered at the valiance of a stranger' ('Karain', 57-58).

Similarly, it is only by struggling against Jewel's violent opposition and by being 'false' (*Jim*, 414) to her, that Jim is able to leave to show 'eternal constancy' (416) to a man, to make his final act of homosocial reparation with Doramin -

she flung herself upon his breast and clasped him round the neck[....]

Jim [caught] her arms, trying to unclasp her hands[....] It was difficult to separate her fingers[....] 'You are false!' she screamed out after Jim. 'Forgive me,' he cried. 'Never! Never!' she called back (413-414).

By the time of the later novels, however, the female usurpations of the place reserved for the masculine have become more sexually explicit: women are feared as potential usurpers of a man's very masculinity itself - a masculinity we have already seen to be rather shakily grounded. Thus, a fear of masculine - or even, more specifically, phallic - usurpation by women repeatedly dominates Marlow's portrayal of women in the later works. For instance, Flora's strong-willed governess, with her taste for young men, is compared with 'Medusa[...]
with serpentine locks' (*Chance*, 118). A creature with the powerful phallic symbol of the snake reduced to mere adornment (or even stolen for a symbol of female sexuality: hair as woman's 'crowning glory'), Medusa has always been a symbolic affront to male power, especially with her ability to turn any hero to stone. The reference to her in Marlow's comparison can only recall that affront. There is a similar fear, again apparently motivated by sexual anxiety, in Marlow's attack on Mrs. Fyne. He attacks her 'self-possession' in her 'secret place' (52); yet look at the tininess of Marlow's (phallic) weapon: 'as if her self-possession had been pricked with a pin'. The woman is more of a man

than Marlow is, here, usurping his masculinity, surely invincible. When Lena is wrestling with Ricardo for the knife, Conrad makes sure the knife is clearly linked with both masculine and phallic power. The lustful Ricardo, with it, is phallically armed, unlike the unarmed and impotent Heyst; the knife is the Edenic-phallic 'sting of death' (*Victory*, 399); Lena's response to the knife is a sexual one - it is 'her heart's desire' (397) - indeed, almost an orgasmic one:

the knife was lying in her lap. She let it slip into the fold of her dress, and laid her forearms with clasped fingers over her knees, which she pressed desperately together. The dreaded thing was out of sight at last. She felt a dampness break out all over her (400).

And it is Lena who ultimately obtains - usurps - this manly power; though she must eventually die for it at the hands of an armed man. (Perhaps Conrad's inability to believe in the possibility of conquering the strong woman with her phallic power is shown by its being the (to Conrad) rather shakily sexually armed homosexual, Jones, who manages to shoot Lena.) There is fear of a similar usurpation in *The Secret Agent*. Conrad seems hardly to sympathise with anyone in this novel, and certainly not with Ossipon, yet when Mrs. Verloc breaks out of her feminine passivity and kills her husband (she stabs him: a symbolic and vengeful usurpation of phallic penetration), Conrad returns to images of the female's becoming powerful through usurping the male phallic symbol of a snake, to convey the root of Ossipon's fear:

he felt her now clinging round his legs, and his terror reached its culminating point, became a sort of intoxication, entertained delusions, acquired the characteristics of delirium tremens. He positively saw snakes now. He saw the woman twined round

him like a snake, not to be shaken off. She was not deadly. She was death itself - the companion of life (291) ⁵.

Moreover, even if the men do manage to achieve some 'pin'-like phallic masculinity in these later works, it is nevertheless undermined by women. In 'The Inn Of The Two Witches' (1913), Tom's and then Byrne's phallic penetrative weapons of 'pistols, a cutlass' are rendered 'powerless' (141) by the potential for engulfment in the crushing bed: three women control the bed and the one who operates it is specifically the only one of the three who still has an active sexuality about her. The tale seems to symbolise a male fear of a power the very opposite of the phallic, a fear of sexual engulfment, of being overwhelmed by a woman's sex/sex organ.

The same kind of phallic insecurity towards women reveals itself again in the frequency with which the Conradian hero is unable to respond sexually to a woman because of the overwhelmingly greater masculine power of his own, or her, father (the latter case making the woman that much more of a symbolic castrator). The cases of Heyst and Anthony (who has both his own and Flora's father to contend with) have already been discussed. Consider also 'Freya Of The Seven Isles' (1912) where Freya makes Jasper wait for marriage only because of her duty to her father, ensuring the poor young man never attains her. Or again, 'A Smile Of Fortune', where the Captain is forced into buying huge quantities of potatoes he does not want, from Jacobus, to make up for his own sudden loss of sexual interest in Jacobus' daughter. Moreover, though he eventually makes a fine profit from the potatoes, he is unable to enjoy it and instead resigns his position of power, the captaincy, in order to avoid meeting the father (and daughter) again.

Unwanted potatoes and tiny phallic pins: Conrad is alive to the potential comedy as well as tragedy of the sexual conflict.

As we might suspect from the repeated images of women with phallic power, then, although Conrad does create more sympathetic characters like Flora and Lena in these later works, his terrifying master-women are still very present: little separates the Native Woman in *Heart Of Darkness* from, say, the intimidating Rita in *The Arrow Of Gold* (1919), or Miss Moorsom in 'The Planter Of Malata' (1914), with her 'pagan' appearance, 'nobly[...] crowned with a great wealth of hair' which is 'chiselled and fluid' like a 'helmet of burnished copper', her 'decided' approach, her 'splendour', her 'strength' (20-22).

Conrad's women have also always been closely linked with triumph and this is another reason for Marlow to be angrily fearful of them. Just as in *Heart Of Darkness*, we saw the Intended with her unnerving cry of 'inconceivable triumph' (121), so in *Chance*, we have the if anything more disturbing image of women at a marriage seeing, 'with a secret and proud satisfaction', their 'common femininity[...] triumphant' (371), or even portrayals just of the 'triumphantly feminine' (189).

Fear of women soon gives rise to hatred and scorn: Marlow's misogyny in *Chance* is a critical commonplace⁶ (63, 93-94, 100-101, 281-282, 327, 378, for example). It is as if, in the Conradian world, the men must reduce the women to manageable proportions by despising them. The hatred often expresses itself in a sadistic attitude. There are, for instance, repeated suggestions that women want to suffer sexually and to be dominated by fear of men. Although Lena ultimately takes on a dominant role as Heyst's protector, she enjoys this only because it paradoxically emphasises her subordination: she wants 'to be the defender of a man who was strong enough to lift her bodily' (*Victory*, 309). She loves Heyst submissively, feeling 'the woman's need to give

way, the sweetness of surrender' : "I will do anything you like," she said' (308). Her love is centred in Heyst's dominance and superiority:

[Heyst] whom she could never hope to understand, and whom she was afraid she could never satisfy; as if her passion were of a hopelessly lower quality, unable to appease some exalted and delicate desire of his superior soul (330).

Marlow presumes a similar female masochistic enjoyment of male sadism in his portrayal of Flora's love for Anthony. When Anthony is angrily passionate with her, she is 'deep down, almost unconsciously[...] seduced by the feeling of being supported by this violence' (*Chance*, 331); she finds in his 'masterful manner' something 'arbitrary and tender which, after the first scare, she had accustomed herself to look forward to with pleasurable apprehension' (374); she willingly goes to meet him in the garden although unsure whether he will kill her or kiss her (229). This sadistic view of women as natural masochists is expressed most bluntly - almost to the point of (presumably unintentional) comedy - by George (who is, as we have seen (my Chapter Four, 205), regarded by many critics as a Conradian alter-ego):

she liked to be abused. It pleased her to be called names. I did let her have that satisfaction to her heart's content. At last I stopped because I could do no more, unless I got out of bed to beat her. I have a vague notion that she would have liked that, too, but I didn't try. (*Arrow*, 149).

The male sadism is often more direct than this, though: again and again, men are shown as having a specifically erotic response to a troubled or anguished female, as when Marlow meets Flora for the first time:

she looked unhappy. And I don't know how to say it - well it suited her. The clouded brow, the

pained mouth, the vague fixed glance! A victim.
And this characteristic aspect made her attractive
(*Chance*, 45-46).

His hesitations suggest that he knows he is saying something shameful, but he says it anyway. Furthermore, when he later finds out that she has, in the past, intended to commit suicide, he 'won't deny' that this gives him 'a thrill' (215). The sadism is not confined just to Marlow, though - a universality which suggests that it is somehow fundamental to Conrad's understanding of masculinity in these works. Anthony, too, is aroused by Flora's suffering:

'you little ghost of all the sorrow in the world[...]
You are all eyes. What makes your cheeks always
so white as if you had seen something... Don't
speak. I love it' (226-227);

the very marks and stamp of this ill-usage[...]
seemed to add to the inexplicable attraction he
felt for her person. It was not pity alone, I take it. It
was something more spontaneous, perverse and
exciting (224).

Similarly, the key point of Heyst's first meeting with Lena, the thing that spurs him to speak to her, is the vicious pinch she receives from Mrs. Zangiacomo; he is attracted to her for the same reasons he was moved by Morrison - she is, like him, 'in trouble, expressively harassed, dejected, lonely' (*Victory*, 72). In 'A Smile Of Fortune', the narrator's first kiss for Jacobus' daughter has 'no hypocritical gentleness about it' the implication is that any masculine sexual gentleness is a pose '[it] was vicious enough to have been a bite' (63).

Such sadism is sometimes accompanied by a complementary masochism in Conradian men: again this seems a response likely to centre in a fear of women. Ricardo knows, and sadistically exults in, his being more powerful than Lena, yet he simultaneously wants to

emphasise this by a masochistic decision to allow her to dominate him: "what you want is a man, a master that will let you put the heel of your shoe on his neck" (*Victory*, 397). Ricardo becomes sado-masochistically fixated on Lena's feet:

'as tired as if I had been pouring my life-blood here on these planks for you to dabble your white feet in' (396);

babbling insanely at her feet, ingratiating and savage, almost crazy with elation (397);

'give your foot,' he begged in a timid murmur, and in the full consciousness of his power (400).

He surrenders his phallic knife to her in a gesture of utter obeisance and

clasping her ankle, pressed his lips time after time to the instep, muttering gasping words that were like sobs, making little noises that resembled the sounds of grief and distress (401).

Nor is this sado-masochistic foot-fetishism confined to Conrad's villains.

It is present too, for instance, in the Conradian alter-ego, George, in *The Arrow Of Gold*: he thinks with longing of the 'awful intimacy' of

the very shape, feel, and warmth of her high-heeled slipper that would sometimes in the heat of the discussion drop on the floor with a crash, and which I would (always in the heat of discussion) pick up and toss back on the couch without ceasing to argue (152).

Conrad's more biographical writings display a similarly masochistic attitude⁷. Of his first love, he says:

I had to hear[...] her scathing criticism of my levities[...] or stand the brunt of her austere, unanswerable invective ('Author's Note', *Nostramo*, xvii).

In cancelled passages from *The Arrow Of Gold*, Conrad talks of the girl whom many critics identify with this same first love⁸ and again, the masochism for the man involved in a heterosexual experience is plain:

discovering that she could make him suffer she let herself go to her heart's content. She amused herself again by tormenting him privately and publicly with great zest and method and finally 'executed' him in circumstances of peculiar atrocity (cancelled opening to *Arrow*, quoted in Meyer 1967, 215).

The passage ends with an almost explicit linking of this attitude towards women with resultant homosexuality:

he came out of [this experience...] seamed, scarred, almost flayed and with a complete mistrust of himself, an abiding fear... he said to himself: if that's it then never, never again.

All these women - fictional and real - are terrible, powerful, dominant and cruel sexual beings: compare Aissa, who haunts Willems and eventually destroys him with her unfulfillable needs; consider Granger's masochistic and humiliating pleasures at the hands of a woman in *The Inheritors* (with Ford, 1901); the women of 'The Planter Of Malata' and 'A Smile Of Fortune' are devastating to men. Only in such frightening masochistic circumstances does Conrad credibly express erotic feeling. Where there is any equality between the lovers, there is little eroticism: Meyer describes the lovers from *Chance*, *Victory* and *The Rescue* as expending 'their sexual energies... backing and filling in a morass of inhibition' (1967, 113).

Conrad's women, if they have any sexuality at all, then, are hurtful, damaging, destructive, while yet offering the sating of desire. With the

need for, yet deadliness of, female sexuality, it is not surprising that this in itself becomes a source of terror for Conrad's heroes. Byrne turns to shut his bedroom door firmly against the sexy young girl who has shown him to his room, and glimpses her

still there motionless and disturbing, with her voluptuous mouth and slanting eyes, with the expression of expectant sensual ferocity of a baffled cat ('The Inn Of The Two Witches', 136).

It is specifically her sexuality that he fears.

After all this, it is not surprising to find that any adoration Conradian men do seem to feel for women is shown as factitious, as half-consciously worked up. For instance, in 'Karain', Hollis has a box-full of mementoes of some woman, which he treasures:

a bunch of flowers, a narrow white glove with many buttons, a slim packet of letters carefully tied up (68)

Yet in the tale, these are merely

amulets of white men! Charms and talismans!
Charms that keep them straight, that drive them crooked, that [...] procure dreams of joy, thoughts of regret (68)

(and the homosexual potential of such factitious adoration is plainly lurking just beneath the surface of this passage, in its ambiguous phrasing). The mementoes are mere artefacts of falsity, of superstition a point emphasised in Hollis's giving Karain one of these mementoes as a placebo or charm: the inference is that the meaninglessness and hollowness of Karain's use of the charm is no different from Hollis's use of the rest of the box's contents. Conrad ensures in Hollis's speech that the exact likeness between supposedly rude native male society, and

supposedly cultured Edwardian male society, here, does not go unmissed:

'everyone of us,' he said, with pauses that somehow were more offensive than his words - 'everyone of us, you'll admit, has been haunted by some woman... And... as to friends... dropped by the way... Well!... Ask yourselves...' (66).

Both societies' heroes are undermined by exposure of the hollowness of the attitudes they take up towards women.

The sadistic approach to women that seems lies at the heart of all this reaches its height in *Victory*. The only sexual encounter we actually get, in a book loaded with anticipation of sex, is violent: Lena's most sexual physical experiences are her struggles (once in the bedroom) with Ricardo - it is only in them that she experiences 'a flash of fire in[...] the white mist which wrapped the promptings and longings of her soul (399); in them that she achieves 'her tremors, her flushes of heat, and her shudders of cold' (395) and her 'gentle flood of penetrating sweetness' (394). She and Ricardo wrestle with 'their faces[...] not a foot apart' (293), motivated by her 'impatience to clutch the frightful thing' (395); and we have already seen her orgasmic response when she does finally get it into her lap. Similarly, in *The Secret Agent*, the only consummation Mrs. Verloc and Ossipon get on their elopement is a deathly fighting:

his arms pinned to his side by a convulsive hug, while the cold lips of a woman moved creepily on his very ear[....] He ceased to struggle; she never let him go. Her hands had locked themselves with an inseparable twist of fingers on his robust back[....] they breathed quickly, breast to breast, with hard, laboured breaths, as if theirs had been the attitude of a deadly struggle, while, in fact, it was the attitude of deadly fear (286).

Likewise, the only penetration Lena achieves, with Heyst, on the bed, is that of the strangely erotically-described bullet-wound she receives from Jones: Heyst, 'as if possessed with a sudden fury[...] tear[s...] open the front of the girl's dress', uttering 'a groan', and gazes at

the little black hole made by Mr. Jones's bullet under the swelling breast of a dazzling and as it were sacred whiteness[...] hardly a trace of blood to mar the charm, the fascination, of that mortal flesh (*Victory*, 405).

It is almost as if the only tragic thing about the blood is the way it might spoil the aesthetic enjoyment of the scene.

If sex in Conrad involves a death it must also involve some sort of power-struggle: if someone is killed, someone else must be the killer. No wonder Conrad's men are often so fearful of sex. Most often (conforming with social expectation at the time) it is assumed that the male is the dominant partner in a sexual relationship, and the male is hence portrayed as the killer - as with Ricardo's encounters with Lena, or Anthony's fears preventing his sexual relationship with Flora (*Chance*, 332-333). This is already an unnerving enough prospect for a man; but if he believes that he is not the sexually dominant partner - as Conrad's men so often do believe - the prospect is even worse: he will be the victim. This is the case in many of Conrad's portrayals of male-to-female relations, with all those terrifying warrior-like women. Kill or be killed: a person's sexuality or sexual behaviour, thus, often comes to be seen, in Conrad, merely as a weapon, a deadly weapon. This is plain in *Victory*, not only with Ricardo's knife and Lena's desire to 'clutch' it, but also in Heyst's instant association of (what he thinks is) Lena's sexual activity - her struggle with Ricardo - with her armed status:

'women have been provided with their own weapon. I was a disarmed man, I have been a disarmed man all my life as I see it now' (404).

The link between death and sexual deadly weapon is even clearer in *The Secret Agent*. Mr Verloc wants sex and Mrs. Verloc stabs him (262-263). There is fear in this picture, fear that the socially suppressed and dominated woman, secretly known to be more powerful than men, will finally revolt.

The sado-masochistic attitude towards women we detect in these novels, then, runs far deeper than a mere sexual quirk. It seems to be part of a theory that dominates Conrad's ideas on marriage and sexual relationships in general. The literary parallel between sex and death the orgasm as a little death is a very old one. However, Conrad takes this idea much further and more literally in these sado-masochistic scenes of combined sex and violence, or sex and death. Indeed, there is an almost constant flow of parallels between sex (or love, or marriage) and death. In *Chance*, Flora's decision to return to the hotel and marry Anthony is paralleled with her attempt at suicide (249). In *Victory*, such parallels are so numerous as hardly to need pointing out: we have already seen how *Victory's* only sex-acts consist in death-struggles. Both Heyst's and Lena's only consummation his by engulfment in flames of passion, hers by penetration - comes only in death. The manly tradition has long cited two achievements killing a man and loving a woman as necessary for the attainment of true manhood, but in *Victory*, Heyst obsessively parallels the two, taking them together as "the greatest enterprises of life" (212) for a man, in his constant refrain of never having "killed a man or loved a woman" (212) - almost as if the two things are somehow the same (penetrative) act. It is not until after his abortive attempt to consummate his

relationship with Lena (discreetly covered by Conrad in the scene where Heyst 'did not obey' Lena's command to 'leave her alone' (215), only to be 'struck afresh' by the 'physical[...] imperfections of their relations' (222)) that Heyst admits that he is not enough of a killer to save Lena: "I can't protect you. I haven't the power" (347). His impotence is a matter of being "unarmed" (388, 389) 'disarmed' (285, 404). Again, it is while Ricardo fondles his potentially fatal phallic knife and Jones his equally potentially fatal and phallic gun, that Heyst is overwhelmed with the realisation that he is 'not sufficiently equipped' for Lena's safety and moreover the sexual note is stressed his lack is 'nothing to do with the revolver being stolen' (317); Heyst has been "disarmed" all his life (404). His failure in sexuality is his failure in killing and ultimately both hence constitute his failure in heroism.

Sometimes these sex-death parallels concentrate strangely and very specifically, into a steady flow of images paralleling sex with submersion, with death-by-drowning, especially in *Chance*. These, for instance, are the terms in which Flora's first dawning of love for the man she will eventually marry are couched:

that girl was, one may say, washing about with
 slack limbs in the ugly surf of life with no
 opportunity to strike out for herself, when suddenly
 she had been made to feel that there was
 somebody beside her in the bitter water (222).

It is perhaps significant that her first dalliance with suicide, before she is sexually awakened by the prospect of marriage to Anthony, involves a jump from a cliff - with no water nearby (202), whereas her second, sexually alert thought of suicide does involve water - a jump from a dock (307). When she first goes to Anthony for the start of her married life, Flora actually sees herself as submerged:

in a dim inclined mirror, Flora caught sight down to the waist of a pale-faced girl in a white straw hat trimmed with roses, distant, shadowy, as if immersed in water (265).

The image is repeated, only more forcefully, later on:

she went on to a shabby bit of a mirror on the wall. In the greenish glass her own face looked far off like the livid face of a drowned corpse at the bottom of a pool (384).

When Flora moves off with Anthony to the bedchamber the consummational moment in their marriage her hair hangs 'back in a dark mass like the hair of a drowned woman' (430). The link between sex and drowning is not a new one in Conrad: we might remember the inextricably close intertwining of images of sexual attraction with the images of submersion and the possibility of suicide by drowning, that open and close the heavily sensual 'Secret Sharer'. By the time of *Chance*, though, the references have become more emphatic.

These later tales, with their deathly attitude towards women and female sexuality, once again force us back to a re-evaluation of Marlow's - and Conrad's - assumed (and, on the reader's part, often presumed) heterosexuality. Most obviously, the sado-masochistically centred fear of women might well prompt a man to feel from the start like the appalled George - 'if that's it then never, never, again' - and any sexual desire might hence be centred in men. We can see this almost schematically illustrated in 'The Inn Of The Two Witches', in Byrne's desire specifically for a fellow male in his bed to protect him from the three women 'would he be able to sleep? he asked himself anxiously. If only he had Tom there' (137) - and Byrne's relations with Tom (once Tom is in the room, as a corpse) are loaded with

homosexual undertones. Tom's corpse falls from the wardrobe and becomes involved in a horrible parody of a sexual romantic clasp:

on the instant the seaman flung himself forward headlong as if to clasp his officer round the neck[....] their faces came into contact. They reeled, Byrne hugging Tom close to his breast (139)

and there is even something of the (then) homosexual experience of desire for the morally forbidden attraction and repulsion in Byrne's later attitude to Tom's body:

Tom was for him now an object of horror, a sight at once tempting and revolting to his fear (142).

Once again, the homosexual implications are not confined only to Conrad's minor characters but spill over into Marlow. Hampson notes Marlow's unease with matters of sexuality throughout the novel. Though apparently compelled repeatedly to touch on sexual dark sides, Marlow is also 'careful never to arrive and settle anywhere': is as if he is 'in flight from recognition', and perhaps this is a 'homosexual panic' (1993, 116). Certainly, continuing from *Lord Jim*, mounting suggestions of effeminacy, at the very least, continue to surround him and in *Chance*, Marlow himself, almost as if he (or Conrad) can no longer contain the knowledge, begins to touch on his rather unexpected feminine aspects: there 'is enough of the woman in [his...] nature' (53) to give him at least a 'composite temperament' (146); Mrs. Fyne detects in him 'that small portion of "femininity"' of which Marlow himself is 'aware' (146). Even more strangely, Marlow speaks as if his own masculinity (and masculinity in general) is not inherent but only an acquired trait: 'being in fact, by definition and especially from profound conviction, a man' (146)⁹. Even if this comment is intended as a joke, it is, to say the least, a rather dangerous one, in what is so

sensitive an area in Conrad. Mrs. Fyne, a woman with 'masculine' (59) attributes, turns out to be a lesbian; surely by the same token, if Marlow is a man with 'feminine' attributes... - the implication of homosexuality is subtle but hard to escape.

The homosexual suggestions unmistakably spread further than Marlow, though, towards Conrad himself. It is not just how the story is told - which is Marlow's ground, and only might, unprovably, be Conrad's - but it is also what has been chosen for the story's subject-matter, and what has not - which is unarguably Conrad's, the story-maker's, ground, that suggests homosexuality. Conrad is, of course, producing the kind of popular adventure-narratives so common at this time, and one must hence expect a certain amount of sensational content. Nevertheless, even allowing for this, one is struck by the way so many of these later works dealing with heterosexual love, deal specifically - almost obsessively - with forbidden heterosexual love: for instance, Lena's not being a "good girl" (*Victory*, 198) and her unmarried elopement with Heyst; or Ricardo's sado-masochism; or the undertones of incest and masochism that lurk in *Chance*; or the strange sexual improprieties of Jacobus' daughter in 'A Smile Of Fortune'; or Laughing Anne's disreputable sexual past in 'Because Of The Dollars' (1914). It might well be that these forbidden loves are somehow standing in for the then ultimate in forbidden love homosexuality.

The idea of Conrad's using heterosexual love to express (yet conceal) his real interest in homosexual love, seems less far-fetched¹⁰ when we notice how often heterosexual love in these tales is explored in what are, for Conrad, loadedly homosexual images. Consider *Chance*'s repeated use of the mirror, doubling and drowning for its imagery of sexual love: this is the very imagery that Conrad built the plainly

homosexual 'Secret Sharer' from. Along these same lines, concerning the plots of *Chance* and *Victory*: how often does a man have a strong, partly moral, barrier preventing him from sleeping with his wife? Surely not nearly as often as that man would have, in Conrad's time, encountered such a barrier if he were considering sleeping with another man. Again, in this heterosexual-for-homosexual vein, we pick up Marlow's love for Flora through tiny implications: Conrad has Marlow being as reticent and shamed about this love as if it were something disgraceful and forbidden - something like (at that time) love for another man.

Some critics¹¹ have read Marlow's relationship with Flora as a 'recovery' (the word is theirs) into - amongst other things - heterosexuality. However, any heterosexual element of this putative 'recovery' is undermined by the fact that Marlow's movement towards finding Flora 'appealing' (201) (and hence any benefit he might derive from this) is itself brought about, as Hampson notes, by 'a process of identification rather than rivalry with other men' (1993, 121)¹². The male-to-male relationship is vital. Despite all Marlow's talk of men needing women, in the end the main problem of the book - the ghastly psycho-sexual triangle of Anthony, Flora and de Barral - is solved not by a woman, or even by a man and a woman, but exclusively by two men: Powell's and Anthony's whispered conversation in the inner, hidden penetralium of the ship (420-422), and the information they exchange is what leads directly to the resolution of the sexual stalemate. The setting is significantly reminiscent of 'The Secret Sharer' - and all this after Powell has already admitted to a strong attraction to Anthony: the plot is strongly in favour of the male partnership, and by implication, of homosexuality, despite all statements to the contrary.

When it comes to *Chance's* pæan to the powers of heterosexuality the statement of what we have already seen to be the novel's intended central theme Marlow does not (or perhaps it is that Conrad cannot bring himself to have Marlow) specify that the pairing he praises with such passion is heterosexual. It might seem to us, by now, as if he even goes out of his way to avoid such a specification:

of all the forms offered to us by life it is the one demanding a couple to realize it fully, which is the most imperative. Pairing off is the fate of mankind. And if two beings thrown together, mutually attracted, resist the necessity, fail in understanding and voluntarily stop short of the the embrace, in the noblest meaning of the word, then they are committing a sin against life, the call of which is simple. Perhaps sacred. And the punishment of it is an invasion of complexity, a tormenting, forcibly tortuous involution of feelings, the deepest form of suffering from which indeed something significant may come at last, which may be criminal or heroic, may be madness or wisdom or even a straight if despairing decision (426-427).

Specification of the sexes of the pair is carefully avoided: to refer to the supposedly heterosexual two in three different ways - 'a couple', 'pair', 'two beings', - without ever saying 'a man and a woman', takes some effort: the possibility of two men (or two women) is carefully left open. The portrayal of the misery of unfulfilled pairing here could easily and with no alteration be read, in another context, as an impassioned apologia for homosexual love, a half-veiled statement of a man's experience of anguish as an unfulfilled homosexual. Read by itself, one might easily take it to be something from Forster's *Maurice*, or Wilde, or a Uranian contemporary. Certainly it is loaded with what are - in the context of sexual relationships, which is how they are used here - homosexually suggestive terms: 'fail in understanding'; 'stop short of the - the embrace'; 'involution of feelings'; 'criminal' (especially as it seems

carefully inserted, a mildly unexpected opposite to 'heroic', rather than, say, 'cowardly' or 'villainous'); 'sin against life' (possibly); 'madness' (possibly); 'a straight if despairing decision' (possibly - especially as 'straight' here is specifically heterosexual, as this phrase is alluding to Anthony's despairing decision to give up Flora). This is a typically Conradian situation: all these elements about the passage, taken individually, would signify little; together, it stretches coincidence too far to say that they are so piled one on the other by mere chance leaving us with at least the possibility of conscious design on the author's part.

Schwarz (1982, 58) notes how much of the sexual activity in *Chance* is voyeuristic: perhaps heterosexual activity is something from which Conrad feels himself to be an outsider. It is noticeable, too, that not only are the two main marriages Conrad deals with in *Chance* and *Victory* both celibate - surely indicative of a failure of full authorial commitment to the possibility of happy heterosexual union - but also that we never see any children produced in these later works. (Indeed, no major character in Conrad happily produces children, and most do not produce them at all.) In the later short stories, the only child we encounter in any detail, in 'Because Of The Dollars', is already present from a previous unhappy union, viciously spurns his 'stepfather' anyway, and firmly takes up the celibate life of the priesthood. There is no pleasure in the potential fruitfulness of heterosexuality. The heart of these books is not in the heterosexual content.

This explains and illuminates a lot of the otherwise inexplicable anomalies we have noted in these later works. Thus, no wonder, for instance, that Conrad found the strongly heterosexual material in *Chance* so distressing. No wonder that there is such a concentration on the hollowness of manliness: these novels have an awareness that

what was then considered the utter opposite of manliness
 homosexuality - may lie behind many, perhaps most, manly facades.
 No wonder, too, that these works attack traditional morals and seem to
 hate 'the peculiar cowardice of respectability' (*Chance*, 181):
 homosexuality was, at this time, considered neither moral nor
 respectable. Indeed, these works' seeming delight in revealing sexual
 abnormality behind a facade of respectability might well, too, have its
 basis in a dissatisfaction with heterosexuality, a hidden homosexuality:
 the phrasing of Marlow's gleeful comments on the Fynes (especially
 when we know Mrs. Fyne is a lesbian) seem to suggest this possibility -

queer enough they were. Is there a human being
 that isn't that - more or less secretly? (*Chance*, 57).

Ultimately, then, in these works Conrad has a violently torn attitude
 towards the role of the male-female partnership, the role of
 heterosexuality, in masculine life. There are two divergent forces: a
 desire popularly to portray heterosexual love as a cure-all; and an
 active distaste for that same love. This duality is not merely a surface-
 problem: we can see him struggling with it in his moments of deepest
 (and perhaps hence least conscious?) symbolism. For instance, the
 climactic moment in *Chance* when Flora and Powell together save the
 ship from fatal collision (an episode obviously vital to Conrad: he had
 been working on something like it since 1898, with a tale he then called
 'Dynamite'):

[Powell] saw the colourless face of Mrs. Anthony a
 little below him, standing on the cabin stairs[....]
 'Let me have the box,' said Mrs. Anthony in a
 hurried and familiar whisper which sounded
 amused as if they had been a couple of children
 up to some lark behind a wall[....]
 'Here you are. Catch hold'.

Their hands touched in the dark and she took the box while he held the paraffin-soaked torch in its iron holder[...] the flare blazed up violently between them (318).

Flora is clearly the idealised, remote, eerily-unseeing female light-bringer of Conrad's earlier tales – we recall Kurtz's drawing in *Darkness* (54), or Jewel at the hut in *Jim* (300): Flora is able to light the match and touch it to the flare, calm where Powell is trembling with fright (318); she is momentarily blinded, throwing 'an arm across her face' when the flame blazes up (318). However, at the same time, in this same episode, and through imagery familiar to us since 'The Secret Sharer', she is inextricably also the exciting, available-forbidden sexual secret down below: she is 'a little below' Powell, standing on the cabin stairs; they share 'amused' whispers in 'familiar' tones, as if up to some secret 'lark behind a wall'; their hands 'touch[...] in the dark' – a detail whose sexual loadedness in Conrad we are familiar with; and flames 'blaze[...] up violently between them' (318). In the crushing together of two divergent imageries in this scene, the combination of heterosexual aspirations with homosexual compulsion is plain.

Schwarz writes, concerning the later works, of Conrad's 'desperate desire to believe that salvation lies in heterosexual love' (1982, 59); Moser writes that 'in 1913 either a new Conrad was born or else the old Conrad began to write love-stories, the intended meanings of which ran counter to the deepest impulses of his being' (1957, 107). Conrad, as his often tortured mental history shows, is never a writer who shies away from existence in a chaotic state – what he calls the 'madness which is but an intolerable lucidity of apprehension' (*Chance*, 225). Thus, we soon come across signs that he has managed to confront and exist with the confusion entailed by his dual allegiances in these

later writings, and achieve some kind of resolution. Our first clue to this possibility might come from the quiet, hardly noticeable third element in the strangely torn image of Flora as simultaneously fearsome, pure light-bringer and darkly sexual secret. Somewhere between or beyond these two, during the episode, she also combines some elements from both to become something that is neither. She manages to be just Powell's rather likeable companion. He asks if the sudden flare scorched her:

'a bit. Nothing to hurt. Smell the singed hair?' There was a sort of gaiety in her tone;

Powell thinks her a "jolly girl" (*Chance*, 321).

We can best understand Conrad's process of living with his chaos in these works, by returning to what — whether his heart was in it or not — he chose to use as his positive approach to heterosexual love: not the traditional idea of pure, cleanly-defined knights and damsels at all (as the headings of *Chance*'s sections might suggest) but a recognition of the necessity of human muddiness and mixedness. A recognition of this necessity for complexity underlies his ability to have a positive approach in any area, then: *Chance* has a happy ending (the only one) — it is ultimately a comedy; but it is impossible to read it without recognising its typically Conradian tangled nature: it is a tragi-comedy, 'slipping between frank laughter and unabashed tears' (310). Allowed confusion, or mixedness, in these later works, then, is what prevents Conrad's thought, as a disillusioned former romantic, from being totally negative, that stops him from following, say, Heyst's father (who is portrayed, I think, with a certain amount of *schadenfreude*), and becoming a depressed and depressing prophet of detached cynicism — a state Conrad approaches most closely, perhaps, in the near-

nihilistic *Secret Agent*. It is acceptance of rather unromantic muddle, then, like *Chance's* imperfect but happy second-marriage ending, that is the key: just because something falls short of the ideal does not mean it is utterly valueless. We can see this belief in the superiority of the non-ideal - superior because real - explored over and over again. Thus, for instance, the Fynes' dog does actually save Flora from suicide : it does not matter (and this is the kind of lesson Flora must learn) that the dog was not motivated, as she had thought, by the ideal reason of devoted loyalty, but merely wanted to play the end result is the same: she is still alive. Or again: the stewardess's mixed motives of kindness and desire for a tip are in the end actually of far more use to Flora than Mrs. Fyne's pure ideal of caring for suffering womanhood. Or again: just because both Lena and Heyst die does not mean that in some way they have not both ultimately achieved their own kind of 'victory' hers of devotion, his of consumption in passion.

We are approaching what lies at the heart of Conrad's ability to resolve these texts' diverging pull, then: the pulls between love as cure-all and love as death, between simple heterosexuality and dangerous homosexuality. Perhaps, for Conrad in these works, love can be something complex, muddled, mixed, too, and can be both death and cure-all, simple and confusedly dangerous at the same time - and thence something bigger than any of its inner dichotomies (in the same way as Flora is both unapproachable light-bringer, and available sexual secret and ultimately neither, but just Powell's 'jolly girl'). These works face the possibility that love is death, then, but will not let that utterly destroy the necessity for, or salvific possibilities of, love.

The survival allowed by love is not just a matter of maintaining some kind of existence, despite a (figurative) death, though: in Conrad, images of the dead who still walk are invariably images of the

monstrous. Consider Kurtz, the 'animated image of death' (*Darkness*, 99); Mr. Jones, with his appearance of a 'corpse' and his voice 'as if issuing from a tomb' (*Victory*, 112-113); or even de Barral: he goes to prison as if 'enter[ing] a tomb' (*Chance*, 87) and, with his strangely muffled voice and constant references to Anthony as his "jailer" (307), he never really gets out again. These are all unmistakably villains and no positive image of masculine possibilities.

The survival Conrad does present positively in these later novels is a process of facing and undergoing (some kind of) death, but coming through it and out on the other side. Consider the picture of Flora and Anthony we are given at the moment of their love's final triumph. It is a very physical triumph, too: the imagery is important here, but theirs is clearly not just a figurative, symbolic success. Anthony moves with Flora to the bedroom:

Mrs. Anthony's hair hung back in a dark mass like the hair of a drowned woman. She looked as if she would let go and sink to the floor if the captain were to withhold his sustaining arm. But the captain obviously had no such intention (*Chance*, 430).

Flora has been drowned, here: this happy ending does not wipe out the earlier images of her death-by-drowning experience of love and her hair is still that of a 'drowned woman!'; but what is different from the earlier images is that here, she has been through that death and come out on the other side: she is no longer underwater; she stands as Anthony's hand supports her. This image does not cancel her previous suffering: we are not dealing with ideal love, but with love in the real world. She has had to come through that suffering, and to be changed and damaged by it, but she has finally, with help, emerged to something real, not merely ideal, on the other side. This watery image

of Anthony and Flora together takes us back to the first image we had of them as a pair, the image that seemed to be the pairing-off version of Stein's lone swimmer:

[Anthony] had made himself felt. That girl was, one may say, washing about with slack limbs in the ugly surf of life with no opportunity to strike out for herself, when suddenly she had been made to feel that there was somebody beside her in the bitter water. A most considerable moral event for her; whether she was aware of it or not (222).

This first image of the couple promises the very process we see the end of in the final 'drowned hair' image: 'strike out' is the important phrase here. Flora needs to get out of the surf, not by getting back onto the land, as we might expect, but by swimming out yet deeper into the sea. She cannot return to safety (land), or remain on the borderline (surf), but must fully undergo what has begun: swim out into the ocean, "to the destructive element submit [her...]self" (*Jim*, 214) - Stein's metaphor has not been rejected; it has been added to. She must drown and hope, as part of a pair, to come out on the other side of that¹³. We have already come across the male individual's version of this positive submitting to the depths: consider the end of 'The Secret Sharer', where Leggatt 'lower[s...] himself into the water to take his punishment: a free man, a proud swimmer striking out for a new destiny' ('The Secret Sharer', 124). This might well be death to him but the tone is of a glorious voyage, a setting out: quite different from other Conradian suicides. Perhaps this is because Leggatt has chosen not to conform to social rules, but has left himself open to homosexual relationships by remaining outside society a 'free man', unlike the Captain, who abides by the rules and stays on the ship. We might compare with the triumph of this, for instance, Decoud's suicide: he is dead when he hits the water - he cannot swim off into any undergoing

of death or experience of relationship; he has cut himself off totally from the possibility of any Other Side - a perfect expression of his solipsistic end. Flora goes through the undergoing, and comes out on the other side, with Anthony and a real, not impossibly ideal, joy: 'burdened and exulting' (*Chance*, 431).

So, Conrad, with the divided heterosexual and homosocial, or even homosexual, desires of these later novels pulling in disturbingly opposite directions, is yet able ultimately to speak positively - albeit with a Conradian kind of positivity - about pairing for love: yes, love is death, is a terrible thing, but there can be a haggard, shipwrecked kind of half-tearful happiness to be had on the other side of that death. Laughing Anne has almost got it right: "'laugh or cry - what's the odds'" ('Because Of The Dollars', 172) - as long as you keep going and undergoing anyway. The novel we have chiefly examined is called 'Chance' - or 'accident' (36); or 'consequences' (161); or 'fate' (426); or even 'fatality' (210); or 'Nemesis' (350); or freedom, whose existence or not the book toys with throughout; or 'chance, fate, providence, call it what you will!' (411) - Conrad uses all these terms interchangeably throughout, teasing us for the solemnity of our attention to his title. Whatever it is called, perhaps the 'chance' is simply whether or not a person will make it to the other side. The possibility of this, anyway, is what Conrad manages to pull from the wreckage of the pæan to heterosexual love.

Of course, it need hardly be stated by now that none of this philosophical salvage-work is firmly outlined. This is Conrad: it is only half-spoken, half-seen, 'indistinct, incomplete, evanescent' (*Darkness*, 81). Yet it is still probably the closest to (a battered kind of) optimism or at least a relinquishment of utter pessimism - that his work will ever get; and it demonstrates a considerable amount of bravery - bravery in

the unswerving pursuit of the path his thoughts dictated, and bravery in the conclusion he (tentatively) reaches.

Only one more question remains to be answered: are we convinced by this attempt to relinquish utter pessimism? Ultimately, I think not. Re-reading 'The Secret Sharer' against *Chance*, there is something more heartfelt and believable in the male solitary positive-suicides (like Leggatt's) than there is in the couples who live on after the simulated suicide of marriage: the homosexually inclined individualism of the former is ultimately the stronger element in Conrad's works. Moreover, if we re-read the death of Decoud alongside the end of Leggatt, we find that perhaps, after all these great attempts at something positive, nevertheless, the most heartfelt and convincing image of all is the picture of the wholly negative suicide, which itself has its roots in the quiet pessimism with which Conrad's career began.

Notes.

1. e.g. Bradbrook 1941, 68, Meyers 1991, 269, Watts 1989, 125-127 and 1993, 37. Guerard dismisses *Victory* in particular as 'one of the worst novels for which high claims have ever been made by critics of standing' (1958, 272).

2. Watts adduces *King Lear*, amongst other works, to demonstrate that Conrad's use of 'gentleman' to describe Jones is also a means of continuing the Satanic undertones that have surrounded the character. Watts also notes how the term is similarly used in *Lord Jim* (of Gentleman Brown) and in 'A Smile Of Fortune' (1984, 103-104). Hampson (1989, 18) also notes the parallel with *King Lear*.

3. It is, of course, theologically quite erroneous to suggest that Adam and Eve's fall was caused by their sexual knowledge, but it is nevertheless a belief popularly (if vaguely) apprehended - perhaps especially in the sexually anxious late Victorian and early Edwardian eras - and hence one that Conrad can turn around for his own subtle shock-tactics.

4. e.g. Moser 1957, 165, Hewitt 1975, 99, Gekoski 1978, 173, Watts 1993, 179.

5. See illustrations (530-532).

6. e.g. Moser 1957, 165, Meyer 1967, 226, Watts 1993, 179, 182.

7. The fear behind this attitude may be what dictated Conrad's careful choice of a small, insignificant woman, slightly below him in class, to be his wife: I say 'careful', because his description of his chosen bride harps on these points as on virtues:

my betrothed does not give the impression of being at all dangerous[....] She is a small, not at all striking-looking person[....] When I met her[...] she was earning her living in the city as a "Typewriter"[....] There are nine children in the family. The mother is a very decent woman (and I do not doubt very virtuous as well) (letter to Zagorski, March 10 1896, quoted in Meyers 1991, 138).

8. e.g. Baines 1960, 29-30, Meyer 1967, 215.

9. Hampson, too, notes the strange sexual implications of this phrasing (1993, 116).

10. For more detail on one aspect of the use of the heterosexual to stand in for the homosexual - namely, the use of women to stand in for a forbidden male love-interest - see my Chapter Six, 310-312 and my Chapter Six, note 8 (342-343).

11. Erdinast-Vulcan 1989, 59, Hampson 1993, 121-122.

12. Hampson credits Andrew Michael Roberts with the interesting suggestion that the 'Author's Note' to *Chance* seems to 'represent... Conrad as following a similar process' (Hampson 1993, 121):

at the crucial moment of my indecision Flora de Barral passed before me, but so swiftly that I failed at first to get hold of her. Though loth to give her up I didn't see the way of pursuit clearly and was on the point of becoming discouraged when my

natural liking for Captain Anthony came to my assistance. I said to myself that if that man was so determined to embrace a "wisp of mist" the best thing for me was to join him in that eminently practical and praiseworthy adventure. I simply followed Captain Anthony. Each of us was bent on capturing his own dream (xxxix-xxxii).

Hampson does not extend his quotation of the passage to that final sentence, but it is tempting to apply it to the divergent 'natural liking[s]' of Marlow (or even Conrad) and Anthony.

13. It is, of course, impossible to disentangle who contributed what to which passages, in Conrad and Ford's joint effort, *Romance*. However, one passage in particular seems to echo the ideas on love and drowning, from *Lord Jim* and *Chance*, that I am examining here. Perhaps the evidence for Conrad's having written the passage is strengthened by the fact that the paragraph from which it comes contains a reference to Seraphina's possession of an emotional 'inexhaustible treasure' which she 'drew on' (335) for Kemp, which is the phrasing used of that other ideal Conradian devotion, Monygham's for Mrs. Gould (*Nostromo*, 504; the 'treasure' phrase also occurs on 361).

Kemp describes the flourishing of his relationship with Seraphina (and the relationship is ultimately successful – they eventually get married and live happily ever after):

in those short days of a pause, when, like a swimmer turning on his back, we lived in the trustful confidence of the sustaining depths, instead of struggling with the agitation of the surface (*Romance*, 335-336).

CHAPTER SIX.

'ONLY ONE WORD' TO GIVE (*RESCUE*, 274); 'BUT HAD HE REALLY ANYTHING TO CONCEAL?' (*SUSPENSE*, 207): MEN, WOMEN AND THE QUESTION OF AFFIRMATION IN THE LAST NOVELS - *THE RESCUE*, *THE ROVER* AND *SUSPENSE*.

In *Chance*, with its careful inclusion of interest in and sympathy for women, Conrad found popular success. With his literary fame finally established, he seems less anxious in his last novels to build his work (if only superficially) around such patently crowd-pleasing material. Men and , in *The Rover* (1923) and *Suspense* (1925), male bonding too - are firmly back at the centre of his stage. Heterosexual behaviour no longer predominates; yet sexual behaviour *per se* is still the central issue perhaps more so even than in the immediately preceding novels: all three last novels are love-stories of a kind.

Male heroism is still under exploration. With Lingard, in *The Rescue* (1920), we are shown the tragic process that goes to make a hero (one whom we have already met in Conrad's first novels.) With Peyroi, we explore how a heroic man of action's story might fittingly end. With Cosmo, Conrad once again returns to the vital transformation-period: how a thoughtful youth (not unlike Jim, at the outset) takes his first steps towards the adult male-heroic existence.

The problems of masculinity continue for the men of these last novels, too. Lingard, like Nostromo, needs to be believed in by others before he can feel he really exists: a man's identity is still involved with his immediate society -

he perceived that he was not believed. This had not happened to him for years. It had never happened. It bewildered him as if he had suddenly

discovered that he was no longer himself (*Rescue*, 112).

As one might expect since Conrad put himself through the discipline of writing the female-oriented *Chance*, women in these last novels have come to share in the male experience of filmily-founded social identity. Mrs. Travers is asked about her husband, "who is he?":

these three words seemed to her to scatter her past in the air like smoke. They robbed all the multitude of mankind of every vestige of importance (*Rescue*, 133).

The problems of the masculine ego, though, are explored more fully and, in *Lingard*, we see them at their most extreme. Where Jim, say, suffers through the desire to be a hero, *Lingard* seems to be struggling to be a god. He proudly displays his ship's crest of his initials controlling the path of two lightning-flashes and he constantly (though only half consciously) takes God's speeches for his own: "I am what I am" (*Rescue*, 266; cf. Exodus, 3:14); "[I came] to you at night - like a thief in the night. Where the devil did I hear that?" (326; cf., e.g., Matt. 24:43, 1 Thess. 5:2, Rev. 3:3.); "you have said it" (184; cf., e.g., Matt. 27:11, Mark 15:2). Indeed, at some points, *Lingard* seems actually to have attained some god-like attributes: 'he had the appearance of standing upon the sea' (132); 'the stars twinkled above his head in a black sky; and reflected in the black water[...] twinkled far below his feet' (73). His brig is the perfect woman for him:

to him she was always precious like old love; always desirable - like a strange woman; always tender like a mother; always faithful like the favourite daughter of a man's heart (20)

- and Lingard feels so strongly about his brig specifically because it alone allows him to be God: 'his will was its will[...] his breath was the breath of its existence' (21).

So vital is this god/creature relationship to him that Lingard seems to achieve a kind of sexual satisfaction from it:

every flutter of the sails flew down from aloft along the taut leeches, to enter his heart in a sense of acute delight; and the gentle murmur of water alongside[...] was to him more precious and inspiring than the soft whisper of tender words would have been to another man. It was in such moments that he lived intensely, in a flush of strong feeling that made him long to press his little vessel to his breast (54-55).

Yet the fate of the deific stars surrounding Lingard indicates the inevitable fate of his desire to be a god: the stars are ultimately lost in the immense darkness. Indeed, as Bonney (1980, 134-138) points out, in this novel the man-made stars – a ship's light (*The Rescue*, 35, 144), the flares (52) – always fall from the heavens.

When Lingard comes to try out his male godliness in a relationship with a real woman, it falls to pieces: Mrs. Travers is a little more complex than the brig and less easily satisfied. Ultimately, she finds that far from being a god, Lingard is actually rather inadequate. Her last meeting with him reprises the course of their entire relationship: he first appears as 'the shape of a giant outlined amongst the constellations', but as he approaches her: '[the shape] shrank to common proportions, got clear of the stars, lost its awesomeness' and even 'became menacing' (377).

Indeed, there is some suggestion that in Lingard, rather than seeing a man become a god, we are instead seeing the making of one of the living-dead men that have so dominated the darker side of Conrad's work: fearsome figures like Kurtz, Jones and Wait. Throughout *The*

Rescue, Lingard is repeatedly likened (by himself and others) to Jörgenson – a man who is little more than an animated corpse, who has 'recross[ed] the water of oblivion to step back into the life of men' (94). Jörgenson repeatedly tells Lingard, with rather sinister emphasis, "'I was like you once'" (90). Furthermore, Lingard declares at the outset that he 'could no more part with' his long-term plan of rescuing Immada and Hassim 'and exist than he could cut out his heart and live' (185). Yet part with that plan is exactly what he does – and so we wonder how alive the man is, whom we see crouched immovably in the dark by a grave (380) – this once god-like being now just 'an uprooted tree' (382).

The women's effect on the world of tortured male identity seems to follow the pattern established in Conrad's preceding works. Mrs. Travers is the heroine of *The Rescue*: she is the main female character, the love-interest and there is enough sympathetic material on her even for it to be possible to read the novel as pro-feminist¹. Her speeches often plead a woman's side of the experience of subjection to social expectation:

'it was supposed not to be good for me to have much freedom of action. So at least I was told. But I have a suspicion that it was only displeasing to other people' (251).

Mr. Travers berates his wife:

'as a matter of fact, as a matter of experience, I can't credit you with the possession of feelings appropriate to your origin, social position, and the ideas of the class to which you belong. It was the heaviest disappointment of my life' (222).

Conrad even allows Mrs. Travers a role hitherto usually confined to his most beloved male protagonists (Marlow, Jim, Heyst, Nostromo) – that

of disappointed romantic: it is she who in her youth was filled with 'romantic ideas', where 'the sincerity of a great passion appeared like the ideal fulfilment and the only truth of life', only to find, on 'entering the world' in marriage, that 'that ideal [is...] unattainable because the world is too prudent to be sincere' (130). Again in *The Rescue*, perhaps mindful of the skills he had learnt with *Chance*, Conrad shows that the heterosexual relationship can be anguish for the woman as well as for the man. It may be Lingard who, after his Christ-like speeches, gets 'stabbed[...] to the heart' (324) , and speaks the secularized '*noli me tangere*' lines - "don't disturb me, Mr. d'Alcacer. I have just come back to life" (363) but it is Mrs. Travers who seems to get the (secularized) crucifixion:

the stockade rose high above her head and she clung to it with widely open arms, pressing her whole body against the rugged surface[....] She heard[...] heavy thuds; and felt at every blow a slight vibration[....] She[...] saw nothing in the darkness but the expiring glow of the torch[....] She gave way to irresistible terror, to a shrinking agony of apprehension. Was she to be transfixed by a broad blade, to the high, immovable wall of wood against which she was flattening herself? (322)

- and after this kind of crucifixion in romantic love, there is only a gaping absence of glory or resurrection.

Yet as with the previous novels, one begins to sense that there is something amiss with the text's apparent sympathy for Mrs. Travers, or for women in general - something so subtly the case in these works that it is usually ignored. At one point, both Lingard and Mrs. Travers have trouble imagining the other as a child. We have Lingard's attempt first:

Lingard tried to imagine her as a child. The idea was novel to him. Her perfection seemed to have come into the world complete, mature, and without any hesitation or weakness. He had nothing in his experience that could help him to

imagine a child of that class. The children he knew played about the village street and ran on the beach. He had been one of them. He had seen other children, of course, since, but he had not been in touch with them except visually and they had not been English children. Her childhood, like his own, had been passed in England, and that very fact made it almost impossible for him to imagine it. He could not even tell whether it was in town or in the country, or whether as a child she had ever seen the sea. And how could a child of that kind be objectionable? But he remembered that a child disapproved of could be very unhappy, and he said:
 'I am sorry' (251).

Compare how we are given Mrs. Travers' attempt:

neither could she depict to herself his childhood as if he, too, had come into the world in the fullness of his strength and his purpose. She discovered a certain naïveness in herself and laughed a little. He made no sound (252).

We are given two parallel attempts: on the surface Conrad is even-handed in his presentation of the man and the woman. But closer reading reveals significant differences. It is not just that the coverage of Mrs. Travers' attempt is shorter. Nor is it just that the description perhaps makes her seem a less sympathetic person than Lingard in that his last lines are of empathy and commiseration with her; her last lines are thoughts of herself and a laugh in this rather distraught man's face. There is something else. Her attempt has less in it to make us care; it is not written by an author who is involved with the character; it is written less from the inside. We get to see what makes Lingard think and respond in the way he does. With Mrs. Travers, we do not.

A reading like Nadelhaft's (1991), of *The Rescue* as a pro-female, even proto-feminist, work (and most critics subscribe to this kind of reading, to some extent, in that few of them read Mrs. Travers particularly negatively²) is possible but only by ignoring such

anomalies as these; and such anomalies point towards the same kind of unease with the female that we found to haunt Conrad's earlier work: a distrust of the feminine as it impinges on the male world. Once again, this is a specifically sexual distrust. Immada, towards whom Lingard feels only fatherly (*Rescue*, 135), is not shown as presenting anything like the threat to men that the more sexually perceived women do.

The unease with women reveals itself in strange twists at even the most apparently pro-female moments. Thus, in *The Rescue*, as in the earlier novels, women are seen as bringing a wonderful vision into the men's world. Lingard, while contemplating Mrs. Travers, experiences a 'vision, so amazing that it seemed to have strayed into his existence from beyond the limits of the conceivable' (180); having seen her, he is like a man who has seen 'through the open gates of Paradise' (339). Marlow has referred to this effect in the past, with a kind of damning praise, as the 'saving illusion' (*Darkness*, 119), but the last novels are far more openly negative about it. The women's illusions are actively dangerous to a man, spoiling him for the real world. Thus, Lingard, having seen 'Paradise', is 'rendered insensible by that moment's vision to all the forms and matters of the earth' (*Rescue*, 339): he cannot possibly captain his ship, or save his friends, in this state. He ceases 'to look upon himself but as the subject of a sublime experience which exalts or unfits, sanctifies or damns - he didn't know which' (339-340): he has lost a grip not only on good and evil, but even on whether he himself is safe or ruined. He is not out of danger even when the vision has passed: he is left useless - only filled with dismay at the reality that fills the vision's place:

'I have just come back to life and it has closed on me colder and darker than the grave itself. Let me

get used... I can't bear the sound of a human voice yet' (363).

Nor is this damaging effect restricted to Mrs. Travers' action on Lingard. In *The Rover*, for instance, Réal is similarly 'cut off from all reality, and even from a consciousness of himself' (243), through the contemplation of Arlette; and again, disappointment with reality results:

the crested wave of enchantment seemed to have passed over his head, ebbing out faster than the sea, leaving the dreary expanses of the sand. He felt a chill at the roots of his hair (244).

Similarly unnerving twists lurk beneath the initially apparently flattering portrayal of women as bringers of light into the male world - again, continuing more openly a trend we have already noticed in Conrad's previous works. Women do still bring light: Lingard looks at Mrs. Travers 'in the light she seem[s...] to shed' (*Rescue*, 192); her complexion is so 'dazzling' in the shade, that it seems to throw out a 'halo' round her head(120); in the cabin with her, he finds that 'extraordinary brilliance' and 'radiant brightness' seem to be 'part of her very essence' (180). Similarly, Arlette staggers Peyrol with the 'brilliance' within her that seems to 'pale the flames of the lamp' (*Rover*, 197). In *Suspense*, Cosmo finds Adèle in a room that 'shone and gleamed and glowed' (94), and she seems 'wonderful in the glow of her complexion' (103). However, once again, the pejorative implications are just beneath the surface. Whatever light-bringing powers Mrs. Travers may have, they do not have any positive effect, they are not at all helpful: at the moment of her blazing arrival at the stockade, so representative to Lingard of her personal luminescence, she is first 'blinded' (*Rescue*, 321) by the light from her own torch, and then casts it aside altogether and runs forward 'blindly' (322). A little later, even Lingard, always so dazzled by

her, comes to find that she is most herself when there is 'hardly enough light to make [her...]out by' (342). Conrad is more bluntly filling out the implications of the blindfolded or unseeing female torch-bearer who has haunted his books from the start (compare Jewel in *Jim* (300); or Kurtz's drawing in *Darkness* (54); or the figurine in 'The Return' (179, 258)): women may seem to bring light, but they are in darkness themselves.

It may be only useless to themselves, but the light women bring is actually dangerous and destructive to men. Mrs. Travers is 'a garment of light' to Lingard, but this is coupled with her being an 'armour of fire' (*Rescue*, 189) and such an armour must harm the wearer as much as his enemies. The suggestion is that Mrs. Travers may be like all the other brilliances around her- purely destructive: the 'ardent sunshine' that 'devour[s...] all' (238); the 'desolating fury of the sunshine' and 'violence of the light' (245). Women's light has only the same debilitating effect on a man's ability to cope with the real world, as women's visions did: once the immediate female stimulus is removed, the man is lost. Mrs. Travers 'laugh[s...] lightly' and 'the night appear[s...] brilliant as day, warm as sunshine' - but 'when she cease[s...] the returning darkness' gives Lingard 'pain as if it had struck heavily against his breast' (136). Cosmo looks at the brilliant Adèle, and even as he does so, 'the light [grows...] dim around him' , until the whiteness of her arm has become 'the only source of light in the room' (*Suspense*, 144). The implication here is a bolder repetition of the effect we saw with the Intended (*Darkness*, 118) not bringing light, but draining it away from the scene.

There is something unnatural and uncanny, about women's light, too. Immada's picture of Mrs. Travers' brilliance is sinister:

'O Hassim! Have you seen her eyes shining under her eyebrows like rays of light darting under the arched boughs in a forest? They pierced me[....] It

seems to me that she does not live on earth - that all this is witchcraft' (*Rescue*, 202).

Arllette is just as bad for similar reasons:

vitality streamed out of her eyes, her lips, her whole person[....] She[...] captured his desperately dodging eyes with her black and compelling glance (*Rover*, 197).

In the cases of both these women there is an element of darkness about their light that makes it all the more disturbing. Mrs. Travers, despite her brilliance, evinces a strange fondness for veils (both real *The Rescue*, 327- and behavioural - 110, 118, 195, etc.) and veils are connotative, not of light, but of concealment and darkness. Arlette may have light streaming from her eyes, but the eyes are simultaneously 'black'.

Far from being light-bringers, women may even be darkness itself. At the very moment Lingard decides to go to Mrs. Travers in his cabin, the torches lighting him go out simultaneously, '[burying] the deck in sudden darkness' (*Rescue*, 178). Mrs Travers seems half-aware of her own darkness. She firmly rejects the status of "creature of darkness" , during d'Alcacer's charge that "obscurity is women's best friend" (258), but her behaviour immediately afterwards belies this denial: 'her face was turned away from the light, and that fact gave her courage to continue' (300). Lingard's world is darkened by meeting Mrs. Travers:

[all things] remained what they had ever been the visible surface of life open in the sun to the conquering tread of an unfettered will. Yesterday they could have been discerned clearly, mastered and despised; but now another power had come into the world, and had cast over them all the wavering gloom of a dark and inscrutable purpose (177).

Here, far more clearly than in the earlier passage from *Heart Of Darkness* that it recalls, woman is as good as named as the dark 'implacable force brooding over an inscrutable intention' (*Darkness*, 66) that is the heart of darkness.

The link between women and violence or death is also restated more boldly in the last novels. Arlette's childhood elopement with Scevola is described in terms of sexual defloration: she returns home from her time with this man, shocked out of innocence by the sight of something that 'spurts' and 'splashes' (*Rover*, 189), and she must be washed symbolically from head to foot before she is fit to re-enter her childhood bed (190). Yet what she has seen, experienced and been ruined by is not a sexual relationship with her abductor, but the blood of wholesale slaughter. After this, Catherine seems quite justified in warning Peyrol that "death seems to cling to [Arlette's...] skirts. She has been running with it madly" (191). A similar transference of the imagery around a woman from that of sex to that of violence occurs at the moment of Lingard's greatest 'elation' (*Rescue*, 151) with Mrs. Travers. He returns to his cabin and has a kind of sexual intercourse with her by violent proxy:

she has done it! he thought[....]

He took a musket down, loaded it, then took another and another. He hammered at the waddings with fierce joyousness. The ramrods rang and jumped. It seemed to him he was doing his share of some work in which that woman was playing her part faithfully. 'She has done it,' he repeated mentally. 'She will sleep in my berth'[....]

He felt a heaviness in his burning breast, in all his limbs, as if the blood in his veins had become molten lead (*Rescue*, 151).

The women in these last novels even seem openly to desire deaths as tribute: Lingard is caught between Immada, whose 'triumphant' cry is

"let them die!" (*Rescue*, 124), and Mrs. Travers, whose expectations of him he understands in terms of giving her 'ever so many lives' (192). The wholesale slaughter with which *The Rescue* ends, seems uncannily linked with Mrs. Travers' own twice-expressed acquiescence in the end of all things:

she saw herself standing alone, at the end of time[....] All was unmoving as if the dawn would never come, the stars would never fade, the sun would never rise any more; all was mute, still, dead - as if the shadow of the outer darkness, the shadow of the uninterrupted, of the everlasting night that fills the universe[...] had stood arrested as if to remain with her forever[....]

She murmured into the darkness a faint 'so be it' (130).

the darkness enfolded her[....] It was gentle and destructive[....] Nothing existed and even all her memories vanished into space. She was content that nothing should exist (204).

After this, the final rain of corpses and timbers that announces 'all strife [has...] come to an end' (361), seems inevitable - she has already prepared for and accepted it - to the point that her guilt as linked with withholding the ring or otherwise becomes immaterial: whichever choice she might have made, she still holds the emotional smoking gun.

If a woman is not death in these novels, it is only because she is something worse than death. Peyrol could clearly have Arlette if he chose - he has gigantic status in her eyes, has 'always existed for her'; the 'first human being she [has...] noted for years' (*Rover*, 183), he is sexually attractive, giving 'a moral and even a physical jolt to all her being' (244). Peyrol could leave Réal at sea (as the latter wishes) and take Arlette for himself. Yet he is quick to choose death over Arlette,

marooning Réal with her and himself escaping to a sailorly suicide.

Réal, left with Arlette, fears her more than death:

'I suppose I nearly died just now [being kissed by Arlette]. But no,' he went on thinking with deliberate cruelty, 'oh no, I shall not die. I shall only suffer, suffer, suffer....' (250).

As in the earlier novels, the nature of this female worse-than-death is suggested in a stream of images of woman as castrating man, or usurping his phallus, in order to destroy him. Without the brig, Lingard will be 'disarmed' (*Rescue*, 190), but Mrs. Travers still makes him leave it behind. Soon he is impotent: she has "taken all hardness out of" him (279); and now it is she not he that has the power of sexual stabbing: 'the passion of [her...] whisper went like a stab into his breast' (254). Arlette has a similar effect: she talks to Réal of their future as lovers and he is 'stabbed to the heart' (*Rover*, 249).

Women's sexual behaviour towards men is far more plainly portrayed in the last novels as coolly calculating, driven not by love but by the desire for power. In the first place, any woman who actually wants sex is seen as hence monstrous and threatening. Mrs. Travers raises the torch above her head, and brings light, 'instinctively' (*Rescue*, 321), but her subsequent sexual yielding to Lingard is emphatically 'not instinctively' but with 'wilful resignation and as it were from a sense of justice' (324). Thus, in Lingard's response to her yielding, we can see not only a man's hastily doing the decent thing, not taking advantage, but simultaneously a male reaction of revulsion, fear and loathing at an unnatural and delinquent behaviour in a woman:

she abandoned herself to his arms. The effect was as though she had suddenly stabbed him to the heart. He let her go so suddenly and completely that she would have fallen down (324).

Mrs. Travers' comprehension of Immada's sexual freedom and her resultant awakening to her own desire for a total sexual experience, is portrayed as a very self-sufficient moment:

[Immada] could know the truth of terror - and of affection, absolutely, without artificial trammels, without the pain of restraint.

Thinking of what such life could be Mrs. Travers felt invaded by that inexplicable exaltation which the consciousness of their physical capacities so often gives to intellectual beings. She glowed with a sudden persuasion that she also could be equal to such an existence; and her heart was dilated with a momentary longing to know the naked truth of things; the naked truth of life and passion buried under the growth of centuries (*Rescue*, 131-132).

The passage culminates with something like a self-reflexive orgasm:

she glowed and, suddenly, she quivered with the shock of coming to herself as if she had fallen down from a star (132).

Such sexual self-sufficiency could seem to hold a terrifying threat of redundancy over men; and the point is emphasised: where does this woman's sexual self-sufficiency leave Lingard, in the picture of her sexual needs?

there was a sound of rippling water and a shapeless mass glided out of the dark void she confronted. A voice below her feet said:

'I made out your shape on the sky' (132).

He is found merely in a position of utter subjection, beneath her feet. sexual awareness and experience increases her power and correspondingly weakens his.

Clelia is similarly powerful, specifically always and only in a sexual context, throughout *Suspense*. She is a sixteen-year-old on the very cusp of sexuality (a time Conrad always seems to find terrifying:

compare Alice Jacobus in 'A Smile Of Fortune' or the girl in 'The Inn Of the Two Witches');

there entered quite noiselessly[...] and with something ambiguous in the very motion, a young girl[...] in a sort of *déshabillé* of a white skirt and a long pink jacket of some very thin stuff which had a silky shimmer. [She....] advanced slowly, if with perfect assurance, and stared unwinkingly at Cosmo, who in the extremity of his embarrassment got up from his chair (*Suspense*, 99-100).

There is a strangely sexual element even in her exchanges with her 'uncle' (probably her father) Helion:

Clelia threw herself half out of bed on the neck of Count Helion, who preserved an unsympathetic rigidity, though he did not actually repulse her wild and vehement caress.

'O dearest uncle of mine,' she whispered ardently into his ear[....]

Count Helion tore the bare arms from his neck and pushed the girl back into bed.

'Cover yourself up,' he commanded hurriedly (188-189)

- it is as if the sexual instinct is so strong, so all-engulfing, so voracious in her, that it does not care what material it feeds off (a horrific version of poor Flora³): incest would come to Clelia as easily as anything else. Her sexual desires are only a threat to Cosmo:

'you are a very handsome gentleman.'

What surprised Cosmo was not the downright statement, but the thought that flashed through his mind that it was as dreadful as being told that one was good to eat (130).

The threat posed by a woman's sexual power over a man is most explicit here: 'she fancies me' has become 'she'll eat me'.

Women want only this power, not love. The scene of Lingard's simple avowal 'wherever I go I shall carry you with me against my breast' (*Rescue*, 341) is loaded with the bitter irony of a failed parallel against Mrs. Travers: we know her to be at that moment carrying against her breast, not Lingard in reciprocal love, but the ring in her self-interested plotting the very ring that becomes the symbol of her power to give or withhold from Lingard strength, information, male friendship. Mrs Travers, despite her passionate moments with Lingard, is actually indifferent to mankind, in her pursuit of power, unable to love or pity. Men are 'to her mind[...] no more real than fantastic shadows' (206); she has never been 'carried[...] away' (249) by anyone or anything, even as a child. She may intellectually apprehend the huge issues hanging over the two groups of men around her, but she is never able truly to 'feel it in her soul' (302): faced with the same situation that Lingard feels as a 'crisis', a 'blow struck straight at his heart', she feels, not 'horror', but merely 'a sort of consternation, something like the discomfiture of people who have just missed their train' (270).

Contact between the sexes hence becomes, for women, merely a series of struggles for power. Mrs. Travers has none of the worldly power that men wield: "ah![....] Don't you see that I have no kingdoms to conquer" (*Rescue*, 181). The only way she can acquire such power, then, is to bend powerful men to her will: she openly offers the exclamation just quoted as the explanation of her need to assert her will over Lingard

'now I want you to give me the life of these two men[....] It can be done. It must be done. You cannot refuse them to me' (181).

Her route to power works: she gets to walk out, on Lingard's arm, dressed as a princess, before a crowd of people crouched at her feet

(240). She is engaged in a contest with Immada and Hassim a 'struggle for the possession of that man's strength' (183). She wins: d'Alcacer notices how she remains 'in the fullest possession of herself' (336), while yet also acquiring 'possession of that man's mind' (358). (Arlette's 'appropriating' of Réal is similar (*Rover*, 241)). Thus, Mrs. Travers may find herself 'invaded by this masterful figure' (*Rescue*, 181), but it is not an invasion in which Lingard conquers: his masterfulness only invades Mrs. Travers in the sense that she ends up being the masterful one.

Mrs. Travers reserves her closest approaches to anguish only for times when her sexual power over men is called into question. After she has apparently spurned Lingard, and he has left for the shore, her desperation to know whether he heard her call him back is plainly not motivated by concern at his leaving while still hurt by her rejection, but by a desire to know her own standing: she needs to know whether he has heard, only because if he had, it would mean that he had subsequently disobeyed her order to return. Her need to know is described in terms of personal pride and power, not loving compassion:

'I shall never, never find out,' she whispered to herself.

She cast down her eyes in intolerable humiliation, in intolerable desire (*Rescue*, 301).

She is thinking only of 'her claim to be served to the last moment of her life' (304):

'all I want is to ask Tom a question and hear his answer. That's what I would like. That's what I must have' (305).

Arlette is similarly single-minded. After wading through the blood of hundreds (including her own parents) during the revolution, and her bizarre elopement with Scevola, she later runs to a priest to tell him everything, and ends up throwing herself onto the altar steps in tearful prayer. We could be forgiven for assuming like the priest that she feels remorse and desires some kind of absolution. We would be wrong. She is concerned only with the continuation of her own sexual power over Réal:

'I have prayed and I feel answered. I entreated the merciful God to keep the heart of the man I love always true to me or else to let me die before I set my eyes on him again' (*Rover*, 179).

There is no concern for Réal, only for the intactness of her own sexual power and pride, in the request to die rather than see him go.

Such self-centred, even megalomaniac, tendencies on the women's part are, moreover, shown not as mere instinctive faults, but as carefully plotted behaviour in pursuit of their own ends. Mrs. Travers is repeatedly shown as concerned not at all with the situation at hand, but only with the specific effect she is creating on the men around her: 'Mrs. Travers, acutely aware of Lingard behind her, remained gazing over the lagoon' (*Rescue*, 247). She knowingly wields her power:

treating Jörgenson to a fascinating sweetness of tone (213);

trying to concentrate in her glance [at a man] all her will power, the sense of her own right to dispose of herself and her claim to be served to the last moment of her life (304).

In her passionate scene with Lingard as she enters the stockade, Lingard is merely a blind, unreflecting emotional force, but Mrs. Travers

is thoroughly aware of her appearance and its effect, thinking about her dropped veil, her lost shoe - vamping an innocent.

Women often seem able to drain male power through a mere gaze perhaps because the Conradian male's existence is so bound up with being seen. Mrs. Travers and Lingard struggle for power through a kind of duel of glances:

[he] had raised his eyes to her with an air of extreme candour and seemed unable to take them off again. She continued to look at him sternly by a tremendous effort of will[....]

'Come, King Tom, don't look at me in this awful way[....]

'I can't stand this[....] I can't stand being looked at like this. No woman could stand it.' (*Rescue*, 266-267).

Immada recognises Mrs. Travers' superiority in this arena:

'Do not! Do not look at that woman![....] O! Master look away[....] Oh! Master - look at us.' (183).

Mrs. Travers certainly recognises the significance of the glance as a tool of power, ultimately coming to know that she has lost Lingard (or perhaps, more accurately, used him up) only when she notices her loss of his gaze:

'I left him sitting with no glance to spare for me. His last glance on earth! I am left with this thing [the ring]. Absolutely unimportant' (381).

Such danger in a woman's gaze returns us more strongly to the idea of women as somehow uncanny, supernatural: 'every attitude of that woman surprised Lingard by its enchanting effect on himself' (248) the epithet seems literally intended when we notice Lingard's response, couched in terms typical of Romantic and Victorian-Gothic portrayals of cruel enchantment by a mediæval *belle dame sans merci*:

Lingard, facing Belarab in a wooden armchair, with slack limbs and in the divine emptiness of a mind enchanted by a glimpse of Paradise, shuddered profoundly (356).

This could be a moment out of 'Christabel'.

The effect of such sinister female enchantment on men is consistent: just as in the preceding novels, women are shown separating a man from the fellowship of his male-bonded group - a crime that by this late stage in our study of Conrad, we know to be well-nigh unforgivable. Réal is appalled to find himself thinking of Arlette 'while seated in the street with[...] men round him, in the midst of more or less professional talk!' (*Rover*, 235). After a few days' exposure to Mrs. Travers Lingard comes to abandon his duties of male bonding without a second thought. He suddenly tells d'Alcacer and Mr. Travers: "you will have to take your chance" (*Rescue*, 359);

[he] let it roll away from under his feet the mere life of men, vain like a dream and interfering with the tremendous sense of his own existence (357).

Mrs. Travers severs Lingard's most basic connection with the world of male-bonding his captaincy. Succubus-like, her presence drains him of his power to command. Before her arrival, he is fluently in control:

'put all the boats in the water, Mr. Shaw[...] and mount the four-pounder swivel in the long-boat's bow. Cast off the sea lashings of the guns, but don't run 'em out yet. Keep the topsails loose and the jib ready for setting' (57-58).

Soon after she turns up, he has lost control even of his speech, let alone his ship:

'I had forgotten you - and now - what? One must - it is hard - hard - ' went on Lingard, disconnectedly,

while he looked into Mrs. Travers' violet eyes[....] 'I
you don't know I - you - cannot...Ha!' (124).

Lingard calls to Carter from his cabin, but without result; he must ask Mrs. Travers to summon Carter for him. She successfully does so, in tones 'very commanding and very sweet' (191); it is Mrs. Travers who is now in command on this man's ship.

Such succubus-women drain men of their belief in moral right and wrong, too. D'Alicacer comments on a woman's ability to get a man to agree to the ritual dance of the sexes: "a very binding agreement with which sincerity and good faith and honour have nothing to do" (*Rescue*, 337). Arlette possesses Réal 'in a way that [tears...] all his scruples out of his breast' (*Rover*, 287) - a point Conrad seems so anxious to convey, that he hovers on the brink of mere melodramatics. Réal is soon asking himself:

'what has become of my rectitude, of my self-respect, of the firmness of my mind?[....] I have let myself be mastered by an unworthy passion for a mere mortal envelope stained with crime and without a mind!' (235).

The women of these novels are even able to drain a man of that Conradian pearl without price, his very selfhood, his masculine essence. Peyrol, whom 'only that morning[...] Réal [had] found as unshakeable as a rock', feels 'all his strength vanish under the hands of' Arlette (*Rover*, 197). She likewise 'cut[s] off' Réal 'even from a consciousness of himself' (243): "'I am lost'" (248), he admits. Under Mrs. Travers's ministrations, Lingard moves from "'I am what I am'" (*Rescue*, 266), to "'I am nothing now'" (270). We soon wonder whether the conventional phrase is not meant literally, even in the case of the relatively sweet Adèle, when we are told that, on taking her hand,

Cosmo immediately 'forgot himself' (*Suspense*, 105). Women steal men's souls.

However, we must pause here and remember Nadelhaft and the majority of critics similarly, if less extremely, persuaded. It is possible if mistaken to write a superficially plausible critique of these last novels as pro-woman. There is there must be a split in the way Conrad's male characters view women: they cannot see women solely as evil. The split, as in the preceding novels, reveals itself in the masochism involved in the men's encounters with women. When Lingard reaches sexual 'ecstasy' with Mrs. Travers (a typically long-distance intimacy: his memory of her 'breath[...] on his forehead'), he has 'a moment' simultaneously 'of soaring pride and of unutterable dismay' (*Rescue*, 180). Cosmo finds Adèle 'delightfully disturbing' (*Suspense*, 134). Réal thinks Arlette will kill him as he kisses her, and his only response is to hold her closer (*Rover*, 247); if she stays with him he will have to 'blow [his...] brains out', but as she moves to leave, he pulls her back 'as if she had been his very life' (249.) The male attitude to women is expressible only in terms of such verbal and psychological oxymorons. In the creation of Adèle and Clelia, Conrad seems to have split the two aspects of the male attitude towards women into two separate figures: Adèle - light-bringing, awe-inspiring, beautiful, spiritual, above sex; Clelia - dark, fearsome, ugly, despicable, sexually eager.

The split in attitude towards women is not confined solely to the male characters, but bifurcates the very narratives themselves. Consider a description of Mrs. Travers we have already laid on the pejorative side of her scales:

trying to concentrate in her glance all her will power, the sense of her own right to dispose of herself and her claim to be served to the last moment of her life (*Rescue*, 304).

The reference to her will-power is neutral: it could be intended as praise or disparagement. The reference to her claim to be served is clearly pejorative. Yet, plumb in the middle of this, we have 'her own right to dispose of herself' - and we are back with the emancipatory, pro-female tones of Mrs. Travers' own reasonable speeches on her lack of social freedom.

This dual attitude in the text is what lies behind the complex portrayal of Jörgenson. Jörgenson can be read in almost purely negative terms⁴ and yet to do so involves ignoring important parts of the novel. Though, like them, a living-dead type, Jörgenson is certainly not in the same league of Conradian horrors as Kurtz, Jones or Wait. There is much in his character to make us like him: his determined devotion to his native wife, even though he only bought her and she is now prematurely old and raddled; or his genuine care for Lingard, as he first tries to dissuade him from a dangerous action and then, finding him immovable, joins in the danger himself. Perhaps most of all, we enjoy Jörgenson for those moments when he is the one man to see through Mrs. Travers' enchantments (presumably because he is 'dead' and therefore sexually unreachable). At one point, Mrs. Travers concentrates all her fearsome powers of manipulative seduction on him but, for the first time in the novel, we see her fail: 'it was as if she had done nothing. Jörgenson didn't flinch' (*Rescue*, 304). All she has said is that she wants to go ashore, but Jörgenson calmly sees through to the succubus's hunger that underlies all her actions:

'I know there is a canoe. I want it' [...]
 'Which of them are you after?' asked his blank
 unringing voice (304).

She tries to glide out of this sudden impasse with a serious, but nevertheless coquettishly intended, remark - coquettish in that its underlying assumption is that Jörgenson has been thinking of her all the time:

'I suppose you have been asking yourself that question for some time, Captain Jörgenson?'

But he quietly cuts the ground from underneath her:

'No. I am asking you now' (304).

After watching the ease with which she has played on all the other men aboard the yacht, it is difficult to repress a cheer here. Yet the negative presentation of Jörgenson still remains: this is the same man whose 'mad scorn[...] flam[es...] up against the life of men' (368) to the point of total destruction. Jörgenson is a confusing mixture, neither hero nor villain. I think the confusion we feel (and find in many critics)⁵ as to whose fault the final disaster is - Jörgenson's, for setting off the bomb, or Mrs. Travers', for not delivering the ring is a confusion that is deep within the text itself. And, like the confusion in *Heart Of Darkness*, I think it is deliberate. If examined coolly, the blame for the final disaster must lie more with Mrs. Travers: if we hypothesise her absence from the start, it is clear that everything would (or could) have turned out happily. Hypothesising Jörgenson's absence does not have the same effect: Mrs. Travers' presence is necessary for the disaster. Yet to say this is to utter the ultimate condemnation of the woman, the ultimate revelation of her of woman's? - dangerous and evil nature; and it is an utterance I think Conrad could not bring himself to make. Unlike some of the other sinister and damaging females in his work, who, by reason of

social position or age, are far removed from Conrad's (and presumably his judgement of his readers') likely sphere of acquaintance - the girl in 'The Inn Of The Two Witches', Kurtz's native mistress, Arlette, Clelia - and whom Conrad is able to portray in wholly damaging terms, Mrs. Travers is far more like the women Conrad (and his readers) would be used to associating with in his everyday life. She is not a social outcast. Perhaps, then, she is too close to home, to his (and his awareness of his readers') daily reality, for Conrad; and it is too shocking for him to acknowledge fully his hatred of such women, even to himself. Thus, he is forced to his semi-protection of her - a protection that the undercurrents of the novel nevertheless belie.

The split in the narratives' attitudes towards women is revealed in the most unlikely areas. Even Clelia is not portrayed as simply as her repulsiveness might lead us to expect. At one point, we see her run into a room with unstockinged feet - a detail that is dwelt on:

[she had] had [...] no time to pull on her stockings, a fact made evident by the shortness of the dark petticoat which, with a white jacket, comprised all her costume. She had managed to thrust her bare feet into a pair of old slippers (*Suspense*, 241);

and her 'invasion' in this get-up is 'alarming and inexplicable' (242). A kind of excitable foot-fetishism emerges quite frequently throughout Conrad's works - there are sexually-charged scenes around the feet of Rita, Alice, Felicia, Lena and Mrs. Travers herself - and on this occasion, it is highly significant. Clelia has been portrayed negatively, throughout *Suspense*, in the depths of her unsuitably unfeminine sexuality. Yet here the eagerly lingering description of her feet suggests that this loathed sexuality is nevertheless highly exciting. The division is apparent. The women of these novels are hated and desired, admired and despised.

The split seems to run deeper than merely the narratives' attitudes to women, though. The last novels repeatedly deal with two worlds: the civilised and the native (*Rescue*); the land and the sea (*Rover*); the everyday and the secret (*Suspense*) - and it is hard not to see this almost obsessive repetition of a split structure, especially when combined with the complexity of the textual attitude towards women, as representative of the division between the conventional world of heterosexual love and the (then) unconventional world of homosexual love. According to this hypothesis, then, the novels are about, amongst other things, the clash between a man's heterosexual and homosocial or homosexual⁶ worlds.

The two worlds that Lingard is torn between, at one level, clearly reflect some such bifurcation: the division between Lingard's loyalty to Hassim and Immada and their goal, versus his loyalty to the home world and Mrs. Travers, is a division between the disreputable (native) world of adventure and the reputable (civilised) world of convention. Moreover, this division has a clearly sexual element: Mrs. Travers envies Immada specifically because the latter is sexually freer in her native world -

nothing stood between that girl and the truth of her sensations. She could be sincerely courageous, and tender and passionate[....] She could know the truth of[...] affection, absolutely, without artificial trammels, without the pain of restraint[....]
Mrs. Travers [longed....] to know the naked truth of things; the naked truth of life and passion (*Rescue*, 131-132).

Lingard's need for the native world contains a similar sexual element, albeit less explicitly: the native life is for him, 'another existence, governed by his impulse, nearer his desire' (89.) Furthermore, this division between two worlds clearly includes the division between the

heterosexual and the homosexual: the perceived sexual freedom of the native world has some strongly homosexual elements for Jørgenson and Lingard. Jørgenson sees the alternatives between which Lingard is caught, as a choice between the dangerous (yet somehow desirable) world of the homosocial (at the very least) and the easier conventional world of the heterosexual. Thus, when Jørgenson bitterly comes round to wanting Lingard to suffer the same kind of engulfment in the native world that he himself has undergone, he does so by attempting to recall Lingard to a 'ruthless *fidelity*' (315, my italics) - a quality that by this stage we know Conrad sees specifically as a virtue of the (sailorly) homosocial world⁷. Jørgenson goes on to chastise Lingard for his desertion from the all-male world in terms of this same division between homo- and hetero- :

'woman! That's what I say. That's just about the last touch - that you, Tom Lingard, red-eyed Tom, King Tom, and all those fine names, that you should leave your weapons twenty miles behind you, your men, your guns, your brig that is your strength, and come along here with your mouth full of fight, bare-handed and with a woman in tow. Well Well!!' (212).

The division into two opposed worlds of homosocial (or homosexual) and heterosexual is even clearer in the last two novels. Peyrol lives his final days moving between the land - which is a place where men and women mix (and where perhaps women have the real power), and the sea - which is a solely male environment. Peyrol finally offers up Réal as a kind of propitiatory sacrifice to the heterosexual, to the women's need for men: he understands, as Arlette gives him a 'sinister' and 'menacing' (*Rover*, 200) look that to give her Réal is the only way to get rid of her himself, 'to get her out of the way and induce her to go to bed' (199-200). He is thus freed to leave the land and end his days at

sea, surrounded only by men and fighting only with men. In *Suspense*, the division is clearer still. Cosmo's dealings with the female, with the heterosexual, are always indoors, behind screens, within a nest of rooms, in a courtyarded place looking in on itself. His dealings with the homosocial are in a quite different world: outdoors, filled with activity, either looking out to sea, or on the sea itself.

The presence of the specifically homosexual, the more than merely homosocial, in one of the two worlds, is subtly handled but still far more plainly expressed in these novels than in any of Conrad's major works until now. In *The Rescue*, for instance, it is hard to avoid the sensation that many of the portrayals of heterosexual sexuality – the only kind of sexuality then freely depictable – are, in fact, intended to stand in for homosexual activity. Again and again, we find images and phrases that, if anything, are connotative of homosexual activities and desires, being used in a context that is ostensibly heterosexual. The central moment of Lingard's grappling with the 'cause of the disaster', including his own predicament of love, is described in strange terms:

the real cause of the disaster was somewhere else, was other, and more remote. And at the same time, Lingard could not defend himself from a feeling that it was in himself, too, somewhere in the unexplored depths of his nature, something fatal and unavoidable[...] This was a conflict within himself. He had to face unsuspected powers, foes that he could not go out to meet at the gate. They were within, as though he had been betrayed by somebody, by some secret enemy. He was ready to look round for that subtle traitor. A sort of blankness fell on his mind and he suddenly thought: 'Why! It's myself' (*Rescue*, 270-271).

We are right back with the imagery of doubling, secrecy, betrayal and fatality, that so dominated the clearly homosexually motivated 'Secret

Sharer'. For a man in a supposedly heterosexual predicament, this imagery is unexpected, to say the least.

The heart of Lingard's ostensibly heterosexual problem is, of course, Mrs. Travers - and woven around her too, we often find, not the heterosexual love imagery we might expect, but rather strangely and strongly homosexual ideas. Meyer's general view of Conradian women approaches the heart of what is happening with Mrs. Travers:

despite Conrad's efforts to endow his female characters with conventional femininity he is rarely convincing, for behind all the words contrived to convey an impression of yielding passivity, the majority of his fictional women emerge as hermaphroditic creatures armed with an assortment of military accoutrements and aggressive weapons (Meyer 1967, 278).

I would go further and put this a little more bluntly. The love-interest in Conrad's last novels - his women - often seem to be mere facades for portraying men, the men who were (perhaps) his real love-interest⁸.

This certainly seems to be the case with Mrs. Travers. She is repeatedly given specifically and unusually masculine attributes: 'of all the women' Lingard knows, 'she alone' seems to be 'made for action' (*Rescue*, 121) - and by this stage we know well how closely action is associated with masculinity both in Conrad and in the period generally. Mrs. Travers is also, unusually, 'really a very strong woman' (212); and twice we see Lingard 'admiring' her for this (212, 214). Carter refers to Mrs. Travers firmly, as 'the best man of them all' (155) on the yacht.

The specifically homosexual slant to her masculinity is stressed by the fact that she is often seen as masculine purely for the reason that she is Lingard's double, his sharer - and again we recall the homosexual implications in such doubling. For instance, she is "perhaps as strong as

[Lingard....] literally. In [her...] body'" (*Rescue*, 211). Her husband chastises her in strange terms:

'it's my belief, Edith, that if you had been a man you would have led a most irregular life. You would have been a frank adventurer. I mean morally' (223).

The possibly homosexual suggestions implicit in this speech aside (it talks of a specifically male irregularity involving immorality), it also bolsters the doubling effect between Mrs. Travers and Lingard: he is the other person repeatedly referred to as an 'adventurer' throughout the novel (e.g. 15, 72, 74, 80). Importantly, and as in 'The Secret Sharer', the lover himself recognises the beloved as his double: Lingard says goodbye to Mrs. Travers and it seems to him 'that he [is...] taking a last leave of his own self' (*Rescue*, 196). Mrs. Travers, too, recognises it: she is 'aware' of something between them that 'provoke[s...] a sort of emotional return as between equals who had secretly recognised each other's value'; yet 'at the same time', she 'regret[s...] not having been left in the dark' (234). Darkness, secrecy and doubling: again we are back with the crypto-homosexual imagery of 'The Secret Sharer', strangely used in an attempt to express what is ostensibly a heterosexual relationship.

There can be no doubt that Mrs. Travers is still also at the heterosexual core of the novel, though: she is the woman with whom Lingard falls in love; the woman whose effect on Lingard demonstrates how dangerous it is to love a woman. *The Rescue* is a very slippery book to read for the first time. The multiple and divergent currents beneath the text work against each other and seem to forbid any consistency of meaning or authorial intent. It is hard to pin down, hard to comprehend. This seeming confusion and elusiveness may help to

explain why the novel is so often dismissed as one of Conrad's lesser works, a minor footnote to his career⁹. However, I think that our struggles with this slipperiness of meaning largely disappear when we realise that Mrs. Travers is (as well as - confusingly enough - being simultaneously admired and despised) also a figure of mixed heterosexual and homosexual interest; and hence that scenes involving her often contain imagery of both sorts. Consider the unusual, and otherwise strangely unanalysable passage that describes the central moment of her entry of the stockade and passionate embrace with Lingard. It is a mass of divergent sexual imagery:

was she to be transfixed by a broad blade, to the high, immovable wall of wood against which she was flattening herself desperately, as though she could hope to penetrate it by the mere force of her fear? (*Rescue*, 322).

Is she the (female) penetrated or the (male) penetrator, here?

She abandoned herself to his arms. The effect was as though she has suddenly stabbed him to the heart[....]

[She held] to [his...] arm that trembled no more than an arm of iron[....] He [was] rigid (324).

Is it she or he who has the erect phallic strength, here? Such gender-shifting in the imagery applied to her sexual relationship with Lingard continues throughout the novel: at one moment she is trying to 'penetrate' (133) him; at the next, she finds herself 'slowly invaded' (181) by him. Lingard is described as experiencing 'another power' (177) on falling in love with her: while this could be because he has never been in love before, it could also, in this strangely mixed text, equally well be a reference to 'the other love'. This shifting imagery cannot be explained away by recourse to the theory of late Conradian

incompetence: what is happening here is too specific and too consistent to be mere slackness. No other hypothesis except that of Mrs. Travers' being not only the heterosexual love-interest, but also a displaced homosexual love-interest, can explain the continual flow of such anomalies in her portrayal; and once this hypothesis is accepted, our struggle with the slipperiness of the novel, and our confusion, suddenly ends. Perhaps it is time for a critical re-evaluation of *The Rescue*.

With *The Rover*, homosexual implications are clearer, no longer disguised in male-to-female relationships but actually present in male-to-male relationships. There are touches suggestive of criminal homosexuality in Peyrol's involvement with Réal, for instance. Réal has established 'a mute, strangely suspicious, defiant understanding' with 'that lawless old man' (*Rover*, 84); when they meet, Réal 'adopt[s...]' the notion of a double personality' (125); there is soon a 'new-born intimacy' (125) between the two men; Peyrol gently touches Réal on the shoulder and 'their eyes [meet...]with the strained closeness of a wrestler's hug' (136). Peyrol's past, and the way he responds to meeting someone from that past, both seem steeped in suggestions of criminal homosexual affection, too. Peyrol was experiencing 'the bonds of the lawless Brotherhood of the Coast' (83), when he first came across the Englishman, Symons. Meeting him again many years later, he feels an 'unexpected tenderness' (143) towards him, 'mixed feelings in which 'hatred certainly [has...] no place' (151), finding his appearance 'not repulsive' (149). Peyrol goes through the motions of a traditional seduction-scene, but in this case with another man. He dismisses his servant to the front of the boat, and gets Symons alone with him in his cabin. He deliberately makes Symons 'dead drunk' (153), while himself remaining relatively sober and in control of the situation, laughing

fondly at Symons' resultant 'childlike' behaviour (153). When Symons says that he is as weak as a kitten, Peyrol again laughs affectionately and rather strangely, for an exchange between two macho men of the sea - tells him: "you make a nice *petit chat*" (146). Peyrol finds himself 'roused' (152), remembering how in the past it was always 'the Englishmen whom he preferred', as they gave him a 'particular' kind of 'appreciation' (151). This certainly seems to have been the case with Symons, who recalls his crush on Peyrol:

the object of his youthful admiration, the black-ringed French Brother in the prime of life of whom everybody thought so much (152)

and why give that detail of his hair here, unless this is a sexual or physical admiration?¹⁰ Both Peyrol and Symons feel that their meeting again like this is somehow fated: "how could I know it was you?", asks Peyrol (147); Symons is wistful that they did not fight properly when he was captured: "you would have got me all the same" (148).

In *Suspense*, the suggestions of homosexuality in Conrad's portrayal of the homosocial world are at their clearest - but still, amazingly, receive no critical attention (hence my following rather detailed examination). The whole of the novel's opening scene of Cosmo and Attilio on the tower is a mass of homosexual allusiveness - particularly noticeable in a work which otherwise, in its depiction of Cosmo's relationship with Adèle, seems to set out to be a tale of heterosexual romance. The two men on the tower 'grow[...] shadowy to each other' (*Suspense*, 10); Attilio is 'as if speaking to himself' (4): here are notes of mystery, darkness and male doubling. Women and heterosexual activity are specifically excluded as a possibility on this tower: "this can't be your trysting-place" (12). Both men repeatedly have the potential homosexual codeword 'strange' or 'stranger' (see Glossary 488-496)

applied to them (14,15,19). The details of the two men's actual behaviour are even more suggestive. Cosmo (who is on a trip abroad with just a manservant and who is hence in conditions of almost complete anonymity) has spotted Attilio, a perfect stranger to him, followed him to this isolated spot and now shows a strong disinclination to leave him. Soon, the two conspire to 'commit' an 'unlawful thing' (14), their 'heads[...] com[ing...] together confidentially' as they do so (15). They then share a series of phallically suggestive moments of penetration. Attilio 'pull[s...] out of' his clothing a secret 'cylindrical object' and 'thrust[s]' it into Cosmo's hand (15). Attilio then

squeeze[s] himself between the massive tube of the piece of ordnance and the wall of stone, and wriggle[s] outwards into the depth of the thick embrasure till nothing of him remain[s...] visible but his black stockings and the soles of his heavy shoes (16).

It is emphasised twice more on this page that Attilio is now 'prone' before Cosmo. Cosmo is a 'cautious' but 'willing accomplice' in these 'mysterious proceedings, the nature of which [is...] becoming clear enough to him' (16), and eagerly returns the cylindrical object to Attilio:

approaching the embrasure [he] thrust the box in at the full length of his arm till it came in contact with the ready hand of the man who was lying flat on his stomach with his head projecting beyond the wall of the tower. His groping hand found and snatched away the box (16).

Cosmo feels 'his interest growing' (16) and finds a 'charm' (17) in the whole procedure, addressing Attilio in a lover's clichés:

'I am sure that when I wake up to-morrow all this will seem to me a dream. Even now I feel inclined to pinch myself' (18).

When Attilio, having had his use of Cosmo, wants to be rid of him, Cosmo's tones change to those of the traditional spurned lover:

'how can you expect me to forget the most extraordinary thing that ever happened to me in all my life?' (19)

- and there is a suggestion of Cosmo's struggling with the (then) unspeakable, in his stumbling difficulty in saying why he will never forget Attilio: "'I God forbid...Good-night, signore'" (19). Cosmo feels he has had 'an adventure[...] at the same time stimulating and obscure' and ends up with a 'pleasurable sensation' (20).

This is nothing less than a kind of love-scene - and it opens the book: the female love-interest has to wait another seventy pages until her appearance. Cosmo and Attilio are, under this reading, the true love-story of *Suspense*.

The suggestions of a homosexual love between the two men are only stronger by the time of their next meetings. Cosmo is appalled by his physical sexual response to a woman, Adèle. While in Conrad's earlier novels, characters of both sexes, and involved in both heterosexual and possibly homosexual attractions, have experienced disgust at their physical sexual response, by the time of *Suspense*, this disgust seems limited specifically only to heterosexual attraction. Sitting in his room, brooding on Adèle, Cosmo experiences

that fantastic feeling of confinement within his own body with its intolerable tremors and shrinkings and imperious suggestions (249).

He immediately makes for the exclusively masculine milieu of his last, potentially homosexual, encounter with a man Attilio specifically in order to escape from these ghastly heterosexual responses - because 'only there' (on the tower) 'complete relief [can...] be found' (249).

Cosmo feels no equivalent revulsion at any of the 'pleasurable sensation[s]' (20) and 'exultation[s]' (276) that he experiences with Attilio.

In the end, a secret night-time meeting with Attilio actually gets Cosmo into trouble with the police; yet he remains unshaken in his affection for Attilio and is determined only to protect him (262). Attilio is similarly devoted, soon willing to 'jeopardise[...] the success of his escape' in 'his desire to get hold of Cosmo again' - and so now there is 'nothing before him but a choice of risks' (283): a firm and suggestive link is made here between male-to-male 'desire' and 'risk', then. Attilio greets Cosmo 'in a voice faint with emotion, "My Englishman!"' (256) and they 'whisper' together (256) and gaze at each other (255, 289), in conditions of secrecy and illegality. A touch from Attilio conveys 'a sort of gentle exultation' (276) to Cosmo, who soon comes to feel 'a secret sympathy' (289) for him, finding that being with Attilio is simply 'the most natural thing in the world' (276). Attilio feels that their meeting was destined in the stars (288-289). It is not long before Attilio is experiencing a world-altering love that the two of them alone can understand, without need of words - a real lovers' cliché:

the discovery of Cosmo sitting amongst the stones was an event so extraordinary in itself that it revolutionized his rational view of life as a whole in the way a miracle might have done. He felt suddenly an awed and confiding love for that marvellous person fate had thrown in his way. The pursuit was close. There was no time to explain. There was no need. (286).

We are back with the same kind of homosexual chargedness in a wordless mutual understanding in the face of an outside threat, as we found, for instance, in 'The Secret Sharer' (my Chapter Four, 204 and 215).

Cosmo finds that Attilio 'touch[es] him in one of those sensitive spots'¹¹ - and moreover, this is specified as being one of those spots 'which are like a *défaut d'armure* in the battle-harness of various conceits which one wears against one's kind' (293)¹². Cosmo fears that in meeting Attilio, he has 'awakened a sleeping and destructive power' in himself which will 'now pursue him to the end of his life' (293) and that he has 'something within' himself which makes him 'a predestined victim of remorse' (294). Attilio says, in tones of 'secret earnestness' (293)- a phrase loaded with homosexual coding, if ever there was one - that it is best to leave the strange quality in Cosmo's 'peculiar personality' (288) that so attracts him, "'without a name"; and refers to Cosmo's "'fantasy"' in "'forc[ing his...] presence on"' him, the other night at the tower (293). Suggestiveness and potential coding are present in measures clearly recognisable by this stage of our study as too great to be coincidence.

The plotting of *Suspense* involves occasional, mild implications of incest (as do some of Conrad's previous works). Cosmo is sexually attracted to a girl who, it seems likely, would have turned out to be his half-sister had the novel been finished: Adèle is the probable offspring of Sir Charles and the now deceased Marquise d'Armand (25). Clelia, as we have seen, shares a strangely sexual moment on the bed (189) with her 'uncle' (probably her father: 184-185). It is Ford admittedly not the most unimpeachable of Conradian critics who, merely by the phrasing of his discussion of incest in Conrad, raises the possibility that such incestuous themes might be simply another way for Conrad to touch on the theme of unlawful love, while carefully keeping the specific kind of unlawful love that he had in mind, well-hidden. Ford talks of Conrad's possible intent

to write of the consummation of forbidden desires... to render the emotions of a shared passion that by its nature must be most hopeless of all (Ford 1928, 6, quoted in Hampson 1992, 69).

However, such a link between the depiction of incest and the desire to write of homosexuality can only remain speculative.

All that we have examined so far in these last works - the sexual and existential problems with masculinity; the distrust of women that lurks beneath a sometimes apparently pro-female veneer; the carefully latent, but nevertheless definitely and consistently present homosexuality - all this is, though often clearer in these last works, nevertheless already familiar to us from the body of Conrad's previous work. I want, now, to discuss a feature that utterly distinguishes these last novels from all those that have preceded them.

These last works, despite the views of some critics¹³, are clearly not an 'affirmation': no collection of novels that includes the unrelievedly pessimistic and bleakly ended *The Rescue*, or even *The Rover*, whose hero chooses suicide, could possibly be so labelled. Yet, while they are in no way an affirmation, there is nevertheless something that might be mistaken for that, which has, I think, confused earlier critics: not an affirmation, but a definite lessening of tension, some relaxation of the earlier Conradian agony. It is perceptible even at the level of prose-style: the sentences in these last works are distinctively more clear-cut, less tortuously constructed, less adjectivally insistent than anything in Conrad's previous work¹⁴.

The changes that Conrad made to *The Rescue* during the process of composition indicate that this lessening of the agony is consciously intended. When he finally put *The Rescue* together in 1920, Conrad went through the parts of it he had written earlier (a manuscript of

1896-1899, then called 'The Rescuer') and consistently changed the character of Lingard to make him less complex, less reprehensible of motive¹⁵. In the final version of *The Rescue*, Lingard's motivation to help Immada and Hassim has faded down to a combination of perhaps some altruism with a mildly egoistic desire to remain a man of honour by keeping his word. In the original version, his motivation had involved a far nastier self-glorifying desire to exercise power for its own sake.

In *The Rover*, a reduction in the usual Conradian angst is even more apparent: Peyrol is a far less complex man (and in his own world, also a more successful man) than the usual Conradian male protagonist ever is. There is even a possible element of some quietly enjoyed authorial wish-fulfilment in Peyrol's characterization. Peyrol shares many characteristics with Conrad: Peyrol is fifty-eight, Conrad was then fifty-six; both Peyrol and Conrad have made a parentless flight to sea as youths; both become strangers to their native countries; both retire to become land-dwellers after a long sailorly career; and both have recently acquired financial security. The element of wish-fulfilment lies, as Schwarz (1982, 112) notes, in the fact that this expatriate – unlike Conrad, to his oft-expressed regret – manages to return to the land of his birth and carry out a socially and politically effective action.

There is an easing, too, in this novel, of the sexual difficulties that usually surround the Conradian hero: Peyrol is a kind of wish-fulfilment figure for all Conrad's previous protagonists. He is a hero who is, for once, not threatened by a dominant patriarchal figure, but who is instead the patriarchal figure himself – and a decent one at that. Further, in this novel, and in *Suspense*, too, the female love-interest may have shackled herself to a (in the case of *The Rover*, different – not Peyrol) dominant patriarchal figure, but this figure is far less threatening to our subordinate hero than usual: Scevola is no real danger to Peyrol,

and in his case and the case of Cosmo's patriarchal rival for the woman, there are even implications of sexual impotence - something only heartening for the anxious hero to discover. Thus, Scevola is repeatedly described, rather mysteriously, as having been found out by a woman (Arlette) to be a 'poor creature' (*Rover*, e.g. 170, 171, 175); Helion may have fathered Clelia, but his apparel is very effeminate (*Suspense*, 136), his experience of service with 'talents of a sort' in the dark 'crimes' and 'love's of oriental courts (137) are rather suggestive in the era of T.E. Lawrence, and he never approaches his wife sexually (163). The women in both cases do not desire their dominant patriarchal partners, but instead show sexual interest in the subordinate hero himself. Perhaps the most obvious fulfilment for the wishes of previous Conradian heroes, comes in the manner of Peyrol's death: he manages to die as a suicide, but nevertheless achieves a manly and heroic end that avoids the solipsistic isolation and pointlessness of other Conradian suicides and is instead a climax of brotherly fidelity.

Suspense is a for Conrad- very happy and relaxed novel, certainly the most genial, least angst-ridden of his career. The heart of its relative happiness seems to lie in the only other factor that distinguishes it from all his previous novels: it avoids much of the anguish of schizophrenic love/hate for women as they impinge on the male world, by keeping the two worlds utterly separate (as we noticed with the indoor/outdoor split, earlier). Attilio never enters Adèle's world and Adèle never enters Attilio's world; Cosmo does not bring the two together, but merely steps clearly and completely from one to the other and back again.

This brings us to the major feature that distinguishes all three last novels from their predecessors. All three novels portray the homosexual world relatively openly, but far more unusually and daringly these

three novels alone also portray that world specifically as the preferable and beautiful one.

As we have seen, in these three works, the land is the world of women and heterosexuality, and the sea is the world of men and the homosocial/homosexual. It is noticeable that in all of them, the hero ultimately responds to the problems of land entanglements with women by escaping to the sea and the world of men: the male homosocial/homosexual world is a steadying influence after the confusion and dangers of exposure to the women's world. Thus, Lingard is briefly brought out of the enchanted apathy Mrs. Travers has induced in him, merely by thinking about the exclusively male exercises of sailing ships and fighting:

the boats[...] were hanging off, irresolute; but why did Jörgenson not put an end to their hesitation by a volley or two of musketry[...] over their heads? Lingard found himself returning to life (*Rescue*, 360).

Unfortunately for him, in this bleakest of the three novels the moment of arousal is too late. Mrs. Travers has already ruined him: he is returned to life merely in order to die from a lack of her:

returning to life, to mere life with its sense of pain and mortality, like a man awakened from a dream by a stab in the breast (360.)

By the time of *Suspense*, the refuge that the masculine world offers is just as clear, but has also become more effective. Cosmo, disturbed by his attraction to Adèle his involvement with the confusion of the heterosexual, women's, world - evinces an instant desire to go to sea, and it is made clear that the sea, for him, means a place of exclusively male company (and perhaps exclusively male sexuality, in his slight emphasis on the sailors' appearance):

'oh, yes, the sea, why not by sea, away from everybody.' He had been rolling and bumping on the roads[...] meeting in inns ladies and gentlemen[...] and for a moment he was fascinated by the notion of a steady gliding progress in company of three or four bronzed sailors (*Suspense*, 211).

Cosmo later finds himself plagued by supernatural fear – a tortured vision of Adèle in an old painting – after he has been indoors brooding on her for a while: again, in order to recover he hurries off to the all-male world – this time the tower by the sea. He is better as soon as he gets there:

he leaned his shoulders against the side of the deep arch[....]

His superstitious mood had left him. An old picture was an old picture[....] He felt critical, almost ironic, towards the Cosmo of the morning, the Cosmo of the day, the Cosmo rushing away like a scared child from a fanciful resemblance, that probably did not even exist (250).

After hours of mental anguish at thoughts of Adèle, Cosmo becomes involved in an adventure – an all-male affair, involving smuggling sailors and fights with the police – and once more it is subtly stressed that although the adventure is dangerous, it is still far better than any experience Cosmo has had in the world of women. And again, to leave us in no doubt as to where its superiority might lie, a definite hint of homosexuality pervades the portrayal of this chosen male world:

the young police fellow, whose lounging attitude, abandoned and drowsy, and almost touching elbows with him, seemed to Cosmo too suggestive to be trustworthy. And indeed, he reflected, what could he do for him? (266)

and so :

in the midst of his perplexities Cosmo enjoyed the feeling of peace that had come to him directly his trouble had begun (270).

It is in *The Rescue* that Conrad indicates most clearly what exactly the emotional superiority of this homosocial/homosexual better world might be. Mrs. Travers (and she may represent Conrad's attitudes to women in general - she is certainly consistent enough with many of his other female creations) is shown as unable (or unwilling) to commit herself to Lingard, despite all that she has asked from him. If a man seeks true commitment, he must go to the homosocial/ homosexual world. Lingard may think of Mrs. Travers as a comrade "has anybody ever had a friend like this?" (279) but we know that Conradian women are delusive creatures:

she stood by his side. Every moment that fatal illusion clung closer to his soul (*Rescue*, 189).

Here, the 'that' is very specific: it is Mrs. Travers' committed position that is merely the 'illusion'. Her behaviour with the ring only stresses this. The ring is a symbol of male commitment, male bonding (as another ring was in *Lord Jim*, too) passed from man to man as a token of fidelity to that bond. Mrs. Travers is dimly aware that she is shut out from this world of male commitment; she cannot even put the ring on her finger, but must wear it around her neck:

it was there, secret¹⁶, hung against her heart, and enigmatic. What did it mean? What could it mean? (330).

She knows that even those men not directly connected with the ring, Jörgenson and d'Alcacer, merely because they are men, can understand it better than she. About to give it to Lingard, she suddenly pauses:

she [...] had the time to reflect - unfortunately. To remember Jörgenson's hostile, contemptuous glance enveloping her from head to foot at the break of a day after a night of lonely anguish. And now while she sat there veiled from his keen sight there was that other man, that d'Alcacer, prophesying. O yes, triumphant. She knew already what that was. Mrs. Travers became afraid of the ring. She felt ready to pluck it from her neck and cast it away (330-331).

Mrs. Travers pictures men ranged against women; the mystery and power of the male commitment surrounding the ring excludes her, so she wrecks it: she fails to deliver it, and eventually tosses it - and all that it stands for - overboard.

The Rescue's subtitle is 'A Romance of the Shallows', and shallows dominate the book as an image and a behaviour, as well as a place: the Shallows are linked with emotional shallowness, shallowness of commitment. In this novel, a failure to commit oneself to one thing but instead (fatally) attempting to commit oneself to two things only leads to the shallow dispersal of commitment, a state of irresolution, a failure to achieve any real single-minded devotion at all. The Shallows' mixed and unresolved nature is emphasised:

the struggle of the rocks forever overwhelmed and emerging, with the sea forever victorious and repulsed (*Rescue*, 204).

The unresolvedness is dangerous: the Shallows are utterly deceptive they may look like 'a belt of sea', but 'there is much more coral, mud, sand, and stones than actual sea-water' (61). They are dangerous to Lingard, not because they are hard to sail - he is a man sufficiently skilled in his craft to cope with that - but by their very nature: on them, Lingard must pull his boat along, 'like a giant child dragging a toy boat'; or, rather than the boat carrying him, he 'carr[ies...] her on his

head' (166.) the normally solidly simple world of the sailor is utterly confused and reversed. There is only the 'dead body' of a boat (102) there, the *Emma*, and she contains only what will 'act on the cupidity and upon the fears of men': a 'grounded ship that [will...] swim no more' (230) is not a good omen for a man whose strength has, until now, resided in his swift brig with all her 'qualities of a living thing' (21). The Shallows, in their permanent state of irresolution, cannot be conquered:

the unchecked gentleness of the flow captured the eye by a subtle spell, fastened insidiously upon the mind a disturbing sense of the irretrievable[....] Lingard looked up[....] For a moment the speck of light lost in vast obscurity the brig, the boat, the hidden coast, the Shallows, the very walls and roof of darkness - the seen and the unseen alike seemed to be gliding smoothly onward through the enormous gloom of space. Then, with a great mental effort, he brought everything to a sudden standstill; and only the froth and bubbles went on streaming past ceaselessly, unchecked by the power of his will (168-169).

Even to Lingard, with his sometimes god-like powers, the ever-shifting Shallows are beyond control.

Mrs. Travers is linked with the Shallows repeatedly: in the space of only a few pages, we see her 'acquiescence in the shallowness of events', and that the 'shallow sea' is 'like her gaze' (108,110). She is dangerous to Lingard, like the Shallows, then, because of her own shallowness, her ultimate inability to commit herself fully to him. Even Lingard himself mixes Mrs. Travers and the Shallows inextricably in his thinking (as conveyed in this passage - indirect reported speech, with my comments interspersed):

[the Shallows' unceasing struggle] fascinated the man[....] while Mrs. Travers slept sustained by his arm[....] The shoals guarding the Shore of Refuge

had given him his first glimpse of success the solid support he needed for his action. The Shallows were the shelter of his dreams; their voice had the power to soothe and exalt his thoughts with the promise of freedom for his hopes

The note of enchantment about the Shallows, here, can only recall Mrs. Travers' very similar hypnotic effect on Lingard and his dreams.

Never had there been such a generous friendship

- and here Mrs. Travers and the Shallows are inextricable: to which of them does this reflection apply? The grammatical structure here implies that it is about the Shallows; the psychological structure the current intermingling of thoughts of them both, and the fact that a little further on, Lingard uses almost the identical phrase about her, alone suggests that it is about Mrs. Travers.

A mass of white foam whirling about a centre of intense blackness

- there is a recollection of the apparently light-bringing women who actually have only a heart of darkness, in this image.

spun silently past the side of the boat... That woman he held like a captive on his arm had also been given to him by the Shallows (*Rescue*, 204-205)

- Mrs. Travers and the Shallows are one and both have what will be for Lingard a damaging dissipation of commitment between two goals.

True commitment is only found in the homosocial (perhaps homosexual) world of male-to-male bonding. Lingard's male comrades all remain conspicuously faithful to him: Hassim (unlike Immada) never blames or despairs of him; Carter meets him briefly at the beginning of

the book, waits for him loyally throughout (albeit making a few mistakes in the meantime), and is the only one left to sail off with him at the end, as his devoted and obedient new First Mate; Jaffir's commitment is legendary - Lingard clings to him as 'faithful above all others' (351); even Jörgenson, although he blows up the ship, does it from brooding solely on 'what was good or bad for King Tom' (313).

Venture outside this all-male world, though, and commitment suddenly becomes problematic: this is Lingard's fatal mistake. It is because he becomes involved with Mrs. Travers that he suddenly finds himself in the position of having to make two divergent promises. To Hassim:

'if ever you and Immada need help at once and I am within reach, send me a message with this ring and if I am alive I will not fail you' (85);

to Mrs. Travers:

'not a hair of your head shall be touched as long as I live!' (140).

But we already know that shallows are dangerous; a man must be either water or land, he cannot be both: as Jaffir sums up

'you are a white man and you can have only one word' (274).

A failure to commit oneself to one of two divergent worlds might again be read in homosexual terms as a portrayal of a traditionally homosexual problem: the dilemma of the closet - a dilemma perhaps most famously expressed by Forster (1972), in the behaviour of Maurice's two lovers - Clive's anxious betrayal in abandoning the homosexual life, versus Alec's eventual determination to remain true to that life no matter what the cost. (The same breach is more

symbolically treated in Forster's 'The Story Of A Panic' (1954, 9-33)). The censorious portrayal of Mrs. Travers's failure to commit herself to Lingard as a lover, and her eventual tragic return to the civilized, morally respectable world, could be a representation of the 'Clive' pattern of homosexual behaviour - with a woman safely standing in for the then unportrayable homosexual lover. In a similar vein, we might re-read Lingard's guilt at his final desertion of Hassim and that whole unconventional side of his existence, as a portrayal of the kind of guilt such a homosexual 'Clive' figure would feel at letting homosexual friends down for fear of the dishonour involved in loyalty to them.

However, whatever the multiple implications of the failure to commit, we soon become aware of the continuing presence of Stein's pronouncements on the "deep, deep sea" (*Jim*, 212-217) in Conrad's thought in this area.

'A man that is born falls into a dream like a man who falls into the sea. If he tries to climb out into the air as inexperienced people endeavour to do, he drowns - *nicht wahr?*...No! I tell you! The way is to the destructive element submit yourself, and with the exertions of your hands and feet in the water make the deep, deep sea keep you up[....]
It is true it is true. In the destructive element immerse' (*Jim*, 214.)

Stein's words seem to toll behind the philosophy and imagery of *The Rescue* in a subtle indication of what it is the characters have failed to do. We saw how *Chance* could be read in Steinian terms, as a novel about drowning fruitfully with a woman. *The Rescue* seems, amongst other things, to pose a question: is such fruitful sexual drowning really possible with women, or do they not, rather, always fail to commit themselves sufficiently - leaving, hence, the men's world as the better place for such things?

The Rescue's world seems initially to be simple, solid planes:

on the unruffled surface of the straits the brig floated tranquil and upright as if bolted solidly, keel to keel, with its own image reflected in the unframed and immense mirror of the sea. To the south and east the double islands watched silently the double ship that seemed fixed amongst them forever (16-17)

- but we have already seen, in 'The Secret Sharer', how fatally simplistic such a view of the world is¹⁷. Hence, we are not surprised when this world begins to break up for the characters who inhabit it, as they discover that relationships are more complicated and multi-faceted than this: their surroundings fragment into glitter and mists, fogs and darkness, and the final rain of bits of people and boat - altogether 'an immensity of contradictions' (353). The position of these people is now perhaps reminiscent of Stein's human butterfly on its little "heap of dirt" (*Jim*, 213) - and thus it is that, towards the end of *The Rescue*, we know straight away that Mrs. Travers (and d'Alcacer) will fail in commitment, by the whole tenor of d'Alcacer's final advice to her in this fragmented situation: "I think I would suppress anything I could not understand" (*Rescue*, 333). This is fatal, a dangerous thing to do in the Conradian world - we have watched Conrad himself doing it often enough: tiptoeing up to the brink of the abyss, peering in and carefully concluding- 'I can't see, and it's probably nasty anyway, so I can't tell you (or myself) anything about it'. The carefully obscure *Heart Of Darkness* is a monument to this pattern of evasion, and it is wholly anguished. D'Alcacer's advice here, then, is the total opposite of Stein's advice, which centres on yes - continuing not to understand, because one has no choice about that, but (or even hence) throwing oneself into that failure to understand, or into something, anyway. The necessity is to immerse oneself and then survive in that immersion by constant activity and exertion. D'Alcacer's advice panders to what

Conrad, on the evidence of the positive aura and prominence he gives to Stein's advice, knows to be a man's (and his own) worse side.

The key of survival and fruitful survival - in Stein's advice, is the combination of submission with exertion. When Mrs. Travers gets to the point of submitting herself to the sea (and even then, she is only in a rowing-boat and in the Shallows), she 'surrender[s...] herself' in 'a temporary relaxation of all her limbs', and we are told twice in quick succession: 'she abandoned herself to the silence', 'she abandoned herself to an illusory feeling' (*Rescue*, 320). This may be a kind of immersion, but there is none of the necessary activity in immersion of Stein's "'exertions of your hands and feet'": we know she will fail to commit herself properly because here she is too interested only in her own sensations and too indifferently passive to everything else.

The same Steinian imagery that ran on into *Chance*, too, also dominates the portrayal of the failure of commitment in Lingard's relationship with Mrs. Travers:

he felt like a swimmer who, in the midst of superhuman efforts to reach the shore, perceives that the undertow is taking him to sea. He would go with the mysterious current; he would go swiftly and see the end, the fulfilment both blissful and terrible (*Rescue*, 184).

Here, once again in Conrad, the image involves the idea of women as death and sex as a suicide and hence something 'blissful' yet also ultimately 'terrible'. Utter surrender to love for a woman, then, is awful, is certain death - the undertow is something any sailor knows as fatal to a swimmer. Lingard's decision to 'go with the[...] current[...] go swiftly' is hence horrific. Later Lingard feels his love for Mrs. Travers as 'the surges of the heaviest sea that he could remember in his life[...] running through his heart' (324). Once again, this image of total overwhelming

is beautiful but fatal; for a sailor, to have the sea one's life's element in one's heart must be an overpowering fulfilment; yet for a sailor, too, the only man who has the sea running through the chambers of his heart is the drowned man. This is not the fruitful drowning we saw the possibility of in *Chance*: in this passage, Lingard drowns alone, unaccompanied and unassisted, and there is no suggestion of a new life on the far side of his experience, as Flora had. Sexual love with women is drowning and nothing else. Drowning can be fruitful, now, only if done with men, in the all-male world - as we saw in Peyrol's fulfilling suicide.

So we see Lingard deliberately give up. He submits himself to the "deep, deep sea" (a deepness that is in any case only illusory in Mrs. Travers) but will not exert himself to keep himself up. He sits at Mrs. Travers' feet and drinks deep of the 'waking dream' (*Rescue*, 353 compare Stein's "deep sea" of "dream" that a man "falls into" (*Jim*, 214)). Then (again, in the original an unbroken passage, here with my comments interspersed):

he tried to regain possession of himself, his old self which had things to do, words to speak as well as to hear. But it was too difficult. He was seduced away by the tense feeling of existence far superior to the mere consciousness of life, and which in its immensity of contradictions, delight, dread, exultation and despair could not be faced and yet was not to be evaded.

This latter phrase recalls Stein's thought that any man, as soon as he "is born" that is, as a condition of life falls into the dream.

There was no peace in it. But who wanted peace? Surrender was better, the dreadful ease of slack limbs in the sweep of an enormous tide (*Rescue*, 353)

this is the horrible departure from the Steinian injunction that makes this a doctrine, not like Stein's, of hope glimmering 'away there in the dusk' (*Jim*, 214), but of failure, death, non-commitment - the despairing, literally fragmenting disaster with which *The Rescue* ends. This is the danger of sexual love with a woman - enchantment, loss of will and movement, the danger feared throughout Conrad's works - in women, as in life - of accidie taking over. Failure to immerse in the "deep sea", failure to submit - to look into the abyss, or the multiplicity of dreams available - is fatal; and equally fatal is the failure to move, to be active, if one finds oneself there.

The kind of response to the "deep sea" of life, of dreams, that these immobile Shallows-characters of *The Rescue* should have, is perhaps indicated by the beauty of an image that occurs very early in the novel:

to the northward, low down in the darkness, three stars appeared in a row, leaping in and out between the crests of waves like the distant heads of swimmers in a running surf; and the retreating edge of the cloud, perfectly straight from east to west, slipped along the dome of the sky like an immense hemispheric iron shutter pivoting down smoothly as if operated by some mighty engine. An inspiring and penetrating freshness flowed together with the shimmer of light, through the augmented glory of the heaven, a glory exalted, undimmed, and strangely startling as if a new world had been created during the short flight of the stormy cloud. It was a return to life, a return to space; the earth coming out from under a pall to take its place in the renewed and immense scintillation of the universe (*Rescue*, 48).

This is a glimpse, importantly, not of the numerous man-made attempts at stars that so repeatedly fall and fail in this novel, but of real stars: it is an image of real light and scintillation, not false female light-bringing. It is also really the only glimpse we get away from the Shallows'

claustrophobia and confusion, and out to the "deep, deep sea". Moreover, the stars are shown as beautiful while they are plainly following both halves of Stein's dual exhortation:

leaping in and out between the crests of waves
like the distant heads of swimmers in a running surf

- immersed yet active. All this happens far out at sea, that is, in the male world: the only hope for fulfilment of Stein's dicta of hope, for genuine commitment, again lies (as with Peyrol and *Suspense*) exclusively in the homosocial/homosexual world. That world is the better place.

The relative contentment of each of these last novels varies proportionately with the degree to which the homosexual world is portrayed, in ways like these, as the better and beautiful place. *The Rescue* is still a very pessimistic novel, and there are only indications of the homosocial/homosexual as superior. *Suspense* is Conrad's happiest novel, by far, and also the one where he most openly portrays the idea of the homosocial/homosexual's superiority. Thus, it seems that Conrad writes happier novels the more openly he gives expression to specifically pro-homosexual thoughts and feelings. One might best comment on the implications of this link by applying to Conrad a couple of sentences he uses of Cosmo's efforts at authorship:

he was suddenly overcome by that weary distaste
a frank nature feels after an effort at concealing
an overpowering sentiment.

But had he really anything to conceal? he asked
himself (*Suspense*, 207)

Do we have here, in what is, after all, Conrad's most open novel, a moment of authorial self-revelation? On this reading, Conrad's 'overpowering sentiment' would be one of homosexual desire, and in

these last novels he perhaps comes to be less concerned about concealing it.

The superiority for Conrad of the homosocial or even homosexual world does not lie solely in its greater facility in romantic commitment, though. In these last novels, there is a sense that the all-male world is more important even than that - that it is a place for a man to find his highest destiny, where the ultimate questions might find an answer.

We have had a hint of this already in Jim's fate, when he thinks it worthwhile to abandon his female sexual companion in favour of a consummation of death at the hands of a male former comrade. Peyrol achieves a more positive version of this male-to-male death, in that he dies more clearly a hero: the consummation he finds in his last, suicidal boat-trip. The extremely and exclusively masculine nature of Peyrol's glorious death is strongly emphasised: we cannot help but feel that some of the glory lies in the very fact of that exclusiveness:

he beheld in a flash the days of his manhood, of strength and adventure. Suddenly an enormous voice like the roar of an angry sea-lion seemed to fill the whole of the empty sky in a mighty and commanding shout: 'Steady!'... And with the sound of that familiar English word ringing in his ears Peyrol smiled to his visions and died (*Rover*, 299)

he dies dwelling on his manly youth with the Brotherhood, and to the sound of a commanding, masculine, sailorly voice issuing an order that calls at once for action and steadfastness - those essential Conradian male characteristics.

The voice is almost like the voice of God - and by the time of *Suspense*, there is no question but that God and heaven, or any ultimate spiritual goals or answers, are exclusively and emphatically located in the male world, the world that in Conrad is so subtly yet consistently tinged with the homosexual. Consider Attilio's life-

changing, epiphanic encounter with a male father/God figure (*Suspense*, 8-9) - the man with the "long silver locks" who has been "watching" Attilio and who treats him like "his son". The vague yet unmistakable undercurrents of homosexuality still swirl beneath the surface of the passage in the young Attilio's decision to stay the night with the older man, although a 'stranger' and to abandon his ship because of the man's unspecified 'particular' tone when addressing him. But above even these, is an emphasis on belonging in the world of the exclusively masculine. Attilio's joy centres solely on this belonging, on his being loved by the (usually feared) patriarchal/divine figure:

'he treated me as if I had been his son[...] I did not go back to my ship [because...] there was no-one there to address me as "My son" in that particular tone' (9).

Here, God is a mildly homosexual figure of patriarchal acceptance and approval, in a heaven of the carefully, exclusively male. Cosmo's decision 'to go off secretly with only the clothes he stood up in[...] at the mere bidding of a man bound on some secret work' (299) (and again, homosexuality hovers in that repeated 'secretly'), is presented, not only in a generally favourable light by Conrad, but also as a potential spiritual high-point:

'tell me, Attilio,' Cosmo questioned, not widely, but in a quiet, almost confidential tone, and laying his hand for the first time on the shoulder of that man only a little older than himself. 'Tell me, what am I doing here?'

Attilio, the wanderer of the seas along the southern shores of the earth, and the pupil of the hermit of the plains that lie under the constellation of the Southern sky, smiled in the dark, a faint friendly gleam of white teeth in an over-shadowed face. But all the answer he made was:

'Who would dare say now that our stars have not come together? Come and sit at the stern, signore' (302).

The homosexual notes that have rippled beneath their relationship throughout the book obviously continue here, but combined with them, this time, is the sense of an approach to ultimate issues. We see in this passage that it is to his male friend, Attilio, that Cosmo turns, with a question that is either utterly casual or philosophically all-embracing, and we are left in no doubt that it is the latter when Conrad re-introduces the God-like hermit we encountered at the beginning of the book. The thrust of the passage is that Cosmo's star-fated male-bonding with Attilio, a comrade who has somehow touched (a very male) God, could supply some sort of answer to the hugest of questions. Attilio's response suggests that the answer will be found in activity, at sea, together – this is their destination – not stifled indoors with women. The male world is the better place.

This is a hugely important moment in the Conradian canon. For a writer who has spent a lifetime as enmeshed in doubt as Conrad, to imply any possibility of answers, or God, is not a task lightly to be undertaken. It seems to confirm our sense that in these last novels, Conrad's writing is less anguished and closer to some kind of resolution of problems, some contentment. More interestingly, it implies that Conrad has a huge emotional investment in the homosocial or homosexual world, in that he chooses to locate the huge and difficult implication of God solely in that area¹⁸.

In these last novels, then, Conrad finds much that is positive in the homosocial or homosexual world. However, despite this, it is still plain that these last novels do not constitute a Conradian affirmation. An ideal masculine behaviour is still – as it has been from the first – not possible: Lingard obviously fails tragically; Peyrol gets closer but still has

to die to do so; Cosmo perhaps gets closest, but his achievement of happiness involves (suggestively) breaking the law, and anyway, the book is unfinished—we cannot speculate on what his ultimate fate would have been. Likewise, commitment may well be more readily available in the all-male world, but whether with men or women, Conradian commitment is still a fearsome and dangerous thing: Réal's commitment to Peyrol results in Peyrol's offering him as a sacrifice to the fearsome Arlette; Peyrol's other committed comrades end up having to die unpleasantly by his side.

What, then, is left as the closest thing to a wholly positive element in these novels? Both *The Rover* and *Suspense* have a central episode involving a simple, sailorly cry at a vital moment. As we have seen, Peyrol dies a happy death to a God-like cry of "Steady!" (*Rover*, 299), that carries within itself all the elements of the Conradian grail—action, steadfast faithfulness and sailorly brotherhood. Cosmo similarly, in his moment of deepest danger, gives a mighty shout of "Boat ahoy" (*Suspense*, 272), which at once ends his silence, his doubt and his captivity, and, vitally, restores him both to a proper sense of his own selfhood (272-273) and to his beloved and lost comrade, Attilio.

I would like to suggest that perhaps these cries represent some discovery, at last, of the saving word that has been sought from the first in Conrad; the word that names the 'unspeakable' mystery at the heart of things, and the knowledge of which would free a man. Marlow finds to his 'humiliation', that had he the final 'opportunity for pronouncement', he would probably 'have nothing to say' (*Darkness*, 112). In this universe of unutterable confusion, he seizes on Kurtz's ability to utter, with relief 'A voice! a voice!' (100) - even though he finds that Kurtz's 'summ[ing] up' (113) is purely and literally horrific "The horror! The horror!" (117); in the darkness there is nothing but fear, revulsion

and despair. The cry that, in extremis, Peyrol gets to hear; the cry that Cosmo is finally enabled to utter for himself - both are quite different from Marlow's annihilating experiences. They are not the indefinite result of philosophical pondering or existential suffering - they avoid the Conradian gehenna of doubt or accidie: they are simple, concrete, active. They convey little except practical sailorly fact - "boat ahoy", "steady!". They firmly belong to the homosocial/homosexual world and their placing in such pivotal positions in each of the last novels indicates that in these texts there is some acceptance of that world's importance to their writer. Perhaps Conrad found at the end of his career that the unspeakable mystery at the heart of things was as simple and as sailorly as these cries.

Conrad seems to have known that he would not finish *Suspense*:

[Conrad] was crippled with Rheumatism, crotchety, nervous and ill... He said to me 'I am finished'. There was pathos in his pulling out of a drawer his last manuscript to show me that he was still at work. There was no triumph in his manner, however, and he said that he did not know whether he would ever finish it. 'I am played out,' he said; 'played out' (Epstein 1940, 98-94, quoted in Meyer 1967, 262)¹⁹.

Given Conrad's apparent certainty, here, that *Suspense* was never to be finished, one might perhaps read its incompleteness as (consciously or unconsciously) part of Conrad's authorial intention. Its incompleteness means that Conrad does not have to confront the problem of somehow uniting (or failing to unite) the widely split male and female worlds of the book, or to resolve Cosmo's simultaneous heterosexual attraction to Adèle with his (stronger) homosexual attraction to Attilio. To have had the novel end where it now breaks off - with Cosmo happily sailing away from the grasp of heterosexual involvement, into the freedom and naturalness he finds in an intimate

male-to-male relationship - would have been impossible for Conrad, as too clearly revealing homosexual desire or approval. As it is, with the novel so plainly unfinished, he is free to leave his characters in this happy position, achieving - at last- something he has before only ever hesitantly groped towards: the optimistic portrayal of a fully satisfying relationship - the homosexual relationship he had perhaps always desired but feared to portray.

Notes.

1. As, for instance, Nadelhaft (1991, 128-133) does.
2. Mrs. Travers is read in positive terms (I feel misguidedly) by, amongst others, such eminent Conradians as Moser (1957, 149), Karl (1960, 287), Geddes (1980, 147-168, especially 168), Land (1984, 250-269, especially 266), and Nadelhaft (1991, 128-133). Kirschner, on no visible grounds, finds in her a depiction of the 'life-promoting feminine principle' and actually feels that she is too positively portrayed, complaining that, in her, 'exaltation of Woman is carried too far' and that 'Woman-worship gets out of hand' (1968, 166). Only a few critics read her with even an occasional negative note – amongst such critics are Meyer (1967, e.g. 230, 303, 305, 341), Roussei (1971, 60-61), and Parry (1983, 40-60, especially 52, 57-58).
3. See my Chapter 5, 237-238.
4. As he is by, amongst others, Moser (1957, 149, 154-155) and Karl (1960, 287).
5. Such confusion is present in, for instance, Karl (1960, 283, 284) and Land (1984, 255, 257; Land actually admits confusion on 268.)
6. As throughout this chapter, I use these two latter terms in close conjunction – although I am not unaware of the vast difference between them – because we have already seen how regularly in Conrad the homosocial is tinged, or more than tinged, with the homosexual: in Conrad, the one often implies some element of the other.
7. See, for instance, Conrad's 'Preface' to 'A Personal Record':

those who read me know my conviction that the world, the temporal world, rests on a few very simple ideas; so simple that they must be as old as the hills. It rests notably, among others, on the idea of Fidelity (xix).

Moreover, the heterosexual element of Jörgenson's engulfment is not at all stressed in its application to Lingard: Jörgenson married a native woman, but there is no question of Lingard's marrying Immada, his 'daughter' – yet Jörgenson still equates Lingard's prospective engulfment by the natives with his own.

8. For more on Conrad's use of this technique see my Chapter Four, 205-206. Koestenbaum (1989, 171-172) briefly notes the use of the heterosexual to stand in for the homosexual in two of Conrad's collaborations with Ford, *Romance* and *The Nature Of A Crime*. *Romance's* Seraphina, too, is surrounded by masculine imagery and accoutrements: e.g., she is 'the girl of the lizard, the girl of the dagger' (142); Kemp, who eventually marries her, finds that she closely resembles Carlos (98) and she carries Carlos's dagger (144); she wishes she had been a man (144) and is 'fierce' (145). Kemp's relationship with Carlos has, throughout the novel, been surrounded with homosexual suggestion: it is as if Seraphina is a substitute for the sexually forbidden man.

Meyer (1967, 277-278) discusses some of Conrad's other masculine women; Watts (1984, 131) notes Alice Jacobus's masculine attributes –

and also that she was in part a representation of a woman with whom Conrad had actually fallen in love in his youth (130).

The use of women to stand in for forbidden male loves is not an uncommon technique in the crypto-homosexual literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries for instance: Deilamora (1990) notes its occurrence in works by Whitman (45) and Swinburne (80-81); Alan Wilde (1979) finds it in Forster (202-203); Meyers (1977) finds it in Proust (2); Showalter goes as far as to assert that 'there is always a veiled man hiding in fin-de-siècle stories about the veiled woman' (1990, 149) and finds the technique in Wilde's *Salomé* (151).

9. In a random selection of general critical surveys of Conrad's works (those on the open shelves in Birmingham University Library) half of them fail to mention *The Rescue* altogether, or mention it only in passing. The proportion of critics who devote an entire chapter to *The Rescue*, as against the number that do so on, say, *Lord Jim*, is negligible. Amongst those that ignore *The Rescue*, or only touch on it in passing, are such eminent Conradians as Bradbrook (1941), Karl (1960), Kirschner (1968), Stewart (1968), Cox (1974), Gekoski (1978), Hampson (1992), Watts (1993), Batchelor (1994). Karl sees it as the nadir of Conrad's 'later decline' (281). The extremes of critical reaction prompted by the novel are best illustrated by comments from two major critics: the same novel that Jeffrey Meyers sees as Conrad's 'most representative work' (1991, 335), is dismissed in half a page by Bradbrook as, with the other late novels, one of 'such unfortunate examples of encroaching senility' (1941, 70).

10. Conrad always enjoys this kind of appearance in a man: compare the similar emphases on Nostromo's black curls.

11. Already homosexually suggestive in itself, this phrase also recalls a more strongly suggestive moment in *Victory*, when Ricardo recalls his first meetings with the homosexual Jones:

'he seemed to touch me inside somewhere[...] I wasn't frightened. What should I be frightened for? I only felt touched on the very spot. But Jee-miny, if anybody had told me we should be partners before the year was out - well, I would have —'
(128).

We might also recall Forster's famous experience in this area: see 'behind' in Glossary, under reference to Forster's 'Terminal Note' to *Maurice* (375-376).

12. 'kind' could be read here as referring to 'that kind of man' not merely 'mankind'; see Glossary: 'unspecified specifications' (512-518) including 'kind'.

13. e.g. Bradbrook (1941), Wright (1949), Wiley (1954).

14. Geddes (1980, 173-195) examines the question of Conrad's simplified style in *The Rover* in more detail.

15. For example, we can compare the following passage from 'The Rescuer' with its equivalent in the final edition, *The Rescue*, and notice that Conrad consistently chooses to cut the details of Lingard's motivation that make him more complex and less pleasant. For ease of comparison, in the extract from 'The Rescuer', I have italicized any

substantial sections that Conrad later cut from *The Rescue*; and in the extract from *The Rescue*, I have underlined any substantial sections Conrad has added since 'The Rescuer'. Note that the passages in italics turn out consistently to be more pejorative in implication, and those underlined, more palliative.

It was the scene of an action he could not yet wholly see, but unseen he felt it all stirring and accomplished within the sudden awakening of his impulses. There was something to be done and he felt he would have to do it. It was expected of him. The sea expected it, the land expected it men also. The story of war, of suffering; Jaffir's display of fidelity, the sight of Hassim and his sister, the night, the tempest, the coast under streams of fire all this made one inspiring manifestation of a life calling to him distinctly for interference. But above all it was himself[,] it was his longing, his obscure longing to mould his own fate in accordance with the whispers of his imagination awakened by the sights and the sounds, by the loud appeal of that night ('The Rescuer', 156-158, quoted in Hampson 1992, 81).

Compare this with:

her owner and commander did not know where he was going. That adventurer had only a confused notion of being on the threshold of a big adventure. There was something to be done, and he felt he would have to do it. It was expected of him. The seas expected it; the land expected it. Men also. The story of war and of suffering; Jaffir's display of fidelity, the sight of Hassim and his sister, the night, the tempest, the coast under streams of fire all this made one inspiring manifestation of a life calling to him distinctly for interference. But what appealed to him most was the silent, the complete, unquestioning, and apparently uncurious, trust of these people. They came away from death straight into his arms as if were, and remained in them passive as though there had been no such thing as doubt or hope or desire. This amazing unconcern seemed to put him under a heavy load of obligation (*The Rescue*, 80).

The following mixture of likeable responsibility with near-megalomania in Lingard was cut altogether from *The Rescue*:

and since this temptation that, perhaps no man on earth could be found to resist, the opportunity to make war and to make history, had been offered to him, the islands, the shallow sea, the men of the

islands and the sea seemed to press on him from all sides with subtle and irresistible solicitation, they surrounded him with a murmur of mysterious possibilities, with an atmosphere lawless and exciting, with a suggestion of power to be picked up by a strong hand. They enveloped him, they penetrated his heart as does the significant silence of the forests and the bitter vastness of the sea. They possessed themselves of his thoughts, of his activity, of his hopes - in an inevitable and obscure way even of his affections ('The Rescuer', 187, quoted in Hampson 1992, 83).

16. As with any use of a word that can sometimes be a homosexual codeword, in a very isolated context such as this sentence, with no immediate background of other suggested homosexuality nearby, it is hard to prove whether the word is intended to introduce any homosexual connotation. This use of 'secret' certainly allows the possibility (see Glossary on 'secret' (479-483)). But I wonder whether the word's use in such a way here has an extra resonance because of these novels' attitude towards women. Is male-bonding commitment here also 'secret' by the very nature of the two sexes, in that women can never hope to know of or understand such commitment: it must always be a 'secret' from them? Certainly something of this sort is strongly implied by Lingard's response to Jaffir's death, a little further on:

now Jaffir was dead there was no one left on the empty earth to speak to him a word of reproach; no one to know[...] the bond of fidelity between him and Hassim and Immada[....Now] all this was as if it had never been. It had become a secret locked up in his own breast forever (*Rescue*, 368).

17. See my Chapter Four, 214.

18. Of course, the Judæo-Christian tradition in general might be considered to involve a strong link between God and the male: we recall the Old Testament Patriarchs' encounters with Jehovah; the New Testament's Father/Son relationship. However, in Conrad's last novels, the areas of potential Godly encounters do not have a Biblical aura to them at all: they are masculine in a far more exclusive and restrictive sense, and that masculine is emphatically and consistently homosexually loaded.

19. Admittedly, our amazement at the uncanny accuracy of Conrad's prediction here is somewhat dampened when we recall that Conrad had never been the most optimistic of men whenever his health was involved. References to his imminent decay pepper his letters from the time of his marriage to Jessie in 1896 onwards. (In September, 1900, Ford was doubtless duly enlightened to read Conrad's latest bulletin:

beastly seedy with cold, cough, piles and a derangement of the bowel. No doubt paralysis isn't far off (letter to Ford, mid-September (?) 1900, in Karl and Davies 1983-1990, 2: 293)).

CONCLUSION.

The homosexual aspects of Conrad's fiction do not (to borrow Koestenbaum's phrase on male collaborative literature) 'bear... a simple relation to hidden desire' (1989, 177): the texts are not mere sublimation. By this stage of my study, it will no longer surprise us to discover that it takes a man who is both a contemporary of Conrad's and a homosexual T. E. Lawrence to approach some understanding of how this interweaving of sexual difficulty and literary artistry works in Conrad, and at how primary a level it does so though Lawrence seems unaware of a specifically homosexual content. He writes of Conrad that he is

the most haunting thing in prose that ever was....
[His work is] not built in the rhythm of ordinary
prose, but on something existing only in his head,
and as he can never say what it is he wants to say,
all his things end in a kind of hunger, a suggestion
of something he can't say or do or think (letter to
Doubleday, March 20 1920, quoted in Meyers 1991,
343)

And yet Conrad's triumph is that in all areas, not just the sexual he does manage to say, while not saying; he is less (and yet perhaps more expertly) elusive than we thought.

Thus, fidelity does lie at the heart of Conrad's art - and not only the kind of fidelity existing within a group of men: his work is marked by an unflinching fidelity to his experience and to the expression of that experience:

I dare say I am compelled, unconsciously
compelled, now to write volume after volume, as
in past years I was compelled to go to sea, voyage
after voyage[....]

I do not know which of the two impulses has appeared more mysterious and more wonderful to me (*Record*, 18).

Conrad wrote of *The Mirror Of The Sea*:

I've discovered that I can dictate that sort of bosh without effort at the rate of 3000 words in four hours. Fact. The only thing now is to sell it to a paper and then make a book of the rubbish (quoted in Watts 1993, 35).

But this is Conrad as bluff *littérateur* amongst bluff *littérateurs*; Conrad the manly wage-earner and writing about a work he felt little for. Conrad the writer is revealed in the man who "wrestled with the Lord" for[...] the headlands of the coast, for the darkness of the Placid Gulf,[...] for the breath of life that had to be blown into the shapes of men and women' (*Record*, 98) in *Nostromo*; the man who stayed with *The Rescue* for the twenty-three years it took to complete. This is Conrad the writer who will not give up the attempt to express, even when brought up both by the specific socio-sexual circumstances of his time, and, more generally, by his own unflinchingly pessimistic probing of thought and meaning so vividly against the difficulty of any expression of any truth at all.

'Conrad is a *macho* novelist' (Batchelor 1982, 43) - and indeed he is: how could the creator of *Nostromo*, or of the crew of the *Narcissus*, or of Captain MacWhirr, be thought of as anything else? But as we have re-read Conrad's works, we have discovered that this is a 'macho' of a sort far removed from Batchelor's - and most Conrad criticism's - idea of a hearty heterosexual masculinity. From Jim to Peyrol, from Marlow to Atilio, homosexual suggestiveness, and even allusiveness, exists within the texts: Conrad's 'macho' - the fascination, delight, and dismay, with masculinity - is a homosexual macho.

Conrad can be linked with the 'manly' tradition of Haggard and Stevenson though he would be the first to stress that he is a more serious writer than these but this link is actually in part founded on the fact that, as recent critical readings show¹, these writers themselves fall more into the literary-sexual tradition occupied by Wilde than that by Kipling. I am claiming Conrad as a part of the (admittedly highly diverse) homosexual literary tradition.

But how useful, how valid, ultimately, is the need to 'claim' him - or any writer for anything in this way: how valid is the whole concept of 'gay' and 'straight' literary traditions? The very absence of the latter term in any common use, at least - from the literary-critical terminology of queer and gender studies might start to indicate some simple imbalance, some insufficiency underlying the whole approach.

Alan Sinfield (1994) discusses queer reading at some length and his comments are also relevant to literary criticism in general, and to the wider cultural perceptions which lie behind that criticism:

the villain of the piece is the masculine/feminine binary structure as it circulates in our cultures, by which I mean the supposition that masculinity and femininity are the essential, normative properties of men and women respectively. This is scarcely valid in respect of heterosexuals - they don't fall tidily into masculine and feminine attributes, all the time and in every respect; so it is perverse that lesbians and gay men should be interpreted as some kind of contorted variation upon it (vii-viii).

Thus, for instance, *Lord Jim* is - as I hope I have shown at some very deep and central level, concerned with, and exploring, questions of male homosexuality; and (it is central to my argument at this point that there should not be a 'but' here) it is - simultaneously and inseparably from this also about other things too. It is not just, or solely, a homosexual novel. Wilde's writings (a better example than Conrad,

here, as Wilde's literary gayness is a matter of common critical acceptance) have often been subjected to a critical straitjacket of this latter kind: negatively at his trial, and positively - but importantly, just as limitingly - in the recent biography by Schmidgall (1994). Schmidgall is so eager to claim Wilde for one side of the gay/straight literary binary that he fails to convey Wilde's essentially and delightedly unfettered breadth of thought, life, love and work. Gender studies and queer reading are fascinating, long-neglected, boundary-breaking and vital literary tools, and will remain so, productively, in the future - as long as they are recognised as tools, as part of the route not (Schmidgall's mistake) the destination itself.

It is, of course, the binarizing attitude to sexes and sexualities that wrenches Conrad's writing (as a product of his age) into the shapes and forms it takes, and I have argued in this thesis that we might even consider the sexual wrench as being the most central to his work, as having the most profound effect on it. We need to assume this binarizing position (and are anyway just as deeply - though differently culturally programmed by our own age to do so) in order to read and understand Conrad's works sympathetically and empathetically. But we need also to be able to drop this binarizing attitude (as we have not hesitated to drop other more obviously-labelled 'politically unsound' elements of Conrad's milieu - the institutionalized misogyny, for example), in order to analyse its effects, in order to see more clearly what is happening on the printed page.

An abandonment of such ultimately inapplicable and divisive binaries is surely not a bad aim to have, in dealing with a man who valued fidelity, in the united diversity of a boat's crew, so highly. Perhaps such an abandonment is the best kind of human fidelity.

Conrad remains elusive: it would not do justice to his literary skills if I claimed that he does not, when his aim is so clearly to do so. He drew back even from revealing this aim. Hampson quotes a passage that seems to sum up much of the Conrad whom we have found in this thesis:

'you don't know what it was to me. For years I had been afraid to whisper for fear that if I once opened my lips everything would come out and be lost. You see the thing had grown within me, had grown shut in; was getting bigger there... bigger every day, mastering me and pent up so that sometimes I thought my breastbone would crack and my heart burst' ('The Rescuer' 598, quoted in Hampson 1992, 99).

Conrad later deleted this passage – perhaps as too revealing? – from the final draft of *The Rescue*. My reading of Conrad allows us at least to understand a little more of what lies within such strange combinations of passion and evasion in his work, and to appreciate the size of the literary talent that allows him to achieve the deepest fidelity to thought and experience while yet (and, indeed, as a part of this same fidelity) maintaining silence within speech and speech within silence. But – and hence – he does, and must, remain elusive.

Whether or not Conrad knew he would die before *Suspense's* completion, it is hard not to imagine that he felt a wry satisfaction when he did so: it is, after all, the ultimate authorial disappearing-act, leaving us with all our questions unanswered, our suppositions unproven; the culmination of a lifetime's evasive tactics. Perhaps he felt he would be able to slip as quietly from the scene, in this way, as the old boatman with whose death *Suspense* peters out, and who, like Conrad, fell at his work. The last sentences of the book seem to express the effect Conrad has always striven to achieve – his own desired epitaph:

'Where is his star now?' said Cosmo, after looking down in silence for a time.

'Signore, it should be out,' said Attilio, with studied intonation. 'But who will miss it from the sky?' (303).

Notes.

1. e.g. Showalter 1990, 105-126, Koestenbaum 1989, 143-178, Miller 1987, 209-244.

APPENDIX I.

A GLOSSARY
OF LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY
HOMOSEXUAL CODEWORDS.

INTRODUCTION.

dark and, so to speak, inscrutable spaces being met with in life, there must be such places in any statement dealing with life (*Chance*, 101).

invulnerable because elusive (*Victory*, 90).

everything may be said indeed ought to be said providing we know how to say it (*Chance*, 61).

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, sexual matters were sufficiently taboo to require the use of some kind of euphemistic, coded language to refer to them outside the confines of medical or legal texts (and sometimes even within such texts). Robert Hampson indicates how such sexual coding works in his description of an oblique reference to prostitution in Stevenson's *The Strange Case Of Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde* (1886):

the passage clearly involves an encoding of knowledge, an encoding that divides the readership into those 'in the know' and those who are ignorant (1993, 107)¹.

Encoding was considered even more necessary when dealing with the sexual aberration (as it was then seen) of homosexuality². D'Arch Smith writes of the Uranian poets' use of

methods of expression which would, at one and the same time, give no cause for shocking the reading public and impress, by their undertones, the already initiated (1970, 180).

Bristow, even more specifically, refers to 'a whole range of homosexual codewords' that were certainly in play by 1905 (1991, 85). The kind of coding to which I refer is best indicated by Cohen's comment on reading contemporary newspaper accounts of the 1895 Wilde trials:

I began to wonder how it was that everyone could seem to know what it was that Wilde was accused of without it ever having to be positively stated (1993, 4-5).

This glossary is concerned with the words that, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, allowed such homosexual knowledge without positive statement.

Outside the scope of a glossary of these homosexual codewords lie terms that, while euphemistic enough to avoid referring specifically to sexual acts (in the way that terms like 'sodomite' or 'bugger' do³) are yet still so unambiguous that they cannot be considered as coded terms: for instance, 'Uranian', 'invert', or even 'adhesiveness' (although perhaps this latter is a borderline case). It is not possible to understand such terms in any 'innocent' sense, as referring to anything other than homosexuality - hence they are merely terms of reference, not coded usages. Nicknames like 'Mary Anne', 'Cissie' or 'Nancy' are slang references, rather than codewords, and hence fall into this same category, as do other gay slang terms in general, like 'a bit of brown'.

Also beyond the bounds of this glossary, for the opposite reason, are terms that are so deeply coded as to constitute another language, incomprehensible to any outsider: Weeks notes the existence of a 'vast homosexual argot, often international in character, in the early twentieth century' with terms like 'varda' for 'look at', 'omee' for man, or 'dish' for 'bottom' (1990, 41-42).

Turn of the century homosexual coding is not a straightforward system of substitutions: as Dowling puts it, homosexual codewords do 'not operate as a simple inversion of the dominant discourse' (1989, 7). Hence, for instance, such peculiarities as the fact that both 'manly' and 'unmanly' can carry codedly homosexual implications. There is, rather, a spectrum of codedness.

The most obvious type of coding occurs when words that have already been generally understood as referring euphemistically to improper sexual behaviour, gradually come to be understood as referring to specifically homosexual 'misconduct' initially only in a loadedly homosexual context, but eventually (presumably through frequency of use in such contexts) in any context. For instance, in the early nineteenth century, 'immorality' could apply to general sexual misbehaviour of whatever orientation, but by the 1890's, it had come to indicate specifically homosexual misbehaviour⁴. By 1895, when a headline accuses Wilde of 'immorality', public and headline-writer both know that something far more serious than involvement with a female prostitute is implied.

Next in the spectrum of codedness fall (often mildly pejorative) words which can be used in wholly non-sexual contexts, but which, in the right sort of context, clearly imply homosexuality. Thus, 'morbid' of course means 'to do with disease or death', 'diseased', 'deathly', but nevertheless, if reference was made at the turn of the century to a

man's 'morbid desires', it was fairly certain to be understood as indicating the specifically homosexual kind of 'diseasedness', that is, a reference to a man's homosexual desires.

Finally we come to the sort of words that make up the largest part of this glossary – the most loosely homosexually coded words. These are words that are in a general, non-sexual, non-homosexual and often non- (or barely-) pejorative use all the time, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, but that nevertheless, in the right context, can become strangely loaded with some degree of homosexual import. Koestenbaum refers to turn of the century literature that has homosexual

double meanings that can never be justified and that sustain a dreamy half-life, impossible to dismiss and impossible to prove (1989, 173)

which describes the effect of such looser codewords perfectly. The closest one can come to proof for the potential homosexual implication of such words is to cite frequency of occurrence in homosexual contexts, beyond what might be expected by mere coincidence. Hence, in this glossary there are what might otherwise seem to be excessive citations of usage, for some of these sorts of words. Indeed, words with this looser sort of coding probably became understood and used as homosexual codewords simply because of the frequency of their occurrence in a homosexual context: 'blackmail' as a term indicative of the presence of homosexuality, is a particularly clear example of how such a pattern of development could work⁵. In the case of some of the more discreet homosexual literature, often, for example, poetry, a word might find its way into this glossary because of its frequent appearances standing out as a term that would distinguish the poem from a heterosexual love poem, if the work were being read

without any knowledge of its homosexual context (for example, this is often the case with the use of the word 'strange', or more obviously, phrases centering around the idea of 'another kind'). Multiple citations also have a specific relevance to the question of whether Conrad is using a word in a homosexual sense in any specific passage: the more frequently and widely a word is used in a homosexually charged sense generally, the harder it becomes to imagine Conrad's being unaware of such overtones when he himself comes to use the word. 'Secret' is a good example of the kind of looser coding I am referring to: it is apparently utterly innocuous, but eventually, when used in a context allowing the possibility, it becomes laden with suggestions of homosexuality: one might consider its use in *Dorian Gray* (1891), for instance, and the way in which the novel was instantly and widely understood, against the anxious protestations of its author, to be about homosexuality.

There is one more, slightly different, division within the spectrum of codedness, just as hazy as those we have already discussed. This is the division between terms that are used within a homosexual milieu - terms used by homosexuals describing themselves - and terms (often the more pejorative ones) used by outsiders to that milieu, describing it from without. Such differences of 'internal' and 'external' use are not always easy to distinguish: one might consider the history of the word 'queer', which, during and since the nineteenth century, was, successively, applied derogatively from the outside against homosexuals, then almost immediately, at the turn of the century, also claimed by homosexuals themselves, then disclaimed again, and more recently, reclaimed once more. The confusion in this area is at its height at the turn of the century, when some external terms were taken up by homosexuals purely because of their pejorativeness, as part of the cult

of decadence - used with a delight in shocking and being different. Wilde's use of terms like 'corrupt' or 'diseased' in *Dorian Gray* seems to follow this pattern.

However, bearing such blurrings of the internal/external division in mind, some distinctions can be made. Applying them to Conrad has some unexpected results: while it is already clearly of some interest that we find Conrad using coded references to homosexuality at all, it is perhaps even more interesting to find that he not only uses the external, pejorative terms (as we might have expected) - such as 'abominable', 'depraved', the concept of the 'worst crime' but that he also uses the internal terms, more associated with use amongst homosexuals themselves - 'alone', the idea of Jones's being a 'gentleman', 'brothers', the concept of 'another kind'.

The sources for this glossary include much late nineteenth and early twentieth century prose and poetry - including specifically homosexual prose and poetry, but as I also wish to provide evidence of the wider usages and understandings of the general public, I have also drawn upon newspapers, court-proceedings, letters, diaries and memoirs. *My Secret Life* by 'Walter' (1994a and b) is a slightly special case, as the terms he uses about homosexual activity can less easily be classed as euphemistic because, when he wishes, Walter is not one to shy away from the explicit; the same applies, to a lesser extent, to Ellis's *Sexual Inversion*. Nevertheless, extracts from both works are included as they still provide evidence of the way some terms seem to cluster around the subject of homosexuality in the late nineteenth century.

This is, of course, only a partial glossary but I think that all the major turn-of-the-century homosexual codewords are present, and certainly all those that there is a case to be made for Conrad having used.

There are a few words in the glossary with no citations from Conrad. In such cases, the words are included on the grounds of their being so commonly used as homosexual codewords that it would render the glossary unrepresentative of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century language on the subject to omit them. Some such words are also included because they are sufficiently close in concept to other coded terms that Conrad does use, as to suggest the existence of *areas* of homosexual coding that Conrad could have been aware of: consider, for instance, the number of homosexually coded terms clustering around the concept of 'diseased', or around the concept of 'companion', or the concept of the 'unspeakable'.

The vast majority of the words in this glossary have until now remained uncatalogued as homosexually coded terms. For instance, Partridge's *Dictionary Of Historical Slang* (1972) (and none of the other slang or historical dictionaries I have consulted does any better) only lists a very few words as late nineteenth or early twentieth century slang references to homosexuality at all, and these are only the well-known and mildly derogatory nicknames - 'Cissie', 'Margery', 'Mary-Anne', 'Nancy' (though not, rather surprisingly, 'poof'): they are not codewords at all. Hughes catalogues the uncoded nicknames 'poof' and 'fairy' (1991, 229), and even briefly mentions actually coded terms 'abomination', 'perversion', 'aberration', 'deviation' (all 232), 'gay' and 'queer' (229). However, that is all. Moreover, he dates the first appearances of the latter two terms in a homosexual context as occurring in the 1890's and 1932, respectively, and, citing Howard (1977) and Rawson (1981), he confidently asserts that the evidence given by John Saul in 1889⁶ is the first recorded use of 'gay' to refer to homosexuals (1991, 232). This glossary shows that both 'gay' and 'queer' were picking up a homosexual import well before Hughes's dates: I cite

potentially loaded uses from as early as 1866 and 1886 for 'gay' and 1886 and 1894 for 'queer'.

The seriousness of the previous scholarly omission of the words catalogued in this glossary only becomes plain when we consider individual cases. For instance, frequently a word that occurs in this glossary is also listed in Partridge, but with no homosexual sense given for it - for example, to give only the first few, 'abnormal', 'abominable', 'alone', 'another'...). Worse are those cases where a word that occurs in this glossary is listed in Partridge specifically as euphemistic sexual term, but with only the heterosexual sense given - for instance 'friend', 'peculiar' and even - amazingly - 'gay' and 'queer'. Other words, like 'understand' and 'share', which were important and widely-used homosexual terms at the turn of the century, are simply not listed in Partridge, Hughes, or similar works of reference, at all.

Large areas of homosexual language-use, slang and coding, then, have been - as Duberman et al. (1991) describe homosexuals in general - 'hidden from history'. I hope that this glossary will form some small part of the process of correcting that.

Notes.

1. For more detail on Edwardian ambiguity and suggestion, see my Introduction to thesis, 10-16 and 35-40.
2. For more detail on Edwardian attitudes to homosexuality, see my Introduction to thesis, 16-35.
3. Although, of course, even these are (or once were) euphemisms too, references to the inhabitants of, respectively, Sodom and Bulgaria.
4. For more detail on the homosexual development of the term 'immorality', see my Introduction to thesis, 39.
5. For more detail on the homosexual development of the term 'blackmail', see Glossary: 'blackmail' (377-379).
6. See Glossary: 'gay', under 'Jack Saul' (420-421).

GLOSSARY.

BRIEF LISTING.

Aberration
 Abnormal/not normal, etc.
 Abominable
 Aesthete
 Affected
 Alone, lonely, etc.
 Another/other
Behind
 Blackmail
 Blushing
 Brothers
Companion
 Comrades
 Corrupt
 Crime, criminal, etc./worst crime
Degenerate
 Degraded
 Depraved
 Deviation
 Different
 Diseased
 Disgrace
 Disgusting
 Dishonourable
 Down, going down, below, etc.
Earnest
 Effeminacy
 Ellipses, omissions and hesitations
Friends
Gay
 Gentleman
 Gorgeous
Handclasp (in Conrad only).
 Hanging offence
 Hermit
Immoral, not moral, etc.
 Indescribable
 Intimacy
Let us say/ let us call it
 Loathsome
 Looks: significant first look between men/ significant look between men.
 Lost
Manly, etc.
 Monstrous
 Morbid

Mystery
Nameless, unnameable, etc.
 Notorious
Older man with younger man
 One of us/one of them
 Other side
 Outcast
Partner
 Peculiar
 Penetration imagery
 Perverse, perversion, etc.
Queer
Romance, romantic, etc.
Secret
 Shame
 Share
 Straight (as the opposite of homosexual)
 Strange, stranger
Tastes
 That way
 Trade
Unclean
 Understand
 Unhealthy
 Unmanly, unmanned, etc.
 Unmentionable
 Unnatural
 Unspeakable, and generally the concept of something's being beyond
 speech
 Unspecified specifications (e.g. 'certain', 'kind', 'particular', 'sort', 'such',
 'type'; also references to unspecified, or only vaguely specified,
 'practices').
Vice, vicious
 Vile
Weakness
 Weaponless men
 Whispering between two men

*FULL CITATIONS.***'ABERRATION'.**Generally.

(i) Listed in Hughes (1991, 232) as a term historically widely understood as descriptive of homosexuality.

Anonymous ('H. C').

(i) Contribution to *Sexual Inversion* (1897).

- He tries to find the reason behind his repeated attempts to have sexual intercourse with women whilst he is still experiencing homosexual impulses: 'no sense of duty impelled me, nor dread of sexual **aberration**' (quoted in Ellis 1924, 175).

Havelock Ellis.

(i) *Sexual Inversion* (1897).

- Explaining a theory that actors may be more likely than others to experience homosexual desire: 'in the process of his trade, therefore, [the actor]... becomes at all points sensitive to human emotions, and, sexuality being the most intellectually undetermined of the appetites after hunger, the actor might discover in himself a sort of sexual indifference, out of which a sexual **aberration** could easily arise' (1924, 297).

'ABNORMAL'/NOT NORMAL.

(See also 'ANOTHER (KIND)', 'DIFFERENT', 'OTHER SIDE', 'PECULIAR', 'QUEER', 'STRANGE')

Josephine Butler.

(i) Letter to Lewis Campbell (referring to c.1870's).

Concerning homosexuality during Jowett's tenure as Master of Balliol: 'there was an outbreak of **abnormal** immorality* among a few of

the young men in Oxford. To such he was (I know) the wisest, most prudent and gentlest of counsellors' (quoted, with no further ascription, in Pearsall 1993, 457).

F. S. Ryman.

(i) *Diaries* (August 1886).

Writing of a man he longs to 'hug and kiss': 'I am certain that the thought of the least demonstration of unmanly* and **abnormal** passion would have been as revolting to him as it is and ever has been to me' (quoted in Duberman 1991, 63).

'Walter'.

(i) *My Secret Life* (1888-1892).

In his running chapter-summaries, Walter categorizes his desire to have a sexual experience with a man as 'an **abnormal** letch' (1994b, 569). The chapter describing the initial attempts at this experience begins: 'then took place the crowning act of my eroticism, the most daring fact of my secret life. An **abnormal** lust of which I have been ashamed* and sorry, and the narrative of which I have nearly destroyed, tho according to my philosophy there was and is no harm in my acts, for in lust all things are natural and proper to those who like them' (1994b, 588).

Havelock Ellis.

(i) *Sexual Inversion* (1897).

abnormal is used to refer to homosexual behaviour throughout this work. e.g.:-

- In the preface, Ellis apologises for publishing a study of '**abnormal** manifestations of the sexual instinct before discussing its normal manifestations' (1924, v).

Inverts are 'the congenital subjects of this **abnormality**' (140); etc..

E. M. Forster.

(i) *Maurice* (wr. 1913-1914).

Clive on why he, as a homosexual, appreciates a painting of a beautiful man differently: "'look at that picture, for instance. I love it because, like the painter himself [the homosexual Michaelangelo], I love the subject. I don't judge it with eyes of the **normal** man'" (1972, 86).

- Clive has decided not to be a homosexual any more: 'how happy **normal** people made their lives!' (106).

Telling Maurice of this decision: "'I have become **normal** - like other men, I don't know how'" (112).

- Clive hears Maurice's revelation that he is still a homosexual: 'he had assumed Maurice was **normal** during the last fortnight' (212).

'ABOMINABLE' .

Alfred Swaine Taylor.

(i) *Medical Jurisprudence* (1861).

On the body of a homosexual: 'the state of the rectum left no doubt of the **abominable** practices* to which this individual had been addicted' (quoted in Weeks, in Duberman et al 1991, 198).

Newspapers Of The Period.

(i) *The New York Herald* (late 1879).

- On the Cleveland Street affair, referring to a male brothel: 'there is not the least reason to doubt that some of the gentlemen* - to give them their conventional names - who have been traced to the **abominable** house went there innocently. They were taken there by friends, merely to see what was going on, and it is possible that some of them thought it was a gambling house' (quoted, with no further ascription, in Pearsall 1993, 470).

(i) *The Evening News* (25 May, 1895).

On Wilde's conviction: 'the conviction of Wilde for these **abominable** vices' (quoted in Hyde 1962, 18).

'Walter'.

(i) *My Secret Life* (1888-1892).

On hearing of the behaviour of two homosexual men: 'fancy two men together in a stable, one shoving a pestle up the other's bum. How curious I thought, yet how **abominable**' (1994b, 266).

The Wilde Trials (1895).

Charles Gill for the prosecution, during the second trial, refers to male prostitutes: 'there was a number of youths engaged in this **abominable** traffic' (quoted in Hyde 1962, 169).

D.H. Lawrence.

(i) Letter to S. S. Koteliensky (1915).

- 'these horrible little frowsty people, men lovers of men, they give me such a sense of corruption*, almost putrescence, that I dream of beetles. It is **abominable**' (letter to S. S. Koteliensky, 20th(?) April 1915, quoted in Meyers 1977, 176).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900):-

- The face of the plainly homosexual chief-engineer of the *Patna* is marked by '**abominable**' caution (53).

- Jim's case at trial, which is reminiscent of the Wilde trials (see my Chapter Four, 175-176) is '**abominable**' (68).

When telling Marlow of his crime, Jim's whisper* occasionally rises to a cry 'hardened by the passion of scorn, as though he had been talking of secret* **abominations**' (117).

(ii) *Heart Of Darkness* (1902):-

Marlow pictures a civilised Roman coloniser of the ancient British 'darkness' in a situation analogous to that of Kurtz in the jungle: 'it has a

fascination, too, that goes to work upon him. The fascination of the **abomination** - you know, imagine the growing regrets, the longing to escape, the powerless disgust*, the surrender, the hate' (31).

-Kurtz's mysterious and suggestive experience with the natives in the jungle involves '**abominable** terrors,[...] **abominable** satisfactions' (113).
(iii)'The Duel' (1908).

The relationship between the two duellers, D'Hubert and Feraud, is loaded with homosexual suggestiveness. D'Hubert fears that his long-running duel, at the heart of his relationship with Feraud, will make him the subject of teasing: 'he dreaded the chaff of his comrades almost as much as the anger of his superiors. The truth was confoundingly grotesque and embarrassing, even putting aside the irregularity of the combat itself, which made it come **abominably** near a criminal* offence' (163).

(iv)'Il Conde' (1908).

The whole tale is densely loaded with homosexual codewords and homosexually suggestive situations and the Count of the title undergoes an experience reminiscent of an attack during a casual homosexual street-encounter that went further than he intended. He describes the attack as '"a very * a very . * how shall I say?* - * **abominable** adventure"' (240) - and the narrator dwells on the Count's choice of that specific term: 'the energy of the epithet was sufficiently startling in that man of moderate feelings and toned-down vocabulary. The word unpleasant I should have thought would have fitted amply the worst experience likely to befall a man of his stamp'. The narrator accordingly fears 'the worst[....] some more or less disreputable scrape' (240). Later, the narrator comes to use the same phrase of the attack: 'his **abominable** adventure' (249).

In describing the attack by the handsome young stranger, the Count 'enlarged upon the **abominably** savage way in which that young man rolled his glistening eyes' (246).

(v) *Victory* (1915).

- Schomberg, who has trouble keeping up his 'manly* exterior' (104), is '**abominable**' (211).

AESTHETE.

Generally.

(i)'Aesthete' carried strong homosexual overtones at the turn of the century because of its association, noted by Schmidgall (1994, 43-63), with limp effeminacy of behaviour and posture.

Newspapers Of The Period.

(i)*Punch* (25 June 1881).

Wilde had been lampooned continually in *Punch* throughout this and the previous year, under the guise of a cartoon character greatly resembling him, who is called Maudle. Maudle adores 'consumately lovely,.... manly* boy[s]' (12 February 1881, quoted in Schmidgall 1994, 55) and enjoys 'tender companionship*' (December 1880, quoted in Schmidgall 1994, 54) with another man. In this issue, *Punch* published a cartoon of Wilde as a drooping-headed flower and referred to him in the title as '**Æsthete** of **Æsthetes**' (quoted in Schmidgall 1994, 59).

J. E. Courtenay Bodley.

(i)On Oscar Wilde, in *New York Times* (20 January 1882).

- Comments that Wilde's friendship with Pater turned Wilde into an 'extreme aesthete' (quoted in Ellmann 1988, 80). Ellmann notes that in context, this is 'almost a euphemism for homosexual'.

'AFFECTED'.

Joseph Conrad.

(i)'The Duel' (1908).

The relationship between the two duellers, D'Hubert and Feraud, is loaded with homosexual suggestiveness. D'Hubert is discussing Feraud's stabbing of a civilian, which he finds 'positively indecent' (148): 'Lieut. Feraud was perfectly tranquil; but Lieut. D'Hubert took it for **affectation**' (151).

People are discussing Feraud's relationship with D'Hubert: 'a sub-commissary of the Intendance, an agreeable and cultivated bachelor in kerseymere breeches, Hessian boots, and a blue coat embroidered with silver lace, who **affected** to believe in the transmigration of souls, suggested that the two men met perhaps in some previous existence' (167).

(ii) *A Personal Record* (1912).

Concerning his liking for a 'robust man' who is one of his harsher literary critics, Conrad denies that his 'reluctant affection' is merely 'a freak of **affectation** or perversity*', or that it involves any 'emotional lawlessness*' (107).

(iii) *Victory* (1915).

Schomberg on the plainly homosexual Jones: "'but he won't touch a woman. Not he! He has told me so. **Affected** beast'" (107).

'ALONE', 'LONELY', etc.

(See also 'HERMIT').

E. M. Forster.

(i) *Maurice* (wr. 1913-1914).

Maurice has just discovered that he is a homosexual: 'he lived on, miserable and misunderstood*, as before, and increasingly **lonely**. One

cannot write those words too often: Maurice's **loneliness**: it increased' (1972, 125).

- Maurice consults a doctor concerning his homosexuality: "what is it? Am I diseased*? If I am, I want to be cured, I can't put up with the **loneliness** any more, the last six months specially" (139).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

In a long, homosexually suggestive passage (44-45) about the boys that have 'passed through [his...] hands', Marlow talks of getting a slap on the back from such boys grown to manhood: 'I have glowed all day long and gone to bed feeling less **lonely** in the world by virtue of that hearty thump' (45).

- Jim is '**alone** of his own superior kind*' (176).

Marlow talks of trying to 'grapple' with 'another man's intimate* need', in the context of his deep affection for Jim, saying: 'it is as if **loneliness** were a hard and absolute condition of existence; the envelope of flesh and blood on which our eyes are fixed melts before the outstretched hand, and there remains only the capricious, unconsolable, and elusive spirit that no eye can follow, no hand can grasp. It was the fear of losing him that kept me silent, for it was borne upon me suddenly and with unaccountable force that should I let him slip away into the darkness I would never forgive myself' (179-180).

(ii) *Heart Of Darkness* (1902).

Marlow, speaking of Kurtz, and not in reference to physical isolation: 'I had, even like the niggers, to invoke him himself - his own exalted and incredible degradation*. There was nothing either above or below him, and I knew it. He had kicked himself loose of the earth. Confound the man! he had kicked the very earth to pieces. He was **alone**' (107).

(iii)'Il Conde' (1908).

The whole tale is densely loaded with homosexual codewords and homosexually suggestive situations and the Count of the title undergoes an experience reminiscent of an attack during a casual homosexual street-encounter that went further than he intended. He is described by the narrator as 'pick[ing] up transient acquaintances of a day, week, or month in the stream of travellers from all Europe' (237); 'one comes upon such **lonely** men, whose only business is to wait for the unavoidable. Death and marriages have made a **solitude** round them, and one really cannot blame their endeavours to make the waiting as easy as possible' (238).

(iv)'The Secret Sharer' (1910).

Leggatt recalls the beginning of what is to become his homosexually loaded relationship with the Captain, when the Captain saw him swimming naked in the sea at night, and contrasts it with his time with the crew of his previous ship: "I didn't mind being looked at*. I -* I liked it. And then you speaking to me so quietly as if you had expected me made me hold on a little longer. It had been a confounded **lonely** time I don't mean while swimming" (97).

(v) *Victory* (1915)

- Davidson thinking about Heyst: ' [he] took a humane interest in Heyst's strange* existence, while at the same time his native delicacy kept him from intruding on the other's whim of **solitude**. He could not possibly guess that Heyst, **alone** on the island, felt neither more nor less **lonely** than in any other place, desert or populous ' (177).

'ANOTHER'/'OTHER'.

(As in 'another kind' etc.) (See also 'ABNORMAL', 'DIFFERENT', 'OTHER SIDE', 'PECULIAR', 'QUEER', 'STRANGE.)

Generally.

(i) Homosexuality has always been thought of as 'the other kind of love', hence, e.g., Hyde can perfectly comprehensibly entitle his survey of homosexuality and the law, ***The Other Love*** (1970).

Richard Morten.

(i) Conversation with Roger Casement (June 8 1916).

Morten could refer perfectly comprehensibly to the subject of homosexuality in Casement's case, as opposed to Casement's treason, simply as 'the other thing': "what about the **other** thing, Roddie?" (quoted, with no further ascription, in Hyde 1964, 79).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

- Jim is about to abandon his career as a sailor, when he meets some sailors that seem to have 'the soft spot, the place of decay', and at first he despises them: 'but at length he found a fascination in the sight of those men[....] In time, beside the original disdain there grew up slowly **another sentiment**; and suddenly, giving up the idea of going home, he took a berth as chief mate of the *Patna*' (13).

(ii) *Romance* (1903, with Ford).

- Carlos is surrounded by homosexual suggestiveness throughout the novel. Kemp mentions Carlos' shady past: 'there were all the elements of romance about Carlos' story[....] he had, as I have indicated, ruined himself in **one way or another** in Spain' (34).

Kemp's relationship with Carlos is surrounded by suggestions of homosexuality. He refers to his life after he has been with Carlos: "'I was **another** man by that time, with much queer* knowledge and **other** desires'" (43; also noted as potentially homosexually suggestive by Koestenbaum 1989, 169).

(iii) 'The Secret Sharer' (1910).

During the Captain's homosexually loaded relationship with Leggatt, he refers to him as his '**other** self' (93, 97).

(iii) *Victory* (1915).

Jones travels around all the time, like Heyst, but he is 'not alone and of quite **another kind**' (98).

- Ricardo is brooding on Jones's 'exaggerated dislike of women', which he does not share, and notes that Jones has 'the **other sort** of disposition' (266).

BEHIND.

(Special fascination with the view of a man from behind, being behind, the rear aspect of a man, etc.)

Newspapers Of The Period.

(i) *The Age* (6 February 1842.)

An allusion to the Duke of Brunswick's sly abuse of his enemies, that hints at his reputation for buggery:

'To do so he prudence or courage must lack

Yet it sometimes is the case

That men will do **behind your back**

What they will not do to your face' (quoted in Thomas 1994, xxviii).

Sir Richard Burton.

(i) Terminal Essay to his translation of the *Arabian Nights*, Section D

'Pederasty' (1885).

- Refers to homosexual love as 'love **a tergo**' (quoted in Reade 1970, 161).

A. C. Swinburne.

(i) Poem, 'Hermaphroditus', from *Poems And Ballads* (1866).

In a poem specifically on homosexual love:

'Lift up thy lips, **turn round, look back for love**'.(quoted in Reade 1970, 71).

R. L. Stevenson and Lloyd Osborne.

(i)*The Ebb Tide* (1894).

The following references occur in a fight-scene which Koestenbaum (1989, 145-149) demonstrates to be full of homosexual suggestiveness:

One man fingers the butt of his revolver as he plans when to kill his victim: 'it should be done now, as he went in. **From behind?**' (1908, 212-213, quoted in Koestenbaum 1989, 149).

A man addresses his intended victim, who is to be shot from behind: "**your back view** from my present position is remarkably fine" (226, quoted in Koestenbaum 1989, 149).

Aleister Crowley.

(i)Poem, 'Dédicace', from *White Stains* (1898).

in a poem specifically on homosexual activity:

'Touch me; I shudder and **my lips turn back**

Over my shoulder, if so be that thus

My mouth may find thy mouth' (quoted in Reade 1970, 430).

E. M. Forster.

(i)'Arthur Snatchfold' (wr. 1928).

Two men having a homosexual encounter: 'he laid his face on the warm skin over the clavicle, hands **nudged him behind**, and presently the sensation for which he had planned so cleverly was over' (1989, 134).

(ii)'Terminal Note' to *Maurice* (1960, obviously too late to be directly relevant to this glossary , but interesting anyway.)

Forster is explaining how *Maurice* took shape from 1913 onwards, as a 'direct result' of a visit to Edward Carpenter, where he met Lowes Dickinson: 'he and his comrade* George Merril combined to make a

profound impression on me and to touch a creative spring. George Merrill also touched my **backside** - gently and just above the buttocks. I believe he touched most people's. The sensation was unusual and I still remember it, as I remember the position of a long vanished tooth. It was as much psychological as physical. It seemed to go straight through the **small of my back** into my ideas, without involving my thoughts. If it really did this, it would have acted in strict accordance with Carpenter's yogified mysticism, and would prove that at that precise moment I had conceived' (1972, 217).

Joseph Conrad

(i) *Heart Of Darkness* (1902).

Marlow's grief for the dead steersman has a 'strange*' element about it: 'well, don't you see, he had done something, he had steered; for months I had him **at my back** - a help - an instrument. It was a kind of partnership*[....] And the intimate* profundity of that look* he gave me when he received his hurt remains to this day in my memory[....]

'I dragged him out, after first jerking the spear out of his side[....] his shoulders were pressed to my breast; I **hugged him from behind desperately**' (87-88).

(ii) *Romance* (1903, with Ford).

Kemp, whose relationships with several men in this novel are surrounded by homosexual suggestiveness, is involved in a fight: 'how could I hold a man so that he should be stabbed* **from behind** in my arms?[....] Collecting all my strength, I forced O' Brien round, and we swung about in a flash[....] I felt him give way all over' (225; Koestenbaum (1989, 170-171) notes of the fights in this novel, in general, that they seem to 'tap... the energies of... homosexual pornography' (170).

- Kemp is in jail, drinking wine in 'close confinement' with two pirates, one of whom, Salazar, declares that the three of them are 'a band of brothers*, each loving the other' (486); when Kemp tries to leave to sleep in the corridor, Salazar insists that Kemp sleep on his bed: '[he] sprang towards me with an immense anxiety[...] He thrust me gently down upon [the bed...], making with his plump hands the motions of smoothing it to receive me' (486). Just before all this, Salazar draws out an 'immense pointed knife', which he kisses 'rapturously', exclaiming "'Aha! [...] Bear this kiss into his ribs **at the back**"' (485; the final exclamation is also noted as potentially homosexually suggestive by Koestenbaum 1989, 171).

(iii) *Victory* (1915).

Ricardo is talking of his first meeting with Jones, when Jones seemed to "'touch"' Ricardo "'inside* somewhere[...] on the very spot"' ; Schomberg asks whether "'the -* the gentleman*"' talked him over into leaving a good berth. Ricardo replies: "' talked me over! Didn't need to talk me over. He just beckoned to me, and that was enough[...] Up he comes, and in his quiet, tired way of speaking* you can tell a gentleman* by that as much as by anything else almost - **up he comes behind me** and says, just like that into my ear, in a manner"' (128-129).

BLACKMAIL.

Generally.

(i) Bristow notes that the Criminal Law Amendment Act, legislating against male 'gross indecency' was commonly known as 'the **blackmailer's charter**' (Bristow 1992a, 48); blackmail was seen as part and parcel of homosexual life: see 'queer', under Stevenson, re. 'Queer Street': financial difficulty, leading one into 'Queer Street', might well come about as a result of being blackmailed).

R. L. Stevenson.

(i) *Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde* (1886).

Showalter notes that some of Stevenson's contemporaries found it homosexually suggestive (1990, 115). Amongst other homosexually suggestive touches about the relationship between Jekyll and Hyde is the fact that their house is known as '**Blackmail House**' (1979, 33).

Oscar Wilde.

(i) *The Picture Of Dorian Gray* (1891)

Dorian knows that his painting changes under the influence of his vices and fears that his servant might find out this secret: 'perhaps some night he might find him creeping upstairs and trying to force the door of the room. It was a horrible thing to have a spy in one's house. He had heard of rich men who had been **blackmailed** all their lives by some servant who had read a letter, or overheard a conversation, or picked up a card with an address, or found beneath a pillow a withered flower or a shred of crumpled lace' (1985, 154).

Dorian's friendship with Campbell has been surrounded by homosexual suggestiveness (e.g. 200). Dorian murders Hallward and, threatening blackmail, forces Campbell to dispose of the body for him: "I am so sorry for you, Alan,... but you leave me no alternative. I have a letter written already. Here it is. You see the address. **If you don't help me, I must send it.** If you don't help me, I will send it. You know what the result will be. But you are going to help me. It is impossible for you to refuse now" (205).

E. M. Forster.

(i) In *Maurice* (wr. 1913-1914).

- See Scudder's specifically homosexually centred blackmail attempts on Maurice (1972, 188-189).

The first letter Scudder writes Maurice after their homosexual night together, is a love-letter with no hint of blackmail intended; nevertheless, merely because homosexuality has been involved, Maurice assumes the letter must be a blackmail attempt, and anxiously shows it to his hypnotist: "he's an uneducated man; **he's got me in his power. In court, would he have a case?**" (185).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

Mariani, having in the past ministered to a *Patna* crew-member's 'vices*' now lets that crew-member stay at his 'infamous' hovel out of '**gratitude**' for '**some unholy favour** received very many years ago' (49).

- Jim's stay with Marlow's bachelor friend is described in a mass of homosexual suggestiveness, as is the character of the second engineer from the *Patna*, who sees Jim's sudden departure from the bachelor's home. Meeting Jim again some time later, the engineer is 'confidential' and 'mysterious*', 'fawning and familiar' in manner, and winks knowingly at Jim, as he makes a blatant blackmail attempt: "I know a gentleman* when I see one, and I know how a gentleman* feels. **I hope, though, you will be keeping me on this job**" (190).

BLUSHING.

(In young men.) See also 'EFFEMINACY'.

Generally.

(i) In the homosexual literature of the time, blushing boys and young men are a constant presence, and such blushing in boys is repeatedly seen specifically as a sexually aroused and arousing response. See, e.g. Reade's selection (1970), *passim*. The quotations that follow are just a small sample.

J. A. Symonds.

(i)'Eudiades' (wr. 1868; pub. 1878).

Eudiades sees Melanthias peeping through the blossom at him: 'Whereat **the boy blushed**, and new thoughts were stirred' (quoted in Reade 1970, 111).

Eudiades finds the love-offering of a wreath Melanthias has left him: 'Then stole a **red blush o'er the sweet boy's face**' (quoted in Reade 1970, 112).

Melanthias' longing gaze affects Eudiades:

'his eyes expressed

Such depth of longing that the fair boy quailed

And blushed' (quoted in Reade 1970, 112; these passages are within fifty lines of each other.)

Oscar Wilde.

(i)*The Picture Of Dorian Gray* (1891).

Dorian has captivated Sir Henry immediately, and has been made aware of this. Sir Henry re-enters the room: 'Dorian bowed to him shyly from the end of the table, **a flush of pleasure stealing into his cheek**' (1985, 61). Anonymous.

(i)*Teleny, or, The Reverse Of The Medal* (1893).

One man is attracted by the other man's '**blushes** that came and went' (quoted in Reade 1970, 229).

E. M. Forster.

(i)The homosexual heroes of '*The Life To Come*' *And Other Stories* flush throughout. A couple of examples will suffice.

'Albergo Empedocle' (1903). Harold, who discovers he was once a homosexual in ancient Greece, and whom the male narrator of the story loves, is the only person in the tale to blush: 'Harold **blushed**' (1989, 38).

'The Life To Come' (wr. 1922). Mr. Pinmay's face is **'flushed'** throughout his first homosexual encounter (1989, 100).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

Jim blushes and flushes throughout the novel. e.g.:-

'[Jim] stood elevated in the witness-box, **with burning cheeks'** (28).

Marlow looks at him: 'I could see the down on his cheek, **the colour mantling warm under the smooth skin of his face**. Believe me or not, I say it was outrageously heart-rending' (153).

A sailor describes Jim's demeanour when he was a ship-chandler: "such a quiet, soft-spoken chap, too - **blush like a girl** when he came on board" (195).

'BROTHERS'.

C. S. Calverley.

(i) Translation of Idyll xxix in *Theocritus Translated Into English Verse* (1869).

- 'I'm longing to press

That exquisite mouth with a **brother's** caress' (166, quoted in d'Arch Smith 1970, 106).

J. A. Symonds.

(i) 'Paths of Life' in *Anima Figura* (1882).

Symonds writes of Uranian love happening 'where'er in **brotherhood** men lay their heads' (16, quoted in d'Arch Smith 1970, 13).

Anonymous ('J.J. W.').

(i) **'Brotherhood'** (1888).

The poet talks of being with his male beloved, 'wrapped in a dream/ Two alone*' and of thus knowing the 'mystic' experience that 'seers' have told of:

'Till all the world grew bright again,
 And our new manhood too was free,
 And each one clasped his friend* again

Tenderly

Knowing that he would never die.

Thus is our kinship sweetly true
 And we are **brothers**, you and I,

I and you' (quoted in Coote 1983, 293-294).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Heart Of Darkness* (1902).

The harlequin is possibly homosexual (Linda Dowling (1989) proposes that his speckledness would have suggested this to a nineteenth-century audience), and is emphatically 'brotherly' towards a rather bemused Marlow: "**Brother** sailor... honour... pleasure... delight[....] English tobacco; the excellent English tobacco! Now, that's **brotherly**" (91).

(ii) *Romance* (1903, with Ford).

Kemp is in jail, drinking wine in 'close confinement' with two pirates, one of whom, Salazar, insists that Kemp sleep on his bed '[he] sprang towards me with an immense anxiety[....] He thrust me gently down upon [the bed...], making with his plump hands the motions of smoothing it to receive me' (486) having just declared that the three of them are 'a band of **brothers**, each loving the other' (486; the final declaration is also noted as potentially homosexually suggestive by Koestenbaum 1989, 171).

'COMPANION'.

Edward Carpenter.

(i)'As It Happened' in *Towards Democracy* (First pub. 1883-1885, enlarged edn, 1892).

A man attending a 'casual little club' sees 'a new member / Of athletic strength and beauty':

'But what was even more strange*, the newcomer turning spoke friendly* to him, and soon seemed to understand*,

And from that time forward came and **companioned** him and nursed him, and stayed whole nights with him and loved him' (quoted, with no page reference, in Bartlett 1988, 115).

Oscar Wilde.

(i)*de Profundis* (wr. 1897, pub. 1905 (abridged), 1949 (complete)).

Wilde on his homosexual relationship with Douglas; someone else would have suited Douglas better: 'I am not saying this in bitterness at all, but simply as a fact of **companionship**. Ultimately, the bond of all **companionship**, whether in marriage or in friendship*, is conversation' (1986, 108).

Douglas' mother had chastised Wilde for introducing Douglas to other homosexuals: 'the reason of your going to Belgium you had placed to the fault of your **companion** in that journey, and your mother had reproached me with having introduced you to him' (110).

- Douglas tried to bring other homosexual lovers of his to Wilde's house: 'you suddenly appeared a third time bringing with you a **companion** who you actually proposed should stay in my house. I (you must admit now quite properly) absolutely declined. I entertained you, of course; I had no option in the matter: but elsewhere, and not in my own house. The next day, Monday, your **companion** returned to the duties of his profession, and you stayed with me' (113).

Douglas is persuaded to go on a trip with Wilde to Egypt by the opportunity for easy homosexual encounters there: 'on my side and

along with my intellectual attractions were the flesh-pots of Egypt. When you could not find me to be with, the **companions** whom you chose as substitutes were not flattering' (123).

(ii) Letter to More Adey (21 November 1897).

Adey has told Wilde's wife that Wilde is still seeing Douglas ('Bosie') and she has accordingly stopped Wilde's allowance: 'depriving me of my allowance, because I have the pleasure of Bosie's **companionship**, the only **companionship** in the world open to me' (Hart-Davis 1979, 319).
E. M. Forster.

(i) *Maurice* (wr. 1913-1914).

Maurice reflects on his homosexual relationship with Scudder: 'they must work and stick to each other till death. But England belonged to them. That, besides **companionship**, was their reward' (1972, 208-209).
Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Romance* (1903, with Ford).

Manuel-del-Popolo's feelings for Kemp are surrounded with homosexual suggestiveness. Kemp recalls the course of one conversation with him, during which Manuel is 'in earnest*' (122) and 'implore[s... Kemp...] with his eyes* for a long time' (121), until he assures Kemp "you would love me; I have a gentle spirit. I am a pleasant **companion**" (123).

(ii) 'The Duel' (1908).

The relationship between the two duellers, D'Hubert and Feraud, is loaded with homosexual suggestiveness. They reappear from the woods, leaning upon each other and are described as 'two indomitable **companions**' who have 'manly* qualities' (187).

(iii) 'Il Conde' (1908).

The whole tale is densely loaded with homosexual codewords and homosexually suggestive situations and the Count of the title

undergoes an experience reminiscent of an attack during a casual homosexual street-encounter that went further than he intended. Even though the Count has only just met the narrator - a meeting described in rather romantic terms - when the Count must spend an evening away from him, he declares that 'he would miss' the narrator 'very much' and the narrator is likewise 'somewhat upset', having found the Count 'an easy, pleasant **companion** for the hours between dinner and bedtime' (238-9).

(iv) *Victory* (1915).

- The homosexual Jones is telling Heyst about his partner, Ricardo: "that er -* **companion** er -* secretary of mine is a queer* chap" (236).

'COMRADES'.

J. A. Symonds.

(i) 'The Song Of Love And Death' in *Studies In Terza Rima* (c.1875).

- 'Love to weld and weave

Comrade to comrade, man to bearded man' (quoted in Reade 1970, 6).

Walt Whitman.

(i) A poem (1876).

- Whitman refers to 'the manly* love of **comrades**' (quoted in Reade 1970, 280).

Edward Carpenter.

(i) *A Problem In Modern Ethics* (1891).

Symonds finds that a major factor of human life is Whitman's 'the high towering love of **comrades**' (quoted in Reade 1970, 275).

(ii) *Homogenic Love* (1894)

Carpenter refers to 'that special attachment which is sometimes denoted by the word '**Comradeship**' (quoted in Reade 1970, 324-325).

Anonymous ('Q').

(i) Contribution to *Sexual Inversion* (1897).

- On working-class homosexual behaviour: 'among the working masses of England and Scotland, "**comradeship**" is well marked, though not (as in Italy) very conscious of itself. Friends often kiss each other, though this habit seems to vary a good deal in different sections and coteries. Men commonly sleep together, whether **comrades** or not, and so easily get familiar' (quoted in Ellis 1924, 22).

Anonymous ('A. S.').

(i) Contribution to *Sexual Inversion* (1897).

- On the necessity of explaining about homosexuality to young children: 'I cannot but think that all youngsters should be spoken to about the love of **comrades** and encouraged to seek help in any sort of trouble that this may bring' (quoted in Ellis 1924, 164).

D. H. Lawrence.

(i) *Studies In Classic American Literature* (1924).

Lawrence on Whitman: 'the strange* calamus has its pink-tinged root by the pond, and it sends up its leaves of **comradeship**, **comrades** from one root, without the intervention of the woman, the female. So he sings of this mystery* of manly* love, the love of **comrades**. Over and over he says the same thing, the new world will be built on the love of **comrades**' (1924, 167).

'CORRUPT'.Obscene Publications Act (1857).

Refers to homosexual 'gross indecency' as 'filthy' and '**corrupt**' (quoted in Bristow 1992a, 49).

Newspapers Of The Period.

(i) *North London Press* (1890's).

- A poem on the notorious 'Cleveland Street' homosexual scandal of the 1890's refers to 'raw, **cash-corrupted** boys' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 250).

Oscar Wilde.

(i) *Dorian Gray* (1891).

Hallward, after he lists Gray's almost exclusively young, male victims: "my God! don't tell me that you are bad, and **corrupt**, and shameful*" (1985, 187).

Hallward, in the same speech: "they say that you **corrupt** everyone with whom you become intimate*, and that it is quite sufficient for you to enter a house, for shame* of some kind* to follow after" (185).

The Wilde Trials (1895).

The prosecution refers to Alfred Taylor as a procurer of male prostitutes: 'it will be shown that Taylor **corrupted** these lads and induced them to meet Wilde by assuring them that he was liberal in his payments' (quoted in Hyde 1962, 169).

The prosecution refers to the necessity of removing a homosexual from society: 'your duty.... to protect society from such scandals by removing from its heart a sore which cannot fail in time to **corrupt** and taint it all' (quoted in Hyde 1962, 213).

E. M. Forster.

(i) *Maurice* (wr. 1913-1914).

Maurice, on first discovering that he feels a homosexual attraction towards Clive: 'he was damned. He dare never be friends* with a young man again, for fear of **corrupting** him' (1972, 70).

(ii) 'The Life To Come' (wr. 1922).

The missionary has had a homosexual encounter with the tribal chief and now thinks it was all part of the tribe's plan: 'yes, to tempt, to

attack the new religion by **corrupting** its preacher, yes, yes, that was it' (1989, 97).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

Following a long section with strong homosexual overtones, Marlow refers to the dangers of 'the seductive **corruption** of men' (43).

Marlow watches a plainly homosexual crew-member of the *Patna*, who is suffering *delirium tremens*, having a vision of what went on below, on board the ship: 'his face[...] became decomposed before my eyes by the **corruption** of stealthy cunning, of an abominable* caution and of desperate fear' (53).

'CRIME'(UNSPECIFIED), 'CRIMINAL', etc./WORST CRIME.

The Wilde Trials (1895).

(i) Committal proceedings of Oscar Wilde (April, 1895).

Magistrate, Sir John Bridge: 'there is **no worse crime** than that with which the prisoners are charged' (quoted in Hyde 1962, 156).

Newspapers Of The Period.

(i) Generally, the newspapers deal report case, including the complexities of Wilde's not having been accused of being a sodomite, but of posing as one; they must remain intelligible without actually using the forbidden word:-

(ii) *The Times* (3rd April 1895).

The words of Lord Queensberry's libel 'were not directly an accusation of '**the gravest of all offences**' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 147).

- Wilde may have 'desired to appear and pose to be a person inclined to the commission of **that gravest of all offences**' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 147).

(iii) *The Evening News* (3rd April 1895).

'There was no accusation in the plea that Mr. Oscar Wilde had been guilty of a **criminal** offence' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 147).

(iv) *Pall Mall Gazette* (3rd April 1895).

On the question of whether a letter from Wilde to Douglas is homosexual in content or not: 'it was merely poetry, not indicative of a **crime**, maintained Sir Edward' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 151-152).

E. M. Forster.

(i) *Maurice* (wr. 1913-1914):-

Maurice scorns Clive's first homosexual overture: "'it's the only subject absolutely beyond the limit as you know, it's **the worst crime in the calendar**, and you must never mention it again'"(1972, 56).

- Clive asks that his homosexuality remain a secret: "'I shall be obliged if you will not mention my **criminal** morbidity* to anyone'"(57).

- Clive realises he is a homosexual: 'Hall had said he was a **criminal**, and must know'(70).

(ii) 'The Other Boat' (wr. 1913 & c.1957-1958).

- Lionel broods after a man has made a sexual advance towards him: 'here was the **worst thing in the world**, the thing for which Tommies got given the maximum' (1989, 211).

Mary Boyle Reilly.

(i) Letter to Gavan Duffy (3 June 1916).

- Reilly is concerned that Roger Casement's trial for treason will be unfairly and irrelevantly swayed against him by the introduction, in the press and at the trial, of evidence to prove that Casement is a homosexual: 'journalists were... shown letters and a diary of Sir Roger Casement's which proved him to be a moral* offender unworthy of public sympathy. One of these journalists... informed me that this **incriminating** evidence will be brought forward early in the trial' (quoted in Hyde 1964, 75).

Lionel Johnson.

(i) Letter to Yeats.

- Johnson believed that Wilde got a 'sense of triumph and power at every dinner table he dominated, from the knowledge that he was guilty of **that sin which, more than any other possible to man, would turn all those people against him**' (quoted in Yeats 1926, 351)

Joseph Conrad.

(i) Generally.

Both 'Falk' and *Heart Of Darkness* deal with an ultimate, unspeakable crime ('Falk' does eventually specify cannibalism; *Heart Of Darkness* leaves the crime carefully unspecified); *Lord Jim* deals with a crime felt by its perpetrator and some of his judges - to be unforgivable.

(ii) *Lord Jim* (1900).

Marlow dilates on the subject of Jim and his crime: 'nothing more awful than to watch a man who has been found out, not in **a crime** but in **a more than criminal weakness***. The commonest sort of fortitude prevents us from becoming **criminals in a legal sense**; it is from weakness* unknown[...] not one of us* is safe' (42-43).

- Jim wishes to be distinguished from the rest of the crew-members of the *Patna*: 'he discovered at once a desire that I should not confound him with his partners* in -* in **crime**, let us call it*' (79-80).

(iii) 'Il Conde' (1908).

The whole tale is densely loaded with homosexual codewords and homosexually suggestive situations and the Count of the title undergoes an experience reminiscent of an attack during a casual homosexual street-encounter that went further than he intended. The Count is uneasy about reporting his handsome young assailant to the police, for fear of his bringing 'some dishonouring* charge' against him,

resulting in the Count's being 'arrested, dragged at night to the police office like a **criminal**' (245).

(iv) *Victory* (1915).

Lena attempts to understand the nature of Heyst's crime against Morrison: "It wasn't murder," she insisted earnestly.

"I know. I understand. **It was worse**. As to killing a man, which would be a comparatively decent thing to do, well I have never done that" (211).

(v) Letter to Ford Madox Ford (c. July 20 1902).

- On his relationship with Ford: 'you cannot really suppose that there is anything between us except our mutual regard and our partnership*
- * **in crime**' (quoted in Karl 1979, 521).

'DEGENERATE'.

Havelock Ellis.

(i) *Sexual Inversion* (1897).

'Strictly speaking, the invert is **degenerate**' (1924, 320); there then follows a long discourse (320-321) on how little is to be gained by the common practice of 'describing inversion as **degeneration**' (1924, 321).

Newspapers Of The Period.

(i) *The Daily Express* (30 June 1916).

Describes Roger Casement, whose homosexuality had been revealed during his trial for treason, as an 'extremely **degenerate** traitor' (quoted in Hyde 1964, 137).

Sir Ernest Blackwell.

(i) Memorandum On Roger Casement (17 July 1916).

On Casement's homosexuality: 'of late years he seems to have completed the full cycle of sexual **degeneracy** and from a pervert*, has become an invert - a 'woman' or pathic who derives his

satisfaction from attracting men and inducing them to use him'
(quoted in Hyde 1964, 200).

John Quinn.

(i) Letter to Gavan Duffy (9 September 1916).

Concerning the revelation of Casement's homosexuality: 'the English have been circulating reports on Casement's **degeneracy**' (quoted in Hyde 1964, 164).

'DEGRADED'

J. A. Symonds.

(i) 'A Problem in Modern Ethics' (1891).

People automatically think of homosexuality as '**degraded**' (quoted in Reade 1970, 249).

Oscar Wilde.

(i) *Dorian Gray* (1891).

- In Hailward's speech to Dorian listing the number of young, mostly male friends Dorian has ruined: "you don't want people to talk of you as something vile* and **degraded**" (1985, 182).

(ii) Letter to the Home Secretary (2 July 1896).

Confessing to a horror of his past homosexual behaviour and a fear lest it return under prison conditions, in an attempt to gain an early release: '[the petitioner's prayer is] that the imprisonment may be ended now, and not uselessly or vindictively prolonged till insanity has claimed soul as well as body as its prey, and brought it to the same **degradation** and the same shame*' (Hart-Davis 1979, 145).

Newspapers Of The Period.

(i) *The Westminster Gazette* (6th April 1895).

-Refers to the homosexually suggestive writings Wilde produced as '**degraded** literature' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 168-169).

Alfred Noyes.

(i) Article on Roger Casement's diaries for Philadelphia local newspaper (1916 (?)).

The homosexually explicit diaries 'touch the lowest depth* that human **degradation** has ever touched' (quoted, with no further ascription, in Hyde 1964, 171).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) 'll Conde' (1908).

- The whole tale is densely loaded with homosexual codewords and homosexually suggestive situations and the Count of the title undergoes an experience reminiscent of an attack during a casual homosexual street-encounter that went further than he intended. The Count feels 'defiled by [the...] **degrading** experience' (252).

'DEPRAVED'.J. A. Symonds.

(i) 'A Problem in Modern Ethics' (1891).

- People assume that 'inverts' were '**depraved**' (quoted in Reade 1970, 249).

C. Dukes.

(i) *Health At School* (1894).

- Concerning schools that still put two boys into one bed, to save space: 'most emphatically I condemn this sytem, which is still unhappily in existence, as distinctly conducing, without the need of my entering into further details, to a flagrant species of immorality* and **depravation** of character' (108, quoted in Honey 1977, 182).

Anonymous.

(i) Contribution to *Sexual Inversion* (1897).

- His attitude to homosexuality before he realised his own and his friends' homosexual inclinations: 'my attention was first drawn to the study of inversion - though I then regarded all forms of it as **depraving** and abominable*' (quoted in Ellis 1924, 180).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Victory* (1915).

- Jones' 'feminine*' appearance makes him look '**depraved**' (102).

'DEVIATION'.

Generally.

(i) Listed in Hughes (1991, 232) as a term historically widely understood as descriptive of homosexuality.

Anonymous.

(i) Contribution to *Sexual Inversion* (1897).

On his finding that most men who experience homosexual desires in youth, go on, in adulthood, to live heterosexual lives: 'ninety per cent. of the boys..., on reaching man's estate, have, like myself, no desire to **deviate** from the old-fashioned way formulated by our ancient sire, Adam' (quoted in Ellis 1924, 346).

'DIFFERENT'.

(See also 'ABNORMAL' 'ANOTHER (KIND)', 'OTHER SIDE', 'PECULIAR', 'QUEER', 'STRANGE'.)

E. M. Forster.

(i) 'Albergo Empedocle' (1903).

· Harold is 'remembering' a past life as a homosexual ancient Greek. His fiancée, unaware of the homosexual aspect of his memories, asks him whether he loved better; he replies: "'I loved very **differently**'" (1989, 52).

(ii)'The Other Boat' (wr. 1913 & c. 1957-1958).

Lionel is a perfect soldier all the time he is above decks, but below decks, he associates with his homosexual lover: 'they couldn't associate on deck with that touch of the tar-brush, but it was a very **different** business down here*' (1989, 210).

Joseph Conrad.

(i)*Lord Jim* (1900).

- Jim and the other crew-members: 'the quality of these men did not matter; he rubbed shoulders with them, but they could not touch him; he shared the air they breathed, but he was **different**' (24-25).

(ii) *Victory* (1915).

- Lena looks at Heyst: 'she now perceived how **different** he was from the other men in the room. He was as **different** from them as she was different from the other members of the ladies' orchestra' (73).

Ricardo talks of his relationship with Jones: "work be damned! I ain't a dog walking on its hind legs for a bone; I am a man who's following a gentleman*. There's a **difference** which you will never understand*" (146).

Lena to Heyst on sexual guilt and the relations between the sexes: "you! You are **different**. Woman is the tempter. You took me up from pity" (354).

'DISEASED', etc.

(See also 'UNCLEAN', 'UNHEALTHY').

Herman Melville.

(i) *White Jacket* (1850).

Concerning 'evils' amongst the crews of men-of-war that 'will neither bear representing nor reading': 'like pears closely-packed, the crowded crew mutually decay through close contact, and every

plague-spot is contagious' (quoted, with no further ascription, in Higgins 1993, 104; it is intriguing to compare this with *Jim*, 34.)

Newspapers Of The Period.

(i) Generally, it was assumed that people addicted to the 'dual vice' showed it on their faces and in their general health:-

(ii) *The Star* (1 and 27 May 1895).

Reports of the Wilde trials concentrate on his unhealthy appearance: he is '**haggard**', his face is 'like the face of **a corpse**' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 194-195).

(iii) *The Evening News* (2 May 1895).

Similarly concentrates on Wilde's unhealthy appearance: he is '**haggard**' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 194).

(iv) *Reynolds'* Editorial (? May 1895)

On the Wilde trials: 'the kind* of literature with which Wilde's name is closely identified [is....] one of the most **diseased** products of a **diseased** time' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 255).

(v) *The Evening News* (25 May 1895).

On Wilde's conviction: 'the conviction of Wilde for these abominable* vices*, which were the natural outcome of his **diseased** intellectual condition, will be a salutary warning to the unhealthy* boys who posed as sharers* of his culture'(quoted in Hyde 1962, 18).

Sir Richard Burton.

(i) Terminal Essay to his translation of the *Arabian Nights*, Section D 'Pederasty' (1885).

Burton tells of Whitman's account of 'the **ashen grey faces** of onanists, the **faded colours**, the **puffy features** and the **unwholesome complexion** of the professed pederast, with his peculiar* **cachectic expression**, indescribable* but once seen never forgotten, stamp the breed' (quoted in Reade 1970, 161).

Oscar Wilde.

(i) *Dorian Gray* (1891).

After Gray's increasing debaucheries, the painting, which registers the effects upon him of his own crimes, looks as if it has a '**disease**' (1985, 262), marked with 'the **leprosy of sin**' (191).

(ii) Letter to the Home Secretary (2 July 1896).

- Confessing a horror of his past homosexual behaviour and a fear lest it return under prison conditions, in an attempt to gain an early release: his 'vices* live on: they make their dwelling house in him who by horrible mischance or fate has become their victim: they are embedded in his flesh: they spread over him **like a leprosy**: they feed on him like a strange* **disease**' (Hart-Davis 1979, 143-144).

The Wilde Trials (1895).

The prosecution refers to the necessity of removing a homosexual from society: 'your duty.... to protect society from such scandals by removing from its heart **a sore** which cannot fail in time to corrupt* and taint it all' (quoted in Hyde 1962, 213).

Marquess Of Queensberry.

(i) Letter to *The Star* (24 April 1895).

Concerning Oscar Wilde's homosexuality: 'I would treat him with all possible consideration as a sexual pervert* of an utterly **diseased** mind, and not as a sane criminal' (quoted in Ellmann 1988, 449).

Roger Casement.

(i) Diary (1903).

On hearing of the suicide of Sir Hector Macdonald, who was travelling to Colombo to face a court-martial on charges of homosexuality: 'the reasons given are pitiably sad. The most distressing case this surely of its kind and one that may awake the national mind

to saner methods of curing a terrible **disease** than by criminal legislation' (quoted, with no further ascription, in Hyde 1964, 175).

Lytton Strachey.

(i) Letter to Forster (12th March 1915).

- Referring to *Maurice*: 'I really think the whole conception of male copulation in the book is rather **diseased** in fact morbid* and unnatural*' (quoted in Gardner 1973, 431).

Sir John Harris.

(i) Unpublished and uncompleted autobiography (sometime after 1916, when he saw Casement's diaries).

- On Roger Casement's homosexually explicit diaries: 'the diary was more than a record, it was the unfolding of a life which for years had been poisoned by **disease**' (quoted, with no further ascription, in Hyde 1964, 138).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

Marlow on the quirks of fate that make him repeatedly meet men like Jim: 'the kind of thing that[...] causes me to run up against men with soft spots, with hard spots, with hidden **plague spots**' (34).

(ii) *Heart Of Darkness* (1902).

Kurtz's unhealthy appearance is emphasised throughout the book: e.g., he is an '**animated image of death**' (99).

(ii) *Victory* (1915).

- Jones' unhealthy appearance is emphasised throughout the book: e.g., he has the 'air of a **convalescent invalid** who had imprudently **overtaxed his strength** (379); his physique is 'even more suggestive of the **grave** than of the **sick-bed** (272).

'DISGRACE'.

The Wilde Trials (1895).

Arthur Gill, for the prosecution, attempting to establish by questioning that a particular brothel was specifically a male brothel: 'a certain* house in Fitzroy Street.... Orgies of the most **disgraceful** kind* used to happen there?' (quoted in Hyde 1962, 173).

Newspapers Of The Period.

(i)*Punch* (13 April 1895).

The Decadents, led by Wilde, did their best

'to asphyxiate

With upas-perfume sons of English race,

With manhood-blighting cant-of-art to prate,

The jargon of an epicene **disgrace**' (177, quoted in Schmidgall 1994, 251).

Oscar Wilde.

(i)Letter to Robert Ross (23 or 30 May 1896).

On his homosexual relationship with Douglas: 'the mode by which he thrust me into the abyss* of ruin and **disgrace**' (Hart-Davis 1979,141).

Anonymous ('E. S.').

(i)Contribution to *Sexual Inversion* (1897).

On his refusal to initiate another into homosexual behaviour: 'I am not sure that I should be able to resist temptation placed in my way. But I am absolutely sure that I should never, under any circumstances, tempt others to any **disgraceful** act' (quoted in Ellis 1924, 106).

E. M. Forster.

(i)*Maurice* (wr.1913-1914).

Clive is relieved that he has never had sex with Maurice: 'there had been nothing **disgraceful**' (1972, 152).

(ii)'The Other Boat' (wr. 1913 & c. 1957-1958).

Cocoanut makes a homosexual approach to Lionel, but is unconcerned when it is initially rebuffed: 'he seemed positively not to mind his **disgrace** - incomprehensibly to Lionel, who expected either repentance or terror' (1989, 213).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

Marlow on Jim: 'the idea obtrudes itself that he made so much of his **disgrace** while it is the guilt alone that matters' (177).

'DISGUSTING'.

R. L. Stevenson.

(i) *Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde* (1886).

Hyde's appearance is such that he strikes everyone as instantly detestable, while yet having no 'nameable* malformation' (1979, 40): 'not all of these together could explain the hitherto unknown **disgust**, loathing* and fear with which Mr. Utterson regarded him' (40).

'Walter'.

(i) *My Secret Life* (1888-1892).

Walter is in the midst of his first adult experiments in homosexual sex: 'then came a dislike to him and **disgust** with myself that I often had felt recently' (1994b, 612). Later he continues: 'a fierce, bloody-minded baudiness possessed me, a determination to do it - to ascertain if it was a pleasure I would have wrung his prick off sooner than have withdrawn for him, and yet felt a **disgust** at myself' (614). As soon as they have finished: 'immediately I had an ineffable* **disgust** at him and myself - a terrible fear a loathing*' (615). He ends his description of the occasion: '[an act] in which I had no pleasure have no recollection of physical pleasure and which only dwells in my mind with **disgust**, tho it is against my philosophy even to think I had done wrong' (615).

Marquis Of Queensberry.

(i) Letter to Lord Alfred Douglas (1 April 1894).

On Douglas's homosexual relationship with Wilde: 'with my own eyes I saw you both in the most loathsome* and **disgusting** relationship as expressed by your manner and expression' (quoted in Ellmann 1988, 394).

E. M. Forster.

(i) *Maurice* (wr. 1913-1914).

Maurice responds to a lascivious sign from an elderly homosexual and then knocks him down, horrified to see 'in this **disgusting** and dishonourable* old age his own' (1972, 136).

Maurice tells Clive that he has slept with Scudder: 'Clive sprang up with a whimper of **disgust**. He wanted to smite the monster*, and flee, but he was civilized, and wanted it feebly. After all, they were Cambridge men' (213).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

Marlow on Cornelius, plainly a homosexual, with whom Jim goes to live at one point: 'marked by that abjectness which was like the stamp of the man[....] I am sure his love would have been the most abject of sentiments - but can one imagine a loathsome* insect in love? And his loathsomeness*, too, was abject, so that a simply **disgusting** person would have appeared noble by his side.

(ii) *Heart Of Darkness* (1902).

Marlow pictures a civilised Roman coloniser of the ancient British 'darkness' in a situation analogous to that of Kurtz in the jungle: 'it has a fascination, too, that goes to work upon him. The fascination of the abomination* you know, imagine the growing regrets, the longing to escape, the powerless **disgust**, the surrender, the hate' (31).

(iii)'The Duel' (1908).

The relationship between the two duellers, D'Hubert and Feraud, is loaded with homosexual suggestiveness. D'Hubert finds, with 'profound **disgust**' that thoughts of his future bride are 'swept from his view' in a 'flood of moral distress' centering on Feraud, and his resultant need to help Feraud is described as an 'almost morbid* need' (196).

(iv) *Victory* (1915).

Heyst discovers the 'calumny' that has been poured on his relationship with Morrison: "'I feel a **disgust** at my own person, as if I had tumbled into some filthy hole*'" (215).

'DISHONOURABLE'.

Sir Richard Burton.

(i) Terminal Essay to his translation of the *Arabian Nights*, Section D, 'Pederasty' (1885).

- A missionary victim of homosexual rape speaks only of his '**dishonoured** person' (quoted in Reade 1970, 179).

E. M. Forster.

(i) *Maurice* (wr. 1913-1914).

Maurice responds to a lascivious sign from an elderly homosexual and then knocks him down, horrified to see 'in this disgusting* and **dishonourable** old age his own' (1972, 136).

Alexander M. Sullivan.

(i) Verbal reference to Roger Casement's trial (after 1916, the time of the trial; before 1956, when the reference appears in print).

Sullivan is anxious that the homosexually explicit diaries should not be used in Casement's defence: 'I knew it might save his life, but I finally decided that death was better than besmirching and **dishonour**' (quoted in Hyde 1964, 77).

Joseph Conrad.

(i)'Il Conde' (1908).

The whole tale is densely loaded with homosexual codewords and homosexually suggestive situations and the Count of the title undergoes an experience reminiscent of an attack during a casual homosexual street-encounter that went further than he intended. After the attack, the Count explains why he is unwilling to speak out against his attacker: "he might have said anything bring some **dishonouring** charge against me what do I know?[....] What could I say*?[....] To be arrested, dragged at night to the police office like a criminal*."

'He shuddered. It was in his character so shrink from scandal, much more than from mere death. And certainly for many people this would have always remained considering certain* peculiarities* of Neapolitan manners - a deucedly queer* story' (245-246).

DOWN, GOING DOWN, BELOW, etc.Generally

(i)Dellamora quotes '**fall**' as known slang for homosexuality in the 1890's (1990, 11).

H. W. Lecky.

(i)1867.

Refers to homosexuality as 'that **lowest abyss** of unnatural* love' (quoted, with no further ascription in Weeks 1990,147).

R. L. Stevenson.

(i)*Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde* (1886)

- Refers to illicit '**down-going** men' (1979, 29).

R. L. Stevenson and Lloyd Osborne.

(i)*The Ebb Tide* (1894).

The men are exiled to the islands because of disgrace in England, where each man had 'made a long apprenticeship in **going downward**; and each, at some stage of the **descent**, had been shamed* into the adoption of an alias' (1908, 5). Koestenbaum points out a link commonly made in the 1890's between the 'going down' of the moral descent into homosexuality, and the specific 'going down' in fellatio that such a decline might involve; he adduces these two passages from Stevenson as examples (1989, 147).

Oscar Wilde.

(i) *Dorian Gray* (1891).

Hallward's condemnatory speech, suggestive of homosexual misbehaviour in Gray: "one has a right to judge of a man by the effect he has over his friends*. Yours seem to lose all sense of honour*, of goodness, of purity. You have filled them with a madness for pleasure. They have **gone down into the depths**. You led them there.... And there is worse behind" (1985, 184).

(ii) Letter to Robert Ross (23 or 30 May 1896).

On his homosexual relationship with Douglas: 'the mode by which he thrust me **into the abyss** of ruin and disgrace*' (Hart-Davis 1979, 141).

(iii) *de Profundis* (wr. 1897, pub. 1905 (abridged), 1949 (complete)).

The title of the work.

- Wilde on the history of his involvement with homosexual behaviour: 'tired of being on the heights, I deliberately **went to the depths** in the search for new sensation. What the paradox was to me in the sphere of thought, perversity* became to me in the sphere of passion' (1986, 152).

Wilde's involvement with Douglas centred on homosexual sex: 'It was only **in the mire** that we met' (108).

The Wilde Trials (1895).

- Prosecution's reference to Wilde's homosexual behaviour: 'however sorry you may feel yourselves at the moral **downfall** of an eminent man' (quoted in Hyde 1962, 213).

Newspapers Of The Period.

(i) *The Star* (3 April 1895).

Headline on the Wilde trial: '**DEEPER AND DEEPER STILL**' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 163).

Alfred Noyes.

(i) Article on Roger Casement's diaries for Philadelphia local newspaper (1916 (?)).

The homosexually explicit diaries 'touch the **lowest depth** that human degradation* has ever touched' (quoted, with no further definite ascription, in Hyde 1964, 171).

E. M. Forster.

(i) 'The Life To Come' (wr. 1922).

The missionary who has spent a homosexual night with the chief feels he is '**down into the depths**' (1989, 97).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

Marlow visits a plainly homosexual crewmember of the *Patna* who is in hospital with the d.t.s and confusedly re-living parts of his voyage: 'his face [was filled with...] abominable* caution and[...] desperate fear. He restrained a cry "Ssh! what are they doing now **down there**?" he asked, pointing to the floor with fantastic precautions of voice and gesture, whose meaning, borne upon my mind in a lurid flash, made me very sick of my cleverness' (53).

- Jim's crime: 'it was as if I had jumped **into a well - into an everlasting deep hole**' (111).

The first sight of Jim gives Marlow a 'flutter **deep, deep down** somewhere, give a flutter of light...of heat' (128).

The homosexual pair Chester and Robinson. Chester describes how he was desperately trying to get money for "my thing". He found a likely source in a man from Auckland: "I nearly **went on my knees** to him". In the end he gets Robinson: "if I *must* share* thinks I with any man, then give me Robinson"; "he's got a little money, so I had to let him into my thing. Had to!"; Robinson said to him: "I am your man" (163-165).

Marlow fears that as soon as Jim leaves his room, he will 'begin the journey **towards the bottomless pit**' (179).

(ii) *Heart Of Darkness* (1902).

Kurtz is '**at the bottom of a precipice** where the sun never shines' (111).

Kurtz has gone '**over the edge**' (112,113).

(iii) 'The Secret Sharer' (1910).

The Captain's first, sexually loaded sight of Leggatt's naked body is '**down there**', on the '**bottom rung**' (86), as if 'he had risen **from the bottom of the sea**' (87).

Throughout, as a matter of practical safety, the Captain and Leggatt's encounters can only happen below decks, but this is mentioned so regularly, one cannot help but suspect a symbolic significance too, and frequently the two men's belowness is specifically stressed simultaneously with moments of homosexual suggestiveness. The Captain tells Leggatt to go below: "you had better **slip down** into my stateroom now," I said, moving off stealthily. My double followed my movements' (91); 'he touched my shoulder lightly. Lazy footsteps came **right over our heads** and stopped' (96); 'with my double **down there** it was most trying to be on deck. And it was almost

as trying to **be below**. Altogether a nerve-trying situation. But on the whole I felt less torn in two when I was with him' (107); 'we could talk only with our eyes* when I first **went down**' (108); 'at night I would smuggle him into my bed-place, and we would whisper* together, with the regular footfalls of the officer of the watch passing and repassing **over our heads**' (110-111); 'we two, **down in my cabin**, came together in our usual position by the bed-place' (113).

The Captain gazes at Leggatt and sees his double: 'as though I had been faced by my own reflection **in the depths** of a sombre and immense mirror' (89).

Leggatt decides to stay beyond authority, unlike the Captain: 'he[...] **lowered himself** into the water to take his punishment: a free man, a proud swimmer striking out for a new destiny' (124).

(iv) *Victory* (1915).

- The homosexual Jones's voice always sounds 'as though he were speaking from **the bottom of a well**' (110).

Ricardo first meets Jones: "'I used to watch him **down the skylight**[...] he caught me at it once' (130).

Ricardo and Jones's first crime together, after Ricardo has told Jones he is "'game for anything"' (130), involves Ricardo's keeping watch to ensure Jones is not disturbed 'in [his...] business **down below**' (132).

Ricardo clearly uses the idea of 'under the table' to indicate a reference to male genitalia. If there is a disagreement during a game of cards, Ricardo will use his knife: "'well, you **stoop** to pick up a dropped card[...] you just dodge **under the table** when there's some shooting coming. You wouldn't believe the damage a fellow with a knife **under the table** can do to ill-conditioned skunks that want to raise

trouble, before they begin to understand what the screaming's about" (136).

Heyst discovers the 'calumny' that has been poured on his relationship with Morrison: "I feel a disgust* at my own person, as if I had **tumbled into some filthy hole**" (215).

- Jones is trying to show Heyst that Heyst's potential heterosexual partner is being unfaithful to him with Jones's own homosexual partner. Jones wants to show Heyst that this could bring the two of them together: "behold!" the skeleton of the crazy bandit jabbered thinly into his ear in spectral fellowship*. "Behold the simple Acis kissing the sandals of the nymph, on the way to her lips, all forgetful, while the menacing fife of Polyphemus already sounds close at hand if he could only hear it! **Stoop a little**" (393).

EARNEST.

Generally.

(i) d'Arch Smith (1970, xvii-xix) and Bristow (1992b, 2, 19) both note that '**earnest**' was a homosexual codeword at the turn of the century, and that this was perhaps assisted by the success of Wilde's homosexually suggestive play, *The Importance Of Being **Earnest*** (1895).

John Gambriel Nicholson.

(i) *Love In Earnest* (1892).

Nicholls entitles a book that contains poems discreetly suggesting love between a man and a boy, *Love In **Earnest***; in one of the poems, 'Of Boys' Names', he avows that '**Ernest** sets my heart aflame' (62, quoted in d'Arch Smith 1970, xviii).

Ford Madox Ford.

(i) *Memories And Impressions* (1911).

Describing Oscar Wilde's social set: 'this little **earnest** or posing world considered itself as a hierarchy' (164, quoted in Schmidgall 1994, 247).
Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Romance* (1903).

Kemp, whose relationships with several men throughout the novel are surrounded by homosexual suggestiveness, has been attacked by a sailor, who returns to apologise to him. During the apology, Kemp notices 'the beauty of that rugged, grizzled, hairy seaman's eyelashes. They were long and thick, shadowing the eyes softly like the lashes of a young girl*' (310). The sailor speaks 'bashfully', 'shyly', to Kemp: 'his bass, half-concealed mutter* was quite as sweet to my ears as a celestial melody; it was, after all, the sanction of simple **earnestness** to my desires and hopes - a witness that he and his like* were on my side in the world of romance*' (310).

Kemp meets a pirate, Manuel-del-Popolo, whose feelings for Kemp are surrounded by homosexual suggestiveness. When he tries to escape from the sailors who are restraining him, they seem 'ridiculously anxious to suppress his sudden contortions, as one would some gross indecency' (291) - the latter phrase had been indelibly imprinted upon the public mind as related to sodomy since the Wilde trials, when Wilde was eventually prosecuted under the terms of the Labouchere Amendment to the Criminal Law Act, which specifically declared illegal any attempt 'to procure the commission by any male person of any act of gross indecency with another male person' (quoted in Weeks 1990, 14). Kemp describes a conversation with Manuel: 'he[...] grasped my arm with wrapt **earnestness** as he settled himself slowly beside me' (120); 'he began to peer at me more wistfully*[...] This man, in spite of his grotesqueness, was quite in **earnest**, there was no doubting that' (122).

(ii)'Il Conde' (1908).

The whole tale is densely loaded with homosexual codewords and homosexually suggestive situations and the Count of the title undergoes an experience reminiscent of an attack during a casual homosexual street-encounter that went further than he intended. The narrator, whose first meeting with the Count has been described in romantic terms, describes the Count's demeanour while the Count is telling of his 'abominable*' (240) adventure, shortly after the Count has declared that he will 'miss [the narrator...] very much' when he leaves (239): 'he leaned sideways over the arm of his chair and looked straight into my eyes* **earnestly**' (240).

(iii)'Stephen Crane' (1923).

Hodges, exploring potentially homosexual aspects of Conrad's life, describes Conrad's essay on his relationship with Stephen Crane as reading like 'a description of two people happily falling in love' (1979, 382). Conrad recalls their first meeting: 'I had already sensed the man's intense **earnestness** underlying his quiet surface. Every time he raised his eyes*, that secret* quality (for his voice was careless) of his soul was betrayed in a clear flash. Most of the true Stephen Crane was in his eyes' (141).

Conrad recalls their long walk 'elbow to elbow' around London on the night of their first meeting, when 'sympathy[...] sprung up instantaneously between' the two of them, as Crane responds to Conrad's 'shyly' uttered compliment with 'quiet **earnestness**' (147-148).

Conrad recalls Crane's manner of complimenting him on his work: 'looking straight into my eyes* as was his wont on such occasions, [he would] say with all the intense **earnestness** of affection that was in him: "I like that, Joseph"' (173).

EFFEMINACY.**(See also BLUSHING, PENETRATION IMAGERY).**J. A Symonds and Generally.

(i)'Eudiades' (wr. 1868; pub. 1878).

There are numerous descriptions of Eudiades' peach-like smooth skin, his soft, full lips and gently curled hair, typical of the descriptions of the effeminate male objects of desire in homosexual literature of the time. (The poem is quoted in full in Reade 1970, 104-130).

(ii) *A Problem In Modern Ethics* (1891).

It is assumed that all 'subjects of inverted instinct' are 'pale, languid, scented, **effeminate**, painted, timid, oblique in expression'; 'some prefer **effeminate** males.... Others prefer powerful adults of an ultra-masculine stamp' (quoted in Reade 1970, 251,259).

Sir Richard Burton(i) Terminal Essay to his translation of the *Arabian Nights*, Section D, 'Pederasty' (1885).

'the male **féminisme** whereby the man becomes patiens as well as agens' (quoted in Reade 1970, 160; cf. **Penetration Imagery**).

Anonymous.

(i) On the Cleveland Street Trial (1889-1890).

Concerning John Saul, a male prostitute, who was called to give evidence amidst great publicity, one contemporary source describes him as having a 'stagey manner and a peculiar* **effeminate** voice' (quoted, with no further ascription, in Pearsall 1993, 472).

Anonymous.(i) *Teleny, or, The Reverse Of The Medal* (1893).

- A homosexual trying to attract the narrator is described: 'someone else came **with mincing steps**, and shaking his buttocks....He was an old, wiry, **simpering** man' (quoted in Reade 1970, 231).

E. M. Forster.

(i) *The Longest Journey* (1907).

Rickie, who hates his father, loves his mother, is 'rather queer*' (1960, 26), and who 'can't ever marry owing to his foot' is '**effeminate**' (85).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

Of two sailors who have 'done together pretty well everything you can think of', one has '**soft fleshy curves**' (23).

The captain of the *Pelion* and the *Ossa* : 'a little popinjay[....] **drowned in scent**', he '**squeaks**' and '**tiptoe[s...]** , **ruffling all his pretty plumes**' (63).

- Jim : '**his lips pouted a little, trembling as though he had been on the point of bursting into tears**' (74); Marlow, looking at Jim can see 'the **down** on his cheek, the **colour mantling warm under the smooth skin of his face**' (153); he is '**pink and fair**' (160); the older bachelor with whom Jim goes to stay writes about him: '**had he been a girl** [...] one could have said he was **blooming - blooming modestly - like a violet**' (187); Jim has '**vapourings**' (235).

(ii) *Romance* (1903, with Ford).

- Kemp meets a pirate, Manuel-del-Popolo, whose feelings for him are surrounded by homosexual suggestiveness. Manuel 'wears his **hair like an old aunt**' of the Captain's, with 'a **bunch of curls flapping on each side of his face**' (288) and has a 'carolling **falsetto**' (261).

Kemp describes a sailor who has almost murdered him: 'to this day I remember the **beauty** of that rugged, grizzled, hairy seaman's **eyelashes**. They were **long and thick, shadowing the eyes softly like the lashes of a young girl**' (310; also noted as potentially homosexually suggestive by Koestenbaum 1989, 170).

Kemp meets a 'young **smooth-faced** mulatto': '[he] **ogled me, like a woman, out of the corners of his languishing eyes**' (455; also noted as potentially homosexually suggestive by Koestenbaum 1989, 170).

Kemp, whose relationships with several men in the novel are surrounded by homosexual suggestiveness, ends up on trial for his life* at a naval court. The key witness against him, Oldham, is 'a **tiny, fair** man, with **pale hair oiled and rather long** for those days, and with green and red signet **rings on fingers** that he was forever running through that hair' (523-524); Oldham comes '**mincingly**' (524) into the witness box, he is 'a **mincing** swell' (527), and later 'the **little creature prance[s...]** off in a new direction' (525); he speaks in a '**falsestto**' (525) and '**squeak[s...]**' (524; the effeminacy of the witness, and the whole scene's evocation of the Wilde trials is noted by Koestenbaum 1989, 172).

(iii)'The Duel' (1908).

The relationship between the two duellers, D'Hubert and Feraud, is loaded with homosexual suggestiveness. D'Hubert's eyes are 'shaded by **long eyelashes**' (158); at one point he dresses in '**a woman's black velvet hood**' and a 'sort of stiff **petticoat**' both of which render him 'noticeable' (188-189).

(iv)'Il Conde' (1908).

The whole tale is densely loaded with homosexual codewords and homosexually suggestive situations and the Count of the title undergoes an experience reminiscent of an attack during a casual homosexual street-encounter that went further than he intended. His handsome young attacker is described with attention to the features more usually concentrated on in descriptions of women - eyes, lips, complexion, cheeks, lashes : 'with a **colourless, clear complexion, red lips**, jet-black little moustache and **liquid black eyes** so wonderfully

effective in leering or scowling*' (243); 'the **smooth** olive **cheeks**, the **red lips**, the little jet-black moustache turned up gallantly, the **fine black eyes** a little heavy and **shaded by long eyelashes**, that peculiar* expression' (249).

(v) *Victory* (1915).

The homosexual Jones has '**slender fingers**' (99), '**long feminine eyelashes [and...] regular features**' (102), '**beautifully pencilled eyebrows**' (111); he is '**tightly enfolded** in an old but **gorgeous** blue silk dressing-gown' (376) that is 'gay*' and 'grotesque' (389); he '**scream[s...]** out' (386) and makes '**shrill** exclamations' (388).

ELLIPSES, OMISSIONS & HESITATIONS.

(See also 'INDESCRIBABLE', 'LET US SAY', 'NAMELESS', 'UNMENTIONABLE', 'UNSPEAKABLE', UNSPECIFIED SPECIFICATIONS.)

A. C. Swinburne.

(i) Letter to Watts (1 December 1873).

- Swinburne explains his decision to shun Simeon Solomon, after Solomon has been arrested for indecency in a public urinal: 'in such a case as this I do think a man is bound to consider the consequence to all his friends and to everyone who cares for him in the world of allowing his name to be mixed up with that of a — *let us say*, a Platonist' (quoted in Dowling 1989, 2).

Newspapers Of The Period.

(i) *The Evening Standard* (3 April 1895).

Queensberry's card to Wilde, which read 'To O. W., posing as a somdomite [sic]' is rendered in the *Standard* as 'Oscar Wilde posing as —' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 145).

- A courtroom exchange between Wilde and Carson on the subject of 'perverted*' novels is rendered in the *Standard* as follows: "A — novel

might be a good book - I don't know what you mean by a — novel"
 "Then I will suggest *Dorian Grey* [sic] as open to the interpretation of
 being a — novel" (quoted in Cohen 1993, 253).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

Marlow, filled with 'the fear of losing him' (180), is ministering to Jim's
 'intimate* need' one night: "wait," I cried, "I want you to ..." "I can't dine
 with you again to-night," he flung at me, with one leg out of the room
 already. "I haven't the slightest intention to ask you," I shouted' (181).

(ii) *Heart Of Darkness* (1902).

Marlow is talking of his 'startling extravagance of emotion' at the
 thought that he will never hear Kurtz speak: "I couldn't have felt more
 of lonely* desolation somehow, had I been robbed of a belief or had
 missed my destiny in life ... Why do you sigh in this beastly way,
 somebody? Absurd? Well, absurd. Good Lord! mustn't a man ever -
 Here, give me some tobacco" (83).

(iii) 'Il Conde' (1908).

The whole tale is densely loaded with homosexual codewords and
 homosexually suggestive situations and the Count of the title
 undergoes an experience reminiscent of an attack during a casual
 homosexual street-encounter that went further than he intended. The
 narrator describes how the Count tells him about it: 'in an odd tone of
 awed embarrassment, he took me into his confidence.

"The truth is that I have had a very - a very - **how shall I say?** -
 abominable* adventure happen to me" (240).

The young, handsome stranger threateningly asks the Count for his
 'anelli', but the latter refuses: "that you shall not have," he repeated
 firmly and closed his eyes, fully expecting - **I don't know whether I am
 right in recording** that such an unpleasant word had passed his lips* -

fully expecting to feel himself being - **I really hesitate to say** - being disembowelled by the push of the long sharp blade resting murderously against the pit of his stomach* - the very seat, in all human beings, of anguishing sensations' (247).

(iv) *Victory* (1915).

- Schomberg is contemplating Jones and Ricardo, who have a homosexual relationship: 'and it was not only their appearance. The morals of Mr. Ricardo seemed to him to be pretty much the morals of a cat. Too much. What sort of argument could a mere man offer to a ... or to a spectre, either!' (148).

Ricardo tells of the rumours surrounding Jones's lack of interest in women: "I used to go to dances of an evening. The girls there would ask me if the English *caballero* in the *posada* was a monk in disguise, or if he had taken a vow to the *sanctissima madre* not to speak to a woman, or whether—— You can imagine what fairly free-spoken girls will ask when they come to the point of not caring what they say"(160).

- Jones is talking of Ricardo to Heyst: "That - er - companion* - er - secretary of mine is a queer* chap" (236).

Heyst talking of Ricardo to Jones: "I don't want to disturb your touching trust in your - your follower" (385).

(There are numerous more examples of this kind of hesitation, where the speaker seems to be searching for a euphemism for the unspeakable term, in the section on '**GENTLEMAN**'.)

'FRIENDS'

Anonymous.

(i) *Don Leon* (1866).

The narrator of the poem falls in love with a boy:

'Oh! how I loved to press his cheek to mine;

How fondly would my arms his waist entwine!
 Another* feeling borrowed **friendship's** name,
 And took its mantle to conceal my shame*' (quoted in Coote 1983,
 252).

Oscar Wilde.

(i) *Dorian Gray* (1891).

Gray has just heard the painter, Basil Hallward, confess the 'secret*' of his devotion to him, and now understands Hallward's strange behaviour better: 'the painter's absurd fits of jealousy, his wild devotion, his extravagant panegyrics, his curious reticences - he understood* them all now, and he felt sorry. There seemed to him to be something tragic in a **friendship** so coloured by romance*' (1985, 147).

Hallward catalogues Dorian's 'shame*' crimes with a string mostly of young men: "'why is your **friendship** so fatal to young men? There was that wretched boy in the Guards who committed suicide. You were his **great friend**"' (183).

(ii) Letter to Lord Alfred Douglas (? December 1893).

Their homosexual relationship was restored after a disagreement: 'I am happy in the knowledge that we are **friends** again, and that our love has passed through the shadow and night of estrangement and sorrow and come out rose-crowned as of old' (Hart-Davis 1979, 114).

(iii) *de Profundis* (wr. 1897, pub. 1905 (abridged), 1949 (complete)).

Wilde refers to his homosexual affair with Douglas: 'our ill-fated and most lamentable **friendship**' (97); 'you were proud... of being the intimate* **friend** of an artist so distinguished' (1986, 99).

(iv) Letter to Lord Alfred Douglas (31 August 1897).

On the renewal of their homosexual relationship: 'everyone is furious with me for going back to you, but they don't understand* us. I feel that it is only with you that I can do anything at all. Do remake my

ruined life for me, and then our **friendship** and love will have a different* meaning to the world' (Hart-Davis 1979, 305-306).

Kains-Jackson.

(i) *The Quorum: A Magazine Of Friendship* (1894).

The introduction contrasts the kind of homosexual '**friendship**' experienced from Shakespeare to Whitman with 'the normal* love-interest' (quoted in d'Arch Smith 1970, 140).

The Wilde Trials (1895).

Wilde's defence objected to the prosecution's assumption of a homosexual relationship between Wilde and Alfred Taylor: 'I must rise to object to Mr. Solicitor-General's rhetorical descriptions of what has never been proved in evidence,... in asserting that an intimate* **friendship** existed between Mr. Wilde and Taylor' (quoted in Hyde 1962, 256).

J. Millott Severn.

(i) 'Friendship: Its Advantages And Excesses' in *Phrenological Journal Of Science And Health* (September, 1898).

'Excessive **Friendship**... has brought disgrace* and ruin upon many an otherwise good character.... They become a natural prey to the dishonest, tricky, unscrupulous, and vicious*, who may take advantage of and link them into all sorts of obligatory concerns ruinous to their pockets and their morals' (76, quoted in Reade 1970, 95).

Edward Carpenter.

Produced a homosexual volume under the title: *lolaus, An Anthology Of **Friendship*** (1902).

E. M. Forster.

(i) *Maurice* (wr. 1913-1914).

Maurice and Alec are talking of their suppressed homosexual desires: "did you ever dream you'd **a friend**, Alec? Nothing else but just

'**my friend**', he trying to help you and you him. A friend," he repeated....
 "Someone to last your whole life and you his" (1972, 172-173).

I. E. Lawrence.

(i) *The Seven Pillars Of Wisdom* (1926).

Men in the desert: '**friends** quivering together in the yielding sand with intimate* hot limbs in supreme embrace, found there hidden in the darkness, a sensual co-efficient of the mental passion which was welding our souls and spirits in one flaming effort' (quoted, with no further ascription in Higgins 1993, 337).

Anonymous.

(i) On male prostitutes (1930's).

'I was introduced to somebody called Tommy... he had a flat.... And he used to have "**friends**" who used to call on him for tea, and he would invite his "**friends**" and pair them off. And presents used to change hands... his clients were MPs, doctors, lawyers and professional gentlemen.... They paid him.... He paid the boy' (quoted, with no further ascription, in Weeks, in Duberman et al 1991, 209).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

- Marlow tells Jim that he is planning to send him to a lonely bachelor:
 "I am writing to a man of whom I've never asked a favour, and I am writing about you in terms that one only ventures to use when speaking of an intimate* **friend**" (183).

Marlow looks at Jim's relationship with Dain Waris and seems 'to behold the very origin of **friendship**' (262).

(ii) *Heart Of Darkness* (1902).

Marlow on Kurtz: "'I am Mr. Kurtz's **friend** in a way*'" (103).

(iii) *Victory* (1915).

- Lena talks to Heyst about the shocking rumours she has heard concerning Heyst's relationship with Morrison (dismissing her shock before Heyst with "I knew very well it couldn't be anything like that*" (197) while strangely and suggestively not specifying what the "like that" might be): "and so you lived with that **friend** that good man?"

"Excellent fellow," Heyst responded, with a readiness that she did not expect. "But it was a weakness* on my part" (202).

In the same conversation, Lena reports Schomberg's gossip: "there never were such **loving friends** to look at as you two; then, when you got all you wanted out of him and got thoroughly tired of him, too, you kicked him out to go home and die" (214).

'GAY'.

Anonymous.

(i) *Don Leon* (1866).

- The poem's narrator reads the 'flowery' and 'honeyed' homosexual literature of ancient Greece and Rome:

'Off I turned me to the Mantuan's page,

To hold discourse with the shepherds of his age;

Or mixed with Horace in the **gay** delights

Of courtly revels, theatres and sights' (quoted in Coote 1983, 253).

R. L. Stevenson.

(i) *Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde* (1886).

- Jekyll makes a statement about how he came to be Mr. Hyde, and notes among his early proclivities that he was always torn between '**gaiety**' and being 'grave' (1979, 81).

Jack Saul.

(i) Deposition pertaining to Cleveland Street scandal (1890).

Saul on being a 'professional Maryanne' (male prostitute): 'I have lost my character and cannot get on otherwise. I occasionally do odd jobs for different **gay** people' (in this case, the context later makes clear that by 'gay people' Saul is referring to female prostitutes as well as male homosexuals). (Public Record Office, D.P.P.1/95/4, File 2, quoted in Weeks in Duberman et al 1991,207).

E. M. Forster.

(i)'The Other Boat' (wr. 1913 and c. 1957-1958).

Lionel reflects on his new, homosexual existence belowdecks with Cocoanut: 'yes, this was the life, and one that he had never experienced in his austere apprenticeship: luxury, **gaiety**, kindness, unusualness, and delicacy that did not exclude brutal pleasure' (1989, 217).

Henry James.

(i)*The Sense Of The Past* (wr. 1914; pub. 1917).

Ralph is haunted by his double, whom he finds "'magnificent.... really beautiful'" (99) but nevertheless also "'strange*'" and "'contrary to nature*'" (100), and he tells his tale to an Ambassador he hardly knows, who holds his hand (95) and indulges in mutual flirting with him (98, 102-3, 104, 106). Ralph asks the Ambassador to be gentle with him: "'it's a most extraordinary thing, you see, to have befallen a man, and I don't wonder at the queer* figure I must make to you. But you'll see too for yourself in a moment how easily you'll wish to let me down. It's the most extraordinary thing that ever happened in the world but at the same time there's no danger," he cheerfully declared, "of my losing my way*. I'm all here, or rather" Ralph was **gay** about it "he is" (96-97). Miller comments on this passage: 'so Ralph can be "gay" as well as "queer". These were favoured adjectives of the Fin de Siecle and after, which in the fullness of time were to become in succession the names which the

English-speaking homosexual community has used to identify itself. James's use presages this' (1987, 236).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Romance* (1903, with Ford).

Carlos, whose relationship with the narrator Kemp is surrounded by homosexual suggestiveness throughout the novel, is described as '**gay** and uncomplaining' (130), and Kemp says he 'loved' him 'for his **gayety**, his recklessness and romance*' (139).

(ii) 'The Duel' (1908).

The relationship between the two duellers, D'Hubert and Feraud, is loaded with homosexual suggestiveness. Their meetings between battles put 'special excitement into delightful, **gay** intervals between the campaigns' (184).

(iii) *Victory* (1915).

Heyst and Lena are talking after Lena has listened to Heyst's description of his friendship with Morrison, she repudiating the calumny that has been spread about it: "I wonder what interpretation you are putting on it?"

"It wasn't **gay**, certainly," she said' (210).

- Heyst regards the homosexual Jones: 'Heyst looked on, fascinated by this skeleton in a **gay** dressing-gown' (389).

'GENTLEMAN'.

The Wilde Trials (1895).

Charles Parker is recounting his becoming involved with Alfred Taylor, a procurer of young men for homosexuals; the two of them had just been watching the prostitutes nearby: ' [he said] "I can't understand sensible men wasting their money on painted trash like that. Many do, though. But there are a few who know better. Now, you could get

money in a certain way* easily enough if you cared to." I understood* to what Taylor alluded and made a coarse reply.... I said that if any old **gentleman** with money took a fancy to me, I was agreeable' (28th April, quoted in Hyde 1962, 170).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

- Jim to Marlow, after telling him his guilty secret: "of course I wouldn't have talked to you about all this if you had not been a **gentleman**. I ought to have known... I am I am - *a **gentleman**, too" (131).

A member of the *Patna's* crew turns up at Jim's new place of employment (where there has been some suggestion of homosexuality between the young Jim and the older, rather affectionate bachelor he is working for) and tries to blackmail* him: "don't you be uneasy, sir[....] I know a **gentleman** when I see one, and I know how a **gentleman** feels. I hope, though, you will be keeping me on this job" (190).

Gentleman Brown is a particularly shady character, with a certain amount of homosexual suggestiveness about him (See e.g. *Jim*, 387).

(ii) *Victory* (1915).

- A comment on Morrison, with whom Heyst has a close friendship that is the subject of disapproving 'gossip' (206): 'Morrison - who, besides being a **gentleman**, was also an honest fellow' (17) a strange use of the word, alerting us to the possibility of its meaning something other than our usual understanding of it (as associated with such qualities as honesty), right at the beginning of the book. A similar alerting to this possibility of using 'gentleman' to connote something other than the customary meaning occurs in Schomberg's use of the word to refer to himself and his customers (20); he and they are certainly neither aristocratic nor decent men. Ricardo's constant use of the term to refer to the utterly ungentlemanly (in the usual sense)

homosexual Jones (see below) strongly suggests that the different use of the word has a homosexual connotation.

- Davidson hears Heyst has run off with Lena, and can hardly believe it: "he's not the man for it" (41); "being a **gentleman** only makes it worse" (51). Meyers (1977, 80) notes that this use seems to link a question-mark over Heyst's heterosexuality with his being a 'gentleman'.

- Ricardo is emphatic about the homosexual Jones: "he's a **gentleman**," testified Martin Ricardo' (112).

- Schomberg refers to the homosexual Jones and his 'partner*' (passim, e.g. 321) Ricardo: "you and that other" - eyeing Ricardo suspiciously, as one would look at a strange* animal - *"**gentleman**" (113). Or again, he refers to Jones: "And so the - *the **gentleman**, up there, talked you over into leaving a good berth" (128).

Ricardo's narration of how he came to meet Jones for the first time repeatedly uses 'gentleman' in contexts that make it difficult to read the word as anything other than some kind of homosexually suggestive euphemism: "I know a **gentleman** at sight. I should know one drunk, in the gutter, in jail, under the gallows. There's a something * it isn't exactly the appearance, it's a * no use me trying to tell you*[....]

"I was employed in that there yacht[...] by ten **gentlemen** at once. That surprises you, eh? Yes, yes, ten. Leastwise there were nine of them **gents** good enough in their way, and one downright **gentleman**, and that was...*"

'Ricardo gave another upward jerk of his chin as much as to say: He! The only one.

"And no mistake," he went on. "I spotted him from the first day. How? Why? Ay, you may ask. Hadn't seen that many **gentlemen** in my life. Well, somehow I did[....]

"Game![...] That's what is was - the sort of silliness **gentlemen** will get up among themselves to play at adventure. A treasure-hunting expedition[...] Their agent in the city engaged me and the skipper. The greatest secrecy* and all that. I reckon he had a twinkle in his eye all the time - and no mistake. But that wasn't our business[...]

"[And then] *he* turned up[...] He would give any woman a ten-mile berth. He can't stand them[...]

"It was only then that he looked at me* - quietly, you know; in a slow way[...] He seemed to touch me inside* somewhere. I went away pretty quick from there[...] I wasn't frightened. What should I be frightened for? I only felt touched - on the very spot. But Jee-miny, if anybody had told me we should be partners* before the year was out well, I would have - *"

'He swore a variety of strange* oaths[...]

"Takes a real **gentleman** to see through a fellow. Oh, yes he spotted me. I told you we had a few talks at sea about one thing or another. And I used to watch him down the skylight[...] By the same token he caught me at it once[...] Yes, he had sized me up. Why not? A **gentleman's** just like any other man and something more*" (125-130).

Ricardo says that finding a woman on the island would be 'an upset to the sensibilities of the **gentleman** with whom he had the honour of being associated' (265).

- Heyst is trying to tell Lena what Jones is like: "he's what people would call a **gentleman**"(316).

- Ricardo repeatedly links Heyst with the homosexual Jones by his use of the word 'gentleman' to apply to them both; here he is addressing Heyst: "the business my governor's after can be settled by ten minutes' rational talk with *with another **gentleman**. Quiet talk!*"

'He looked up suddenly with hard, phosphorescent eyes[....] "You want poor, harmless Peter out of the way before you let me take you to see the governor is that it?"

"Yes, that is it."

"H'm! One can see," Ricardo said with hidden venom, "that you are a **gentleman**; but all that **gentlemanly** fancifulness is apt to turn sour on a plain man's stomach. However - you'll have to pardon me" (368-369).

Ricardo tries to lure Lena into running away with him: "I live for myself, and you shall live for yourself, too - not for a Swedish baron. They make a convenience of people like you and me. A **gentleman** is better than an employer, but an equal partnership against all the 'yporcrits is the thing for you and me" (397).

Ricardo is talking to Lena of Heyst: "I am not going to hide you, like that good-for-nothing, finicky, sneery **gentleman**" (400).

Of course, the idea of *not* being a gentleman is also (somewhat confusingly, though understandably) used to imply homosexuality. e.g.:-

Oscar Wilde.

(i) *Dorian Gray* (1891).

Hallward pleads with Dorian to change his way of life before it is too late, against Dorian's protests that he is not interested in scandals about himself: "every gentleman is interested in his good name. You don't want people to talk of you as something vile* and degraded*" (1985, 182).

- Hallward is listing Gray's young, mostly male victims: "what about the young Duke of Perth? What sort of life has he got now? What gentleman would associate with him?" (184).

Newspapers Of The Period.

(i) *The Evening News* (4 April 1895).

Wilde during his first trial is described as 'defending himself against one of the gravest charges that can be brought against an English gentleman' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 159).

'GORGEOUS'.

E. M. Forster.

(i) 'The Other Boat' (wr. 1913 & c.1957-1958).

Lionel is wearing silk pyjamas, a gift from his homosexual lover, and is challenged at night on deck: "Ye gods, what **gorgeous** pyjamas the fellow's wearing. What's he going about like a lone wolf for? Eh?"

"Too hot in my cabin, sir. Nothing sinister" (1989, 231).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

- Jim's youthful shipboard fantasies have a '**gorgeous** virility' (20) about them.

The plainly homosexual Captain of the *Patna* is 'extravagantly **gorgeous**' (37) in his green and orange striped sleeping-suit.

(ii) *Victory* (1915).

- Jones is twice referred to as wearing a '**gorgeous**' blue dressing-gown (376, 389).

HANDCLASP (in Conrad only).

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

Marlow and Jim have had a long dinner together. Marlow describes Jim's appearance with an enthusiasm reminiscent of an adoring Uranian poet: 'and all the time I had before me these blue, boyish* eyes looking straight into mine*, this young face, these capable shoulders, the open bronzed forehead with a white line under the roots

of clustering fair hair, this appearance appealing at sight* to all my sympathies: this frank aspect, the artless smile, the youthful seriousness. He was of the right sort*; he was one of us*.' The paragraph ends with a significant move on Jim's part: 'he darted his arm across the tablecloth, and **clutching my hand** by the side of my plate, glared fixedly*. I was startled. "It must be awfully hard," I stammered, confused by this display of speechless feeling. "It is - hell," he burst out in a muffled voice.

'This movement and these words caused two well-groomed male globe-trotters at a neighbouring table to look up in alarm from their iced pudding' (78).

Marlow is with Jim: 'Jim and I, alone as it were, to leeward of the mainsail, **clasped each other's hands** and exchanged the last hurried words'; this is 'a moment of real and profound intimacy*' (240-241).

(ii) *Romance* (1903, with Ford).

The narrator Kemp's relationship with Carlos is surrounded by homosexual suggestiveness throughout the novel. Carlos is about to leave, and in a moment will 'lean[...] over and kiss [Kemp...] lightly on the cheek': '**his hand was grasping mine**: it thrilled me like a woman's' (51; the moment's generally homosexual import is also noted by Koestenbaum 1989, 169).

(iii) 'Author's Note' to *Nostramo* (1904; Note, 1917).

- Conrad is talking of his first love, describing his final goodbye to the girl: 'I received a **hand-squeeze** that made my heart leap and saw a tear that took my breath away' (xlvii). Tennant comments: 'to the end of his life Conrad would record no other occasion on which his heart leaped or his breath was taken away, and indeed it may be that in a sense this was his deepest sexual experience' (1981, 15); Tennant's whole chapter on Conrad's youthful sexuality is called 'A Squeeze Of The Hand'. Compare with the 'Author's Note' anecdote the following

cancelled passage from *The Arrow Of Gold* (1919): 'it was very little that she had done, a mere **pressure of the hand**. But he had remembered it for five and thirty years of separation and silence' (quoted in Tennant 1981, 15).

(iv)'The Secret Sharer' (1910).

The Captain is smuggling Leggatt 'through a tiny dark passage' (119), on their hands and knees: 'I snatched off my floppy hat and tried hurriedly in the dark to ram it on my other self. He dodged and fended off silently. I wonder what he thought had come to me before he understood* and suddenly desisted. **Our hands met gropingly, lingered united in a steady, motionless clasp for a second...**No word was breathed by either of us when they separated' (119-120).

HANGING OFFENCE.

Generally.

(i)Weeks notes: 'in February 1816, four members of the crew of the *Africaine* were hanged for buggery after a major naval scandal. The navy, in fact, was even more severe than civil society: buggery had been mentioned in the Articles of War since the seventeenth century, and was treated as seriously as desertion, mutiny or murder. The death penalty was ruthlessly applied – you were more likely to be hanged for buggery than for mutiny or desertion' (1990, 13).

Joseph Conrad.

(i)*Lord Jim* (1900).

The following occurs in an altogether strange and suggestive passage about 'weakness'* that is 'manfully scorned', which may be 'repressed' and from which 'not one of us* is safe': 'we are snared into doing things for which we get called names, and **things for which we**

get hanged, and yet the spirit may well survive survive the condemnations, survive the halter' (43).

A crew-member of the *Patna*, who is 'in various ways a pretty notorious* personality' (46) is suffering from the d.t.'s and is taken to hospital by the police: 'at first he had a notion they were carrying him off **to be hanged**, and fought for liberty like a hero' (50).

(ii) *Romance* (1903, with Ford).

Kemp's relationship with Carlos is surrounded with homosexual suggestiveness, and he is warned that his association with Carlos will get him hanged (42); he eventually does end up on trial for his life in a naval court, and the key witness against him is described in effeminate terms (see entry for *Romance* under **EFFEMINACY**).

'HERMIT'.

(See also '**ALONE/LONELY**').

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Victory* (1915).

Schomberg talking of Heyst: "oh, a certain* Swede," with a sinister emphasis, as if he were saying "a certain* brigand." "Well known here. He's turned **hermit** from shame*. That's what the devil does when he's found out."

'Hermit. This was the latest of the more or less witty labels applied to Heyst' (31).

Heyst's way of life: 'and though he had made up his mind to retire from the world in **hermit** fashion, yet he was irrationally moved by this sense of loneliness* which had come to him in the hour of renunciation' (66).

(ii) *Suspense* (1925).

The whole of Attilio's encounter with the Hermit of the plains is loaded with homosocial/homosexual suggestion; Attilio decided to 'join a **hermit** in a wilderness' who was 'not like... other men', simply because 'the tone of his voice appealed' to his 'heart', and there may even have been 'more in it' than that (9-10)

'IMMORAL', NOT MORAL, etc.

Josephine Butler.

(i) Letter to Lewis Campbell (date?. Referring to c.1870's).

Concerning homosexuality during Jowett's tenure as Master of Balliol: 'there was an outbreak of abnormal* **immorality** among a few of the young men in Oxford. To such he was (I know) the wisest, most prudent and gentlest of counsellors' (quoted, with no further ascription, Pearsall 1993, 457).

C. Dukes.

(i) *Health At School* (1894).

Concerning the practice of having two boys share one bed, in order to save space: 'most emphatically I condemn this system, which is still unhappily in existence, as distinctly conducing, without the need of my entering into further details, to a flagrant species of **immorality** and depravation* of character' (108, quoted in Honey 1977, 182).

Newspapers Of The Period.

(i) Generally, only three years before *Lord Jim* was published, the word 'immorality' was on placards and in headlines everywhere in connection with only one thing: the charges of sodomitical behaviour in the Wilde trial:-

(ii) *Evening Standard* (3 April 1895).

- Reports the charges against Wilde as: 'Mr. Wilde published, or caused to be published with his name upon the title-page, a certain*

immoral and indecent work, with the title "The Picture Of Dorian Gray" (quoted in Cohen 1993, 153).

(iii) *The Star* (3 April 1895).

Reports the charges against Wilde as having 'published a "certain* **immoral** and obscene work entitled 'The Picture Of Dorian Gray'" (quoted in Cohen 1993, 153).

(iv) *The Morning Leader* (Headline) (4 April 1895).

'MOST SERIOUS CHARGES FORMULATED AGAINST MR. WILDE.... MR. CARSON Q.C.... OPPOSES THE PLAY OF OSCARISM WITH DIRECT SUGGESTIONS OF **IMMORALITY**' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 134).

(v) *The Daily Telegraph* (4 April 1895).

Reports the charges against Wilde: 'in December 1894 was published a certain* **immoral** work ['Phrases For Young Things'] in the form of a magazine called "The Chameleon"' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 153).

(vi) *Westminster Gazette* (6 April 1895).

On Wilde's defence of his works as art: 'art we are told has nothing to do with morality. But even if this doctrine were true, it has long ago been perverted*, under the treatment of the decadents, into a positive preference on the part of "Art" for the **immoral**, the morbid*, and the maniacal' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 168).

(vii) *The Evening News* (6 April 1895).

Describing a confederate of Wilde's allegedly trying to procure young men for him: 'he spoke to them of **immoral** practices and mentioned to them Wilde's name' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 189).

The Wilde Trials (1895).

The defence proposes, in its plea of justification for Queensberry's reference to Wilde as a 'sodomite' [sic], that *Dorian Gray* is an '**immoral** and obscene work.... understood by the readers thereof to

describe the relations, intimacies*, and passions of certain* persons of sodomitical and unnatural* tastes*, and practices*' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 128).

Mary Boyle Reilly.

(i) Letter to Gavan Duffy (3 June 1916).

Reilly is concerned that Roger Casement's trial for treason will be unfairly and irrelevantly swayed against him by the introduction, in the press and at the trial, of evidence to prove that Casement is a homosexual: 'about a month ago a group of important American journalists were called to Whitehall and there shown letters and a diary of Sir Roger Casement's which proved him to be **a moral offender** unworthy of public sympathy' (quoted in Hyde 1964, 74-75).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

Marlow is talking his introduction of Jim to an older bachelor: 'in this transaction, to speak grossly and precisely, I was the irreproachable man; but the subtle intentions of my **immorality** were defeated by the moral simplicity of the criminal' (153).

'INDESCRIBABLE'.

(See also ELLIPSES, 'LET US SAY', 'NAMELESS', 'UNMENTIONABLE', 'UNSPEAKABLE', UNSPECIFIED SPECIFICATIONS.)

Newspapers Of The Period.

(i) A Newspaper (1810?)

Commenting on matters raised by the notorious homosexual scandal at Vere Street: 'the existence of a Club, or Society, for a purpose so detestable and repugnant to the common feeling of our nature that **by no word can it be described** without committing an

outrage against decency' (quoted, with no further ascription, in Cohen 1993, 116).

(ii) *North London Press* (16 November 1889).

On the notorious homosexual scandal at Cleveland Street:
'**indescribably** loathsome*' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 123).

'INTIMACY'

Oscar Wilde.

(i) *Dorian Gray* (1891).

Hallward is listing Gray's young, mostly male victims: "'they say that you corrupt* everyone with whom you become **intimate**, and that it is quite sufficient for you to enter a house, for shame* of some kind* to follow after"' (1985, 185).

(ii) *de Profundis* (wr. 1897, pub. 1905 (abridged), 1949 (complete)).

- Wilde addresses his erstwhile homosexual partner: 'you were proud... of being the **intimate** friend of an artist so distinguished' (1986, 99).

The Wilde Trials (1895).

The charge against Wilde alleged that *Dorian Gray* was intended to be understood 'to describe the relations, **intimacies**, and passions of certain persons* of sodomitical and unnatural* habits, tastes* and practices' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 128)

The prosecution asked Wilde, concerning his homosexual relationship with Douglas: 'were you aware of his father objecting to your **intimacy**' (quoted in Hyde 1962, 246).

Wilde's defence objected to the prosecution's assumption of a homosexual relationship between Wilde and Alfred Taylor: 'I must rise to object to Mr. Solicitor-General's rhetorical descriptions of what has never been proved in evidence,... in asserting that an **intimate**

friendship* existed between Mr. Wilde and Taylor" (quoted in Hyde 1962, 256).

- The foreman of the jury asked, during the third trial, about the homosexual relationship between Wilde and Douglas: 'in view of the **intimacy** between Lord Alfred Douglas and Mr. Wilde, was a warrant ever issued for the apprehension of Lord Alfred Douglas?' (quoted in Hyde 1962, 264).

E. M. Forster.

(i) *Where Angels Fear To Tread* (1905).

Phillip, who feels that his relationship with Gino is "a vision of perfect friendship*" (153) and who confesses to Miss Abbott - "I love him too!" (158), is bound to Gino 'by ties of almost alarming **intimacy**' (1985b, 153).

(ii) *Maurice* (wr. 1913-1914).

Clive is beginning to realise that he is 'a little in love with' Maurice: 'and as soon as they met he had a rush of emotion that carried him into **intimacy**' (1972, 69).

Maurice goes to Dr. Barry about his homosexuality: "it's an illness* too awfully **intimate** for Jowitt" (137).

Clive has finally convinced Maurice that he no longer loves him and has become 'normal*': 'now that Clive Durham was safe from **intimacy**, he looked forward to helping his friend*' (143).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

Marlow describes his relationship with Jim as trying to 'grapple with another man's **intimate** need' (179-180).

Marlow refers to Jim in his letter introducing him to the older bachelor "in terms that one only ventures to use when speaking of an **intimate** friend*" (183).

The scene of parting between Marlow and Jim as they 'clasped each other's hands': 'the sort of formality that had been always present in our intercourse vanished from our speech; I believe I called him "dear boy*," and he tacked on the words "old man*" to some half-uttered expression of gratitude, as though his risk set off against my years had made us more equal in age and in feeling. There was a moment of real and profound **intimacy**, unexpected and short-lived like a glimpse of some everlasting, of some saving truth. He exerted himself to soothe me as though he had been the more mature of the two' (240-241).

(ii) *Heart Of Darkness* (1902).

Marlow is trying to dissuade Kurtz from attending his 'unspeakable*' (86) ceremonies in the jungle: "you will be lost*," I said, "utterly lost*" [...] though indeed he could not have been more irretrievably lost* than he was at this very moment, when the foundations of our **intimacy** were being laid to endure - to endure - even to the end * even beyond' (107).

(iii) 'The Duel' (1908).

The relationship between the two duellers, D'Hubert and Feraud, is loaded with homosexual suggestiveness. D'Hubert is being questioned about his relationship with Feraud by the Duke of Otranto, who fears D'Hubert will 'do something rashly scandalous' (199):

"**Intimate** friend*?"

"**Intimate**... * yes. There is between us an **intimate** connexion of a nature* which makes it a point of honour with me to try..." (199-200). D'Hubert then requests his affectionate interest in Feraud be kept as a "profound secret*" by the Duke (200).

(iv) 'The Secret Sharer' (1910).

Towards the end of his homosexually loaded relationship with Leggatt, the Captain notes: 'I was extremely tired, in a peculiarly* **intimate** way' (98).

(v)'Stephen Crane'(1923).

Hodges, exploring potentially homosexual aspects of Conrad's life, describes Conrad's essay on his relationship with Stephen Crane as reading like 'a description of two people happily falling in love' (1979, 382). Conrad recalls their developing relationship, despite their only slight knowledge of each other's past life: '[we were] very **intimate** and also very open with each other from the first. Our affection would have been "everlasting" as he himself qualified it, had not the jealous death intervened with her cruel capriciousness by striking down the younger man. Our **intimacy** was really too close to admit of indiscretions' (144).

'LET US SAY'/'LET US CALL IT'.

See also ELLIPSES, 'INDESCRIBABLE, 'NAMELESS', 'UNMENTIONABLE', 'UNSPEAKABLE', UNSPECIFIED SPECIFICATIONS.

A. C. Swinburne.

(i)Letter to Watts (1 December 1873).

Explaining his decision to shun Simeon Solomon after Solomon was arrested for public indecency in a urinal: 'in such a case as this I do think a man is bound to consider the consequence to all his friends and to everyone who cares for him in the world of allowing his name to be mixed up with that of a — * **let us say**, a Platonist; the term is at once accurate as a definition and unobjectionable as a euphemism' (quoted in Dowling 1989, 2).

Joseph Conrad.

(i)*Lord Jim* (1900).

- Marlow considers Jim 'outwardly so typical' of 'the kind* that is not disturbed by the vagaries of intelligence and the perversions* of *of nerves, **let us say**' (44).

Marlow notes Jim's desire to make a distinction between himself and the rest of the crew: 'he discovered at once a desire that I should not confound him with his partners* in *in crime*', **let us call it**. He was not one of them*; he was altogether of another* sort*' (79-80).

(ii) *Heart Of Darkness* (1902).

Marlow is describing Kurtz's (homosexually loaded) behaviour in the jungle: 'this must have been before his - **let us say** - *nerves, went wrong, and caused him to preside at certain* midnight dances ending with unspeakable* rites' (86).

'LOATHSOME'

(in the context of 'loathsome vice', etc.)

R. L. Stevenson.

(i) *Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde* (1886).

Hyde's appearance is such that he strikes everyone as instantly detestable, while yet having no 'nameable* malformation' (1979, 40): "I had taken a **loathing** to my gentleman* at first sight. So had the child's family" (31); 'not all of these together could explain the hitherto unknown disgust*, **loathing** and fear with which Mr. Utterson regarded him' (40).

'Walter'

(i) *My Secret Life* (1888-1892).

Walter has just had his first adult experience of homosexual sex: 'immediately I had an ineffable* disgust* at him and myself a terrible fear a **loathing** - I could scarcely be in the room with him - could have kicked him' (1994b, 615).

Newspapers Of The Period.

(i) *The North London Press* (16 November 1889).

A notorious homosexual scandal is 'indescribably* **loathsome**' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 123).

(ii) *Reynolds' Newspaper* (26 May 1895).

Concerning the male prostitutes involved in the Wilde case: 'it did not require Wilde to degrade* them. They were brutes before he ever set eyes upon them. It is appalling to think that the conviction of any man should depend upon the testimony of such **loathsome** creatures' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 256).

Marquis Of Queensberry.

(i) Letter to Lord Alfred Douglas (1 April 1894).

- On Douglas's homosexual relationship with Wilde: 'with my own eyes I saw you both in the most **loathsome** and disgusting* relationship as expressed by your manner and expression' (quoted in Ellmann 1988, 394).

(ii) Letter to *The Star* (24 April 1895).

On the Wilde trial: 'supposing he was convicted of the **loathsome** charges brought against him... were I the authority that had to mete out his punishment, I would treat him with all possible consideration as a sexual pervert* of an utterly diseased* mind' (quoted in Ellmann 1988, 449).

Oscar Wilde.

(i) Letter to the Home Secretary (2 July 1896).

Confessing to a horror for his past homosexual behaviour and a fear lest it return under prison conditions, in an attempt to gain an early release: '[the petitioner] is conscious that his mind, shut out artificially from all rational and intellectual interests, does nothing, and can do nothing, but brood on those forms of sexual perversity*, those

loathsome modes of erotomania, that have brought him [here].... [He is] like one bound hand and foot, to be possessed and polluted by the thoughts he most **loathes** and so cannot escape from' (Hart-Davis 1979, 143-144).

John Redmond.

(i) On Roger Casement's homosexually explicit diaries (1916?).

He refers to the diaries as this '**loathsome**' matter (quoted, with no further ascription, in Hyde 1964, 137).

E. M. Forster.

(i) 'The Life To Come' (wr. 1922).

The missionary recalls his homosexual encounter with the tribal chief, now that he is married: '[he] had acquired a natural* **loathing** for it in consequence of his marriage' (1989, 107).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

Marlow comments on the plainly homosexual Cornelius: 'I am sure his love would have been the most abject of sentiments but can one imagine a **loathsome** insect in love? And his **loathsomeness**, too, was abject, so that a simply disgusting* person would have appeared noble by his side. He has his place neither in the background nor in the foreground of the story: he is simply seen skulking on its outskirts, enigmatical and unclean*, tainting the fragrance of its youth' (286).

LOOKS: SIGNIFICANT FIRST LOOK BETWEEN MEN/SIGNIFICANT LOOK BETWEEN MEN.

Generally.

(i) Weeks compares such glances with the modern homosexual practice of 'cruising' for a likely partner (1990, 38).

Walt Whitman.

(i) *The Poem Of The Road* (1856).

- 'Do you know what it is, as you pass, to be loved by strangers*?

Do you know the talk of those **turning eyeballs**?' (quoted in Lynch 1985, 90).

Edward Carpenter.

(i) 'George Merrill: A Biographical Sketch' (Speaking of 1891).

Carpenter describes meeting his lifelong partner for the first time: 'we exchanged a few words and **a look of recognition**' - and thus become 'almost immediately close and intimate*' (quoted, with no further ascription, in Weeks 1990, 78).

Oscar Wilde.

(i) *The Picture Of Dorian Gray* (1891).

Basil Hallward falls in love with Dorian. He tells of their first meeting: "'I turned halfway round, and saw Dorian Gray for the first time. **When our eyes met**, I felt that I was growing pale. A curious sensation of terror came over me. I knew that I had come face to face with someone whose mere personality was so fascinating that, if I allowed it to do so, it would absorb my whole nature, my whole soul, my very art itself.... Something seemed to tell me that I was on the verge of a terrible crisis in my life. I had a strange* feeling that Fate had in store for me exquisite joys and exquisite sorrows. I grew afraid, and turned to quit the room"' (1985, 28-29).

Magnus Hirschfeld.

(i) *A Categorical Personal Analysis For The Reader* (first pub. in Leipzig, 1899; in England, translated and adapted by Xavier Maine, 1908 or 1909).

- A questionnaire designed to elicit answers which the doctor would then analyze to answer the question 'Am I At All An Uranian?': 'have you ever been conscious of betraying or guessing, by **a mere look, a**

brief exchange of glances (quite instantaneous often) that you or another person are homosexuals? This is absolutely apart from any gesture or incident that any third person would understand as hinting at simisexualism' (quoted, with no page reference, in Bartlett 1988, 74).

Xavier Maine.

(i) *The Intersexes* (1910).

Maine describes men out looking for a homosexual encounter: 'he meets a **furtive, keen look** from a man or a youth who passes...that signal and challenge everywhere current and understood among homosexuals.... Before a shop window, or perhaps at a bench in a park, halts the Uranian. Soon another stroller...walks towards him **catches his eye expressively** and sits near him...A conversation is begun. Little by little it slips on towards confidentialities. Presently they take a walk together; or go to some restaurant' (427-428, quoted in Weeks 1990, 38.) This could describe Jim and Marlow's first meeting. In Maine's account, the pair end up in a public urinal.

Henry James.

(i) *The Sense Of The Past* (wr. 1914; pub. 1917).

- Ralph is haunted by his double, whom he finds "magnificent.... really beautiful" (99) but nevertheless also "strange*" and "contrary to nature*" (100), and he tells his tale to an Ambassador he barely knows, who holds his hand (95) and indulges in mutual flirting with him (98, 102-3, 104, 106). He and the Ambassador look at each other: 'the men exchanged a **long look**, a **look** which, as it gave the younger* everything he wanted, must also more or less have comprised some gain for the elder*. Ralph was willing to be taken for anything' (93).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

- Much emphasis is placed on Jim's eyes meeting Marlow's for the first time: '[Jim] **met the eyes** of the white man. The **glance** directed at him was not the fascinated stare of the others. It was an act of intelligent volition'; at it, Jim 'forgot himself' because 'that man there seemed to be aware of his hopeless difficulty' (32-33).

Marlow remembers the glance with the kind of emphasis usually reserved for love at first sight: '**my eyes met his for the first time** at that inquiry' (35); 'then it was that **our glances met**[....] Very soon after **that exchange of glances**' (69).

- Jim's response to the glance is more like that of a woman rejecting an attempted flirtation, rather than that of a man being looked at by the entire audience of a trial: "'what did you mean by **staring at me** all the morning?" (71).

(ii) *Romance* (1903).

Kemp's relationship with Carlos is surrounded with homosexual suggestiveness. Kemp describes how Carlos proposes that he should live with him: "'you must —' And, **looking me straight in the face with a still, penetrating* glance of his big, romantic* eyes**, "It is a good life," he whispered* seductively, "and I like you, John Kemp" (47; also noted as potentially homosexually suggestive by Koestenbaum 1989, 169).

Manuel-del-Popolo's feelings for Kemp are surrounded with homosexual suggestiveness. Kemp recalls the course of one conversation with him, during which he assures Kemp "'you would love me"'(123): '**his great eyes wistfully explored my face**' (121); '**he implored me with his eyes for a long time**' (121); '**he began to peer at me more wistfully**, and his eyes grew more luminous than ever' (122).

(iii) 'Il Conde' (1908).

The whole tale is densely loaded with homosexual codewords and homosexually suggestive situations and the Count of the title

undergoes an experience reminiscent of an attack during a casual homosexual street-encounter that went further than he intended. When the narrator first comes across the Count, he describes their meeting in terms reminiscent of a conventional love-story: they are looking at a statue 'side by side', when the Count addresses him first, saying 'the right things'; the younger man* has '**noticed**' the older man* earlier and finds that his 'smile was very attractive', so a little later he proposes 'to share* his little table' and the Count, now having about him 'the faint scent of some very good perfume*' consents with 'quiet urbanity' (235-236).

When hearing of the Count's 'abominable* adventure', the narrator suspects 'the worst', some 'disreputable scrape' and 'confess[es]' to us that he '**eyed him stealthily**'; while telling it, the Count 'leaned sideways over the arm of his chair and **looked straight into my eyes** earnestly*' (240).

The narrator tries to 'return[...] his **steadfast gaze**' and only then does he understand the Count: 'he **stared at me very hard**. And I understood* then' (241).

At a dance, the Count meets the handsome young stranger who will later attack him. He has 'a colourless , clear complexion, red lips, jet-black little moustach and liquid **black eyes so wonderfully effective in leering or scowling**' - and soon '**their eyes met**'(243). Later they both go to a dark alleyway, where the Count walks up and down in front of the young man, who is sitting on a bench, and 'approache[s]' him three times, before he is finally asked for a light by him (243-244).

- The narrator describes hearing the Count's story of his 'abominable' (240) encounter: [the Count was] **holding me with his eyes**' (246).

The Count remembers his attacker: 'his mind reverted to his abominable* adventure.

'He thought of the moody, well-dressed young man, with whom he had **exchanged glances** in the crowd around the bandstand[...] He did not want ever to see him again. The best thing was to forget this humiliating episode'(249).

(iv)'The Secret Sharer' (1910).

- The Captain has observed Leggatt for the first time, while Leggatt was naked; Leggatt gives his response:"I didn't mind **being looked at**. I -* I liked it" (97).

(v) *Victory* (1915).

Ricardo is talking of his first meeting with Jones:"**I spotted him** from the first day. How? Why? Ay, you may ask" (126); "it was only then that **he looked at me** - quietly, you know; in a slow way[...] He seemed to touch me inside* somewhere[...] I[...] felt touched - on the very spot" (127-128).

Ricardo on Jones: "when you work with a gentleman* of the real right sort* you may depend on **your feelings being seen through your skin**" (143-144).

(vi)'Stephen Crane' (1923).

Hodges, exploring potentially homosexual aspects of Conrad's life, describes Conrad's essay on his relationship with Stephen Crane as reading like 'a description of two people happily falling in love' (1979, 382). Conrad recalls his first sight of Crane: 'I **saw his smile first** over the table-cloth in a restaurant. We shook hands with intense gravity and **a direct stare at each other**[...] I had already sensed the man's intense earnestness* underlying his quiet surface. **Every time he raised his eyes**, that secret* quality (for his voice was careless) of his soul was betrayed in a clear flash. Most of the true Stephen Crane was in his eyes' (140-141).

Soon Conrad and Crane, walking about 'elbow to elbow' in London at night, experience '**mutual recognition**' (148; one is reminded of the experiences of Xavier Maine and Edward Carpenter, above).

'LOST'.

Henry James.

(i) *The Sense Of The Past* (wr. 1914; pub. 1917).

Ralph is haunted by his double, whom he finds "magnificent.... really beautiful" (99) but nevertheless also "strange*" and "contrary to nature*" (100), and he tells his tale to an Ambassador he hardly knows, who holds his hand (95) and indulges in mutual flirting with him (98, 102-3, 104, 106). Ralph asks the Ambassador to be gentle with him: "it's a most extraordinary thing, you see, to have befallen a man, and I don't wonder at the queer* figure I must make to you. But you'll see too for yourself in a moment how easily you'll wish to let me down. It's the most extraordinary thing that ever happened in the world but at the same time there's no danger," he cheerfully declared, "of my **losing my way**. I'm all here, or rather" Ralph was gay* about it "he is" (96-97).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

Marlow on Jim (at the end of a long homosexually suggestive passage): '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*' (93)

- Jim's comment on himself: "I was so **lost**, you know" (129).

(ii) *Heart Of Darkness* (1902).

Marlow is trying to prevail upon Kurtz not to go to his 'unspeakable*' (86) ceremony in the jungle: "you will be **lost**," I said "utterly **lost**." One gets sometimes such a flash of inspiration, you know. I did say the right

thing, though indeed he could not have been more irretrievably **lost** than he was at this very moment, when the foundations of our intimacy* were being laid to endure - to endure even to the end * even beyond' (107).

'MANLY', etc.

See also 'UNMANLY'.

Newspapers Of The Period.

(i)*Punch* (12 February 1881).

- Wilde had been lampooned continually in *Punch* throughout this and the previous year, under the guise of a cartoon character greatly resembling him, who is called Maudle. Maudle adores '*consumately* lovely,.... **manly** boy[s]'

(quoted in Schmidgall 1994, 55).

J. A. Symonds.

(i)*A Problem In Modern Ethics* (1891).

Repeatedly refers to Whitman's doctrine of '**manly**' love as helpful when considering homosexuality (quoted in Reade 1970, 278,280).

- Of homosexuals, 'some prefer effeminate* males.... Others prefer powerful adults of an **ultra-masculine** stamp' (quoted in Reade1970, 259).

Anonymous.

(i)*Teleny, or, The Reverse Of The Medal* (1893).

- A male prostitute is 'a brawny man, with massive features; clearly a fine specimen of a **male**' (quoted in Reade 1970, 232).

Anonymous.

(i)Street Ballad On The Wilde Trials (1895).

'he was fond of **manly** beauty, he's so beautiful himself' (quoted in Stokes 1989, 4).

D. H. Lawrence.

(i)'Prologue' to *Women In Love* (1916)

Of Birkin: 'in the street, it was the men who roused him by their flesh and their **manly**, vigorous movement... he studied the women as sisters.... It was the men's physique which held the passion and the mystery* to him' (in Roberts and Moore 1968, 104).

(ii) Letter to Godwin Baynes (1919).

- Concerning his admiration for Whitman: 'I believe in what he calls "**manly** love", the real implicit reliance of one man on another; as sacred a unison as marriage: only it must be deeper, more ultimate' (quoted in Meyers 1987, 133).

Joseph Conrad.

(i)'The Duel' (1908).

The relationship between the two duellers, D'Hubert and Feraud, is loaded with homosexual suggestiveness. When the two of them reappear from the forest, leaning on each other, they are described as 'indomitable companions*' who have displayed '**manly** qualities' (187).

When D'Hubert tells the Chevalier of his long-running duel with Feraud, the Chevalier exclaims: "'what horrible perversion* of **manliness!**" (213).

(ii) *Victory* (1915).

Schomberg always contrives to look '**manly**' (20, 26, etc.) by throwing out his chest and his general bearing, but this is just 'put on' (108): 'he would[...] creep out, with movements strangely* inappropriate to the Lieutenant-of-the-Reserve bearing by which he tried to keep up his self-respect before the world' (119); he has '**manly**, careless attitudes' (106) but is 'in reality of a timid disposition under his **manly** exterior' (104).

'MONSTROUS'.

R. L. Stevenson.

(i) *Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde* (1886).

- Homosexual overtones surround the monster throughout.

J. A. Symonds.

(i) *A Problem In Modern Ethics* (1891).

- People used to believe that sexual inversion was '**monstrous**'

(quoted in Reade 1970, 249).

Oscar Wilde.

(i) *The Picture Of Dorian Gray* (1891).

The painting with the marks of Gray's dissolute life on it is '**monstrous**' (1985, 189); Gray's confession of his crimes to Campbell is '**monstrous**' (203).

(ii) Letter to the Home Secretary (2 July 1896).

Confessing to an abhorrence for his past homosexual behaviour and a fear that prison life might stimulate its return, in an attempt to obtain an early release from prison: 'it is under the ceaseless apprehension lest this insanity, that displayed itself in **monstrous** sexual perversion* before, may now extend to the entire nature and intellect, that the petitioner writes this appeal' (Hart-Davis 1979, 143).

Anonymous ('E. S.').

(i) *Contribution to Sexual Inversion* (1897).

He believed that his homosexual desires were peculiar to himself alone: 'I thought about my male friends... during the day and dreamed about them at night, but was too convinced that I was a hopeless **monstrosity** ever to make any effectual advances. Later on... I came to find that there were others like myself' (quoted in Ellis 1924, 107).

Havelock Ellis.

(i) *Sexual Inversion* (1897).

- A discussion as to how best to think of homosexuality: 'is it a diseased* condition which qualifies its subject for the lunatic asylum? or is it a natural **monstrosity**, a human "sport"' (1924, 302).

E. M. Forster.

(i) *Maurice* (wr. 1913-1914).

Maurice tells Clive that he has slept with Scudder: 'Clive sprang up with a whimper of disgust*. He wanted to smite the **monster**, and flee, but he was civilized, and wanted it feebly. After all, they were Cambridge men' (1972, 213).

'MORBID'.

Andrew Combe.

(i) *Observations On Mental Derangement* (1831).

Speaking of cases of male 'aversion to the society of the opposite sex', he refers to '**morbid** and unnatural* appetites' (219-220, quoted in Lynch 1985, 91).

R. L. Stevenson.

(i) *Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde* (1886).

Jekyll's 'profound duplicity of life' as a young man addicted to 'concealed... pleasures': 'many a man would have even blazoned such irregularities as I was guilty of; but from the high views that I had set before me, I regarded and hid them with an almost **morbid** sense of shame*' (1979, 81).

Walt Whitman.

(i) Letter to J. A. Symonds (August 19 1890).

Whitman disclaims the homosexual implications in his *Calamus* poems: '**morbid** inferences which are disavowed by me and seem damnable' (quoted in Ellis 1924, 51).

Newspapers Of The Period.

(i) *Westminster Gazette* (6 April 1895).

Concerning the Wilde trials, the question is raised of whether Wilde wrote '**morbid**' literature (quoted in Cohen 1993, 168-169).

Oscar Wilde.

(i) Letter to the Home Secretary (2 July 1896).

Confessing to a horror of his past homosexual behaviour and a fear lest it return under prison conditions, in an attempt to gain an early release: 'the mind... becomes... the sure prey of **morbid** passions, and obscene fancies, and thoughts that defile, desecrate and destroy' (Hart-Davis 1979, 143).

E. M. Forster.

(i) *Maurice* (wr. 1913-1914).

Clive thinks that Maurice has utterly rejected his first overtones of homosexual affection and is afraid that he will reveal his attempt to others: "'I shall be obliged if you will not mention my criminal* **morbidity** to anyone'" (1972, 57).

Clive discovers that Maurice has not returned to a heterosexual lifestyle: "'you won't dally with **morbid** thoughts. I'm so disappointed to hear you talk of yourself like that'" (212).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) 'The Duel' (1908).

The relationship between the two duellers, D'Hubert and Feraud, is loaded with homosexual suggestiveness. D'Hubert finds, with 'profound disgust*' that thoughts of his future bride are 'swept from his view' in a 'flood of moral distress' centering on Feraud, and his resultant need to help Feraud is described as an 'almost **morbid** need' (196).

(ii) *Victory* (1915).

Heyst comments to the homosexual Jones: "'you seem to be a **morbid**, senseless sort of bandit'" (388).

'MYSTERY'.**(See also 'SECRET').**D. H. Lawrence.(i) 'Prologue' to *Women In Love* (1916).

Of Birkin: 'in the street, it was the men who roused him by their flesh and their manly*, vigorous movement... he studied the women as sisters.... It was the mens' physique which held the passion and the **mystery** to him' (Roberts and Moore 1968, 104).

(ii) *Studies In Classic American Literature* (1924).

Describes Whitman's poetry as on 'the **mystery** of manly* love' (167; quoted in Meyers 1987, 154).

J. Middleton Murry.(i) *Between Two Worlds: An Autobiography* (1936).

Describing the love between himself and D. H. Lawrence, that threatened both their marriages: 'this "**mystical**" relationship with Lawrence' (413, quoted in Meyers 1987, 142).

J. A. Symonds.(i) *Memoirs* (wr. 1889; pub. 1984).

Describes his erotic dreams of sailors: 'the contact of their bodies afforded me a vivid and **mysterious** pleasure' (62, quoted in Koestenbaum 1989, 59).

Joseph Conrad.(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

In a passage sprinkled with homosexual suggestiveness, Marlow refers to 'all the little **mysteries**' of a sailor's life (45).

- Jim will always be 'greater and more pitiful in the loneliness* of his soul, that remains even for her who loved him best a cruel and insoluble **mystery**' (393).

(ii)'Falk' (1903).

Falk makes 'an utterly **mysterious** allusion to the necessity for peculiar* domestic arrangements' (166) in his married life; he is only talking of vegetarianism, but in a story so loaded with homosexual suggestiveness, the choice of words in this context seems significant.

(iii)'The Duel' (1908).

The relationship between the two duellers, D'Hubert and Feraud, is loaded with homosexual suggestiveness. The heart of their relationship, a long-running duel, originated 'in a **mysterious**, unforgivable offence*' (185).

- One of their seconds comments on their long duel: "'in **mystery** it began, in **mystery** it went on, in **mystery** it is to end'" (227).

(iv)'The Secret Sharer' (1910).

At the beginning of his homosexually loaded relationship with Leggatt, the Captain comments: 'a **mysterious** communication was established already between us two'(88).

The Captain refers to Leggatt as 'the **mysterious** arrival' (92).

(v) *Victory* (1915).

- The customers' response to Schomberg's suggestions that there was something wrong in Heyst's friendship with Morrison: 'of course we laughed at the inkeeper's suggestions of black **mystery**' (23).

'NAMELESS', 'UNNAMEABLE', etc.

(See also ELLIPSES, OMISSIONS AND HESITATIONS, 'INDESCRIBABLE', 'LET US SAY', 'UNMENTIONABLE', 'UNSPEAKABLE', UNSPECIFIED SPECIFICATIONS.)

Generally.

(i)Cohen notes that in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, the Latin designation for sodomy was simply '*crimen **non nominandum** inter Christianos*' (1993, 97, 240).

R. L. Stevenson.

(i)*Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde* (1886).

Hyde gives 'an impression of deformity **without any nameable** malformation' (1979, 40).

- Jekyll, of Hyde, says :'"I have brought on myself a punishment and a danger that **I cannot name**" (58).

Lord Alfred Douglas.

(i)'Two Loves' (1894).

Refers to the love that is not that of man for woman but is 'Shame'* as 'the love that **dare not speak its name**' (quoted in Reade 1970, 362).

Havelock Ellis.

(i)*Sexual Inversion* (1897).

Inversion used to be considered 'a loathsome* and **nameless** vice*' (quoted in Weeks 1990, 47).

Joseph Conrad.

(i)*Lord Jim* (1900).

Marlow on Jim: 'he was just Jim - nothing more. He had, of course, another* name, but he was anxious that it **should not be pronounced**. His incognito, which had as many holes as a sieve, was not meant to hide a personality but a fact. When the fact broke through the incognito he would leave suddenly the seaport where he happened to be at the time and go to another - generally farther east' (4).

(ii)'The Secret Sharer' (1910).

The Captain comments on Leggatt's tale of his past life, during their homosexually loaded relationship: 'there was something that made

comment impossible in his narrative, or perhaps in himself; a sort of feeling, a quality, **which I can't find a name for**' (96).

'NOTORIOUS'.

Oscar Wilde.

(i) *The Picture Of Dorian Gray* (1891).

Dorian's reputation sinks under suggestive rumours that he has been away 'brawling with foreign sailors' : 'his extraordinary absences became **notorious**, and, when he used to reappear again in society, men would whisper to each other in corners, or pass him with a sneer, or look at him with cold searching eyes, as though they were determined to discover his secret*' (1985, 173-174).

Newspapers Of The Period.

(i) *Punch* (10 November 1894).

Two cartoon characters, called Raggie and Flitters are based on Bosie and Wilde: Flitters admires Raggie's being so 'wonderfully complete' and 'beautiful', refers to their both having 'lovely limpness' and adores 'deliciously innocent' youths, whom he wishes to make equally limp. A policeman comes up to arrest them ('rather ominously', as Schmidgall (1994, 207) puts it, 'considering what was to occur five months later') and Raggie eagerly exclaims: 'can we be going to become **notorious** really **notorious** - at last?' (225, quoted in Schmidgall 1994, 207-208).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

- Robinson is involved in a homosexually loaded relationship with Chester, and is referred to as 'the **notorious** Robinson' (166, 168).

OLDER MAN WITH YOUNGER MAN.

Generally.

(i) There is a long tradition of the association of an older with a younger man throughout the history of homosexuality - e.g. Plato, *Phaedrus*: **'he is old and his companion is young**, yet he never leaves his side day or night if he can help it; he is driven on by an irresistible itch to the pleasures which are constantly to be found in seeing, hearing, and touching his beloved' (quoted in Meyers 1987, 42); many of the homosexual works quoted in Reade (1970) and d'Arch Smith (1970) concentrate on relationships with such a disparity in age.

The Wilde Trials (1895).

- Throughout Wilde's questioning, the disparity of age between Wilde and his younger male friends is brought up against him as a fact automatically suggestive in itself of homosexuality.

- "Why should a man of **your age** address a **boy nearly twenty years younger** as 'My own **Boy**'?" (quoted in Hyde 1962, 115).

- When Wilde was asked if he became "fond of this office **boy**", he objected strongly to this description, knowing that the implications of 'boy' would look bad for him: "I deny that was the position of Mr. Edward Shelley, to whom you are referring. I object to your description". Carson immediately returns to the main point, confirming that 'boy' is the problem word:

"What **age** was Mr. Shelley?"

"I should think about twenty" (quoted in Hyde 1962, 119-120).

- "Now, did you not know that Taylor was notorious* for **introducing young men to older men**?" (quoted in Hyde 1962, 125).

Wilde defends the 'Love that dare not speak its name*': "there is nothing unnatural* about it. It is intellectual, and it repeatedly exists **between an elder and a younger man**, when the **elder** has intellect,

and the **younger man** has all the joy, hope, and glamour of life before him" (quoted in Hyde 1962, 201).

- "Why did you take up with these **youths**?"

"I am a lover of **youth!**"

"You exalt **youth** as a sort of god?" (quoted in Hyde 1962, 202).

E. M. Forster.

(i) *'The Life To Come' And Other Stories* (wr. 1902-1958).

In every story, with the possible exception of 'The Obelisk', where it is not clear, the homosexual relationship involves an older man with a younger boy.

Joseph Conrad.

(Obviously, scenes between older and younger men occur throughout literature with no homosexual implications whatsoever. Those that follow have only been included if they are surrounded by specifically homosexual suggestions.)

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

Marlow on Jim: 'and all the time I had before me these blue, **boyish** eyes looking straight into mine*, this **young face**, these capable shoulders, the open bronzed forehead with a white line under the roots of clustering fair hair, this appearance appealing at sight* to all my sympathies: this frank aspect, the artless smile, the **youthful seriousness**. He was of the right sort*; he was one of us*' (78).

Marlow on Jim, in the passage talking of being 'found out' in a 'more than criminal* weakness*': 'I watched **the youngster** there. I liked his appearance; I knew his appearance[...] he was one of us*' (42-43).

- Jim to Marlow: "you don't know what it is for a fellow in my position to be believed - make a clean breast of it to an **elder man**. It is so difficult - so awfully unfair - so hard to understand*" (128)

Marlow on the reality of the sailor's life after dreams of it: 'what we get well, we won't talk* of that; but can one of us* restrain a smile? In no other kind* of life is the illusion more wide of reality - in no other is the beginning *all* illusion the disenchantment more swift - the subjugation more complete[....] What wonder that when some heavy prod* gets home the bond is found to be close; that besides the fellowship* of the craft there is felt the strength of a wider feeling the feeling that binds **a man to a child**. He was there before me[...] giving me a glimpse of himself as **a young fellow** in a scrape that is the very devil of a scrape, the sort of scrape **greybeards** wag at solemnly while they hide a smile' (129).

The whole section concerning Jim's being sent by Marlow to stay with an older male friend of his 'a cynical, more than middle-aged bachelor, with a reputation for eccentricity' (187); the bachelor harps on about 'Jim's perfections'; until now, he has been 'alone*' but now he has 'had [Jim] to live with' him (187); 'for one thing, Jim kept his freshness in the climate. Had he been a girl* - my friend wrote - one could have said he was blooming blooming modestly - like a violet' (187); "'the dew is yet on him, and since I had the bright idea of giving him a room in the house and having him at meals, I feel less withered myself[....] I [feel...] more in touch with mankind than I had been for years. Ridiculous, isn't it? Of course I guess there is something - some awful little scrape which you know all about but if I am sure that it is terribly heinous, I fancy one could manage to forgive it. For my part, I declare I am unable to imagine him guilty of anything much worse than robbing an orchard. Is *it** much worse?[....] it is such a long time since we both turned saints that you may have forgotten we, too, had sinned in our time?" (188). When Jim leaves, the bachelor's response is in the language of the spurned lover: Jim's note of formal apology is

'either silly or heartless'; he warns Marlow: 'lest you should have some more mysterious* **young men** in reserve, that I have shut up shop, definitely and for ever. This is the last eccentricity I shall be guilty of. Do not imagine for a moment that I care a hang; but[...] for my own sake I've told a plausible lie at the club"' (189). Jim comments on this bachelor: "'I know he liked me. That's what made it so hard. Such a splendid man! That morning he slipped his hand under my arm.... He, too, was familiar with me"' (190).

Marlow's parting with Jim, when they clasp hands and finally achieve their only 'moment of real and profound intimacy*': 'I believe I called him "dear **boy**," and he tacked on the words "**old man**" to some half uttered expression of gratitude, as though his risk set off against my years had made us more equal in age and in feeling[....] He exerted himself to soothe me as though he had been the more mature of the two' (240-241).

Marlow on Cornelius, plainly a homosexual, with whom Jim goes to live at one point: 'marked by that abjectness which was like the stamp of the man[....] I am sure his love would have been the most abject of sentiments but can one imagine a loathsome* insect in love? And his loathsomeness*, too, was abject, so that a simply disgusting* person would have appeared noble by his side. He has his place neither in the background nor in the foreground of the story; he is simply seen skulking on its outskirts, enigmatical and unclean*, **tainting** the fragrance of **its youth** and of its naiveness' (286).

(ii)'ll Conde' (1908).

The whole tale is densely loaded with homosexual codewords and homosexually suggestive situations and the Count of the title undergoes an experience reminiscent of an attack during a casual homosexual street-encounter that went further than he intended. His

age and his handsome attacker's youth are strangely emphasised: 'the **"young man,"** as the Count called him' (246); 'it is probable that **"the young man"** had departed' (247); the Count fears 'being everlastingly haunted by the vision of that **young man'** who, he is told by the café-owner (who hesitates* to do so, out of 'discretion'), is the chief of 'an association of **young men** of very nice **young men'** (250).

ONE OF US/ONE OF THEM.

Newspapers Of The Period.

(i)*Punch* (6 April 1895).

A skit as if written by Wilde, published at the height of the publicity surrounding his trials, and proclaiming the writer's own 'indiscretion' and membership of the band of 'real and only... Sexomaniacs', is referred to as being 'By **One Of Them'** (157, quoted in Schmidgall 1994, 208).

Joseph Conrad.

(i)*Lord Jim* (1900).

The plainly homosexual Captain and engineer of the *Patna* are both '**one of them'** (46, 154).

Marlow, in a passage loaded with homosexual suggestion, comments that Jim is 'too much like **one of us** not to be dangerous' (106).

'OTHER SIDE'.

Anonymous.

(i)*Teleny* (1893).

The alternative title of this very explicit homosexual text is '**The Reverse Of The Medal'** (quoted in Reade 1970).

Oscar Wilde.

(i)*de Profundis* (wr. 1897, pub. 1905 (abridged), 1949 (complete)).

Wilde reproaches Douglas for making the specifically homosexual aspect of their relationship public: 'it was a very real grief to me that **that side** of my friendship* with you should inadvertently be revealed to the common gaze' (1986, 140)

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

Marlow on Jim's appeal: '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, with only a fearful ashy light falling at times on the edge. 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*' (93).

'OUTCAST'.

E. M. Forster.

(i) *Maurice* (wr. 1913-1914).

Maurice goes to a hypnotist in the hope that he can be cured of his homosexuality: "'I want to be like other men, not this **outcast** whom nobody wants"' (1972, 184).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Victory* (1915).

The homosexual Jones describes himself as having been "'hounded **out of [his...] sphere**" by people "'of the best society"' (337).

Jones links Heyst and himself: "'it's obvious that we belong to the same - *social sphere," began Mr. Jones with languid irony[....] "Something has **driven you out** - the originality of your ideas, perhaps. Or your tastes*.'" (378).

Heyst asks Jones to define himself: "I am **an outcast** - almost an outlaw*" (379).

'PARTNER'.

C. Eduard Bertz.

(i) Letter to W. C. Rivers (18 June 1913).

Concerning Whitman's homosexuality: 'only **partners** in guilt can know anything definite about Whitman's sexual activity, and they will be afraid because they would accuse themselves' (quoted in Duberman 1991, 115).

D. H. Lawrence.

(i) Letter to Ottoline Morrell (22? February 1915).

On his long friendship with Middleton Murry: 'at present he is my **partner** - the only man who is quite simply with me' (quoted in Meyers 1987, 152).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

- Marlow on Jim: 'he discovered at once a desire that I should not confound him with his **partners** in *in crime*, let us call it*. He was not one of them*; he was altogether of another* sort*' (79-80).

The patently homosexual Chester and his friend: 'the two figures of Chester and his antique **partner**[...] No! They were too phantasmal and extravagant to enter into anyone's fate' (174).

(ii) *Heart Of Darkness* (1902).

Marlow admits he feels an excessive grief at the death of the helmsman: 'I missed my late helmsman awfully, I missed him even while his body was still lying in the pilot-house. Perhaps you will think it passing strange*, this regret for a savage who was of no more account than a grain of sand in a black Sahara. Well, don't you see, he had

done something, he had steered; for months I had him at my back* - a help an instrument. It was a kind of **partnership**. He steered for me I had to look after him, I worried about his deficiencies, and thus a subtle bond had been created[....] And the intimate* profundity of that look* he gave me when he received his hurt remains to this day in my memory' (87-88).

(iii) Letter to Ford Madox Ford (c. July 20 1902).

- A rather strange disclaimer concerning his literary collaboration with Ford: 'you cannot really suppose that there is anything between us except our mutual regard and our **partnership** *in crime*' (quoted in Kari 1979, 521).

(iv) *Victory* (1915).

Ricardo on his first meeting with the homosexual Jones: "It was only then that he looked* at me quietly, you know; in a slow way[....] He seemed to touch me inside* somewhere. I went away pretty quick from there; I was wanted forward anyhow. I wasn't frightened. What should I be frightened for? I only felt touched - on the very spot*. But Jee-miny, if anybody had told me we should be **partners** before the year was out - well, I would have - *"

'He swore a variety of strange* oaths' (127-128).

Ricardo is away from Jones: 'his secretary, who was in fact his **partner**, was not present' (321).

(v) 'Stephen Crane' (1923).

Hodges, exploring potentially homosexual aspects of Conrad's life, describes Conrad's essay on his relationship with Stephen Crane as reading like 'a description of two people happily falling in love' (1979, 382). Conrad angrily dismisses the 'perfidious and contemptible gossip' (164) that dwells on 'the Crane legend of "unrestrained temperament"'; the gossip is highly 'suggestive' and 'founded on Crane's visits to town'

(during which Conrad would 'me[e]t him there' so that they could 'spend afternoons and evenings together'): Conrad denies that he has 'ever seen anybody who would own to having been a **partner** in those excesses' (166).

'PECULIAR'.

(See also 'ABNORMAL', 'ANOTHER (KIND)', 'DIFFERENT', 'OTHER SIDE', 'QUEER', 'STRANGE').

Anonymous.

(i) On the Cleveland Street Trial. (1889-1890).

- Concerning John Saul, a male prostitute, who was called to give evidence amidst great publicity, one contemporary source describes him as having a 'stagey manner and a **peculiar** effeminate* voice' (quoted, with no further ascription, in Pearsall 1993, 472).

The Wilde Trials (1895).

Questioning concerning Douglas's homosexual poems in *The Chameleon*: 'the poems in question were somewhat **peculiar**, were they not?' (quoted in Hyde 1962, 198).

Fr. Rolfe/Baron Corvo.

(i) *Hadrian The Seventh* (1904).

The woman is as yet unaware that the man she loves is a homosexual: 'still ignorant of his **peculiarity**, she treated him as the female animal treats the male' (quoted in d'Arch Smith 1970, 69-70).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) 'Falk' (1903).

The story is already loaded with homosexual undertones, in that we do not yet know what the unmentionable crime of Falk's youth is, that stands in the way of his marriage; then our confusion is suggestively

increased: 'he then murmured an utterly mysterious* allusion to the necessity for **peculiar** domestic arrangements' (166).

(ii)'Il Conde' (1908).

The whole tale is densely loaded with homosexual codewords and homosexually suggestive situations and the Count of the title undergoes an experience reminiscent of an attack during a casual homosexual street-encounter that went further than he intended. The narrator worries that the attack might be considered 'queer'* (246), considering 'certain* **peculiarities** of Neapolitan manners' (245).

-The handsome young stranger who attacks the Count has 'that **peculiar** expression of cruel discontent to be seen only in the busts of some Roman emperors' (249).

(iii)'The Secret Sharer' (1910).

The Captain notes, towards the end of his homosexually loaded relationship with Leggatt: 'I was extremely tired, in a **peculiarly** intimate* way' (98).

(iv) *Suspense* (1925).

- Attilio feels that he and Cosmo have been 'drawn together' (288) by the stars; he speaks to Cosmo in tones of 'secret* earnestness*' (293) and suggests that Cosmo has a '**peculiar** personality' (288).

PENETRATION IMAGERY.

(See also EFFEMINACY).

Generally.

(i)The portrayal of a man as effeminate, in order to suggest his homosexuality, often takes the form of symbolic imagery of the man's being penetrated, to suggest his taking the female, sexually penetrated, role.

Anonymous.

(i) *Don Leon* (1866).

The poem's narrator justifies his homosexual activity:

'I **plough** no field in other men's domain;

And where I **delve** no seed shall spring again' (quoted in Coote 1983, 252-253).

D. H. Lawrence.

(i) *Women In Love* (wr. 1916, pub. 1920).

Birkin and Gerald are wrestling: '[Birkin] **impinged** invisibly upon the other man, scarcely seeming to touch him, like a garment, and then suddenly **piercing** in a tense fine grip that seemed to **penetrate into** the very quick of Gerald's being....

'They seemed to **drive their white flesh deeper and deeper** against each other, as if they would **break into a oneness**....

'It was as if Birkin's whole physical intelligence **interpenetrated into Gerald's body**, as if his fine, sublimated energy **entered into the flesh of the fuller man**, like some potency' (1972, 348-349).

E. M. Forster.

(i) 'The Life To Come' (wr. 1922).

The dying tribal chief is in love with the missionary and wants to continue the relationship initiated by their one long-ago homosexual encounter; the missionary has just told him that there will be 'real and true love' after death: "Real and true love! Ah, that would be joyful." His voice gained strength, his eyes had an austere beauty as he embraced his friend*, parted from him so long by the accidents of earth. Soon God would wipe away all tears. "The life to come," he shouted. "Life, life, eternal life. Wait for me in it." And he **stabbed** the missionary through the heart.

'The jerk the knife gave brought his own fate hurrying upon him.... But he survived for a moment longer, and it was the most exquisite he had ever known. For love was conquered at last' (1989, 111).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Romance* (1903, with Ford.)

Kemp's relationship with Carlos is surrounded with homosexual suggestiveness throughout the novel. Carlos is trying to persuade Kemp to come and live with him, speaking 'softly and very affectionately': 'Carlos [said] gently "you must —" And, looking me straight in the face with a still, **penetrating** glance* of his big, romantic* eyes, "It is a good life," he whispered* seductively, "and I like you, John Kemp. You are young very young yet. But I love you very much[...]" (47; parts of the conversation are also noted as homosexually suggestive by Koestenbaum 1989, 169).

Kemp is in jail, drinking wine in 'close confinement' with two pirates, one of whom, Salazar, insists that Kemp sleep on his bed: '[he] sprang towards me with an immense anxiety[....] He thrust me gently down upon [the bed...], making with his plump hands the motions of smoothing it to receive me' (486). Just before this, Salazar draws out an 'immense pointed knife' which he kisses 'rapturously', exclaiming "'Aha!...bear **this kiss into his ribs** at the back' (383; the final exclamation is also noted as potentially homosexually suggestive by Koestenbaum 1989, 171).

(ii) 'The Duel' (1908).

The relationship between the two duellers, D'Hubert and Feraud, is loaded with homosexual suggestiveness. Feraud hears that D'Hubert has hurt a civilian he '**ran [him...] through**' with his sword and considers this 'positively indecent' (148), but then goes on to do the same thing to D'Hubert (169). D'Hubert is reprimanded by his Colonel

afterwards: "what the devil do you mean by letting yourself **be spitted** like this by that fellow of the 7th Hussars? It's simply disgraceful!" (173). (iii)'ll Conde' (1908).

- The whole tale is densely loaded with homosexual codewords and homosexually suggestive situations and the Count of the title undergoes an experience reminiscent of an attack during a casual homosexual street-encounter that went further than he intended. The young, handsome stranger threateningly asks the Count for his 'anelli', but the latter refuses: "that you shall not have," he repeated firmly and closed his eyes, fully expecting - *I don't know whether I am right in recording that such an unpleasant word had passed his lips* - fully expecting to feel himself being - *I really hesitate to say* - being disembowelled by **the push of the long sharp blade resting murderously against the pit of his stomach** the very seat, in all human beings, of anguishing sensations.

'Great waves of harmony went on flowing from the band.

'Suddenly the Count felt the **nightmarish pressure removed from the sensitive spot**[....] He was alone*[....] A feeling of weakness* came over him' (247).

'PERVERSE', 'PERVERSION', etc.

Newspapers Of The Period.

'Perverted' was so clearly understood to mean 'homosexual' that some newspapers would not print the word. For instance, an exchange over whether *Dorian Gray* is a 'perverted' book is reported in *The Evening Standard* thus: 'A — novel might be a good book? I don't know what you mean by a — novel.'

'Then I will suggest "Dorian Grey" [sic] as open to the interpretation of being a — novel? That could only be to brutes and illiterates' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 253).

Oscar Wilde.

(i) Letter to the Home Secretary (2 July 1896).

- Confessing to a horror of his past homosexual behaviour and a fear that it might return under prison conditions, in an attempt to gain an early release: 'it is under the ceaseless apprehension lest this insanity, that displayed itself in monstrous* sexual **perversion** before, may now extend to the entire nature and intellect, that the petitioner writes this appeal....

'[The petitioner] is conscious that his mind, shut out artificially from all rational and intellectual interests, does nothing, and can do nothing, but brood on those forms of sexual **perversity**, those loathsome* modes of erotomania, that have brought him from high place and noble distinction to the convict's cell and the common gaol' (Hart-Davis 1979, 143).

(ii) *de Profundis* (wr. 1897, pub. 1905 (abridged), 1949 (complete)).

Wilde on his own homosexuality: 'the French understood... much better than you did [that...] along with genius goes often a curious **perversity** of passion and desire' (1986, 138).

On his homosexual relationship with Douglas: 'what the paradox was to me in the sphere of thought, **perversity** became to me in the sphere of passion' (152).

Wilde confesses his homosexuality to a friend who believes in his innocence: 'I... told him that while there was much amongst the definite charges that was quite untrue and transferred to me by revolting malice, still that my life had been full of **perverse** pleasures,

and that unless he accepted that as a fact about me and realized it to the full I could not possibly be friends with him any more' (196-197).

Havelock Ellis.

(i) *Sexual Inversion* (1897).

The Wilde case 'may have brought conviction of their **perversion** to many inverts who were before only vaguely conscious of their abnormality*' (1924, 63).

E. M. Forster.

(i) *Maurice* (wr. 1913-1914).

- A doctor pronounces on the results of Maurice's having had a homosexual encounter with Scudder: 'by pleasuring the body Maurice had confirmed that very word was used in the final verdict he had confirmed his spirit in its **perversion**, and cut himself off from the congregation of normal* man' (1972, 187).

(ii) 'The Life To Come' (1922).

The tribal chief thinks that his experience of homosexual sex with a missionary is Christianity: 'the dark erotic **perversion** that the chief mistook for Christianity' (1989, 106).

Sir Ernest Blackwell.

(i) Memorandum On Roger Casement (17 July 1916).

On Casement's homosexuality: 'of late years he seems to have completed the full cycle of sexual degeneracy* and from a **pervert**, has become an invert a 'woman' or pathic who derives his satisfaction from attracting men and inducing them to use him' (quoted in Hyde 1964, 200).

Senator Eamonn Duggan.

(i) On the homosexually explicit diaries of Roger Casement (sometime after 1921, when Duggan saw the diaries and before 1936, when Duggan died).

'the diary was in two parts bound volumes repeating *ad nauseam* details of sex **perversion**, of the personal appearance and beauty of native boys.... It was disgusting*' (quoted in Hyde 1964, 167).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

Marlow on Jim: 'he was outwardly so typical of that good, stupid kind we like to feel marching right and left of us in life, of the kind that is not disturbed by the vagaries of intelligence and the **perversions** of - * of nerves, let us say*. He was the kind of fellow you would, on the strength of his looks, leave in charge of the deck[....] and, by Jove! it wouldn't have been safe. There are depths of horror in that thought. He looked as genuine as a new sovereign, but there was some infernal alloy in his metal' (44-45).

(ii) 'The Duel' (1908).

The relationship between the two duellers, D'Hubert and Feraud, is loaded with homosexual suggestiveness. The Chevalier responds when D'Hubert tells him of his long-running duel with Feraud: "what horrible **perversions** of manliness*!" (213).

'QUEER'.

(See also 'ABNORMAL', 'ANOTHER (KIND)', 'DIFFERENT', 'OTHER SIDE', 'PECULIAR', 'STRANGE')

R. L. Stevenson.

(i) *Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde* (1886).

One of Jekyll's friends is reluctant to inquire too deeply into Jekyll's strange friendship with Hyde: "the more it looks like **Queer** Street, the less I ask" (1979, 33).

- Hyde is described by Poole: "there was something **queer** about that gentleman something that gave a man a turn I don't rightly know

how to say it, sir, beyond this: that you felt in your marrow kind of cold and thin" (68).

Showalter (1990, 110-111) notes that the manuscript version of the novel has Poole exclaim of Hyde's mirror: 'this glass has seen some **queer** doings' and that his latter phrase is changed to 'strange* things' in the final version. It is possible that Stevenson himself felt that the original phrase was too homosexually suggestive and needed to be toned down: the manuscript edition is consistently more obviously homosexually loaded than the final version. (For instance, the manuscript portrays Jekyll's early life far more suggestively than the final version: in the manuscript, Jekyll was 'from an early age... the slave of certain* appetites' which were 'at once criminal* in the sight of the law and abhorrent in themselves. They cut me off* from the sympathy of those whom I otherwise respected' (quoted in Showalter 1990, 112).

The Marquess Of Queensberry.

(i) 1894.

The Marquess of Queensberry, the year before he prosecuted Wilde, accused a group of prominent men of being 'snob **queers**' (quoted in Ellmann 1988, 402).

E. M. Forster.

(i) 'Albergo Empedocle' (1903).

Harold, a prospective son-in-law dreams/discovers that he has lived in ancient Greece and 'loved very differently*' (1989, 52) in a past life; the prospective father-in-law has already declared of Harold: "'I'll have no **queerness** in a son-in-law'" (1989, 46).

(ii) *Maurice* (wr. 1913-1914).

Maurice and Clive discuss how they managed to start their homosexual relationship:

"But hadn't you been getting hold of me for months? Since first you saw me at Risley's, in fact."

"Don't ask me."

"It's a **queer** business, anyway."

"It's that." (1972, 85).

Clive looks back with disgust at his youthful homosexual relationship with Maurice: 'he hated **queerness**, Cambridge, the Blue Room, certain glades in the park' (152).

(iii) Forster said of T. E. Lawrence that he had 'some **queer** friends*' (quoted in Meyers 1977, 17).

Henry James.

(i) *The Sense Of The Past* (wr. 1914; pub. 1917).

Ralph is haunted by his double, whom he finds "magnificent.... really beautiful" (99) but nevertheless also "strange*" and "contrary to nature*" (100), and he tells his tale to an Ambassador he barely knows, who holds his hand (95) and indulges in mutual flirting with him (98, 102-3, 104, 106). Ralph asks the Ambassador to be gentle with him: "it's a most extraordinary thing, you see, to have befallen a man, and I don't wonder at the **queer** figure I must make to you. But you'll see too for yourself in a moment how easily you'll wish to let me down. It's the most extraordinary thing that ever happened in the world but at the same time there's no danger," he cheerfully declared, "of my losing my way*. I'm all here, or rather" Ralph was gay* about it "he is" (96-97). Miller comments on this passage: 'so Ralph can be "gay" as well as "queer". These were favoured adjectives of the Fin de Siecle and after, which in the fullness of time were to become in succession the names which the English-speaking homosexual community has used to identify itself. James's use presages this' (1987, 236).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

The clearly homosexual captain of the *Patna* is referred to as the captain of 'that **queer** lot' (36).

(ii) *The Inheritors* (1901, with Ford).

A stranger asks about the narrator, Etherington Granger, 'is he **queer**?' (73).

(iii) *Romance* (1903, with Ford).

Kemp, whose relationships with Carlos and with other men are surrounded by homosexual suggestiveness throughout the novel, declares of his life after he has been with Carlos: 'I was another* man by that time, with much **queer** knowledge and other* desires' (43; also noted as potentially homosexually suggestive by Koestenbaum 1989, 169).

Kemp meets a sailor, Williams, who has been 'quite incapable of keeping straight*' (320), and whose wife hence 'suspects every woman - every man, too' (296) who comes near him. Williams thinks Kemp 'a **queer** fish' (336).

(iv) 'Il Conde' (1908).

The whole tale is densely loaded with homosexual codewords and homosexually suggestive situations and the Count of the title undergoes an experience reminiscent of an attack during a casual homosexual street-encounter that went further than he intended. The story of his 'abominable"* (240) attack, especially when considering 'certain* peculiarities* of Neapolitan manners' is 'a deucedly **queer** story' (245-246).

(v) 'The Secret Sharer' (1910).

The captain's smuggling of a man into his cabin is described in very homosexually suggestive terms; he now knows that his crew suspect something: 'there was a sort of curiosity in his eye that I did not like. I

don't know whether the steward had told them that I was "**queer**" only, or downright drunk, but I know the man meant to have a good look at me' (99).

The captain decides that only at night can he can whisper* to the man he has smuggled into his bedroom: 'it would not have been prudent to talk in daytime; and I could not have stood the excitement of that **queer** sense of whispering to myself' (101).

(vi) *Chance* (1913).

- Marlow comments on the lesbian Mrs. Fyne and her husband: '**queer** enough they were. Is there a human being that isn't that - more or less secretly*? But whatever their secret*, it was manifest to me that it was neither subtle nor profound' (57).

(vii) *Victory* (1915).

Heyst, who has 'never[...] loved a woman' (212), and with whom the homosexual Jones repeatedly links himself as a type, is described throughout the novel as 'queer' by the narrator and others. e.g.: '**queer** chap - yes, that may have been said, and in fact was said' (4); "'**queer** chap, that Swede," was his only comment' (7); 'Heyst[...] was generally considered a "**queer** chap"' (91); 'he was a **queer** chap. I doubt if he himself knew how **queer** he was' (408).

The homosexual Jones describes his 'admirer and partner*' (128): "'that er - *companion* - er - *secretary of mine is a **queer** chap' (236).

(viii) *The Nature Of A Crime* (1924, with Ford).

In this novel (of which Koestenbaum (1989, 172) suggests that Conrad and Ford use the heterosexual plot as a mask for homosexual ideas), the narrator outlines the relationship he wants with the woman: "'for the union with you that I seek is a **queer** sort* of thing; hardly at all, I think, a union of the body, but a sort of consciousness of our thought proceeding onwards together"' (69); he later notes of the woman, "'She

is alarmed and possibly fascinated because she feels that I am not 'straight'* - that I might, in fact, be a woman or a poet" (47-48, all quoted in Koestenbaum 1989, 172-173).

'ROMANCE', 'ROMANTIC', etc.

Generally.

(i) Koestenbaum points out that 'romance' had strong homosexual overtones in the literary world at this time: (concerning works like *King Solomon's Mines*) 'the boy-reader was a figure of erotic interest, for Haggard and Lang considered these textbooks in masculinity to be specimens of "romance" a genre that Stevenson favored, and that critic George Saintsbury, among others, invested with reactionary and anti-feminist values. Saintsbury advocated a "return to pure romance," a revolt against "the more complicated kind of novel."... These complicated and realistic novels were either by women... or they focused on women's lives and on marriage; in contrast, Haggard's romances, like Stevenson's, slighted women altogether. The term "romance," then, has nothing to do with the heterosexual romance of Victorian fiction; Stevenson's and Haggard's romances made room for pederasty by excluding marriage' (1989, 152-153).

Frederick Bridges.

(i) *Phrenology Made Practical And Popularly Explained* (1861).

'the most absurd and **romantic** attachments are frequently formed... by young men, based upon an unnatural* excitement of Adhesiveness' (quoted in Lynch 1985, 78).

Oscar Wilde.

(i) *The Picture Of Dorian Gray* (1891).

Hallward confesses his attraction to Dorian ("I worshipped you. I grew jealous of everyone to whom you spoke. I wanted to have you all

to myself" etc. (1985, 144)), and Dorian feels pity for him: 'there seemed to him to be something tragic in a friendship* so coloured by **romance**' (147).

Dorian searches 'for sensations that would be at once new and delightful, and possess that element of strangeness* that is so essential to **romance**' (163).

(ii) Letter to Reginald Turner (23 September 1897).

On his homosexual relationship with Douglas ('Bosie'): 'so when people say how dreadful of me to return to Bosie, do say *no* - say that I love him, that he is a poet, and that, after all, whatever my life may have been ethically, it has always been **romantic**, and Bosie is my **romance**. My **romance** is a tragedy of course, but it is none the less a **romance**, and he loves me very dearly, more than he loves or can love anyone else, and without him life was dreary' (Hart-Davis 1979, 309).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

Stein sums up Jim's problem:

"I understand* very well. He is **romantic**."

'He had diagnosed* the case for me, and at first I was quite startled to find how simple it was' (212; and cf. 'diseased').

Marlow on Jim: 'even Stein could say no more than that he was **romantic**. I only knew he was one of us*. And what business had he to be **romantic**?' (224).

(ii) *Romance* (1903, with Ford).

Carlos and his relationship with Kemp are surrounded by homosexual suggestiveness throughout the novel. Kemp is talking of Carlos's shady past: 'there were all the elements of **romance** about Carlos' story[...] he had ruined himself in one way or another* in Spain' (34).

Kemp enters the outlaw's life under the gaze of Carlos. Carlos is 'standing in a languid pose' (47), speaking to Kemp 'softly* and very affectionately' (47), and has just told his companion that he 'want[s]' Jack 'very much' (46). Carlos looks him 'straight in the face with a still, penetrating* glance* of his big, **romantic** eyes', while he whispers* 'seductively[...] "I like you, John Kemp"' (47; the conversation is also noted as potentially homosexually suggestive by Koestenbaum 1989, 169).

When Carlos leaves: '[he] leaned over and kissed me lightly on the cheek, then climbed away. I felt that the light of **Romance** was going out of my life' (51; also noted as potentially homosexually suggestive by Koestenbaum 1989, 169).

Kemp speaks of his relationship with Carlos: 'this man whom I loved for his gayety* , his recklessness and **romance**' (139).

Even when Carlos is dying, Kemp finds that he 'remained attractive, with the charm of his gallant and **romantic** temper' (178).

Kemp, whose relationships with several men throughout the novel are surrounded by homosexual suggestiveness, has been attacked by a sailor, who returns to apologise to him. During the apology, Kemp notices 'the beauty of that rugged, grizzled, hairy seaman's eyelashes. They were long and thick, shadowing the eyes softly like the lashes of a young girl*' (310). The sailor speaks 'bashfully', 'shyly', to Kemp: 'his bass, half-concealed mutter was quite as sweet to my ears as a celestial melody; it was, after all, the sanction of simple earnestness* to my desires and hopes - a witness that he and his like* were on my side in the world of **romance**' (310).

(iii) *A Personal Record* (1912).

- Miller (1987, 246-247) notes some suggestive phrasing in this work, as Conrad talks of sowing his 'wild oats' at sea, of his shipboard 'seductive

reveries' (111) and of the 'somewhat exceptional psychology of [his...] seagoing' (119); Conrad also admits: 'I have been called **romantic**. Well, that can't be helped' (111).

(iv) *Victory* (1915).

Heyst, who has 'never[...] loved a woman' (212), and is 'queer*', is discussed in detail by the narrator and Davidson: 'not that we were two **romantics** tingeing the world to the hue of our temperament, but that both of us had been acute enough to discover a long time ago that Heyst was' (51).

'SECRET'.

(See also 'MYSTERY').

Oscar Wilde.

(i) *The Picture Of Dorian Gray* (1891).

Basil Hallward is homosexually attracted to Dorian and had not meant to reveal Dorian's identity to Sir Henry: "when I like people immensely I never tell their names to anyone. It is like surrendering a part of them. I have grown to love **secrecy**. It seems to be the one thing that can make modern life mysterious* or marvellous to us' (1985, 26).

Lord Henry has been flattering Dorian in a homosexually loaded vein, praising his 'rose-red youth' and his 'rose-white boyhood'. Dorian's response: 'the few words that Basil's friend had said to him words spoken by chance, no doubt, and with wilful paradox in them had touched some **secret** chord that had never been touched before, but that he felt was now vibrating and throbbing to curious pulses' (42).

Gray hovers on the brink of telling Hallward of his own double life, but instead brings out Hallward's confession of love for him: "we have each of us a **secret**. Let me know yours and I shall tell you mine" (143).

Hallward's painting seems to him to reveal his homosexual love for Dorian: "'I know that as I worked at it, every flake and film of colour seemed to me to reveal my **secret**. I grew afraid that others would know of my idolatry'" (145).

Instead of revealing his own double life, Gray has heard Hallward's confession of love for him: 'and how strange* it was that, instead of having been forced to reveal his own **secret**, he had succeeded, almost by chance, in wresting a **secret** from his friend*!' (147).

Dorian's reputation sinks under suggestive rumours that he has been away 'brawling with foreign sailors' : 'his extraordinary absences became notorious*, and, when he used to reappear again in society, men would whisper to each other in corners, or pass him with a sneer, or look at him with cold searching eyes, as though they were determined to discover his **secret**' (173-174).

Jerome K. Jerome.

(i) Editorial in *Today: A Weekly Magazine Journal* (29 December, 1894).

- Jerome drew his readers' attention to the undesirably homosexual nature of *The Chameleon's* contents, referring to its 'advocacy for indulgence in the cravings of an unnatural* disease*...[men] cursed with these unnatural* cravings... **unseen and unknown**' (5: 60, quoted in d'Arch Smith 1970, 58).

C. Eduard Bertz.

(i) Letter to W. C. Rivers (18 June 1913).

Concerning Whitman's homosexuality: 'Whitman's intimates* would not have imparted their **secret** to any one of whom they had not good reason to believe that he belonged to their kind*' (quoted in Duberman 1991, 115).

Henry James.

(i) *The Sense Of The Past* (wr. 1914; pub. 1917).

- Ralph is haunted by his double, whom he finds "magnificent.... really beautiful" (99) but nevertheless also "strange*" and "contrary to nature*" (100), and he tells his tale to an Ambassador he barely knows, who holds his hand (95) and indulges in mutual flirting with him (98, 102-3, 104, 106). Ralph's story is referred to between them as his "**secret**", and one which the Ambassador "must keep... for [his own]... pleasure" (94).

D. H. Lawrence.

(i)'Prologue' to *Women In Love* (1916).

On Birkin: 'this was the one and only **secret** he kept to himself, this **secret** of his passionate and sudden, spasmodic affinity for the men he saw. He kept this **secret** even from himself' (Roberts and Moore 1968, 107).

E. M. Forster.

(i)'The Life To Come' (wr. 1922).

- The missionary thinks about his homosexual encounter with the tribal chief, Vithobai: 'he was tired, but as soon as he lay down his **secret** stole out of its hiding-place beyond the mountains, and lay down by his side.... Vithobai had laid all formality aside. "I have come **secretly**," were his first words' (1989, 96).

Joseph Conrad.

(i)*Lord Jim* (1900).

The outlaw Brown talks to Jim, and (like Jones with Heyst) assumes a similarity between the two of them: 'and there ran through the rough talk a vein of subtle reference to their common blood, an assumption of common experience; a sickening suggestion of common guilt, of **secret** knowledge that was like a bond of their minds and of their hearts' (387).

(ii)'The **Secret** Sharer' (1910).

Obviously, the very title, given the tale's strongly homosexual undertones, seems to constitute a specifically homosexually coded application of the word 'secret', only emphasised by the relentless repetition of the word throughout the tale in suggestive contexts, of which only a few examples follow:-

The Captain comments on the effects of his having smuggled a man into his bedroom: 'I was extremely tired, in a peculiarly* intimate* way, by the strain of stealthiness, by the effort of whispering* and the general **secrecy** of this excitement' (98).

'I was constantly watching myself, my **secret** self, as dependent on my actions as my own personality, sleeping in that bed, behind that door' (100).

The Captain refers to Leggatt as 'the **secret** sharer* of my life' (100) a phrase more suggestive of matrimony than of a few hour's acquaintanceship.

'I was not wholly alone with my command; for there was that stranger* in my cabin. Or rather, I was not completely and wholly with her. Part of me was absent. That mental feeling of being in two places at once affected me physically as if the mood of **secrecy** had penetrated* my very soul' (109).

(iii) *Chance* (1913).

Marlow on the lesbian Mrs. Fyne and her husband: 'queer* enough they were. Is there a human being that isn't that more or less **secretly**? But whatever their **secret**, it was manifest to me that it was neither subtle nor profound' (57).

(iv) *Victory* (1915).

Ricardo describes the group of gentlemen amongst whom he met the homosexual Jones: the arrangements for their 'game' of 'silliness' involved 'the greatest **secrecy** and all that' (126).

(v)'Stephen Crane' (1923).

- Hodges, exploring potentially homosexual aspects of Conrad's life, describes Conrad's essay on his relationship with Stephen Crane as reading like 'a description of two people happily falling in love' (1979, 382). Conrad recalls Crane's 'intense earnestness*' when they first met: 'every time he raised his eyes, that **secret** quality (for his voice was careless) of his soul was betrayed in a clear flash' (141).

(vi) *Suspense* (1925).

- The relationship between Cosmo and Attilio, described in terms loaded with homosexual suggestiveness throughout the novel, centres on secrecy, on not being caught.

- Cosmo feels a '**secret** sympathy' towards Attilio(289).

Attilio whispers to Cosmo 'in a tone of **secret** earnestness*' (293)

'SHAME'.

Generally.

(i)Koestenbaum says that '**shame**' was 'understood in the 1890's to mean homosexuality' (1989, 147).

J. A. Symonds.

(i)'Eudiades' (wr. 1868; pub. 1878).

In this openly homosexual poem, Eudiades can hardly bear to speak of his night-time 'restless yearnings' for his future partner Melanthias: '[he] scarce could frame/ The secret* of the night in speech for **shame** and fear' (quoted in Reade 1970, 362).

R. L. Stevenson.

(i)*Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde* (1886).

- Jekyll on his need to satisfy the 'certain* impatient gaiety*' of his disposition: 'many a man would have even blazoned such irregularities

as I was guilty of; but... I regarded and hid them with an almost morbid* sense of **shame**' (1979, 81).

- Jekyll on the beginning of his dual life: 'though so profound a double-dealer, I was in no sense a hypocrite; both sides of me were in dead earnest*; I was no more myself when I laid aside restraint and plunged in **shame**, than when I laboured, in the eye of day, at the furtherance of knowledge or the relief of sorrow and suffering' (81).

Oscar Wilde.

(i) *The Picture Of Dorian Gray* (1891).

Hallward taxes Dorian with a list of his misdemeanours, and of his almost exclusively male young victims: "'there was that wretched boy in the Guards who committed suicide. You were his great friend*. There was Sir Henry Ashton, who had to leave England, with a tarnished name. You and he were inseparable. What about Adrian Singleton, and his dreadful end? What about Lord Kent's only son, and his career? I met his father yesterday in St. James's Street. He seemed broken with **shame** and sorrow'" (1985, 183).

The same speech: "'they say that you corrupt* everyone with whom you become intimate*, and that it is quite sufficient for you to enter a house, for **shame** of some kind to follow after'" (185).

The same speech: "'my God! don't tell me that you are bad, and corrupt*, and **shameful**'" (187).

(ii) Letter to the Home Secretary (2 July 1896).

Confessing to a horror of his past homosexual behaviour and a fear lest it return under prison conditions, in an attempt to gain an early release: '[the petitioner's prayer is] that the imprisonment may be ended now, and not uselessly or vindictively prolonged till insanity has claimed soul as well as body as its prey, and brought it to the same degradation* and the same **shame**' (Hart-Davis 1979, 145).

Lord Alfred Douglas.

(i)'Two Loves' (1894).

- The 'love that dare not speak its name*' is finally named: 'his name is **Shame**' (quoted in Reade 1970, 362).

(ii)'In Praise Of **Shame**' (1894).

A notorious poem of a homosexual vision.

Joseph Conrad.

(i)*Victory* (1915).

Shomberg tells enquirers for Heyst, who has 'never[...] loved a woman' (212), that Heyst has 'turned hermit* from **shame**' (31).

Heyst takes Lena to his island and in doing so feels 'a sort of **shame** before his own betrayed nature*' (65).

'SHARE'.E. M. Forster.

(i)*Maurice* (wr. 1913-1914).

- Scudder's letter to Maurice after their homosexual encounter: 'Dear Sir, let me **share** with you once before leaving Old England if it is not asking to much.... I since cricket match do long to talk with one of my arms round you, then place both arms round you and **share** with you, the above now seems sweeter to me than words can say' (1972, 181-182).

Maurice asks the hypnotist about the state of the laws on homosexuality in France:

"you mean that a Frenchman could **share** with a friend* and yet not go to prison?"

"**Share**? Do you mean unite? If both are of age and avoid public indecency, certainly." (184-185).

- Maurice tells Clive that he has slept with Scudder:

"I have **shared** with Alec," he said after deep thought.

"Shared what?"

"All I have. Which includes my body."

'Clive sprang up with a whimper of disgust' (213).

The existence of a homosexual code is demonstrated in these extracts from *Maurice*, in that the meaning of 'share' has to be explained to the non- (or no longer) homosexual men, but needs no explanation amongst the homosexual pair.

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

Chester and Robinson's relationship is surrounded by homosexual suggestiveness. Thus, e.g., Chester, trying to get money for his 'thing' (163) from someone, says : "I nearly went on my knees* to him" (164); Robinson is 'notorious*' (168); Chester says of his need for Jim: "I want that young chap[....] He's no good, is he?[....] he can't be much good;[...] I am on the look-out for somebody, and I've just got a thing that will suit him[....]"

"I mean to give him a good screw" (166-167); Chester declares: "I must have a man" (168). Chester says of his partner Robinson: "he's got a little money, so I had to let him into my thing. Had to![....] and if I *must share* thinks I with any man, then give me Robinson. I left him at breakfast in the hotel" (163).

Cornelius is a blatant homosexual; Brown, around whom there are also suggestions of homosexuality, sees Cornelius's relationship with Jim, and in reply to Cornelius's declaration that everything belongs to Jim, comments: "it strikes me that he may be made to **share** with somebody before very long" (368).

(ii) 'The Secret **Sharer**' (1910).

Obviously, the very title, given the tale's strongly homosexual undertones, seems to constitute a homosexually coded application of the word 'share'.

'STRAIGHT' (as the opposite of homosexual).

Oscar Wilde.

(i) *The Picture Of Dorian Gray* (1891).

- Dorian has begun to lead his double life, but has then fallen in love with a woman, who he hopes can save him; she dies: "Harry, what shall I do? You don't know the danger I am in, and there is nothing to keep me **straight**. She would have done that for me" (1985, 129).

Haveiock Ellis.

(i) *Sexual Inversion* (1897).

Describing the theory behind the psychoanalytic method of 'treating' homosexuality: 'the congenital element of inversion is a rare and usually unimportant factor; the chief part is played by perverse psychic mechanisms. It is the business of psychoanalysis to **straighten** these out, and from the bisexual constitution, which is regarded as common to every one, to bring into the foreground the heterosexual elements, and so to reconstruct a normal* personality' (1924, 330-331).

E. M. Forster.

(i) *Maurice* (wr. 1913-1914).

Maurice asks about Scudder after his first homosexual encounter with him:

"**Straight**?" He trembled as he asked this supreme question.

"Scudder? A little too smart to be **straight**" (1972, 180).

(ii) 'The Other Boat' (wr. 1913 & c.1957-1958).

Lionel thinks about his homosexual lover's possession of two passports: 'they confirmed a growing suspicion that he might not be altogether **straight**' (1989, 217).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Romance* (1903, with Ford).

Williams has been 'quite incapable of keeping **straight**' (320), and his wife hence 'suspects every woman - every man, too' (296) who comes near him.

(ii) *The Nature Of A Crime* (1924, with Ford).

A man seeks a 'queer*' union with a woman; his comment on what she thinks of it: 'she is alarmed and possibly fascinated because she feels that I am not "**straight**" that I might, in fact, be a woman or a poet' (47-48).

'STRANGE', 'STRANGER'.

(See also, 'ABNORMAL', 'ANOTHER (KIND)', 'DIFFERENT', 'OTHER SIDE', 'PECULIAR', 'QUEER').

Walt Whitman.

(i) 'The Poem Of The Road' (1856).

- 'Do you know what it is, as you pass, to be loved by **strangers**?

Do you know the talk of those turning eyeballs*' (quoted in Lynch 1985, 90; Lynch comments that this passage is struggling with the question of 'how to name an experience that anticipates what urban gay men today call "cruising"').

Anonymous.

(i) *Don Leon* (1866).

The poem's narrator is commenting on the number of great men who have experienced homosexual desire, and includes Shakespeare in his list:

'Nay, e'en our bard, Dame Nature's darling child,

Felt the **strange** impulse' (quoted in Coote 1983, 254).

Walter Pater.

(i)'Winckelmann' in *The Westminster Review* (1867).

Pater is discussing whether Winckelmann had homosexual affairs or not: 'Goethe's fragments of art criticism contain a few pages of **strange** pregnancy on the character of Winckelmann' (quoted in Reade 1970, 76).

Winckelmann wishes to return to his coterie of male friends in Rome: 'as he left Rome, a **strange**, inverted home-sickness came upon him' (quoted in Reade 1970, 85).

J. A. Symonds.

(i)'Eudiades' (wr. 1868; pub. 1878).

Melanthias sees his boy-beloved exercising and is 'athirst for him,' as he is overtaken by 'that **strange** surprise/Which gave new life' to him (quoted in Reade 1970, 109).

- When Eudiades and Melanthias finally 'blent' their souls in love's 'accomplishment', this is the stream that slakes the '**strange** sweet thirst that burned and pleased them still' (quoted in Reade 1970, 119).

'Walter'.

(i)*My Secret Life* (1888-1892).

Writing of his secret homosexual life: 'have all men had the **strange** latches which late in life have enraptured me?' (1994a, 9).

Fondling the genitals of a sailor: 'I... believe to this day that the sailor thought it was the girl who was feeling it. I clutched it, and a **strange** delight crept through me as I drew my hand softly up and down' (1994a, 584).

Walter describes his emotions on his first adult attempt at homosexual sex: 'both were wanting the pleasure sorely, yet I dallied

and my brain whirled with **strange** desire, fear, dislike, yet with intention. Then I placed him bending over the bed' (1994b, 613).

R. L. Stevenson.

(i) *The **Strange** Case Of Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde* (1886).

Utterson cannot understand what he sees as the close relationship between his friend, Jekyll, and Hyde: 'he might see a reason for his friend's **strange** preference or bondage (call it which you please), and even for the startling clauses of the will' (1979, 38).

- Jekyll cannot speak of his relationship with Hyde: "you do not understand* my position," returned the doctor, with a certain* incoherency of manner. "I am painfully situated, Utterson; my position is a very **strange** - *a very **strange** one. It is one of those affairs that cannot be mended by talking" (44).

- Jekyll, in the guise of Hyde, must not be seen in his own house: 'I stole through the corridors, a **stranger** in my own house' (84).

Marc André Raffalovich.

(i) 'It Is Thyself' (1889).

- Poem to homosexual beloved:

'Put on that languor which the world frowns on,

That blamed misleading **strangeness** of attire' (144, quoted in d'Arch Smith 1970, 33).

Oscar Wilde.

(i) *The Picture Of Dorian Gray* (1891).

Basil, who falls in love with Dorian, recalls their first meeting: "when our eyes met.... I had a **strange** feeling that Fate had in store for me exquisite joys and exquisite sorrows....

"Suddenly I found myself face to face with the young man whose personality had so **strangely** stirred me" (1985, 28-29).

- Lord Henry has been praising Dorian in homosexually loaded terms, which has opened Dorian's eyes to aspects of himself he was not aware of before. Dorian reflects on this experience: 'but he felt afraid of him, and ashamed of being afraid. Why had it been left for a **stranger** to reveal him to himself?' (44).

Lord Henry reflects on Dorian's effect upon the artist, Basil Hallward, who is in love with Dorian: 'and Basil? From a psychological point of view, how interesting he was! The new manner in art, the fresh mode of looking at life, suggested so **strangely** by the merely visible presence of one who was unconscious of it all [i.e. Dorian],.... How **strange** it all was! He remembered something like it in history. Was it not Plato, that artist in thought, who had first analysed it? Was it not Buonarroti who had carved it in the coloured marbles of a sonnet-sequence? But in our own century it was **strange**' (60-61; Plato and Michaelangelo were both heroes in Edwardian homosexual circles, often cited as examples of how noble such a love could be - see, for example, *Dorian Gray*, 149; Wilde's own list of such heroes at his trial (quoted in Hyde 1962, 201); E. M. Forster 1972, 50, 86.)

Hallward is in love with Dorian, feeling a '**strange** idolatry' for him (146).

Dorian reflects on Hallward's confession of love for him: 'how much that **strange** confession explained to him! The painter's absurd fits of jealousy, his wild devotion, his extravagant panegyrics, his curious reticences he understood* them all now, and he felt sorry. There seemed to him to be something tragic in a friendship* so coloured by romance*' (147).

Dorian searches for experiences that will have 'that element of **strangeness** that is so essential to romance*' (163).

(ii) Letter to the Home Secretary (2 July 1896).

Confessing a horror of his past homosexual behaviour and a fear lest it return under prison conditions, in an attempt to gain an early release: his 'vices* live on: they make their dwelling house in him who by horrible mischance or fate has become their victim: they are embedded in his flesh: they spread over him like a leprosy: they feed on him like a **strange** disease*' (Hart-Davis 1979, 143-144).

John Francis Bloxham.

(i)'The Priest And The Acolyte' (1894).

The priest suddenly realises he is homosexually attracted to his altar-boy: 'he felt his veins burn and tingle with a **strange** new fascination' (quoted in Reade 1970, 350).

Lord Alfred Douglas.

(i)'In Praise Of Shame' (1894).

The man has a vision of homosexual love because he has been visited by 'Our Lady of **strange** dreams' (quoted in Reade 1970, 362).

(ii)'Two Loves' (1894).

He describes a personification of 'the Love that dare not speak its name':

'But he that was his comrade walked aside;
He was full sad and sweet, and his large eyes
Were **strange** with wondrous brightness, staring wide
With gazing' (quoted in Coote 1983, 264).

Newspapers Of Period.

(i)*Evening News* (3 April 1895).

Headline on the first Wilde trial: 'The **Strange** Libel Case Opened' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 132)

(ii)*The Star* (3 April 1895).

- Reporting the first Wilde trial, concerning the allegations that *The Picture Of Dorian Gray* was 'immoral* and obscene... designed and

intended... to describe the relations, intimacies*, and passions of certain* persons of sodomitical and unnatural* habits, tastes*, and practices*' (charge against Wilde, quoted in Cohen 1993, 128), and similar allegations concerning 'Phrases and Philosophies for the Use of the Young' : '[Clarke] would do nothing to extend the range of the case beyond the radius which was inevitable. But two of the allegations were so **strange** that he was bound to notice them' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 153).

(iii) *Evening News* (4 April, 1895).

- Reporting the first Wilde trial: 'the trial, in which this **strange** personality is nominally accusing a relentless pursuer of libel, but is actually defending himself against one of the gravest charges* that can be brought against an English gentleman' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 159).

George Cecil Ives.

(i) *Book Of Chains* (1897).

- A description of Wilde in a passionate defence of Wilde's homosexual behaviour: 'I saw a **strange** plant from a Southern clime alone* upon an English field growing' (91, quoted in d'Arch Smith 1970, 112).

Edward Irenaeus Prime Stevenson.

(i) *The Intersexes: A History Of Simisexualism As A Problem In Social Life* (1908).

That Christ was a homosexual is proved by 'his vivid attraction to total **strangers**; the immediate spell that, right and left, he exercised on all men' (259-260, quoted in d'Arch Smith 1970, 175).

E. M. Forster.

(i) *Maurice* (wr. 1913-1914).

Scudder is arguing with Maurice: 'but while he bragged his arm was gaining Maurice's. They deserved such a caress - the feeling was **strange**. Words died away, abruptly to recommence. It was Alec who ventured them.

"Stop with me" (1972, 198).

(ii)'Arthur Snatchfoild' (wr. 1928).

- Conway reflects on how he spotted that Arthur would accommodate his homosexual desires: 'it was so pleasant to have been completely right over a **stranger**; even down to little details like the texture of the skin' (1989, 136).

Henry James.

(i)*The Sense Of The Past* (wr. 1914; pub. 1917).

Ralph is haunted by his double, whom he finds "magnificent.... really beautiful" (99) but nevertheless also "strange*" and "contrary to nature*" (100), and he tells his tale to an Ambassador he barely knows, who holds his hand (95) and indulges in mutual flirting with him (98, 102-3, 104, 106). The Ambassador says that in getting involved with Ralph, he has "allow[ed]" himself "such intimate* **strange** participations" (105).

Joseph Conrad.

(i)*Lord Jim* (1900).

Marlow on Jim: 'perfect **strangers** took to him as one takes to a nice child [because of....] his personal appearance, his hair, his eyes, his smile' (198).

(ii)*Heart Of Darkness* (1902).

Marlow's grief at the death of his native steersman: 'perhaps you will think it passing **strange**, this regret for a savage[....] Well, don't you see, he had done something, he had steered; for months I had him at my back* - a help an instrument. It was a kind of partnership*' (87).

(iii)'The Secret Sharer' (1910).

- The words 'strange' and 'stranger' are used of the Captain and his secret companion - and almost exclusively of these two: if they are used of anyone else, it is only as part of a reference back to the captain's own status as 'stranger'. It is around these two men alone that the tale's homosexual suggestions abound; the words are used of the two with a frequency that is hard to dismiss as mere coincidence.

The following are merely a few examples: 'my position was that of the only **stranger** on board. I mention this because it has some bearing on what is to follow. But what I felt most was my being a **stranger** to the ship; and if all the truth must be told, I was somewhat of a **stranger** to myself' (83); 'I felt painfully that I - a **stranger** - was doing something unusual' (84); 'my **strangeness**, which had made me sleepless, had prompted that unconventional arrangement' (84); 'it was inconceivable that he should not attempt to come on board, and **strangely** troubling to suspect that perhaps he did not want to' (87); anyone coming across the pair of them 'would think he was seeing double, or imagine himself come upon a scene of weird witchcraft; the **strange** captain having a quiet confabulation by the wheel with his own grey ghost' (91); 'I was almost as much of a **stranger** on board as himself, I said. And at the moment I felt it most acutely. I felt that it would take very little to make me a suspect person in the eyes of the ship's company' (96-97); 'we, the two **strangers** in the ship, faced each other in identical attitudes' (97); 'I was not wholly alone with my command; for there was that **stranger** in my cabin. Or rather, I was not completely and wholly with her' (109); 'I forgot the secret* **stranger** ready to depart, and remembered only that I was a total **stranger** to the ship' (122); '[the hat floating in the sea] was saving the ship, by

serving me for a mark to help out the ignorance of my **strangeness**' (123) - and all these in a story just over thirty pages long.
 (ii) *Victory* (1915).

The narrator recalls the impulse that made Heyst first approach Morrison to begin the friendship that was to become the subject of scandal: 'it was the same sort of impulse which years ago had made him cross the sandy street of the abominable* town of Delli in the island of Timor and accost Morrison, practically a **stranger** to him then, a man in trouble, expressively harassed, dejected, lonely*' (71-72).

Heyst, who has 'never[...] loved a woman' (212), leads a '**strange** existence' (177).

- Lena's thoughts on Heyst: 'she felt in her innermost depths an irresistible desire to give herself up to him more completely, by some act of absolute sacrifice. This was something of which he did not seem to have an idea. He was a **strange** being without needs' (201).
 (v) 'Stephen Crane' (1923).

Hodges, exploring potentially homosexual aspects of Conrad's life, describes Conrad's essay on his relationship with Stephen Crane as reading like 'a description of two people happily falling in love' (1979, 382). Conrad recalls their behaving like 'two **strange** small boys' (141) at their first meeting.

TASTES.

The Wilde Trials (1895).

(i) It was alleged in court against Wilde that *The Picture Of Dorian Gray* described 'the relations, intimacies*, and passions of certain* persons of sodomitical and unnatural* habits, **tastes**, and practices' and likewise that his 'Phrases And Philosophies For The Use Of The Young' might be understood to encourage the attitudes found in 'The Priest And The

Acolyte', which depicted 'the practices* and passions of persons of sodomitical and unnatural* habits and **tastes**' , and which appeared in the same magazine as 'Phrases And Philosophies' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 250-1).

E. M. Forster.

(i)'The Other Boat' (wr. 1913 & c. 1957-1958).

- At first Lionel is dismayed by Coconut's homosexual advances and wishes he were not sharing a berth with him for the whole voyage: 'if only he had found out the fellow's **tastes** in England he would never have touched him, no, not with tongs' (1989, 212).

A. C. Benson.

(i)'Obituary Note' on Charles Sayle (1924).

- Sayle was a prominent Uranian: 'of his **tastes** and pursuits, of which alone I shall attempt to speak, the first was undoubtedly his interest in young people' (*Cambridge Review*, 46: 1123, 12, quoted in d'Arch Smith 1970, 80).

Joseph Conrad.

(i)*Victory* (1915).

The homosexual Jones talks of Heyst's being an outcast from polite society in the same way that he is: "something has driven you out - the originality of your ideas, perhaps. Or your **tastes**" (378).

THAT WAY.

Anonymous.

(i)Street Ballad On The Wilde Trials (1895).

- Entitled 'Oh! Oscar Wilde, We Never Thought That You Was Built **That Way**' (quoted in Stokes 1989, 4).

E. M. Forster.

(i)*Maurice* (wr. 1913-1914).

- Clive's homosexual education: 'in his second year he met Risley, himself "**that way**"' (1972, 68).

'TRADE'

Generally.

(i) Weeks notes that 'by the 1870's, any sort of homosexual transaction, whether or not money was involved, was described as "**trade**"' (quoted in Weeks, in Duberman et al 1991, 202).

'UNCLEAN'

(See also 'DISEASED', 'UNHEALTHY').

Hubert H. Bancroft.

(i) *The Native Races Of The Pacific States Of South America* (1875).

Sodomy as practiced in 'Cueba, Careta and other places': 'some of the head men kept harems of youths who, as soon as destined to the **unclean** office, were dressed as women' (quoted, with no further reference, in Bartlett 1988, 100).

Henry James

(i) Comment on Oscar Wilde (c. 1882-1883).

- James states that Wilde is 'an **unclean** beast' (quoted in Ellmann 1987, 171).

The Wilde Trials (1895).

(i) Mr. Justice Wills on a letter from Wilde to Douglas: 'it is for you... to consider whether or not that letter is an indication of **unclean** sentiments and **unclean** appetites on both sides' (quoted in Bartlett 1988, 151).

D. H. Lawrence.

(i) Letter to David Garnett (19 April 1915).

Lawrence often hated other homosexuals: 'never bring Birrell to see me any more.... There is something nasty about him like black beetles. He is horrible and **unclean**' (quoted in Meyers 1987, 134).

T. E. Lawrence.

(i) Letter to Charlotte Shaw (26 March 1924).

- Concerning his experience of homosexual rape: 'you may call this morbid*', but think of the offence, and the intensity of my brooding over it for these years. It will hang about me while I live, and afterwards if our personality survives. Consider wandering among the decent ghosts, hereafter, crying "**unclean, unclean!**" (quoted in Meyers 1987, 124).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

- Cornelius, blatantly a homosexual, skulks on the edge of the story, 'enigmatical and **unclean**, tainting the fragrance of its youth and of its naiveness' (286).

'UNDERSTAND'

Edward Carpenter.

(i) 'As It Happened' in *Towards Democracy* (first pub. 1883-1885, enlarged edn. 1892).

- A man attending a 'casual little club' sees 'a new member / Of athletic strength and beauty':

'But what was even more strange*, the newcomer turning spoke friendly to him, and soon seemed to **understand**,

And from that time forward came and companioned* him and nursed him, and stayed whole nights with him and loved him'

(quoted, with no page reference, in Bartlett 1988, 115). It is also indicative of a coded use that in the lines preceding these, no specific thing for the newcomer to understand is mentioned.

Reginald Balliol Brett (Lord Esher).

(i)'Briseis' (1893).

Brett is attracted to young boys:

'Oh come, dear Love, come touch his hand

And make my lover **understand**' (quoted in d'Arch Smith 1970, 91;

d'Arch Smith comments: 'note the use of the word "understand"... used in the sense of a homosexual rapport between two people' (105).

Anonymous.

(i)A poem (1893).

A homosexual poem, quoted by d'Arch Smith to illustrate the specifically homosexual application of the word 'understand':

'As we wander in the garden friends may smile but **understand**....O, my sweetheart loved and loving, all too soon we **understand**

What the call to those before us, they who wandered, sweethearts true,

In the sleepy Oxford sunshine, wandered like us, hand in hand.

Prince of day and nighttime too, here I think you **understand**' (in *The Artist*, 14: 164, 213; quoted in d'Arch Smith 1970, 105-106).John Francis Bloxham.

(i)'The Priest And The Acolyte' (1894).

The priest kisses the altar-boy on the head in the first moment of homosexual attraction between them and the child is not at all perturbed: 'a wonderful assurance took possession of him: he **understood**. He raised his little arms, and, clasping his slim white fingers around the priest's neck kissed him on the lips' (quoted in Reade 1970, 351).The priest tells his angry Rector, when the homosexual relationship is discovered: "'you do not **understand** me'" (quoted in Reade 1970, 357).The Wilde Trials (1895).

(i) Wilde's testimony concerning the kind of love referred to in Douglas's poem on 'the Love that dare not speak its name*': "it is in this century **misunderstood**, so much **misunderstood** that it may be described as the 'Love that dare not speak its name*', and on account of it I am placed where I am now. It is beautiful, it is fine, it is the noblest form of affection. There is nothing unnatural* about it.... That it should be so, the world does not **understand**' (quoted in Hyde 1962, 201).

Oscar Wilde.

(i) Letter to Leonard Smithers (?1 October 1897).

On his homosexual relationship with Douglas: 'how *can* you keep on asking is Lord Alfred Douglas in Naples? You know quite well he is we are together. He **understands** me and my art, and loves both. I hope never to be separated from him' (Hart-Davis 1979, 311).

E. M. Forster.

(i) 'Albergo Empedocle' (1903).

Harold realises that he lived in ancient Greece in a past life, and 'loved very differently*' (1989, 52); he is desperate for his fiancée to '**understand**' (57, 58, 60) him, but she cannot. On the other hand, the narrator Tommy, who refers to Harold as 'the man I love most in the world' (36-37), does: 'he got up and kissed me on the cheek. I think he knows that I **understand** him and love him: at all events it comforts me to think so' (63).

(ii) *Maurice* (wr. 1913-1914).

Clive gives Maurice the *Symposium* to read in the vacation, to introduce him to the concept of homosexual love. Clive meets Maurice for the first time after the vacation, ready to declare his love:

"I knew you read the *Symposium* in the vac," he said in a low voice*.

Maurice felt uneasy.

"Then you **understand** without me saying more *"

"How do you mean?"

"Durham could not wait. People were all around them, but with eyes that had gone intensely blue he whispered*, "I love you." (1972, 56).

Clive knows that his mother would not feel the same about his homosexual attraction to Maurice as she feels about her daughter's heterosexual love: 'she wouldn't attempt, wouldn't want to attempt to **understand** that I feel to you as Pippa to her fiancé, only far more nobly, far more deeply' (84).

Maurice nearly tells his grandfather of his homosexuality, but then decides that 'his grandfather didn't, couldn't **understand**' (124).

- Maurice's homosexuality leaves him, at home, 'miserable and **misunderstood**' (125).

(iii)'The Other Boat' (wr. 1913 & c. 1957-1958).

Lionel resolves not to tell his mother of his homosexual affair with Cocoanut: "'I ought never to have mentioned you in that letter to the Mater. There's no advantage in putting her on the scent of something she can't **understand**'" (1989, 224).

(iv)'Arthur Snatchfold' (wr. 1928).

A homosexual encounter between two men: 'they **understood** one another with a precision impossible for lovers. He laid his face on the warm skin over the clavicle' (1989, 134).

Kains-Jackson.

(i)'Finibus Cantat Amor' (1922).

On his lifelong friend, Cecil Castle:

'The little people do not **understand**

That we are of one country, that we come

From where we once were One....

From the beginning this I **understood**....

You always led and would lead easily' (quoted in d'Arch Smith 1970, 152).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

Obviously, the word is used throughout the novel in a perfectly ordinary way. The following quotations are all examples of the word's occurrence in passages of a specifically homosexual suggestiveness.

- Jim, to Marlow, desperate for someone to realise how his shame came about: "can't *you understand?*" (108).

- Jim to Marlow: "you don't know what it is for a fellow in my position to be believed make a clean breast of it to an elder man*. It is so difficult - so awfully unfair - so hard to **understand**" (128).

- Jim is confessing his shame to Marlow, and why he didn't stay to die on the ship: "forgive me," he said. "Of course I wouldn't have talked to you about all this if you had not been a gentleman*. I ought to have known...* I am I am *a gentleman*, too[....] Now you **understand** why I didn't after all...* didn't go out in that way*" (131).

(ii) *Falk* (1903).

Why Falk wishes to confess to the Captain: 'and then I was a sailor, too. Falk thought that a sailor would be able to **understand** certain* things best' (165).

(iii) *Il Conde* (1908).

The whole tale is densely loaded with homosexual codewords and homosexually suggestive situations and the Count of the title undergoes an experience reminiscent of an attack during a casual homosexual street-encounter that went further than he intended. The Count tells the narrator of an 'abominable'* (240) adventure he had after a dance where he met a handsome young stranger, but only when the Count 'stared at'* the narrator very hard, does the narrator

finally announce that he '**understood**' the Count and his adventure (241).

(iv)'The Secret Sharer' (1910).

The captain and Leggatt dwell on their having so wonderfully understood each other. What it is they have understood is never openly explained, either to the reader, or between the two of them. The tone of the conversations in which they speak of this wondrous understanding is always that of lovers.

The Captain to Leggatt:"I quite **understand**," I conveyed that sincere assurance into his ear. He was out of breath with whispering*; I could hear him pant slightly' (108-109).

Leggatt to the Captain:"and...* you have **understood** thoroughly. Didn't you?"

'I felt suddenly ashamed* of myself. I may say truly that I **understood** and my hesitation in letting that man swim away from my ship's side had been a mere sham sentiment, a sort of cowardice.

"It can't be done now till next night," I breathed out. "The ship is on the off-shore tack and the wind may fail us."

"As long as I know that you **understand**," he whispered*. "But of course you do. It's a great satisfaction to have got somebody to **understand**. You seem to have been there on purpose." And in the same whisper, as if we two whenever we talked had to say things to each other which were not fit for the world to hear, he added, "It's very wonderful." (114-115).

Leggatt and the captain: 'He kept silent for a while, then whispered, "I **understand**."

"I won't be there to see you go," I began with an effort. The rest... *I only hope I have **understood**, too."

"You have. From first to last" - and for the first time there seemed to be a faltering*, something strained in his whisper*. He caught hold of my arm, but the ringing of the supper-bell made me start' (118).

(v) *Victory* (1915).

- Heyst on his relationship with Morrison, in a passage loaded with homosexual suggestiveness (e.g. the phrases "my poor Morrison", "I, who could not bear to hurt his feelings! I, who respected his very madness", "I was burning with shame* at his gratitude" all occur in this paragraph): "of course, the people here could not **understand** the truth of our relation to each other. But what business of theirs was it?" (213).

Ricardo pairs Heyst and the homosexual Jones, in conversation with Heyst: "you can see at once he's a gentleman*, can't you?

"Anybody can see at once *you* are one. You and the governor ought to **understand** each other. He expects to see you tonight. The governor isn't well*" (364).

'UNHEALTHY'.

(See also 'DISEASED', 'UNCLEAN').

Newspapers Of The Period.

(i) *The Lancet* (6 August 1836).

Homosexual behaviour between two men 'an attachment... so excessive, as to amount to a disease*' - eventually 'abated to something like a natural* or **healthy** feeling'(quoted in Lynch 1985, 84).

(ii) *The Evening News* (25 May, 1895).

On Wilde's conviction: 'we venture to hope that the conviction of Wilde for these abominable* vices*, which were the natural outcome of his diseased* intellectual condition, will be a salutary warning to the

unhealthy boys who posed as sharers* of his culture' (quoted in Hyde 1962, 18).

'UNMANLY', 'UNMANNED', etc.

(See also 'MANLY'.)

R. L. Stevenson.

(i) *Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde* (1886).

- Jekyll refers to his relationship with Hyde as producing 'sufferings and terrors so **unmanning**' (1979, 58).

Newspapers Of The Period.

(i) *The Evening News* (25 May 1895).

Wilde and his kind attack 'all the wholesome, **manly**, simple ideals of English life' (quoted in Hyde 1962, 18).

E. M. Forster.

(i) 'The Other Boat' (wr. 1913 & c. 1957-1958).

Lionel's mother feels that his relationship with Cocoanut is unsuitable and senses that Cocoanut might be homosexual (as he indeed turns out to be), twice referring to him as '**unmanly**' (1989, 207, 222).

D. H. Lawrence.

(i) *Women In Love* (wr. 1916, pub. 1920).

Birkin and Gerald are homosexually attracted to each other: 'they burned with each other, inwardly. This they would never admit. They intended to keep their relationship a casual free and easy friendship*, they were not going to be so **unmanly** and unnatural as to allow any heart-burning between them' (1972, 83).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

Marlow, in a long homosexually suggestive passage talks of 'weakness* that may lie hidden, watched or unwatched, prayed

against or **manfully** scorned, repressed or maybe ignored more than half a lifetime' (43).

'UNMENTIONABLE'

George Bernard Shaw.

(i) Letter to *Truth* (26 November 1889).

Concerning the notorious homosexual scandal at Cleveland Street: 'I am sorry to have to ask you to allow me to mention what everybody declares **unmentionable**'; '[are] the scandals [still....] to be darkly hinted at and gloated over as filthy, **unmentionable**, abominable*, and every other adjective and innuendo that can make them prurient and mischievous?' (quoted in Schmidgall 1994, 221,223).

The Wilde Trials (1895).

- Cohen (1993, throughout) notes that no newspaper ever reported or could report - exactly what the sexual charges were: they were always just '**unmentionable** acts'.

A. C. Swinburne.

(i) Letter to George Powell (before Simeon Solomon's death in 1905).

Concerning Solomon's unconcealed homosexuality, Swinburne said that Solomon had become 'a thing **unmentionable** alike by men and women, as equally abhorrent to either nay, to the very beasts' (quoted, with no further ascription, in Pearsall 1993,452).

'UNNATURAL'

Andrew Combe.

(i) *Observations On Mental Derangement* (1831).

- Excessive male 'adhesiveness' leads to 'morbid* and **unnatural** appetites' between men (219-220, quoted in Lynch 1985, 91).

Frederick Bridges.

(i) *Phrenology Made Practical And Popularly Explained* (1861).

'the most absurd and Romantic* attachments are formed... by young men, based upon an **unnatural** excitement of Adhesiveness' (quoted in Lynch 1985, 78).

The Boulton and Park Trial (1871).

A famous and widely reported prosecution of a group of homosexuals. The charge against three men was of 'conspiring and inciting persons to commit an **unnatural** offence'; the men's homosexual behaviour was referred to in this fashion throughout the case (quoted, with no further ascription, in Pearsall 1993, 461).

The Cleveland Street Trial (1889-1890).

A brothel offering young males was the subject of the first sensational prosecution under section 11 of the Criminal Law Amendment act, prior to Wilde's trial. The public prosecutor referred to it as a case of '**unnatural** lust' (quoted, with no further ascription, in Cohen 1993, 121).

Director Of Public Prosecutions, 1889.

(i) Letter to Attorney General (14 September 1889).

Concerning the 1885 Amendment and prosecutions for sodomy, he felt that it might be best to allow 'private persons being full grown men to indulge their **unnatural** tastes* in private' (quoted in Weeks, in Duberman et al 1991, 201).

(ii) On the Cleveland Street Trial (1889).

States that it is a duty 'to enforce the law and protect the children of respectable parents taken into the service of the public... from being made the victims of the **unnatural** lusts of full-grown men' (Weeks, quoting, with no further ascription from L. Chester, D. Deitch and C. Simpson, *The Cleveland Street Affair*, 1977, 73, in Duberman et al 1991, 205).

Jerome K. Jerome.

(i) Editorial in *Today: A Weekly Magazine Journal* (29 December 1894).

- On the homosexual magazine, *The Chameleon*, he refers to its 'advocacy for indulgence in the cravings of an **unnatural** disease*' and people who are 'cursed with these **unnatural** cravings' (5: 60, quoted in d'Arch Smith 1970, 58).

The Wilde Trials (1895).

(i) It was alleged by the prosecution that *Dorian Gray* was 'understood by the readers thereof to describe the relations, intimacies*, and passions of certain* persons of sodomitical and **unnatural** habits, tastes*, and practices' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 128), and the term was used to refer to homosexual love throughout the trial (see e.g., Hyde 1962, 201).

Lytton Strachey.

(i) Letter to E. M. Forster (12 March 1915).

On *Maurice*: 'I really think the whole conception of male copulation in the book is rather diseased* - in fact morbid* and **unnatural**' (quoted in Gardner 1973, 431).

D. H. Lawrence.

(i) *Women In Love* (wr. 1916, pub. 1920).

Birkin and Critch 'burned with each other, inwardly. This they would never admit. They intended to keep their relationship a casual free and easy friendship*, they were not going to be so unmanly* and **unnatural** as to allow any heart-burning between them' (1972, 83).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Victory* (1915).

Ricardo muses on Jones's possession of 'the other* sort* of disposition' - his 'exaggerated[...] horror of feminine presence' : 'it was **unnatural**,

he thought somewhat peevishly. How was one to reckon up the **unnatural**? There were no rules for that' (266).

'UNSPEAKABLE' AND GENERALLY THE CONCEPT OF SOMETHING'S BEING BEYOND SPEECH.

(See also ELLIPSES, 'INDESCRIBABLE', 'LET US SAY', 'NAMELESS', 'UNMENTIONABLE', UNSPECIFIED SPECIFICATIONS).

Generally.

(i) Homosexuality was for a long time referred to as '*crimen non nominandum inter christianos*'; see, for instance, Weeks 1990, 14, which dates the phrase back at least as far as Sir Robert Peel's use of it to refer to sodomy, in Parliament, in 1826.

Edward Carpenter.

(i) *Towards Democracy* (first pub. 1883-1885, enlarged edn. 1892).

On a schoolboy with homosexual desires:

'The masters talked about Greek accident and quadratic equations, and the boys talked about lobs and byes and bases and goals; but of that which was nearest to his heart **no one said a word.**

It was laughed at - or left **unspoken**' (quoted in Coote 1983, 230).

E. M. Forster.

(i) *Maurice* (wr. 1913-1914).

Clive talks of society's ridiculous attitude towards homosexuality: "'as long as they talk of the **unspeakable** vice of the Greeks they can't expect fair play'" (1972, 84).

Maurice goes to a hypnotist to be cured of his homosexuality, and tells him of his problem by saying "'I'm an **unspeakable** of the Oscar Wilde sort*'" (139).

(ii) 'The Life To Come' (1922).

The newly homosexually experienced missionary thinks of 'his **unspeakable** secret*' (1989,95).

The missionary's sin is the one 'the very name of which **cannot be mentioned** among Christians' (1989, 97; cf. 'generally' above.).

Alfred Noyes.

(i) Article on Roger Casement's homosexually explicit diaries in Philadelphia local newspaper (1916).

Noyes describes the diaries as 'filthy **beyond all description**' (quoted, with no further ascription, in Hyde 1964, 165).

Sir Basil Thomson.

(i) Article on Roger Casement's diaries in the *Irish Times* (21 February 1937).

Thomson looked through the homosexually explicit diaries after interrogating Casement about treasonous acts: 'it is enough to say of the diaries that they **could not be printed in any age or in any language**' (quoted in Hyde 1964, 30).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

- Jim has a shady and mysterious background that he does not wish investigated, described in terms that could imply homosexuality. Concerning his name, Marlow says: 'he was just Jim nothing more. He had, of course, another name, but he was anxious that **it should not be pronounced**' (4).

Mariani looks after the Engineer from the *Patna* with the d.t.'s, and homosexual suggestions surround both of them. He is referred to as 'that **unspeakable** vagabond, Mariani' (49).

In a passage laden with homosexual suggestiveness, describing the sailorly life, Marlow compares what the inexperienced young sailor

dreams of with the sordidness of what he actually gets: 'what we get - * well, **we won't talk of that**' (129).

(ii) *Heart Of Darkness* (1902).

Kurtz is surrounded with implications of homosexuality; the mysterious and unspecified rites over which he presides are described as the '**unspeakable** rites' (86).

(iii) 'The Secret Sharer' (1910).

The Captain's relationship with Leggatt has already been surrounded by homosexual implications by the time we see him greet, very coolly, Archbold, who has come aboard to find and remove Leggatt. The Captain offers a mysterious explanation for his coolness: 'and yet how else could I have received him? Not heartily! That was impossible for psychological reasons, which **I need not state** here' (105).

UNSPECIFIED SPECIFICATIONS (e.g. 'certain', 'kind', 'particular', 'sort', 'such', 'type'; and references to unspecified, or only vaguely specified 'practices'). (See also ELLIPSES, 'INDESCRIBABLE', 'LET US SAY', 'NAMELESS', 'UNMENTIONABLE', 'UNSPEAKABLE').

Generally.

(i) At a court-case in 1889, when a judge asked what a 'Mary Anne' (male prostitute) was, a policeman was perfectly able to make himself understood by replying merely: 'men that get a living by bad **practices**' (quoted, with no further ascription, in Pearsall 1993, 472).

The Wilde Trials (1895).

The prosecution refers to Alfred Taylor, a procurer of male prostitutes: "he has himself indulged in these filthy **practices** with the same youths as he agreed to procure for Wilde" (quoted in Hyde 1962, 169).

- Questioning to establish whether a witness is a male prostitute or not:

"When Taylor asked you if you ever went with men and got money for it, did you understand what he meant?"

"Yes."

"You had heard of **such things** before?"

"Yes."

"Then it was with the intention of entering upon **such practices** that you called upon Taylor?.... You understood **the practices** you were going to enter upon?" (quoted in Hyde 1962,176).

The charges against Wilde alleged amongst other things that *Dorian Gray* was 'understood by the readers thereof to describe the relations, intimacies*, and passions of **certain persons** of sodomitical and unnatural* habits, tastes and **practices**' (quoted in Cohen 1993,128).

The Judge reminds the jury that the housekeeper of Atkins, one of Wilde's acquaintances, has given evidence as to the occurrence of homosexual behaviour between Wilde and Atkins: "I do not wish to enlarge upon this most unpleasant part of this most unpleasant case, ... but it is necessary for me to remind you as discreetly as I can that... the housemaid objected to making the bed on several occasions after Wilde and Atkins had been in the bedroom together. There were, she affirmed, indications on the sheets that conduct **of the grossest kind** had been indulged in' (quoted in Hyde 1962, 216).

Charles Parker gives evidence that Alfred Taylor is a homosexual and a procurer of male prostitutes. Parker asserts that Taylor kept him in his rooms for a week, calling him 'Darling' and 'little wife' and, when Parker left, that Taylor paid him some money:"he said I should never want for cash... and that he would introduce me to men prepared to pay for **that kind of thing**" (quoted in Hyde 1962, 228).

Newspapers Of The Period.

All the following extracts are reporting the Wilde trials.

(i) *Evening Standard* (3 April 1895).

'In the early part of 1894 Mr. Wilde became aware that **certain statements** were being made against his character' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 149).

'Mr. Wilde published, or caused to be published... **a certain** immoral* and indecent work' (quoted Cohen 1993, 153).

Wilde is described as 'inclined to **certain practices**' (quoted in Cohen 1993, 153. Other newspapers (e.g. *The Star*, 3 April, *The Daily Telegraph*, 4 April) also used this same phrase from the trial.)

(ii) *Evening News* (25 May 1895).

'England has tolerated the man Wilde and others of **his kind** too long.... The man himself was a perfect type of **his class**, a gross sensualist veneered with the affectation of artistic feeling too delicate for the appreciation of common clay. To him and **such as him** we owe the spread of moral degeneration* amongst young men' (quoted in Hyde 1962, 18).

Oscar Wilde.

(i) *de Profundis* (wr. 1897, pub. 1905 (abridged), 1949 (complete)).

Wilde refers to the time he helped Douglas when Douglas was homosexually blackmailed at Oxford: Douglas was 'in very serious trouble of a **very particular character**' (1986, 110).

E. M. Forster.

(i) *Maurice* (wr. 1913-1914).

The hypnotist is trying to cure Maurice of his homosexuality and tells him: "**your type** was once put to death in England" (1972, 185).

Maurice tells the hypnotist how things would have been easier for homosexuals in pre-industrialized England: "men **of my sort** could take to the greenwood" (185).

The hypnotist's feelings: 'the doctor wanted to get on to his next patient, and he did not care for **Maurice's type**' (187).

'The Other Boat' (wr. 1913 and c. 1957-1958).

The homosexual couple Lionel and Cocoanut are in their sleeping-quarters together. Lionel must talk to Cocoanut: 'they couldn't associate on deck with that touch of the tar-brush, but it was a very different* business down here*, or soon would be. Lowering his voice, he said: "The trouble is we're not supposed to do **this sort of thing**' (1989, 210).

(ii)'Arthur Snatchfold' (1928).

Conway thinks back to his homosexual encounter with Snatchfold: 'nobody could have been more physically attractive in a **particular way**' (1989, 140).

Henry James.

(i)*The Sense Of The Past* (wr. 1914; pub. 1917).

Ralph is haunted by his double, whom he finds "magnificent.... really beautiful" (99) but nevertheless also "strange*" and "contrary to nature*" (100), and he tells his tale to an Ambassador he barely knows, who holds his hand (95) and indulges in mutual flirting with him (98, 102-3, 104, 106). Ralph announces to the Ambassador, with no further explanation of what class of 'kind' or 'sort' he means: "'I'm one of the quiet **kind** - for I'm sure you see all **sorts**" (93).

Joseph Conrad.

(i)*Lord Jim* (1900).

To Marlow, Jim is 'the **right kind**' (45).

Seeing Jim makes Marlow 'give a flutter deep, deep down* somewhere, give a flutter of light...of heat!...Yes; I had a glimpse of him then... and it was not the last of **that kind**' (128).

(ii) *Romance* (1903, with Ford).

Kemp, whose relationships with several men throughout the novel are surrounded by homosexual suggestiveness, has been attacked by a sailor, who returns to apologise to him. During the apology, Kemp notices 'the beauty of that rugged, grizzled, hairy seaman's eyelashes. They were long and thick, shadowing the eyes softly like the lashes of a young girl*' (310). The sailor speaks 'bashfully', 'shyly', to Kemp: 'his bass, half-concealed mutter* was quite as sweet to my ears as a celestial melody; it was, after all, the sanction of simple earnestness* to my desires and hopes - a witness that he and **his like** were on my side in the world of romance*' (310).

(iii) 'The Duel' (1908).

The relationship between the two duellers, D'Hubert and Feraud, is loaded with homosexual suggestiveness. The Chevalier learns of this relationship, which D'Hubert tries to dismiss as "'a youthful folly'" (212) and recognises with horror that it will come between D'Hubert and his future bride: "'it is an inconceivable thing, I say! A man settles **such affairs** before he thinks of asking for a young girl's hand[....] In my time men did not forget **such things** - nor yet what is due to the feelings of an innocent young woman. If I did not respect them myself, I would qualify your conduct in **a way which you would not like**"' (211).

(iv) 'Il Conde' (1908).

The whole tale is densely loaded with homosexual codewords and homosexually suggestive situations and the Count of the title undergoes an experience reminiscent of an attack during a casual homosexual street-encounter that went further than he intended. The

Count meets the handsome young stranger, who will later attack him, at a dance: 'the Count penetrated the throng, drifted with it in tranquil enjoyment, listening and looking at the faces[....] Young men and young women all talking, smiling, nodding to each other. Very many pretty faces, and very many pretty toilettes. [And note how the passage immediately following the mention of 'pretty faces' concentrates only on the men present.] There was, of course, a quantity of diverse types: showy old fellows with white moustaches, fat men, thin men, officers in uniform; but what predominated, he told me, was the South Italian **type of young man**, with a colourless, clear complexion*, red lips*, jet-black little moustache and liquid black eyes so wonderfully effective in leering or scowling*' (242-243).

Later the Count sees the same handsome stranger at a café: 'the Count shared* a little table in front of the café with a young man of **just such a type**[....]

' Strolling about in the neighbourhood of the band, the Count thinks he saw twice that young man wandering alone* in the crowd. Once their eyes met*. It must have been the same young man, but there were so many there of **that type** that he could not be certain' (243).

The Count fears to accuse his attacker in case the young man should 'bring some dishonouring* charge' against him and the narrator agrees, feeling that some people 'considering **certain** peculiarities* of Neapolitan manners' would find the whole thing a 'deucedly queer* story' (245-246).

The Count looks for the handsome young stranger: 'behold! to the left against the wall there sat the same young man. He was alone* at a table[....] The smooth olive cheeks, the red lips*, the little jet-black moustache turned up gallantly, the fine black eyes a little heavy and shaded by long eyelashes*, that peculiar* expression of cruel

discontent to be seen only in the busts of some Roman emperors - it was he, no doubt at all. But that was **a type**. The Count looked away hastily' (249).

(v)'The Secret Sharer' (1910).

The Captain from Leggatt's ship comes after him, and talks to the narrator-Captain: "**he wasn't exactly the sort** for the chief mate of a ship like the *Sephora*[....]

"**Not at all the style** of man. You understand*," he insisted, superfluously, looking hard at me*" (104).

(vi) *Victory* (1915).

Schomberg on Heyst:"oh, **a certain** Swede," - with a sinister emphasis, as if he were saying "a certain brigand" (31).

'VICE', 'VICIOUS'.

Sir Richard Burton.

(i)'Terminal Essay' to his translation of *The Arabian Nights*. Section D 'Pederasty' (1885).

On the 'Sotadic Zone', where he believed homosexual behaviour to be prevalent: 'within the Sotadic Zone the **Vice** is popular and endemic' (quoted in Reade 1970, 159).

J. A. Symonds.

(i) *A Problem In Modern Ethics* (1891).

Symonds refers to the fact that people in the past thought that inverts were '**vicious**' (quoted Reade 1970, 249).

Havelock Ellis.

(i) *Sexual Inversion* (1897).

On the relative infrequency of any actual physical manifestations of homosexual passion amongst schoolboys: 'it is probable that only a

small proportion of homosexual boys in schools can properly be described as "**vicious**" (1924, 78).

On the number of eminent men who have experienced homosexual desire in their schooldays: '[one correspondent], on making a list of the **vicious** boys he had known at Eton,... found that "these very boys had become cabinet ministers, statesmen, officers"' (1924, 78).

Gordon Stables.

(i)'Doings For The Month: January' in *The Boy's Own Annual* (1909).

: One of his frequent warnings against homosexual behaviour while away at school: 'the boy who gives way to bad habits, especially the **vice** of schools, is likely to find himself one day in an asylum or a gaol' (206).

Joseph Conrad.

(i)*Victory* (1915).

- Jones the homosexual, who has been 'hounded out from society by a lot of highly moral souls'(381), is 'the outcast of his **vices**' (269).

Jones's feminine appearance, with his 'thin, waspish, beautifully pencilled eyebrows', makes him appear '**vicious**' (383).

'VILE'

Oscar Wilde.

(i)*The Picture Of Dorian Gray* (1891).

Basil Hallward taxes Gray with the number of young men he has corrupted, in a homosexually suggestive speech: "every gentleman* is interested in his good name. You don't want people to talk of you as something **vile** and degraded*" (1985, 182).

Joseph Conrad.

(i)*Heart Of Darkness* (1902).

Mr. Kurtz, around whom there are numerous suggestions of homosexuality, has '**vile** desires' (116).

(ii) *Victory* (1915).

Heyst, learning of the (possibly homosexual) 'calumny' being spread around town about his relationship with Morrison, asks why such a thing should be suspected of him: "have I a particularly **vile** countenance?" (211).

'WEAKNESS'

Anonymous.

(i) *Don Leon* (1866).

The poem's narrator reads the 'flowery' and 'honeyed' homosexual literature of ancient Greece and Rome:

'When young Alexis claimed a Virgil's sigh,
He told the world his choice, and may not I?
Shall every schoolman's pen his verse extol,

And, sin in me, in him a **weakness** call?' (quoted in Coote 1983, 253).

R. L. Stevenson.

(i) *Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde* (1886).

- Having earlier given up the use of the transforming potion, Jekyll uses it to turn back into Hyde in what he describes as 'an hour of moral **weakness**' (1979, 90).

- Soon Jekyll finds himself turning into Hyde without the use of the potion: 'that insurgent horror was knit to him closer than a wife, closer than an eye; lay caged in his flesh, where he heard it mutter and felt it struggle to be born; and at every hour of **weakness**, and in the confidences of slumber, prevailed against him, and deposed him out of life' (95-96).

Simeon Solomon.

(i)'A Vision Of Love Revealed In Sleep' (1871).

- The narrator of the poem sees a vision of male love and immediately 'a **weakness** fell upon me' (quoted Reade 1970, 137-138).
Wilfred Scawen Blunt.

(i)On Oscar Wilde's attempt to join the Crabbet Club (1891).

- Blunt was present and describes George Curzon's opposition to Wilde's membership: 'he had been at Oxford with Wilde and knew all his little **weaknesses** and did not spare him, playing with astonishing audacity and skill upon his reputation for sodomy and his treatment of the subject in *Dorian Gray*' (quoted in Ellmann 1987, 302).

George Cecil Ives.

(i)*Book Of Chains* (1897).

Referring to the Wilde trials: 'to make the **weak** suffer the wrongs of power' (quoted in Weeks 1990, 121).

Oscar Wilde.

(i)*de Profundis* (wr. 1897, pub. 1905 (abridged), 1949 (complete)).

Referring to his inability to control his homosexual relationship with Douglas: 'I should have forbidden you my house and my chambers except when I specially invited you. I blame myself without reserve for my **weakness**. It was merely **weakness**' (1986, 101).

E. M. Forster.

(i)*Maurice* (wr. 1913-1914).

Generally, it is relevant to note that the word 'weak' is sometimes applied to Clive, opposing descriptions of Maurice's being 'strong': on such occasions, 'weakness' presumably refers to Clive's failure to persist (in his homosexual desires), and thus is only secondarily of homosexual implication. However, as the following show, there are also plenty of uses of the word in a primarily homosexual sense.

Clive, under the strain of keeping his homosexuality secret, has collapsed and cried. Maurice listens to the doctor's explanation of Clive's tears:

"That is only the **weakness**."

"Oh, give it your own name," said Maurice' (1972, 96) (and it is in this same conversation that the doctor will make the homosexually suggestive jibe about Maurice's offer to nurse Clive "have you wheeling the baby next" (96)).

Maurice cannot understand the reason for Scudder's first homosexual encounter with him, in describing it to the hypnotist: "how did a country lad like that know so much about me? Why did he thunder up that special night when I was **weakest**?" (187).

(ii)'The Other Boat' (wr. 1913 and c. 1957-1958).

- Lionel finally has a homosexual encounter with Cocoanut: 'resistance **weakened** under the balmier sky, curiosity increased' (1989, 214).

Joseph Conrad.

(i)*Lord Jim* (1900).

Marlow watches Jim's demeanour at the trial and comments in a passage loaded with homosexual undertones: 'nothing more awful than to watch a man who has been found out, not in a crime* but in a more than criminal* **weakness**. The commonest sort of fortitude prevents us from becoming criminals* in a legal sense; it is from **weakness** unknown, but perhaps suspected, as in some parts of the world you suspect a deadly snake in every bush from **weakness** that may lie hidden, watched or unwatched, prayed against or manfully* scorned, repressed or maybe ignored more than half a lifetime, not one of us* is safe. We are snared into doing things for which we get called names, and things for which we get hanged*' (42-43).

- Just after Marlow has been discussing Jim's doubleness, his dark side and his being 'one of us*', Marlow goes on to excuse himself from becoming so interested in Jim: 'my fault of course. One has no business really to get interested. It's a **weakness** of mine. His was of another* kind*. My **weakness** consists in not having a discriminating eye for the incidental - for the externals - no eye for the hod of the rag-picker or the fine linen of the next man. Next man - that's it. I have met so many men[...], met them, too, with a certain* *certain* - impact, let us say*; like this fellow, for instance' (94).

(ii)'Il Conde' (1908).

The whole tale is densely loaded with homosexual codewords and homosexually suggestive situations and the Count of the title undergoes an experience reminiscent of an attack during a casual homosexual street-encounter that went further than he intended. The narrator describes him as a 'lonely*' traveller with 'an eye for the small **weaknesses** of humanity. But it was a good-natured eye' (238).

The Count after his attack: 'great waves of harmony went on flowing from the band.

'Suddenly the Count felt the nightmarish pressure removed from the sensitive spot*[...] He was alone*[...] A feeling of **weakness** came over him' (247).

(iii) *Victory* (1912).

Heyst, around whom there are many suggestions of homosexuality, is referred to as having a 'hidden **weakness**' (197).

Heyst refers to living with his friend Morrison a relationship about which homosexual suggestions have multiplied as 'a **weakness** on my part' (202).

- The homosexual Jones talks of his 'partner*': "'travelling as I do, I find a man of his sort* extremely useful. He has his little **weaknesses**, no doubt'" (237).

(iv)'Stephen Crane' (1923).

Hodges, exploring potentially homosexual aspects of Conrad's life, describes Conrad's essay on his relationship with Stephen Crane as reading like 'a description of two people happily falling in love' (1979, 382). Here, Conrad discusses Crane's 'chivalry'. I quote from the passage at length to demonstrate how it has a tendency to hover on the verge of incomprehensibility, while simultaneously (and homosexually suggestively) interweaving ideas of 'weaknesses', fake 'honour' (and hence possible dishonour), and the necessity for internal 'restraints', 'circumspection in the conduct of [one's...] affairs' and 'rigid limitations in personal relations' for men: 'I will say that there was in Crane a strain of chivalry which made him safe to trust with one's life. To be recognisably a man of honour carries no immunity against human **weaknesses**, but comport more rigid limitations in personal relations than the status of an "honourable man," however recognisable that too may be. Some men are "honourable" by courtesy, others by the office they hold, or simply by belonging to some popular assembly, the election to which is not generally secured by a dignified accuracy of statement and a scrupulous regard for the feelings of others. Many remain honourable (because of their greater circumspection in the conduct of their affairs) without holding within themselves any of these restraints which are inherent in the character of a man of honour, however **weak** or luckless he may be' (145-146). The passage becomes less opaque if we allow the homosexual suggestions force - we could read it as a veiled explanation of how it is

possible to be truly honourable (though not in the way then usually accepted by the world in general) while being homosexual.

WEAPONLESSNESS MEN

Sir Richard Burton.

(i) Essay on 'Pederasty' (Section D of the terminal essay to his translation of the *Arabian Nights*, 1885).

Burton talks of central and southern America where some men are set aside to sexually 'perform the function of women, the **use of weapons being denied them**.... Dressed like women, [they] were **forbidden to carry arms**' (quoted in Reade 1970, 184).

E. M. Forster.

(i) 'The Other Boat' (wr. 1913 and c. 1957-1958).

- Lionel addresses the homosexual Cocoanut: "'you're **not exactly cut our for a man of war**" (1989, 224).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Lord Jim* (1900).

- Jim goes off to Patusan with a revolver, but forgets the cartridges for it (238).

- Jim sits 'nursing the **unloaded revolver** on his lap' (243).

- He never loads it, and eventually gives it up, thinking that he would "look like a fool walking about with an **empty shooting-iron** in [his...] hand" (249).

He goes to Doramin, to be shot in what could be read as a symbolic homosexual consummation-scene, having left his wife to fulfil his obligation to the closest male friend of his youth, and announces on arrival: "'I am come ready and **unarmed**" (415).

(ii) *Victory* (1915).

- Heyst is '**in no way a fighting man**' (156); he possesses a gun which he has '**never used** in his life' (255); Jones's conversation with Heyst is 'the conversation of an evil spectre with a **disarmed** man' (285); Heyst looks at Lena in his bed and 'it occurred to him for the first time in his life' that he is 'very **defenceless**' (256); Ricardo tries to force himself on Lena, and she recalls Heyst's confession that he is 'a **disarmed, defenceless** man' and it is these specifically sexual circumstances that allow her to understand what Heyst meant: 'she had hardly comprehended the meaning of his confession. Now she understood better what it meant' (295); Lena considers Heyst's attempts to deal with Ricardo and Jones (and possibly herself, too): 'he seemed to her too good for such contacts, and **not sufficiently equipped**. This last feeling had nothing to do with the material fact of the revolver being stolen' (317); Heyst confesses to Lena: "'I can't protect you! **I haven't the power**'" (347); Heyst is looking for weapons: 'he picked up a table-knife and let it fall disdainfully - "that's why I wish these wretched round knives had some edge on them. Absolute rubbish - neither edge, point, nor substance. I believe one of these forks would make a better weapon at a pinch. But can I go about with a fork in my pocket?" He gnashed his teeth with a rage very real, and yet comic' (360) (and it is perhaps relevant to note that Partridge lists 'fork' as slang for the female genitalia in the 19th and 20th centuries); during Heyst's confrontation with the homosexual Jones, who claims Heyst as a kindred spirit, the fact of Heyst's being '**unarmed**' is repeated four times in one page (388); Heyst comments on Lena 'women have been provided with their own weapon. I was a **disarmed** man, I have been a **disarmed** man all my life' (404) - this might recall 360 specifically; Heyst says that he is "'**not the sort that always itches for a weapon**'" and specifically parallels the issues of weapons and sexuality: "'I've never

killed a man or loved a woman not even in my thoughts, not even in my dreams[....]

"**To slay, to love**, the greatest enterprises of life upon a man! And I have **no experience** of either" (212).

WHISPERING BETWEEN TWO MEN.

Dr. Macnish.

(i) Letter to *The Lancet* (6 August 1836).

- 'ADHESIVENESS - I knew two gentlemen whose attachment to each other was so excessive, as to amount to a disease*. When the one visited the other, they slept in the same bed, sat constantly along side of each other at table, spoke **in affectionate whispers**, and were, in short, miserable when separated' (633, quoted in Lynch 1985, 84).

Anonymous.

(i) *Teleny, or, The Reverse Of The Medal* (1893).

Two homosexuals speak to each other 'in **that hushed tone peculiar to lovers**' (quoted in Reade 1970, 231).

E. M. Forster.

(i) 'The Other Boat' (wr. 1913 and c. 1957-1958).

The homosexual couple Lionel and Cocoanut are in their sleeping-quarters together. Lionel must talk to Cocoanut: 'they couldn't associate on deck with that touch of the tar-brush, but it was a very different* business down here*, or soon would be. **Lowering his voice**, he said: "The trouble is we're not supposed to do this sort of thing"' (1989, 210).

Joseph Conrad.

(i) *Romance* (1903, with Ford).

Carlos is talking to Kemp 'so sweetly and persuasively that the suggestiveness of it caus[es...] a thrill' in Kemp (47). When Carlos tells

Kemp he likes him, he '**whisper[s...]** seductively' (47; the whisper is also noted as potentially homosexually suggestive by Koestenbaum 1989, 169).

- Kemp, whose relationships with several men throughout the novel are surrounded by homosexual suggestiveness, has been attacked by a sailor, who returns to apologise to him. During the apology, Kemp notices 'the beauty of that rugged, grizzled, hairy seaman's eyelashes. They were long and thick, shadowing the eyes softly like the lashes of a young girl*' (310). The sailor speaks 'bashfully', 'shyly', to Kemp: 'his bass, **half-concealed mutter** was quite as sweet to my ears as a celestial melody; it was, after all, the sanction of simple earnestness* to my desires and hopes - a witness that he and his like* were on my side in the world of romance*' (310).

(ii)'Il Conde' (1908).

- The whole tale is densely loaded with homosexual codewords and homosexually suggestive situations and the Count of the title undergoes an experience reminiscent of an attack during a casual homosexual street-encounter that went further than he intended. He is attacked by a handsome young stranger that he meets at a dance, whom he later approaches in a deserted side street, and who asks him, '**in a low, gentle tone**' (244) for a light.

(iii)'The Secret Sharer' (1910).

Throughout this homosexually suggestive story, the two men whisper together in situations loaded with homosexual undertones. The Captain even comments on their exclusive use of **whispers**: 'as if we two whenever we talked had to say things to each other which were not fit for the world to hear' (115).

(iv) *Victory* (1915).

Ricardo describes the homosexual Jones's first proper talk with him, which "seemed to touch[Ricardo...] inside* somewhere[...] on the very spot*" (128): "up he comes, and in his **quiet, tired way of speaking** - you can tell a gentleman* by that as much as by anything else almost - up he comes behind me and says, just like that **into my ear**, in a manner: 'Well, and what do you think of our treasure-hunt now?'

"I didn't even turn my head; 'xactly as I stood, I remained, and I **spoke no louder** than himself" (128-129).

*APPENDIX II.**ILLUSTRATIONS.**A NOTE ON TWO DRAWINGS BY CONRAD.*

(See page 532)

Top.

Meyer comments:

both [Conrad's]... writings and his drawings are liberally sprinkled with references to birds and snakes... When Lena finally succeeds in inducing [Ricardo]... to surrender his knife, the writer observes: 'The very sting of death was in her hands; the venom of the viper in her paradise, extracted, safe in her possession and the viper's head all but lying underneath her heel.' In short, Ricardo has been 'de-snaked' (1967, 331).

The snake in the picture does not pose any of the usual threat of a boa-constrictor to the woman: it is not around any of her vital organs. Indeed, she is almost wearing the snake around her arm and across her back like a feather boa. The only hint of subordination in the woman's posture is in her looking up at the snake: she is nevertheless clearly in the dominant position remaining free to move herself, whilst holding the snake's head and controlling its movements. We might read the picture as suggesting that any relationship between woman and man will result in an inextricable intertwining, and one which the woman will control.

Bottom.

Meyer comments:

the man, who has a 'Milquetoastish' aspect, appears to be warding off the lady as she crowds him into a corner of the sofa.... As if retreating from both beast and lady, the man sits retracting his pigeon-toed feet, his knees pressed firmly together like a well-behaved girl, with his left forearm guarding the vicinity of his genitals. In view of the patently Victorian atmosphere it is noteworthy that the lady is smoking while he is not....

In these seemingly innocent pictures Conrad succeeded in conveying the same image of the aggressive woman who menaces the vulnerable man that had attained such prominence in his fiction (Meyer 1967, 329).

The posture of the woman, and the detail of her cigarette, suggest very much the masculine-dominant Wellesian New Woman. The possible homosexual aspects of the picture are too clear to need further elucidation.



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If I have used more than one edition of a work, the editions appear underneath each other, as a continuation of the bibliography, and the edition to which my page-references in the thesis apply is starred.

Abbreviations (if any) appear in square brackets, and, if more than one edition of a work is listed, only after the edition I have used for page-references.

Occasionally, I have encountered minor discrepancies amongst bibliographies concerning the dates of first publication. Such discrepancies usually arise because of the different forms in which Conrad's work first appeared: as Watts points out, there are often substantial differences between the version of a work that appeared as a serial in a magazine, and the version(s) that subsequently appeared in book form (1989, viii). In such cases I have followed Ehrsam.

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