

Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository

6-22-2022 10:00 AM

Nostalgic Metafiction: The Adventure Fiction of Stevenson, Kipling, and Conrad

Hanji Lee, *The University of Western Ontario*

Supervisor: Rowlinson, Matthew, *The University of Western Ontario*

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in English

© Hanji Lee 2022

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd>



Part of the [Literature in English, Anglophone outside British Isles and North America Commons](#), and the [Literature in English, British Isles Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Lee, Hanji, "Nostalgic Metafiction: The Adventure Fiction of Stevenson, Kipling, and Conrad" (2022). *Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository*. 8658.
<https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd/8658>

This Dissertation/Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Scholarship@Western. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository by an authorized administrator of Scholarship@Western. For more information, please contact wlsadmin@uwo.ca.

Abstract

A sense of nostalgia for real adventure is ubiquitous in the adventure fiction of Robert Louis Stevenson, Rudyard Kipling, and Joseph Conrad. While many scholars consider the object of the writers' nostalgia to be the exploratory age of the British Empire before her massive territorial expansion in 1890s, I argue that there is a missing piece in the current critical understanding of nostalgia: its textual dimension. Nostalgia in my texts is more than a historical longing for the youthful days of the Empire; it is a textual longing for the ideal adventure as imagined and constructed by the previous generation of the adventure stories. The nostalgic moments in Stevenson, Kipling, and Conrad are conscious meta- and inter-textual constructions. My approach to the nostalgia in these tales is a formalist intervention informed by Caroline Levine's updated formalism and Northrop Frye's old structuralism. I examine nostalgia as a formal element integral to these tales, which embodies both the emotional affinity to the ideals of the adventure fiction of the previous generation and the sophisticated awareness that their desires for adventure have been mediated by literary imagination. This study then explores the possibility of reading the nostalgia in the authors' adventure fiction as a mode of metafictionality – a mode of rewriting and reinterpreting the generic conventions of the adventure genre and the romance form. The result of this exploration necessitates a creation of a new literary category, which I call 'nostalgic metafiction'. I propose a way of understanding nostalgic texts as a literary category distinct from conventional metafictional writings like parodies or satires: as nostalgic metafiction that simultaneously sympathizes with and challenges the conventions of the genre to which it belongs.

Keywords

English literature; Victorian adventure fiction; Robert Louis Stevenson; Rudyard Kipling; Joseph Conrad; New Imperialism; Romance; Adventure; Nostalgia; Metafiction; Genre theory; Structuralism; Formalism; Narrative theory; Fin de Siècle

Summary for Lay Audience

The main authors whose works this study examines are Robert Louis Stevenson, Rudyard Kipling, and Joseph Conrad. Stevenson and Kipling are well known for their adventure stories like *Treasure Island* and *The Jungle Book*. Joseph Conrad too is famous for his *Heart of Darkness* which is read as an anti-adventure story and commonly used for the teaching of the horrors of imperialism, of the crimes committed by the European states on the African continent in the nineteenth century. My thesis focuses on a rather surprising element found in selected adventure narratives by the three authors: nostalgia. A number of narratives by the authors presents curious casts of anti-heroes who sentimentally look back at their lost chance of doing something daring and honorable in the past. The pervasive sense of sadness and belatedness conveyed by these narratives is best described as nostalgic.

Most scholars consider the object of the writers' nostalgia to be the exploratory age of the British Empire before her massive territorial expansion in the latter half of the nineteenth century. However, instead of examining their nostalgia as a case of imperial nostalgia, I examine it as a longing for the ideal imperial past imagined and portrayed by the adventure genre. To say that the narratives under examination simply long for the youthful days of the Empire, they betray too sophisticated a historical and literary awareness that the promise for ideal imperial adventure was always an illusion, constructed and fueled by the literature of the past generation. Therefore, I examine the nostalgia in these narratives as a type of metafictionality – as a mode of rewriting and reinterpreting the generic conventions of the overall adventure genre. Metafictionality is a self-referential quality in a narrative that draws attention to its status as an artifact and is a characteristic feature of the postmodern novel which parodies and ironizes the conventions of the previous literary tradition. Against the backdrop of this postmodern understanding of metafictionality, I propose to invent a new category of metafiction called “nostalgic metafiction” which simultaneously sympathizes with and challenges the conventions of the genre to which it belongs.

Acknowledgments

I have always loved literature; I have always loved school. Pursuing a PhD in English literature was the most natural thing to do for me even when life seemed to present to me at times with options for other paths. In this last stage of wrapping up my doctoral degree, I would like to thank all my past teachers, professors, TAs, and classmates whose passion for and insights into literature have inspired me to keep pursuing my own passion for literature and the study of humanities.

My first special thanks goes to my supervisor, Dr. Matthew Rowlinson. In the many lonely hours of writing, he has been the sole reader of my thesis whose presence I could always count on and be comforted by. I have deeply appreciated his presence, guidance, and supervision over the last few years. He had the uncanny ability of a supervisor who knew exactly which scholars and books to recommend for furthering my research. The quality of my research wouldn't have been what it is without his guidance, but all errors and shortcomings are, of course, mine alone.

At Western, I was blessed with many stimulating academic encounters with high-caliber intellectuals in the English department. I am thankful for my second reader, Dr. Chris Keep, for the helpful suggestions and recommendations he always readily and willingly offered to me.

Many ideas for this project came to me while sitting through the lectures of my TA supervisors. I am indebted to Dr. Richard Moll's lecture on Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King", Dr. Gabrielle Ceraldi's introduction to Stevenson's poem "To the Hesitating Purchaser", and Dr. Jonathan Boulter's moving ruminations on the concept of nostalgia.

My warmest gratitude goes to Dr. Donna Pennee and Dr. Mary Helen McMurrin who took the time to show that they believed in my ideas and aptitude as a scholar while my own confidence wavered from time to time. They encouraged me as teachers and role models, which motivated me to keep going in the moments when I felt like giving up.

I am also thankful for Ramanpreet Kaur, Naveera Ahmed, and Shazia Sadaf. Together, we shared the excitement and anxieties of the graduate school. Thanks to their friendship, my early days as a graduate student were filled with fond, interesting memories.

In listing the key influences for the formation of my project, I cannot not mention Dr. Cannon Schmitt and his fourth-year undergraduate seminar course on Sea Adventure Fiction,

which I took as an undergraduate student, almost a decade ago. Dr. Schmitt deliberately and skillfully prepared his students in this course for graduate studies in literature, and I'm proud and thankful to have been one of his students. As a culmination of the research and work for the course, I wrote a paper on the metafictional qualities of J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*. I carried on with the interests in adventure fiction, genre, and metafiction I had developed during that year, and these interests came to be developed more fully here.

As for the people from my personal life, I want to thank sincerely both my parents, Jungkeun Lee and Jeongsik Jang, and parents-in-law, Daeyoung and Shinja Kang. I can only imagine how many times they swallowed the question, "When will you finish writing your thesis?" But they swallowed this question for my sake and have always supported me and my family materially, emotionally, and spiritually.

I'm thankful for my spouse, Minku Kang. His support for me as a spouse and as a fellow seeker & lover of knowledge has made the hard work of studying bearable and even pleasurable at times.

I also thank Ellen Yoon for all her mentoring, prayers, and encouragement for me over the years. She is such a sweet listener. I released much stress while narrating my academic stories to Ellen, and she always listened with genuine interest and sympathy.

Thank you, Hara Kang, for the hours of your toddlerhood you have been under somebody else's care other than your own mom's while your mom was working on or trying to work on her thesis. Now, thank you, Dan Kang, who became the motivation and last impetus to put an end to this era of thesis writing.

Finally, I thank God for this lifetime opportunity to be buried in books to pursue the expressions of the archetypal human desire for the meaning of life in literature. I didn't think it would take this long though. But I believe it was worth it.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Summary for Lay Audience.....	iv
Acknowledgments.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vii
Chapter 1.....	1
1 Introduction: Nostalgic Metafiction.....	1
1.1 Nostalgic Rewriting.....	3
1.2 Adventure and Romance: Genre and Form.....	8
1.3 Literary Nostalgia as Metafictionality.....	14
1.4 Conclusion.....	24
Chapter 2.....	26
2 Nostalgic Landscape of Adventure.....	26
2.1 Adventure, Geography, and Imperialism.....	27
2.2 The End of the Exotic.....	28
2.3 Heterotopia.....	32
2.4 Stevenson’s Literary Nostalgia.....	36
2.5 The Setting of <i>Treasure Island</i>	37
2.6 Nostalgia and Trauma in Kipling’s “The Man Who Would be King”.....	50
2.7 The Narrator’s India.....	51
2.8 The Historical Kafiristan.....	56
2.9 Sir James Brooke.....	59
2.10 The Indian “Mutiny” of 1857.....	63
2.11 Kafiristan’s Spatial and Epistemological Obscurity.....	69
2.12 Conclusion.....	72

Chapter 3.....	74
3 Nostalgia for Adventure in <i>Nostramo</i>	74
3.1 Conrad’s Nostalgia.....	77
3.2 “Author’s Note”	79
3.3 The Calmness of the Gulf	89
3.4 The Peninsula of Azuera.....	92
3.5 The Silver of the Mine	98
3.6 Back to the Gulf	106
3.7 Conclusion	113
Chapter 4.....	114
4 The Utopian Vision of Nostalgia	114
4.1 Work and Adventure.....	117
4.2 Frye and Jameson.....	122
4.3 <i>Captains Courageous</i>	129
4.4 Cod Fishery.....	130
4.5 <i>We’re Here</i>	135
4.6 A Romance of a Capitalist	138
4.7 <i>Nostramo</i>	142
4.8 Nostalgia for the World of Romance	143
4.9 Nostalgia for Garibaldi	151
4.10 The Casa Gould.....	159
4.11 <i>Nostramo</i> ’s Personal Revolution	171
4.12 Conclusion	172
Chapter 5.....	174
5 Conclusion: Reading Adventure Fiction Nostalgically	174
5.1 Popular Dominant Culture	174

5.2 Literary Evolution and “Pop” Forms	176
5.3 Adventure Fiction and Its Alternative Social Vision.....	178
5.4 Conclusion	182
Works Cited	184
Curriculum Vitae	190

Chapter 1

1 Introduction: Nostalgic Metafiction

“Civilisations without boats are like children without their parents' double bed to play on – their dreams dry up; espionage takes the place of adventure, and the ugliness of the police supplants the sun-drenched beauty of the pirates.”

- Michel Foucault, “Heterotopia”

The key concepts for this thesis are nostalgia, genre, form, and metafiction. The inspiration for this project came to me when I read Joseph Conrad’s *Lord Jim*. I was struck by the pervasive sadness of Jim, utterly inexplicable to me at first. Jim had the sadness of a man who came to the scene too late, constantly lamenting the missed chance at genuine action. Then, I started to notice more blatant expressions of sadness in Conrad’s other narratives involving narrator Marlow: his exclamation “Ah! The good old time—the good old time. Youth and the sea. Glamour and the sea!” (39) at the end of his wistful reminiscence of a youthful adventure in his past in “Youth” and the sense of loss he expresses at seeing the world map colour-coded by the imperial colonial possessions and contrasting it with the world map of his youth which used to be full of unlabeled blank spaces in *Heart of Darkness*. The word that best describes the sentiment seemed to be nostalgia.

Once I acquired an interest in nostalgia in Conrad’s fiction, I started to sense it everywhere – in less obvious examples from Conrad’s corpus and in the works of other adventure writers from the similar period, namely Stevenson and Kipling. The narrator of *The N. of the ‘Narcissus’* mourned the end of the age of sailing even as the whole novel celebrated the masterful navigation of the ship through natural disasters; Conrad’s nostalgic recollections in “Author’s Note” in *Nostramo* colour the whole novel as a nostalgic tale. Herrick’s worn-out copy of Virgil in Stevenson’s *The Ebb-Tide* and the admiration for the dying highland tribal culture displayed in *Kidnapped* signaled a hankering after an ideal past. Kipling similarly pays a tribute to the comradeship between the cod fishermen of the last generation on the Grand Banks in *Captains Courageous*. The rather bold statement of Dravot and Peachey, “India isn’t big enough for such as us”

in *The Man Who Would Be King* sounded to me like “India has now become too small for the likes of us, the adventurers” – the implication being the possibility for new adventure in India is now buried in the past. Even Jim Hawkins’ *Treasure Island* and Kim’s India suggested to me nostalgic projections of the authors’ youthful fantasies of adventure. Nostalgia in the three authors felt ubiquitous and hinted at a merit for a literary investigation to me. What are these stories so sad about? What are the authors so nostalgic about? What is the primary object of their nostalgia? How should this nostalgia be approached and investigated?

The investigation began with the historical dimension of the nostalgia in the texts and moved onto its textual elements. Critics have noticed peculiar pessimistic features that characterize a number of adventure tales published around the end of the nineteenth century. Many attribute such features to the end of the age of exploration. The perceived end of exploration and adventure is an important cause of the authors’ nostalgia, but aside from the historical dimension, I discovered that their nostalgia displays curious textual elements. When Conrad’s Lord Jim looks for models of heroic action, he turns to literature and finds that his present life does not live up to the ideals of the readings of his youth. In this quotation, he daydreams about being a hero after the kind he has read about in the genre of sea-romance:

On the lower deck...he would forget himself, and beforehand live in his mind the sea-life of light literature. He saw himself saving people from sinking ships, cutting away masts in a hurricane, swimming through a surf with a line; or as a lonely castaway, barefooted and half naked...always an example of devotion to duty, and as unflinching as a hero in a book. (Conrad 5)

What Jim’s example illustrates is the possibility that the nostalgia in the narratives mentioned above may be *literary* even as it is historical.

The argument of this thesis is that nostalgia in my texts is more than a historical longing for the youthful days of the empire; it is a textual longing for the ideal adventure as imagined and constructed by the previous generation of the adventure stories and the overall romance form. This textual longing, or literary nostalgia, as a consequence, demonstrates a sophisticated generic awareness of the narrative forms in which the texts are written. The word that best describes such an extent of self-awareness in narratives is,

of course, metafictionality. My thesis explores the possibility of reading the nostalgia in the authors' adventure fiction as a mode of metafictionality – a mode of rewriting and reinterpreting the generic conventions of the adventure genre and the romance form. The result of this exploration necessitates a creation of a new literary category, which I call 'nostalgic metafiction'. I propose a way of understanding nostalgic texts as a literary category distinct from that of parodies or satires: as nostalgic metafiction that simultaneously sympathizes with and challenges the conventions of the genre to which it belongs.

1.1 Nostalgic Rewriting

By the end of the nineteenth century, the age of exploration was perceived to be largely over in the Victorian minds. In *Mapping Men and Empire: Geographies of Adventure*, Richard Phillips writes, "European imperialism and map-making reached a simultaneous climax at the end of the nineteenth century" (7). The climax of imperialism and map-making was perceived as an end of exploration: "to many Europeans and Americans, from Jules Verne to Frederick Jackson Turner, the turn of the century seemed to herald the conclusion and the end of geography; there was nowhere else left to go" (6).

Patrick Brantlinger's *Rule of Darkness* also documents how "[n]umerous travel writers from about 1870 onward lament the decline of exploration into mere tourism" (238). Among the lamenting writers were H. Rider Haggard and Joseph Conrad. In his 1884 essay, "'Elephant Smashing' and 'Lion Shooting,'" Haggard complains, "[s]oon the ancient mystery of Africa will have vanished" and asks, "will the romance writers of future generations find a safe and secret place, unknown to the pestilent accuracy of the geographer, in which to lay their plots?" (qtd. in Brantlinger 238). Conrad likewise records a disappointing visit to the Boyoma Falls, Congo – then-Stanley Falls – in 1890: "A great melancholy descended on me...there was...no great haunting memory...only the unholy recollection of a prosaic newspaper 'stunt' and the distasteful knowledge of the vilest scramble for loot that ever disfigured the history of human conscience and geographical exploration. What an end to the idealized realities of a boy's daydreams!" (qtd. in Brantlinger 239). Brantlinger evaluates that "[t]he fear that adventure may be a

thing of the past in the real world led [the above] writers to seek it in the unreal world of romance, dreams, imagination” (239). According to him, in the face of the disillusionment of the visions of exploration and imperialism, adventure writers like “Stevenson, Haggard, Kipling, Doyle, Bram Stoker, and John Buchan” (230) turned to the elements of Gothic for their fiction instead of pursuing more realistic depictions of adventure. Hence, he categorizes their adventure narratives as “Imperial Gothic.”

Chris Bongie’s *Exotic Memories* makes a similar argument that New Imperialism, “the phase of acute geopolitical expansion initiated by the European nation-states during the last decades of the nineteenth century,” cancelled out the geopolitical alternatives in the European cultural imagination by “[absorbing the] Other into the body of the Same,” by subsuming the exotic land under the influence of modernity. Hence, adventure writers started to lose their faith in the exotic – the belief that somewhere out there still exists a land that is “Other than those in which modernity has come to hold sway” (17) – and “the writing of exoticism” could now be no more than “rewriting” (19). Considering the age of exploration and exoticism to be largely over, “the fin-de-siècle imagination envisions a world given entirely, and hopelessly, over to modernity” (18). Exemplary of Bongie’s position at work is his criticism of Kipling’s *Kim* (1901). Although Kipling is not one of the major authors his book examines, Bongie extends the view of the perceived end of exoticism to his reading of Kipling’s *Kim*, countering Edward Said’s reading of the text as an expression of the imperialist vision of India as the exotic elsewhere. He finds it problematic to make “such an acute and self-conscious writer as Kipling as an unproblematical spokesperson for this vision.” Rather, Bongie proposes that *Kim* may be a “willfully utopic response to an India that had, as far as [Kipling] was concerned, turned into something rather less than the scene of a possible heroism” (21) due to the country’s modernization. While to Said, *Kim* is a “novel of adventure” written in the imperialist tradition, Bongie reads it as a reworking of “imperialist exoticism,” which signals “Kipling’s awareness of the impossibility of that ‘authentic experience’ that he nonetheless continued to desire” (22).

Common to Brantlinger’s and Bongie’s approaches is the idea that the turn-of-the-century adventure writers were doing something unfamiliar with the familiar adventure and romance tradition at the backdrop of the awakening historical awareness.

Bongie's use of the word "rewriting" is particularly intriguing. The authors' contemporary critics similarly called the rise of such adventure narratives, heralded by Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883) and Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), the "revival of romance" (Daly 8). Nicholas Daly's *Modernism, Romance and the Fin de Siècle* challenges the term "revival" since he considers the authors' use of romance a "distinctively modern phenomenon." Rather than a "return" or regress, the new romance of the fin de siècle was a "modern phenomenon" according to Daly; it morphed the old conventions for the modern adaptations to express the concerns and themes of contemporary society just as the modernist writers experimented with psychological realism. Neither was "revival of romance" "a return to earlier narrative forms," nor was it "a hankering after some lost literary world" (8-9), Daly posits. But when it comes to the topic of romance, the writers themselves demonstrated exactly that: "a hankering after some lost literary world."

Romance, or quest romance, where a group of distinguished men embark on a journey to find a Holy Grail of some sort, had a special place in the Victorian culture. Narratives like the Arthurian tales and the Arabian Nights were immensely popular during the Victorian era. Romance writers like Haggard and Kipling fondly recall childhood readings of the tales of medieval and classical romance. Robert Fraser uncovers the moments where "Haggard talks of his childhood reading in the nursery, the staple of which was the Arthurian tales and versions of classical romance" in Haggard's autobiography *The Days of My Life*; Kipling similarly "recalls going to stay with his Aunt Georgie...where she would read him 'The Pirate' or The Arabian Nights of evenings" in *Something of Myself*. What Fraser finds interesting about the two men's attitude to such tales is that they "seem to have believed that the Arabian Nights and the Arthurian cycle, like other classical or medieval romances, were not 'literary' in the narrow sense." Since these tales were such an "integral" part of the Victorian nursery story-time, "romance seems to have approximated in the eyes of late-Victorian people to what we now call 'orature', something handed down by word of mouth" (Fraser 7). In other words, there was something pre-literary and pre-modern about the tales of romance to these writers.

In his 1887 essay "Realism and Romance," Andrew Lang sarcastically concedes that compared to the realist novels, "modern romances of adventure...may be 'savage

survivals” (264). Far from finding the concession offensive, however, Lang, the proponent of romance, celebrates the supposed primitive nature of romance narratives. According to him, it is to “the old barbarian under our clothes,” “the natural man within [him], the survival of some blue-painted Briton or of some gypsy,” and “[t]he savage within us” (263) that romance appeals; despite the modern refined literary taste for realism, “there is still room for romance, and love of romance, in civilized human nature” (265).

While Lang invokes “the savage within us” to justify his love of action and adventure, Stevenson turns to the child in the reader in his defence of romance. He writes that “[f]iction is to the grown man what play is to the child” and that “when it pleases him with every turn, when he loves to recall it and dwells upon its recollection with entire delight, fiction is called romance” (Stevenson, “A Gossip on Romance” 61). Just as play absorbs the child in all its actions and delights, so too storytelling should have the same effect on the adult readers. And the most proper form of storytelling involves romantic tales of action and adventure. Having examined these general attitudes to romance, Fraser aptly concludes, “For Scott, for Lang, and for most of the writers [Stevenson, Kipling, Haggard, and Doyle] considered in the study, to read a romance was, therefore, in some sense pleasurable to regress” (Fraser 5).

To write a romance in the modern age, then, was an act of rewriting; it involved a conscious return to the desired ideal version of the past. The motivations for the move to return were numerous. Besides the nostalgia for the days of exploration, and the appeals of the thrills of sheer action and the joys of childhood imagination mentioned above, there was also a moral dimension, which Conrad’s critic Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan identifies as the main reason for Conrad’s adoption of older narrative forms in his fiction. The genre mix-up in Conrad’s fiction, as in the romance-like Patusan section of *Lord Jim*, has been subject to much scholarly debate as it had to do with the question of Conrad’s artistic competency. Perhaps the most famous of the challenges on Conrad’s use of romance and literary merit comes from Fredric Jameson who posits that his fiction is “unclassifiable...floating uncertainly somewhere in between Proust and Robert Louis Stevenson” (Jameson 206). Erdinast-Vulcan locates Conrad’s “regression into the heroic-mythical frame of reference” (*Joseph Conrad* 5) as the source of what critics like

Jameson sees as inconsistencies in his fiction. Instead of “romance,” Erdinast-Vulcan uses the terms “heroic-mythical” and “epic” to describe the older literary modes of writing Conrad resorts to, and one of the effects of the adoption of these modes is “the stereotyped characterization of the protagonists, who are cast into the mould of the epic-mythical hero,” which “has been pointed out by critics as [Conrad’s] major artistic weakness” (22-3).

So, what is the reason for his “regress to an archaic, essentially unsophisticated, form of literature?” (23). According to Erdinast-Vulcan, Conrad was “an incurable moralist infected with the ethical relativism of his age” (3), “a modernist at war with modernity” (5). She finds the reason for his “regress” in “what Lukács nostalgically calls the ‘integrated nature of epic-making societies’.” Unlike the modern world of secularization, individualism, and ethical relativism, “the ‘age of the epic’, as presented by Lukács, is an integrated, and therefore, a happy world, in that it does not yet recognize the rift between the individual and the community, the self and the world, the soul and the deed” (23), much like the medieval communal life idealized by Victorian thinkers like Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin. Therefore, the driving force behind Conrad’s artistic regress is “a sense of nostalgia for that very distant cultural past perceived as an age of cohesion and moral certainty,” a potential “refuge from an essentially individualistic and relativistic socio-ethical framework” (24-5).

What motivates the rewriting of the older narrative forms, then, is a desire: a highly instinctual desire for pleasure, action, and ideals. The adoption of narrative forms like romance and the worldviews associated with them allowed both the writers and readers to indulge in their desire for “the impossible homecoming” (Erdinast-Vulcan 3). That home may be one’s own childhood, the youthful days of the empire, the primordial age of the humankind, or the distant past of absolute morality or even of amorality. The options abound, but one thing that binds them is that they are all conceived as ideal spaces to escape to from the deep dissatisfactions with the present. The idea of the use of romance as a vehicle for wish-fulfillment is an old one. In *Anatomy of Criticism*, Frye defines romance in terms of desire, particularly, nostalgia: “The romance is the nearest of all literary forms to the wish-fulfillment dream... The perennially child-like quality of romance is marked by its extraordinarily persistent nostalgia, its search for some kind of

imaginative golden age in time or space” (186). The mindfulness of the inadequacy of the present and active search for the golden age make nostalgia a conscious desire. The nostalgic acknowledges the pastness of the past and the distantness of the faraway home for which she yearns.

A narrative inspired and driven by the force of nostalgia could, then, display a certain level of awareness of its own constructedness as a literary artefact that rewrites an older literary form. The texts under examination in this thesis display just that kind of curious self-awareness of the literariness of the romantic narratives and the idealness of the ideals they pursue. That awareness also prevents the texts’ full immersion in their nostalgic hankerings, and what emerges is a subtle but distinct kind of metafiction that explores the discrepancies between the literary idealizations and the historical memory of the adventures of the past generation. Consequently, the authors’ acts of nostalgic rewriting should be examined more critically than as a simple reproduction of recognized narrative patterns. This thesis focusses on the metafictional elements of the texts by tracing the texts’ connections to and divergences from, and sympathies and disillusionment with the conventions and ideals of the adventure genre and the romance form.

1.2 Adventure and Romance: Genre and Form

A distinction needs to be made between what I mean by ‘genre’ and ‘form’ as it would help highlight the richness and complexity of the literary tradition to which my texts relate. I take ‘genre’ as a historical category that groups together a set of similarly recognizable texts in a given time period while identifying ‘form’ as an ahistorical arrangement like an organizing principle or pattern.

My approach is indebted to Caroline Levine’s recent work on new methods of formalism. Levine’s definition of form is extremely loose and flexible: she considers forms to be “all shapes and configurations, all ordering principles, all patterns of repetition and difference” (3). Without physical substance or historical markers, forms are “abstract organizing principles, shapes and patterns” that are “iterable” and thus “portable (7). By that line of thinking, a literary form too stands out for its timelessness

and adaptability. The trend has been to see literary forms as “outgrowths of social conditions”: Levine notes that some critics “have read literary forms as legible reflections of social structures” while others have seen them “less as a reflection of a specific social context than as a deliberate *intervention*” (Levine’s emphasis, 12). Both tendencies bind literary forms to their particular social contexts, but Levine is adamant in arguing that they “do not belong to certain times and places” (12). Rather, literary forms are ahistorical patterns and structures that cut across different time periods, available for anyone who has use for them just as “the quest structure of ancient epic remains available to the contemporary novelist” (12). She refers to “a range of recent literary theorists, including Wai-Chee Dimock, Frances Ferguson, and Franco Moretti” who “have noted that certain literary forms—epic, free indirect discourse, rhythm, plot—can survive across cultures and time periods, sometimes enduring through vast distances of time and space” (4-5).

Levine’s understanding of literary forms corresponds well to the timeless appeal that the late-Victorian adventure writers associated with the romance form. As Robert Fraser says, the Victorians found that “tales describing groups of men departing for unknown destinations in search of wealth, or to quell some peril, are as old as the art of storytelling itself” (5). Contemporary critics examining the origins of modern adventure fiction (such as Michael Nerlich, Paul Zweig, and Margaret Cohen) too find that adventure has persistently functioned as a motif, theme, structure, and even ideology in the development of the romance form: the socio-political underpinnings and expressions of adventure have kept changing over the time periods while some key structural and thematic commonalities remain. Michael Nerlich’s *Ideology of Adventure* traces the evolution of the figure of the adventurer and the concept of adventure from Homeric heroes, medieval knights-errant, and Renaissance merchants to modern Crusoes. Despite the emerging differences instigated by the rise of capitalism and individualism especially, Nerlich identifies a few familiar formal traits like acceptance of changes and disorder, elements of risk taking, and encounters with the unknown and the other (xxi). The survival of romance through the ages speaks to the flexibility of the form. Nicholas Daly is not wrong to posit that the late Victorian “revival of romance” was a “distinctively

modern phenomenon” by which the old conventions and themes of romance were adapted and adopted for expressing modern concerns and anxieties.

Whereas the adaptability of a form is not bound by time or space, the parameters of a genre are governed by its historical context. Genre is a timebound concept as it involves “a historically specific and interpretive act” of “classifying texts” based on an “ensemble of characteristics, including styles, themes, and marketing conventions” (Levine 13). Any writers could experiment with genre conventions and expectations, but even in experimenting, they would have to consider the specific contexts of the production and reception of their texts. Levine thus defines genres as “customary constellations of elements into historically recognizable groupings of artistic objects, bringing together forms with themes, styles, and situations of reception” (14).

Margaret Cohen examining the adventure tradition takes a similar approach to generic conventions as Levine’s. For her stance on genre, Cohen subscribes to Marxist criticism – “the materialist lineage” as she calls it – which finds genre to be a useful “analytic category” because “the concept enables discussion of the social dimension of poetics.” According to this view, the appeal of popular genres comes from their ability to address effectively the questions involving “the state of the literary field” and “the ideological and social contradictions shaping society as a whole.” Successful genres are, then, the ones that have found “an integrated way of addressing questions of literature and society simultaneously” and “can speak to divergent publics or a public defined in its diversity, dispersion, and heterogeneity” (Cohen, “Traveling Genres” 482).

The socio-historical and ideological contexts most strongly associated with the adventure genre have been the rise of the British Empire and European imperialism at large. A host of critics has examined adventure fiction more as a carrier of the imperialist ideology than as a cultural critique addressing the issues that the ideology raises. Martin Green’s *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* traces the generic development of literary imperialism in the works of both English and American writers like Daniel Defoe, Walter Scott, James Fenimore Cooper, Mark Twain, Robert Louis Stevenson, Rudyard Kipling, and Joseph Conrad. Green argues that adventure fiction became the source of the Empire’s “energizing myth.” Not only did the myth of adventure make

imperialism more palatable to the English readership, it also “charged” their imagination with “the energy to go out into the world and explore, conquer, and rule” (3).

Imperialism and Juvenile Literature, a collection of essays edited by Jeffrey Richards, shows more direct ways in which popular adventure fiction had been influenced by the dominant ideology of the nineteenth century. According to Richards’ argument, nineteenth-century juvenile adventure tales played a conscious “active” role in “constructing and perpetuating a view of the world in which British imperialism was an integral part of the cultural and psychological formation of each new generation of readers” (3). Influential groups like the Evangelical school began to get directly involved in the writing and circulation of the genre as they started to view adventure fiction as an ideal model “for juvenile instruction” (3); popular adventure writers like Kingston and Ballantyne consciously treated their works as evangelical tools (4); the most influential boys’ magazines of all times *The Boy’s Own Paper*, first published in 1879, was also a creation of the Religious Tract Society (5). Juvenile adventure fiction was widely read across different interest groups: books popular among working boys were also often popular among “their contemporaries in the well-to-do classes” (8). The collection as a whole examines adventure fiction as a powerful medium through which the myth of British imperialism was promulgated as its popularity “cut across the boundaries of class, nation and gender” (9).

Joseph Bristow’s *Empire Boys* also takes an interest in the use of adventure fiction for imperial ends, specifically in the Victorian and Edwardian contexts. His research shows that “between 1870 and 1900 narratives celebrating empire and techniques in teaching reading and writing gradually converged”: “This trend would be set by Jarrold’s *Empire Readers*, published in the 1880s, and adopted by the London School Board.” An emphasis on “heroic adventure” (20) added heavy moral weight on the popular conception of boyhood. In fact, Victorian imperial education took a distinctively masculinist turn as “[i]mperialism made the boy into an aggrandized subject – British born and bred – with the future of the world lying upon his shoulders” (19). The Empire was in need of many leaders, and public educators worked hard to make sure that these leaders could come from all parts of society, especially from either end of the burgeoning middle class.

Richard Philips' *Mapping Men and Empire* also makes a connection between the ideological and aesthetic levels of adventure fiction. Philips identifies cartographic elements as a dominant feature in adventure fiction that challenges the boundary between the real and the fictional. Cartography is one of the many geographical discourses culture uses in understanding space; it specifically uses maps to visualize particular landscape. An interesting thing about the map is that it "exudes authority" (Smith 499, qtd. in Philips 14). Maps are impersonal, authorless and presented as objective scientific knowledge. As such, maps have powerful impact on cultural perceptions of space. The language of maps naturalizes what they portray, and they become a powerful tool in shaping the reader's cultural imagination. Philips' central argument is that adventure fiction markets itself as cartography. Therefore, the ways in which it portrays the unknown space and the social relations therein which the European adventurers find and participate in shaping have a powerful bearing on how people at home conceptualize the colonial space. In his reading, adventure fiction, overall, produces an effect of naturalizing the whole institution of imperialism.

Despite the evident strong connections between imperialism and the adventure tradition, the late Victorian tales of adventure do not comfortably fit with the picture of the tradition that the critics in the camp of Martin Green paint. The earlier mentioned studies by Brantlinger, Bongie, and Daly demonstrate the pessimistic attitudes and awareness of the late Victorian and Edwardian adventure tales that authentic imperial adventures were things of the past; the studies point towards the perceived end of the age of exploration, and the concerns of literary modernism and the fin de siècle as the factors influencing these changes. Though not overt critics of imperialism per se, these narratives have a much more layered relationship to imperialism. While their desire for adventure finds what it is looking for in the timeless appeal of the romance form and the historical glamour of the past imperial adventures, the historical memories of violent encounters with the colonial Other prevent them from fully sentimentalizing imperial quest – the main focus of the next chapter which analyzes Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King."

Moving away from the ideological approach, Margaret Cohen introduces another key factor to the evolution of adventure fiction at the turn of the twentieth century: the

routinization of sailing. According to Cohen, the adventure genre enjoyed popularity over the span of four centuries “stretching from the navigations of Vasco da Gama and Columbus to the race across frozen seas for the poles at the turn of the twentieth century,” and “[t]his span was roughly defined by two distinct but interrelated histories: the working age of global sail and the era of global exploration” (*The Novel and the Sea* 3). Cohen does not mention the perceived end of global exploration, so important to some other critics, as an influence over the demise of the adventure genre; rather, she singles out “the routinization of seafaring” (10) to be the factor that precipitated the end of the genre. For her, adventure fiction is a “romance of navigation,” “a thoroughly secular romance of men at work,” and “a romance of human practice” that glorified the work of the mariner who navigated through the uncharted, dangerous seas (4).

With the routinization and mechanization of seafaring, “the craft was on the wane,” and the figure of the mariner could no longer be glorified with the same vigour as in the past. In such a new material condition, writers like Herman Melville, Victor Hugo, and Joseph Conrad who admired the previous generation of adventure fiction adapted the poetics of adventure to create “maritime modernism” which “challeng[ed] the writer and reader to the difficult work of navigating the foggy, uncharted seas of language and thought” (10). Her version of the adventure genealogy runs that the conventions of the genre eventually disperse over multiple future genres like detective, spy, and science fiction, all of which used “sea fiction’s adventures in problem-solving to explore the expanding frontier of information” (10). Although the poetics of sea adventure fiction continues to “appeal into the twenty-first century” as evident with the popular success of the works of the writers like C. S. Forester and Patrick O’Brian as well as movies like *The Pirates of the Caribbean*, Cohen concludes that “its significance is now nostalgic.” The kinds of adventurous living and meaningful work available for the mariners of the past are deemed to be no longer possible by today’s adventure writers. Therefore, sea fiction now “yearns for embodied, multidimensional human agency in an increasingly abstract and specialized world, dominated by vast forces of society and technology beyond the individual’s comprehension and control, which are the man-made equivalents to the world’s oceans.” In Cohen’s somewhat nostalgic words, “[w]ith this last nostalgic

turn of craft, path-breaking Odysseus becomes exiled Odysseus longing to return home” (10).

My contention, of course, is that the nostalgic turn in adventure fiction started even earlier – at the end of the nineteenth century. The reasons for late-Victorian adventure writers to feel nostalgic were manifold: the perceived end of global exploration, the routinization of seafaring, and the advancement of industrialization and modernization. In composing adventure tales, the writers expressed a desire for “some kind of imaginative golden age in time or space” (Frye 186) where life was more action filled, adventures more perilous, heroes more heroic, and people more human. Critics intrigued by adventure narratives comment on the underlying metaphysical and archetypal desires driving these narratives for the secrets of human origins (Fraser 76-7), a “plunge into essential experience” (Zweig 4), and productive exercise of human agency (Cohen 10). All in all, adventure in essence represents a quest for a meaningful and fulfilling life, an existence well worth living. The desire for adventure finds what it is looking for in the timeless appeal of the romance form and the historical glamour of the past imperial adventures.

1.3 Literary Nostalgia as Metafictionality

The texts of Stevenson, Kipling, and Conrad show an acute awareness of the formal and generic conventions of the literary tradition they follow. Stevenson’s poem “To the Hesitating Purchaser” – his sales pitch for *Treasure Island* – exemplifies the texts’ metatextual awareness:

To the Hesitating Purchaser

If sailor tales to sailor tunes,
 Storm and adventure, heat and cold,
 If schooners, islands, and maroons,
 And buccaneers, and buried gold,
 And all the old romance, retold

Exactly in the ancient way,
 Can please, as me they pleased of old,
 The wiser youngsters of today:

-- So be it, and fall on! If not,
 If studious youth no longer crave,
 His ancient appetites forgot,
 Kingston, or Ballantyne the brave,
 Or Cooper of the wood and wave:
 So be it, also! And may I
 And all my pirates share the grave
 Where these and their creations lie! (Stevenson xxx)

Stevenson's poem unapologetically frames *Treasure Island* as a rewriting: "the old romance, retold/ Exactly in the ancient way." In highlighting the elements of the story that his readers would find familiar, he appeals to the aspects of both the form ("the old romance") and the genre (the adventure narratives of "Kingston, Ballantyne, and Cooper") of the adventure tradition to which his tale subscribes. The listed elements belong to both the ancient and recent past, but one obvious commonality between them is that they are of the past. If today's youth no longer find his kind of tale appetizing, the author is willing to share the grave with his creations, along with the previous generation of adventure writers (although R. M. Ballantyne would still outlive the first publication of *Treasure Island* by a few more years) and their stories. If this kind of formal and generic awareness is also made evident on the level of the narrative itself, which my next chapter argues is the case, could we read such metatextual awareness in texts as a mode of metafictionality?

Although the critical discourse on metafiction usually focuses on its more radical versions among postmodern novels, most critics of metafiction agree that there is a wide spectrum of metafictionality on which individual texts can be placed and analyzed accordingly. Pithily defined as "self-conscious fiction" by Patricia Waugh in 1984, the term "metafiction" was first used by William Gass in 1970 to refer to fiction "in which

the forms of fiction serve as the material upon which further forms can be imposed” (Gass 25, qtd. in Macrae 2) in analyzing the works of Jorge Luis Borges, John Barth, and Flann O’Brien. In literary criticism, the term “came to mean” more broadly “fiction which overtly uses both its narrative form and its thematic content to explore the nature of fiction, and through it the nature of reality” (Macrae 2). Many postmodernist novelists turned to metafiction as a mode of writing perhaps because metafiction’s potential for self-reflexivity on its fictionality worked well for expressing the postmodern concerns like “a hyper-awareness of the self and her/his relation to reality and the other, a crisis of faith in enlightenment systems of rationalisation and totalisation, scepticism of histories and master-narratives, anxiety over the mediating role of consciousness, and philosophical questioning of the possibility of communication and a shared ‘reality’” (5).

However, the “neatness of the marriage between metafiction and postmodernism” (6) does not mean that metafictionality is a sole property of postmodernist fiction. According to Macrae, “metafictionality, as a quality of fiction, is scalar rather than binary” (4). From the beginning of the history of the novel, a “reflexive awareness of literariness...rather underscores much of the tradition of the novel as a mimetic form” (4). While metafictionality can be used to challenge the fictional construction of the text, it can also further support its construction (think about Jane Eyre’s address to the reader, for instance), or do both simultaneously. Overall, metafictionality has the potential to “reflect beyond that particular book to broader literary and socio-political contexts and concerns” (4).

Patricia Waugh similarly argues that a degree of metafictionality has always been part of the natural process of how literary genres evolved. The concept that is pivotal to that view is parody. Simply put, metafiction works much like how parody works. In fact, metafiction builds upon a strong “parodic basis”: “parody in metafiction” brings about a “positive literary change...by undermining an earlier set of fictional conventions which have become automatized, the parodist clears a path for a new, more perceptible set” (64). Waugh’s argument also corresponds to the Russian formalists’ view of literary evolution which sees literature as a system “that develops itself through the realignment of units *within* that system, and through its absorption of elements *outside* the literary system” (65). In this system, old conventions become ‘background’ against which new

innovations are brought about. Parody makes “explicit” the literary codes and conventions which used to remain as an “implicit” set of norms. In a way, parody plays a historical function of defining the norms of the past literary generation. Metafictional parody not only explores “the relations between literary and historical systems” but it also “implicitly historicizes literary tradition” (66). In undermining a previous convention, metafiction demonstrates the “historical provisionality” of the particular convention which used to pass as ‘neutral’ ‘natural’, and ‘authentic’ aspects of people’s lives. When implicit conventions are made explicit in the process of reading, the reader sees the arbitrariness of the aspects of their worldviews which have in fact developed over time and find roots in the earlier generation’s ideological underpinnings (66-7).

My authors’ uses of the romance form and the adventure genre appear to fit with Waugh’s picture of how literary genres evolve, and parody in metafiction works. In a similar line of thinking, Katherine Isobel Baxter’s study on Joseph Conrad makes an argument that Conrad consciously uses the romance form to make ideological critiques. Romance in Conrad’s oeuvre is usually perceived as the author’s artistic flaw to which “critics point” either to “excuse or to explain”; Baxter instead proposes to “read his uses of romance in a more nuanced way” as Conrad’s experiments with ideological critiquing on an aesthetic level (1). Baxter highlights that romance is a highly self-referential form to begin with by calling attention to how Margaret Bruzelius’ and Gillian Beer’s studies on romance acknowledge the form’s “potential for self-referentiality as a move that can destabilize the narrative security” due to the extraordinary nature of the events usually featured in romance (3). Although for Beer and Bruzelius, romance “remains a conservative genre that cannot, and does not look to, destabilize the world beyond its fictional realm,” Baxter finds that “when used consciously,” the self-referential aspect of romance offers opportunities to open the standard formal features to “ironic reworking and undercutting” (3-4). In exploring romance’s full experimental potential, she turns to Robert Miles’ concept of “philosophical romance” which is a genre that self-consciously uses the fantasy elements of romance to “trespass on realism” (6) and expose “the ideological nature of ideology” or the arbitrary nature of given social values of the time by aligning them with fictional constructs. Baxter’s argument is that Conrad uses philosophical romance in self-conscious ways – that he “uses romance radically

throughout his writing career to question the values of his historical milieu and the power of narrative itself” (14).

Baxter’s study effectively brings out the built-in metafictional features in the romance form and paves a way to examine my texts as self-aware, self-referential texts. But there is a catch: Baxter’s reading of Conrad’s use of romance is essentially parodic and does not account for his and his text’s emotional affinity with the values and conventions associated with the romance form. Her reading of *Nostramo*, in particular, is that the novel is “a double parody of both the romance and realist literature” (81), a view my analysis of the novel disagrees with. No matter how complicated their metatextual and generic awareness may be, the narratives of Stevenson, Kipling, and Conrad are not parodic in the strictest sense. They lack the ironic edge that most works of parodies demonstrate. Instead, they sincerely yearn and long for the ideal literary past represented in the romance and adventure fiction of previous generations. In short, my authors’ uses of romance are nostalgic, rather than parodic.

Here comes the challenge of understanding nostalgia as a literary device. How do we read what is generally regarded as sentiment as a method of writing as in the cases of parody and irony? One way of incorporating nostalgia as a novelistic practice is to read it as part of the narrative’s “plot,” or its intention and purpose. In *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative*, Peter Brooks proposes a comprehensive definition of plot that encompasses the usual distinction between fabula and sjuzet (Russian formalism), or *histoire* and *récit* (French structuralism). While fabula/ *histoire* refers to the chronological order of the reported events in narrative, sjuzet/ *récit* deals with the ordering and organizing of these events in the overall narrative discourse (12). For Brooks, the understanding of plot as sjuzet is too limiting as he thinks that plot has to do with more than the mechanical organization of what happened in narrative. He thinks that plot is both the “logic” and “dynamic” of narrative (10). His conceptualization of plot “cut[s] across the fabula/ sjuzet distinction” since “to speak of plot is to consider both story elements and their ordering.” In fact, “[p]lot could be thought of as the interpretative activity elicited by the distinction between sjuzet and fabula, the way we use the one against the other.” Plot could be “generally [understood]” to be “an aspect of sjuzet in that it belongs to the narrative discourse, as its active shaping force,” but one

must also understand that it is also “used to reflect on fabula, as our understanding of story.” Hence, plot is “the dynamic shaping force of the narrative discourse” (13).

Brooks finds affirmation for his understanding of plot in Paul Ricoeur’s and Roland Barthes’ theorization of narrative. Ricoeur defines plot as “the intelligible whole that governs a succession of events in any story.” He then comments on the plot’s “connecting function between an event or events and the story” in the way “[a] story is made out of events to the extent that plot makes events into a story,” which means that “[t]he plot...places us at the crossing point of temporality and narrativity” (qtd. in Brooks 13-4). Brooks considers “Ricoeur’s emphasis on the constructive role of plot, its active, shaping function” as a “useful corrective to the structural narratologists’ neglect of the dynamics of narrative” (14). Roland Barthes’ concepts of “proairetic” and “hermeneutic” also offer an alternative corrective. According to Barthes, the “proairetic concerns the logic of actions, how their completion can be derived from their initiation, how they form sequences,” and the “hermeneutic code concerns rather the questions and answers that structure a story, their suspense, partial unveiling, temporary blockage, eventual resolution, with the resulting creation of a ‘dilatatory space’ – the space of suspense – which we work through toward what is felt to be, in classical narrative, the revelation of meaning that occurs when the narrative sentence reaches full predication” (18). In Brooks’ appropriation of these concepts, plot is to be understood as “an ‘overcoding’ of the proairetic by the hermeneutic, the latter structuring the discrete elements of the former into larger interpretive wholes, working out their play of meaning and significance” (18). What essentially lacks in the structuralist conception of plot is its intentional aspect, which Brooks also calls ‘dynamic’. More than an organizing structure, plot, for Brooks, has to do with the dynamic shaping of the narrative – from the selection of the events in narrative, thinking of the relations between the events to even eliciting of the meanings of the events and their relations.

Building upon Brooks’ conceptualization of plot, I propose to read nostalgia as a major quality of the plot of the late-Victorian adventure narratives of Stevenson, Kipling, and Conrad, as part of the organizing structure and driving force of the narratives. Nostalgia as a way of remembering the past shares many parallels with the act of plotting events in narrative. These parallels can be highlighted when we consider Linda

Hutcheon's exposition on how nostalgic remembering works. According to Hutcheon, nostalgia rarely recalls "the past as actually experienced" but rather "as imagined, as idealized through memory and desire." The operation of nostalgia involves "what Mikhail Bakhtin called an 'historical inversion': the ideal that is not being lived now is projected into the past." The nostalgically recalled past is "'memorialized' as past, crystallized into precious moments selected by memory, but also by forgetting, and by desire's distortions and reorganizations." Therefore, the "aesthetics of nostalgia" might be "less a matter of simple memory than of complex projection" in which "the invocation of a partial, idealized history merges with a dissatisfaction with the present" (195).

Hutcheon's use of the word "projection" is quite telling as it suggests a level of agency and intention on the part of the subject engaged in nostalgic recalling. The agency implicated in the work of nostalgic "projection" involves multiple senses and faculties: the awareness of temporality, knowledge of the past and the present, desire for an ideal past which expresses dissatisfaction with the present, and active quest for this golden age in the past. The intentional and emotional editing of the past by nostalgia parallels the operation of a plot in narrative. In fact, nostalgia can be a powerful and effective force of plot, structuration, and narrativization that uses both intention and emotion, design and desire, and in Hutcheon's words, "affect and agency" and "emotion and politics."

This thesis argues and demonstrates that Stevenson, Kipling, and Conrad use nostalgia to reimagine the adventure of the literary past, which affects the setting, selection and organization of events, and character and thematic development in their narratives. Identifying nostalgia as a major feature in the plot helps bring out both the narratives' metafictional awareness of the literary tradition they follow and their emotional affinity to the tradition. The term I propose to use to categorize this type of narratives is 'nostalgic metafiction'.

In order to develop a new concept of 'nostalgic metafiction' distinct from the usual parodic understanding of metafiction, I revisit Northrop Frye and his theory of genres. Frye developed a strict taxonomic system of understanding literature based on the genres to which literary texts belong. For my purpose, I find useful the distinction Frye makes between what he calls "naïve" and "sophisticated" literature. Frye argues that different forms of literature such as "tragic" or "comic" forms have been written in

different modes of writing in different historical periods. When a certain mode of writing is re-popularized in a later historical period, Frye calls that mode a sentimental version of the original one:

In each mode a distinction will be useful between naïve and sophisticated literature. What I mean by [the word naïve is] primitive or popular... The word sentimental also means something else in English, but we do not have enough genuine critical terms to dispense with it. In quotation marks, therefore, “sentimental” refers to a later recreation of an earlier mode. Thus Romanticism is a “sentimental” form of romance, and the fairy tale... a “sentimental” form of folk tale. (Frye 35)

To give a better sense of what Frye means, here is a chart illustrating Frye’s analysis of the Tragic form in its various modes (Frye 33-43):

	Tragic Forms
Myth	<p>Its hero is a dying or isolated god.</p> <p>Naïve examples: stories about Hercules, Orpheus, Balder</p> <p>Sentimental examples: “The Dream of the Rood,” Kingsley’s ballad in <i>Alton Locke</i></p>
Romance	<p>Its hero is still half a god.</p> <p>Naïve examples: <i>Beowulf</i>, Song of Roland, stories of martyred saints</p> <p>Sentimental example: Tennyson’s <i>The Passing of Arthur</i></p>
High Mimesis	<p>It’s about the fiction of the fall of a leader. The tragic hero has to be of a properly heroic size but clearly recognized as a fallible human being.</p> <p>Naïve examples: Greek tragic drama, <i>The Mirror for Magistrates</i></p> <p>Sentimental examples: tragic drama of Shakespeare, Racine</p>
Low Mimesis	<p>Its hero is isolated by a weakness which appeals to our sympathy because it is on our own level of experience.</p>

	<p>Naïve examples: Gothic thrillers, popular fiction with its mad scientists</p> <p>Sentimental examples: <i>Lord Jim</i>, <i>Madame Bovary</i>, Balzac, Dickens</p>
Irony	<p>Its hero is a random victim.</p> <p>Naïve examples: Plato's <i>Apology</i>, Job</p> <p>Sentimental examples: <i>The Trial</i>, <i>Crime and Punishment</i></p>

Tragedy is generally about the fall of a hero, and depending on how mythically or realistically its hero is treated, Frye classifies the different modes of tragic writing as “myth,” “romance,” “high mimesis,” “low mimesis” or “irony.” In a mythical mode, its hero is a dying, isolated god. In a mode of romance, its hero is a demi-god. Jumping to the next one, in the low mimetic mode, the hero is a common person with many flaws, a kind of person the readers can easily relate to. The naïve examples of the mythic mode are stories about mythical heroes like Hercules and Orpheus. And the sentimental examples are “The Dream of the Rood” and Kingsley’s ballad in *Alton Locke*. Jumping to the low mimetic mode, the naïve examples of the low mimetic mode are Gothic thrillers, popular fiction with its mad scientists. Among its sentimental examples, we find *Lord Jim* along with *Madame Bovary*, and the works of Balzac and Dickens.

For a group of writings to be sentimental about a genre preceding them, they must display a highly sophisticated level of narrative structure and temporal awareness. In Frye’s “sentimental literature,” I identify potential metafictional qualities. I seize upon this concept of “sentimental literature” as a theoretical predecessor to my “nostalgic metafiction.” In line of this thinking, not all metafictional works have to be parodic or ironic. They can also be “sentimental” or “nostalgic.” By drawing a connection between metafiction and Frye’s “sentimental” literature, I propose a new concept of ‘nostalgic metafiction’ and use this concept to analyze the adventure fiction of Stevenson, Kipling, and Conrad. The proposal begs the question if it, then, follows that all sentimental, nostalgic literatures are necessarily metafictional. My short answer is yes: all nostalgic writings are conscious rewritings of the known forms, conventions, and poetics of the previous generations. The degree of the consciousness, awareness, experimentation, and

intentionality involving the rewriting would, of course, vary from one text to the next. The narratives of Stevenson, Kipling, and Conrad are noteworthy due to the complex interplay between the awareness of the present and the idealization of the past, and the tension between the troubling historical memories of the imperial past and the hankering after the idealized imperial adventure represented in the past adventure fiction – which are most evident in their engagements with the conventions, patterns, and practices of romance and adventure fiction. The rest of the thesis explores their nuanced experimentation with form and genre.

“Chapter 2: Nostalgic Landscape of Adventure” examines the geographies of adventure envisioned by the narratives of Robert Louis Stevenson and Rudyard Kipling. The central premise of my approach is that their fictional works demonstrate an acute historical awareness that the age of exploration for the European states was now over. The chapter examines the settings in Stevenson’s *Treasure Island* and Kipling’s *The Man Who Would Be King* as sites of contestation, or Michel Foucault’s ‘heterotopias’, between the authors’ nostalgia for adventure and their historical awareness of the unattainability of that desire; it also demonstrates how these heterotopias are used as metafictional tools through which the texts explore the tension between nostalgia for idealized adventures in literature and the trauma of the historical past of the previous generation of colonial adventurers.

“Chapter 3: Nostalgia for Adventure in *Nostramo*” analyzes the most consciously nostalgic novel to be discussed in the thesis, Conrad’s *Nostramo*. This chapter examines nostalgia in *Nostramo* as the novel’s mode of metafictionality and explores how nostalgia affects the manners in which the actions of the novel are recorded, the characters are developed, and the local sceneries are depicted. In the case of *Nostramo*, the main object of its nostalgia appears to be the ideals of adventure embodied by the adventure genre, pitted against the modern world of skepticism, relativism, individualism, and materialism. My argument is that the narrator of the novel has nostalgic and metafictional awareness, and this awareness leads the novel to critique the conventions of the previous adventure genre even as it displays an emotional pull towards the value system of the adventure genre.

“Chapter 4: The Utopian Vision of Nostalgia” seeks to uncover the utopian dimension of the nostalgic desire conveyed by the adventure novels of Kipling and Conrad. According to Helmut Illbruck, nostalgia in modernity represents the modern subject’s longing for a particular home, exacerbated by the homogenizing forces of globalization. Rewriting the adventure genre allows the authors to revel in their vision of a more idyllic cooperative community such as the ones formed between Gloucester fishermen in Kipling’s *Captains Courageous* (1897) and the townspeople of Sulaco in Conrad’s *Nostramo* (1904). What holds together this kind of organic integrated society in the novels is the hard work that the characters put in as part of their adventure; their work plays two-fold roles of self-actualization and community-building. Nostalgia for adventure, in this sense, suggests more than a private fantasy but a social vision. In uncovering the utopian dimension of the novels’ nostalgia, I appeal to Frye’s and Jameson’s socially oriented approaches to literary criticism – to read the narrative desire in their texts in communal terms as a drive for an ideal future society. The utopian push in Frye’s and Jameson’s own critical frameworks parallels the texts’ aspiration for a society of community-minded individuals emancipated through the means of meaningful adventure and work.

1.4 Conclusion

According to Peter Brooks, the work of plot is not finished with the act of writing but with reading. Plot is like “the syntax of meanings [in grammar] that are temporally unfolded and recovered, meanings that cannot otherwise be created or understood” (21). Hence, we as readers read for the plot in narrative “in a spirit of confidence, and also a state of dependence, that what remains to be read will restructure the provisional meanings of the already read” (23) as we search for the meaning of what we have read and are reading. Similarly, the work of nostalgia can only be completed by the feeling observer, or the reader. According to Linda Hutcheon, nostalgia is rather “an attribution of a quality of [response]” than a “description of the [entity itself].” Nostalgia is “not something you ‘perceive’ in an object,” but “it is what you ‘feel’ when two different temporal moments, past and present, come together for you and, often, carry considerable

emotional weight.” It is the “active participation, both intellectual and affective” of the observer “that makes for the power” of nostalgia (199). My essential understanding of the adventure fiction of Stevenson, Kipling, and Conrad is that the adventure in their narratives represents a nostalgic search for meaningful experience and even meaning itself. This introduction opened with my captivation by the power of the nostalgia found in their narratives. The rest of the thesis will narrate my own search for and exploration of the meaning of the nostalgia in these belated tales of adventure.

Chapter 2

2 Nostalgic Landscape of Adventure

This chapter examines the geographies of adventure envisioned by the works of Robert Louis Stevenson and Rudyard Kipling. The central premise of my approach is that their fictional works demonstrate an acute historical awareness that the age of exploration for the European states was now over. Their texts demonstrate this historical awareness by imaginatively engaging with maps and spaces as a literary motif. Made-up geographies of fictitious settings in *Treasure Island* and the highly idealized depiction of India in *Kim* and Kafiristan in “The Man Who Would Be King” draw attention to the fictional status of their stories. The maps and landscapes in their texts elude real-life geographical referents and nostalgically construct a highly literary landscape of adventure. However, this is not to say that the settings of these texts are purely phantasmagoric. Instead, they occupy an interstitial space between the real and the imagined by indulging the reader’s sense of space with a carefully designed impression of geographical verisimilitude.

In order to effectively theorize this tension between the settings’ two incompatible ontological modes, I borrow from Foucault’s concept of ‘heterotopia’. Heterotopias are special sites of cultural signification and imagination. These sites, owing to their layered cultural meanings, cannot be described in one unitary manner, and they function wonderfully as literary motifs for representing and problematizing cultural values and understandings. Literary descriptions of heterotopias trace both the sites’ real and mythical dimensions, and explore the limits of the known and the unknown, the knowable and the unknowable, the representable and the unrepresentable of a given culture at a particular historical juncture. In this chapter, I will examine the settings in Stevenson’s *Treasure Island* and Kipling’s “The Man Who Would Be King” as heterotopias, as sites of contestation between the authors’ nostalgia for adventure and their historical awareness of the unattainability of that desire; I will also demonstrate how these heterotopias are used as a metafictional tool through which the texts explore the tension between nostalgia for idealized adventures in literature and the traumatic historical past of the previous generation of colonial adventurers.

2.1 Adventure, Geography, and Imperialism

Postcolonial critics have long identified the intricate interplay between the expansionist mission of imperialism and the romantic vision of adventure at work in British adventure fiction. Edward Said theorizes the primacy of geopolitics in the larger British cultural imagination during the colonial period in his seminal work *Orientalism*. Said conceptualizes Orientalism as “a distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts.” These texts collectively demonstrate a political will or intention “to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different world” (12). Said’s later work *Culture and Imperialism* analyzes just how deeply Western culture has been influenced by these imperialist attitudes of Orientalism and brings to the fore “the geographical notation, the theoretical mapping and charting of territory that underlies Western fiction, historical writing, and philosophical discourse of the time.” According to Said, imperialist writings establish the following three positions of superiority: 1) the authority of the European observer, 2) cultural discourse of relegating and confining the non-European to a secondary racial, cultural, anthological status, 3) spatial prioritization of the metropolitan over the colonized peripheries (58).

Adventure fiction with its explicit geographical interests is an easy candidate for such a Saidian interpretation. Richard Philips takes a more deliberately cartographic approach to adventure fiction in *Mapping Men and Empire*. Philips identifies cartographic elements as a dominant feature in adventure fiction that challenges the boundary between the real and the fictional. Cartography is one of the many geographical discourses culture uses in understanding space; it specifically uses maps to visualize particular landscape. An interesting thing about the map is that it “exudes authority” (Smith 499, qtd. in Philips 14). It is impersonal, authorless and presented as objective scientific knowledge. As such, maps have powerful impact on cultural perceptions of space. The language of the map naturalizes what it portrays, and the map becomes a powerful tool in shaping the reader’s cultural imagination. Philips’ central argument is that adventure fiction markets itself as cartography. Therefore, the ways in which adventure fiction portrays the unknown space and the social relations therein which the European adventurers participate in shaping have a powerful bearing on how people at

home conceptualize the colonial space. Overall, adventure fiction produces an effect of naturalizing the whole institution of imperialism. In Philips' reading, *Robinson Crusoe*, the father-figure of the adventure genre, represents a map of "colonial geography, the British Empire in particular": "Crusoe's island and its native inhabitants are vehicles for the adventurer's personal growth, for his spiritual, moral and social reflections, but they also represent, map and imaginatively colonise real places and peoples, real colonial geographies." The main source of *Crusoe*'s ideological influence comes from its transformative potential. Crusoe's island may be set in the Caribbean, but it "came to be regarded a more generic, colonial space" (Hulme, qtd. in Philips 32). In the end, the novel, more generically, functioned as a "map of British imperial geography and a myth of British imperialism" (32).

2.2 The End of the Exotic

But what happens to the cultural imagination once this project of incorporating the unknown into the known comes to its completion? By the end of the nineteenth century, the British Empire's totalizing territorial expansion around the globe exhausted the Victorian culture's romantic vision of the unknown by violently transforming the once-exotic land of the Orient into the known parts of the European states. By then, there was no more need for exploration and discovery, and hence, no more possibility for having authentic adventures in an exotic setting. A striking visual illustration of this territorial expansion appears in Marlow's two world maps in *Heart of Darkness* – one made during his youth and the other during his adulthood. Marlow muses,

Now 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. At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look that) I would put my finger on it and say: When I grow up I will go there... Well, I haven't been there yet and shall not try now. The glamour's off. Other places were scattered about the Equator and in every sort of latitude all over the two hemispheres... But there was one yet – the biggest – the most blank, so to speak –

that I had a hankering after... True, by this time it was not a blank space any more. It had got filled since my boyhood with rivers and lakes and names. It had ceased to be a blank space of delightful mystery – a white patch for a boy to dream gloriously over. It had become a place of darkness. (Conrad 7-8)

Marlow conveys in this passage a sense of nostalgia for the times gone-by when he could dream of adventures and be genuinely excited about them. The map of Africa, in particular, in Marlow's adulthood does not have a blank space anymore; every corner is marked by "all the colors of a rainbow" (10). Each color indicating a different European nation in ownership – the predominant red being the color of the British Empire – the recent map of Africa Marlow sees in the office of the trading company is a visual testament to the Scramble for Africa, an occupation and annexation of the whole African continent by European nations at the end of the nineteenth century. It appears that Marlow's youth coincides with that of the Empire. As the Empire loses its rejuvenating spirit of adventure, Marlow too experiences the disillusionment of adulthood.

A peculiar pessimistic atmosphere characterizes adventure tales like *Heart of Darkness* which are published at the end of the nineteenth century. Patrick Brantlinger's *Rule of Darkness* collectively brings them under the subgenre he titles "Imperial Gothic." Imperial Gothic is an extensively anxious genre: it expresses "anxieties about the waning of religious orthodoxy, but even more clearly... anxieties about the ease with which civilization can revert to barbarism or savagery and thus about the weakening of Britain's imperial hegemony" (229). Travelogues of the time too shared a similar kind of cultural anxiety and pessimism. Brantlinger reports that "[n]umerous travel writers from about 1870 onward lament the decline of exploration into mere tourism... the old ideal of opening up the dark places of the world to civilization, commerce, and Christianity fades into the tourist trade" (238). Among these writers were Haggard and Conrad who elaborated on the loss of their own dreams for exotic adventure in personal essays. Haggard wrote, "Soon the ancient mystery of Africa will have vanished" and asked "will the romance writers of future generations find a safe and secret place, unknown to the pestilent accuracy of the geographer, in which to lay their plots?" (qtd. in Brantlinger 239). Conrad recalled the depressing experience of visiting the Boyoma Falls, Congo – then-Stanley Falls – in 1890: "A great melancholy descended on me... there was... no

great haunting memory...only the unholy recollection of a prosaic newspaper ‘stunt’ and the distasteful knowledge of the vilest scramble for loot that ever disfigured the history of human conscience and geographical exploration. What an end to the idealized realities of a boy’s daydreams! I wondered what I was doing there” (qtd. in Brantlinger 239).

According to Brantlinger, “[t]he fear that adventure may be a thing of the past in the real world led many writers to seek it in the unreal world of romance, dreams, imagination” (239), and hence, the marriage between the gothic and the imperial romance.

Brantlinger’s analysis of the Imperial Gothic is mainly concerned with the changes in the styles of writing in adventure fiction at the turn of the century. The expansionist enthusiasm of the previous generation was replaced by gothic interests in the unreal and the superstitious. Adventure fiction moved on from being a form of Eurocentric cartography to a more fantastically romantic genre. Chris Bongie’s *Exotic Memories* makes a similar argument that the end of exoticism fundamentally altered the ways in which adventure stories were written. Whereas Brantlinger’s keyword is ‘gothic’, Bongie’s is ‘Decadence’. Decadence is a fin-de-siècle artistic movement, typically understood as a pessimistic reaction against modernization. The totalizing territorial expansion of many European states at the turn of the century absorbed the land of the Other into the realm of the Same in the period called New Imperialism. Whatever geopolitical alternative – uncorrupted by modernity as of yet – that exoticism had offered to the previous generation was thoroughly exhausted as a result. The end of the exotic vision directly affected the literary portrayal of the imperial project. This explains Marlow’s melancholic attitudes towards the idea of the empire in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, but even the less obvious choice like Kipling’s *Kim* displays the influence of decadent sentiments. Bongie proposes that *Kim* may be a “willfully utopic response to an India that had, as far as [Kipling] was concerned, turned into something rather less than the scene of a possible heroism” (21). Although Kipling is aware of the “impossibility of that ‘authentic experience’” of the exotic, he “nonetheless continued to desire” it nostalgically (22). The adventure writing of the fin de siècle could now only be a nostalgic rewriting.

Bongie’s brief assessment of Kipling’s work points out a significant fact: that adventure writers continued to feature colonial spaces as sites for adventure even after the

near completion of Europe's massive expansionist project. Then how did the erosion of exoticism affect the configuration of colonial spaces in adventure fiction? Following Bongie's suggestion, in what ways is Kipling being nostalgic in his writing about India? How is Kipling's description of India in *Kim* utopic? If Kipling's nostalgia for genuine adventure spills over into the landscape of his tales, how is other authors' nostalgia manifested geographically in their works? Bongie's own work does not provide answers to these questions; instead, the rest of his work explores the traces of decadent sentiments found in the fin-de-siècle adventure writing from a philosophical and theoretical angle. The end of exoticism complicated the principle of spatial prioritization (as embodied by Edward Said's concept of Orientalism) that organized the geographical representations of colonial spaces found in the earlier Orientalist works. The territorial expansion of New Imperialism broke down the boundaries between the European subject and the colonial Other, the familiar space of the Self and the exotic space of the Other, the site of imagination and the site of colonization. At the turn of the century, colonial spaces carried layered cultural meanings in adventure fiction.

Several critics have examined explicitly spatial aspects of the adventure stories by the authors of my interest. William H. Hardesty and David D. Mann¹ argue that Stevenson's *Treasure Island* displays dream-like qualities despite the novel's realistic descriptions of the island. Edward Marx² criticizes New Critical readings of Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King" which treat Kipling's Kafiristan as a metaphorical imaginative setting for the two white men's failed imperial adventure. Marx advocates the need to productively engage with the historical context of Kafiristan as a real geographical location which Kipling intended it to be. When analyzing *Nostramo* (the main focus of my next chapter), Ian Watt³ notices "a certain floating quality" (19) to Conrad's description of Sulaco, a fictitious setting of his invention. The novel's detailed

¹ Hardesty, William H. and Mann, David D. "Historical Reality and Fictional Daydream in *Treasure Island*." *The Journal of Narrative Technique*, vol. 7, no. 2, 1977, pp. 94-103.

² Marx, Edward. "How We Lost Kafiristan." *Representations*, vol. 67, 1999, pp. 44-66.

³ Watt, Ian. *Conrad: Nostramo*. Cambridge UP, 1988.

description of Sulaco evades real-world geographical pointers, and the setting remains imaginatively distant from any specific South American state as the narrator is sufficiently “vague” when talking about the “crops and climate” of Sulaco and “avoids botanical details” (Watt 18, 23). One shared issue that the critical readings of colonial spaces in these stories raise is the tension between the realistic and imaginative aspects of the settings. Critics have noticed the existence of this tension, but it has not been effectively theorized before. Given my authors’ sophisticated historical awareness, their works cannot be dubbed as simply imperialistic using Said’s dialectical model of mapping – by which the Occident seeks to absorb the Orient. As an alternative, I propose to use Michel Foucault’s concept of ‘heterotopia’ in order to capture the layered meanings of spatial representations in my texts.

2.3 Heterotopia

Foucault’s heterotopia is an elusive spatial-temporal concept. Heterotopia is a term distinct from ‘utopia’ which is a place that does not exist. Foucault’s heterotopia is a special site of cultural relations that has “the curious property of being in relation with all other sites,” at all times; they exercise their property in such a way as “to suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect” (24). In his famous 1967 lecture “Les Espaces Autres,” Foucault gives examples of spaces like brothels, motels, mad houses, and prisons as heterotopias, all of which are sites with layered cultural significance, and carefully separated and distinguished from regular spaces of everyday life. Foucault’s lecture was published posthumously in 1984, and ever since then the concept of “Heterotopia” has been widely appropriated in multiple disciplines to examine significant cultural sites.

Paul Johnson’s article, “Geographies of Heterotopia” keeps track of diverse studies that have made use of the concept such as Allweil and Kallus’ “Public-space heterotopias: heterotopias of masculinity along the Tel Aviv shoreline,” Bryant-Bertail’s “Theatre as Heterotopia: Lessing’s Nathan the Wise” and Jacobs’ “Pornography in Small Places and Other Spaces.” Not all such studies of this kind make effective use of the concept, however. There is a danger of oversimplifying Foucault’s elusive concept when

a critic applies it to her analysis too literally. According to Johnson, the common error made by many critics is the attempt to stabilize heterotopia as a spatial site either too commonplace (any cultural site is potentially a heterotopia) or too radically different (to the danger of stabilizing and totalizing the whole society). But heterotopia is both common and different, ordinary and extraordinary. It is common in the sense that it is densely related to the everyday places instead of being radically separated from them, and this dense relationality makes it also different from other common spaces. When effectively used in spatial analysis, heterotopia “encourages sites to be used as a starting point for research as both a conceptual method and object; it helps disrupt established thought, practice and human subjectivities; it resists the settling of binary thinking; and it assists in formulating new relationships and alliances” (800). Johnson argues that heterotopia is “both a conceptual method and object” since he understands the concept in the context of Foucault’s large body of works. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* especially, Foucault suggests a new way of approaching history. Instead of understanding history temporally, he seeks to examine it from a spatial point of view. A spatial approach to history is an alternative way of analyzing history from seeing history as a battle of conflicting ideas in the Hegelian model. This approach describes and demonstrates like the discipline of archaeology, rather than “revealing and explaining” (Johnson 795).

Kevin Knight’s article “Placeless Places” also elaborates on Foucault’s spatial approach to history in his theorization of heterotopia and brings up the fact that Foucault himself mainly used the concept in his literary criticism. “Dialectical thinking” is fundamentally temporal as only a progression of time would allow for a reconciliation between contrary views. But Foucault is more interested in a site of “contestation” than a period of dialectic progression. In Knight’s words, contestation “involves the simultaneous presence of incompatible descriptions of space, to the point where no logical resolution is possible, and they negate each other, completely effacing the possibility of the space that is ostensibly described” (154). Examining Foucault’s original radio talk on “Les Hétérotopies” where Foucault gives a number of literary examples for his concept, instead of “Les Espaces Autres” whose primary audience was a group of architects, Knight argues that heterotopias refer to fictional representations of cultural

sites of symbolic significance, rather than the actual sites themselves. In its afterlife, heterotopia has become a “byword for a kind of postmodern spatial alterity” (145) but it was “never intended as a tool for the study of real urban space” but rather “fictional representations of those sites, and of their simultaneously mythic and real dimensions” (147). In his literary criticism, Foucault was largely invested in “those spaces that constitute the repositories of myth and fantasy for a given society at a particular historical moment” (147). Those sites can be “the convent, the forbidden castle, the forest, the inaccessible island and ‘the sect’” for the second half of the eighteenth century, or the encyclopedia, the garden and the library for the twentieth century.

Another one of Foucault’s cherished heterotopias is the ship, which he considers to be the heterotopia *par excellence*. In both his lecture and radio talk, the last example of heterotopia he discusses is the ship. The last paragraph of his lecture reads:

...and if we think, after all, that the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea and that, from port to port, from tack to tack, from brothel to brothel, it goes as far as the colonies in search of the most precious treasures they conceal in their gardens, you will understand why the boat has not only been for our civilization, from the sixteenth century until the present, the great instrument of economic development...but has been simultaneously the greatest reserve of the imagination. The ship is the heterotopia par excellence. In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates. (Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” 9)

In the radio version, a few more details are added:

With the colony, we have a heterotopia that is in some way naïve enough to want to turn an illusion into reality. With the brothel, by contrast, we have a heterotopia that is subtle or adept enough to want to dissipate reality by the power of illusion alone. And if we then consider that the ship – the great ship of the nineteenth century – is a piece of floating space, a placeless place, living on its own, closed in on itself, free in a sense, but fatally delivered to the infinite space of the sea, where it moves from port to port, from red-light district to red-

light district, from shore to shore, going as far as the colonies in search of the most precious offerings from those wondrous oriental gardens, then we can understand why the boat has been for our civilisation – since the sixteenth century at least - at once the greatest economic instrument and the greatest reservoir for our imagination. The ship is the heterotopia par excellence. Civilisations without boats are like children without their parents' double bed to play on – their dreams dry up; espionage takes the place of adventure, and the ugliness of the police supplants the sun-drenched beauty of the pirates.⁴

(Foucault, “Heterotopias” 22)

Following Knight's suggestion, it is helpful to understand heterotopia as a literary concept. Otherwise, the above passages on the modern ship make Foucault sound like he condones colonial violence. His celebratory description of the boat travelling into “the colonies in search of the most precious treasures they conceal in their gardens” could sound somewhat outrageous to the contemporary critic with postcolonial sensitivities, especially when Foucault identifies this ship as “the great ship of the nineteenth century” in the radio version.

But even without the help of Knight's insight, one can observe the internal evidence of Foucault's literary approach to the ship from this passage. Not only does he emphasize the function of the boat as a means of “economic development” but he also “simultaneously [sees it as] the greatest reserve of the imagination.” The last sentence of the above passage states, “In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates.” This sentence is rendered differently in the original radio version. The translation of this version is less poetic but more illustrative: “Civilisations without boats are like children without their parents' double bed to play on - their dreams dry up; espionage takes the place of adventure, and the ugliness of the police supplants the sun-drenched beauty of the pirates.” The invocation of childhood play and the appeal to careless adventures involving the pirates

⁴ This passage is taken from Pamela Johnston's translation of “Daniel Defert's recent republication of a radio talk for France-Culture, delivered by Foucault on 7 December 1966”: “See Daniel Defert, ‘Postface “Hétérotopie”: Tribulations d'un concept entre Venise, Berlin et Los Angeles’, in Michel Foucault, *Le corps utopique - Les Hétérotopies* (Paris: Nouvelles Éditions Lignes, 2009), pp 37-61” (Vidler 19).

in this sentence render Foucault's tone romantic and even nostalgic. The great ship of the nineteenth century is indeed a thing of the past, and one gets the sense that the children in the analogy have perhaps grown up. The present civilization seems to have already lost its boats, and pirates and adventure have been supplanted by police and espionage. But Foucault is not interested in police or pirates in a literal sense. The whimsical tone of the analogy makes it clear that the breed of "the pirates" Foucault mentions here is not those from the accurate historical past, but more like those who feature as charming characters in adventure stories for children. One can detect a faint hint of literary nostalgia from the conceptualization of Foucault's heterotopia *par excellence*.

2.4 Stevenson's Literary Nostalgia

This "sun-drenched beauty of the pirates," Robert Louis Stevenson brings back through his novel *Treasure Island*. According to Stevenson's promotional poem for *Treasure Island*, titled "To the Hesitating Purchaser," the beauty of his pirate characters is drawn from literature rather than history. In the words of Hardey and Mann, they are "the romantic, mythical pirates of tradition rather than...sweaty real ones" (98). In fact, the materials for the whole novel are drawn from literature. The poem markets the novel as a nostalgic recreation of the old romance: "If sailor tales to sailor tunes,/ Storm and adventure, heat and cold,/ If schooners, islands, and maroons/ And Buccaneers and buried Gold/ And all the old romance, retold,/ Exactly in the ancient way,/ Can please, as me they pleased of old,/ The wiser youngsters of to-day" (Stevenson xxx). Stevenson's poem makes a curious appeal to the novel's generic-ness. It guarantees the appearance of the same set of literary conventions commonly found in "the old romance," including buccaneers and buried gold. The reader can expect from the novel a tale of the "the old romance" "retold/ Exactly in the ancient way," designed to appease "His ancient appetites," which are older adventure writers like "Kingston," "Ballantyne," and "Cooper."

Stevenson's appeal to the generic-ness of the novel can also be understood as an intergenerational appeal. W. G. Kingston, R. M. Ballantyne, and James Fenimore Cooper are not exactly "ancient" writers. Both Kingston and Ballantyne passed away in 1880s

(*Treasure Island* was first published in 1882); Cooper was around until the 1850s. The sense of their premature antiqueness perhaps stems from the fact that Stevenson read their stories when he himself was a young boy. They pleased him “of old,” but would they please “the wiser youngsters of to-day”? Or would they find sailor tales like *Treasure Island* too “ancient” to consider reading? Another factor that contributes to this sense of ancientness associated with “the old romance” is that the material conditions that enabled the envisioning of the nautical events in older adventure stories were becoming more and more irrelevant to Stevenson’s contemporary society. Stevenson recalled his father working on his own romance stories which “dealt perpetually with ships, roadside inns, robbers, old sailors, and commercial travelers,” always set sometime in the past, “before the era of steam” (“My First Book” 8). It was not that avid romance readers like Stevenson and his father wanted to bring back the historical past where such things as pirates, robbers, old sailors were more common. What they really desired was the idealized and romanticized maritime past found in literature. If perchance the boy readers of the new age were to shun his book, Stevenson was ready to share the “grave” with his pirates and his literary predecessors: “And may I/ And all my pirates share the grave/ Where these and their creations lie!”

2.5 The Setting of *Treasure Island*

Stevenson’s literary nostalgia gives rise to the novel’s unique setting of England and the Caribbean sometime in the eighteenth-century that is both historical and mythical at the same time. In their article, “Historical Reality and Fictional Daydream in *Treasure Island*,” Hardesty and Mann argue that Stevenson achieves a fine balance between realism and romance in his depiction of Jim’s adventures both at home in England and away on *Treasure Island*. He achieves this balance by carefully crafting a sense of historical and geographical verisimilitude while refraining from giving away the precise dates and locations for the events of the novel.

What year does *Hispaniola* set sail? Which corner of the globe is *Treasure Island* sitting on? The novel does not offer answers. However, the approximate temporal coordination may be traced if motivated literary critics like Hardesty and Mann put their

minds to it and piece together all the historical allusions used in the novel. For instance, many of the everyday life details which Jim reports in the novel are “recognizable” eighteenth-century practices as in “Bones wears a cocked hat, the doctor lets blood, people travel from place to place by mail coach, the pirates carry a dark lantern and are mistaken for smugglers, the floor of the ‘Spyglass’ inn is even strewn with sand” (98). Hardesty and Mann identify the “total effect of these allusions to life about 1760” to “to provide...a verisimilitude almost unmatched in children’s fiction” (98). Why do Hardesty and Mann identify 1760s as the likely temporal setting of the novel? They find several clues from the novel, and I will mention two of them here. First, the names of the inns and their historical namesakes narrow down the likely time period of the novel’s setting. “Royal George” is an inn on the main road in Jim’s neighbourhood, “where Bones first stopped” and “from which Jim and Redruth left” for Bristol; the inn may have been named after a famous battle ship which launched for the Seven Years’ War in 1756. Royal George was “one of the largest vessels in the fleet, a 100-gun ship of the line” and must have attracted public attention. It so follows, then, that the events of the novel should take place at least after its launch in 1756.⁵ Another clue for the novel’s temporal setting comes from Long John Silver’s lie about when and where he lost his leg. He tells Trelawney that he has lost his leg “in the service of Admiral Hawke” “presumably in the campaign of 1744 or that of 1747.” Considering that his was a believable lie for Trelawney and that Silver is a middle-aged man in the time of the novel, “we may use the information...to deduce a date, say, fifteen years later – again around 1760” (97). What Hardesty and Mann’s meticulous gathering of historical allusions reveals is the extent to which Stevenson took care in establishing an accurate historical background and internal temporal consistency for the novel, which has been remarkably done without giving away any exact dates.

A similar principle works for Stevenson’s spatial coordination. The opening chapters of *Treasure Island* offer a detailed picture of Jim’s life on the west coast of

⁵ It is interesting to note that Jim’s family inn is called Admiral Benbow after a “much earlier naval hero, John Benbow (1653-1702)” (Hardesty and Mann 97). Thus, by naming the inn after its namesake found in the earlier naval history, Stevenson gives a sort of rustic and romantic feeling to Benbow, this little inn off the main road: “for we had no stabling at the old ‘Benbow’” (Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 6).

England. His family keeps a small inn on Black Hill Cove by the Bristol Channel. Although the precise location of Black Hill Cove is not given (this Cove is a fictional construct), Hardesty and Mann identify the location of the early events around “the north Devon coast,” probably Barnstaple. There is a mention of a town B- in Chapter 5 of the novel⁶, and another work by Stevenson, *Admiral Guinea*, mentions an inn called “Admiral Benbow” located in Barnstaple. Considering how Jim and Redruth take one entire night and the next day’s morning to arrive at Bristol on a mail coach from “Royal George,” Barnstaple sounds about right in terms of the distance between the two cities. Again, this gathering of details holds up to an internal consistency regarding the location of Admiral Benbow in England. Although its exact location is never given away, the overall effect of such sparse details about the location of Admiral Benbow is to give to the reader “a sense of an almost familiar place – a quiet eighteenth century inn” (95), exactly the kind of setting that Stevenson’s own father would fantasize about before sleeping. No wonder his father found “something kindred to his own imagination” in *Treasure Island*; “it was *his* kind of picturesque” (“My First Book” 8). Admiral Benbow is a literary type with which the Victorian reader would have been always already familiar.

The description of Treasure Island, the main setting for Jim’s adventures, is more eclectic than allusive. Stevenson himself described his scenery as “Californian in part, and in part chic” (qtd. in Hardesty and Mann 99) rather than an accurate representation of “a genuine pirate haunt” in the Caribbean. The “flora and fauna” of the island and even “the ceaseless booming of the surf” on the beaches of the island are taken from what Stevenson knows of the Californian beaches which he frequented (George R. Stewart qtd. in Hardesty and Mann 99). The rest of the island’s landscape is what the author calls “chic.” Hardesty and Mann consider these “chic” elements as those “derived from popular pirate lore” (99). In other words, like Admiral Benbow, Treasure Island too is a type.

⁶ “Mr. Dance stood there, as he said, ‘like a fish out of water,’ and all he could do was to dispatch a man to B—to warn the cutters” (Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 28).

Treasure Island is, particularly, a literary motif turned into a real place as the generic nature of the island's name attests. The map of the island is still full of other generic place names which seem to promise prospects of adventure and intrigue. When Long John Silver examines the map of Treasure Island in the novel, he supplies more details to its place names. "Skeleton Island" used to be "a main place for pirates...and a hand we had on board knowed all their names for it." There are three main hills on the island forming a vertical line on the map. From north to south, the hills are marked as "Fore-mast Hill," "Spy-glass Hill," and "Mizzen-mast Hill." Anyone examining the map before reading the novel might wonder at the reason why the hill in the middle is not named "Main-mast Hill" as to complete the formation of a three-masted schooner using the island's landscape. The middle hill has indeed been named "Main-mast Hill" at one point, confirms Long John. "Spy-glass" is its alternative name as it has been used as "a look-out they kept when they was in the anchorage cleaning" (62). Other noteworthy place names include "Skeleton Island," "Haulbowline Head" and "Cape of Ye Woods." Long John adds "Capt. Kidd's Anchorage" to the list to refer to one of the inlets on the island as it was "just the name [his] shipmate called" (Stevenson 63). These place names for the island's major landmarks are more than generic; they sound extremely literary and fictional, especially when compared to colonial place names like London or Kingston, the likes of which abound in the former British colonies around the world including those among the Caribbean islands. Whereas Robinson Crusoe's Caribbean island has been a wild island waiting to be domesticated, populated and colonized by Crusoe and his later Portuguese subjects, Treasure Island seems more like a fantasy adventure land, ready-made for a perfect treasure hunt.

Yet, Stevenson did not design Treasure Island with a pre-conceived narrative in mind. Rather, the creation of the map of the island came before the drafting of the story; it is the shape of the island that inspired the narrative of Jim's adventure. The idea for the map of Treasure Island came to Stevenson spontaneously and naturally. Stevenson says that the map was drawn "at random" ("My First Book" 10). Once it was drawn, the map was more than a "flat projection" (6) of space. Instead, there were certain literary qualities to the map that immediately caught Stevenson's creative imagination. The "shape" of the island "took [his] fancy beyond expression," and the island "contained

harbors that pleased [him] like *sonnets*” (my emphasis). The map of Treasure Island became a literary inspiration for him, and he “pored upon [his] map of “Treasure Island,” and “the future characters of the book began to appear there visibly among imaginary woods; and their brown faces and bright weapons peeped out upon me from unexpected quarters, as they passed to and fro, fighting, and hunting treasure, on these few square inches of a flat projection” (193). More than a source of inspiration, the map also became “the chief part of [the novel’s] plot” (197). Stevenson gives two examples of the map and the plot coming together. First, because he had an islet called “Skeleton Island,” he “broke into the gallery of Mr. Poe and stole Flint’s pointer” in order to “justify this name.” Also, “it was because” the island had “two harbors” that the *Hispaniola* “was sent on her wanderings with Israel Hands” (197).

Later in the essay, Stevenson adjusts his position that the map of Treasure Island made up the “most of the [novel’s] plot.” Considering it an understatement, he corrects himself by saying that “I might say [the map] was the whole” of the plot. This is an interesting claim to make since he lists a host of other sources like “[a] few reminiscences of Poe, Defoe, and Washington Irving, a copy of Johnson’s ‘Buccaneers,’ the name of the Dead Man’s Chest from Kingsley’s ‘At Last,’ some recollections of canoeing on the high seas, a cruise in a fifteen-ton schooner yacht” (197) that made up the materials for his novel besides the map. So why call the map the whole of the novel’s plot? The hint for the answer is found in Stevenson’s strong suggestion to fellow novelists regarding the setting of their stories:

But it is my contention – my superstition, if you like – that he who is faithful to his map [of the setting], and consults it, and draws from it his inspiration, daily and hourly, gains positive support...The tale has a root there; it grows in that soil; it has a spine of its own behind the words. Better if the country be real...But, even with imaginary places, he will do well in the beginning to provide a map. As he studies it, relations will appear that he had not thought upon. He will discover obvious though unsuspected shortcuts and footpaths for his messengers; and even when a map is not all the plot, as it was in “Treasure Island,” it will be found to be a mine of suggestion. (198)

According to Stevenson, when the novelist studies the map of his setting closely, he will discover “relations” which “he had not thought upon.” He, then, gives a quite pedestrian (pun intended) example of discovering new “shortcuts” and “footpaths” for finding a new set of relations through the study of the map. But the implication of this claim for *Treasure Island* may be understood more theoretically. Stevenson claims that the space of the map allows for the possibilities of new relations to arise. “Relations” here do not have to be spatial only; they may be literary, historical, cultural or conceptual. These relations inhabit the map in both realized and unrealized forms. The map of the setting acts as a central platform through which different modes of thought and realities can interact with for the possibility of developing new relations.

Treasure Island is a site particularly concentrated with literary relations. Not only is it an embodiment of a popular literary motif, the island is also a projection of the author’s literary fantasy. The novel as a final product bespeaks the island’s richness with literary relations. In the essay, Stevenson places a striking emphasis on the spontaneity and thoughtless ease with which he has written *Treasure Island*: “I have begun a number of other books, but I cannot remember to have sat down to one of them with more complacency” (194). To start off, the name of the island comes to Stevenson spontaneously: “with the unconsciousness of the predestined, I ticketed my performance ‘Treasure Island’” (193). The literary inspiration of the map soon gives shapes to characters and events of the treasure hunt as quoted earlier in this chapter, and “[t]he next thing I knew, I had some paper before me and was writing out a list of chapters. How often have I done so, and the thing gone no farther! But there seemed elements of success about this enterprise” (193). Interestingly, the inspiration that Stevenson receives is a genre-specific one: “[i]t was to be a story for boys; no need of psychology or fine writing” (193). The writing of the story would not cause Stevenson the pain of creation that usually attends creative endeavours. This was because *Treasure Island* was going to be a product of Stevenson’s literary nostalgia; the novel was going to be an archetypal boys’ adventure story emerging out of the past adventure stories Stevenson has read.

Stevenson calls his literary sources as “stolen waters” and readily admits the similarities between his work and his predecessors’: “No doubt the parrot once belonged to Robinson Crusoe. No doubt the skeleton is conveyed from Poe,” “The stockade, I am

told, is from ‘Masterman Ready’,” and the early chapters of the novel are much influenced by Washington Irving’s *Tales of a Traveller* (194). Stevenson, however, insists that his heavy indebtedness to his predecessors has been completely unintended and unpremeditated. In fact, at the time of the composition, he was completely unaware of these literary influences working on him: “But I had no guess of it then as I sat writing by the fireside, in what seemed the springtides of a somewhat pedestrian inspiration; nor yet day by day, after lunch, as I read aloud my morning’s work to the family. It seemed to me original as sin; it seemed to belong to me like my right eye” (194-5). It is curious to note the author’s initial attachment to the story’s perceived originality in the face of “To the Hesitating Purchaser” where he shamelessly appeals to the novel’s generic-ness. One way of understanding this enigmatic creative process is that the visual cue of Treasure Island provides for Stevenson an access to his literary unconscious. The geography of the island appropriates disparate elements and patterns from Stevenson’s past readings of adventure materials and allows the author to find new connections between these disparate elements without consciously delineating their original sources. In short, Treasure Island is the heterotopian site of relations.

As much as Treasure Island embodies the author’s literary nostalgia, it also betrays a languishing modern awareness. As much as the author desires it to be, Treasure Island is *not* a fantasy adventure land where one seeks adventure for adventure’s sake. The very presence of the tangible treasure in the island complicates such a naïve storyline. Those who visit the island pursue treasure, not adventure – perhaps the only exception being Jim, the boy hero of the story. Two camps of men land on the island: gentlemen born and gentlemen of fortune. The island soon becomes a bloody battleground between the two camps fighting over the possession of the treasure, and the level of violence they engage in disturbs both the author and reader’s nostalgic indulgence in the romance of the adventure. Foucault’s concept of heterotopia effectively captures these seemingly conflicting meanings of Treasure Island. The heterotopian site of Treasure Island is heavily layered with multiple modes of thought and meaning which are often antithetical to one another. This is because heterotopia, being a site of contestation, allows for a co-existence of contrasting modes of thought and meaning.

What we have with *Treasure Island* is the space where the romance form's literary past and the author's Victorian present co-exist.

The modern awareness in the narrative takes the form of a trauma that haunts the island. The trauma of *Treasure Island* is far too real for Jim Hawkins to remember his quest as a romantic adventure although he starts out on his journey as such. As said above, the only character in the novel who pursues adventure for adventure's sake is Jim Hawkins, the first-person narrator of *Treasure Island* who represents the novel's overall consciousness. Jim, much like author Stevenson, takes immense pleasure in the romantic charm of the map of the island. While he anxiously waits to embark on his journey, he tackles his boredom by scrupulously studying and fantasizing over the map:

I lived on at the Hall under the charge of old Redruth, the gamekeeper, almost a prisoner, but full of sea-dreams and the most charming anticipations of strange islands and adventures. I brooded by the hour together over the map, all the details of which I well remembered. Sitting by the fire in the housekeeper's room, I approached that island in my fancy, from every possible direction; I explored every acre of its surface; I climbed a thousand times to that tall hill they call the Spy-glass, and from the top enjoyed the most wonderful and changing prospects. Sometimes the isle was thick with savages, with whom we fought; sometimes full of dangerous animals that hunted us... (37)

Jim's expectations for adventure incited by the map are not just a little boy's vague wishes for excitement. In his "fancy," Jim becomes an authorial figure. His "sea-dreams" and "charming anticipations" turn into vivid geographical explorations and encounters with savages" and "dangerous animals." As it did for author Stevenson, the map represents for Jim an abstraction of the highly romanticized and literary kind of adventure with which he is familiar. It is hard to tell if Jim has read exotic travelogues or romantic adventure stories for boys with which his Victorian counterparts would have been familiar, but one clear source of Jim's "fancy" that can be identified from the novel is Billy Bones and his glamorous tales of the sea.

Billy Bones, from the beginning of the narrative, is introduced to the reader primarily as a story-teller. The first time Jim sees Billy Bones, he is "whistling to himself," "breaking out" in an "old sea-song": "Fifteen men on the dead man's chest—

Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!” His daily routines around the Admiral Benbow would include singing “his wicked, old wild sea-songs” and at times “[forcing] all the trembling company to listen to his stories or bear a chorus to his singing.” It is “[h]is stories” that “frightened people worst of all”; those were “[d]readful stories” “about hanging, and walking the plank, and storms at sea, and the Dry Tortugas, and wild deeds and places on the Spanish Main.” Bones speaks in an arresting narrative voice of his own, and it is “the language in which he told these stories” that “shocked [Jim’s] plain country people almost as much as the crimes that he described.” Jim suspects that Bones’ presence helped with his father’s business since he provided “a fine excitement in a quiet country life.” A group of younger people, attracted to his raw energy of the sea, called him a “true sea-dog” and a “real old salt.” In the imagination of the villagers, Bones epitomizes the type of the romantic pirate. Out of all hearers of his stories, Jim is the most intimate sharer of Bones’ terrors and fancies. Bones’ fear of the sea-cook appeals to Jim’s terror in the form of “abominable fancies” (5); Jim says himself, “I was, in a way, a sharer in his alarms” (4); the sight of Bones’ chest which Jim supposed to be the same “dead man’s chest” in Bones’ song gets “mingled in [his] nightmares with that of the one-legged seafaring man” (7).

Jim’s uncanny intimacy with Billy Bones can be understood as the novel’s awareness of its own generic connections. The character of Bones embodies an element of the novel’s metafictionality. David Sergeant reads Bones as “the romance’s carefree pasts somehow survived – damaged and ailing – into the more prosaically unforgiving present that is *Treasure Island*.” According to Sergeant, “[p]art of the plangency of Bones’s death comes from its invocation of whole regions of possible narrative – youth, that country love-song – that are more suited to Jim’s childhood than the narrative he actually finds himself in: it gives the novel, before it has properly begun, a distinctly post-lapsarian feel” (913). In the post-lapsarian world of *Treasure Island*, Jim’s dream for adventure is an unachievable fantasy. After narrating a list of things he has fantasized over the treasure map before his trip (quoted above), Jim’s retrospective voice intrudes and makes a sobering remark: “in all my fancies nothing occurred to me so strange and tragic as our actual adventures” (Stevenson, *Treasure Island* 60). Jim’s “actual adventures” “replaced” his fantasy with brutal encounters with “bloodshed, betrayal, and

the systematic elimination of condemned group” (Sergeant 915). The story thus fails at being what it aims to be – “a simple story for boys” (“My First Book” 6). In a way, the shattering of Jim’s boyhood innocence announces the end of the adventure genre. Jim’s loss of innocence signals the impossibility for late Victorian writers like Stevenson to write “a simple [adventure] story for boys” even when they aim to do so. When Jim inherits Bones’ romantic songs, he inherits Bones’ nostalgia as well. Through Bones, Jim develops a nostalgic longing for things that he desires to experience, but he has no means of re-living Bones’ romantic past in his modern world. The uncanny connections between the two characters suggest that Jim is more than a real boy in the novel; he seems to exemplify a critical generic consciousness transitioning from innocence into knowledge. In Sergeant’s words, Jim is “a sort of generic zone of consciousness, the romance thinking itself aloud” in the modern context of “late Victorian capitalism” (915).

Sergeant’s argument is that Jim’s trauma is incurred by the intrusion of the “ruthlessly purposive [Victorian] present” (908) into the romantic tale of adventure the novel desires but fails to be. In Sergeant’s reading, those characters like Captain Smollett and Doctor Livesey who are the regular perpetrators of systematic violence in the novel represent the unromantic reality of Victorian professionalism. Pirate characters who display childish and impulsive behaviours are associated with the romantic past of the adventure genre. Their destruction at the hands of the professionals is synonymous with the demise of adventure fiction as a genre in Stevenson’s modern world. Long John Silver, the only other thriving pirate character next to old Morgan, is morally dubious and has repulsively elastic loyalties. As his name suggests his link to capital, the mistrustful Silver comes to represent the suspicious flow of capital in the world of modern finances. It is the “deadly alliance between Victorian professionalism and high finance” that exert “the materialist forces at work in the novel” that not only cause Jim’s “personal trauma” but also “the damage wreaked upon the romance itself” (Sergeant 913).

But to understand Jim’s trauma only in literary terms is to overlook the historical reality of colonial and pirate violence which the novel may be underscoring. The moral remorse Jim senses at the sight of Flint’s treasure is doubly constructed with the traumas of both the present and the *past*:

That was Flint's treasure that we had come so far to seek, and that had cost already the lives of seventeen men from the *Hispaniola*. How many it had cost in the amassing, what blood and sorrow, what good ships scuttled on the deep, what brave men walking the plank blindfold, what shot of cannon, what shame and lies and cruelty, perhaps no man alive could tell. Yet there were still three upon that island – Silver, and old Morgan, and Ben Gunn – who had each taken his share in these crimes, as each had hoped in vain to share in the reward. (185)

In this passage, Jim speaks of violence in an alarmingly realistic manner. A sobering number of seventeen men died in the pursuit of Flint's treasure. Jim is able to count this number and even put faces on the men behind the statistic because he has been an active participant in the recent tragedy of the treasure hunt. He is obviously unable to count the number of people whose lives perished in "amassing" the treasure and imagines the potential extent of the violence committed in the process.

The contents of his imagination are not so different from Billy Bones' stories of "hanging, and walking the plank...and wild deeds and places on the Spanish Main" (5) which are mentioned in the beginning of the novel. When Jim tells the reader about his first impression of Bones' stories, there is a tone of incredulity in him: "[b]y his own account he must have lived his life among some of the wickedest men that God ever allowed upon the sea" (5). The villagers also seemed to suspend their disbelief as they "pretended to admire him, calling him a 'true sea-dog,' and a 'real old salt,' and such like names, and saying there was the sort of man that made England terrible at sea" (6). Why did they feel compelled to "[pretend]" to admire Bones? Either they were too incredulous to believe Bones' stories to be true, or they repressed their fear of the violence portrayed in his stories by this pretension. Or perhaps it was something of the both. By this point in the narrative, Jim loses his hold on his past incredulity and innocence. His narrative now registers the full force of the reality involving the violent incidents it describes. Even the romantic past of Billy Bones cannot be deemed imaginary or literary anymore; it is ruthlessly real in Jim's newly gained consciousness. The physical presence of Silver, old Morgan and Ben Gunn at the site reminds Jim of his own link to the violence committed in the past. As Jim shares in the material profits of Flint's treasure, he also shares in the trauma of Treasure Island.

Like Jim, Stevenson's Victorian readers, too, were not entirely exempt from sharing in the trauma and guilt of *Treasure Island*. Often, in the narrative, when the common English folks discuss the topic of piracy, the reputation of the pirates they recall evokes a sort of national pride in them. Those villagers who "pretended to admire" Billy Bones remark, "'there was the sort of man that made England terrible at sea'" (6). When inquired about Flint by Dr. Livesey, Squire Trelawney bursts into excitement and exclaims: "He was the bloodthirstiest buccaneer that sailed, Blackbeard was a child to Flint. The Spaniards were so prodigiously afraid of him, that, I tell you, sir, I was sometimes proud he was an Englishman." Trelawney then adds, "I've seen his top-sails with these eyes, off Trinidad, and the cowardly son of a rum-puncheon that I sailed with put back – put back, sir, into Port of Spain" (31). Why Trelawney would flinch at his then-captain's more than reasonable precaution against Flint as cowardice is highly questionable. Trelawney makes it sound as if he admires and identifies more with the pirate Flint than with this honest man who was responsibly commanding the ship he himself was on board, thereby securing his own safety.

But Trelawney's reference to the Spanish in the above comment places his absurd appreciation of Flint in a specific historical context. Back in the Elizabethan years, England used to adopt piracy as a "belated answer to Spain's imperial expansion." In this period, the private violence of the pirates and the public interests of the nation overlapped, and piracy was prolifically committed under the guise of privateering; the Queen granted "her not-so-tacit approval to privateering expeditions that ostensibly sought new channels for English trade but in fact consisted mainly of attacks on Spanish colonies in the New World" (Fuchs 45). By the end of the seventeenth century, however, "the differentiation between privateering and piracy became ever clearer...the English developed tighter and more effective laws against piracy in 1698. In addition, privateering was ever more tightly defined and regulated by the state, in terms of the development of institutions such as prize courts and during wartime, privateers were much more heavily integrated into naval strategy" (Mabee 149). The villagers' and Trelawney's attitude towards Bones and Flint betray a sentiment of admiration (though increasingly becoming outdated) towards pirates they have inherited from the past. Their admiration rightly points out the historical link between piracy and England's rise to an

imperial naval power. According to Fuchs, “[t]he English experience of piracy has usually been glorified as the proleptic wanderings of a future imperial power-piracy as the vanguard of the Empire” (45). The English initially nurtured its naval power by plundering the Spanish wealth in transportation which was itself the result of the violent exploitation of the New World. This chain of violence is now connected back to Stevenson’s Victorian readers perusing *Treasure Island* at the height of the British Empire’s overseas expansion.

Therefore, *Treasure Island* as a heterotopian site successfully embodies multiple realities and disparate modes of thought and meaning which are paradoxically both real and mythical, historical and literary. While *Treasure Island* as an ideal site of adventure is the product of the author’s literary nostalgia, Stevenson also uses the site to review the real historical issues of colonial greed and violence, though in fascinatingly subtle ways. In terms of its generic connections, the narrative announces the demise of adventure fiction as a genre in the late Victorian context through the protagonist Jim’s loss of innocence. Once Jim returns to England, what used to be his “sea-dreams” turn into nightmares. For Jim, *Treasure Island* has ceased to be a fantasy adventure land. Rather it is an “accursed island” which features in his nightmares: “the worst dreams that ever I have are when I hear the surf booming about its coasts, or start upright in bed, with the sharp voice of Captain Flint still ringing in my ears: ‘Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight!’” (190) Thus concludes the novel *Treasure Island* on this tragic note. The effects of trauma for Jim are ongoing even at the end of the novel, but his trauma remains largely inarticulate and only figures in his dreams. While Jim’s nightmares may be a subtle indicator for the Victorian culture’s anxieties surrounding the violence of New Imperialism, one must note that Jim’s adventures in *Treasure Island* take place in a sufficiently vague temporal period of sometime in the mid-eighteenth century. On the contrary, the strange adventures Kipling’s characters encounter in *Kafiristan* are set in a remarkably specific time frame within the nineteenth century. The Victorian trauma Kipling tries to capture in the narrative is all the more easily locatable due to this specificity, but not necessarily more articulate.

2.6 Nostalgia and Trauma in Kipling's "The Man Who Would be King"

The main setting of adventure in Kipling's "The Man who would be King" (1888) is Kafiristan. Situated in the north-east corner of Afghanistan, Kafiristan was the only nation on the whole face of the earth that had not been visited by a white traveler in the latter half of the nineteenth century. As such, it fascinated the Victorian cultural imagination. In the story, two good-for-nothing Anglo-Indian vagabonds-*cum-con-artists* decide that – "India isn't big enough for such as us" (252). Then they travel to Kafiristan in hopes of becoming kings. The two men's adventure becomes something of a tragicomedy and is narrated to the reader through a set of frame narratives almost as elaborate as that of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Daniel Dravot and Peachey Carnehan, the men who would be kings, are nostalgic adventurers trapped in the much-too-normalized India of the late-Victorian period. In Kafiristan, they aspire to be like Sir James Brooke (1803-68) who was "made ruler of Sarawak by the Sultan of Borneo as a reward for his military exploits" (299). They land on Kafiristan to recover the colonial glory of the previous generation like that of Sir James, but instead end up reliving the violent recent past of the Indian Mutiny of 1857. They pay a steep price for belatedly fantasizing about colonial adventure.

"The Man Who Would Be King" operates along two major narrative lines – that of the frame narrator and Carnehan's fragmented report back from Kafiristan – which are at great tension with each other. The frame narrator of the story is an unnamed journalist for an Anglo-Indian paper and is an exact opposite of our two adventurers. Completely unromantic, unimaginative, cynical and disinterested, he is the spirit of journalism incarnate and largely unaffected by the lust for adventure which plagues Dravot and Carnehan. He is the impartial spokesperson for the empire who is to show that all is well and under control in British India. However, the detached impartiality and reliability of his narrative authority is undermined and rendered unstable by the fantastic narrative of Dravot and Carnehan that the narrator mediates to the reader. The direct invocation of the Mutiny – a truly *traumatic* event in Anglo-Indian history in every sense of the word – in the narrative as the equivalent of what the two adventurers have faced in Kafiristan suggests that perhaps Kafiristan is more than a provisional setting for adventure – that it

may be a spatial alternative to the historical India onto which the Victorian culture's trauma of colonization is displaced. Perhaps all was and is *not* well with British India and its imperial consciousness. While the characters' nostalgia for adventure initially frames Kafiristan as an ideal setting for adventure, the historical awareness of the narrative rewrites the violent colonial past onto the two adventurers' Kafiristan narrative. Their misadventure exposes as a myth the ideal colonial adventure which supposedly leads to a harmonious living with one's colonial Other. Mapped onto the geography of Kafiristan are Dravot and Carnehan's own versions of the adventures of Sir James Brooke, the man who really became king, on one level and the violent conflict of the Mutiny on another. Kipling's Kafiristan is a heterotopian site which reveals a network of complex relations between the real and the imagined, the historical and the mythical, the nostalgia of the present and the trauma from the past, and the representable and the unrepresentable in the context of colonial adventure.

2.7 The Narrator's India

India in "The Man Who Would be King" is no fit setting for exciting adventure. India, under British rule, is much too normalized and regulated to allow for mediocre Anglo-Indians to be adventurous and rise to sudden fame and fortune. The rather unexciting stability of British India is represented by the dispassionate voice of the unnamed narrator, the journalist. Unlike Carnehan and his fantastic story-telling, the dispassionate narrator offers the voice of common sense and makes lucid commentaries on the unlikely events of the narrative. In fact, many of Kipling's early Indian short stories are populated by such authorial figures as our journalist whom Stephen Arata calls "Kipling's imperial narrators" (163). They are Anglo-Indian characters who have a privileged position of observing and commenting on the various life scenes of the colonial India; they are "always unnamed first-person narrators" who occupy "shadowy presences, hovering around the edges of stories until the important moment comes to step forward and make sense of what has occurred" (163-4). Arata suggests that there is a "readily apparent ideological backbone" to this narrative set-up. Like the British Raj's colonial control over India, "Kipling's imperial narrators impose aesthetic order on their material so that it may

be more readily consumed,” and thus, “India is transformed via narrative into useable information” (164). They belong to the ideal type of colonial agents who know the ins and outs of the lives of their native subjects and still maintain a safe “psychological distance” (164) from the local life so as not to risk losing their sensible English-ness.

Our unnamed narrator is not a colonial agent but a journalist with a special access to the Indian native life. He penetrates into the most obscure parts of the British India, almost out of reach of the control of the colonial government. He calls the Central India States to which he travels as a correspondent “the dark places of the earth, full of unimaginable cruelty, touching the Railway and the Telegraph on one side, and, on the other, the days of Harun-al-Rasid” (Kipling 248). The vastness of the spectrum of their obscurity is such that it ranges from the high technology of the modern civilization and the fantastic literary past of *The Arabian Nights*. Our narrator, however, is a versatile adventurer, no less resourceful perhaps even than Dravot or Carnehan. He spends a picturesque week in “the dark places” of India by doing business “with divers Kings” and “[passing] through many changes of life”: “Sometimes I wore dress-clothes and consorted with Princes and Politicals, drinking from crystal and eating from silver. Sometimes I lay out upon the ground and devoured what I could get, from a plate made of leaves, and drank the running water, and slept under the same rug as my servant. It was all in the day’s work” (248-9). After his “business” trip, he returns to his “office where there were no Kings and no incidents outside the daily manufacture of a newspaper.” He thereby becomes “respectable” again, meaning that he turns *English* again. As picturesque as it may seem, the narrator’s intimate encounter with and knowledge of the deep India cannot be the main subject of the narrative. The narrator senses that there would be no readership interested in hearing about his experience. The colonial India no longer inspires dreams of adventure for the Empire. This is mainly because India has already become a part of the British Empire. In the cynical words of the narrator, “nobody cares a straw for the internal administration of Native States so long as oppression and crime are kept within decent limits, and the ruler is not drugged, drunk, or diseased from one end of the year to the other” (247).

Without genuine adventure, there is no possibility for genuine self-fulfillment. In the narrator’s British India, every subject of the Crown is put into his or her right place;

there is little room for the radical re-making of the self. Even vagrant rogues like Dravot and Carnehan have become normalized and incorporated into the larger imperial machinery. The narrator's first encounter with Dravot takes place in a railway train, which he likens to a miniature British India. On that particular day, due to "a Deficit in the Budget," the narrator travels "not Second-class which is only half as dear as First-class, but by Intermediate, which is Eurasian, or Native, which for a long night journey is nasty, or Loafer, which is amusing though intoxicated" (244). The Intermediate car, as the name "Intermediate" suggests, is a kind of cross-cultural space belonging to either the Natives of India or those English men and women who expose themselves to extended contacts with their racial Other. But this site of cultural hybridization is safely contained within the space of the train. These English people who deviate from their official English properness can be put into clear existing categories. Whatever degrees of transgression from regular Englishness they may embody, it can be snugly articulated using Anglo-Indian vocabulary.

For instance, when the narrator first sees Dravot on the train, he identifies Dravot as a *loafer*. According to Louis Cornell who edited the Oxford edition of the story, 'Loafer' is a specifically an "Anglo-Indian" term of "Kipling's time." The term does have its original meaning of "an idler or lounge," but it should be understood as an "Anglo-Indian slang" word for "any European at large in India with no official attachments or visible means of support, a vagabond" (298). Dravot indeed was "a wanderer and a vagabond" and "told tales of things he had seen and done, of out-of-the-way corners of the Empire into which he had penetrated, and of adventures in which he risked his life for a few days' food" (244). With him, the narrator discusses "the politics of Loaferdom" (245). The narrator soon learns that Dravot represents a particular type of loafer who "[personates] correspondents of [English] newspapers and [bleed] small Native States with threats of" exposing their peculiar ways of governing. The narrator has heard of such people but "never met any of the caste before." Such people "lead a hard life, and generally die with great suddenness" (247). The choice of the word "caste" to describe people like Dravot is a fascinating one. Invoking this Hindu system of strict social stratification, the narrator's use of "the caste" validates the authority of the imperial machinery which subsumes Hindus and loafers alike under its system. Earlier we have

seen the narrator's cynical comments that "nobody cares a straw for the internal administration of Native States so long as oppression and crime are kept within decent limits" (247). The Otherness of the deep India does not interest the English any more as long as it can be contained under the control of the colonial government. Loafers too are normalized and stabilized as a separate caste of their own in British India.

Dravot and Carnehan eventually run out of the "out-of-the-way corners of the Empire" into which to penetrate for adventure and fortune. This actually is the work of the narrator who functioned as a kind of colonial police and reported them "to people who would be interested in deporting them" (248). One night, both Dravot and Carnehan show up at the narrator's newspaper office. The narrator recognizes them for Carnehan's "eyebrows" and Dravot's "beard" (251). The two loafers "have decided that India isn't big enough for such as us" and have come to the narrator for information about a new country to which they plan to travel for adventure. It is not that India is not exotic enough for their loafers. It is due to the British colonial government's unimaginative governance over India, one's possibilities of adventure within India have been terribly restrained:

The county isn't half worked out because they that governs it won't let you touch it. They spend all their blessed time in governing it, and you can't lift a space, nor chip a rock, nor look for oil, nor anything like that, without all the Government saying, "Leave it alone, and let us govern." Therefore, such *as* it is, we will let it alone, and go away to some other place where a man isn't crowded and can come to his own. (252)

"Therefore, we are going away to be Kings," Carnehan triumphantly asserts. The two men's aspired kingship seems to be quite a promotion from the list of things they have been: "[s]olider, sailor, compositor, photographer, proof-reader, street-preacher, *and* correspondent of the *Backwoodsman* when we thought the paper wanted one" (251), and "boiler-fitters, engine-drivers, petty contractors, and all that" (252). Despite the long list of what they have been professionally, the best term describing them in India is still a loafer. Leaving India and escaping from the control of the colonial government may really be the only way for them to live their romantic dreams of adventure. Thus, Carnehan tells Dravot, "Now you know the sort of men that loafers are – we *are* loafers,

Dan, until we get out of India” (254). In India, Carnehan and Dravot are resourceful but poor, and their search for Kafiristan is, no doubt, motivated by their greed for quick material gains. But the sense of contempt they show for their own identity as loafers betrays a desire for something else besides material gains: a desire for genuine self-fulfillment and for a land of opportunities where they can radically refashion who they are.

The two men’s desperate need for a spatial alternative is reflective of what Bongie recognizes to be the function of exoticism (as visited earlier in this chapter). According to Bongie, the vision of the exotic provides the modern subject with geopolitical alternatives, unaffected by modernity, except that the massive territorial expansion of New Imperialism has almost exhausted that vision of spatial alterity. Incorporating the analysis of modernity by the Italian writer and film director Pier Paolo Pasolini, Bongie says, “‘We’ are all here, part of a homogenized world community organized according to the dictates of (post-)industrial, transnational power; ‘ours’ is a world without horizons, essentially lacking in mystery, out of which nothing new can arise. With the disappearance of an ‘else-where’ and of those who might formerly have inhabited this alternative space, something essential has been lost” (3). That “something essential” is “the possibility of self-realization” only attainable in a “realm of experience beyond the confines of modernity” (10).

Dravot and Carnehan’s India represents the “world without horizons” (3) where the possibility for authentic experience and self-realization has been lost. This is not to say that India has ceased to be the Other to the European Self, but that it has been incorporated into the imperial power structure of the modern world. Kaori Nagai’s article “God and his doubles” locates in Kipling’s story a trope of ‘the man who would be king’, which gets replicated in other adventure stories like Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim* as well. One significant pattern of this trope involves the setting, which is usually located “somewhere outside the imperial rule, some primitive community isolated from the modern world, left alone from the master-slave relationship which colonialism has imposed on other parts of the non-European world” (Nagai 90). In British India, any white man seeking to make a name for himself would also need to subject himself to the pre-existing power structure of British imperialism. The hero of the trope, however,

happens to be “the first white man to arrive in this community” and “finds himself looked up to as a protector, a champion, and sometimes as a god” whose orders the natives follow “as the Law” (90). Thus, the hero would become an originator and sustainer of a brand-new power system, thereby achieving genuine individuality outside the modern world through his newly found power. Both Kipling and Conrad do not let their heroes fully live out the fantasy of this trope in the end, but Dravot and Carnehan, at the start of their journey, firmly believe that exploring a geopolitical alternative would enable the elevation of their status from mere loafers to autonomous kings.

They find such an enabling space of geopolitical alternative in the land of Kafiristan which, Dravot says, is located in “the top right-hand corner of Afghanistan” (Kipling 252). When the narrator hears of their plan, he tries to scare them away by saying, “no Englishman has been through it” (253). But precisely for that reason Dravot and Carnehan have chosen Kafiristan for their grand adventure. When the two men demand to be shown any maps and books on Kafiristan the narrator possesses, Dravot especially asks for “as big a map as [he has] got even if it’s all *blank* [my emphasis] where Kafiristan is” (253). Dravot’s seemingly absurd desire to see a blank map of his future destination makes sense when paired with Marlow’s experience with world maps from *Heart of Darkness*. Whereas the blank spaces on the world map in his younger days have inspired Marlow with dreams of adventure, the colour-coded world map of New Imperialism in his adulthood crushes the idealism and optimism of his youth. In Kipling’s story, Kafiristan is the only remnant of these blank spaces from the earlier generation which allows the two adventurers to dream on.

2.8 The Historical Kafiristan

Despite its semi-mythical status, Kafiristan was indeed a real place on the world map. Edward Marx’ article “How We Lost Kafiristan” reveals a remarkably rich historicity surrounding the country of Kafiristan. The name Kafiristan is from an Islamic term ‘Kafir’, meaning ‘infidel’. Given by its Muslim neighbours and not the name the locals themselves called their land by, the name ‘Kafiristan’ excited the European imagination as it suggested that this land remained untouched even by the Islamic Empire. Around

1880, Kafiristan had indeed been deemed as the only corner of the globe no European visitor had set foot on. In 1883, the president of the Royal Geographical Society quoted in his speech Sir Henry Yule who once said, “when Kafiristan was visited and explored, the Royal Geographical Society might close the doors, because there would be no more new work to be done” (qtd. in J. E. Howard’s *Memoir of William Watts* 1890, qtd. in Marx 53). Kafiristan was an emblem of geographical alterity in the Victorian cultural imagination.

In fact, all four documents on Kafiristan – Captain John Wood’s *A Personal Narrative of a Journey to the Source of the River Oxus by the Route of the Indus, Kabul, and Bdakhshan* (1841), Captain H.G. Raverty’s “Notes on Kafiristan” (1859) and Major Henry W. Bellow’s speech at the United Services’ Institute (1879) and Sir Henry Yule’s article from *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1882) – which the narrator hands over to Dravot and Carnehan offer only vague descriptions of the land “based largely on secondhand native travelers’ [and historians’] accounts” (Marx 49) or British soldiers’ brief contacts with the Kafirs outside of Kafiristan (50). And they all confirmed the fact that no white man, let alone an English man, had visited Kafiristan for themselves. While these were indeed historical documents to which Kipling would likely have had access in real life, they offered sufficiently vague information about Kafiristan and inspired Dravot and Carnehan’s imagination. The two men are said to have “pored over Raverty, Wood, the maps, and the *Encyclopaedia*” while the narrator “smoked” (254). With the advancement of the night, the narrator goes home and leaves them “still poring over the maps” (255), much like Jim Hawkins and author Stevenson who “pored over” their map of Treasure Island (Stevenson, “My First Book” 6).

In other words, Kafiristan of “The Man Who Would be King” is the perfect candidate for heterotopian representation, as a significant site in cultural memory and imagination which maintains an enigmatic tension between the real and the imagined, and the historical and the mystical. It can also be argued that Kipling consciously intended Kafiristan to be a sort of heterotopia when we consider his conspicuous omission of one critical contemporary document on Kafiristan, William McNair’s personal travelogue. In 1883, McNair, “a surveyor in the Indian Survey Department” “disregarding government regulations prohibiting entry into Afghanistan” “[travelled]

into Kafiristan disguised as a *hakim* or doctor” (Marx 53) and became the first Englishman to set his foot on Kafiristan. The speech of the president of the Royal Geographical Society quoted earlier was actually delivered as a preface to McNair’s presentation on his visit to Kafiristan.

Marx offers some convincing evidence that strongly suggests that Kipling would have been familiar with McNair’s journey. According to Marx, “[t]he conditions of McNair’s journey...exhibit some striking similarities to those of Kipling’s story” (54). Dravot dresses as priest and is “accompanied by Carnehan disguised as servant”; McNair travels as a hakim and is “accompanied by ‘a native explorer...’” “disguised as a servant” (54). Other details in the story like the way Dravot shaves his hair in patterns and how the locals practice their religion can be found in McNair’s account as well. In particular, McNair’s account of the Kafirs’ military weapons match with Kipling’s own depiction, “down to the matchlocks” (55). The only inconsistent detail concerns the census of the people. Whereas McNair estimated that the Kafirs had 18 chiefs and 200,000 people for the entire population, Dravot has “‘forty Chiefs’ at his heel” and roughly “two million people” for the population of Kafiristan, which may be a mark of “Dravot’s tendency toward exaggeration” (55). More circumstantial evidence that supports Marx’s speculation is McNair’s obituary published in the *Pioneer* in 1889. Just a few months after Kipling leaves the *Pioneer* where he served as a co-editor, the paper publishes an obituary of McNair which notes that “his journey to Kafiristan ‘need not be told here’ as ‘it will be found in the chronicles of the Royal Geographical Society’” (54). Given the editor’s past familiarity with McNair, it is not a big stretch to assume Kipling himself would also have been familiar with McNair’s personal travels during his stay at the *Pioneer* and the time of the story’s composition.

Kipling’s Kafiristan is born out of the late-Victorian nostalgia for the ideal colonial adventure which was thought to have been available in the past but was impossible to be had by adventurers living in the age of New Imperialism. Kipling betrays this historical awareness by making explicit references to real-life documents on Kafiristan and conspicuously leaving out McNair’s account. Kipling either intentionally predates his story before McNair’s 1883 journey, or imaginatively obliterates this historical detail for the world of his story. In “The Man Who Would Be King,” Dravot

and Carnehan's nostalgic visit to Kafiristan is undercut by their traumatic encounter with the colonial Other. The setting of Kafiristan functions as a useful heterotopian site through which to explore the tension between Victorian culture's nostalgia for adventure and its memory of the past colonial violence. In the story, Kafiristan is represented in both imaginative and real ways as the two distinct strands of historical narratives intertwine in the characters' experience in Kafiristan: the adventure of Sir James Brooke and the conflict of the Indian Mutiny of 1857.

2.9 Sir James Brooke

Dravot and Carnehan have a clear role model in history in their search for authentic adventure and self-realization: Sir James Brooke. Dravot declares to the narrator that they "have decided that there is only one place now in the world that two strong men can Sar-a-whack" (252), meaning that they intend on reliving the colonial exploit of Sir James, the Rajah of Sarawak, in conquering Kafiristan. Like Dravot and Carnehan, Brooke was an ex-soldier of the British army in India which then belonged to the East India Company. According to Kaori Nagai, Brooke sailed for Borneo in 1838 initially as "adventurer and merchant" but had a serious interest in a philological inquiry. His inquiry was "along the lines of comparative philology," which sought to discover possible ancient connections between seemingly unrelated cultures by comparing the names of gods in their respective religions. Brooke's journals record the interviews he had with the natives where he asked them about the names of their gods. Brooke was especially interested in discovering if they had "a concept of a supreme God," but his questions were often met with "the unease of his native informants...who...had difficulty understanding what Brooke wanted when he insistently asked who and what their god was" (89).

Four years later, Brooke became the Rajah of Sarawak and gained the title of "Tuan Besar (great man)" for his military feats. With his reputation among the natives, he became something of a god himself. He wrote to his mother about "the terror" his name inspired among the natives and showed an awareness of the "symbolic power gathering around his name and person." Nagai observes that "[i]t was as if Brooke's journey, which

had originally started as a search for the supreme signifier in Borneo, led him to occupy the very space belonging to the divine ruler for whose name he was so passionately seeking” (88). Brooke’s life story embodied “a dreamlike moment of encounter between European subjects and the Orient” and “captivated the Victorian imagination as a rare embodiment of [the] colonial fantasy” (90). His life story was a rags-to-riches “colonial fairy tale” (90), that is the trope of ‘the man who would be king’, where a British adventurer of a mediocre standing back home makes a name for himself in the unexplored corner of the world and rises to power as a benign white ruler.

Fully knowing that India has become a colonial reality where “they that governs it won’t let you touch it” (Kipling 252), Dravot and Carnehan nostalgically dream of Brooke’s colonial fantasy and wish to turn it into a personal reality in Kafiristan. In the heterotopian space of Kafiristan, the two men do indeed live out their own version of Brooke’s narrative. Following Brooke’s example, Dravot and Carnehan seek to gain control over the Kafirs with their superior weapons and drilling skills. After Brooke’s example, they also plan to become not just kings but *gods*. “They have two-and thirty heathen idols there, and we’ll be the thirty-third and fourth” (252), declares Dravot to the narrator. In Kafiristan, Dravot initially grabs the natives’ attention by suppressing tribal conflicts and promoting himself as a strong military leader. Dravot then finds a religious site with “half-a-dozen big stone idols” and locates the biggest idol there, dedicated to their supreme deity, Imbra. With the stone of Imbra, he puts on an outlandish performance of “rubbing his nose respectful with his own nose, patting him on the head, and saluting in front of it”; in front of Imbra, he demands food to be brought to him and would eat only when “one of the old priests and the boss of the village brings him food” (261-2). All these tricks have been designed to secure for themselves a position combining something of both royalty and divinity among the Kafirs. Dravot’s divine status is eventually achieved with the accidental discovery of the similarities between the Kafirs’ local religion and the Craft of Free Masonry, of which Dravot and Carnehan are members. While James Brooke sought similarities between disparate religions to discover possible ancient connections between different cultural groups, Dravot and Carnehan accidentally stumble upon the mysterious resemblance between the worship of Imbra and the Craft.

The resemblance, of course, is Kipling's pure invention, a projection of his fantasy over some fictitious common heritage shared between the Kafirs and the English from the ancient times. Because of the Kafirs' white skin, a myth had been developed that they were the descendants of Alexander (267), and one of the sources Dravot and Carnehan consult even suggests that "they" were somehow "related to us English" (254). Once Dravot discovers that the Kafirs practice a lower form of the Craft, he is determined to make use of it to consolidate his political power. He tells Peachey, "we don't want to fight no more. The Craft's the trick, so help me!" Dravot resolves to hold a "Lodge in the Third Degree" and "raise the head priests and the Chiefs of the villages" (265). "It is a master-stroke o' policy... It means running the country as easy as a four-wheeled bogie on a down grade" (265-6), he persuades Carnehan, who is reluctant to forge the Craft of the Third Degree. Dravot is to rule as king, god and the Grand-Master of the Craft over the Kafirs by reorganizing the Kafirs' political and religious structure according to the order of Freemasonry. On the day Dravot opens the Lodge, one of the priests notices the mark on Dravot's apron, which he has designed for himself, to be the same mark carved onto the bottom of the stone of Imbra. It is "the missing Mark that no one could understand the why of" (267), and Dravot's knowledge of the mark is the clincher that reassured the natives of his divinity. "Luck again" (267), says Dravot, and through this luck he becomes a Brooke-like king.

In Kafiristan, Dravot is able to pull himself out of the tight grip of the imperial machinery of British India which has not only restrained his mobility but also denied him of any possibility for attaining true autonomy. He achieves a near completion of self-realization when he declares himself "Grand-Master of all Freemasonry in Kafiristan" and "King of Kafiristan equally with Peachey!" with the authority that originates from himself: "By virtue of the authority vested in me by my own right hand and the help of Peachey" (267). As the God of Israel declares his tautological authority with 'I am that I am', Dravot achieves self-autonomy by likening himself to a divine figure, which is what the Kafirs literally take him to be. However, the power to control the sign of the "Master" does not lie with Dravot, quite contrary to what he thinks. Marx analyzes that when the stone the priest overturns reveals "the sign of the Master' identical to the one Dravot has made for himself, thus securing his transcendent status," Dravot simultaneously loses or

“[forfeits]” “his control over the sign that gives him mastery.” The same sign that “marks his divine status” also “removes him from the social and sexual order to which he later wishes to gain entry through marriage” (Marx 63). Dravot’s downfall is precipitated by his desire to marry a local woman and sire a new race of children. The Kafirs object to the idea of Dravot’s marriage because they take him to be a god. When the wedding eventually takes place, the frightened bride bites Dravot’s arm and makes it bleed. The sight of Dravot’s blood betrays his mortality for the local population who immediately rebels against his rule.

In my analysis, the main cause of Dravot’s downfall is not the loss of his control over the sign of the Master. The truth is that he has never had that control, and the tragedy is that he has come to really believe and behave as if he did. Dravot initially plans to become both king and god because he knew that it was one sure way for the two of them to become “Kings in our own right” (252). Upon the discovery of the resemblance between the Kafirs’ religion and their Craft, Dravot declares: “A God and a Grand-Master of the Craft am I, and a Lodge in the Third Degree I will open” (265). Peachey is reluctant to go along with Dravot’s plan because “It’s against all the law...holding a Lodge without warrant from anyone; and you know we never held office in any Lodge” (265). Despite Peachey’s objection, Dravot sees the use of Freemasonry as a practical necessity: “We can’t stop to inquire now, or they’ll turn against us” (266). Up until this point, Dravot understands that he is making use of the Kafirs’ religion and Freemasonry for his benefit in a somewhat unlawful and risky way. However, somewhere along the way, Dravot deludes himself into believing that he really has “the authority vested in [him] by [his] own right hand” (267) to reign as King of Kafiristan. At the height of his success, Dravot appeals to the memory of Brooke again: “Two hundred and fifty thousand men, ready to cut in on Russia’s right flank when she tries for India! [...] we shall be Emperors – Emperors of the Earth! Rajah Brooke will be suckling to us” (Kipling 269).

Dravot’s later plan to take a wife and queen among the natives upsets the Kafirs because they take Dravot to be literally a god. When Dravot learns of his Council’s reluctance to marry him to a local girl, he is incensed and asks a series of rhetorical questions that reveal the extent of his megalomania: “What’s wrong with me? [...] Am I

a dog or am I not enough of a man for your wenches? Haven't I put the shadow of my hand over this country? Who stopped the last Afghan raid? [...]Who bought your guns? Who repaired the bridges?" And the most revealing of them all is "Who's the Grand-Master of the Sign cut in the stone?" (271). Significantly enough, he asks these questions, "standing by the idol of Imbra" (271). In his delusion, Dravot forgets that he is *not* the legitimate Grand-Master of the Craft; he has *no* control over the Sign of the Master, which happens to be there as pure "[l]uck" (267); he did not become King of Kafiristan with his own authority; he is certainly *not* Imbra or any other minor god of the Kafirs for that matter. He might have escaped the old master-slave relationship of British Imperialism by coming to Kafiristan, but even in this new colonial order which he has created, Dravot still depends upon his subjects' compliance to sustain his authority over them. His reign and authority are not self-sustaining, nor self-originating. Any form of autonomy and self-realization Dravot thinks he has achieved as king is revealed to be an illusion when the insurgence breaks out.

2.10 The Indian "Mutiny" of 1857

With the insurgence, the fantasy of 'the man who would be king' Dravot and Carnehan have been living out quickly turns into a historical *déjà vu* of the "Mutiny" of 1857. Three times at the critical moments in the outbreak of the violence, the characters conspicuously use the word "mutiny." Billy Fish, Dravot and Carnehan's native friend, calls out, "Ruin and Mutiny's the matter" (274). Dravot blames Carnehan for not "looking after [his] Army better" when "[t]here was mutiny in the midst" (275). It is eventually Peachey Carnehan who makes an explicit connection between their misadventure and the Mutiny of 1857 as he says, "there's no accounting for natives. This business is our 'Fifty-Seven'" (275). Carnehan understands what they have come to experience in Kafiristan is their own version of the 1857 Mutiny.

According to Edward Said, to Kipling's readers, the Mutiny represented "the single most important, well-known and violent episode of the nineteenth-century Anglo-

Indian relationship” (“Introduction” 24).⁷ On May 10, 1857, the Hindu and Muslim soldiers of the British imperial army started rebelling against their British officers in Meerut, and the rebellion “spread immediately” and led to “the capture of Delhi by the mutineers” (24). Many British officers and their wives and children were killed at the outbreak of the violence, and the Mutiny was soon suppressed by the British with the use of even greater forces of violence. Whatever illusions the British and even some Indians might have entertained about *Pax Britannia* before 1857 were completely shattered through the rapid spread of the violence broken out during the Mutiny. For the Indians, the Mutiny marked the birth of the nationalist consciousness and “nationalist uprising against the British rule”; for the British, it demonstrated a desperate need for establishing a more proficient colonial government in British India. In Said’s words, “[t]he Mutiny, in short, reinforced the difference between colonizer and colonized.” (25).

For a writer best known for his authoritative representation of India, Kipling is surprisingly silent on the issue of 1857 in his body of fiction. At one time, Kipling was personally requested by his editor Robert Johnson to try a novel on the Mutiny. Kipling respectfully declined the request as the work would be “an exceeding big job and one altogether beyond [his] scope.” Another reason Kipling gives for his decline calls for a little more unpacking. Kipling continues in his letter to Johnson:

Besides '57 is the year we don't talk about and I know *I* can't. Again you overlook the little fact that it is much more difficult to catch the spirit, the hundred little shades, of society 40 years ago than of society of the middle ages or of the Neolithic age for that matter. (*The Letters* 219)

Who are “we” in Kipling’s letter who do not talk about the Mutiny as a principle? And why is it that Kipling “can’t” talk about the Mutiny? Kipling’s “we” is the Anglo-Indian community who had lived through the violence of 1857. Their proximity to the event of the Mutiny distinguishes them from their counterparts in Victorian England for whom the Mutiny was a digestible (though terrible) historical event, not unutterable horrors of the immediate past. Kipling’s seemingly irrational suggestion that it is more difficult to

⁷ Said, Edward. “Introduction.” *Kim*, edited by Edward Said, Penguin Books, 2000, pp.7-46.

depict a “society 40 years ago than of society of the middle ages or of the Neolithic age” may also be pointing to the fact that the Mutiny was too immediate a trauma for his Anglo-Indian community for him to articulate.

Occasionally though, Kipling’s fiction does make references to the Mutiny. Edward Said’s and Kaori Nagai’s works on Kipling point out that his brief fictional treatments of the Mutiny represent his efforts to consciously forget about the deadly animosity between the colonizer and the colonized for which the Mutiny had given a vent. For instance, in *Kim*, Kipling chooses an old loyalist Indian soldier to commemorate the Mutiny. Although an Indian, whose loyalty would have more likely belonged to the mutineers, he instead condemns their acts as “madness.” In depicting this soldier, Kipling “simply eliminates...the likelihood that the soldier’s compatriots [would] regard him as (at very least) a traitor to his people” (Said “Introduction” 25). “The point about this brief episode” is that “Kipling puts it in the mouth of an Indian whose much more likely nationalist counterpart is never seen in the novel at all”; “So far is Kipling from showing two worlds in conflict, as Edmund Wilson would have it, that he has studiously given us only one, and eliminated any chance of conflict altogether” (Said 26).

In her article “The Writing on the Wall,” Kaori Nagai analyzes Kipling’s (only) short story on the Mutiny, “The Little House of Arrah” (1888). The Little House of Arrah is a significant site of the Indian Mutiny where around seventy white men and loyalist natives successfully warded off the advance of three regiments of mutineers until the arrival of the British army. The narrator of the short story visits this site a few decades after the famous siege. Though recognizing the cultural significance of the site, the narrator dismisses the possibility of erecting the house as a historical museum. He argues that instead the house should be cleaned and used as an ordinary “English home,” “an office of the Empire” (Nagai 94). Therefore, Kipling’s story “proposes to lay the basis of the Empire on the non-commemoration of the past” (93); the house of Arrah functions as “a site of conscious forgetting, of both white man’s panic and native rebellion” (94).

I do not necessarily disagree with the argument of Said and Nagai that Kipling’s refusal to commemorate the Mutiny highlights and reinforces the ideological leanings of imperialism in his fiction. But I also recognize that to Kipling and some members of his Anglo-Indian community, the Mutiny was a consciously suppressed cultural memory

which was simply too traumatic for them to “talk about” (*Letters* 219). In “The Man Who Would Be King,” however, the geographical alternative of Kafiristan provides for the author a distant space to explore the trauma of the Mutiny.

The Mutiny is understood to be a truly traumatic moment for the Victorians since it “marked” a “terrible break” for their cultural consciousness (Herbert 16). In Christopher Herbert’s words, “it was a moment when educated Britons suddenly were afforded a deeply disillusioning view into the national soul and found that they could never return afterward to their prelapsarian state of unawareness” (16-7). What destroyed their “prelapsarian state of unawareness” is the “shock of finding that they were despised by their supposedly grateful imperial subjects in India” and “of finding that their national idealism and national self-esteem were self-deluding and morally corrupting” (17). This terrible break in the Victorian cultural consciousness poses serious threats to the literary representation of colonial adventure. How does one write adventure stories in the face of the reality of the Mutiny? In Kipling’s story, Dravot and Carnehan’s nostalgic desire to return to the ideal colonial past is undercut by the sobering historical awareness of the Mutiny. Their journey into the heterotopian space of Kafiristan gives forms to the multi-faceted, even contradictory, elements of the nostalgia for adventure as it intersects with the cultural memory of the Self’s traumatic encounter with the Other.

After examining the body of Victorian Mutiny literature, Herbert concludes that Mutiny literature “seethes with its own self-diagnosed inner contradictions” as well as displays “lacerating, sometimes paralyzing contradictions in British attitudes” of its own (17). One particularly interesting contemporary attitude to the Mutiny, loaded with inner contradictions, is the British officers’ propensity to idealize the pre-1857 Anglo-Indian relations. According to Herbert, contemporary analysts of the Mutiny “often spoke of the terrible break that had occurred between modern days and a sounder past when the British officer corps and the sepoys were bound together by ties of affection and mutual esteem” (21). These sources testify to “the occurrence of a terrible break in previously harmonious relations between British officers and their sepoys, and more generally between British masters and their Indian subjects” (34). Herbert calls it “the *nostalgic* myth...of a fairly recent past of harmonious, affectionate relations between Indians and their European masters” (my emphasis, 72). Such a position begs the glaring question as

to why the native soldiers broke into a violent rebellion against their officers during the Mutiny, if they had indeed enjoyed so affectionate a relationship with their superiors.

Herbert expands on the irony of “the nostalgic myth”:

...nothing could be more perverse and delusive or more likely to generate a dangerous substrate of rage than a system claiming to be based on “fond and affectionate confidence” between British masters and mercenary soldiers recruited from a population subjugated by force and ruled ever after by a despotic foreign government whose instruments they are. (34-5)

Despite its perverseness, the nostalgic myth of a harmonious recent past was perhaps a necessary tool to sustain Britain’s hopes for “the possibility of a genuinely humane and benevolent imperial despotism” (72) as Britain continued to rule India long after 1857. In turn, the nostalgic sentiments could only be sustained by the utter ignorance of the English masters with regards to the true sentiments of their colonial subjects – the ignorance to consider that people ruled by force by foreigners would be happy to be ruled thus.

It is not difficult to imagine that some British officers might have treated their Indian soldiers as nicely and affectionately as they claimed to have in the pre-Mutiny days. Mutiny literature often makes note that there had been a wide-spread practice among the British officers to refer to their native soldiers as “their ‘children’.” It seems that many of the officers did enjoy a level of intimacy with the Indian sepoys as they “spoke their language fluently, fraternized with them, and would have trusted them unhesitatingly with their lives and those of their wives and children” (34). Herbert quotes “the officer historian G.B. Malleon” who writes that these officers “had associated with them, had joined in their sports,” and even “had in every way identified themselves with them” (qtd. in Herbert 34). In *Kim*, Kipling expresses his endorsement of exactly such a type of colonial agents and officers who “[identify] themselves with” their native subjects through the words of the Kulu woman. “These be the sort to oversee justice. They know the land and the customs of the land. The others, all new from Europe, suckled by white women and learning our tongues from books, are worse than the pestilence. They do harm to Kings” (*Kim* 124), says the Kulu woman to Kim. Dravot in “The Man Who Would Be King” too is the benevolent colonizer the Kulu woman might have approved of

as he “did a lot I couldn’t see the hang of and learned their lingo in a way I never could” according to Carnehan (268).

The shock of the Mutiny would have come most intensely to those who had really believed in “the possibility of a genuinely humane and benevolent imperial despotism” (Herbert 72) as did Dravot. When warned of a possible riot at his wedding, Dravot dismisses the warning by exclaiming incredulously, “A row among my people!” (Kipling 273). When the riot does break out, Dravot irresponsibly blames Carnehan for not recognizing that “[t]here was mutiny in the midst” (275). Carnehan, though, is less trusting of the Kafirs than Dravot. He refuses to believe that there has been any rational reason for them to rebel as in the case of the Indian sepoy in 1857: “there’s no accounting for natives. This business is our ‘Fifty-Seven’” (275). The tragedy of the wedding stems from Dravot’s insolence in thinking that he has fully understood the Kafirs, “his people.” Instead of acknowledging their Otherness, Dravot treats the Kafirs as a sort of an extension of his self. He initially chooses to trust in the Kafirs’ loyalty because of their white skin: “I know that you won’t cheat me because you’re white people – sons of Alexander – and not like common, black Mohammedans. You are *my* people, and by God...I’ll make a damned fine Nation of you, or I’ll die in the making!” (267). He even comes to delude himself into thinking that the Kafirs have “grown to be English.” He says, “These men aren’t niggers; they are English! [...] They’re the Lost Tribes or something like it” (269). The mentality of the British officers calling their soldiers their “children” would have worked in a similar way. Before the Mutiny, the British had seen their colonial endeavours “as benevolent parenthood extended to grateful primitive children” (Herbert 32). The trick of the imperial self-delusion is, then, to see the natives as the inferior versions of the English masters instead of recognizing and acknowledging their own subjectivity and autonomy.

The very moment they realize that Dravot is “Not a God nor a Devil but only a man!” (274), the natives start violently attacking Dravot and his company, and the insurgence exposes the pre-existing dissension among the natives regarding Dravot’s reign. Dravot may be shocked to find out that “there was mutiny in the midst” of his beloved subjects, but there are hints in the story that point towards the inhumane measures of violence Dravot and Carnehan have been using against the Kafirs which

would have been contributing factors to their dissension. The first time the two men spot the Kafirs, a band of ten men have been fighting against another band of twenty men. At this sight, Dravot and Carnehan pick a side with a fewer number and start shooting away at the twenty men: “Carnehan and Dravot sits on the boxes picking them off at all ranges, up and down the valley” (261). The ten men they have helped “[fall] down flat” on the ground for the fear of their guns, and Dravot then “walks over them and kicks them, and then he lifts them up and shakes hands all round to make them friendly like” (261). That is how Dravot introduces himself to the Kafirs, with the senseless killings of those who have done him no harm. On the day he is crowned, Dravot promises his Council that, “Nobody is going to be shot or speared any more so long as he does well” (267), suggesting that there has been shooting and spearing of the natives for his power’s sake up until then. Nagai observes that the fantasy of ‘the man of who would be king’ is “particularly pleasant, since the white man’s rule over the natives is not forced but spontaneously accepted: the natives immediately see in the hero qualities far superior to theirs, and, being submissive by nature, follow his orders as the Law” (90). In Kipling’s story, Dravot and Carnehan’s rule is neither unforced, nor spontaneously accepted. The natives do not see superior qualities in the two men that are worthy of their subordination once their initial misconception regarding Dravot’s divinity has been shattered. The two men’s time in Kafiristan concludes with Dravot’s deadly fall from the massive height of a rope-bridge and Carnehan’s crucifixion. Carnehan survives and receives his friend’s decapitated head as a reminder for “him not to come again” (278). Carnehan begs his way back to India and turns up at the narrator’s newspaper office again and relates the narrative of their adventure in broken pieces.

2.11 Kafiristan’s Spatial and Epistemological Obscurity

The fragmentation of Carnehan’s narrative challenges the European Self’s ability to represent its Other. Like Jim Hawkins who comes back to England from his traumatic experience in *Treasure Island* and writes an account of his experience, Peachey Carnehan too returns to India as a survivor with a story to tell. But unlike Jim Hawkins who comes back more or less intact, except his occasional nightmares, Carnehan is both physically

and mentally broken in atrocious ways. The narrator sees “what was left of a man” “[creep]” to his chair. His description of Carnehan is less human and more bestial. Carnehan is “bent into a circle, his head sunk between his shoulders”; his movement is like that of a bear moving “his feet one over the other”; the narrator cannot tell if Carnehan “walked” or “crawled” (258); his hand is “twisted like a bird’s claw” (259). The only feature he recognizes Carnehan by is his eyebrows: “Once before had I seen eyebrows that met over the nose in an inch-broad black band” (258).

Along with the marks of trauma his body bears, Carnehan is badly damaged psychologically, which affects his story-telling. He insists that the narrator look him in the eye lest his attention and words fall apart: “I ain’t mad – yet, but I shall be that way soon. Of course I remember. Keep looking at me, or maybe my words will go all to pieces. Keep looking at me in my eyes and don’t say anything” (259). Carnehan has to repeat the same instruction several times and also tells him not to distract him: “No, don’t look there. Look at *me*...for the Lord’s sake don’t distract me” (259). Once he does get distracted, he loses a sense of the narrative flow of his experience. The narrator tries to bring him back to the beginning of his narrative by asking, “What did you and Daniel Dravot do when the camels could go no farther because of the rough roads that led into Kafiristan?” Carnehan, rather than going back to the beginning, fully reveals the ending in a confused manner: “What did which do? There was a party called Peachey Taliaferro Carnehan that was with Dravot. Shall I tell you about him? He died out in the cold. Slap from the bridge fell old Peachey, turning and twisting in the air like a penny whirligig that you can sell to the Amir” (260) while it was actually Daniel Dravot who met his end by falling from a rope bridge. Muddled subjectivity is an important feature of Carnehan’s psychological damage. In his confusion, Carnehan shifts between different narrative perspectives. He refers to himself and Dravot as ‘they’ and assumes a kind of omniscient narrator’s position for a bit: “The country was mountaineous, and the mules were most contrary, and the inhabitants was dispersed and solitary. *They* [my emphasis] went up and up, and down and down” and referring to himself as “that other party, Carnehan” but switches quickly back to “We” (260-1). Carnehan’s inability to cogently represent Kafiristan threatens the narrative stability of the otherwise highly believable realist tale of the frame narrator. Carnehan presents the crowned head of Dravot as an ontological proof

for his adventure, but that too disappears as if into thin air after Carnehan's death in the asylum (279). Although we hear from Carnehan what has happened in Kafiristan, the semi-mythical space of Kafiristan remains as obscure and inscrutable at the end of the story as it is in the beginning. Dravot and Carnehan seem to have failed to penetrate into the "blank" (253) space of Kafiristan despite their short-lived success as rulers.

Throughout Kipling's story, the motifs of blankness and darkness stand for epistemological obscurity. The connection between these motifs reveals that India, like Kafiristan, remains an ultimately unknowable space for the British colonizer/ observer. Besides the "blank" space of Kafiristan on the world map which Dravot and Carnehan consult (253), similar imagery is used to describe the narrator's experiences with India. As quoted earlier in the chapter, the narrator calls the Native States of the central India, "the *dark* places of the earth, full of unimaginable cruelty, touching the Railway and the Telegraph on one side, and, on the other, the days of Harun-al-Raschid" (my emphasis, 247). The darkness of the inner states encompasses the issue of the unknowability of the Other on the one hand and that of the colonizer's inability accurately to represent his colonial Other on the other hand.

Stephen Arata, from his analysis of Kipling's Indian short stories, concludes that the imperial impartiality and authoritativeness associated with Kipling's imperial narrators is not always indefatigable. Arata finds "a series of covert attacks on those narrators' modes of writing" which associates writing "not with truth but with distortion, deception, bad faith." Often, these lies are "inseparable from the generic forms that clothe them: the journalistic account, the Orientalist treatise, the official report, the realist tale" (Arata 168). In "The Man Who Would Be King," the covert attack comes in the form of the narrator's own cynicism directed at his editorial role as a journalist. As a journalist for an Anglo-Indian paper, the narrator reproduces and represents India as digestible pieces of information for his readership. He is not interested in representing India as truly as possible (not that such a task is achievable), but in consciously producing a version of India which his Anglo-Indian readership would be comfortable dealing with and reading about. After enumerating a long list of contributions from petty colonial officials and their wives, missionaries, travelling actors and news from Europe which roughly make up

the paper's major contents, the narrator dismisses their significance by saying that "most of the paper is as *blank* as Modred's shield" (my emphasis, 249).

Ironically though, Dravot and Carnehan's journey into Kafiristan ends up unearthing a version of India which the narrator's readership would have liked to overlook, dismiss, and forget. Dravot and Carnehan's nostalgia for adventure fuels their search for the exotic elsewhere. Just as James Brooke sailed for Sarawak from India a couple of generations ago, so do the two men hope Kafiristan to be the place where they would be kings and gods. What they find in Kafiristan though is the India of 1857 where the conflict between the colonizer and the colonized people was most fierce and violent. The heterotopic space of Kafiristan allows the characters to explore the layers of the real and the mythical, the knowable and the unknowable, and the representable and the unrepresentable of the colonial India in the Victorian cultural memory. Kafiristan, then, stands in for the *other* India.

2.12 Conclusion

Both *Treasure Island* and *Kafiristan* initially appear to be inviting places that open up the possibility for ideal adventure but instead reveal complex layers of cultural meanings and anxieties that are built into their landscape. This layered reading of *Treasure Island* and *Kafiristan* is possible because far from being either real or invented sites, the two settings embody Foucault's concept of heterotopia and occupy the seemingly contradictory ontological modes of both the real and the imagined at the same time. They are heterotopian sites of complex relations and contestation between incompatible modes of feeling and thought. The anxieties of modernity give rise to the authors' nostalgia for the kind of authentic adventure which had been available for the past generation of adventurers. Their nostalgia for adventure gives shape to the landscapes of *Treasure Island* and *Kafiristan*, but what lurks in the background of these highly idealized settings of adventure is the historical trauma of the colonial violence of the past. *Treasure Island* and *Kafiristan* enable Stevenson and Kipling to explore the limits of both the known and the unknown, and the representable and the unrepresentable of the cultural imagination of their late-Victorian society, along with its fondest fantasies and deepest anxieties.

Chapter 3

3 Nostalgia for Adventure in *Nostramo*

Intermingling of genres is a well-documented trait of Conrad's novel *Nostramo*. With its detailed description of the peoples, geographies, and histories of the imaginary Costaguana, the novel seemingly presents itself as a work of historical realism. However, the modernist experimentalism of the novel associated with its use of narrative techniques like "time shifts; analepsis; prolepsis; breaks in the narration; shifts in 'focalization'" (Miller 160)⁸ frustrates all readerly efforts at constructing an orderly historical account for the region of Costaguana by simply following its plot progression; the novel thereby exposes the unnaturalness and constructedness of historical realism as a mode of writing. Edward Said warns against those seeking to place *Nostramo* in "the same class of fiction as *War and Peace*" since *Nostramo* "aspires to no authority on matters of history and sociology, and neither does it create a normative world that resembles our own." For Said, the novel is rather "a result of a strangely idiomatic vision" of the author (*Beginnings* 110). In the 2008 collection of narratological essays on Conrad's works, *Joseph Conrad: Voice, Sequence, History, Genre*, Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan's and Christophe Robin's articles take Said's position one step further and read *Nostramo* as a deliberate work of anti-historiography. These articles focus on how the narratological experiments concerning perspectives and temporality in *Nostramo* powerfully challenge the view of history as progression. Jed Rasula summarizes that the main critical attitude towards the genre of *Nostramo* has been to view it as a novel "split in its allegiances to

⁸ J. Hillis Miller's full list of narrative techniques used in *Nostramo* is quite extensive. He notes that in Conrad's novel, "[j]ust about every narrative device specialists in narrative form have identified is employed in one way or another." Such devices include: "time shifts; analepsis; prolepsis; breaks in the narration; shifts in 'focalization' from one character's mind to another by way of the 'omniscient'...narrator's use of free indirect discourse, or by way of interpolated first person narration or spoken discourse; shifts by the narrator from distant, panoramic vision to extreme close-ups; retellings of the same event from different subjective perspectives; citations of documents, and so on" (Miller 160). The experimentalism of the novel is such that one anonymous reviewer in Conrad's life time compared the novel to "one of those modern scenic plays where the drama is overwhelmed by machinery" (qtd. in Nadelhaft 383-4).

realism and modernism” (84) – though critics are split on its degrees of allegiances to each genre.

What complicates further the generic make-up of *Nostromo* is the presence of another form in the novel: romance. Conrad has indeed written many works of sea romance throughout his career as a novelist. *Nostromo*, too, though quite distinct from Conrad’s other sea adventure stories, as its story concerns mostly with political issues on shore, demonstrates a number of features of the adventure genre. In fact, the 1918 Dent edition of *Nostromo* promotes the novel as “A MOVING TALE OF HIGH ADVENTURE – OF REVOLUTION, ROMANCE, HIDDEN TREASURE, AND A HERO OF THE MOST VIVID PERSONALITY” (qtd. in Batchelor 131). Northrop Frye classifies *Nostromo* as a work of romance due to the primary importance of “buried treasure” – Gould’s silver – in the narrative: “the quest for buried treasure has been a central theme of romance from the Siegfried cycle to *Nostromo*” (193). Many critics have commented on the use of romance in Conrad’s larger body of works. Erdinast-Vulcan sees the presence of romance in Conrad as a reflection of the author’s nostalgia towards the moral absolutism of the previous generation as a reluctant modernist and relativist. More recently, Katherine Isobel Baxter and Jed Rasula have argued that Conrad makes conscious use of the forms of romance and fairy tale as tools for ideological critique.

There has long been a camp of critics who considered the generic complexity and/or ambiguity of Conrad’s works as evidence for the author’s literary inferiority.⁹ As I have documented above, however, more recent critics examining the generic features of Conrad’s works recognize and argue for the author’s intentional and purposeful art in intermingling genres and forms in his writing. When commenting on the duality between realism and modernism evident in *Nostromo*, Rasula says, “[a]ny novel will provide thematic grist for a binaristic reading, but *Nostromo* is fairly unique in that it relocates its

⁹ Albert J. Guerard praises *Nostromo* as “an important step in that deformalization of the novel” but argues that “the real *Nostromo*, the book one remembers and the book critics talk about, has largely been achieved by the beginning of Part III” (qtd. in Rasula 84). The rest of the novel fails to be the great modernist work it could have been as it concludes as “the standard realistic novel.” Fredric Jameson complains about the generic ambiguity of Conrad’s works, which makes “[Conrad’s literary] place...unstable, undecidable, and his work unclassifiable, spilling out of high literature into light reading and *romance*...floating uncertainly somewhere in between Proust and Robert Louis Stevenson” (my emphasis, 206).

thematic dualisms into a formal register where they provoke a different order of interpretative reflection” (84). Though a comment made in passing in a footnote, Rasula’s words raise an important question about the novel’s formal sophistication. According to him, the novel’s thematic dualisms are imprinted in its formal structure in such sophisticated ways that are suggestively self-aware. The term this comment invokes for me is metafictionality. It is one thing to suppose that the author is being intentional in mixing up genres for his own end, but quite another to question if the text itself is aware of its generic complexity. Is *Nostramo* a self-conscious novel? And if it is, how is its self-awareness manifested in the unfolding of the narrative? How does one analyze the text’s own consciousness?

Conrad’s unique use of romance and adventure in *Nostramo* is the main focus of this chapter. While I recognize the presence of other competing forms – namely, realism and modernism – that inform the novel’s formal structure, I read *Nostramo* primarily as an adventure story, albeit a very self-conscious one. Critics like Baxter and Rasula examine Conrad’s intentional use of the conventions of romance to the effect of destabilizing narrative security for ideological critique. Romance in *Nostramo* is far more than a cold philosophical tool, however. There is in the novel’s narrative consciousness a strong emotional pull towards the idea of adventure; there is enough evidence in the text that suggests that the novel *wants* and *sees* itself to be an adventure story.

But the novel’s attitude to adventure is complex and seemingly inconsistent. On the one hand, the novel considers exotic adventure as an ideal, and hence unreal, construction of the stories from the past; on the other hand, it hankers after adventure as an old man recalls his youthfulness in all its glorious optimism. The novel’s complex attitude to adventure expresses the two opposite forces that tug at the core of the modern adventurer: the skepticism of the modern age which dismisses the idea of adventure as unrealistic and the romantic desire of the heart which longs for a soul-searching adventure of a lifetime. There is a sentiment that best captures the dilemma of these two contradictory pulls, and the name of this sentiment is nostalgia. Nostalgia in *Nostramo* is more than a fleeting mood or sensation. It affects the manners in which the actions of the novel are recorded, the characters are developed, and the local sceneries are depicted; it also provides an overarching framework for the multiple strands of adventure narratives

the novel follows. It is in this nostalgic attitude of the narrative that I find the signs for the text's self-consciousness. A text being nostalgic of the generic conventions it follows or subverts must display a highly sophisticated level of self-awareness. In this chapter, I propose to analyze nostalgia textually as the novel's mode of metafictionality and explore the possibility that not all metafictional works have to be ironic parodies of the previous literary conventions, but they could be nostalgic lamentations of the passing of old cultural and literary values. In the case of *Nostramo*, the main object of its nostalgia appears to be the ideals of adventure embodied by the adventure genre, pitted against the modern world of skepticism, relativism, individualism, and materialism.

3.1 Conrad's Nostalgia

In *Joseph Conrad and the Modern Temper*, Erdinast-Vulcan suggests that the most important clue to the riddle of Conrad's "notorious ambiguities" (4) is the author's intense nostalgia for the past. The ambiguities mixed into Conrad's modernism (as in the Patusan section of *Lord Jim* which reads like a boys' adventure tale and the romantic heroism of Nostromo's character in *Nostramo* which otherwise is a sophisticated work of anti-historiography) have something fundamentally to do with Conrad's conflicted response to the modern age. According to Erdinast-Vulcan, Conrad was "never – either literally or figuratively – at home in the world" (3). As a child born to banished Polish nationalists, Conrad remained an exile wherever he lived; he was also "an incurable moralist infected with the ethical relativism of his age" (30). Conrad's own metaphor for his desire for the "impossible home-coming" (3) is an observer of nature living in a Copernican age who retains the habit of considering the universe in a self-serving Ptolemaic way. The observer is intellectually aware of how the Copernican system works but has far more emotional affinity with the Ptolemaic way of understanding the universe that is "integrated and anthropocentric" (4). Conrad compares the position of a modern poet to that of this observer: "In the same way a poet hears, reads, and believes a thousand undeniable truths which have not yet got into his blood" (qtd. in Erdinast-Vulcan 1). In a world where "the collapse of transcendental sanctions and a priori ethical distinctions" has been "brought about by the secularization and individualization which

underlie the evolution of modernity,” the author had a “nostalgia for that very distant cultural past perceived as an age of cohesion and moral certainty” (24-5). It is this nostalgia that leaves its marks on the narrative structure and generic make-up of Conrad’s works. Instead of a “mere aesthetic fault,” the generic incongruity in Conrad’s works “reflects a temperamental and ideological tension which operates both as a theme and as a structuring principle in these texts” (5).

Where, then, is Conrad’s ideal past to be located? Is it a specific place within a particular time frame to which Conrad’s nostalgic gaze is directed? Erdinast-Vulcan’s analysis gives an unintended hint to these questions by demonstrating how Conrad expresses his nostalgia: the incorporation of outdated literary genres and modes in his modernist narratives. For instance, “the need to break away from the ethical relativism of modernity, leads Conrad” to adopt “the ‘mythical’ mode” in many of his adventure stories in order to “recreate, or duplicate, the social structure of a heroic community” (25). In other words, Conrad digs up and reconstructs the ideal world of the past by using a literary tradition. I find that the connection between ideal past and literature is more than functional in Conrad’s works. In *Lord Jim*, Jim’s daydreams about being a hero heavily involve the ideal lifestyle he has read about in adventure fiction:

On the lower deck...he would forget himself, and beforehand live in his mind the sea-life of light literature. He saw himself saving people from sinking ships, cutting away masts in a hurricane, swimming through a surf with a line; or as a lonely castaway, barefooted and half naked...always an example of devotion to duty, and as unflinching as a hero in a book. (Conrad 5)

Here, literature serves as a direct source of the ideal past about which Jim nostalgically romanticizes. It seems that the “very distant cultural past perceived as an age of cohesion and moral certainty” (Erdinast-Vulcan 24-5) is best to be found in literature rather than in reality.

Nostalgic texts with this kind of literary awareness have tremendous metafictional potential due to their sophisticated use of past literary conventions and genres. My contention is that *Nostramo* is such a nostalgic text. *Nostramo*’s self-consciousness is mainly characterized by its nostalgic gaze towards the ideal construction of the past found in previous literary traditions. My analysis of the novel’s

metafictionality begins by closely examining the nostalgic tone adopted in Conrad's "Author's Note" to *Nostramo*. Although the Oxford edition places the "Note" at the end of the whole novel, "Author's Note" is an indispensable document in fully understanding the narrative voice of *Nostramo*'s omniscient narrator and should, in fact, be read as part of the novel. In what follows, I will demonstrate how the "Note" intentionally develops a character for the narrator as a nostalgic old seaman, much like author Conrad himself. The development of the nostalgic narrative voice is a significant aspect of the novel's metafictionality as it allows the narrator to make metafictional comments on the outdatedness of the ideals of adventure that he paradoxically desires to relive.

3.2 "Author's Note"

Conrad's "Author's Note" for *Nostramo* explicitly develops the sentiment of nostalgia and opens up the possibility of analyzing nostalgia as the novel's overall narrative framework. The "Note" tells us that the conception of the novel has come to him after an extended period of feeling artistically exhausted. Conrad records feeling that, "after finishing the last story of the *Typhoon* volume it seemed somehow that there was nothing more in the world to write about." Nothing substantial has happened to him that caused him to feel this way; nothing has been happening to him mentally either. The stand-still was perhaps caused by "a subtle change in the nature of the inspiration" that has "nothing to do with the theories of art" (407). What brings an end to "[t]his so strangely negative but disturbing mood" is the "first hint" for his next novel *Nostramo*, which comes to the author "in the shape of a vagrant anecdote completely destitute of valuable details." The "vagrant anecdote" makes Conrad oddly nostalgic for his youthful days of adventure, and this nostalgic sentiment inspires him to write *Nostramo*, a fictional elaboration of the anecdote. The nostalgic characterization of the author here interests me greatly because there is strong evidence suggesting that the author in the "Author's Note" is not just the real Conrad. My analysis of the metafictional qualities of the "Note" will demonstrate that the figure of the author in this document is a fictional construct who stands in for the omniscient narrator of the novel. The Note's sentimental characterization of this figure is significant to my reading of the novel as a nostalgic adventure story.

The “vagrant anecdote” mentioned above tells a “story of some man who was supposed to have stolen single-handed a whole lighter full of silver, somewhere [in South America] during the troubles of a revolution.” Conrad first hears of the story when sailing in the Gulf of Mexico in his youth. The story revisits him at home during this period of inspirational change with added details for him to ponder upon:

And I forgot it till twenty-six or seven years afterwards I came upon the very thing in a shabby volume picked up outside a secondhand bookshop. It was the life-story of an American seaman written by himself, with the assistance of a journalist. In the course of his wanderings that American sailor worked for some months on board a schooner, the master and owner of which was the thief of whom I had heard in my very young days...

He used to say: “People think I make a lot of money in this schooner of mine. But that is nothing. I don’t care for that. Now and then I go away quietly and lift a bar of silver. I must get rich slowly – you understand.”

There was also another curious point about the man. Once in the course of some quarrel the sailor threatened him: “What’s to prevent me reporting ashore what you have told me about the silver?”

The cynical ruffian was not alarmed in the least. He actually laughed. “You fool, if you dare talk like that on shore about me you will get a knife stuck in your back. Every man, woman, and child in that port is my friend. And who’s to prove the lighter wasn’t sunk? I didn’t show you where the silver is hidden. Did I? So you know nothing. And suppose I lied? Eh?” (407-8)

Conrad first hears of the story of the silver thief presumably from his fellow seaman. A few decades later, he stumbles upon the story by a chance encounter with an old second-hand copy of an American sailor’s autobiography. In the account of the sailor who claims to have known this thief personally, the silver thief is described as an eccentric personality who openly and proudly boasts of his theft.

The author’s recollection of how the anecdote reaches him reads like a familiar Conradian trope. A figure larger than life supposedly achieves an extraordinary feat, and the story of the figure’s adventure or misadventure circulates among a community of sailors until it is repeated to the narrator through a complex web of story tellers. Such a

trope informs the narrative structures of *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim*, and is most elaborately developed in *Chance* where the narrator Marlow gathers his main story from multiple oral sources. In *Lord Jim*, Marlow, like our author here, is reminded of an incident of an abandoned ship, named *Patna*, via a chance encounter with a French lieutenant who has been personally involved with the ship's rescue. The story of the ship's abandonment travels around the globe, much like Conrad's "vagrant anecdote" in the "Note." Marlow tells his listeners:

Indeed this affair, I may notice in passing, had an extraordinary power of defying the shortness of memories and the length of time: it seemed to live, with a sort of uncanny vitality, in the minds of men, on the tips of their tongues. I've had the questionable pleasure of meeting it often, years afterwards, thousands of miles away, emerging from the remotest possible talk, coming to the surface of the most distant allusions. (84)

Conrad's "anecdote" does not first arrest the author's attention in the same intensity as the *Patna* story, but it similarly travels distances and lengths of time before it reaches the author again. The "anecdote" is, like the *Patna* story, one of those stories seamen tell their mates while sailing and gets published in an autobiography of a notable sailor. The complex layers of transmission through which the story of the silver thief is mediated to Conrad – his past memory, an anecdote recalled by some sailor who claims to have known the thief, the secondhand autobiography which includes the anecdote, and the journalist who has brushed up the sailor's prose in the autobiography – we observe in "the Note" suggest that Conrad is doing more than just relaying facts here. He is framing his narrative in a way that implicates himself in an intricate web of story tellers who shape the story of Nostromo, the silver thief.

According to Cedric Watts, "[t]here is no good reason to doubt these [autobiographical] claims made in the 'Author's Note'." Scholars have identified objective sources for most of the autobiographical details in the "Note" including H. E. Hamblen's *On Many Seas: The Life and Exploits of a Yankee Sailor* (1897) which seems to be the source for Conrad's "shabby volume" (Watts 21), and as Watts says, there is no good reason for us to doubt the objective validity of the little account of how Conrad has taken hold of the "anecdote." However, it is also important to note that Conrad is not

interested in the “anecdote” as a historical fact per se. He says, “A rascal steals a large parcel of a valuable commodity – so people say. It’s either true or untrue; and in any case it has no value in itself” (408). He admits to not having any “particular interest in crime qua crime” (407), and dismisses the idea of “invent[ing] a circumstantial account of the robbery” (408). In other words, Conrad does not concern himself with the criminal nature of the robbery and the moral consequences of this action. Instead, Conrad calls the action of the theft “something of a feat” and is impressed with “the greatness this opportunity thrust upon [the thief]” (408). Conrad’s easy morality and deep fascination with the theft make sense if we consider the “Note” to be a device for his narrative framing. *Nostromo* is to be an adventure story, and hence, the “Author’s Note” demonstrates the easy moral bearing of an adventure story which is concerned more with the action of the story than its moral consequences.

The sheer energy of adventure conveyed by the anecdote leads the author to feel singularly nostalgic for his own youthful days of adventure. Three times, he stresses the fact that he has heard of the story in his “very young” days (407, 408). His rediscovery of the story evokes for him “the memories of that distant time when everything was so fresh, so surprising, so venturesome, so interesting; bits of strange coasts under the stars, shadows of hills in the sunshine, men’s passions in the dusk, gossip half-forgotten, faces grown dim.” The anecdote reminds him of another piece of memory from his “early days” of seafaring: the fond memory of a Mediterranean sailor named Dominic who serves as a model for Nostromo’s character. Conrad remembers Dominic for “a rather absurd adventure” in which both of them were “engaged together.” Dominic must have been an adventurer with irresistible charm, an exciting man to be around, since the author considers it “a real satisfaction to think in [his] very young days there must, after all, have been something in [him] to command that man’s half-bitter fidelity, his half-ironic devotion.” Conrad’s youth coincides with his early days of seafaring. Those were the days when he could pursue an exciting adventure in an exotic setting without worrying much about the consequences of his actions. The memories of the adventure’s excitement live on, but Conrad can shrug off the absurdity of the adventure (and perhaps the dangers that had been associated with it) as something that “does not matter” (410).

As if to reflect Conrad's nostalgic attitude toward the good old seafaring days, three of *Nostromo's* major characters are ex-sailors who are now land locked in Sulaco to pursue a more stable lifestyle. The innkeeper Giorgio who acts as Nostromo's surrogate father has "been a sailor in his time" like his political hero "the great Garibaldi" (21). The bureaucrat of the O.S.N. (Oceanic Steam Navigation) company Captain Mitchell no longer sails but is described as "the guileless old seaman" (232). The eponymous hero Nostromo too has been a sailor in his time, and the narrator calls him "the Mediterranean sailor come ashore to try his luck in Costaguana" (97). The novel features many of Nostromo's heroic horse rides to places and people pivotal to changing the course of the action of the story, but Nostromo himself professes that "I can swim far better than I can ride" (352), which makes one think that he is perhaps more tied to the sea than he is to the land. These characters maintain romantic ties to the sea even as they settle down in the land. The author himself is reminded of his ties to the sea through the anecdote of the silver thief's adventure. The fresh breeze of nostalgia from the sea brought about by the anecdote makes him think, "Perhaps, perhaps, there still was in the world something to write about" (408).

Conrad's nostalgic emphasis on the days gone by is moving, yet strange. His comments make it sound as if he has never written nautical stories based on his own seafaring experiences. Are most of Conrad's adventure stories not based on his own experiences with sea travelling? Why do the memories from his past seafaring days suddenly become an inspiration that overcomes his writer's block? And if he did really want to write about seafaring adventures, why are so many of his main characters in *Nostromo* ex-sailors who no longer actively sail?

In fact, Conrad has been *always* nostalgic about his seafaring days – not only about his own sailing days but also the art of sailing itself – which is evident in many of his early works. *The N. of the "Narcissus"* is a good example of a Conradian nostalgic sailing story. The novel features the crew's everyday life on ship; its climax occurs when the sailors collectively and heroically steer the ship safely out of the violent storm it has hit head on. Despite the heroic descriptions of the sailor's efforts on board, the novel acknowledges the fact that sailing would soon become a lost art. When the unnamed narrator looks at his crew members on the busy streets of London upon their safe arrival,

they seem to him “creatures of another kind – kind, alone, forgetful, and doomed; they were like castaways, like reckless and joyous castaways, like mad castaways making merry in the storm and upon an insecure ledge of a treacherous rock.” Honest and efficient seamen they are, but they are also naïve, old-fashioned, and altogether not fit for life on land. But in the near future, they would not be even fit for life on sea. Soon, there would be no sailing ships which would require their seafaring skills; soon, modern steam ships would take over the sea. The narrator never sees any of his crew from the “Narcissus” again, and he figures that, while some of them would die at sea, some would be buried in the graveyards, and “others” would be taken by “the steamers” (107). *The N. of the “Narcissus”* is a sad celebration of sailing in the age of the steamship.

The ascendancy of modern steamships in the mid-nineteenth century did not just affect Conrad’s writings but had a palpable influence on how sea fiction was written in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. Margaret Cohen delivers a thorough analysis of the evolution of sea fiction as a genre from the eighteenth century to the early twentieth century in her monograph *The Novel and the Sea*. According to Cohen, the decline of sailing in the mid-nineteenth century caused the later writers of sea fiction like Herman Melville, Victor Hugo and Joseph Conrad to innovate the form by “transport[ing] the adventures of craft to other historical and imaginary frontiers...including the frontiers of speculating and art.” Since describing the craft as it is could no longer be the legitimate centre of the sea adventure story in the age of steamers, certain authors imbued new life to the genre by creating “a maritime modernism challenging the writer and reader to the difficult work of navigating the foggy, uncharted seas of language and thought” (10). Cohen’s analysis of *The N. of the “Narcissus”* reads the novel as another conscious attempt to renew the genre of sea fiction. In that sense, the subtitle of the novel is a good indication of the novel’s generic positioning: “Conrad oriented the reader toward expecting a work of sea fiction from this work’s subtitle, taking the generic tag *A Tale of the Sea*, first used by Cooper in his path-breaking *The Pilot – A Tale of the Sea*” (202). Conrad’s gesture linking his novel to Cooper is significant for Cohen as she considers James Fenimore Cooper as the first author who “forge[d] a new kind of sea fiction” featuring real seafaring actions on ships as a focal point of his writings (9).

However, for an attempt to renew the genre, *The N. of the "Narcissus"* is too definitive in its announcement of the demise of human sailing. Quite tellingly, the novel ends with the narrator's dramatic farewell directed to his ship crew: "Good-bye, brothers! You were a good crowd. As good a crowd as ever fisted with wild cries the beating canvas of a heavy foresail; to tossing aloft, invisible in the night, gave back yell for yell to a westerly gale" (107). The passage preceding the farewell is even more dramatic:

A gone shipmate...is gone for ever; and I never met one of them again. But at times the spring-flood of memory sets with force up the dark River of the Nine Bends. Then on the waters of the forlorn stream drifts a ship – a shadowy ship manned by a crew of Shades. They pass and make a sign, in a shadowy hail. Haven't we together and upon the immortal sea, wrung out a meaning from our sinful lives? (107)

The narrator's mythological tone turns the farewell passage into an ode full of symbolic significance. The "forlorn stream" recalls the mythological River Styx flowing into the underworld, and the "crew of Shades" may be the narrator's fellow seamen who are as good as dead to him since he never gets to see them again after their ride together on the "Narcissus." Earlier the narrator says, "I never saw them [the crew] again" and surmises that some of their lives would have been claimed by "the sea" and "the graveyards of the earth" but also by the "steamers" (107) as if working on steamers becomes their death and burial.¹⁰ The "shadowy hail" in the above passage is then sent from the memory of the past and reaches the present-future where the modern steamer blocks seamen from having meaningful engagements with "the immortal sea." The "crew" could also be archetypal sailors of the past generations, superannuated creatures of the sea who have "wrung out a meaning from [their] sinful lives" in their hard labour "upon the sea." Granted that Conrad does some new things with the genre of sea fiction in *The N. of the "Narcissus"* by "mining the psychology of mariners" (202) as Cohen suggests, but I still find the novel to be more of a wistful rewriting than an attempt at regeneration. In either

¹⁰ The narrator says, "The sea took some, the steamers took others, the graveyards of the earth will account for the rest" (107).

case, the novel demonstrates a strong awareness of coming at the end of an age, in terms of both the genre it belongs to and the craft of sailing it describes as its central action.

How is nostalgia in *The N. of the "Narcissus,"* then, different from the one in *Nostramo*? If Conrad has been always nostalgic about sailing in his writings even before *Nostramo*, why does he express what seems to be a belated sense of personal nostalgia in the "Author's Note"? The key to resolving the puzzle of Conrad's belated nostalgia lies in the uniqueness of the nostalgia expressed in *Nostramo* in comparison to Conrad's other adventure stories. According to Margaret Cohen, Conrad's *The N. of the "Narcissus"* takes the form of sea fiction after the kind that James Fenimore Cooper popularized. Cohen also observes that "the ethos of craft [a major characteristic of sea fiction] emerges intact in" Conrad's other stories like "*Typhoon, The Secret Sharer, and Youth*, among others" (205). Conrad's *Lord Jim*, however, demonstrates a slightly different temporal awareness, and this difference obscures the novel's connection to sea fiction. Cohen finds that "the last residue of this novel's conformity to sea fiction is in its subtitle, *A Tale*." This minimal subtitle bears "the resonance of the generic tag with Cooper," especially with his work *The Red Rover* which carries the same subtitle. *Lord Jim*'s generic connection to *The Red Rover* is ironic since *Lord Jim*'s "ramshackle steamship *Patna*" is nothing like "the Red Rover's elegant, dexterous *Dolphin*," and "[t]he dashing Rover would never have recognized even his caricature in the *Patna*'s monstrously overweight, cowardly, opportunistic New South Wales German captain" (205). Jim is not a seaman with obsolete sailing skills; he is a modern adventurer on a steamer nostalgically looking backwards at the days of noble sea voyage. The acute temporal and generic awareness of coming *after* the age of sea adventure sets *Lord Jim* apart from Conrad's other nostalgic sailing stories.

In *Nostramo* too, nostalgia for the good old days takes a more conscious form. As Cohen suggests if Conrad's subtitles may be any indication, the novel's subtitle *A Tale of the Seaboard* seems to embody the transition the novel is going through as an adventure story due to the rapidly changing material circumstances of the time. The fictional seaboard town Sulaco is a port of entry into the country of Costaguana and the South American continent. Although it may also be a port of exit into the sea and the rest of the world, Sulaco in the novel serves effectively as a local setting with its own deep regional

concerns. In Sulaco, what starts as personal adventures of the novel's characters turn into the political enterprises undertaken for the regional interests. Just as the physical setting of the novel represents a passage into the land from the sea, the temporal setting of the novel encapsulates a transitional period for the region's entry into the modern globalized world from its old simpler form of self-sustaining governance and economy. The omniscient narration of the novel adopts a temporal awareness of the present-future and narrates the stories of the past from that vantage point with a nostalgic attitude.

While *The N. of the "Narcissus"* nostalgically indulges in the "ethos" of the old-fashioned art of seafaring, *Nostramo* adopts nostalgia of a knowing kind which questions the place of 'adventure' in the modern age. Perhaps when Conrad said, "after finishing the last story of the *Typhoon* volume it seemed somehow that there was nothing more in the world to write about," he meant that he was done with a certain type of story writing. The one-time sailor Conrad looks back at his youthful days of adventure in the "Author's Note" and has to acknowledge that those days are long gone. Similarly, author Conrad might have sensed that his days of writing particular tales of the sea were also over when he felt artistically exhausted. His renewed sense of nostalgia surely inspired him to write a very different kind of adventure story from before: one that experiments with its own form and questions the very idea of 'adventure'.

The self-conscious nature of the novel's nostalgia becomes more evident when "Author's Note" slips into a mode of metafictionality. Up until the first half of the "Note," Conrad securely holds on to his authorial identity, but that ontological security is radically challenged when he starts to claim to have literally travelled to the country he himself has just acknowledged was his fictional creation. In the following passage, Conrad slides over into a mode of metafictional writing:

But generally, as I've said before, my sojourn on the continent of Latin America, famed for its hospitality, lasted for about two years. On my return I found (speaking somewhat in the style of Captain Gulliver) my family all well, my wife heartily glad to learn that the fuss was all over, and our small boy considerably grown during my absence.

My principal authority for the history of Costaguana is, of course my venerated friend, the late Don Jose Avellanos...in his impartial and eloquent

History of Fifty years of Misrule. That work was never published – the reader will discover why – and I am, in fact, the only person in the world possessed of its contents. (Conrad 498-9)

Conrad reveals the chief source for his novel's historical background to be *History of Fifty Years of Misrule*. This book appears sporadically in the novel, and it supposedly tells a fictitious history of an imaginary country called Costaguana, written by a fictional character within the novel, the same Don Jose Avellanos. In short, Conrad names a fictional prop in his own novel as an external basis for his creative writing. J. Hillis Miller even calls the whole joke “almost postmodern” (165). So why would Conrad begin this “Author's Note” in a non-fictional way and slide into a metafictional mode in the middle? Is “Author's Note” not supposed to be a non-fictional document? Conrad's metafictional move makes sense when we consider the “author” in “Author's Note” as a constructed character, not the real Conrad who is extraneous to the world of the novel. “Author's Note” is an integral part of the novel's narrative structure that develops the character for the novel's overarching narrator. The striking similarities between this author-character-narrator and the actual author are carefully intended as the two figures share the same kind of nostalgia.

The nostalgic sentiment developed in the “Note” comes in several forms, and these forms are bound up with different personal attributes of the author. The author in the “Note” is an artfully flexible figure. First of all, he is the author-narrator of the tale. He is also presented as an one-time sailor and aged adventurer looking back at the good old times. As an author, he expresses nostalgia for simpler tales of the sea, and as an old sailor, he is nostalgic for the age of sailing and his own youthful days of adventure. The relevance of this multi-faceted sentiment is extended to the rest of the novel since the figure of the author here is deeply implicated in the narrative development of Nostromo's tale. Beyond posing as the autobiographical Conrad, the author in the “Note” also claims to have had actual encounters with the novel's characters and has physically visited its fictional setting (408-9). The result of the *mélange* between fact and fiction is the construction of an author-narrator who resembles the real Conrad in many apparent ways but does not exactly correspond to him. The rest of my literary analysis will trace the

effects of the author-narrator's nostalgia on the manners in which the local sceneries are depicted, the actions of the novel are recorded, and its characters are developed.

3.3 The Calmness of the Gulf

Nostramo opens with a four-page detailed description of the physical background of the story. Despite its attention to detail, however, the novel's description of the setting displays what Ian Watt calls "a certain floating quality" (19) which evades real-world geographical pointers. The setting remains imaginatively distant from any specific South American state as the narrator is sufficiently "vague" when talking about the "crops and climate" of Sulaco and "avoids botanical details" (Watt 18, 23). The narrator makes strategic use of this imaginative flexibility of the setting and projects his nostalgic gaze onto its geographical features. The following paragraph lays out the overall outline of the town's natural setting and illustrates my point:

In the time of Spanish rule, and for many years afterwards, the town of Sulaco – the luxuriant beauty of the orange gardens bears witness to its antiquity – had never been commercially anything more important than a coasting port with a fairly large local trade in ox-hides and indigo. The clumsy deep-sea galleons of the conquerors that, needing a brisk gale to move at all, would lie becalmed, where your modern ship built on clipper lines forges ahead by the mere flapping of her sails, had been barred out of Sulaco by the prevailing calms of its vast gulf. Some harbours of the earth are made difficult of access by the treachery of sunken rocks and the tempests of their shores. Sulaco had found an inviolable sanctuary from the temptations of a trading world in the solemn hush of the deep Golfo Placido as if within an enormous semi-circular and unroofed temple open to the ocean, with its walls of lofty mountains hung with the mourning draperies of cloud. (5)

The main information of the passage is that the seaboard town of Sulaco has been for a long time preserved as an isolated port with only local significance owing to the calmness of its gulf. When transmitting this information, the narrator romanticizes the town's once isolated status by describing the inaccessibility of the gulf to the "trading world" with

religious language: the gulf used to provide Sulaco with “an inviolable sanctuary from the temptations of a trading world...as if within an enormous semi-circular and unroofed temple open to the ocean.” Sulaco’s historical isolation is thus described as something sacred, which sets it apart from other international ports somehow polluted by global trade. Sulaco in its isolation is also ancient and timeless, and its Spanish past is referred to as “antiquity” by the narrator. In light of the religious description which turns Sulaco into a kind of sea-side garden of Eden, the reason for the gulf’s inaccessibility appears strangely practical: sail boats prior to the modern clipper ship could not easily enter the port due to a lack of breeze in the gulf.

In this passage, a phrase that contributes the most to the characterization of the narrator is “your modern ship.” Conrad uses the same expression when he discusses the disastrous effects of the steam ship on seamen’s nautical sensibilities in his memoir *The Mirror of the Sea*. According to Conrad, “your modern ship which is a steamship makes her passages on other principles than yielding to the weather and humouring the sea. She receives smashing blows, but she advances...The machinery, the steel, the fire, the steam have stepped in between the man and the sea. A modern fleet of ships does not so much make use of the sea as exploit a highway” (*The Mirror of the Sea* 64). Here Conrad uses a similar kind of resentful tone that the narrator of *Nostromo* adopts when he talks about the introduction of clipper ships into the Golfo Placido. Clipper ships are not steamers, but their modernity is demonstrated by the ways in which they prevail over the once-immobilizing calmness of the gulf – “where your modern ship...forges ahead by the mere flapping of her sails.”

According to Conrad, the repercussions of the steamship innovation are so revolutionary that this technology effectively broke the generational links that used to connect the sailors of the ancient times all the way to those of the nineteenth century. Conrad imagines that the sailors of “the last generation” with their caravels can sympathize with his “direct professional ancestors” who “[navigated] the naïve seas of ancient woodcuts.” However, “the seamen of three hundred years hence” would “glance at the photogravures of our nearly defunct sailing-ships with a cold, inquisitive, and indifferent eye. Our ships of yesterday will stand to their ships as no lineal ancestors, but as mere predecessors whose course will have been run and the race extinct. Whatever

craft he handles with skill, the seaman of the future shall be not our descendant, but only our successor” (65). The sailors of the last generation, their ancient counterparts and their future successors in Conrad’s imaginary scenario all belong to the time periods other than the present. However, Conrad’s nostalgic tone makes it clear that the hypothetical feelings of the imagined sailors point toward a sense of alienation he himself suffers as an old seaman in the modern age. Conrad is more overt about this sense of alienation in a different memoir *A Personal Record* where he says, “I never went into steam – not really. If I only live long enough I shall become a bizarre relic of a dead barbarism, a sort of monstrous *antiquity*, the only seaman of the dark ages who had never gone into steam – not really” (my emphasis, qtd. in Cohen 200). Margaret Cohen picks up on the word “antiquity” and points out the irony in Conrad’s use of the term since “the working age of sail has only just disappeared, and yet its knowledge is as irrelevant as if it dated to the remote past” due to the fast “pace of technological innovation.” She also locates Marlow’s use of the term in *Heart of Darkness* when he discovers a copy of *An Inquiry into some Points of Seamanship* written in 1820s and calls it an “amazing antiquity” (qtd. in Cohen 200).

The omniscient narrator in *Nostramo* uses the same word “antiquity” when discussing Sulaco’s Spanish past. He finds that the “luxuriant beauty of the orange gardens [in Sulaco] bears witness to its antiquity” simply because it was the Spanish who first started planting oranges in South America. The word “antiquity” is once again used in an ironic way as the picture of transplantation of crops foreign to the original landscape of the town and the conventional meaning of the word “antiquity” do not go hand in hand together. The reference to the “orange gardens” also problematizes the romanticization of the town’s historical isolation as these gardens point to the fact that Sulaco had indeed been invaded by Spain once, a global power of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. This puts into question if Sulaco was really “an inviolable sanctuary” when even its natural landscape had been altered by foreign presence. However, the narrator does not make a connection between the old and the new kinds of globalization. Instead, he contrasts the town’s “antiquity” where it had been protected from the invasion of “clumsy deep-sea galleons” with the modernity of clipper ships which will now force the town to trade with the world. He chooses to put a break between

the town's relatively recent Spanish past and its upcoming entrance into global markets. Therefore, the narrator skews his sense of time and presents Sulaco's "antiquity" nostalgically even as he is aware of the irony in his own nostalgic expressions.

3.4 The Peninsula of Azuera

The next feature of the landscape the chapter moves on to is the peninsula of Azuera, which is situated on the northern tip of the Gulf. The peninsula of Azuera is "a wild chaos of sharp rocks and stony levels cut about by vertical ravines"; the place is "[u]tterly waterless, for the rainfall runs off at once on all sides into the sea, it has not soil enough...to grow a single blade of grass, as if it were blighted by a curse." Many locals do indeed believe that the peninsula is plagued by a curse due to "its forbidden treasures" in the form of "heaps of shining gold" which "lie in the gloom of the deep precipices cleaving the stony levels of Azuera." A sinister legend associated with the peninsula deters people's entry into it despite its promise of wealth:

Tradition has it that many adventurers of olden time had perished in the search. The story goes also that within men's memory two wandering sailors – Americanos, perhaps, but gringos of some sort for certain – talked over a gambling, good-for-nothing mozo, and the three stole a donkey to carry for them a bundle of dry sticks, a water-skin, and provisions enough to last a few days. Thus accompanied, and with revolvers at their belts, they had started to chop their way with machetes through the thorny scrub on the neck of the peninsula...The sailors, the Indian, and the stolen burro were never seen again. As to the mozo, a Sulaco man – his wife paid for some masses, and the poor four-footed beast, being without sin, had been probably permitted to die; but the two gringos, spectral and alive, are believed to be dwelling to this day amongst the rocks, under the fatal spell of their success. Their souls cannot tear themselves away from their bodies mounting guard over the discovered treasure. They are now rich and hungry and thirsty – a strange theory of tenacious gringo ghosts suffering in their starved and parched flesh of defiant heretics, where a

Christian would have renounced and been released... These, then, are the legendary inhabitants of Azuera guarding its forbidden wealth... (6)

Couched in local lingo and superstitious discourse is a familiar story of certain Westerners venturing into a dangerous search for hidden (and forbidden) treasures. This is a plot line that gets rehashed over and over in the adventure fiction of the late Victorian period: Western adventurers get hold of some accursed treasure in an exotic setting and rush into their downfall due to the supernatural powers of the curse. In *Rule of Darkness*, Patrick Brantlinger suggests that these tales which feature the motif of accursed treasure “[express] a social version of the return of the repressed characteristic of” late Victorian and Edwardian adventure fiction as they point to the repressed social fear that “Western rationality may be subverted by the very superstitions it rejects.” Brantlinger identifies strong Gothic elements in this subgenre and christens it “imperial Gothic” (227). According to him, “Imperial Gothic expresses anxieties about the waning of religious orthodoxy, but even more clearly it expresses anxieties about the ease with which civilization can revert to barbarism or savagery” (229). The narrator’s brief legendary account of Azuera’s gringo¹¹ ghosts fits snugly into Brantlinger’s picture of imperial Gothic. The two white English-speaking men go missing from their search for treasure. Whereas the innocent beast and the Catholic mozo, their guide, are blessed enough to naturally perish, the defiant heretics who are the gringos are condemned to assume a spectral form and haunt the landscape forever. The attitude of the common folk that the narrator impersonates here considers the adventurers’ rejection of the local tradition and the Christian faith as a factor that contributes to their impiety. In the eyes of the local, the somewhat superstitious piety of the Catholic mozo and his wife morally triumphs over the heretical intrepidity of the greed-consumed foreigners.

Thus one way of reading the account is to treat it as a mini imperial Gothic story told as a local legend. However, our sophisticated narrator adds another narrative layer to the telling of the legend by entering into the time of the event himself. Here, a shift in narrative perspective occurs. Between the paragraphs that present the legend, the narrator

¹¹ “The Glossary of Foreign Words” (an appendix to the Oxford edition of *Nostromo*) defines “gringo” as a “contemptuous” term referring to “English speakers” (449).

sneaks in a passage reporting the accounts of the eyewitnesses who observe from afar the smoke of the adventurers' camp fire, a sure sign of their presence in the forbidden peninsula. The prose used in the passage is almost journalistic and certainly far from mythical:

On the second evening an upright spiral of smoke (it could only have been from their camp-fire) was seen for the first time within memory of man standing up faintly upon the sky above a razor-backed ridge on the stony head. The crew of a coasting schooner, lying becalmed three miles off the shore, stared at it with amazement till dark. A negro fisherman, living in a lonely hut in a little bay near by, had seen the start and was on the look-out for some sign. He called to his wife just as the sun was about to set. They had watched the strange portent with envy, incredulity, and awe. (6)

Specific time and measurement references like “the second evening” and “three miles off the shore” used in the passage provide a direct contrast to the mythical tone assumed by the narrator elsewhere in his presentation of the legend. The reference to the kind of sea craft the eyewitnesses were on also gives away the likely time frame for the event of this misadventure. Although the term “coasting schooner” in itself is not a specific time locator, in the context of the novel’s opening paragraph, the event appears to have taken place back in the days when Sulaco was a “coasting port” engaged only in “local trade” (5) as this coasting schooner would have been designed for local travel and probably not fit for deep sea travel. This is a time period before “your modern ship built on clipper lines” takes over the coasting port of Sulaco. Unlike “your modern ship” that “forges ahead by the mere flapping of her sails,” the coasting schooner in the above passage remains motionless on the Gulf’s calm shore, and its immobility allows the crew to stare at the smoke from Azuera idly and leisurely.

As with his Spanish “antiquity,” the narrator once again skews his sense of time by presenting an event from the recent past as an ageless legend. In that case, the expression “memory of man” can be understood literally as belonging to the memory of the older generation who are still alive and well by the time the main events of the novel take place. What makes the narrator present the relatively recent event as an ancient legend is his wistful awareness that perceives the end of the simpler days where

adventure was possible. In the modern Sulaco, the prominence of local trade has been replaced by that of global trade while a search for the Azuera gold has become a primitive endeavour compared to the complex engineering efforts that are devoted to Gould's silver mine. The account of the legend evokes nostalgia more than Gothic fear as the omniscient narrator, along with the ship crew and the fisherman, watch the smoke of the fire from Azuera rises up with "envy, incredulity, and awe" (6).

The novel's opening chapter is not the only place where the Azuera legend is mentioned. The legend enjoys a lingering presence in the rest of the novel as the dangerous allure of the Azuera gold is often compared to that of the silver from the Gould concession. Just as the motif of accursed treasure serves as a recurring pattern for imperial Gothic stories including the Azuera legend, the gringo ghosts' attachment to the forbidden treasure becomes a paradigm for many characters' obsession over the silver in the novel.

One character in *Nostramo* who is most invested in the story of the gringo ghosts is Nostromo himself. In fact, the only occasions where the Azuera legend is explicitly alluded to in the novel is in connection with Nostromo. When the populist revolution breaks out in Costaguana, two revolutionary leaders and their troops make their way into Sulaco to take possession of Gould's silver mine. In order to save the mine's recent six month's silver production from the clutches of the revolutionaries, Nostromo and Decoud leave on a sea journey to transport the silver to a safer place. Amidst this political turmoil, Nostromo considers his involvement as his personal adventure, albeit of a very desperate kind. When Giorgio Viola's wife bids Nostromo to stay in Sulaco on her death bed, Nostromo tells her he should still go and stresses the importance of this undertaking by invoking the Azuera legend: "I am needed to save the silver of the mine. Do you hear? A greater treasure than the one which they say is guarded by ghosts and devils on Azuera. It is true. I am resolved to make this the most desperate affair I was ever engaged on in my whole life" (184-5). Nostromo uses the same reference when he delivers an informal will to Dr. Monygham in case he dies in transporting the silver: "Adios, look after the things in my sleeping-room, and if you hear from me no more, give up the box to Paquita. There is not much of value there, except my new serape from Mexico and a few silver buttons on my best jacket...The things will look well enough on the next lover she gets,

and the man need not be afraid I shall linger on earth after I am dead, like those Gringos that haunt the Azuera” (186).

In reality, the transportation of the silver is not exactly the same thing as a search for hidden treasure. The text makes this disparity explicit when Decoud expresses his “[surprise]” at “the grimness of [Nostromo’s] anxiety” when Nostromo invokes the legend in his presence. To Decoud, “the removal of the treasure” is simply a “political move” (190). In fact, unlike the gringos in the legend whose purpose of voyage was to possess the treasure themselves, Nostromo is not promised any share of the treasure he is to transport. It takes a disinterested third party like Dr. Monygham to point out the economic disparity between the risks of the undertaking and the prospect of reward for Nostromo: “I hope you have made a good bargain in case you come back safe from this adventure.” Monygham then plants a dangerous idea in the mind of Nostromo, who asks him, “What bargain would your worship have made?”: “Illustrious Capataz, for taking the curse of death upon my back, as you call it, nothing else but the whole treasure would do” (187).

If he cares little about the politics or even the possession of the silver, what motivates this man to risk knowingly his own life to take part in Decoud’s plan? Material gains have never been of much value to Nostromo, and he proudly reveals to Dr. Monygham that “[t]here is not much of value” among his possessions (186) before embarking on the journey. What does he value then? “A good name” which he finds to be “a treasure” (186).¹² The secret to Nostromo’s incorruptibility lies in his attachment to his reputation. When he “[resolves] to make this the most desperate affair” of his whole life, it is his “good name” and reputation which he determines to seal. The once “incorruptible Capataz de Cargadores” (178) eventually lets himself become corrupted by the material “value” of the silver.¹³ When he leaves behind Decoud and silver on the island of the

¹² Several characters in the novel recognize Nostromo’s strong attachment to his fame. Decoud speaks on his topic to Mrs. Gould: “I suppose he looks upon his prestige as a sort of investment.” Mrs. Gould, knowing Nostromo a little better than him, suggests that “Perhaps he prizes it for its own sake” (160). On a different occasion, Dr. Monygham also says something similar: “His prestige is his fortune” (230).

¹³ Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan claims that Nostromo dies twice in the novel. The first death is a figurative one and is enacted by Nostromo’s enslavement to the silver and thus his “renunciation of his title.” The

Great Isabel, Nostromo ironically says, “silver is an incorruptible metal that can be trusted to keep its value for ever,” repeating one more time the phrase – “An incorruptible metal” (216).

The narrator compares Nostromo’s enslavement to the stolen silver to the gringo ghosts’ supernatural ties to the Azuera gold:

He could never shake off his treasure. His audacity, greater than that of other men, had welded that vein of silver into his life and the feeling of fearful and ardent subjection, the feeling of his slavery – so irremediable and profound that often, in his thoughts, he compared himself to the legendary Gringos, neither dead nor alive, bound down to their conquest of unlawful wealth on Azuera – weighed heavily on the independent Captain Fidanza, owner and master of a coasting schooner, whose smart appearance (and fabulous good-luck in trading)¹⁴ were so well known along the western seaboard of a vast continent. (377)

The realistic gap between Nostromo’s situation and the gringos’ in the legend begins to close when Nostromo becomes a willing subject to the silver’s curse by shifting his value on “a good name” to the material “value” of silver ingots. Although no local Sulaco legend warns adventurers from the accursed power of Gould’s silver, the Azuera legend itself predicts and predetermines the course for Nostromo’s destruction from the moment he starts to identify himself with the gringo ghosts. Moreover, the Azuera gringos, to add to the score of ex-sailors who populate the novel, have been sailors in their time, an interesting fact that Nostromo points out by comparing their sailor identity to his own: “Doctor, did you ever hear of the miserable gringos on Azuera, that cannot die? Ha! ha! Sailors like myself. There is no getting away from a treasure that once fastens upon your mind” (331). Nostromo re-enacts another aspect of the Azuera legend by purchasing a

“mythical hero” in him dies when he steals the silver, and he is reborn as a “material man” (*Joseph Conrad* 80-1) when he awakes alone on the shore after his brief journey with Decoud.

¹⁴ In order not to draw suspicious attention to himself, Nostromo determines to “grow rich slowly” (390). The wealth he is accumulating through Gould’s silver ingots is disguised as the profits he earns from trading.

“coasting schooner,” a conspicuous gesture toward another “coasting schooner” upon whose deck multiple sailors jealously watched the distant smoke from the campfire the gringos and their guide started in the Azuera Peninsula (6). Thus, *Nostromo*’s narrative consciously rewrites a typical imperial Gothic story exemplified by the gringo ghosts’ adventure in Azuera, but this rewriting is conscious of its own outdatedness. In the new world of material interests, coasting schooners give way to “your modern ship” and so does local trade to international commerce: *Nostromo*’s “fabulous good luck in trading” is only an illusion. In such a world, this adventure story loses its glamour and mystical appeal. *Nostromo* himself is no more than a silver thief, the kind author Conrad would read about in someone else’s biography.

3.5 The Silver of the Mine

As I have stated earlier, no local Sulaco legend warns prospective adventurers from the accursed power of the silver of the San Tomé mine. But a public and private record of the mine’s recent history certainly does. Like the Azuera gold that is said to “lie in the gloom of the deep precipices cleaving the stony levels of Azuera,” the silver of the San Tomé Mountain too is the “treasure from the earth” (46); like the Azuera gold, the San Tomé silver is said to have dangerous enchanting influences over those who have their minds “[fastened] to” (331) it. Unlike the Azuera gold, however, which seems to have attracted mostly private adventurers, the silver mine boasts of a history of brutal systematic violence and exploitation committed against the labourers on its ground for the benefit of their masters.

The narrator recounts the history of the mine through the perspective of Mrs. Gould, starting by “Mrs. Gould knew the history of the San Tomé mine.” The mine used to be “worked...mostly by means of lashes on the backs of slaves, its yield had been paid for in its own weight of human bones”; “[w]hole tribes of Indians had perished in the exploitation.” The mine was “abandoned” for a time only because “this primitive method” of mining “had ceased to make a profitable return, no matter how many corpses were thrown into its maw.” After the War of Independence, “[a]n English company obtained the right to work it, and found so rich a vein that neither the exactions of

successive governments, nor the periodical raids of recruiting officers upon the population of paid miners they had created, could discourage their perseverance” (40). The mine was eventually closed down when the native miners revolted against and “murdered” their “English chiefs” during the period of political upheavals following the death of Dictator Guzman Bento. The “decree” justifying the confiscation of the mine states the following:

Justly incensed at the grinding oppression of foreigners, actuated by sordid motives of gain rather than by love for a country where they come impoverished to seek their fortunes, the mining population of San Tomé, &c.... (41)

The mine’s history reworks a few elements from the Azuera legend. The above decree, for instance, frames the mine’s late English owners as impoverished foreigners seeking “their fortunes” in Sulaco. Seeking one’s fortune is a “sordid” motive since in Costagauna, the foreigners’ fortunes have always been made at the expense of the wellbeing of the local people – as in the case of the one “good-for-nothing” mozo who had been dragged to the Azuera Peninsula by the gringo adventurers (6). So far, the mine’s history presents a secular, realistic version of the Azuera legend. While the grisly talks of lashes, bones, corpses and murders may be enough to dissuade any corporate men or women of squeamish disposition from taking part in the mining business, the mine’s nefarious fame is sealed by Charles Gould’s father who attributes to the mine the eerie power of a curse.

One of the successive governments after the death of Guzman Bento, “with a secret conviction of [the mine’s] worthlessness in their own hands,” offers concession of the San Tomé mine to a wealthy merchant, who happens to be Gould’s father, in hopes of extracting forced loans from him. Mr. Gould sees through the government’s ignoble intentions but is forced to take over the mine regardless: “Mr. Gould had swallowed the pill, and it was as though it had been compounded of some subtle poison that acted directly on his brain” (43). His mind is so overcome by the injustice of the concession business that he sees the silver mine as a curse and begins to languish under this curse. In order to articulate the power of the mine’s curse over his fate, Mr. Gould draws upon “light literature” in which “he was well read.” In his mind, the mine takes “the form of” predatory villains like “the Old Man of the Sea fastened upon his shoulders” and

“vampires.” The literary motifs he recalls to verbalize his misery become too real for Mr. Gould who obsessively mulls over the mine’s ominous powers. He prophesies that “It will end by killing me” and ends up “[suffering] from fever, from liver pains, and mostly from a worrying inability to think of anything else” and fulfills his prophecy by prematurely dying. Mr. Gould is also convinced by the “eternal character of [the] curse” as the Concession is inheritable for his descendants and passionately urges his young son studying in England “never to touch it, never to approach it.” The narrator’s portrayal of Mr. Gould, the father, is aware of the irony and irrationality of his situation. The narrator accuses him of viewing his problem “emotionally” and attaching “too much importance to form” (43). The word “form” seems to refer to a literary form, given that the same word is used earlier in the same passage to refer to “the form of the Old Man of the Sea” which the mine has taken in his mind. The assessment is that the late Mr. Gould exaggerates the financial threats that the Concession poses on his family fortune and eventually perishes from a diseased imagination polluted by “light literature.”

Just as the Azuera legend deters would-be fortune seekers from entering the Peninsula, the public history of the San Tomé mine presents silver mining as a rather unappetizing business opportunity. Especially for Charles Gould, his father’s demise serves as another warning against getting his hands dirty with the mining business. Young Gould in Europe, however, takes a remarkable turn of reverse psychology and develops a severe interest “in that thing which could provoke such a tumult of words and passion” through reading his father’s letters. He is determined not to repeat his father’s mistake of excessively indulging in literary imagination. The narrator tells us that “he managed to clear the plain truth of the business from the fantastic intrusions of the Old Man of the Sea, vampires, and ghouls, which had lent to his father’s correspondence the flavour of a gruesome Arabian Nights tale” (44-5). Charles Gould does not care about “the form.” He means business.

But Gould’s interest in the mine business is not driven by love for profit. He means to seriously serve the country and its population with the economic value generated by the mine. In his conversation with his future wife, Gould describes his family’s past involvement in the national affairs of Costaguana in order to expand on his own political and economic vision for the country. Many of Gould’s family relations

were deeply concerned with the welfare of Costaguana and served as civil servants and even political activists in times of need. In the following passage, Gould puts forward Uncle Harry as a good role model:

The name of Gould has been always highly respected in Sulaco. My uncle Harry was chief of the State for some time, and has left a great name amongst the first families. By this I mean the pure Creole families, who take no part in the miserable farce of governments. Uncle Harry was no adventurer. In Costaguana we Goulds are no adventurers. He was of the country, and he loved it, but he remained essentially an Englishman in his ideas. He made use of the political cry of his time. It was Federation. But he was no politician. He simply stood up for social order out of pure love for rational liberty and from his hate of oppression. There was no nonsense about him. He went to work in his own way because it seemed right, just as I feel I must lay hold of that mine. (49)

Gould uses the term “adventurer” as a word strongly opposing the kind of political practicality and idealism embodied in Uncle Harry. While the other “pure Creole families” of the first generation made it their principle not to get involved in the country’s politics, Harry Gould threw himself into the political scene and “stood up for social order,” not out of personal ambition, but “out of pure love for rational liberty and from his hate of oppression.” Gould’s ideal depiction of Harry Gould reminds one of the rather sentimental language used in the miners’ decree regarding the confiscation of the San Tomé mine quoted earlier: “Justly incensed at the grinding oppression of foreigners, actuated by sordid motives of gain rather than by love for a country where they come impoverished to seek their fortunes” (41). The miners might have tolerated Harry Gould, this foreigner whose political involvements had been “actuated...by love for [their] country.”

Even as Charles Gould passionately delivers his ‘anti-adventure’ speech, the narrator shows that both Charles Gould and his future wife are strongly attracted to the possibility of adventure in Costaguana. When Emilia returns home after their meeting, she is seen daydreaming about his “fascinating vision”: “All the eagerness of youth for a strange life, for great distances, for a future in which there was an air of adventure, of combat – a subtle thought of redress and conquest, had filled her with an intense

excitement, which she returned to the giver with a more open and exquisite display of tenderness” (50). In Emilia’s enthusiastic acceptance of Gould’s proposal, the multiple meanings of the term ‘romance’ are brought together. In her daydream, her future life in Sulaco is presented as an exciting quest narrative full of stimulating factors like “adventure,” “combat,” “redress” and “conquest.” The narrative of the San Tomé mine intrigues and titillates her; it promises her an escape from the mundaneness of the domestic life in Europe; it also heightens her sense of romantic love for Gould. Moreover, their love story takes on a waft of medieval flavour when Gould whisks Emilia away from her Marchesa aunt in Italy who “led a still, whispering existence, nun-like in her black robes and a white band over the forehead, in the corner of the first floor of an ancient and ruinous palace, whose big empty halls downstairs sheltered under their painted ceilings the harvests, the fowls, and even the cattle, together with the whole family of the tenant farmer” (46). Similarly to her old aunt in Italy, Emilia Gould is soon to preside in Sulaco “like the lady of the mediaeval castle” (52).

At first glance, Charles Gould may seem like a person less susceptible, if not immune, to the appeal of adventure than his romantic wife. After all, he is “El Rey de Sulaco” who has successfully worked the silver mine and singlehandedly revived the whole regional economy of the Occidental province. It is said that “Charles Gould was competent because he had no illusions” (63). Not only is Gould competent in his business dealings but he is also one of the most preeminent political lobbyists in the country. His political involvement has produced a tangible result in establishing a Blanco-friendly civil government, which he considers to be a necessary move “to retrieve the peace and the credit of the Republic” (104). Gould’s pragmatic moves are compared to those taken by Henry, another one of Gould’s dead family relations, this time a revolutionary, who “from the conviction of practical necessity, stronger than any abstract political doctrine...had drawn the sword [of revolution].” Gould is “as far from being a political intriguer as his uncle from a revolutionary swashbuckler.” Illusions and idealism play no part in Gould’s pragmatic realism, and his actions simply “[spring] from the instinctive uprightness of” his nature. Gould is “not a man of cowardly illusions” (104-5). At this point, though, Gould’s claim to pragmatism *doth protest a little too much*. His political conviction is constantly defined by a set of negatives like “no nonsense,” “no illusions”

and no “political intriguer.” The proliferation of the opposites – ‘adventurer’ vs. ‘dedicated civil servant’ and “practical necessity” vs. “abstract political doctrine” – which are designed to better locate his position betrays an anxious insight on Gould’s part that recognizes his own attraction to the other end of the opposition.

As much as Gould inherits political pragmatism from his admirable uncles – Harry and Henry Gould – he is singularly affected by the same imaginative weakness which has plagued his late father. Like his father, he falls “under the spell of the San Tomé mine,” but the nature of this enchantment is different from his father’s in that its “magic formula [combined together] hope, vigour, and self-confidence, instead of weary indignation and despair.” Even when Gould decides to become a mining engineer as a practical preparatory step to inheriting the mine, “this scientific aspect of his labours remained vague and imperfect in his mind” (45). The mines he visits in Europe elicit from him “a dramatic interest,” and he studies each of the mine’s “peculiarities from a personal point of view...as one would study the varied characters of men” (45). The reader is yet to learn whether Gould ends up successfully qualifying for a mining engineer, but that seems unlikely as Gould is shown to be interested in the mines more as histories and narratives than as objects for scientific study. Gould sustains his dramatic interest in the mines in Sulaco and decides to blow up the San Tomé mine if it was to be taken over by the wrong kind of people as a theatrical act of defiance. This decision to destroy the mine upon provocation reveals Gould for who he really is, an adventurer:

After all, with his English parentage and English up-bringing, he perceived that he was an adventurer in Costaguana, the descendant of adventurers enlisted in a foreign legion, of men who had sought fortune in a revolutionary war, who had planned revolutions, who had believed in revolutions. For all the uprightness of his character, he had something of an adventurer’s easy morality which takes count of personal risk in the ethical appraising of his action. He was prepared, if need be, to blow up the whole of San Tomé mountain sky high out of the territory of the Republic. This resolution expressed the tenacity of his character, the remorse of that subtle conjugal infidelity through which his wife was no longer the sole mistress of his thoughts, something of his father’s imaginative

weakness, and something, too, of the spirit of buccaneer throwing a lighted match into the magazine rather than surrender his ship. (261-2)

This is a revelatory passage that identifies the familial lineage of Charles Gould as a long line of adventurers and foreigners who have sought fortune in a volatile political situation of a non-European state. His family history finds its literary equivalent in the genre of imperial romance which features scores of “gringo” protagonists seeking fortune and adventure in an exotic setting like that of Costaguana. The passage compares an “adventurer’s easy morality” adopted by Gould to the spirit of buccaneer “throwing a lighted match into the magazine rather than surrender his ship,” a common motif of high sea romance. The difficulty of assessing the moral integrity of Gould’s decision to blow up the mine when necessary is expressed in terms of the uneasy connection the narrator makes between the battles Gould is fighting and those waged by pirates and buccaneers in adventure stories. The passage also defamiliarizes the common motif of buccaneering in romance and highlights its moral dubiousness by transferring the patterns of adventure fiction onto the landscape of the novel’s seeming political realism.

The above passage dubs the entire male line of the Gould family as quixotic fortune-seekers in one sweeping generalization and dismantles the system of opposition between Gould’s pragmatic political uncles and his imaginative father that Gould has carefully established earlier in the novel. What this family line has in store for Gould is an abundance of doubles whose life examples have prefigured and predetermined the patterns of Gould’s actions as in the case of Nostromo and the gringo adventurers in Azuera. In fact, *Nostromo* as a novel generously indulges in the use of doubles, another common motif of romance literature. Katherine Isobel Baxter in her monograph *Joseph Conrad and the Swan Song of Romance* studies Conrad’s use of the conventions of romance. In her chapter on *Nostromo*, she argues that the novel uses doubling in ways that subvert the traditional use of doubles in romance. According to her, doubles in romance provide the reader with a moral bearing through which she can understand the meaning of the events in the narrative. The two examples she uses are the story of the swain and the prince and Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*:

The similarity between a swain and a prince-in-disguise-as-a-swain often indicates the hidden noble birth of the former, which the reader is encouraged to

suspect and uncover before the characters do. Conversely, the similarity between two queens such as Duessa and Una, in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, may be used to test the reader's ability (along with Redcrosse's) to distinguish good from bad. And if, like Redcrosse, we fail to make such distinction during the initial stages of the narrative the revelation encourages us to learn from our mistakes and to distinguish more carefully in future. (69)

Conrad's doubles do not "illumine" the moral message of the narrative in such a way. The doubling in *Nostramo* "[r]ather...circumscribes the character's freedom of action so that where one character fails, if another is made to double the former's characteristics in some way, then failure is implicated for the latter too" (69). Conrad's doubles do not ground the reader morally but instead destabilize the reader's process of interpretation and search for meaning in the narrative.¹⁵ Now that the string of uncles with legendary political careers Gould has been trying to emulate is revealed to be vainglorious adventurers, their examples along with that of Gould's father reinforces the perpetual doubling of moral and personal failure which "circumscribes" Gould's "freedom of action" and also his possibility of success and self-fulfillment.

Emilia Gould too finds her double in her aunt. Her "old and pale aunt" has "married a middle-aged, impoverished Italian marquis" who has been a political visionary and known "how to give up his life to the independence and unity of his country." Emilia's Italian uncle has been "one of the youngest of those who fell for that very cause of which old Giorgio Viola was a drifting relic, as a broken spar is suffered to float away disregarded after a naval victory." Losing her beloved husband to his political vision, Emilia's aunt now "[mourns] that man" and "[leads] a still, whispering existence" (46). Like her aunt, Emilia falls in love with a visionary and loses him to his vision. Her husband works tirelessly, and although Emilia's existence is louder than a whisper and her philanthropic works are recognized all over the country, she still leads a lonely barren (conjugally speaking) life in her medieval-castle-like mansion in Sulaco (52) whereas her aunt really does live in a medieval castle (42). It seems that a curious doubling exists

¹⁵ Baxter's analysis of doubling in *Nostramo* focuses on the character of Emilia Gould and her doubles, Antonia Avellanos and Dr. Monygham.

between the couple's family histories. Earlier, Emilia's union with Charles Gould has invoked multiple meanings of romance. In the failure of their union, romance too fails in multiple senses. The couple finds little sense of fulfillment in their adventure in Sulaco; their romantic union remains fruitless, meaning childless; Gould fails to successfully rescue the lady from the repressive medieval castle – he has simply transferred her to another one.

3.6 Back to the Gulf

The failure of romance plays a larger thematic function in the novel. Romance as a form of literature is attached to a particular worldview. The world of romance is a place where the adventurer can establish a meaningful sense of self by performing a series of purposeful actions. Conrad's novel displays an understanding of this thematic aspect of an adventure narrative. Paul Zweig, critic of adventure fiction, argues that Conrad's works seek to reestablish the world view of romance by which "action and adventure [are seen] as the highest modes of personal definition" (Zweig 15). According to Zweig, "[t]here exists in [Conrad's] work a profound sympathy for heroic experience" (15). I differ with Zweig in that Conrad wishes to reenact the values of adventure. I think Conrad's sympathy for heroic experience simply remains as such, a sympathy. And I call this sentiment a 'nostalgia' as it recognizes the outdatedness of the very object for which it feels nostalgic. Just as Conrad's use of doubling in *Nostromo* fails to illumine the moral message of the narrative, when characters' pursuit of romance or adventure fails in the novel, their sense of purpose and meaning too fails. The world of *Nostromo* is indifferent, even hostile, to the characters' attempts at heroic action. The omniscient narration of the novel presents a cruel picture of what happens when their aspirations for action and adventure crash against the wall of universal indifference.

For Conrad, the sea is a perfect metaphor for this kind of morally indifferent universe and nautical navigation an apt analogy for human search for meaning. His memoir *The Mirror of the Sea* develops such a metaphoric reading of the sea. When Conrad recalls the fond memories of his sailor days, he often compares common sailor struggles to the general experience of humanity. In recalling the sailor's difficulty when

one's visibility is seriously impaired by harsh weather on the ocean, Conrad writes, "To see! to see! – this is the craving of the sailor, as of the rest of blind humanity. To have his path made clear for him is the aspiration of every human being in our beclouded and tempestuous existence" (78). The sea, beset by harsh weather, represents one's "beclouded and tempestuous existence." Nautical visibility is used here as a metaphor for an act of 'seeing', or discovering one's existential purpose. *The Mirror of the Sea* further expounds on what makes the universe so hostile to one's aspiration "to have [their] path made clear for [them]" and reveals the source of this hostility to be *indifference*.

Despite his love for the sea, Conrad admits that "the sea has never been friendly to man" (121). Unlike the lands which bear the effects of human toil and labour upon them, the sea maintains a perennial indifference:

Faithful to no race after the manner of the kindly earth, receiving no impress from valour and toil and self-sacrifice, recognizing no finality of dominion, the sea has never adopted the cause of its masters like those lands where the victorious nations of mankind have taken root, rocking their cradles and setting up their gravestones...the ocean has no compassion, no faith, no law, no memory...All the tempestuous passions of mankind's young days, the love of loot and the love of glory, the love of the unknown and vast dreams of dominion and power, have passed like images reflected from a mirror, leaving no record upon the mysterious face of the sea. Impenetrable and heartless, the sea has given nothing of itself to the suitors for its precarious favours. (121)

A mirror reflects fleeting images of its beholders but never retains any of these images. In the same way, the sea bears no memory of those who have used it as a passageway for pursuing their "love of loot," "glory," and "vast dreams of dominion and power." It shows no recognition for the differences between human races; it does not subjugate itself to the social sense of justice and morality. The sea is a great equalizer that cancels all individual and collective human differences – like death. What can a man demand from the sea which displays such a "cynical indifference...to the merits of human suffering and courage" (127)? Indeed, Conrad the sailor "demanded nothing from it – not even adventure" (139). Although Conrad thinks that the sea provides the mankind with

the best setting for “adventurous voyages” as it contains such vastness, wonders and romance (135), he also holds that “[n]o adventure ever came to one for the asking” (139).

Cannon Schmitt’s article “Tidal Conrad” analyzes in detail the thematic function of the literal sea and related phenomena in Conrad’s fiction. In the case of *Heart of Darkness*, the tide on the Thames that opens the novel forces the ship *Nellie* stay anchored and wait for the favourable ebb to sail out into the ocean. The involuntary inactivity imposed on the shipmen by the condition of the water occasions an opportunity for Marlow to relate his memorable story of Kurtz. Given the novella’s thematic attention on the concept of “restraint” – as in Kurtz’s unrestrained actions of violence committed in Congo – the physical restraint of the tide problematizes the jingoistic attitude that the narrator expresses in the beginning of the novella and also offers itself as a metaphorical critique of European Imperialism, of men and women who thought that they could venture into the world and exploit natural and human resources of elsewhere without a sense of restraint or remorse. The sea and related phenomena in Conrad’s fiction “stand as confirmation of the nonhuman forces in the world that restrict the scope of human action, that must be grasped and negotiated with, that cannot simply be overcome or ignored” (25). Extending this reading to “the rest of Conrad’s corpus” “sheds light on why Conrad should have preferred sail to steam”: it may be a “dedication to a mode of sea travel that does not give the illusion of human omnipotence” (26). It may also be because of the advent of steamers which has brought an end to “mankind’s young days” and its “tempestuous passions” (Conrad 121) – the age of adventure and romance on the sea.

In *Nostramo*, the sea of the Golfo Placido calls for Schmitt’s literalist reading. The Golfo Placido is named so, literally because of the gulf’s placidity. As discussed in the earlier section, when ships enter into the Gulf, they “lose at once the strong breezes of the ocean” and “become the prey of capricious airs that play with them for thirty hours at stretch sometimes” (6) although “your modern ship” forges on, unaffected by its placidity. Another factor that complicates sailing in the Gulf is its “impenetrable darkness” during cloudy nights:

At night the body of clouds advancing higher up the sky smothers the whole quiet gulf below with an impenetrable darkness...Indeed, these cloudy nights are

proverbial with the seamen along the whole west coast of a great continent. Sky, land, and sea disappear together out of the world when the Placido—as the saying is—goes to sleep under its black poncho...In its vastness your ship floats unseen under your feet, her sails flutter invisible above your head. The eye of God Himself—they add with grim profanity—could not find out what work a man's hand is doing in there; and you would be free to call the devil to your aid with impunity if even his malice were not defeated by such a blind darkness. (7)

While the gulf's calmness immobilizes ships like the windless tide in the Thames Estuary in the opening of *Heart of Darkness*, its darkness is impenetrable and blinding for the sailors. The darkness dissolves into nothingness everything that the sailor has seen around him with his naked eye during the day – including “[s]ky, land, and sea.” Literally speaking, the Gulf's calmness and darkness are part of those “nonhuman forces in the world that restrict the scope of human action” (Schmitt 25). Moreover, its darkness, specifically, plays a significant thematic function. “To see!,” according to Conrad, is “the craving of the sailor, as of the rest of blind humanity” (*The Mirror of the Sea* 78). The sailor's blindness in the Gulf mirrors the blindness of the rest of the humanity, and their immobilized status represents humanity's universal “beclouded and tempestuous existence” (78). There is no way for this sailor to “have his path made clear for him” as his “ship floats unseen under [his] feet, her sails flutter invisible above [his] head.” Even the “eye of God” cannot penetrate into this darkness, and the case is no different for the devil. And thus the Gulf in its darkness forms a complete moral void, impenetrable by both good and evil. The calmness of the Gulf may be overcome by the modern technology that drives clippers and steamers, and give “the illusion of human omnipotence” (Schmitt 26) to those on board, but its darkness cannot be escaped by even “your modern ship.” The beclouded black Gulf epitomizes a microcosm of the indifferent cosmos.

Most of the geographical markers in Sulaco which accompany a detailed description in the first chapter ends up performing a clear plot function at some point in the novel. The Golfo Placido and its blinding darkness also directly influence one of the major events in the novel – the transportation of the silver by Decoud and Nostromo. At the outbreak of the revolution, two Monterist armies approach Sulaco – one by land and

the other by sea – aiming for Gould’s silver. Decoud, a known anti-Monterist journalist, needs to leave Sulaco before the armies arrive for his safety. Determined to counter the Monterist revolution with another revolution, Decoud plans to separate the Occidental province from the rest of Costaguana. He leaves the harbour on a lighter full of Gould’s silver, manned only by the sailor Nostromo, with the grand political vision of the new Occidental Republic. However, Decoud’s grand vision is soon to be frustrated by the Gulf’s calmness and darkness. Their lighter hardly moves at all since their departure, and its immobility is “overpowering” for Decoud (190). The Gulf’s darkness too has tremendous psychological effects on Decoud. The “enormous stillness” of the Gulf begins to “affect Decoud’s sense like a powerful drug”; “[l]ike a man lost in slumber, he heard nothing, he saw nothing”; the sense of emptiness he feels in the dark presents such a stark contrast to the life on the shore with all its “agitation,” “passions” and “dangers” that the blackness “[resembles] death,” or the “foretaste of eternal peace” for Decoud; “the circumambient darkness” dissolves into nothingness “land, sea, sky, the mountains, and the rocks”; the “solitude” of “the blackness” comes to “weigh upon Decoud like a stone” (189). In order to make out the boat’s course, Nostromo lights up a small candle (194), but when Nostromo extinguishes its final flame for the fear of being discovered, it is “to Decoud as if his companion [has] destroyed, by a single touch, the world of affairs, of loves, of revolution, where his complacent superiority analyzed fearlessly all motives and all passions, including his own” (197). Decoud feels hopelessly helpless. Even his formidable intelligence, ironic wit and frenchified humour – “the only weapon[s] he could use with effect” could not “penetrate the darkness of the Placid Gulf” (198). Decoud, “the imaginative materialist” (261), is completely overcome and immobilized by the impenetrable nothingness of the Gulf until the lighter’s collision with the Monterists’ steamer forces him into action.

Nostromo, on the other hand, remains unaffected by the Gulf’s debilitating psychological effects. For Nostromo, the Gulf’s calmness and darkness are simply part of those “non-human forces” of the sea which need to be “grasped and negotiated with” (Schmitt 25) by using his sailor know-how. When the lighter departs from the harbor, Martin Decoud delivers his goodbye speech by enthusiastically calling out “*Au revoir, messieurs*, till we clasp hands again over the new-born Occidental Republic.” The lighter

begins to move away from the harbour, and it seems to Decoud that “the wharf was floating away into the night”; only “it was Nostromo who was already pushing against a pile with one of the heavy sweeps.” Decoud is simply “being launched into space” whereas “Nostromo’s feet” keep “leaping about the boat” (188). Soon Decoud loses his enthusiasm of the departure and is quickly dazed by the numbing effect of the Gulf’s darkness. But Nostromo keeps his mind and body busy with practical things: the “denser the darkness generally, the smarter were the puffs of wind on which he had reckoned to make his way” (191). Facing the Gulf’s windlessness, Nostromo “[chirps] softly, as sailors do, to encourage the wind” (199). When Senor Hirsch is discovered in the lighter, and Nostromo and Decoud feel their safety is endangered, Nostromo readily comes up with two pragmatic action plans: either they “sink this treasure tied up round” their necks, or they run away on a little boat leaving behind Hirsch (203-4). Decoud has not even been aware of the presence of the little boat that is towing behind the lighter: “[o]f course, it was too dark to see” anything for Decoud (204). Nostromo and Decoud represent two completely different perspectives and modes of existence. Nostromo is a simple, practical man. He is an adept sailor for whom the sea of the Gulf remains what it is literally, a sea. Decoud, by contrast, knows very little about sailing or other practical matters, but he is a keen reader and intellectual. He recognizes the thematic significance of the Gulf’s blinding darkness and is overpowered by its nihilistic implications.

The two characters’ vast differences are brought into view when they face the common danger of the sinking ship. The steamer manned by Sotillo’s Monterist army hits the lighter obliquely and wakes Decoud from his nihilistic slumber and launches him into action. Decoud “[pumps]” water out of the lighter “without intermission” while Nostromo “[steers] without relaxing for a second” (213). This common danger ironically isolates and alienates them from each other instead of uniting them. The narrator tells us that “[e]ach of them” is “as if utterly alone with his task.” Their shared knowledge of the sinking ship acts as a “crucial test of their desires,” and they seem “to have become completely estranged, as if they [have] discovered in the very shock of the collision that the loss of the lighter would not mean the same thing to them both.” It would not mean the same to them since each of them pursues a different vision and adventure:

This common danger brought their differences in aim, in view, in character and in position, into absolute prominence in the private vision of each. There was no bond of conviction, of common idea; they were merely two adventurers pursuing each his own adventure, involved in the same imminence of deadly peril.

Therefore they had nothing to say to each other. (213)

The close possibility of losing the lighter and silver magnifies the deepest desires and motivations of the two men. In this curious timing and setting, they discover their own subjectivities. Normally, a life-or-death situation would bring together two individual adventurers as they face the common adventure of perilous voyage. But Decoud and Nostromo strive for completely different things even in the face of the common danger, and for the first time ever they become acutely aware of this fact. Decoud is after politics; Nostromo, after treasure. It is as if each of their life story is cut out from a different narrative genre: Nostromo's from something like imperial Gothic and Decoud's from a more sophisticated political romance. The omniscient narration then acts as a meta-framework commenting on and validating the separate frames of romantic narratives which are the lives of Decoud and Nostromo. A sense of meaning and purpose that drives the actions of the characters is now relativized. The worldview of the adventure genre is absorbed into the modern world of relativism and individualism.

The two men miraculously find and land on an island in the dark. Nostromo swims for the harbour leaving behind Decoud and silver. Stranded on the island, Decoud encounters an extreme form of subjectivity and relativism which drive him into near madness and leads him to commit suicide. The narrator tells us that Decoud dies "from solitude, the enemy known to few on this ear, and whom only the simplest of us are fit to withstand." Decoud in his brilliant Parisian cynicism is too sophisticated an intellectual to hold out the deadly power of complete solitude. Spending a few days on the island without seeing a single human face, Decoud begins to "doubt" "his own individuality"; he loses "all belief in the reality of his action past and to come"; "[b]oth his intelligence and his passion" are "swallowed up easily in this great unbroken solitude of waiting without faith" (356-7). Solitude drives Decoud into the purest form of nihilism, and he dies from "want of faith in himself and others" (356). He then chooses to die by gunshot and drowning. Decoud, "weighted by the bars of San Tomé silver, [disappears] without a

trace”: he is “swallowed up in the immense indifference of things,” that is the sea of the Golfo Placido. What the narrator calls ‘solitude’, critic Erdinast-Vulcan calls ‘subjectivity’. She proposes to read Decoud’s ending as a surrender to the “skeptical relativistic outlook.” Decoud “ends up by being stranded, both literally and figuratively, without a foothold in an indifferent, senseless universe” (Erdinast-Vulcan, *Joseph Conrad* 84-5). His separatist vision lives on, and the Occidental province eventually forms its own Republic. Nevertheless, Decoud’s personal adventure and romance fail and are swallowed up by the indifferent universe.

3.7 Conclusion

For a novel so devoted to the conventions of romance, *Nostramo* witnesses too many of its characters’ pursuit of adventure end in failure. Different aspects of adventure narratives are so thoroughly invoked throughout the novel, that when romance fails in the novel, it does so all the more splendidly in its multiple meanings and senses. The world of romance is a thing of the past for *Nostramo*’s nostalgic narrator. Instead of ironically parodying the conventions of romance and the adventure genre, he nostalgically announces the passing of the old world. Genuine adventure calls for some sort of belief in the Absolute and along with it, meaning, purpose and ideals, and such a belief cannot be afforded by a solitary individual like Decoud. However, if Decoud dies from solitude, his cure may have been society. On the one end of the spectrum is an intellectual steeped in the values of relativism and individualism; on the other end, there is a society united by a strong communal bond. In the narrator’s nostalgic attitude to romance, one sees a glimpse of his utopian desire for a cooperative community, which might explain why *Nostramo* is hailed as “the Man of the People” (Conrad 411).

Chapter 4

4 The Utopian Vision of Nostalgia

In her essay “Nostalgia and Its Discontents,” Svetlana Boym diagnoses “nostalgia” to be “a symptom of our age.” Nostalgia, according to her, is an “historical emotion”; it is “an expression of local longing,” which is only possible in the modern era that has seen the rise of “a new understanding of time and space that makes the division into ‘local’ and ‘universal’ possible.” Nostalgia is a reaction or rebellion against the universalizing and globalizing mission of the modern age. Rebelling against the modern ideas of time, history, and progress, “[t]he nostalgic desires to turn history into private or collective mythology, to revisit time like space, refusing to surrender to the irreversibility of time that plagues the human condition” (8).

Boym’s brief essay on nostalgia offers a remarkable summary of the functions of nostalgia in the works of the authors I have examined thus far. My three authors – Robert Louis Stevenson, Rudyard Kipling, and Joseph Conrad – embody the exact class of “the nostalgic” that Boym describes above. The marks of the modern age against which they were reacting and rebelling are diverse: the totalizing territorial expansion of New Imperialism which left the modern adventurer with no geographical alternatives to explore other than Europe’s overseas territories; the rise of global capitalism which threatened to obliterate local differences; the rise of the machine that started to render obsolete the human factor in labour (especially in sailing). Nostalgia for a different time led the authors to turn to the past where the possibilities for genuine action and authentic adventure seemed to be abundant. And they found this ideal past in literature – in the adventure genre of the past generation. However, when they composed stories in the style of the past adventure fiction, the narrative consciousness of these stories betrayed a sophisticated historical and generic awareness of the ones who have arrived at the scene too late. Their stories have somehow lost the innocence of the genre; they could only be nostalgic rewritings of the past adventure fiction. In fact, nostalgia is a key feature of these stories, and its influence permeates into a number of narrative elements of the stories including the spatial and temporal construction of the setting. Unable to envision the exotic land of the Other in the age of New Imperialism, the authors construct unique

nostalgic, heterotopian spaces for the settings for adventure in their narratives. They indeed seek to “revisit time [the ideal past] like space” (Boym 8) as are the cases with Jim Hawkins’s *Treasure Island*, Daniel Dravot and Peachey Carnehan’s *Kafiristan*, and even *Nostromo*’s Sulaco.

Nevertheless, the visit to the ideal literary past does not satisfactorily fulfill the narratives’ nostalgic desire for adventure. On the contrary, the traumatic memory of the historical past – for example, the Indian “Mutiny” of 1857 in the case of Kipling’s “The Man Who Would Be King” – becomes a major obstacle to the complete idealization and nostalgic indulgence of the literary past by the narratives. Boym says that the nostalgic seeks to “turn history into private or collective mythology.” What the authors find in revisiting the past is that history is recalcitrant to their efforts to fantasize and mythologize it. Even their own historical awareness turns against them: the very awareness that the past they were reconstructing is not the *historical* past, but the *ideal* past found in literature, acts as an obstacle to the fulfillment of their nostalgic desire. Ultimately, the encounter with history, the Real, unsettles the trajectory and itinerary of nostalgia in the narratives. In Fredric Jameson’s words, “History is what hurts”; “it is what refuses desire and sets inexorable limits to individual as well as collective praxis” (102).

What then is the point of the authors’ nostalgic visit to the past in the narratives? Is it, merely, a sentimental exercise that ends in a sobering historical shock? Such might be the case if nostalgia were always only retrospective, forever turning to the past of its desire that it can never relive – heading for an impossible homecoming. But I agree with Boym who argues that nostalgia “is not always retrospective; it can be prospective as well.” She continues that “[t]he fantasies of the past, determined by the needs of the present, have a direct impact on the realities of the future” (8). Nostalgia’s concern with the future has something to do with its collective nature. Rather than a purely individual fantasy, nostalgia “is about the relationship between individual biography and the biography of groups or nations, between personal and collective memory” (9). By revisiting the inaccessible ideals of the past, nostalgia can offer criticisms of the present and utopian directions for the future generation. This is not to say, however, that all nostalgic tales present utopian visions for the future although one detects a hint of utopian

desire even in non-futuristic nostalgic tales. Boym notices that “futuristic utopia might be out of fashion,” but “nostalgia itself has a utopian dimension” (9). Other theorists of nostalgia like Susan Stewart and Linda Hutcheon agree with Boym's observation. In her essay on nostalgia, Hutcheon reiterates Stewart's argument that “nostalgia makes the idealized (and therefore always absent) past into the site of immediacy, presence, and authenticity,” and therefore, “nostalgia is, in this way, ‘prelapsarian’ and indeed *utopian*” (my emphasis, 35).

The present chapter uncovers the utopian dimension of the nostalgic desire conveyed by the adventure novels of Kipling and Conrad. The simple idea that I have been belabouring thus far is that nostalgia for adventure is essentially a desire for meaningful experience and fulfilling life. For such meaningful experience to be possible, it called for a world, altogether different from ‘the present’ my authors were living in – the one with deeply communal values which cared for the growth and maturity of its inhabitants. As Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin, after him, found a model for ideal social organization in their versions of the medieval past, my authors reconstructed an alternative world of adventure by using the value system of the older adventure genre and its timeless form – romance. Rewriting the adventure genre allows the authors to revel in their vision of a more idyllic cooperative community such as the ones formed between Gloucester fishermen in Kipling's *Captains Courageous* (1897) and the townspeople of Sulaco in Conrad's *Nostramo* (1904). What holds together this kind of organic integrated society in the novels is the hard work that the characters put in as part of their adventure; their work plays two-fold roles of self-actualization and community-building. As the authors dwell on the ideal construction of the world of adventure and thereby express their deep dissatisfaction with the present, nostalgia in their novels seeks to reclaim the humanizing and self-actualizing aspect of work from the strictly utilitarian and rationalist view of labour as service in exchange for wage. Nostalgia for adventure, in this sense, suggests more than a private fantasy but a social vision. In uncovering the utopian dimension of the novels' nostalgia, I appeal to Frye's and Jameson's socially oriented approaches to literary criticism – to read the narrative desire in their texts in communal terms as a drive for an ideal future society. The utopian push in Frye's and Jameson's

own critical frameworks parallels the texts' aspiration for a society of community-minded individuals emancipated through the means of meaningful adventure and work.

4.1 Work and Adventure

In *Gospels and Grit: Work and Labour in Carlyle, Conrad, and Orwell*, Rob Breton posits that Conrad's and Kipling's attitudes towards work and society are more Victorian than modern (117-8) in their glorification of work. In order to understand their Victorian sensibilities regarding work and society, it is helpful to examine the similarities between their views and that of Thomas Carlyle. At the centre of the Victorian attitudes to work and society is Thomas Carlyle's philosophy of Work which exalts human labour as a means of individual salvation. Despite the religious connotation of the word, salvation is not an understatement in discussing Carlyle's philosophy. A secular transcendentalist in the age of the Industrial Revolution and the rise of utilitarianism, Carlyle held onto work as the divine provision for the fulfillment of humanity's higher purpose. In *Sartor Resartus*, the German Professor Teufelsdröckh touts Work as what would save humanity from the descent into material hedonism and utilitarianism in the face of the wide-spread loss of religious faith. His mandate is "Work while it is called today; for the Night cometh, wherein no man can work" (203). This mandate serves as a conspicuous allusion to the Biblical call for faith and warning against unbelief in Hebrews 3:15 – "While it is said, [*To day*] if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation" (KJV). Here, those who hardened their hearts and did not believe when they had the chance ("today") are the first-generation Israelites who were barred from entering the promised land. It is spoken of them, "Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my [*rest*]." (Hebrews 3:10-11, KJV). Both the similarity and difference between Teufelsdröckh's words and the Biblical original are striking. Whereas the writer of the Hebrews calls for faith in the Lord of the Sabbath which will bring true rest to the believer, Teufelsdröckh instead preaches Work as a means of salvation. Elsewhere, in *Past and Present*, Work emerges as even an end in itself. Carlyle writes,

The only happiness a brave man ever troubled himself with asking much about was, happiness enough to get his work done. Not “I can’t eat!” but “I can’t work!” that was the burden of all wise complaining among men. It is, after all, the one unhappiness of a man. That he cannot work; that he cannot get his destiny as a man fulfilled. Behold, the day is passing swiftly over, our life is passing swiftly over; and the night cometh, wherein no man can work. The night once come, our happiness, our unhappiness, -- it is all abolished; vanished, clean gone; a thing that has been: ‘not of the slightest consequence’ whether we were happy as eupeptic as Curtis, as the fattest pig of Epicurus, or un-happy as Job... (157-8)

The tone of this passage is similarly apocalyptic like Teufelsdröckh’s allusion to the Bible. Whether it be individual death or humanity’s ultimate demise he was referring to by the “night,” Work is what a man should pursue to fulfill his destiny. Work for Work’s sake was certainly Carlyle’s battle cry. It was the Carlylean elixir against excessive introspection, on the one hand, and decadent epicureanism, on the other.

There are obvious limitations to applying his philosophy to real life at face value, to the context of actual labour conditions and relations, especially. Breton’s valuable criticism is that Carlyle never makes a distinction between the self-fulfilling work available for the bourgeois class and the hard drudgery the working class is forced to carry out to make a living. This neglect and subsequent abstraction/ idealization of Work lead him to “[bounce] between an aristocratic desire to freeze social relations in rigid hierarchies and the typically middle-class position that self-made wealth signifies goodness” (69). His message to the working class seems to be ‘know your place and work’ without allowing them any room to negotiate the terms of their labour.

Despite such blatant practical limitations, what interests me about Carlyle’s philosophy is the intersection between his Work and my authors’ Adventure. Breton notices that Carlyle’s representation of the qualities of Work closely resembles what “Today we tend to associate play with” such as “spontaneity, creativity, freedom, and innovation.” Breton writes,

In fact, Work for him is ‘playful,’ and his style is fittingly playful, in Johan Huizinga’s sense of the word: spontaneous but disciplined, creative but heavily structured, and moreover, indicative of a kind of contest or a challenge. Carlylean

Work corresponds to Huizinga's 'play' insofar as it accommodates rules and subordination on the one hand and (artisanal) autonomy, stubbornness, independence, and a challenge to utilitarian order on the other. (51-2)

Carlyle's idealized Work does not equate the backbreaking labour of the working class. It is rather an individual's existential battle raged against the modern condition to prove one's worth and shape one's own destiny. The liberal aspect of his Work associates it with what we now understand as 'play' as suggested in the above passage.

Breton's analysis of Carlylean Work interestingly corresponds to what Paul Zweig understands to be the essence of adventure. According to Zweig, adventure stories present intense adventurous moments as a plunge into "essential experience" rather than temporary vacations from real life: "They [adventure stories] offer us heroes obsessed by risk and confrontation, who spell out a choice we glimpse only fleetingly in ourselves: the choice to pursue adventures, to interpret life itself as a series of solitary combats, with death as the adversary. Adventure stories transpose our dalliance with risk into a sustained vision" (4). He considers the reason why romance as a literary form has been degraded to the realm of popular culture since Renaissance has to do with the new ways in which the secular world governed by the market economy defined "Man." No longer was a human being defined by their outward actions but by their inward secrets. High literature with deep insights into human nature was to be preoccupied with the characters' interiority rather than their public acts. In the modern novel, "'actions' and adventures hinder individuality"; "they do not reveal it" (10). Zweig's criticism of the modern novel is reminiscent of Carlyle's disapproval of utilitarianism: "Our modern disregard for adventure reveals how thoroughly domesticated is the view we have come to take of our human, and cultural limits. Man, we have decided, is the laboring animal whose ability to create values depends upon his infinite capacity to buy and to sell: his time, his work, his very life. From this point of view, adventure is, at best, a recreation" (Zweig 5-6). In the nineteenth century, romance was once more recuperated to the high culture by writers like Melville and Conrad. Zweig calls them anti-novelists who opposed "the modernist tradition [which] created a language of radical privacy" and "attempted to reestablish action and adventure as the highest modes of personal definition" (15).

Zweig's adventurer and Carlyle's worker are similar in the sense that they both discover and shape who they are through conscious acts and interactions with outward circumstances. There are a few commonalities between the pursuits of adventure and work. First of all, they are both marked by an intense desire for fulfillment. Besides, they have overlapping elements as in there is work involved in the adventure of romance (think of Conrad's sailors' hard work) and adventure involved in Carlyle's work (think of Breton's descriptors like a "contest" and a "challenge"). Another commonality that they share is that their proponents consider them as a thing of the past. Zweig speaks of the works of the "anti-novelists": "There exists in their work a profound sympathy for heroic experience" (15). This "sympathy" I have been analyzing as a complex form of nostalgia, which is most evident in the adventure writers' choice of the past as the setting for their stories. Carlyle too looks to the past for the heroes whose labour embodied the sanctity of human work – in the twelfth-century medieval England.

In 1840s, Carlyle saw the 'condition of England' to be that of spiritual bankruptcy and moral degradation. He found inspiration for regenerating the present Victorian society in the past through his visit to the ruins of the abbey at Bury St Edmunds and reading of Jocelyn de Brakelond's *Chronicle of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds* which records how life used to be in the abbey under the leadership of Abbot Samson in the twelfth century. Hence, Carlyle gives his book on the 'condition of England' the title of *Past and Present*. Carlyle's nostalgic look at the life of the abbey reveals the social aspect of his philosophy of Work. Linda Austin's article "The Nostalgic Moment and the Sense of History" argues that Carlyle's medievalism is one of the earliest forms of depathologized nostalgia, not an illness that sent soldiers to hospital beds or led them to desert the army camp, but a normative one with cultural functions. According to the article, the medievalisms of the nineteenth century "in various esthetic forms proved so instrumental in forming a popular sense of history and a national identity" (128). Carlyle and Ruskin, in particular, wrote "history as an anti-industrial narrative decline" (129), and they located a "Golden Age" of social harmony and spiritual fulfillment in the distant past of the twelfth century. In a way, the nostalgic reminiscing of the past serves no apparent practical purpose except as a mournful reminder of the ideal values that used to be practiced and are now lost. Austin stresses the "estranging effect of nostalgia" for

Carlyle: “he approached the *Chronicle* convinced that the political and social structures of early Victorian England had become too moribund and that material and religious culture had altered too drastically for contemporary readers to benefit from restoring practices of the past” (131). But it would be too reductionist a reading of Carlyle if we conclude that he preached and wished for a return to the past as it used to be. A more sensible interpretation that accounts for his strength as a social critic would be that he makes use of Jocelyn’s *Chronicle* as a source material from which to build his social vision.

Sociologist R.E. Pahl once said that “there was no pre-industrial golden age of satisfying work” (qtd. in Breton 44). Whether Carlyle was aware of how unrealistically idealized his representation of the past was or not, the medieval monastery life serves the metaphorical role of fleshing out his social agenda. His critics point out that he uses the monastery life as a “symbol” (Altick xv), “parable” (Breton, “Utopia and Thomas Carlyle’s ‘Ancient Monk’” 44), and “folklore” (Evans 235) – as literary devices and genre. One way of understanding such descriptors is that Carlyle was using a different mode of representation when he approached the past. Of the three terms, “folklore” is the most genre-related term with a historical bearing. Timothy Evans specifies that “folklore” for Carlyle and other Victorian medievalists meant “folklife”: “the peasant community as a society and a whole way of life, with an emphasis on material culture” (248). In adopting a particular literary mode in describing the past, Carlyle creates a new totalizing worldview, inspired by the past and projected onto the future. Richard Altick in his edition of *Past and Present* introduces “Life in the abbey of St. Edmund” as Carlyle’s “running symbol of the fulfillment of Christian society’s purpose” (xiv-xv). While “Carlyle’s remedy for the ills of his age” was “Nothing short of society’s ethical and religious regeneration, a return to the serene faith, obedience, and values of Abbot Samson’s time” (xv), Carlyle did not expect or hope for England’s return to the identical values of the twelfth century “in form or content” (xv) but rather to those “harmonious in spirit” (xv). The representation of Abbot Samson and his monks is used, in Breton’s words, to “establish a mood of community as an antidote to modernity, with its social climbing, competition, alienation, anatomization and depersonalization” (217). Breton’s article quotes La Valley’s pithy definition of Carlyle’s utopia as a place “in which man

would be restored to his full humanity and society to one body in its self-fulfilling activity” (qtd. in Breton 217). The society Carlyle dreamed of was a religious community with rigid social structures and hierarchies where both the ruling and working classes work together for the advancement of the collective. Work in that setting would be both self-fulfilling and community building, and material and spiritual.

I spell out Carlyle’s philosophy of Work and its utopian dimension for the helpful similarities I see between them and my authors’ attitude to work, adventure, and society. All three texts, *Past and Present*, *Captains and Courageous*, and *Nostramo* are marked by an intense desire for an ideal space that holistically embodies their vision of a good society, and this desire is manifested as a nostalgia for the past. While Carlyle finds his social model in the folklore of Abbot Samson, the conventions and expectations of the adventure genre inform the novelists’ utopian vision.

4.2 Frye and Jameson

In order to explore the utopian aspect of the nostalgia of their texts in its more appropriate material context, I appeal to Frye’s archetypal criticism and Jameson’s Marxist hermeneutics. Katherine Baxter’s *Joseph Conrad and the Swan Song of Romance* provides a useful theoretical point of departure for me. In her monograph, she rejects Frye’s structural reading of romance for being reductionist: “For Frye the aim of reading romance fiction becomes not an appreciation of individual texts themselves, necessarily, but in addition the gaining of access through their collective narrative force to larger, totalizing narrative patterns which reflect a totalized social conscience” (2). She instead opts for Robert Miles’ concept of “philosophical romance” which is a genre that self-consciously uses the fantasy elements of romance to “trespass on realism” (6) and expose “the ideological nature of ideology” or the arbitrary nature of given social values of the time by aligning them with fictional constructs. Baxter’s argument is that “Conrad uses romance radically throughout his writing career to question the values of his historical milieu and the power of narrative itself” (14). There is no doubt that the use of ‘philosophical romance’ serves Baxter well in highlighting Conrad’s experimentalism and sophisticated engagements with ideological critique. Her reading of *Nostramo*, in

particular, is that the novel is “a double parody of both the romance and realist literature” (81). Even Nostromo’s death is a punishment for the reader who forces “meaning from the author”; the author is in turn forced to “kill off his hero” in order to “[present the reader] with the reality of a meaningless ending” (80).

However, labelling *Nostromo* as a parody does not account for the text’s emotional affinity with the value systems of the romance form and adventure genre. My previous chapters sought to establish the presence of a genuine longing for how things were in the past in the adventure fiction of Stevenson, Kipling, and Conrad. As in the case of Carlyle’s nostalgia for medieval England, nostalgia for adventure and romance contains a strong social dimension. The appeal to Frye and Jameson is appropriate for the primacy of the social concerns in their interpretive systems. The impulse of their literary criticism is also totalizing, universal, and, most of all, utopian. As Frye seeks to gain “access” to “a totalized social conscience” reflected by larger, totalizing narrative patterns (Baxter 2), Jameson develops an interpretive system that uncovers the universal political unconscious of the literary texts. What the two critics suspect that texts do unconsciously – strive for a utopian society – I argue that my texts do so quite consciously – that the nostalgic rewriting of romance presents a totalizing social vision wherein community is seen as an antidote to the alienating effects of modernity.

To begin with, Jameson’s socially grounded approach to narrative desire is pivotal to understanding the social dimension of my texts’ nostalgia. Desire is an important concept in Jameson’s theorization of the system of Marxist hermeneutics. In *Political Unconscious*, Jameson delineates the collective drive of narrative desire in his theory by differentiating his approach from Freudian psychoanalysis and turning to Northrop Frye’s archetypal literary criticism. According to Jameson, every interpretation proper involves a master code by which the latent meaning of a literary text is inferred and rewritten. Jameson argues that the master code of Freudian psychoanalysis is “desire”: “The center around which the Freudian interpretive system turns is not sexual experience but rather wish-fulfillment, or its more metaphysical variant, ‘desire,’ posited as the very dynamic of our being as individual subjects” (65). The later versions of the Freudian reading of desire fully develop “the ideology of desire” (66) and “effectively transformed” “the object of commentary” “into an allegory whose master narrative is the story of desire

itself, as it struggles against a repressive reality, convulsively breaking through the grids that were designed to hold it in place, or, on the contrary, succumbing to repression and leaving the dreary wasteland of *aphanasis* behind it” (67).

The cultural context that allows such views on desire to emerge is the isolation and abstraction of individual experiences in modern thoughts. For instance, the Freudian “articulation and analysis of the mechanisms of desire” depend on “such key themes or signifiers as the phallus, castration, the primal scene, the psychosexual stages, narcissism, repression, Eros vs. Thanatos, and the life.” These sexual themes can be developed into “an independent sign system or symbolic dimension in its own right” only when sexuality becomes alienated from social life in general, through a process of “isolation, autonomization, [and] specialization” (64). In the following passage, Jameson makes a clear connection between the abstraction of various human values and activities in modernity and the Freudian interest in studying the working of ‘desire’ as a symbolic system:

For with the coming of secular society and the desacralization of life paths and of the various rituals of traditional activity, with the new mobility of the market and the freedom of hesitation before a whole range of professions as well as the even more fundamental and increasingly universal commodification of labor power...it became possible for the first time to separate the unique quality and concrete content of a particular activity from its abstract organization or end, and to study the latter in isolation. To claim that Freud’s conception of wish-fulfillment is a late stage in this process of abstraction...is simply to observe that you cannot talk about wish-fulfillment or desire except by way of a powerful abstraction performed on a host of concrete and irreducible wishes or desires... (66)

Human desires now belong to the realm of the private as the desiring subjects have been alienated from the traditional collective social life. Such a precondition allows for the Freudian reading of desire which abstracts and alienates the act of desiring from its material contents as well as from its desiring subject. The element of reification – the very thing that the Marxist critic is wary of and considers as a hallmark of the alienating process of the modern capitalist society – is built into the Freudian examination of desire.

There are two main reasons why the Freudian approach is not so useful for the theorization of the political unconscious. First, its view of the transgressiveness of genuine desire makes it difficult for desire to be materially contextualized. In psychoanalysis, genuine desire is a repressed form of desire that needs to surface to consciousness, which means that “desire must always be transgressive, must always have a repressive norm or law through which to burst and against which to define itself.” The perennial transgressiveness of repressed desire makes desire stand “outside of time” and “outside of narrative”; desire, then, “has no content, it is always the same in its cyclical moments of emergence.” Whatever historical background in which the repressed desire emerged has no real tangible material significance or “historicity” other than as “the context of the explosion” (68). The second reason is “more damaging” from Jameson’s point of view. It is that in Freudian Hermeneutics, desire “remains locked into the category of the individual subject.” For the theorization of the collective political unconscious, the critic must “transcend individualistic categories and modes of interpretation” (68). Jameson, then, turns to Northrop Frye as a more appropriate theoretical predecessor for a political hermeneutic that interprets desire “in terms of the collective.”

Frye’s archetypal system examines “the function of culture explicitly in social terms” (68) and fits the overall picture of Jameson’s Marxist hermeneutics. Freudian psychoanalysis and Frye’s myth criticism embody the polar opposites in the spectrum of literary interpretation. Freud’s diagnostic approaches to the psychological working of an alienated subject in literature can be severely contrasted by Frye’s theological reflection on the collective social function of myths and other cultural texts. According to Jameson, the “greatness of Frye” lies in “his willingness to raise the issue of community” and to connect the function of literature with that of religion as “collective representation” (69). Religion, for Frye, is “the human community[’s]” “symbolic coming to consciousness of itself,” and “the religious figures” embody “the symbolic space in which the collectivity thinks itself and celebrates its own unity.” As secular successors of these religious figures, the cultural objects of our time are “a weaker form of myth or a later stage of ritual,” and in that sense, “all literature must be read as a symbolic meditation on the destiny of community” (70). Frye further develops the connection between religious and

cultural texts by reinventing the Medieval biblical hermeneutics¹⁶ for the purpose of his literary criticism. In the first two levels, Literal and Formal, Frye deals with the specifics of the literary language used in the texts and its engagement with the reading mind. The question of human desire, central to our earlier discussion on Freud, emerges in the third level of Frye's interpretative system.

On the third level (Mythical or Allegorical), Frye's interpretation highlights the social aspect of desire rather than examining desire as a function of private libido. The following passage is worth quoting in full:

The archetypal critic studies the poem as part of poetry, and poetry as part of the total imitation of nature that we call civilization. Civilization is not merely an imitation of nature, but the process of making a total human form out of nature, and it is impelled by the force that we have just called desire...It is neither limited to nor satisfied by objects, but is the energy that leads human society to develop its own form. Desire in this sense is the social aspect of what we met on the literal level as emotion, an impulse toward expression which would have remained amorphous if the poem had not liberated it by providing the form of its expression. The form of desire, similarly, is liberated and made apparent by civilization. The efficient cause of civilization is work, and poetry in its social aspect has the function of expressing, as a verbal hypothesis, a vision of the goal of work and the forms of desire. (Frye 105-6, qtd. in Jameson 71-2)

Desire on this level is not a desire belonging to particular individuals, or even for particular objects. Frye gives examples of desires driven by need or want in order to differentiate the kind of social desire he is discussing from them. Desire here is not "a simple response to need, for an animal may need food without planting a garden to get it," nor does animals' need for food and shelter lead them to develop "farming and architecture." Desire is a collective push for a better human society – or, say, a utopian

¹⁶ The Medieval hermeneutic system involved four levels of interpretation of the scripture: it examined a narrative in the Old Testament as a historical fact (Literal); the narrative in question is, then, analyzed as an allegory of the biography of Christ (Allegorical); the allegorical reading leads to the spiritual lesson for an individual believer (Moral); the final level of interpretation involves the meditation on the fate of the human race upon Christ's second coming (Anagogical).

vision – and a literary text liberates otherwise “amorphous” desire by giving “the form of expression” to it (106).

Similarly to Frye, Jameson sees a literary text as an expression of the larger collective political unconscious. His interpretive system builds upon the Medieval four-fold Hermeneutics and Frye’s contemporary counterpart, and he seeks to construct a specifically social hermeneutic which examines desire in literary texts as a collective drive for “the perfected community” and “the renewed organic identity of associative or collective life” (74). Instead of the four stages of interpretation developed by the Medieval theologians and Frye, Jameson suggests “three concentric frameworks” which will “mark a widening out of the sense of the social ground of a text.” The first framework deals with “political history” which involves “punctual event and a chronicle like sequences of happenings in time”; the second framework involves the concerns of the society, more specifically, the “less diachronic and time-bound sense of a constitutive tension and struggle between social classes; the final framework deals with the notion of “history” which is “conceived in its vastest sense of the sequence of modes of production and the succession and destiny of the various human social formations, from prehistoric life to whatever far future history has in store for us” (75). Far from Jameson’s approach is that a literary text expresses the narrow view of the interests of one particular social class. Instead, in Jameson’s political, social, and historical examination of literature, a literary text becomes a symbolic space in which 1) political conflicts are symbolically resolved, 2) antagonistic class interests are articulated, and 3) multiple modes of production and their value systems are allowed to co-exist even in opposition against each other. A literary text provides a cultural platform for a symbolic resolution between social conflicts in a given historical moment. In a sense, each text brings about its own cultural revolution driven by the utopian desire for a better community – classless, free, and unalienating.

The method by which a literary text articulates its vision of communal social coexistence is through “the ideology of form,” which Jameson defines as “the symbolic messages transmitted to us by the coexistence of various sign systems which are themselves traces or anticipations of modes of production” (76). Unlike the traditional Marxist way of thinking of the mode of production as a diachronic concept (one

dominant mode of production succeeded by another mode chronologically), Jameson proposes to read the concept synchronically. He adopts Nicos Poulantzas' view of the "social formation," which suggests that "every social formation or historically existing society has in fact consisted in the overlay and structural coexistence of *several* modes of production all at once, including vestiges and survivals of older modes of production, now relegated to structurally dependent positions within the new, as well as anticipatory tendencies which are potentially inconsistent with the existing system but have not yet generated an autonomous space of their own" (95). A literary text captures such a social moment and instigates its own cultural revolution. In real life, cultural revolution is normally observed as a product of a critical transitional moment where "the coexistence of various modes of production becomes visibly antagonistic, their contradictions moving to the very center of political, social, and historical life" (95). In Jameson's final "horizon" of interpretation, the text becomes "a field of force in which the dynamics of sign systems of several distinct modes of production can be registered and apprehended" and "make up" *the ideology of form* (98). "The study of the ideology of form" takes the form of "a technical and formalistic analysis" which "seeks to reveal the active presence within the text of a number of discontinuous and heterogeneous formal processes." The uneven developments of formal processes in a given text are seen as "sedimented content in their own right, as carrying ideological messages of their own" (99).

The present chapter seeks to apply a similar social interpretation on my authors' use of the romance form in their adventure stories with the acknowledgement that there are interesting parallels between the aforementioned thinkers (Carlyle, Frye, and Jameson) and my authors. *Captains Courageous* and *Nostramo* consciously adopt the form of romance in an effort to reconstruct a world where multiple modes of production – including both moribund and emergent ones – and their value systems can coexist. The force of desire that drives the narrative trajectory of these stories is *nostalgia*. The texts' nostalgic gaze towards the harmonious communal life supposedly enjoyed in the past is intercepted by their historical awareness of the present where previous social relations and communal bonds have been effectively dissolved. This chapter examines how the nostalgic use of romance in the novels points towards a utopian vision for an unalienating collective society.

4.3 *Captains Courageous*

Rudyard Kipling's *Captains Courageous* (1897) is a sea adventure story about the life on board a Gloucester fishing schooner on the Grand Banks. The story centers around a 15-year-old boy, Harvey Cheyne, a son of an American multi-millionaire, who is badly raised and spoiled by his hysterical mother, and largely neglected by his industrious father. In the beginning of the story, Harvey falls overboard from an ocean liner on his way to Europe for his education. He is, subsequently, rescued by the fishermen of *We're Here* and is forced to last the fishing season on the Grand Banks as part of the crew. The healthy laborious life on the Grand Banks, along with the communal life on board, eventually cures Harvey from the enervating effects of the effeminate, luxurious, and idle life he has been leading on shore before the days of *We're Here*. He ends up receiving an altogether different kind of education from the one his parents intended him to have in Europe, but with better outcomes. In Kipling's words, "the boy works out his own salvation and learns discipline and duty" (*The Letters of Rudyard Kipling Vol.2* 242).

The plot of the novel outlines a typical Kipling story about an adaptable boy coming of age through a series of unlikely adventures in an unlikely setting. In fact, that is how Kipling envisioned his story to be – a *typical* adventure story for boys. A couple of times in his letters to companions, Kipling labels *CC* as "a boy's story" (237) in a somewhat dismissive way. To Elizabeth Ward, a writer invested in stories set in Gloucester who was showing an interest in his novel, he wrote, "my little tale is not of sufficient account to give you or your husband one moment's concern. It is really *a boy's story* of some 50,000 words, and deals almost exclusively with life on the Grand Banks." (my emphasis, 242). He insists in the letter that "there is no plot; no love making and no social problem" in his story (242).

For a mere "boy's story," *Captains Courageous* carries out an ironically ambitious hidden agenda: allegorizing the fate of America as an emerging nation. Shortly after its publication, a critic from *Atlantic Monthly* wrote a scathing review of the novel, calling it insignificant and lifeless, "as if it were a steamer underengined on its length" (qtd. in Ormond xiii). Kipling finds the comment hurtful but ironically true because the

critic's words exactly described what he thought about America in an essence, which he sought to capture through the novel: "That's his own country and in half a dozen words he gets at the nub of the thing I was laboriously painting in C.C." Kipling's defense was that it was unreasonable of the critic to expect him to "extract from a two hundred year old background [that is the history of America] all the tints of the gilded East." In order to capture the spirit of the new country in narrative, Kipling intentionally changed his style to "allegorize and parable and metaphor" as opposed to composing a fully developed novel and "tried to get it thin, and tinny, and without passion." But perhaps he had "done it only too well," he bitterly concedes later in the letter (*Letters* 323).

Danny Karlin's article "*Captains Courageous* and American Empire" agrees with Kipling that *CC* is an allegory of America. Karlin argues that the novel is about "the rite of passage of a nation as well as an individual." Harvey's initial fall from the liner which changes the setting of his education from Europe to the Grand Banks "aborts a regressive and degenerative voyage from the New World to the Old" and "replaces it by a voyage from the old world of luxury and over-refinement to the new one of effort and integrity." The making of Harvey's manhood is, in a way, about "the making of an American" as well as about "the destiny of modern America" (14). As Kipling says in a letter, the novel may be describing no serious social problem; rather it seeks to describe the social reality of America in the form of romance.

4.4 Cod Fishery

Interestingly enough, what Kipling seizes as the focal point to describe the quintessential American social life is cod fishing on the Grand Banks. The inspiration to write a story on cod fisheries came to Kipling when he was living in Vermont and met a local doctor, James Conland, who told Kipling about his fishing days of 30 years ago. Conland's stories of the Grand Banks captivated Kipling and led him to conduct thorough research on the topic for the writing of *CC*. Kipling reminisces in a letter that he has "taken the detail of a laborious and dangerous trade (fishing on the Grand Banks) and used it for all the *romance* in sight" (my emphasis, *Letters* 249). Although the temporal background of *CC* is set in Kipling's contemporary time, 1890s, Leonee Ormond argues that as Kipling

was writing the novel, he “knew that these schooner fishermen and their skills were doomed” and that he was “describing the [fishing] practice thirty years before, when Conland himself was at sea” (xvii). After taking so much care in accurately describing the skills of the trade which he knew to be dying, Kipling later denied that *CC* was “all reportage.” The real object he wanted to “catch” and get hold of was “a rather beautiful localised American atmosphere that was already beginning to fade” (qtd. in Ormond in xv). *Captains Courageous* was to be a nostalgic story about the skills of the tradesmen who were about to be replaced by technology and no longer needed due to the changes in the global marketplace. In this critical moment where a “beautiful localised American atmosphere” was fading, Kipling saw an apt setting for his allegory for America – its past, present, and future. Kipling’s choice of the form – nostalgic romance – allows for the co-existence of multiple modes of production and their value systems in the world of the novel as he seizes upon America’s recent past and gleans from it the utopian communal values which he wished to reinstate.

Harvey Cheyne’s romantic adventure with Gloucester fishermen allows Kipling to draw a picture of the industry caught at a transitional moment moving away from traditional ways of fishing to modernized steam-powered trawling, which will eventually complete the depletion of the cod stocks on the Grand Banks in later years. First of all, the setting of the Grand Banks is populated by various types of ships that exemplify the changes in technological development for fishing and sea travelling. *We’re Here*, Harvey’s home on the Banks, is Captain Disko Troop’s own schooner that catches cod mainly by dory fishing. Dory fishing involved the main boat “anchored...in a favourable location” which “launched dories into the water” manned by “two or three crewmembers who fished for cod using handlines, jiggers, or trawl lines (also called bultows).” Among the many dangers faced by the dory fishermen were not only the natural factors like violent or foggy weather, but also “large ocean liners” which “could inadvertently capsize or run down dories and schooners in foggy weather” (Higgins n.pag.). The threat of being run down by large steamers is constantly present for fishing vessels in *Captains Courageous*. One fine day, Disko looks out into the Banks where “[m]ore schooners had crept up in the night, and the long blue seas were full of sails and dories” but does not miss larger vessels in sight: “Far away on the horizon, the smoke of some liner, her hull

invisible, smudged the blue, and to eastward a big ship's top-gallant sails, just lifting, made a square nick in it" (Kipling 33).

On foggy days, liners travelling nearby are real threats to boats like *We're Here* and, surely, much more than just a 'smudge' on the blue horizon. *Captains Courageous* opens with the description of the "big liner," carrying Harvey and his mother to Europe, "whistling to warn the fishing-fleet" (3) in foggy weather. In his brattish boredom – these were the days before *We're Here* – Harvey makes a horrifying wish of running down a fishing boat: "Say, it's thick outside. You can hear the fish-boats squawking all around us. Say, wouldn't it be great if we ran down one?" (4). Harvey learns what it is like being vulnerable and precarious before nature and large steel machines only when he himself faces the looming danger of being sunk from a fishing boat by a liner. Unlike large steamers that defy the vagaries of the weather, the fishing vessels on the Grand Banks find themselves grounded under the fog, unable to travel to their intended destination. On such a foggy day, *We're Here* is "anchored, surrounded by the tinklings of invisible bells" (89), which are the cries that desperately seek to signal their presence to the passing-by liners. Harvey is tasked with the ringing of the bell, and as he hears "the muffled shriek of a liner's siren" nearby, he "[hammers]" on the bell "literally for the dear life, while somewhere close at hand a thirty-foot steel stem was storming along at twenty miles an hour!" Recalling his own unacceptable wish to run down a boat made earlier, Harvey has "the bitterest thought" that "there were folks asleep in dry, upholstered cabins who would never learn they had massacred a boat before breakfast" (89). And a boat does get indeed hit by a liner that day – *The Jennie Cushman* "cut clean in ha'af – ground up an' trompled on" (90).

Joseph Conrad's *Nostromo* features a similar scene where a lighter carrying the silver of the mine is run down by a steamer in the dark. While the scene plays an important plot function that shows how the once-incorruptible Nostromo becomes the infamous silver thief, it also epitomizes the theme of human limitations before the indifference of the dark sea. Sailing through the beclouded sea is Conrad's favorite metaphor for the perilous human condition: "To see! To see! – this is the craving of the sailor, as of the rest of blind humanity. To have his path made clear for him is the aspiration of every human being in our beclouded and tempestuous existence" (*The*

Mirror of the Sea 78). Cannon Schmitt's article "Tidal Conrad (Literally)" analyzes Conrad's preference of sail to steam as a "dedication to a mode of sea travel that does not give the illusion of human omnipotence" (26). Likewise, *Captains Courageous* displays a sense of disdain for large ocean liners and affinity for sail ships. Being in a large liner gives its crew and passengers the illusion of omnipotence and invincibility. Travelling in the comfort (and boredom) on a liner has once blinded Harvey Cheyne of the pains suffered by fellow human beings when he has wished his brattish wish to run down a boat. The passengers on a liner can afford to be ignorant of the possible human plight their ship might be able to cause down on the Banks like the "folks asleep in dry, upholstered cabins who would never learn they had massacred a boat before breakfast" in Harvey's imagination. Dangerous and precarious life on the Grand Banks it may be, there is something beautifully and fearfully human about the vulnerability of the lives on these fishing boats.

However, what "cut clean" *The Jennie Cushman* "in ha'af" in *Captains Courageous* is not the fog or the darkness, but a man-made machine. The rise of the machine posed different threats from those of nature for the fishermen.¹⁷ They were vulnerable against the technological development in the fishing industry which was rendering obsolete the value of their human labour. While Kipling's novel romanticizes the remarkable skills of fishermen Disko Troop in cod fishing, it also leaves hints at the emergence of the new technologies that were soon to replace Disko. Disko has a "reputation as a master artist who knew the Banks blindfold" (46); he indeed reads the Banks like a book. When fishing for cod, he "[studies] the fish – pitting his knowledge and experience on the Banks against the roving cod in his own sea" and for that hour of studying, becomes "a cod himself," looking "remarkably like one" (33). Dan admires his

¹⁷ The novel shows that indeed a harsh fate awaits for those who do not keep with the march of the times when Abishai's seventy-year-old ship sinks on its own in front of the eyes of the crewmen on *We're Here*. The sinking of the ship is blamed on the crew's drunken stupor which has left some missing planks at the bow unattended. Abishai and his crew are not industrious fishermen; Abishai is notorious for "jes' drif's around, in debt, trawlin' an' cussin'" (61) rather than actually fishing. Although the cause of the sinking is made clear from the novel, the ship's ancientness is worth noting as possible causes for its tragic end as well. Dan points out the ship's age to Harvey: "You saw his boat? Well, she's nigh seventy year old, they say; the last o' the old Marblehead heel-tappers. They don't make them quarter-decks any more" (61-2). The last of the old Marblehead heel-tappers is outdated for the industry, and it makes a dramatic exit on the Grand Banks in the novel.

father, Disko, for his fishing expertise, but does not always agree with his old-fashioned ways of doing things. He tells Harvey about the new “haddockers an’ herrin’ boats” which are “chock-full o’ labour-savin’ jigs an’ sech all” (65) and regrets that his father does not take an interest in these new ships with innovative fishing methods. Disko can surely “find fish, but he ain’t no ways progressive” (65), according to Dan. Another new type of fishing vessels discussed in the novel is modernized trawlers which use steam power to pull up the fish caught on coiled lines, making trawling much more safe and efficient. Despite his attraction to progressiveness, however, Dan dreads mechanical manual labour on modernized trawlers and tells Harvey, “I tell you, Harve, there ain’t money in Gloucester ‘ud hire me to ship on a reg’lar trawler. It may be progressive, but, barrin’ thet, it’s the puttering’est, slimjammest business top of earth” (48).

The turn of the twentieth century saw significant changes in the methods of cod fishing which placed less and less emphasis on the skills of the fishermen. George Rose in *Cod: An Ecological History of the North Atlantic Fisheries* writes that up until the late 1800s, only “few technological changes” were made “in the methods of the Newfoundland and Labrador cod fishers over nearly 400 years.” The dominant gear for the fishermen in the mid-1800s included “unbaited jiggers, single handlines with bait, and longlines” “as they had been since the 1500s.” All of this was to change in the late 1800s with the decline of the fish stocks which necessitated an innovation in the fishing method. One chief invention of the time is Captain William Whiteley’s “cod trap.” The cod trap was a room with four walls made of nets which trapped cod around the shorelines without the fishermen having to move around. This new fishing method caused “quite a stir in the 1880s” in Canada, and a committee was set up to investigate its effects on the industry. One of the effects of the cod trap the Newfoundland Fishers Commissions involves the devaluing of the skills of the fishermen who use the method: “the effect on the fishermen who use them is demoralizing. They require to develop little skill or energy in working them and there is the danger that they may lose those qualifications for which, as fishermen, they have long been honorably distinguished” (qtd. in Rose 310).

Similar concerns were raised when steam-powered fishing vessels made their entry into the cod fisheries. More specifically, modernized trawlers became more dominant “in the early 1900s” (Rose 316). Albert Jenson in *The Cod* records that while

the “steam trawlermen considered themselves the vanguard of the future, pioneers in new ships using new techniques,” the “dory fishermen, however, looked on [them] with disdain and contempt.” The dory fishermen found that “[t]here was something lacking...in a man who fished from the deck of the floating iron machines rather than enduring the more arduous and risky life in an open dory.” In the words of “Captain Angus Walters, skipper of the famed Canadian dory schooner *Bluenose*,” the trawlermen were “softies...not the same kind of young-uns that sailed in the schooners when I started forty years ago!” (74). In the same vein, Dan of *We’re Here* rejects the idea of working on a modern trawler as he tells Harvey, “there ain’t money in Gloucester ‘ud hire me to ship on a reg’lar trawler.” The trawler’s attraction to Dan is that it is “progressive,” but “barrin’ thet,” he knows that he would find the “puttering’est, slimjammet business” (48) on the ship too boring, mechanical, and alienating. No matter what the dory fishermen’s preferences may have been, however, modern technology soon took over the cod fisheries and completely replaced the old ways of fishing. It has been observed that at the peak of the industry, “modern trawlers from over a dozen nations often take thirty-five tons of cod each in two hours of fishing during the spring spawning concentration” (Jenson 35). Kipling’s cod fishing romance captures this critical transitional moment in history where the multiple modes of production in fishing coexisted, and the value system of the one in decline could still be observed and lived out.

4.5 *We’re Here*

According to Northrop Frye, “romance is nearest of all literary forms to the wish-fulfillment dream.” Although romance is, often, a product of the ruling class ideology which demonstrates the ideals of the class through “the virtuous heroes and beautiful heroines,” it also possesses “a genuinely ‘proletarian’ element” which becomes never satisfied with whatever the “great” societal change of the time may be, but looks for “new hopes and desires to feed on.” Such is the “perennially child-like quality of romance” which is “marked by its extraordinarily persistent nostalgia, its search for some kind of imaginative golden age in time or space” (186). On the one hand, the dominant ideology of *CC* may be the masculine work ethic and technical maturity Harvey has to learn and

reach at on *We're Here* before he can inherit his father's multi-million businesses in "mines," "lumber," and "shipping" (Kipling 3). In Cannon Schmitt's brief summary of the novel, Harvey Cheyne "undergoes an education in sailing and cod fishing that prepares him to take his place as a captain of [his father's] industry" ("Technical Maturity in Robert Louis Stevenson" 71). On the other hand, the proletarian element in *Captains Courageous* seizes upon the days of sailing and dory fishing as "the golden age" that satisfies its utopian desire. The plot of the story is driven by a persistent nostalgia for the days where life was precarious on sail boats, fishermen could enjoy the creative pleasure in their work of sailing and fishing, and a man's place in society was determined by his heritage and craft (as in the cases of Disko and Dan Troop who descend from a family of fishermen and owned their own ship).

The most utopian factor of this age as Kipling portrays it is the communal aspect of the life on the schooner. In this utopian life afloat, each workman is accepted for who he is and where he is from; each person has a specific role to play on the boat, and his labour¹⁸ is genuinely valued for its utility and creativity. There is an absolute unity between who the man is and what the man does; a beautiful harmony is achieved between one's interiority and exteriority, and one's personal identity and social surrounding. The scene that most perfectly captures the communal spirit of the boat in *CC* is when the fishermen sit around in a circle during a storm and exchange stories from their past. Each man's individuality is highlighted through a distinct narrative genre his stories inhabit, but a unity between these stories is achieved through the overarching framework of the novel.

On *We're Here*, stormy days are story-telling days. The crewmen gather in the forecabin, sit idly on "the cabin lockers" while the only movements around them are "spare eye-bolts, leads, and rings [rolling] and [rattling] in the pauses of their talk" (73), and tell each other conspicuously old stories from the generation before. Disko's are sea captain's nautical adventure narratives that tell of "whaling voyages in the Fifties," of

¹⁸ Even the labour of the novice Harvey Cheyne is not deemed superfluous but appreciated by the crew as *We're Here* has recently lost a young worker to the sea – a grim reminder of precariousness of life on a fishing schooner.

“boats smashed to splinters,” of extreme weather events, and of “stories of the cod,” which the narrator stresses to be “wonderful tales, all true.” Long Jack’s stories have a more supernatural bent and echo the notes of adventure tales like *Treasure Island*, which is set in the eighteenth century, as his familiar nautical nickname suggests. His treasure trove includes “ghastly stories of the ‘Yo-hoes’ on Monomoy Beach...of sand-walkers and dune haunters who were never properly buried,” of “hidden treasure...guarded by the spirits of Kidd’s men,” of haunted ships and harbours, which leave boy listeners like Harvey “sitting still and shuddering.” Tom Platt’s stories are mostly about military exploits of his younger days. The relative ancientness of Platt’s experiences is greatly highlighted by the narrator who points out that these were “the flogging days” where he served “with a navy more extinct than the dodo – the navy that passed away in the great war [the Civil War].” It is not surprising to see that his service concluded when steamers were “comparatively new” and that he shows an old sailor’s contempt for steamers: “Tom Platt had no use for steam.” The narrator reports that he “admitted that it was a specious invention in time of peace” while he nostalgically and impossibly looked forward “for the day when sails should come back again on ten-thousand-ton frigates with hundred-and-ninety-foot booms” (74) – a vessel of his fantasy. The mysterious Gaelic-speaking black cook tells of his mother’s stories that have the bearing of folk-tales and talk “of life far to the southward where water never froze” and of the “warm white beach of sand with palm-trees waving above” on which “his soul would go to lie down” (75).

Among these veterans of old sea life, young Harvey gets a seat himself and has a chance to share about his old life luxuries ashore with his crews. The significance of his acceptance by other crewmen is not lost on Harvey and the narrator: “He was a recognized part of the scheme of things on the *We’re Here*; had his place at the table and among the bunks; and could hold his own in the long talks on stormy days, when the others were always ready to listen to what they called his ‘fairy tales’ of his life ashore” (67). It occurs to Harvey that his regular routine on *We’re Here* is “a vast improvement on being snubbed by strangers in the smoking-room of a hired liner” (66-7). By this, he refers to the very first scene of the novel where he enters men’s smoking-room for some company but is directly told to “[s]hut the door and stay outside” because he is “not

welcome” there (4). In such an unwelcoming environment, Harvey boyishly boasts of his insusceptibility to seasickness and tough smoking habits in an attempt to belong, but the dizziness from being seasick and smoking eventually leads him to fall overboard from the ship. By contrast, *We’re Here* is a man’s world where boys safely grow to be men. “Boylike,” Harvey ends up “[imitating] all the men by turns,” and the men affectionately discuss how “’Tis beautiful to see how he takes to us” and proudly notes how Harvey is growing to be a proper “mariner” (70). Harvey interestingly recalls the ocean liner he was on as “a hired liner” (67). The reference is, no doubt, directed at the contrasting fact that *We’re Here* is privately owned by Disko, the Captain, and is there to accentuate the alienating and inauthentic environment of the liner, a world of outsiders where passengers remain strangers to each other.

4.6 A Romance of a Capitalist

Amidst the many fantastic tales of old sea life exchanged on *We’re Here*, it is Harvey’s stories of his pampered life on land, which the fishermen find to be most fanciful and incredulous. Harvey’s narratives are, also, the only ones that receive a genre label in the novel – as ‘fairy tales’. When the men discuss Harvey’s progress on board, Tom Platt makes notes of Harvey’s storytelling skills. He says, “He yarns good...T’other night he told us abaout a kid of his own size steerin’ a cunnin’ little rig an’ four ponies up an’ down Toledo, Ohio, I think ‘twas, an’ givin’ suppers to a crowd o’ sim’lar kids.” Tom calls these stories a “Cur’us kind o’ fairy tale,” of which Harvey knows “scores” (70). Here occurs a curious kind of inversion of genre expectations. Whereas the tough tales of sea life are hard realisms, Harvey’s life stories are romantic fairy tales to the crew of *We’re Here*. In fact, to them, the story of Harvey Cheyne Sr. – of “a kinless boy turned loose” (142) who single-handedly became a multi-millionaire in forty years – would be more of a romance than their own experiences at sea.

When Harvey reunites with his family at the end of the novel, he hears the life story of his father for the first time. The story, in fact, reads like a romance of a capitalist, “for which a dozen leading journalists would cheerfully have paid many dollars.” Mr.

Cheyne's story is also a history of the new industrial America – “the story of the New West, whose story is yet to be written”:

It began with a kinless boy turned loose in Texas, and went on fantastically through a hundred changes and chops of life, the scenes shifting from State after Western State, from cities that sprang up in a month and in a season utterly withered away, to wild ventures in wilder camps that are now laborious paved municipalities. It covered the building of three railroads and the deliberate wreck of a fourth. It told of steamers, townships, forests, and mines...It touched on chances of gigantic wealth flung before eyes that could not see, or missed by the merest accident of time and travel; and through the mad shift of things, sometimes on horseback, more often afoot, now rich, now poor...deck-hand, train-hand, contractor, boarding-house keeper, journalist, engineer...moved Harvey Cheyne, alert and quiet, seeking his own ends, and, so he said, the glory and advancement of his country. (142)

The telling of Mr. Cheyne's story holds Harvey “almost breathless,” and his father with his massive success seems to Harvey “a locomotive storming across country in the dark – a mile between each glare of the opened fire-door” (143). The syntax of the paragraph indeed runs like a locomotive, like a long line of train cars, with its lengthy list of short items which are the shifting scenes of Cheyne's past life, connected almost like one massive sentence through the anaphora of “It” – “It began with,” “It covered,” “It told of,” and “It touched on.” Railways and trains, like steamers, belong to the future of America whereas sailboats and fishing schooners are remnants of the past. Cheyne's life history tells of the emergence of a new generation of resourceful adventurers who are to build America for its “glory and advancement” while the heroic “tales of the Gloucester fishermen can be found in the history books” (9) as one famous sea captain's memoir¹⁹ writes.

Kipling has elsewhere consciously delineated the elements of romance in the life stories of the capitalists of his time. In *The Times* article, titled “Captains Courageous,”

¹⁹ Shields, Ed. *Salt of the Sea: The Pacific Coast Cod Fishery and the Last Days of Sail*. Pacific Heritage Press, 2001.

Kipling calls the speculators, traders, and investors of the global market as the new “captains courageous” and “gentleman adventurer[s].” The second half of the article specifically discusses the rapidly growing cities in North America and the abundance of investment opportunities in them. The skeptical English reader might say, “Yes, but it’s all a lie” to the promises of quick money, but Kipling justifies the temptation to invest by naming the towns that experienced precisely that rapid growth like “Denver, Leadville, Ballaarat, Broken Hill, Portland, or Winnipeg.” The knowledge of these cities “leads the passer-by to give ear to the wildest statements of the wildest towns. Anything is possible, especially among the Rockies where the minerals lie, over and above the mining towns, the centres of ranching country, and the supply towns to the farming districts.” Kipling also enumerates a fabulous list of things one sees in a city in boom and likewise in a city that fell out of the boom, which reads like the passing scenes from Mr. Cheyne’s life story in the New West. The “wildest towns” of North America where “[a]nything is possible” is the new land of adventure.

Kipling writes that “[b]y the time a man has seen these things...that go with a boom...He has heard the Arabian Nights retold and knows the inward kernel of that romance, which some little folk say is vanished.” The “kernel of that romance” is the spirit and possibility of adventure through which pirates are turned into generals, explorers into kings, and boy adventurers into colonial agents. Kipling specifically names the past adventure heroes from both fiction and history, and claims that they live their second lives through capitalists and investors: “Cortes is not dead nor Drake, and Sir Philip Sydney²⁰ dies every few months if you know where to look. The adventurers and captains courageous of old have only changed their dress a little and altered their employments to suit the world in which they move.” The new adventurers are now “selling horses, breaking trails, drinking sangaree, running railways beyond the timberline, swimming rivers, blowing up tree-stumps, and making cities where no cities were, in all the five quarters of the world.” According to Kipling, regular English readers would not believe the above stories to be true and would say of “the most cold-blooded

²⁰ The other names he drops are Clive, Hastings, Don Quixote, Young Hawkins, and Boscawen who live their second lives in South Africa, Australia, and Zanzibar.

realism: -- This is indeed romance.” It is interesting to note that what Kipling first introduces as the “kernel” of the “romance,” he himself concludes as “the most cold-blooded realism.” As Harvey’s real life stories are dubbed as fairy tales to the fishermen on *We’re Here*, these stories of the capitalists are both romances and realisms at the same time. Kipling’s ambivalent attitude to generic classifications seems to indicate his awareness of the historical provisionality of literary forms -- how the development of literary forms and genres are bound up with the material conditions of the historical background in which they are produced. The chivalric heroes of the medieval romance evolved into brave seafarers and explorers in the expanding British Empire in the adventure fiction of the generation before, but it was still uncertain how the new romance form that narrativizes the ventures of the capitalist heroes of the expanding global market was to develop. Kipling’s own romance is, then, an experimental piece in a sense that it describes different modes of life and production, along with their value systems, by consciously pitting conventional genre expectations against the changing circumstances of the times.

The nostalgic cod fishing romance of *Captains Courageous* is the product of Kipling’s emotional loyalty to the outdated mode of life, coupled with his keen historical awareness of the changing times. Kipling himself possessed more emotional affinity with the ethos and values of the world which produced earlier adventure fiction than with the emerging world. Kipling’s choice of the form for the novel can be seen as a socially symbolic act of bringing the two different worlds of the old and the new together. In his article “*Captains Courageous* and American Empire,” Danny Karlin notes a crucial difference between the worlds that Harvey Cheyne Senior’s and Disko Troops’ stories inhabit. Whereas “Harvey Cheyne senior begins as a ‘kinless boy,’” the Troops’ family, “by contrast, has been established for generations in Gloucester, Massachusetts” (17). Quoting Disko who says, “We Troops, livin’ an’ dead, are all around the earth an’ the seas thereof” (Kipling 135), Karlin concludes that the Troops are “like an English family, or the ‘troops’ of a regiment, whose sons are scattered over the Empire” (17). Unlike Cheyne’s world of constantly shifting values, “Disko comes from a whole whose values are fixed, and where a man’s identity is determined by the environment of which he is an organic part” (20). Karline calls this quality of Disko’s world as “authenticity,” which

Cheyne notices as something he and his family “haven’t got” (Kipling 138). According to Karlin, Authenticity is “a Utopian (that is, unrealisable) project” for capitalists like Cheyne. Disko is a man who “owns his craft, his boat, and is also a master of his craft, his trade,” but Cheyne is “the owner of ‘hired men’” (20) who tracks down shifting values of different investments, pursues the fluid movement of money and capital, and is ready to change his craft and trade at ease with the promise of profits.

At the end of the novel, both Harvey and Dan leave *We’re Here* to work for and with Harvey’s father in the pacific shipping industry. Karlin’s assessment of the ending is that “Kipling’s reading of where America was heading, they are not here but there” (21). However, one must remember that the majority of Harvey’s time in the novel is spent on board *We’re Here*. The nostalgic desire of the narrative longs for the socially integrated world of Gloucester fishermen, and *Captains Courageous* carves out an aesthetic space where utopian values of the harmonious society can be lived out and pursued as ideals, alongside the shifting value system of the emerging modern world.

4.7 *Nostramo*

Nostalgia for community in *Nostramo* takes a more complex turn than Kipling’s in *Captains Courageous*. In my previous chapter, I have outlined Conrad’s ambivalent attitudes towards the value system associated with romance in *Nostramo*. I have argued that Conrad adopts nostalgia of a knowing kind in *Nostramo* by which he examines the outdatedness of the ideals of adventure even as he displays an emotional pull towards their appeal. In the similar light, what the novel considers to be the picture of ideal society is not easy to locate in the past. Whereas one might find an exemplary bond of humanity between the crew of *the ‘Narcissus’* in *The N. of the ‘Narcissus’* as in the case of the crew of *We’re Here* in *Captains Courageous*, no easy model of utopia can be found in one moment in the past in *Nostramo*. Instead, the nostalgia of *Nostramo* offers clues to the novel’s utopian envisioning of a model community rather than reconstructing it. My analysis begins with *Nostramo*’s title as a “Man of the People” and the exploration into its potential meanings. The answers to the questions of who the capitalized “People” are and why *Nostramo* is their “Man” are intertwined with the novel’s quest for an ideal

community. The exploration takes me to the novel's nostalgia for the past represented by the romance form and its nostalgic depictions of the ideals of the past humanitarian revolutions like those of old Viola and Charles Gould's uncles who fought for the liberation of the people; finally, the analysis arrives at the common labourers of the Casa Gould whose evolving lives the narrator of the novel follows with great sympathy. In following the movement between the three factors –the Man, the Ideals, and the People – I trace the hints of the novel's utopian vision for a society where individual members willfully cultivate a sense of community through their daily work in a social structure that encourages and appreciates their labour.

4.8 Nostalgia for the World of Romance

Community is one of the central themes of the novel as revealed by the author-narrator of the "Author's Note" when he ceremoniously declares the titular hero of *Nostromo* as a "Man of the People." What does it mean for *Nostromo* to be the Man of the People? Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan has read the protagonist *Nostromo* of the pre-revolution era as a mythical hero of the socially integrated world associated with the romance form, and hence, the Man of the People. My analysis adds to this reading the layer of the narrator's knowing commentary. In his description, neither is the Sulaco village life before the revolution pristinely idyllic, nor is *Nostromo* to be seriously taken as a mythical hero. There is a sense of nostalgia for Sulaco of the pre-revolution, pre-modern, pre-capitalist days in the novel, yet the narrator's description of those days betrays a complex attitude to the past. This sophisticated nostalgia leaves hints for the need for *Nostromo*'s fuller growth into the Man of the People.

No other passage in the novel better underscores the narrator's sophisticated nostalgia for the past social life than the description of a feast day in Sulaco. In the background of the feast, some eighteen months before the populist revolution, the dignitaries of Sulaco and Blanco-friendly government officials are celebrating the breaking of ground for the National Central Railway. The construction of the railway is one of the few modernizing forces that make inroads into the previously secluded life of the coastal town of Sulaco. On this particular day, a local feast is being colourfully

celebrated, and the narrator's description of the celebration is layered with multiple temporalities.

The narrator notes that Sulaco still retains its local flavour on this day since “[t]he material apparatus of perfected civilization which obliterates the individuality of old towns under the stereotyped conveniences of modern life had not intruded as yet.” This is not to say that the town's celebration is completely pre-modern as the development of the San Tomé mine, “very modern in its spirit,” has “already thrown its subtle influence” on the town life. The most overt sign of its influence during the feast is the number of “white ponchos with a green stripe” worn by the San Tomé miners in town. White and green are unusual colours to be worn by common Costaguaneros and those wearing these colours are marked out as belonging to the San Tomé mine and, as a result, likely to escape the random brutalities of the town police and the chance of being kidnapped by the army's recruiting party, a process ironically referred to as “a method of *voluntary* enlistment looked upon as almost legal in the Republic” (my emphasis, 73). In a brief conversation inserted by the narrator at the end of this paragraph, Don Pepe, the manager of the mine, tells Mrs. Gould, “What would you! Poor people! Pobrecitos. Pobrecitos! But the State must have its soldiers” (73). More scenes from this local feast are described later from the perspective of the carriage carrying Charles and Emilia Gould. The carriage passes by a “multitude of booths...erected all over...for the sale of cana, of dulces, of fruit, of cigars,” “Indian women, squatting on mats” cooking food in “earthen pots” and boiling “the water for the mate gourds,” a “racecourse...staked out for the vaqueros,” and “a huge temporary erection, like a circus tent of wood” from which “came the resonant twanging of harp strings, the sharp ping of guitars, with the grave drumming throb of an Indian gumbo pulsating steadily through the still choruses of the dancers” (91-2). The sight of the peasant festivities induces Charles Gould to remark rather matter-of-factly, “All this piece of land belongs now to the Railway Company. There will be no more popular feasts held here.” But the narrator observes that not-so-matter-of-factly Mrs. Gould is “rather sorry to think so” – that the vibrant scenes of the popular festival would be no more (92).

The narrator's depiction of the feast day in pre-revolution Sulaco is nostalgic, yet tinged with the irony of the modern awareness. From the perspective of the present-

future, the narrator invokes the effects of industrialization that efface the traces of the particularities of old towns by noting that “[t]he material apparatus of perfected civilization which obliterates the individuality of old towns” “had not intruded [into Sulaco] yet,” but the invocation of that knowledge of and from the future renders precarious the present scene being described. Modernization of towns is identified by Helmut Illbruck as an important phase in the development of nostalgia as a concept. With no particular home to return to in times of homesickness, nostalgia fell into the realm of linguistic vagueness and became a desire for an impossible return to the time and place which perhaps never truly existed, except in one’s construction of the past. Sulaco at this point has already entered the phase of modernization, and as such, the object of the narrator’s nostalgia in this passage remains vague and ambiguous. The truth is that the life of peasants in Sulaco has never been easy. The ancientness characterizing Sulaco of the time appears to be its unsavory Spanish past²¹ with “its stuccoed houses and barred windows, with the great yellowy-white walls of abandoned convents.” Even that ancientness is already tainted by modern elements like the San Tomé miners’ white and green ponchos. The uncomfortable fact of the ponchos functioning for the miners as a shield of protection from the state brutalities points to the country’s recent past of political and social unrest after the liberation from the Spanish colonizers. There might have been a chance to pass the narrator’s tone at this point as rather unsentimental, had he not introduced the ever-sympathetic Mrs. Gould who hears from Don Pepe about the unfortunate recruiting system and in her conversation with her husband, anticipates the

²¹ There is some room for doubt whether the novel’s object of nostalgia, as captured in this passage, may be Sulaco’s colonial past. On the one hand, ideologically speaking, the novel endorses the South American revolutions against the Spanish. According to Hay, “The novel virtually sanctions South American revolutions fought against the Spanish invaders, most clearly those led by Garibaldi, which are reflected in Giorgio Viola’s dimming idealism” (86). On the other hand, Costaguana’s pre-colonial era is beyond the scope of the novel’s representation and does not account for what it considers as the history of the country. In addition, the major players of the political game in Costaguana almost always have European origins. The novel also actively illustrates the limitations of the European characters’ political vision which often excludes the native-born Costaguaneros against whom they harbour vicious biases. More on this in the section on “Nostalgia for Garibaldi.”

end of the popular festivals with a sense of regret.²² From the narrator's bird's eye view of the town, close-up shot of the miners' ponchos during the celebration, to the private conversations of Mrs. Gould, the description of the feast day is layered with multiple temporal perspectives and realities, all of which complicate the narrator's and reader's simple indulgence of the colourful local celebration.

Into this intricately constructed framework of the village feast scene, enters Nostromo in the most picturesque and picaresque way possible. Bedecked and bejeweled with silver articles all over – “a grey sombrero with a silver cord and tassels,” “the enormous silver buttons on the...leather jacket,” “the row of tiny silver buttons down the seam of the trousers,” “the silver plates on headstall and saddle” – Nostromo, in dazzling “splendor” (93), means to join the festivities and approaches the temporary erection passed earlier by the Gould carriage. The structure contains a music hall where the villagers blended into one big mass in singing and dancing. As if sensing Nostromo's presence nearby, the crowd spontaneously breaks out into a love song: they “all at once would sink low, chanting in unison the refrain of a love song, with a dying fall.” Both the music and the crowd spill over outside the hall. Out of the crowd and the song emerges a town belle who demands from Nostromo a lover's gift fitting for his grand reputation. The whole village gawks at the scene. Nostromo responds to the onlookers' interest with a splendid performance. He demands a knife from the crowd – “Twenty blades flashed out together in the circle” – and lets the lady slash the silver buttons from his jacket as his gift. The crowd responds back with “shouts of laughter and applause at this witty freak” (96). The whole scene reads like an episode cut out from a folk tale about a legendary hero. As good oral traditions concerning a region help develop a sense of community for the residents, the scene with Nostromo brings together the Sulaco peasants physically (in a circle) and emotionally (in their excitement over the public love show). In the act of making and telling this story, the common people of Sulaco would reaffirm their sense of belonging to the community which regards Nostromo as its hero, in the days to come.

²² The novel often entrusts Mrs. Gould with the nostalgic task of preserving the memories of the past as in her water-colour sketch of the waterfall which does not exist anymore because the engineers of the mine rerouted the waterways (79-80).

The episode, however, is too extravagant to be taken seriously. Like Nostromo's silver ornaments, the narrator's use of epithets for Nostromo in the scene is excessive and almost insincere in its profuseness. In the town, "the greatly envied Capataz de Cargadores advanced, amongst murmurs of recognition and obsequious greetings"; he is addressed in multiple ways as "his worship" and "the Senor Capataz" (94); in his encounter with Morenita, the town belle, "a red flower falls on the resplendent Capataz"; at his cold reception, Morenita "dropped her head before all the eyes in the wide circle formed round the generous, the terrible, the inconstant Capataz de Cargadores" (95); "The dreaded Capataz de Cargadores" is seen to be "magnificent and carelessly public in his amours" (96); as he rides away from the festival, the narrator bestows on him the last set of epithets, "the lordly Capataz de Cargadores, the indispensable man, the tried and trusty Nostromo, the Mediterranean sailor come ashore casually to try his luck in Costaguana" (97).

Replenished with past participles like "envied," "dreaded," and "tried" and adjectives like "indispensable" and "trusty," the descriptors above indicate how other people in Sulaco interact with, understand, perceive, and represent Nostromo among themselves. Paula Martin Salván notes that the "topical remark" that precedes the mention of Nostromo "suggests popular characterizations of the man" (101) and further observes that the popular characterizations somehow govern the actions of the man himself. Nostromo – the nickname meaning 'our man' – is a man "owned by the people who keep on telling stories about him," and his life seems often "dictated by the desires of a fascinated audience" (102). In her reading, the title of the "Man of the People" is a source of oppression for Nostromo; the expression communicates "the possessive sense" "rather than the idea of belonging" (103). I differ with her reading since Nostromo is a willing and happy subject of the town's rumors and stories. The Man of the People does indeed belong to his community, beloved by the people and thriving on their attention. But it is noteworthy that the formation of both the man and the community in this particular scene is frivolous and predictable, though colourful and picturesque. The extravagance in narration heightens the aspect of performance and spectacle in Nostromo's playing the role of the Man of the People, but the layered perspective of the narrator portends that the revolution is coming, and Nostromo, the Man, is to change. The

meaning of his title, the Man of the People, is also to evolve. The episode concludes with Captain Mitchell's words that after the events of the revolution, "he has never been the same man since" (97).

The internal changes to be undergone by Nostromo in the novel highlight the differences between the value systems of the past world of social integration and the present world of individualism and capitalism. Initially in the novel, as a town hero of an epic proportion, Nostromo shows a complete disregard of material possessions except for outward ornamental purposes but attaches infinite value to others' regard and expectations of him. He believes "a good name" to be "a treasure" (186) in itself. His pride in being needed leads him to take up the risky business of transporting Gould's silver for no promise for booty in return but for his reputation. He tells Teresa Viola who bids him not to go the reason why he cannot comply: "I am needed to save the silver of the mine. Do you hear? A greater treasure than the one which they say is guarded by ghosts and devils on Azuera. It is true. I am resolved to make this the most desperate affair I was ever engaged on in my whole life" (184-5). Nostromo means to take on this adventure for adventure's sake, in all its glory, grandiosity, and danger since doing so is required and expected of him who is praised for his trustworthiness, resourcefulness, and audacity. Nostromo's attachment to reputation and adventure is unaccountable to other characters with more material sense. Martin Decoud "suppose[s] he looks upon his prestige as a sort of investment" (160). Dr. Monygham "suppose[s] he obtains...some spiritual value for his labours" and concludes "that Nostromo is a fool" (231). Teresa Viola most violently opposes Nostromo's motivations and actions on account of their material worthlessness: "They have been paying you with words. Your folly shall betray you into poverty, misery, starvation" (186).

Nostromo's puzzlingly non-pragmatic ways of life associate him with the heroes of romance, as opposed to those of the conventional novel. According to Paul Zweig, tales of romance "offer us heroes obsessed by risk and confrontation, who spell out a choice we glimpse only fleetingly in ourselves: the choice to pursue adventures, to interpret life itself as a series of solitary combats, with death as the adversary" (4). Such stories present adventurous moments as a plunge into an individual's "essential experience" (3); the episodes of intense action define and shape the heroes for who they

are. Using the distinction Clara Reeve makes between romance and the novel in the eighteenth century, Zweig explains that romance involves a lofty style of telling stories about elevated heroes and their out of ordinary experiences while the novel “is a picture of real life and manners, and of the times in which it is written” (qtd. in Zweig 13-14). Zweig understands the novel to be a conservative middle-class genre which necessarily upholds the status quo, and in it the individual “must live with the fear that there is nothing for him to become” and “can tolerate only small doses of change, gradual involvements of ‘action,’ but not revolutions, and not the explosive energies of adventure” (12). With little appetite for action, the modern novel obsesses over the character’s interiority rather than her public persona. The internal drama is of far more interest than her outward actions which are actually viewed to hinder her individuality: “If a character was to be fully realized, he could not be too busy. It was better if he were imprisoned in a room, like Pamela, or in a provincial town, like Emma Bovary” (10). Nostromo, on the other hand, is all about public reputation and outward actions. His plunge into adventure is to be a public achievement to be appreciated by the admiring community. One way of understanding Nostromo is that he is a romantic hero trapped in the hostile world of the modern novel. While he pursues adventure for its glory and publicity, others ask him what material profit he is to make by it like Dr. Monygham who tells him on the night he leaves to transport the silver, “I hope you have made a good bargain in case you come back safe from this adventure” (187).

As a romantic hero, Nostromo operates by a peculiar mythical economy of value which he eventually replaces with that of material wealth. Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan finds in his character development a transition between two modes of existence, from “mythiccity” to “historicity.” By mythicity, she means “the mythical-heroic frame of reference” where Nostromo’s silver “seems to be endowed with a magic quality: when given away, it is not diminished.” The “magical quality” of silver is mythical in a sense that it “def[ies] the basic economic law of material scarcity” and “dissolves the crude materiality of the silver”; “Nostromo’s generosity does not impoverish him but makes him ‘rich in glory and reputation’” (78-9). The key to this magical quality of silver for Nostromo is society. He values being “a valuable man.” A “better recognition” he could not “expect.” He leads “a public life in his sphere” which becomes “necessary to him”

and “was the very breath of his nostrils.” Accumulation of material riches has no appeal to the illustrious Nostromo as he is “disinterested with the unworldliness of a sailor” and “sheer ignorance and carelessness for tomorrow.” His sense of individuality is “unsophisticated” (Conrad 297) and sustained by others’ appreciation and admiration of him (297). Although he is poor in a material sense, Nostromo never feels destitute himself: “To find himself without money after a run of bad luck at monte in the low, smoky room of Domingo’s posada, where the fraternity of Cargadores gambled, sang, and danced of an evening; to remain with empty pockets after a burst of public generosity to some *peina de oro* girl or other (for whom he did not care), had none of the humiliation of destitution,” for he “remained rich in glory and reputation” (299). All this changes once he arrives in Sulaco after the failed attempt at smuggling the Gould silver out of Costaguana. He wakes up on a shore in complete solitude and realizes that he might need to live the rest of his life in hiding. This solitary awakening has none of the “splendour and publicity” for which he has lived up until that moment. And he feels “the pinch of poverty for the first time in his life”; knowing that he could “no longer...parade the streets of the town, and be hailed with respect in the usual haunts of his leisure,” Nostromo “feels himself destitute indeed.” That separation from community heralds an “end of things” for him -- that “everything that had gone before for years [is made to] appear vain and foolish, like a flattering dream come suddenly to an end” (298). The romantic hero dies in him, so does one meaning of the “Man of the People.”

So far, Nostromo has lived as a “Man of the People” in a manner of natural belonging – as in a sense that he is one *of* them. Not only was he the local hero, he was also a commoner of commoners in his poverty, superstition, and lack of lineage and ideology. According to “Author’s Note,” the author-narrator has taken care to create in Nostromo “a Man of the People as free as possible from his class-conventions and all settled modes of thinking” (409) and additionally from a “pride of ancestry” (410). In Eloise Knapp Hay’s words, Nostromo has an “instinctive association with ‘the people’,” which she defines as “the unprivileged in both hemispheres” (93).

Alone on the beach, after the failed mission, Nostromo wakes up into a new reality, however, and starts to see his late adventure in the objective light of historicity. He sees that he has been used as a mere pawn in the political game of the ‘hombres finos’ and that

such has always been the manner and attitude of the wealthy and the powerful towards “the unprivileged.” The awakening leads him to reconsider Giorgio Viola’s revolutionary views: “What he had heard Giorgio Viola say once was very true. Kings, ministers, aristocrats, the rich in general, kept the people in poverty and subjection; they kept them as they kept dogs, to fight and hunt for their service” (298). In the realization that he has been “betrayed” and “taken advantage of,” it dawns on him also that in the midst of the populist revolution, he has “persuaded the body of Cargadores to side with the Blancos against the rest of the people” (301), the very ones he should have identified with and perhaps fought for. It is in this moment that Nostromo finally makes a conscious connection with “the People.” What he gains is a kind of interiority which he has previously lacked living like a hero of a romantic tale in glory and publicity. With the private knowledge of the hidden silver and newly developed hatred for the rich, he becomes conscious of the material and historical reality around him and recognises the sufferings of the oppressed. The “Man of the People” takes a more determined turn as a man *for* the people.

4.9 Nostalgia for Garibaldi

The second sense of the title “Man of the People” involves Nostromo’s awakening to Giorgio Viola’s ideals. After all, Conrad has envisioned Nostromo to be a character who “could stand...well by the side of Giorgio Viola the Garibaldino, the Idealist of the old, humanitarian revolutions” (409). In a world being rapidly transformed by material interests, Giorgio Viola is a man of austerity and moral principles with a complete disregard for “all personal advantage” (25). In his youth, he fought with Giuseppe Garibaldi in Uruguay and again in Italy for the love of all humanity and freedom for the people. Viola lives in the past, absorbed in the memories of freedom fighting in his youth. Dr. Monygham describes him as a “rugged and dreamy character, living in the republicanism of his young days as if in a cloud” (230). Viola’s ideals from the past are of note since the novel presents them as a stark contrast to the laws of material wealth governing the world absorbed into global trade. Towards the end of the novel, Dr.

Monygham tells Mrs. Gould who exasperates over myriads of revolutions brewing in Sulaco that there is no true peace in the world governed by material interests:

There is no peace and 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. Mrs. Gould, the time approaches 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. (366)

The operating principles of material interests are not necessarily *inhumane*, but they are *inhuman* in the sense that in pursuit of efficacy and profit, the development of material interests can overlook the human factors like culture, heritage, and labour welfare. Dr. Monygham prophesies a grim future for Gould's silver mine whose development has been originally intended to promote the order and welfare of the nation. By contrast, from Viola's humanitarian values, one sees a glimpse of the "continuity and the force" lacking in capitalist ventures but only found in "a moral principle."

Viola's moral principles are centered on the ideal and the person of "Liberty and Garibaldi" which the narrator calls his two "divinities" (14). Garibaldi, being the "fierce apostle of independence" (24) and freedom fighter for all those oppressed, Viola's divinity is really just one. Guiseppe Garibaldi (1807-82), the legendary Italian general, who fought in South America for the liberation of the people of Uruguay from the Spanish rule and dedicated his life for the unification and independence of Italy, was Viola's chief in youth whose picture still hangs in his house in Sulaco in his old age (20). Jacques Berthoud and Mara Kalnins, the editors of the Oxford edition of *Nostramo*, identify Garibaldi's main impetus for action in their explanatory notes to be "a romantic republicanism which found expression in his idealization of the sea on which he served until his fortieth year, and in a life-long repudiation of the quest for material wealth and political rewards" (433).

From their notes, Garibaldi's two characteristics stand out: his republicanism and austerity. His republicanism can be said to be romantic and idealized as it eludes specific political labels and crosses all borders – like the fluidity of the sea. Viola remembers Garibaldi's concerns being universal and humanitarian: "It was enough to look once at

his face to see the divine force of faith in him and his great pity for all that was poor, suffering, and oppressed in this world” (25). In his time, Garibaldi was revered in all of Europe and especially in England. In the novel, Viola too mentions England’s enthusiastic reception of Garibaldi one of the reasons why he respects the English: “He respected their nation because they loved Garibaldi. Their very countesses and princesses had kissed the general’s hands in London, it was said” (25). The contemporary socialist H.M. Hyndman remembers Garibaldi’s reception in England as follows:

No such spontaneous or enthusiastic reception was given by Londoners to any foreigner either before or since. It was a personal demonstration, due to the courage of the guerrilla leader of 1859/60 and in remembrance of his long and brilliant life of adventure in South America on the side of *the People*. At that moment a wave of Republicanism swept our country. (my emphasis, qtd. in Davis 23)

Marjan Schwegman’s article includes the observation of another contemporary, Arthur Munby, clerk in the Ecclesiastical Commission Office who “noticed how a large, ‘very shabby and foul smelling crowd’ greeted Garibaldi,

rising ‘as one man from their level attitude of expectation...they shouted with a mighty shout of enthusiasm that took one’s breath away to hear it...No soldier was there, no official person: no King nor government nor public body got it up or managed it: it was devised & carried out spontaneously by men and women simply as such; and they often of the lowest grade.’ (qtd. in Shwegman 386)

Who are the *People*, the nameless, faceless masses for whom Garibaldi fought? The “unprivileged in both hemispheres,” Eloise Knapp Hay’s simple definition in relation to Nostromo’s title “Man of the People” seems to serve well here. Additionally, from Munby’s words, “men and women simply as such...often of the lowest grade” might do well as a definition too. It is a broad humanitarian term that eludes geopolitical specificity, and the downtrodden everywhere instinctively knew that they shared their fate. Viola laments the fate of the People on a global scale that “Too many kings and emperors flourished yet in the world which God had meant for the people”; he was sad to see how others “cared nothing for the wrongs of downtrodden nations” (26).

Other than the concern for the oppressed worldwide, something else Viola inherits from Garibaldi: honesty and poverty. The greatness of Garibaldi lay in not only his idealism and military genius, but that he remained poor and never sought political rewards for his achievements. Viola calls it the “spirit of self-forgetfulness, the simple devotion to a vast humanitarian idea which inspired the thought and stress of that revolutionary time,” and this spirit led him to “a sort of austere contempt for all personal advantage” (25). Giorgio, at the expense of his own family’s financial wellbeing, has “all his life despised money” following the examples of the “leaders of his youth” who “had lived poor, had died poor” (25). His austerity was “a matter of principle...born of stern enthusiasm like the puritanism of religion” (26). While pursuit of wealth on an individual, organizational, and national level has become a norm in Costaguana, Viola’s principle is out of keeping with the ways of life around him. Even when Viola makes it public his aversion to money, the rumour has it that he has buried great treasure in his house – “the lowest class in Sulaco suspected [him] having a buried hoard in his kitchen” (25). As many characters wonder at what material profit Nostromo must have leapt through his loyal service, those who listen to Viola’s “tales of war” would ask what personal reward he has “got out of it after all.” The indignant Viola would reply, “We wanted nothing, we suffered for the love of all humanity!” (26)

As Viola declaims “the love of all humanity” as his chief motivation, *love* indeed is a name for the powerful political force Garibaldi’s idealism inspires. The popular representation of Garibaldi brought together many meanings of the word love and transposed it into a source of political activism on both local and global levels. Marjan Schwegman’s article “In Love with Garibaldi: Romancing the Italian Risorgimento” explores “the possible connections between love and nineteenth-century politics” by studying the case of Garibaldi and his international fame (383). Schwegman sees the process of the spreading of Garibaldi’s fame as “a dynamic, highly international, interactive work of art” (390). For Garibaldi to become an international icon, the circulation of Garibaldi’s “eyewitness accounts,” “interviews, biographies, paintings and engravings, hymns and legendary stories” produced by “an international network of writers, journalists and artists” played a huge role (387). In her assessment, “[a]ll these evocations betray a desire to convey” Garibaldi’s personal attraction (387), and for many

of his early biographers, love for and friendship with Garibaldi became a strong motivation that launched them into political action, which also happens to be the case for *Nostromo*'s old Viola. These early biographers and companions of Garibaldi protested against his initial reputation as a "cold-blooded, self-centred, Mediterranean bandit" and sought to create "the image of Garibaldi as the incarnation of a revolution in which love magically keeps potentially dangerous energies in check" (388).

Among the many highlights of Garibaldi's early biographies is a love story between Garibaldi and his first wife Anna, which functions as a political allegory for Garibaldi's revolutionary spirit. Their love plot runs thus: Garibaldi "discovers an exotic girl on a sunny Brazilian beach; he desires her, makes her his, and she subsequently changes into a female pirate" (393). That Anna was married to another man at the time was no hindrance to their romance. Thus, the couple "transgresses the moral codes of their time" and becomes "'brothers', comrades in arms and in bed." According to Schwegman, this private life event fits in with what Garibaldi represents as "a new revolutionary outlaw, a pirate who is the carrier of new values that embrace both the public and the private" (393). Garibaldi himself understood and branded his private romance as a political allegory. Being a novelist himself, he employed "the theme of the rescue by patriot of a woman suffering from an oppressive (non-patriot) husband...again and again in his novels" (393). In addition to its political undertone, the passionate romance in an exotic setting appealed to his followers' desire for adventure: "[m]uch as he appealed to a humanitarian civilization ideal, he also unleashed desires for adventure, for trespassing all sorts of boundaries" (389). The Garibaldi-Anna affair is one example of how love acted as a "powerful motivating force in the transmission of the revolutionary spirit" (385), not only for those directly involved but also for those who are indirectly involved in the creation and dissemination of Garibaldi's stories. Love in the Garibaldi myth became a holistic concept that encompassed a range of meanings from romantic infatuation, exoticism, camaraderie, to attraction to the ideals, and the ideals themselves like patriotism and republicanism. The power of Garibaldi was that his myth converted many forms of private affection into powerful expressions of revolutionary activism.

In *Nostromo*, there is a general sense of sympathy and nostalgia for Garibaldi's revolutionary spirit and ideal of love. Viola is not the only character in the novel who invokes *love* as a chief motivation for his revolutionary endeavours. When Charles Gould proposes to Emilia, he paints a rosy picture of the future where he will help restore the social order of Costaguana with the wealth of the mine. In his speech, he mentions Uncle Harry as his model: "Uncle Harry was no adventurer...He was of the country, and he *loved* it...He made use of the political cry of his time. It was Federation. But he was no politician. He simply stood up for social order out of pure *love* for rational liberty and from his hate of oppression. There was no nonsense about him. He went to work in his own way because it seemed right, just as I feel I must lay hold of that mine" (my emphasis, 49). Harry Gould was admirable in the nephew's eyes, not simply for his pragmatic moves, but also for his noble motivations – love for the country and passion for rational liberty. Charles' speech works magic with Emilia just as the Garibaldi myth did for his followers. The narrator observes that "[a]ll the eagerness of youth for a strange life, for great distances, for a future in which there was an air of adventure, of combat...had filled her with an intense excitement, which she returned to the giver with a more open and exquisite display of tenderness" (50); in the marriage with Charles Gould, she sees promises for romance, adventure, and revolution, and she gives her hand to Gould. Another invocation of love in the novel comes from a surprising place: from the memo left by the San Tome miners who revolted against their recent English managers. The memo expresses their anger at "the grinding oppression of foreigners, actuated by sordid motives of gain rather than by *love* for a country" (my emphasis, 41). In both Gould's and miners' cases, the articulation of their ideal necessarily appeals to what they detest the most: oppression fueled by "sordid motives of gain" for selfish ends. These discussions on revolution reveal a desire for a society built on and sustained by both private and universal forms of altruistic love.

Conrad's own views on revolution and a just society are in line with Garibaldi's humanitarian spirit. Conrad often seems to adopt an ambiguous position on revolution in his creative works, but it was not that he was mistrustful of all revolutions. Instead, Conrad made a clear distinction between the kind of revolution which overthrows a legitimate ruling power and the kind that rebels against unjust oppressors. Eloise Knapp

Hay notes that this distinction led Conrad to protest against “being called ‘the son of a Revolutionist’” despite his father being a well-known Polish revolutionary against Russian domination. For Conrad, “No epithet could be more inapplicable to a man with such a strong sense of responsibility in the region of ideas and action.” Since his father “purely revolts against foreign domination,” he was no revolutionary “in the sense of working for the subversion of any [legitimate] social or political scheme” (qtd. in Hay 85). Much like Viola’s case, two positions would characterize Conrad’s father’s political activism: hatred of oppression and love for liberty. But what kind of society do these ‘pure’ revolutionaries fight for? Andrew Mozina argues that throughout “the major phase of Conrad’s career (from *The N. of the “Narcissus”* through *Chance*),” Conrad “tests different moral bases for the social order – including solidarity, the fixed standard of conduct, material interests, revolutionary idealism” and “finds a provisional refuge (if not certainty) in an ideal of love that repudiates violence and is consummated by sexual union, the most profound form of solidarity” at “the end of this phase” (xviii). Mozina’s analysis relates to Dr. Monygham’s words to Mrs. Gould which show mistrust of material interests as a stable basis for social order and suggest a need for “a moral principle” whose “rectitude,” “continuity,” and “force” would sustain a community in healthy ways. Indeed, in *Nostramo*, many characters pursue the “ideal of love that repudiates violence and is consummated by sexual union” as a moral basis for a just society. Whether they achieve their goal or not is another question.

While the characters’ nostalgia for the Garibaldian spirit leaves hints for what the novel considers to be the ideal moral basis for a just society, their pursuit of the ideals ends in failure. Giorgio Viola inherits his chief’s humanitarian ideals, yet he fails to put them into practice in the present-day Sulaco. In the beginning of the novel, when a local riot breaks out, Giorgio dismisses the rioters as “thieves,” not “a people striving for justice” and expresses an “immense scorn for this outbreak of scoundrels and léperos, who did not know the meaning of the word ‘liberty’” (17). He is, in fact, described as generally “full of scorn for the populace” (14). Viola’s “scorn” is an object of scathing critique by James Sanders in his article “‘The Disrepute of the Old Revolutionary

Utopias' and Conrad's *Nostramo*."²³ He points out the discrepancy between the old man's Garibaldian idealism and actual every-day attitude towards the populace: Viola "cannot imagine the plebian soldiers in the novel were fighting for a cause as he had once done, and denigrates them as 'Blind. Esclavos!'" (181). Despite the fact that Garibaldi's own comrades in South America included those who were "native born to the New World" and Africans who were "victims of the slave trade" (182), Viola seems to consider the ideals of democracy and republicanism originate from Europe and cannot be fully grasped by the local populace.

Sanders argues that Conrad too shares Viola's bias as the novel represents the popular revolutions of the country as brutal and corrupt, and even dismisses Montero's troops as "Negro liberals" through the mouth of Don Pepe (286). Sanders' criticism against Conrad's attitude towards popular South American revolutions is compelling. Even so, the novel seems to be aware of its limitations in representing the subalterns of Costaguana. The narrator of *Nostramo* is especially aware of the European characters' segregation from and biases against the general populace. When a local man starts passionately courting his younger daughter, Viola vehemently disapproves of the man. Dr. Monygham gives his commentary on the issue to Mrs. Gould: "The old Garibaldino, however, took a violent dislike to him. I don't know why. Perhaps because he was not a model of perfection like this Gian' Battista, the incarnation of the courage, the fidelity, the honour of 'the people'. Signor Viola does not think much of Sulaco natives" (389). The tone of the commentary is ironic. Viola is a Garibaldino who appreciates *Nostramo* (Gian' Battista) as a man of 'the people'. The very next sentence exposes this Garibaldino's irrational personal distaste of the Sulaco natives whose membership to 'the people' is undeniable. The novel actively portrays the pitfalls of Viola's idealism as he fails to see the true value of the people for whom he fought alongside with Garibaldi.

²³ Sanders' article offers an incredibly up-to-date postcolonial look at Conrad's treatment of the nineteenth-century South American politics in *Nostramo*. He claims that South Americans were genuinely experimenting with democracy through a series of revolutions in the nineteenth century, but these revolutions have been grossly misrepresented by the contemporary European intellectuals as farcical. Conrad adopts such a biased view of the South American politics in *Nostramo*, and till now, most of his readers and critics wrongly accept his political realism as a valid representation of the political history of the continent.

Nostromo, too, despite his awakening to Viola's ideals, fails to live up to the title of "Man of the People" in the sense of the man *for* the people. Although he starts attending the meetings of "the secret societies amongst immigrants and natives" who are preparing to "raise the country with the new cry of the wealth for the people" (365-6), his personal reformation is held down by his unlawful possession of and attachment to the hidden silver. Lastly, Charles Gould's mining business shows some results, but it too loses contact with Gould's original humanitarian vision in the development of the interest of material wealth. Gould's failure is most explicitly manifested in the barrenness of his marriage. Mrs. Gould remains childless and neglected by her husband, and even betrayed as the promises for romance, adventure, and revolution continue to be only partially fulfilled. The ideal of love, though pursued, remains largely unconsummated in both private and public spheres in the novel. However, one place in Sulaco exhibits some characteristics of the utopian society aspired for by the main characters of the novel. Charles and Emilia Gould's Casa Gould provides for the common labourers working within its walls a safe haven to lead their personal lives in relative peace and prosperity.

4.10 The Casa Gould

On the fateful night when Pedrito Montero and his revolutionary troops arrive in Sulaco, the general population welcomes them with open arms – a reaction fiercely contrasting that of the Blanco leaders who have been dreading their coming. The townspeople's enthusiasm found vent in the clanging of "all the belfries in the town" (275). The deafening peeling of the bells sends panic among the resident servants of the Casa Gould who take it for "the signal for a general massacre" (273), and they rush towards the second floor of the house. What ensues from the panic-stricken stampede is perhaps the most humanistic and, arguably, democratic moment in the novel: Charles Gould comes to "[behold] all the extent of his domestic establishment" in a meaningful way (273):

"Shut these windows!" Charles Gould yelled at [Basilio] angrily. All the other servants, terrified at what they took for the signal of a general massacre, had rushed upstairs, tumbling over each other, men and women, the obscure and generally invisible population of the ground floor on the four sides of the patio.

The women, screaming “Misericordia!” ran right into the room, and falling on their knees against the walls, began to cross themselves convulsively. The staring heads of men blocked the doorway in an instant – mozos from the stable, gardeners, nondescript helpers living on the crumbs of the munificent house – and Charles Gould beheld all the extent of his domestic establishment, even to the gatekeeper. (273)

The sight of the gatekeeper stands out to Charles Gould because of his special connection to the Gould family:

This was a half-paralysed old man, whose long white locks fell down to his shoulders: an heirloom taken up by Charles Gould’s familial piety. He could remember Henry Gould, an Englishman and Costaguanero of the second generation, chief of the Sulaco province; he had been his personal mozo years and years ago in peace and war; had been allowed to attend his master in prison; had, on the fatal morning, followed the firing squad; and, peeping from behind one of the cypresses growing along the wall of the Franciscan Convent, had seen, with his eyes starting out of his head, Don Enrique throw up his hands and fall with his face in the dust. Charles Gould noted particularly the big patriarchal head of that witness in the rear of the other servants. (273-4)

Often in descriptive passages, the narrator of *Nostramo* will jump between diverse characters’ perspectives as well as between different places and times in order to provide wider historical contexts for the local moment being depicted. In the passage in question, however, the narrator makes it clear that his perspective largely stays with Gould. It is Charles Gould who “[notes] ...the big patriarchal head of that witness”; it is Gould who reminisces about the “fatal morning” where the gate keeper has witnessed the execution of his uncle (although the memories of the gatekeeper appear to be supplied by the narrator’s omniscience). The doubling between Charles and Henry Gould is something the novel has already hinted at before. The narrator informs that Henry Gould was a revolutionary who took up his political cause out of “the conviction of practical necessity, stronger than any abstract political doctrine” just like how Charles Gould has “flung the silver of the San Tomé into the fray” as a political weapon for practical reasons. The narrator further underscores their resemblance by stating that “[s]pringing from the

instinctive uprightness of their natures their action was reasoned” (104). Given the doubling, it is no coincidence that on the night of the arrival of Pedrito Montero whose political agenda he publicly opposes, Charles Gould, “the ‘Costaguana Englishman’ of the third generation” (104) is reminded of Henry Gould, “an Englishman and Costaguanero of the second generation” (274) whose fate he might share.

But the agent who brings back the memories of his late uncle is the old gate keeper who has personally known and served Henry Gould, a living link that connects the two generations. Interestingly, his presence has been noted a couple of times in the novel in passing. Referred to as “the old porter” in those moments, he is “the old porter” who “would hobble in, sweeping the flagstones and [make] the house...ready for the day” (52); he is “the gouty old porter” who attends “Don José and Decoud” as the Blanco leaders visit the Casa Gould to discuss the political fate of Costaguana (127). But it is only when Charles Gould, in the face of common danger, recognizes his “heirloom” as a person and “witness,” the historical significance of the old porter/ gatekeeper is revealed. Because of this recognition by Gould, towards the end, he reappears in the novel as a familiar character: “the old porter, who had known Henry Gould,” though “totally blind and impotent now” (365).

Charles Gould’s recognition does not end with the old gate keeper but also extends to those he has not noticed before:

But he was surprised to see a shriveled old hag or two, of whose existence within the walls of this house he had not been aware. They must have been the mothers, or even grandmothers, of some of his people. There were a few children, too, more or less naked, crying and clinging to the legs of their elders. He had never before noticed any sign of a child in his patio. (273-4)

The “shriveled old hag[s]” and crying “children” are among the “obscure and generally invisible population of the ground floor” (273) upon whom Charles Gould’s eyes set for the first time. Gould comes to terms with the extent of the diversity of the population housed under his roof which he has been unknowingly supporting. He notices too “Leonarda,” Mrs. Gould’s “favorite maid” and “the Viola girls [being led by Leonarda] by the hand” who are staying at the Gould’s to be kept away from their mother’s death bed and also perhaps from the dangers of the upcoming social unrest. The whole “extent”

of the Casa Gould's "domestic establishment" resembles that of a mini state due to the diversity of its inhabitants encompassing the historical witness, entire families of workers including elders and children, asylum seekers, and "nondescript helpers living on the crumbs of the munificent house." For these servants and their families, the Casa Gould holds and fulfills promises of work and welfare.

Charles Gould's meaningful look at his household members constitutes a utopian moment in the backdrop of the revolution. The Casa Gould in this moment embodies a figure of a prosperous state sharing its wealth with the oppressed people, and this figure is consciously registered to Gould when he gazes upon the faces of the people for whose welfare he has been supposedly labouring. Gould has once told his wife about his vision for Costaguana and the role of the silver mine for that vision:

What is wanted here is law, good faith, order, security. Any one can declaim about these things, but I pin my faith to material interests. Only let the material interests once get a firm footing, and they are bound to impose the conditions on which alone they can continue to exist. That's how your money-making is justified here in the face of lawlessness and disorder. It is justified because the security which it demands must be shared with an oppressed people. A better justice will come afterwards. That's your ray of hope. (63)

According to Gould, for a state to achieve law and order, it first needs to experience the development of the material interests, which will in turn ensure the conditions of security in which further material wealth can be procured. Only under such economic conditions, is it possible for an oppressed people to share in the safety and security of the state. Hence, Gould decides to devote his life to the development of the San Tomé mine, not for the sake of money making but for the building of a safer country for the oppressed, or so he *justifies*. Eloise Knapp Hay assesses Charles Gould as a revolutionary and utopian visionary who "attempts, and nearly manages to accomplish in one lifetime, the centuries-long revolutions from feudalism to liberal capitalism and thence to the establishment of the dreamed-of peaceable kingdom" (89). In explaining the historical background of Gould's vision, Hay refers to Hannah Arendt's analysis that the root of all European revolutionary thoughts lies in "the discovery of the New World and its wealth" and that "the Western hemisphere made possible for the first time the utopian idea of a

society that could be rid of poverty.” Arendt interprets that “the stage [of the age of revolutions in the modern sense] was set when first Locke – probably under the influence of the prosperous conditions of the colonies in the New World – and then Adam Smith held that labor and toil, far from being the appanage of poverty...were, on the contrary, the source of all wealth” (qtd. in Hay 90). In a similar way, Charles Gould too bases his utopian vision on the buried treasure of the San Tomé mine, which he hopes to use to build a prosperous society where common labourers could earn their living and prosper themselves in safety.

Gould’s utopian desires do not turn him into a democratic fighter, however. Rather, his political moves support a moderate Blanco government – an oligarchy of the leaders, most probably, of colonial origin – through corruptive means and seek to ensure the interests of the bourgeois class. Gould is aware of the irony of his moves and uses the word “justified” twice in the above speech in order to defend his money making amidst the corruption of the country and his participation in it. One way of making sense of the discrepancy between Gould’s utopian vision and pursuit of self and class interests is to appeal to Jameson’s *Political Unconscious*. In the conclusion of the book, Jameson proposes that “all class consciousness of whatever type is Utopian insofar as it expresses the unity of a collectivity” but only in a symbolic sense that “all such collectivities are themselves figures for the ultimate concrete collective life of an achieved Utopia or classless society” (290-1). Jameson’s proposition is applicable here for the way it highlights the interconnectedness between the ideological and the utopian. The opposite of the above example could also be true as some cultural and religious practices that appeal to “the nostalgia for the collective and the Utopian” have built-in “ideological” functions. If “religious and ritual practices” symbolically affirm “social unity in a society which is objectively class divided,” these practices perform an ideological function since they attempt to “conjure such divisions away by an appeal to some higher (and imaginary) principle of collective and social unity” (292). In other words, an overt ideological operation could carry a symbolic utopian impulse while a symbolic cultural practice that appeals to social cohesion could perform an ideological role of sustaining current class divisions. In this light, Gould’s ambivalent political attitude underscores the seemingly unlikely connection between ideology and a utopian vision. Gould’s political

participation which can otherwise be dismissed as an ideological move can also be read as a gesture towards a utopian society as his acts “[affirm] collective solidarity” (291) for his class. Gould’s case is also unique in that he consciously extends his class solidarity to the rest of the country in his vision; Gould himself might argue that for him, the vision for a universal utopia actually precedes and motivates his pursuit of class interests.

Gould’s utopian vision is partially fulfilled in the Casa Gould where the vulnerable population is given work and shelter although Gould himself has been unaware of the small utopia he has achieved in his domestic sphere up until the moment of bell ringing. The lives of the resident servants appear to have been set apart from the rest of the townspeople since on that night when the revolutionary troops arrive, the servants and their families take the celebratory bell ringing as a signal for a general massacre and participate in the panic and fear of their Blanco masters. The Casa Gould could very well have been a haven for the common labourers of the town, or “the People” as Garibaldi and old Viola would call them. The representation of the servants of the Casa Gould seems to justify the revolution Gould and his friends wage – Sulaco’s separation from the rest of Costaguana. From the picture of the servants’ lives, one sees evidence for Gould’s intention to use the wealth of the mine for the welfare of the people.

According to Bruce Robbins’ *The Servant’s Hand*, the use of the servant as a figure for the common people is a motif pervasive in the English novel. Robbins’ argument starts by noting the sheer absence of the working class in what we accept as the major works of English fiction. He brings up George Orwell’s complaint against Charles Dickens that the working class is never represented in Dicken’s novel except “as servants, and comic servants at that” (3-4). Robbins argues that Dickens’ case applies to the majority of the other nineteenth-century English novelists, and proposes to read the servant figure as a rhetorical device rather than as the historical domestic servant. According to him, the snippets of the servant figure seen from the margins of English fiction offer “the vision of unsatisfied community” (218) that is subject to poverty and discrimination. He concludes that the representation of the servant in English fiction plays a utopian function in a symbolic sense: “the servant figures the people not as essential content but as [rhetorical] appeal, as a beckoning toward something which is visibly unrealized” (220), whether the beckoning has been intentional or not on the part

of the author. In representing the Casa Gould servants, Conrad too uses the servant figures for their rhetorical appeal,²⁴ but not for “the vision of unsatisfied community” and “beckoning toward something which is visibly unrealized” but for the vision of a society which has already been symbolically realized in the novel.

The servants of the Casa Gould lead separate lives from their masters’ in the background of the novel. While they play no significant plot function, their symbolic function is sealed at the end of the novel where Emilia Gould looks at the butler of the house (“head mozo”) and reflects on the course of her past life. Since the beginning of the novel, two servants in particular have been named and mentioned sporadically in the novel similarly to the case of the old gate keeper – Charles Gould’s personal mozo Basilio²⁵ and Emilia Gould’s maidservant Leonarda²⁶. Basilio and Leonarda also make appearance in the scene of bell ringing. The narrator reports that “Basilio, who had been waiting at the table, shrinking within himself, clung to the sideboard with chattering teeth” (273) and that “Even Leonarda, the camerista, came in a fright, pushing through, with her spoiled, pouting face of a favourite maid, leading the Viola girls by the hand” (274). From the sporadic brief descriptions, Basilio is depicted as a deferential and somewhat fearful man, and Leonarda as a strong and feisty woman who takes pride in

²⁴ Conrad does attempt a representation of the proletariat in *Nostromo*. I find that the workers of the San Tomé mine are the real proletariat in the novel. The mining village is chiefly made up of poverty-stricken native workers who have migrated from the rest of the country with their families, and the life in the village is described in detail (Conrad 74-8). At the same time, the picture of the sufferings of the miners and the cultural imperialism (as illustrated by Father Roman’s patronizing Euro-centric preaching) to which they are subject is not compatible with the kind of the utopian society that Charles and Emilia Gould envision. The portrayal of the miners, therefore, holds little rhetorical appeal as Robbins describes, which is probably why Conrad turns to the servants of the Casa Gould to paint a picture of model society.

²⁵ He is the same Basilio who is mentioned in the following quotes: “Basilio, in a livery of white linen and a red sash, had squatted for a moment behind his heels to unstrap the heavy, blunt spurs in the patio” (39); “but it was Basilio, Mr. Gould’s own mozo and the head servant of the Casa, who, in all good faith and from a sense of propriety, announced him once in the solemn words, ‘El Senor Gobernador has arrived’” (75); Basilio, standing aside against the wall, said in a soft tone to the passing ladies, “The Senor Administrador is just back from the mountain” (127); “No, senor,” said behind Mrs. Gould the soft voice of Basilio, the head servant of the Casa. “I don’t think the senorita could have left it in this house at all” (153).

²⁶ Leonarda is mentioned in the following quotes: “Leonarda – her own camerista – bearing high up, swung from her hand raised above her raven black head...A big green parrot...screamed out ferociously, “Leonarda! Leonarda!” in imitation of Mrs. Gould’s voice” (52); “Leonarda told him that the senora had not risen yet. The senora had given into her charge the girls belonging to that Italian posadero...Leonarda did not approve of the Viola children being admitted to the house” (264).

being Mrs. Gould's favourite maid. At the end of the novel, it is revealed that Basilio and Leonarda have married and had several children together over the years. The revelation comes significantly at a moment where Mrs. Gould's continued dissatisfaction with her marriage in her later years is exposed. Basilio enters the garden to find Mrs. Gould and informs her that her husband has decided to spend the night at the mine while she has been looking forward to enjoying some private time with him that evening before their public duties would start the next day. Right at this moment, Basilio happens to be carrying his youngest child on his shoulders:

Through the garden gate emerged Basilio, grown fat and sleek, with an elderly hairless face, wrinkles at the corners of eyes, and his jet-black, coarse hair plastered down smoothly. Stooping carefully behind an ornamental clump of bushes, he put down with precaution a small child he had been carrying on his shoulders – his own and Leonarda's last born. The pouting, spoiled Camerista and the head mozo of the Casa Gould had been married for some years now. (371)

He is seen "gazing fondly at his offspring" (372) before he breaks the news of Gould's plan to remain in the mine for the night. Mrs. Gould becomes saddened by the news, and the narrator catches her gazing at Basilio and his child:

She watched him walk away along the path, step aside behind a flowering bush, and reappear with the child seated on his shoulders. He passed through the gateway between the garden and the patio with measured steps, careful of his light burden. (372)

There is little doubt in supposing that Basilio and Leonarda's family building is intended to juxtapose Goulds' childless marriage. The personal lives of these servants seem to have been flourishing in the backstage of the novel's primary plots as evident not only in the mention of the children born between the two servants but also in Basilio's improved stature, "grown fat and sleek."

The encounter with Basilio and his child launches Mrs. Gould into a deep reflection on what makes human labour meaningful:

Had anybody asked her of what she was thinking, alone in the Garden of the Casa...It had come into her mind that for life to be large and full, it must contain the care of the past and of the future in every passing moment of the present. Our

daily work must be done to the glory of the dead, and for the good of those who come after. (372-3)

Here, Mrs. Gould invokes the communal and spiritual value of human labour. As for the dead, she may be thinking of Martin Decoud and Don Jose Avellanos – those who died in the height of the revolution of her generation; as for those who come after, she is likely referring to Basilio's child, suggestively placed on his father's shoulders as a "light burden" (372). In her reflection, what connects her to the past and future generations is her "daily work." It is also her "daily work" which connects her to the servant Basilio and his youngest child as her and her husband's hard work has helped provide a safe haven where Basilio's family has been flourishing. The point of her reflection seems to be the evaluation of how effective her past revolutionary and philanthropic works have been, but in the process, it reveals the potential of labour in community building.

Labour, in fact, is the single most celebrated human activity for its social potential in many of Conrad's texts. According to Timothy Wager, the "'real' value of labor" in Conrad's texts "is not in the wealth it creates, but in its ability to forge social bonds among people." I have also noted the importance of the work of sailing in bringing together a society of seamen in *The N. of the "Narcissus"* and *The Mirror of the Sea* in the earlier chapters. Wager quotes a passage on the social value of labour from Conrad's other essay, "Tradition." In the passage, Conrad passes by the institute of the British Merchant Service and "envisions the camaraderie of" the naval men based on their common work:

From the hard work of men are born the sympathetic consciousness of a common identity, the fidelity to right practice which makes great craftsmen, the sense of right conduct which we may call honour, the devotion to our calling and the idealism which is not a misty, winged angel without eyes, but a divine figure of terrestrial aspect with a clear glance and its feet resting firmly on the earth on which it was born. (qtd. in Wager 219-20)

In his analysis, Wager rightly emphasizes the "public" nature of Conrad's understanding of labour in "[bringing] men together in a series of abstract ideals" – these ideals being social virtues like communal belonging, craftsmanship, honour, and higher purpose and ideals. Labour is the means by which the abstract social ideals take the form of concrete

individual actions; the men's "hard work" develops a sense of community among them by allowing them to fulfill their public duties. In Conrad's reflection, Wager hears the "cry" for "Work for work's sake" and concludes that for Conrad, "the value of labor is not at all dependent on the utility of its product, but on the by-product it produces in the society of laborers" (220). Some characters of *Nostromo*, like Mrs. Gould above, hint at the importance of this "by-product" of labour. Among others, the engineer-in-chief of the railways most explicitly calls it "the spiritual value" of labour in his conversation with Dr. Monygham: "Upon my word, doctor, things seem to be worth nothing by what they are in themselves. I begin to believe that the only solid thing about them is the spiritual value which every one discovers in his own form of activity" (Conrad 228). Dr. Monygham cynically "[supposes]" that Nostromo too must be drawing "some spiritual value for his labours," otherwise he cannot fathom "why the devil he should be faithful to you [the engineer-in-chief], Gould, Mitchell, or anybody else" (231). Nostromo indeed has derived spiritual value from his labours since he has felt rich in his high reputation among his social circle – that is until when he realizes and starts to value the material product of his labour, more than its social by-product.

The tragedy of the material world of *Nostromo* is that the wealth that the labourer produces subscribes to a larger system, and this system seeks its own law and order while caring nothing for the spiritual value of human labour. Wager notes that despite labour's social potential, it is often ironically the product of one's own labour which alienates the labourers from their community and causes social divisions. For instance, "[w]hen laborers such as Nostromo concentrate the value of their work in the social bonds it creates...all involved are served well"; however, Nostromo becomes socially alienated and isolated "once he places a higher value on the material wealth that his labor creates – as happens once Nostromo realizes that he has been exploited by Charles Gould" (Wager 216). Indeed, Nostromo hoards the silver for himself upon the discovery that he has been "betrayed" (Conrad 301). But betrayed by whom? How? The quick answer is the wealthy Europeans of Sulaco who sent him on his death mission without caring to provide a way for him to enter back into the community safely. It was the safety of the silver they cared about, not Nostromo's. On a more philosophical level, Nostromo comes to recognize the failure of his original value system (as discussed earlier in this chapter): he has been

operating with the social values of the older generation in a world governed by the system of material interests. There is a sense in the novel that “the force of ‘material interests’ will [eventually] overcome the [noble community/ nation-building] efforts of” of all human labour. Wager writes, “Conrad depicts all human labor as that on which community is founded, but ultimately demonstrates the failure of such efforts because wealth does not obey the moral principles under which it finds its genesis” (Wager 217). The great tragedy of *Nostromo* is the labourer divorced from the spiritual value of his labour and enslaved to the material wealth his labor produces.

Amidst the doom and gloom of the wealth of the nations, the Casa Gould remains a sanctuary for the common labourers, epitomized by the thriving servant figures of Basilio and Leonarda. The reason for this is simple: the Casa Gould is managed by Mrs. Gould who has always been more of a person of principles than Nostromo (or any other characters, for that matter) has ever been in the novel. Paula Salván points out that she is called by Conrad an “authentic ‘Costaguanera’” and that she is “the only character able to cross the apparently unbridgeable barrier that separates the Europeans from the natives in Sulaco.” In her journey into the interior of the country in the early years, each day, she is said to have “come nearer to the soul of the land...unaffected by the slight European veneer of the coast towns”; “she was becoming a Costaguanera”; “[s]he saw the man under the silent, sad-eyed beast of burden” (67). Her conscious connection with the “soul of the land” places Emilia Gould above the limitations of Nostromo’s romantic simplicity, Georgio’s Eurocentric racism, and her husband’s infatuation with material interests: in fact, she may be the only true inheritor of the Garibaldian spirit in the whole novel.

At the end, Mrs. Gould is the only one who consciously reflects on the spiritual value of her past labour. Given her thematic centrality, her last inner monologue is not to be taken lightly. Hay considers the two things Mrs. Gould invokes in her reflection “‘care of the past and of the future’ in the present moment” as “an essential concern in Conrad’s political programme.” According to Hay, Mrs. Gould is, in fact, Conrad’s model political and social activist. Hay sharply refutes Irving Howe’s “charge” that “she merely represents Conrad’s ‘apolitical’ retreat ‘to the resources of private affection’” (qtd. in Hay 92). Rather, “Mrs. Gould’s vision is undimmed, principled aspect of Gould’s

original plan, and she repeatedly takes political action” such as backing Decoud’s plan, taking part in scouting Hernandez, and supporting Dr. Monygham’s activities. Yes, her political efforts would eventually fail to yield the kind of social peace she envisions. Yet, there is little doubt that the novel describes her labour as the redeeming link between the private affections and the public duties; it is the means by which the ‘love’ of the private sphere becomes “transmitted” (Foster, qtd. in Hay 93) to the whole nation in the Garibaldian sense. To Hay’s list of Mrs. Gould’s political activities, I want to add the managing of the Casa Gould. Mrs. Gould’s monologue ends with an exasperated mutter to “Material interests.” But the Casa Gould managed by this good woman remains as an embodiment of what Sulaco and Costaguana could have been but will never be. Borrowing from E. M. Foster’s words which Hay quotes, the novel seems to hint that the good of the People will only be achieved when the “private decencies” of the Casa Gould “can be transmitted to public affairs” of the whole nation.

Mrs. Gould’s last interaction with Nostromo takes on a political meaning when examined in the light of “Conrad’s political programme.” On his deathbed, Nostromo calls for Mrs. Gould as a believer calls for a priest, to confess his sin over the silver and have his soul released – he does not want to be condemned like the gringos haunting the Azuera gold. While it is significant to note that Nostromo sees Mrs. Gould “as the only one qualified to release the hold of the silver’s evil influence” (Hay 93), Mrs. Gould’s refusal to hear Nostromo’s confession is just as significant in a political sense. As well as refuting Howe’s analysis of Mrs. Gould’s character, Hay also contends with Said’s reading of Mrs. Gould’s refusal as “nugatory by the standards of modern politics” (qtd. in Hay 93). For critics like Howe and Said, Mrs. Gould’s dismissal of Nostromo’s confession may not be politically proactive enough. However, Hay thinks that it is precisely these “standards of modern politics” that “the novel sets out to repudiate.” Mrs. Gould simply provides a different model of political action. By refusing to hear the silver’s whereabouts and thus “disposing of the silver in effect,” Mrs. Gould decides to ensure the “safety” of the silver upon which the revolution “came to depend” and to protect the reputation and work of the silver thief in his labour for the founding of the nation, along with it those of her husband and Dr. Monygham. In so doing, in Hay’s words, Emilia Gould assumes “a public responsibility” and “once again provides a model

for action that is based on ‘care of the past and of the future’ in the present moment,” which is, again, “an essential concern in Conrad’s political programme” (93).

4.11 Nostromo’s Personal Revolution

In my reading, the greatest virtue of Mrs. Gould’s choice lies in her firm denunciation of material wealth, which helps Nostromo achieve a personal reformation on his deathbed. When Dr. Monygham hears that Nostromo has something to confess to Mrs. Gould, he immediately thinks of the lost silver with excitement at the possibility of retrieving it. Mrs. Gould, on the other hand, is mortified by that possibility: “Oh no! No! [...] Isn’t it lost and done with? Isn’t there enough treasure without it to make everybody in the world miserable?” (399). Her main concern is humanitarian: what more human misery will this once-lost wealth cause now? Nostromo learns that Mrs. Gould “too [has] hated the idea of that silver from the bottom of [her] heart” (400) and breaks into a rant against the wealthy, “Marvelous! – that one of you should hate the wealth that you know so well how to take from the hands of the poor. The world rests upon the poor, as old Giorgio says. You have been always good to the poor. But there is something accursed in wealth” (401). Nostromo judges Mrs. Gould to be above both the curse of the wealth and the antagonism against the poor, and he asks her, “shall I tell you where the treasure is? To you alone...Shining! Incorruptible!” But she flatly refuses: “No one misses it now. Let it be lost for ever.” Her answer effectively shuts Nostromo down: “After hearing these words, Nostromo closed his eyes, uttered no word, made no movement” (401).

After this encounter, Nostromo is again given a chance to reveal the source of his wealth. This time, a Marxist activist, “the pale photographer, small, frail, bloodthirsty, the hater of capitalists,” sneaks into his room and asks him two things before he dies: 1) Does he want to donate to the Marxist cause? 2) Is Dr. Monygham really an enemy of the people? To the former, he answers with silence; to the latter, his reply is “a glance of enigmatic and mocking scorn” (402). Hay reads this scene as the completion of Nostromo’s mental revolution. Like Mrs. Gould, Nostromo is now “judging and acting” and “[repudiates] any revolution that ties its expectations to economic returns” (95). The Marxist photographer tellingly adds to his question, “Do not forget that we want money

for our work. The rich must be fought with their own weapons” (Conrad 402), and thus reveals how his revolution too is subsumed under the system of material interests even in its commitment to fight against those in power in that system. Nostromo “[refuses] to become a pawn in yet another conspiracy,” and “silence” becomes “his sign of resistance,” which “[liberates] him in an earthly sense before death does the rest” (Hay 95).

This moment is also redemptive in the sense that Nostromo denounces wealth, the product of his labour. Nostromo’s tragedy has centred around his forfeiting the spiritual value of his labour and latching onto its material product. But the trouble is that Nostromo has never been consciously invested in the community-building aspects of his labour except as an instinct attachment to them. For him to become fully a man *of* the people in the sense of a man *for* the people, he needs to denounce the enslaving control of material wealth and reclaim the redemptive power of his own labour. His last act of silence protects those he has worked for and somewhat prevents Dr. Monygham from being a target of violence in another revolution. Like Emilia Gould’s refusal to hear his confession, Nostromo’s silence reflects the “‘care of the past and of the future’ in the present moment” – even with a touch of cynicism and irony.

4.12 Conclusion

The readers of *Captains Courageous* and *Nostromo* find that the value system of the world of adventure is distinctly communal whereas the emerging system of material interests is unfeeling and progressive. Through their experiments with the romance form, Kipling and Conrad revisit and describe in nostalgic ways the past social life of the Gloucester fishermen and Sulaco townspeople – a socially integrated life where an individual is an organic part of a small-scale community. For both novels, the key to the individual’s connection to the community is found in human labour. *Captains Courageous* celebrates the lost art of dory fishing and the comradeship between the fishermen; *Nostromo* honours the community-building efforts of the mindful characters. The novels’ nostalgic visit to the communal past is not simply sentimental, but also utopian as the novels find an ideal model for human labour in the past. In *Captains*

Courageous which glorifies the labour of the Grand Bank fishermen, some hope is redirected at the emerging generation of Captains Courageous – the capitalists like Harvey Cheyne’s father – as the shapers of the new value system. In the case of *Nostromo*, through the depiction of the flourishing servant figures of the Casa Gould, Conrad points towards a vision of a utopian society where individual members cultivate a sense of community through their daily work under the leadership of those who appreciate the value of their labour. For both novels, labour has the powerful social potential to serve as the redeeming link between the private and the public, and the personal affection and the communal duty – and even between the past and the future. Unfortunately, though, the promise of fulfilling and self-actualizing labour may be a bourgeois myth that has little place in the life of the working class. The glorification of labour tends to isolate the labour factor from its economic and material contexts, and surreptitiously plays an ideological role of upholding the status quo in the interests of the ruling classes. But the major drive of the nostalgic desire in the texts remains utopian. Their nostalgic rewriting of an adventure story points towards a good society of the future: an unalienating community of liberated individuals.

Chapter 5

5 Conclusion: Reading Adventure Fiction Nostalgically

“...the great creative writer shows us the realisation and the apotheosis of the day-dreams of common men, but their true mark is to satisfy the nameless longings of the reader, and to obey the ideal laws of the day-dream.”

- Robert Louis Stevenson, “A Gossip on Romance”

5.1 Popular Dominant Culture

The classification of the genre and literary status of the adventure tales discussed in this thesis has been an old critical problem epitomized by Fredric Jameson’s famous comment on the unclassifiable nature of Conrad’s fiction – “floating uncertainly somewhere in between Proust and Robert Louis Stevenson” (206). Nicholas Daly points out that there is “considerable critical reluctance to see the late Victorian romance as a modern form at all” (11). To associate the authors’ works with romance and adventure is often seen to degrade their status as reputable literature. When their works are examined as serious fin-de-siècle texts, the primary focus of such criticism shifts from their adventure interests to criminal psychology in texts like *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* in Stevenson’s case, concerns of aestheticism in the domestic novel *The Light that Failed* in Kipling’s, and experiments with literary modernism in Conrad’s. *The Cambridge Companion to Rudyard Kipling* dedicates a chapter to Kipling’s relationship to the Fin de Siècle. In it, Robert Hampson delivers a close reading of *The Light that Failed* and identifies the text’s complex gender politics and the protagonist’s decadent obsession with his art as points of Kipling’s link to the literary scene of the Victorian fin de siècle. For Hampson, however, Kipling’s fin-de-siècle concerns were soon to be taken over by his “focus on empire” (20) as most of his later works feature adventure narratives set in colonial settings. Hampson’s is a familiar position that adventure motifs belong to the subordinate popular culture, and its implication is that they are thus incompatible with the immediate concerns of the late Victorian culture and society.

Nicholas Daly in *Modernism, Romance and Fin de Siècle* contests the labels such as ‘popular literature’ and ‘subordinate culture’ associated with romance adventure fiction. For Daly, the late-Victorian romance did not belong to the domain of popular literature in the sense of “some noxious pulp canned by the sinister ‘culture industry’ decried by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer,” nor “some residual, resistive core of working-class practice” celebrated by E.P. Thompson (5). To be more exact, late-Victorian romances belonged to “popular *middle-class* fiction...produced by...middle-class writers for a [rapidly growing] middle-class reading public” (5). As such, they belonged to what Daly calls the “popular dominant culture” (6) as opposed to the subaltern dominated culture. In 1880s, romance novels started to “overwhelm the domestic novel” and “did much to create the popular perception of a new direction in fiction” (8) – think about the heated public debate between Henry James and R. L. Stevenson on the merits of realism and romance (as embodied in James’ “The Art of Fiction” and Stevenson’s “A Humble Remonstrance”).

The contemporary critics of R. L. Stevenson, H. Rider Haggard, and “Anthony Hope, Arthur Conan Doyle, Bram Stoker, George Du Maurier” dubbed the rising popularity of their fiction the “revival of romance” (8). Although the term “revival” suggests an intimate association with the past literary world, Daly sees the late-Victorian romance as a “distinctively modern phenomenon” that was “shaped in the same historical mould as literary modernism.” He contends that it is much more appropriate to “shelf a narrative like *She* or *Dracula* with the work of modernists like Joyce and Woolf than that of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century practitioners of romance like Ann Radcliffe, or Sir Walter Scott” (8). As a modern phenomenon, the late-Victorian romance played a “serious cultural function” of “[accommodating] certain historical changes, notably modernizing processes.” According to Daly who looks at David Harvey’s argument that literary modernism provided “ways to absorb, reflect upon, and codify” modernization, romance similarly helped the dominant culture appropriate modernizing processes like “the rise of professionalism, the search for new global markets in the ‘new imperialism’, and the rise of consumer culture” (24). In other words, the popular literary form from the past was summoned and reappropriated to address new modern concerns of the day.

5.2 Literary Evolution and “Pop” Forms

The adoption of the popular motifs from the past is identified as a key feature of how metafiction works by Patricia Waugh. In this view, she is much indebted to Russian formalists whose perspectives on literary evolution fit quite well with Daly’s account of the rise of romance in the late Victorian literary scene. Russian formalists see literature as an interconnected system. According to them, one prominent way literature evolves is by absorbing “fringe” or “popular forms” of the previous age into “mainstream fiction.” Roman Jakobson put forward the concept of “shifting dominants,” which referred to the idea that “what one age has considered to be trivial or of purely ephemeral entertainment value, another age will see as capable of expressing more profound anxieties and concerns.” By defamiliarizing “the popular form within the new context [mainstream fiction],” the literary experiment “uncovers aesthetic elements that are appropriate for expressing the serious concerns of the new age” (Waugh 79). Russian formalists saw that the potential for certain thematic expressions is already “inherent in the popular form” rather than invented by the experimenting writers. Through the dynamic process of creation and reception, the “possibilities for serious analysis” in certain motifs and forms are discovered. Therefore, whichever popular motifs and forms are to be more prominently “taken up as modes of serious expression” depended upon “each set of historical and cultural circumstances” of the given age (80). For instance, “the [popular] thriller” whose “stereotypical characters, plot and situations, escapism and often sensationalism, and its simplistic moral affirmations” can be taken up in “an age of uncertainty” as a mode for “the expression of a deep human ontological insecurity through its central image of a man or woman threatened and on the run” (79).

It is worth mentioning that there is a fundamental difference between what we would today consider dated ‘popular culture’ and what the late Victorian writers would have considered the ‘popular’ literary forms from the past like romance. Waugh makes that important distinction when she refers to Leslie Fiedler’s views on the fate of the novel in the latter half of the twentieth century. In his 1975 essay, “Cross the Border—Close the Gap,” to which Waugh refers, Fiedler discusses young American writers who turn away from the avant-garde and high culture and instead adopt “Pop forms” in their novels when they are “most themselves” and “nearest to their central concerns.” These

forms include “Western, Science Fiction, and Pornography,” the genres “most associated with exploitation by the mass media.” According to Fiedler, the “most congenial of [these forms] is the Western.” Because the Western has been consumed exclusively as a form of light entertainment via “pulp magazines, run-of-the-mill T.V. series and Class B movies” rather than as literature, the form has preserved the reader’s “mythological innocence” (Fiedler 278). Such appeal to “mythological innocence” is critical to Fiedler’s perspective on the role of the novel. Waugh states that “Leslie Fiedler was one of the first to argue that, in order to survive, the novel must return to its origins in the popular forms of a collectivist folk ethic which can ‘bridge the gap’ between the ‘notion of one art for the cultivated, the favoured few...and another sub-art for the ‘uncultured’” (Waugh 80). The “mythological innocence” preserved in the popular form like the Western would rescue the novel from the cultivated high culture and restore it to the domain of the common people by reinstating what we find most naturally entertaining and important as human beings.

Waugh herself considers Fiedler’s perspective rather outdated and irrelevant for the analysis of postmodern metafiction. Waugh considers that Fiedler “[implicitly rejects]” “the technological base of much contemporary popular culture” and “attempts to return to a pre-industrial homogeneous mythical past” by advocating the novel’s return to the “collectivist folk” readership (80). But both the writers and readers of the mythical past now belong to the past. A view like Fiedler’s “ignores the continuous shift in historical consciousness at the level of both the everyday and the deeper social paradigm” and does not account for the postmodern “shift involving an adjustment to material developments consequent upon huge technological expansion.” For instance, a number of postmodern metafictional texts dismantle the conventions and formulae of popular literature in order to convey the “ideological shift involving the perception of reality as a construct” (81). Whereas literary conventions of an established genre uphold an internally consistent literary world that makes reference to a stable outside world, radical metafiction plays with these conventions to the effect of “*disturbance*” rather than “*affirmation*” of the reader’s sense of reality – both literary and real (her emphases, 82).

In analyzing the nostalgic metafictional texts by my authors, however, Fiedler’s view rather than Waugh’s is more applicable. I have discussed in the introduction the

timeless appeal of romance to the late Victorian adventure writers. Contemporary critic Andrew Lang declared that the sheer thrill of action in romance captivated the primitive, primeval, prehistoric savage within each reader of adventure fiction (263) and held up the raw entertainment value of romance against the unnatural refinement of realist novels. Lang's position corresponds to what Waugh invokes as an "archetypal structural" or "Jungian view" of popular forms like "science fiction, ghost stories, westerns, detective stories, popular romance": the archetypal view would see "these forms" as "different explicit historical shapes which manifest, at a surface level, archetypal desires that remain unchanged at a deep level" and "'allow' for the expression of these desires" (81). Such is the approach of Robert Fraser and Paul Zweig (as discussed in the introduction) towards the use of romance in adventure fiction – as an expression of archetypal desires. Fraser sees in the motivation for the quest narratives of Stevenson, Kipling, Haggard, and Doyle a search for the secrets of human origins (76-7); Zweig considers the appeal of the adventure motif in Western literature as existential, as a "plunge into essential experience" (4). My last chapter examined another archetypal thematic appeal of adventure in the form of 'work' by identifying the parallels between the concepts of Thomas Carlyle's "work," Johan Huizinga's "play," and Paul Zweig's "adventure," and their applications to Kipling's *Captains Courageous* and Conrad's *Nostramo*. The chapter demonstrated how the romance form's focus on action rather than inward psychology allowed the texts to explore the potential for meaningful and fulfilling work carried in the experience of adventure.

5.3 Adventure Fiction and Its Alternative Social Vision

It may seem ironic to connect romance, the ultimate leisurely form, to the idea of work, but "Work" or "Technical Maturity" is also a focal point of Cannon Schmitt's analysis of Stevenson's adventure narratives. Schmitt sees Stevenson's fiction as a critique of the conventional bildungsroman which, starting from Wolfgang von Goethe's Wilhelm Meister, pivots on the character's inner maturation and social integration rather than on their apprenticeship to a specific trade. Most unique to Stevenson's bildung, however, is his focus on exteriority rather than psychological interiority, which has been seen as the

centre of, not just the bildungsroman, but the modern novel. Stevenson himself considers this uniqueness as a feature of “romance”: “where the interest turns, not upon what a man shall choose to do, but on how he manages to do it; not on the passionate slips and hesitations of the conscience, but on the problems of the body and of the practical intelligence” (Stevenson “Gossip on Romance” 18, qtd. in Schmitt, “Technical Maturity” 61). The bildung in Stevenson’s fiction involves more technical maturity than internal character growth – developing an attentive attitude to how things operate, mastering a specific set of skills necessary to navigate a ship and a life, and learning to cope with the abiotic forces one encounters in the act of navigation.

Paradoxically, though, Stevenson’s characters never really grow up as they neither fix their skills to a stable trade or profession, nor tie the knot of marriage for full social integration. In a way, their go at sailing remains a child’s play. Schmitt analyzes that “[t]he incomplete nature of technical maturity results from the displacement of heterosexual romance by romance with the world” (73). The inconclusive nature of their bildung “indicates less their failure to mature than Stevenson’s refusal of the model of personhood on offer in the traditional bildungsroman” (74). Rather than adopting a respectable profession or settling down by marrying an eligible person, Stevenson’s characters’ maturity is marked by two things: passion for the work and loyalty to a community where that passion is appreciated. It is clear at this point that the work featured in Stevenson’s fiction corresponds less to the backbreaking labours of, say, a factory worker, but more to Carlyle’s idealized kind which contains the elements of Huizinga’s “play” – spontaneous, imaginative, innovative, creative, and free. Love for this kind of idealized work also plays a strong social role as it is, according to Schmitt, “required and transmitted in contexts of male homosociality – ‘an imagined community of map-obsessed men,’ as Oliver Buckton has it – from which women are almost entirely absent” (73). The lack of growth displayed by Stevenson’s characters translates into the rejecting of the morals of the nineteenth-century domestic novel in their search for alternative forms of personal fulfillment, work, and society.

Could it be that Stevenson’s adventure narratives set a pattern for the thematic development in the whole genre of adventure fiction? Could it be that the adventure genre operates under an entirely different kind of poetics than that governing the domestic

novel as we understand it? Margaret Cohen certainly thinks so. Genre, for Cohen, is a useful “analytic category” (“Traveling Genres” 482). Recognizable generic features are taken up by the writers in order to address and engage with the pressing social and literary concerns of the time. Certain literary genres gain popularity across borders and travel internationally for their “transportable significance” (495), which is the term used by Cohen as the genre’s potential to address the society’s most pressing concerns. Sea fiction is one such example of a travelling genre for its transportable significance. Cohen differentiates her approach from Fredric Jameson’s “symptomatic” reading which analyzes the political traces of the “major, if traumatic and unacknowledged, historical developments” (“Narratology” 58) that the individual texts bear but hide. She, on the other hand, vows to pay attention to what the text performs – overtly and explicitly.

And the major work that sea adventure fiction performs is *work*. Sea adventure fiction is “a form of the novel driven by the performance of skilled work” (67) and as such, adventure novels generally “represent *the labor process*” (her emphasis, 67). Work is also the key social issue taken up by sea adventure fiction, especially the degradation of work in the face of the rise of capitalism and industrialization. Unlike the industrial novel that tackles the issue of working conditions head-on by realistically depicting the lives of labourers, sea fiction works against the degradation of labour in progress by celebrating the characters’ practical knowledge of seafaring, which Cohen calls “know-how.” This know-how shines the most in precarious situations where familiar technology and predictability fail – in moments we would call adventurous. The celebration of seafarers’ know-how in nautical novels resists the modern degradation of human labour on land in 2 ways: 1) ‘know-how’ is a comprehensive knowledge and skillset that engages the labourer in the entire labouring process without alienating him; 2) ‘know-how’ is an amoral and apolitical knowledge that has democratic potential as anyone with the right skills and experiences can prove themselves to be worthy of heroism (“Traveling Genres” 491-3).

The distinction she makes between the modern domestic novel and sea adventure fiction is also similar to Zweig’s. In *The Novel and the Sea*, she writes,

Sea adventure depicts action rather than psychology, its organization is episodic, and it measures plausibility by performance rather than mimesis. The heroism of

skilled work substitutes for education and love, and sea fiction gives pride of place to communities of laboring men, bonded in the struggle for survival, rather than communities of private sociability, strongly associated with women, shaped by passion, virtue, and taste. (11)

Instead of degrading the literary merit of these texts for their lack of psychological depth, Cohen thinks that they should be examined for the specific poetics of adventure they adopt in their thematic concerns with practical problem-solving and real struggles for survival. In commenting on Cohen's analysis of work, Schmitt notes how Cohen "renders" work in maritime fiction "utopian" by highlighting its aspect of "know-how": "not what things are or where they come from ('knowing that') but rather how they function, and specifically how to make them function to get something done" (Schmitt, "Tidal Conrad (Literally)" 19). The descriptor "utopian" is indeed significant as it encompasses the dual functions of work in maritime fiction: self-actualization and community building.

As the material conditions that gave rise to sea adventure fiction changed, the genre also underwent evolutionary developments. Cohen considers the invention of Melville's and Conrad's modernism as an example of such evolutionary change adopted by the ardent (but somewhat belated) practitioners of the adventure poetics. While Jameson sees the modernism in Conrad's novels as a helpless turn to aestheticism from realism in the face of "the advent of later capitalist modernity attended by its abstraction, fragmentation, and degradation of labor" ("Narratology" 68), Cohen sees Conrad's and Melville's invention of modernism as a response to the changing circumstances of the mariner's craft – namely, the mechanization and routinization of seafaring. These writers still actively engaged with the conventions and poetics of the adventure genre they willingly inherited, but they updated and transformed these conventions. As she skillfully shows through her analysis of *Lord Jim*, Conrad transfers the poetics of the previous sea adventure fiction to the mode of narration in *Lord Jim*. The treacherous navigation on sea becomes a narrative act of going through and making sense of fragmentary and indefinite pieces of information about the life of Jim. The mariner's craft becomes a metaphor for Conrad's craft of narration.

Cohen's tracing of the genre's evolution does not end there as she also argues that the poetics of adventure morphs into different literary genres that were to flourish in the twentieth century: science, spy, and detective fiction. According to her, "Jules Verne...transported sea fiction's patterns to frontiers as of yet unachieved by science and technology, and invented an influential form of science adventure fiction"; "[d]etective fiction and spy fiction [used] sea fiction's adventures in problem-solving to explore the expanding frontier of information"; "[s]ea fiction is visibly morphing into spy fiction in Conrad's *The Secret Agent* (1907) and Erskine Childers's *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903)" (*The Novel and the Sea* 10). Cohen's survey of the evolution of the adventure genre is truly reminiscent of Foucault's pronouncement quoted in the epigraph of my introduction²⁷: "In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates." (Foucault 9).

5.4 Conclusion

The subtle generic awareness and sympathies which Cohen recognizes in Melville and Conrad at the end of the hey days of sailing and exploration I have demonstrated also exists in the adventure narratives of Stevenson and Kipling. I have called that peculiar generic consciousness *nostalgia* and examined it as a form of metafictionality – fundamentally different from that which is practiced by Waugh's postmodern metafictional texts. Having conducted this research, I see myself following the line of critics who have considered the uses of the formal and generic conventions in my authors' adventure narratives as expressions of archetypal human desires. The interplay between genre and form in my texts proved to be interesting. While the pessimistic historical awareness of the authors worked against the ideals of the vigorous adventure genre of the past generations – exploration of the frontiers of modernity and celebration of human agency – the use of the romance form provided a framework for expressing the longing for authentic adventure. My theoretical approach adopting formalism and

²⁷ The introduction quotes a different version of Foucault's essay used for a radio talk.

structuralism has been rather old-fashioned and moved away from ideological readings of the imperial contents of the adventures in my texts. The excuse has been that the communal and archetypal focus of the older theorists like Frye and Jameson dovetails with the worldviews of my authors themselves. But I need to admit one thing: that I too have been reading these texts nostalgically – looking backward at and forward to the golden age where life could be exciting and meaningful.

Works Cited

- Altick, Richard. Introduction. *Past and Present*, by Thomas Carlyle, edited by Richard Altick, New York UP, 1965, pp. v-xviii.
- Arata, Stephen. *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle*. Cambridge UP, 1996.
- Austin, Linda. "The Nostalgic Moment and the Sense of History." *Postmedieval: A Journal of Medieval Cultural Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2011, pp. 127-40.
- Batchelor, John. *The Life of Joseph Conrad: A Critical Biography*. Blackwell, 1994.
- Baxter, Katherine Isobel. *Joseph Conrad and the Swan Song of Romance*. Ashgate, 2010.
- Berthoud, Jacques and Mara Kalnins. "Explanatory Notes." *Nostromo: A Tale of the Seaboard*, by Joseph Conrad, edited by Jacques Berthoud and Mara Kalnins, Oxford UP, 2009, pp. 432-47.
- Bongie, Chris. *Exotic Memories: Literature, Colonialism, and the Fin de Siècle*. Stanford UP, 1991.
- Boym, Svetlana. "Nostalgia and Its Discontents." *The Hedgehog Review*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2007, pp. 7-18.
- Brantlinger, Patrick. *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914*. Cornell UP, 1988.
- Breton, Rob. *Gospels and Grit: Work and Labour in Carlyle, Conrad, and Orwell*. University of Toronto Press, 2005.
- . "Utopia and Thomas Carlyle's 'Ancient Monk.'" *English Language Notes*, vol. 51, no. 1, 2013, pp. 211-22.
- Bristow, Joseph. *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World*. Harper Collins, 1991.
- Brooks, Peter. *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narratives*. A. Knopf, 1984.
- Carlyle, Thomas. *Past and Present*, edited by Richard Altick, New York UP, 1965.
- . *Sartor Resartus*, edited by Israel Gollancz, Dent, 1898.
- Cohen, Margaret. "Narratology in the Archive of Literature." *Representations*, vol. 108, no. 1, 2009, pp. 51-75.
- . *The Novel and the Sea*. Princeton UP, 2010.
- . "Traveling Genres." *New Literary History*, vol. 34, no. 3, 2003, pp. 481-99.
- Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*, edited by Paul B. Armstrong. W.W. Norton, 2006.

- . *Lord Jim*, edited by Thomas Moser, W. W. Norton, 1968.
- . *Nostromo: A Tale of the Seaboard*, edited by Jacques Berthoud and Mara Kalnins, Oxford UP, 2009.
- . *Nostromo: A Tale of the Seaboard*, edited by Ruth Nadelhaft, Broadview, 1997.
- . *The Mirror of the Sea*. Marlboro, 1988.
- . *The N. of the "Narcissus,"* edited by Robert Kimbrough, W. W. Norton, 1979.
- . "Youth." *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Joseph Conrad: Youth, Heart of Darkness, The End of the Tether*, edited by Owen Knowles, Cambridge UP, 2010, pp. 11-39.
- Daly, Nicholas. *Modernism, Romance and the Fin de Siècle: Popular Fiction and British Culture, 1880-1914*. Cambridge UP, 1999.
- Davis, John. "Garibaldi and England." *History Today*, vol. 32, no. 12, 1982, pp. 21-6.
- Erdinast-Vulcan, Daphna. *Joseph Conrad and the Modern Temper*. Clarendon, 1991.
- . "Nostromo and the Writing of History." *Joseph Conrad: Voice, Sequence, History, Genre*, edited by Jakob Lothe, et al., Ohio State UP, 2008, pp. 178-195.
- Evans, Timothy. "Folklore as Utopia: English Medievalists and the Ideology of Revivalism." *Western Folklore*, vol. 47, no. 4, 1988, pp. 245-68.
- Fiedler, Leslie. "Cross the Border—Close the Gap." *A New Fiedler Reader*. Prometheus Books, 1999, pp. 270-94.
- Foucault, Michel. "Heterotopias." Translated by Pamela Johnston, *AA Files*, no. 69, 2014, pp. 18-22.
- . "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias." Translated by Jay Miskowiec, *Architecture/ Mouvement/ Continuité*, 1984.
- Fraser, Robert. *Victorian Quest Romance: Stevenson, Haggard, Kipling and Conan Doyle*. Northcote House, 1998.
- Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton UP, 1957.
- Fuchs, Barbara. "Faithless Empires: Pirates, Renegadoes, and the English Nation." *ELH*, vol. 67, no. 1, 2000, pp. 45-69.
- Green, Martin. *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire*. Basic Books, 1979.
- Hardesty, William, and David Mann. "Historical Reality and Fictional Daydream in *Treasure Island*." *The Journal of Narrative Technique*, vol. 7, no. 2, 1977, pp. 94-

103.

Hay, Eloise Knapp. "Nostromo." *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*, edited by J. H. Stape, Cambridge UP, 1996, pp. 81-99.

Herbert, Christopher. *War of No Pity: The Indian Mutiny and Victorian Trauma*. Princeton UP, 2008.

Higgins, Jenny. "19th Century Cod Fisheries." Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage Web Site, 2007, <https://www.heritage.nf.ca/articles/economy/19th-century-cod.php>.

Hutcheon, Linda. "Irony, Nostalgia and the Postmodern." *Methods for the Study of Literature as Cultural Memory*, edited by Raymond Vervliet and Annemarie Estor, Rodopi, 2000, pp. 189-207.

Illbruck, Helmut. *Nostalgia: Origins and Ends of an Unenlightened Disease*. Northwestern UP, 2012.

Jameson, Fredric. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Cornell UP, 1981.

Jenson, Albert. *The Cod*. Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1972.

Johnson, Peter. "The Geographies of Heterotopia." *Geography Compass*, vol. 7, no.11, 2013, pp. 790-803.

Karlin, Danny. "Captains Courageous and American Empire." *The Kipling Journal*, vol. 63, no. 251, 1989, pp. 11-21.

King James Version. BibleGateway, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews%203%3A10-11&version=KJV>.

Kipling, Rudyard. *Captains Courageous*, edited by Leonee Ormond, Oxford UP, 2008.

---. "Captains Courageous." *The Times*, 23 Nov. 1892, p. 10. *The Times Digital Archive*, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/94GTZ6>. Accessed 8 Feb. 2019.

---. *Kim*, edited by Edward Said, Penguin Books, 2000.

---. *The Letters of Rudyard Kipling Vol.2: 1890-99*, edited by Thomas Pinney, Macmillan, 1990.

---. "The Man Who Would Be King." *The Man Who Would Be King and Other Stories*, edited by Louis L. Cornell, Oxford UP, 2008.

Knight, Kelvin. "Placeless Places: Resolving the Paradox of Foucault's Heterotopia."

- Textual Practice*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2017, pp. 141-158.
- Lang, Andrew. "Realism and Romance." *The Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature (1844-1898)*, vol. 47, no. 2, 1888, pp. 259-66.
- Levine, Caroline. *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network*. Princeton UP, 2015.
- Mabee, Bryan. "Pirates, Privateers and the Political Economy of Private Violence." *Global Change, Peace & Security*, vol. 21, no. 2, 2009, pp. 139-52.
- Macrae, Andrea. *Discourse Deixis in Metafiction: The Language of Metanarration, Metalepsis and Disnarration*. Routledge, 2019.
- Marx, Edward. "How We Lost Kafiristan." *Representations*, vol. 67, 1999, pp. 44-66.
- Miller, J. Hillis. "'Material Interests': Conrad's *Nostromo* as a Critique of Global Capitalism." *Joseph Conrad: Voice, Sequence, History, Genre*, edited by Jakob Lothe, et al, Ohio State UP, 2008, pp.160-177.
- Moran, Neil. *Kipling and Afghanistan: A Study of the Young Author as Journalist Writing on the Afghan Border Crisis of 1884-1885*. McFarland & Company, 2005.
- Mozina, Andrew. *Joseph Conrad and the Art of Sacrifice: The Evolution of the Scapegoat Theme in Joseph Conrad's Fiction*. Routledge, 2001.
- Nagai, Kaori. "God and His Doubles: Kipling and Conrad's 'The Man Who Would Be King.'" *Critical Survey*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2009, pp. 88-102.
- . "The Writing on the Wall: The Commemoration of the Indian Mutiny in the Delhi Durbar and Rudyard Kipling's 'The Little House at Arrah.'" *Interventions*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2005, pp. 84-96.
- Nerlich, Michael. *Ideology of Adventure: Studies in Modern Consciousness, 1100-1750*. Translated by Ruth Crowley, University of Minnesota Press, 1987.
- Ormond, Leonee. Introduction. *Captains Courageous*, by Rudyard Kipling, edited by Leonee Ormond, Oxford UP, 2008, pp. xiii-xxx.
- Phillips, Richard. *Mapping Men and Empire: A Geography of Adventure*. Routledge, 1997.
- Rasula, Jed. "*Nostromo* as Fairy Tale Epic." *Genre*, vol. 33, 2000, pp. 83-114.
- Richards, Jeffrey. *Imperialism and Juvenile Literature*. Manchester UP, 1989.
- Robbins, Bruce. *The Servant's Hand: English Fiction from Below*. Duke UP, 1993.
- Robin, Christophe. "Time, History, Narrative in *Nostromo*." *Joseph Conrad: Voice,*

- Sequence, History, Genre*, edited by Jakob Lothe, et al., Ohio State UP, 2008, pp. 196-216.
- Rose, George. *Cod: The Ecological History of the North Atlantic Fisheries*. Breakwater Books, 2007.
- Said, Edward. *Beginnings: Intention and Method*. Basic Books, 1975.
- . *Culture and Imperialism*. Vintage Books, 1994.
- . Introduction. *Kim*, by Rudyard Kipling, edited by Edward Said, Penguin Books, 2000, pp. 7-46.
- . *Orientalism*. Vintage Books, 1979.
- Salván, Paula Martin. "'The great worth of the people': Models of Community in Joseph Conrad's *Nostramo*." *Estudios Ingleses de la Universidad Complutense*, vol. 16, 2008, pp. 89-109.
- Sanders, James. "'The Disrepute of the Old Revolutionary Utopias' and Conrad's *Nostramo*: Disparaging and Forgetting Democratic Innovation in Late Nineteenth-Century Mexico and Colombia." *The Latin Americanist*, vol. 61, no. 2, 2017, pp. 169-92.
- Schmitt, Cannon. "Technical Maturity in Robert Louis Stevenson." *Representations*, vol. 125, no. 1, 2014, pp. 54-79.
- . "Tidal Conrad (Literally)." *Victorian Studies*, vol. 55, no.1, 2012, pp. 8-29.
- Schwegman, Marjan. "In Love with Garibaldi: Romancing the Italian Risorgimento." *European Review of History = Revue Européenne D'histoire*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2005, pp. 383-401.
- Sergeant, David. "'The Worst Dreams That Ever I Have': Capitalism and the Romance in R. L. Stevenson's *Treasure Island*." *Victorian Literature and Culture*, vol. 44, 2016, pp. 907-23.
- Stevenson, Robert Louis. "A Gossip on Romance." *R. L. Stevenson on Fiction: An Anthology of Literary and Critical Essays*, edited by Glenda Norquay, Edinburgh UP, 1999. pp. 52-64.
- . *Kidnapped*, edited by Donald McFarlan, Penguin Books, 2007.
- . "My First Book – 'Treasure Island.'" *McClure's Magazine (1893-1926)*, vol. 3, no. 4, 1894, pp.1-12.

- . "The Ebb-Tide: A Trio and Quartette." *South Sea Tales*, edited by Roslyn Jolly, Oxford UP, 1996, pp. 123-252.
- . "To the Hesitating Purchaser." *Treasure Island*, by Robert Louis Stevenson, edited by John Seelye, Penguin Books, 1999, p. xxx.
- . *Treasure Island*, edited by John Seelye, Penguin Books, 1999.
- Vidler, Anthony. Introduction. "Heterotopias," by Michel Foucault. Translated by Pamela Johnston, *AA Files*, no. 69, 2014, pp. 18-22.
- Wager, Timothy. "'There Is Meaning in Endeavour': Conrad's Artistic Labor." *Conradiana*, vol. 30, no. 3, 1998, pp. 213-26.
- Watt, Ian. *Conrad: Nostromo*. Cambridge UP, 1988.
- Watts, Cedric. *Joseph Conrad, Nostromo*. Penguin, 1990.
- Waugh, Patricia. *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*. Methuen, 1984.
- Zweig, Paul. *The Adventurer*. Dent, 1974.

Curriculum Vitae

Name: Hanji Lee

Post-secondary Education and Degrees: University of Toronto
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
2006-2011 B.A.

University of Toronto
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
2011-2012 M.A.

Western University
London, Ontario, Canada
2013-2022 Ph.D.

Honours and Awards: McIntosh Prize Competition
Honorable Mention
English Department at Western
2017

Province of Ontario Graduate Scholarship
2015-2016

Related Work Experience: Professor
King's University College
2018-2022

Professor
Fanshawe College
2018

Teaching Assistant
Western University
2013-2021

Publications:

Lee, Hanji. "Post-postcolonial Experiments with Perspectives." *Routledge Companion to Pakistani Anglophone Writing*, edited by Aroosa Kanwal and Saiyma Aslam, 2018, pp. 307-17.