A Comparative Study of Conrad and Loti

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CONRAD AND LOTI

by

Reverend Gerard Riopel

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I. Conrad and Loti

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Sadness of Their Youths</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Appeal of the Sea</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Classification of their Works</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Elements Influencing their Moods of Creation</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PART II. Their Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Influences Which Moulded Them</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Magic of Their Words</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Acuteness and Suggestiveness of Their Descriptions</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Conrad's Sonority of Style Suggests the Image, Loti's Turn of Sentence Creates the Form</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PART III. The Philosophy of Their Heroes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Philosophy of Conrad and Loti</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Struggles and the Defeats of Their Heroes</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Pessimism of Conrad and Loti</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BIBLIOGRAPHY                                          118

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Joseph Conrad and Pierre Loti are already very well-known and there is no need to introduce them. Many studies have been written about their works and it seems that nothing new can be said. Therefore, we shall attempt to confine our study to two problems: one entirely literary, the study of their styles; the other will deal with the philosophy of their heroes. Conrad and Loti were contemporaries. Although they were subject to the same influences, it is difficult to classify them in a really distinct group. They have remained very personal in a literary period rightly called one of "Literary Individualism."

The Conradian style is the one mastered by a scholar gifted with an exquisite power of assimilation. Conrad was a writer who gradually mastered a foreign language learned at a mature age. We can follow the improvement of Conrad's style until it became that of a virtuoso. A brief study of sound patterns, tone color, imagery, and figures of speech, will show all the effects obtained by the mastery of his style. Loti's style fascinates by the same process, although his sentences seem to have no backbone, his words no relief. It is a long suite of vocables which seem to slide over each other but which finally give a form and make seen the things which can hardly be seen. Conrad and Loti both knew how to please their readers by the sonority and the color of their descriptions.

The character given to their heroes pleased the philosophical tendency at the very beginning of the twentieth century. The tendency of a deception
of living, a nostalgic regret of having lost their faith, a horror of the fugitive, time; the coming of old age, and the inevitable "sombre faucheuse." This is the state of mind created in England by Gissing, Thompson, and Hardy. These men had realized the inability of the rational system of the Utilitarians, "the greatest happiness of the greatest number," and consequently had reacted, challenging a pessimistic answer. Conrad, with his philosophy, is their heir. His heroes, although strong and courageous, failed at the end overcome by their own temperament or by outside elements. Whether they struggle against themselves, other men, or elements of nature which surround them, Conrad made us witness their struggles. They advance with confidence, with determination, each with his own ambition. Conrad, from his height can follow their fortunes, their brave struggles, their fortitude to the very last. He admires that courage, the simplicity of that faith, but his irony springs from his knowledge of the inevitable end.

Loti's heroes are not so numerous as those of Conrad, for in very many of his writings he himself is the hero. However, they show the same soul before Fate; they are condemned to be overcome. Conrad's Lord Jim, like Loti's Jean Peyral, has heroically fallen in an unequal struggle against a superior strength.

Loti cannot be compared to Conrad as a novelist. The latter is surely a better plot-maker and a more interesting story-teller. Therefore the parallel will be restricted to the art in their styles and to the conception of the lives of their heroes.

This work will be divided into three parts in which the following points
will be stressed:

1) The similarities of the conditions under which they grew up, how they felt the appeal of the sea, and how they corresponded to its charm. An outline of their works will be drawn.

2) A discussion of their styles will follow: the influences which moulded them, the qualities of the words and a longer discourse upon the ornaments of their descriptions.

3) The deeds and the philosophy of their heroes will be compared.
PART ONE
CONRAD AND LOTI

CHAPTER I
THE SADNESS OF THEIR YOUTHS

"My young days, the days when one's habits and character are formed, have been rather familiar with long silences."

(Conrad's: "A Personal Record" Familiar Preface)

"C'est très curieux, que mon enfance, bien qu'entourée de tendresse ne m'ait laissé que des images tristes."

(Loti's: Roman d'un Enfant, p. 32.)

Toward the time of the Crimean War, in one of the southern provinces of Poland under Russian rule, we find a lovely young couple cheering and smiling before the birth of a little child christened Teodor Jozef Konrad Korzeniowski. The father, Apollo Korzeniowski, is qualified as "the best fellow in the world, but a very excitable and moody man."

Joseph's father had the reputation of being extremely talented and a great talker. He had been sent to St. Petersburg to learn the Oriental languages. He had read indefatigably French literature, for which he had a natural inclination. According to a letter he wrote to a friend, Casimir Kaszewski, he had translated "Le Sacre de la Femme," the first legend in the Legende des Siècles. Joseph's mother, whose maiden name was Evelina Bobrowska, is described as a very beautiful

woman, well educated and eager minded. She met Apollo for the first time in 1847, but their marriage was delayed on account of her father who could not fancy him as a son-in-law because he was the spoilt darling of society, where he dominated people of maturer age by his wit and light conversation while at the same time humoring them by an old-fashioned Polish courtesy of manner which was natural to him.

In that time the state of unrest in Poland was such that the events which followed determined for the next sixteen years the tragic course which the young boy's life was to take. The importance of this political situation surely must not be overstressed; however, in order that we may build up around Conrad the true nature of this environment it is necessary to survey briefly the history of Poland at the time of his early childhood.

An important date in the first decade of Conrad's life is the year 1861. The stirrings of "liberalism" in Russia at this time could not fail to have their effects on the oppressed Poles. It gave rise to the formation of several important societies in Poland, each of which stood firmly for its own particular policy. The new Agricultural Society, whose members were concerned with the problem of Polish social life, i. e., the peasant question, was led by the fine patriot, Andrew Zamoyski. Another center, composed of young and enthusiastic people of radical sympathies was localized in the Medical Academy, one of the Faculties of the University of Warsaw. From this group came the beginnings of many of the patriotic manifestations and protests which took place in Warsaw and involved many of the citizens. It was only natural
that these manifestations should be looked upon by Russia with much disfavor. The Russian troops did not hesitate to interfere, and in 1861 general indignation was aroused when several men were killed. This is only one of the examples of Russian ruthlessness which aroused indignation and hatred in the patriotic Poles.

At this period, however, Warsaw was in the hands of an exceptionally tactful and honest Russian governor, Prince Gertchakov. He allowed the Polish citizens the privilege of assuming civic responsibilities and appointed to a high government office a Polish noble, Alexander Wielopolski, a man whose iron will and overbearing arrogance made him unpopular among the Poles. He stood for a policy of unquestioning and absolute loyalty to Russian which he thought must inevitably make for ordered economic progress, spreading of liberty, and perhaps eventually a voice in Russian affairs of government. Thus we have three schools of political thought: (1) the "Real Politik" of cooperation with Russia, under the leadership of Wielopolski; (2) the revolutionary idealism manifested in the actions of the young men of the Medical Academy; (3) and, between these two extremes the figure of Zamoyski, who combined the idealism of political restraint with the realism of progressive economic development.

Although the administration of Wielopolski was unpopular with both Russians and Poles because of the man's despotic character, he achieved a great deal in the field of education and in reforming the Russian political administrative system in Poland. He succeeded even in reorganizing the school
system, in establishing the Polish language in place of the Russian, and in reopening the University of Warsaw.² In this connection should be mentioned Joseph Korzeniowski, an uncle of Conrad, after whom he was undoubtedly named. He was a writer of some little repute in Poland at the time and acted as Wielopolski's chief adviser in educational matters.³

Apollo Korzeniowski had friends in every political party and was called to Warsaw for the purpose of organizing a literary periodical. However, the real reason was to help in organizing the Secret National Committee. Aubry tells us how the young Joseph already witnessed the secret meetings:

The Russian authorities, informed by their spies, already knew of the clandestine meetings in the white and scarlet salon of Apollo Korzeniowski's house. Little Conrad sometimes saw people with grave faces enter and disappear, among them his mother, always dressed in black as a sign of national mourning, though this was forbidden by the Russian police. At the end of October, 1862, Apollo Korzeniowski was arrested and imprisoned in the citadel.⁴

Condemned to exile, the patriot was not deported to Siberia, but to Perm. Mrs. Korzeniowski decided to accompany her husband and little Conrad was taken along to Perm also. On the way he fell seriously ill. His mother suffered a nervous breakdown as a result of their exile. The severity of the climate and the failure of the patriotic movement caused a dreadful bereavement to the poor exiles. The Russians repressed the insurrection with cruel-

ty. Apollo's two brothers, Robert and Hilary, were among their victims. Robert had been killed fighting, and Hilary had been sent to Siberia, where he died ten years later. Mme. Korzeniowski lost the youngest of her brothers, Stefan, who had been an influential character in the Polish insurrection and a member of the brief national revolutionary government of 1862. He was killed in a duel a short time before the rising.

The health of Conrad's mother grew steadily worse until her death on April 6, 1865. Conrad, only nine years old now, and deprived of his mother, was to live with a sick father who was in a continual mood of gloominess. The shadow of the Russian Empire was like a thick cloud darkening the mind and saddening the heart of Conrad's father. Conrad recalls that past: "Over all this hung the oppressive shadow of the great Russian Empire, the shadow lowering with the darkness of a new-born national hatred fostered by the Moscow school of journalists against the Poles..."5

Conrad was left alone after his mother's death. He had no companions, no child to play with; and the tension in the atmosphere which had surrounded him from birth now approached its height. His surroundings made him conscious of ideas of death, faith, and liberty. He was unconsciously being trained in a fidelity to ideals without hope. His only escape from the world in which he was living was reading. He enjoyed books which described countries where it was possible to act freely and speak one's thoughts openly. He desired to visit these strange countries where one could be free. Most of his reading

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was done from French books which escaped the supervision of the Russian authorities. Due to the lack of games and amusements, the child often read the same page over and over, dreamed over it and lived in it, as though the characters and landscapes described there were real. Conrad was born with a strong imagination, and his sensitiveness had been intensified by the sight of the sufferings of those he loved. His close companionship with his father, to whom death was a familiar thought, and for whom life had no longer any attraction, drove the child to live in a world only created by his own imagination.

Conrad himself has given us a picture of his environment at home:

But I did not suffer much from the various imperfections of my first school. I was rather indifferent to school troubles. I had a private gnawing worm of my own. This was the time of my father's illness... Our domestic matters were ordered by the elderly housekeeper of our neighbor on the second floor, a Canon of the Cathedral, lent for the emergency. She, too, spoke but seldom. She wore a black dress with a cross hanging by a chain on her ample bosom... I don't know what would have become of me if I had not been a reading boy."

Apollo Korzeniowski followed his wife into the grave four years later. His son had seen with his own eyes the public funeral, the cleared streets, the hushed crowds, and he understood very well that this was a manifestation of the national spirit seizing a worthy occasion. The bareheaded mass of work people, students of the University, women, and school-boys on the pavement, could have known nothing positive about Conrad's father except the fame

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of his fidelity to the one guiding emotion in their hearts. He had been impressed much more intimately by the burning of his father's manuscripts a week or so before his death. Conrad went into his room a little earlier than usual that evening, and remaining unnoticed stayed to watch the nurse who was taking care of the fire in the fireplace. His father sat in a deep armchair propping up with pillows. This was the last time he was seen out of bed. His aspect was to Conrad not so much that of a man desperately ill, as mortally weary—a vanquished man.\footnote{Joseph Conrad, \textit{A Personal Record}, p. x.}

The rest of the youth's "Polish days" were spent in different schools as a boarder or under the protection of a tutor. He did not seem to have enjoyed his school-days, complaining of the dullness of his professors, "in fact who were not only middle-aged but looked to me as if they had never been young, and their geography was very much like themselves, a bloodless thing with a dry skin covering a repulsive armature of uninteresting bones."\footnote{Joseph Conrad, \textit{Last Essays}, "Geography and Some Explorers" London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1925. p. 12.}

In May, 1873, on account of his poor health, he was ordered to travel through Germany, Switzerland and Italy. From Venice he saw the sea for the first time. The tribulations witnessed during his childhood, and the disappointments of his first love, were to darken his whole life and were to be responsible for the sad descriptions of his style and the failure of his heroes who were unable to stand the struggle for life.

Let us transport ourselves, by imagination, to the north of France, to
the little town of Rochefort, the city of the numerous sailors. A dreaming boy sat at the window of a modest house. His gaze took in the trees and beyond, the silver thread of the river Charente. But his vision extended farther afield, beyond the near-by ocean, far ahead into the years. He beheld his future life unrolled before him as a gorgeous epic, played out with the whole world for background. This boy's name is Julien Viaud, a tardy child of a Huguenot family who had suffered persecution for his faith and was still resenting seclusion. That is what gave to their existence that silent and dull character, that tinge of melancholy and obliteration which seemed to be the appanage of the Protestant life. We find there a kind of sadness like a constant aspiration towards the hereafter which Loti has inherited.

Since he had been taught all that his ancestors had suffered for their religion, he imagined with enthusiasm the assemblies of the Cavennes, and full of admiration for these pastors in the wilderness, he resolved to become a minister of the gospel himself when he was old enough. But faith was nearly to disappear from this mind so marvelously endowed with the instinct for natural things. He was still a very little boy when there began "a first imperceptible fissure through which, drop by drop, an icy water began to make its way inward." It was the death of his grandmother. He saw her lying in state, asleep in a regular, exact position that seemed eternal.

Since he had never seen the dead, he had imagined until that day, that when the soul was gone they must all, from the first moment, have a fleshless, inexpressive grimace, like skulls, and yet she had an infinitely sweet and
tranquil smile. She was still beautiful, as if she had grown younger in complete peace. Then within him there was one of those sad little beams of light which sometimes make their way into the heads of children, as if to allow them to question with a furtive glance abysses that they barely glimpse. He fell to reflecting, "How can grandmere be in Heaven, how can such a duplication be understood, since what is left behind to be buried is so like herself, and retains, alas! even her very expression?"

That day was no more than a single chill drop in an invisible opening. But the crack was to be widened by insensible degrees, until the edifice of his ancestors fell suddenly all in a heap.

The young Pierre, with such an austere religious background and growing among adults was to become a lonely child. As he always faced solitude and austerity, his childish imagination gave a large importance to the small events of the common life. He dreamed fantasies and his mind was often crowded with terrors and hallucinations.

One evening at Rochefort, a rainy evening in May, one of those dismal, cold evenings in Spring, which clutch a heart that is ready to pen itself to the warmth, little Pierre, who was then eleven years old, saw a procession of orphan children, all dressed in white go down a long and solitary street.

After it had passed through the empty streets and had sung a melancholy ritournelle, the modest procession, with its two or three banners, came back without a sound. No one looked at it in the street, where from end to end the child Pierre seemed to be alone. He had the feeling that no one looked
at it from the sky either, for it stretched out all gray, and seemed equally empty. This poor little procession of children, quite abandoned, depressed his spirits by adding to his disappointment over the May evening a realization of the vanity of prayer and the nothingness of everything.

Thereafter the breach was open, a breach that could not be closed. Like all sincere geniuses of true originality, Pierre Loti represents nature's revenge on education, a fine triumph of instinct over belief, a fine stroke on the part of the mysterious forces that form human beings. On a family tree that had been grafted by saints and martyrs he grew like a wild shoot, destined to bear flowers of a disturbing perfume, and delicately poisonous fruits. Strange and curious, that the heir of the pastors of the wilderness, the child of the reformed church, should have devised exotic love affairs and given new forms, new colors, and new odors to the sensuality of old Europe.

At the beginning, Loti was educated at home because his parents feared bad companionship at school. The child grew there among the tender women, Aunt Claire, Aunt Lalie, and Aunt Corinne, who took too much care of him. Aunt Claire, a venerable ascetic, was the companion of the idle school-boy. Aunt Corinne awoke him every morning. Aunt Lalie, who was already very old, pretended to find a charm in his games in order to remain with him. Later on Loti regretted, as a blemish, his childhood which was too lovingly sheltered. He wrote: "A trente cinq ans j'aurais peut-être été beau, si j'avais reçu une autre éducation. . . On m'a élevé comme une plante de serre."9

We knew Tante Claire already through the confidences made in the Roman d'un Enfant. Loti declared in that book that Tante Claire was the one person who spoiled him most, and who was most thoughtful in his little affairs. She used to give burnt almonds to her nephew. In one corner of the mantel in her room there was a bear, a bear made of porcelain and hollowed out to make a cup. According to a convention established by Tante Claire, whenever the bear had his head turned to one side, which happened several times a day, after meals, there would be burnt almonds in it for the little boy. Tante Claire would dress up dolls, too, which were characters from a fairyland invented by the little boy poet, a marvelous Peau d'Ane. She had especial skill with the hair of nymphs and fairies. On their heads, no bigger than the end of one's little finger, she would fasten little bundles of yellow silk, which she would secure in scattered curls by means of invisible pins. Besides, she helped the dreamy student with his work. She would hold in her hands the enormous dictionary that he needed, and help him hunt for words for his themes and translations. She even learned to read Greek so as to help him learn his lessons in that language. For this exercise he always used to go to a certain staircase where he stretched out on the steps, his feet higher than his head, and for two or three years that was Pierre's classic position for reciting the Cyropoedia and the Iliad.

His sister Marie, eighteen years older than he, had a large part in his tutoring. Victor Giraud wrote about her:

Elle fut pour celui-ci (Loti) comme Lucille de Chateaubriand, comme Henriette Renan, une de ces soeurs
admirables auxquelles nous devons quelques-uns de nos plus grands hommes. Elle était musicienne, elle dessinait, elle peignait avec un réel talent.10

Loti himself gave a flattering portrait of his sister:

Elle avait voyagé de très bonne heure . . . elle avait beaucoup étudié et elle écrivait d'une façon délicieuse, avec un esprit étincelant. . . une âme vibrante d'artiste et de poète . . . elle adorait son petit frère . . . elle a été une des influences qui ont le plus contribué à m'éloigner, jusque dans les moindres détails de la vie, je ne dirai pas de tout ce qui était vulgaire, mais de ce qui était inséligant.11

His school days were not happy, for his application was mediocre, and like Conrad, he disliked his teachers. He even disliked his classmates and companions to whom he appeared too effeminate. His distinguished manners could not fit in with the cursing and swearing of the loungers of the streets. The impression caused by the tragic death of his brother in 1865, in the Bengal Gulf, must also be mentioned. Twenty years later, Loti told his impressions when he sailed through the same place:

Une nuit à une heure du matin au milieu de ce golfe de Bengale, les timoniers avaient la consigne de me réveiller, bien que je ne fusse pas de quart: nous passions sur le point calculé où, vingt ans auparavant, on avait immergé mon frère. Et je me levai, pour aller regarder tout autour de moi les transparences bleuâtres de la mer et de la nuit.12

Another misfortune that increased his sorrow was the loss of his parents'
money. Loti in *Prime Jeunesse* has told how he saw a crow-faced old man coming to his home very often. His grandmother received him in her room and after each visit she seemed very weary. They had to sell their properties and to suppress toys, piano lessons, and horsemanship. The old, young life was changing decidedly. Reverses overtook the father, whom the son hardly troubles to commend, but who, behind the scenes, was putting up a stiff fight for his wife, child, and aged kinsfolk. The lad could hardly bear this series of misfortunes. Sorrow at close view lost much of its romance and he had no religious faith to console him. The sadness of his youth will overshadow his whole life.

The young Julien was already a dreamer dissatisfied with reality, to which he preferred the mirage of the past or the future. He was a recluse, persuaded that he was not like other men and already accustomed to consider the small incidents of his life as matters of great importance. Anxious about the future, tortured by the dreadfulness of death, exalted and shaken by mystic impulses, and carrying already in his soul the germs of atheism, was the child Loti, the same as we have found the novelist years later in the works he wrote.

Loti's and Conrad's works will be penetrated by the monotony of life and the heroes of both will be defeated in their struggle against the elements of nature of the strength of their own temperaments.
CHAPTER II
THE APPEAL OF THE SEA

"I listened to him in despairing silence, feeling that ghostly, unrealized, and desired sea of my dreams escape from the unnerved grip of my will."

(A Personal Record)

"La tête sans cesse tournée vers cette fenêtre ouverte, par où le port apparaissait, avec les navires, les tartanes et l'échappée bleue du large."

(Matelot)

What made Conrad decide to become a sailor, after having spent his whole life far away from the sea? When, really, did he feel the appeal of the witch which was to procure the material of his novels and the wealth of his descriptions? It is not easy to determine the motive which impelled Conrad to go sailing in spite of the opposition of some of his relatives. His sensitive nature, without any doubt, had represented to itself the beauty of the large and wide spaces where he could breathe freely. The burden of tyranny had revolted the mind of a boy of sixteen. Aubry adds that the possibility of the failure of Conrad's early loves might have been a cause to seek diversion far from the theater of his disappointments. We can find in his works the story of his early love:

If anything could induce me to revisit Sulaco (I should hate to see all these changes) it would be Antonia—and the true reason for that—why not be frank about it?—the true reason is that I have modelled her on my first love. How we, a band of tallish school-boys, the chums of her two brothers, how we used to
look up to that girl just out of the school-room herself, as the standard-bearer of a faith to which we were all born, but which she alone knew how to hold aloft, with an unflinching hope! She had perhaps more glow and less serenity in her soul than Antonia, but she was an uncompromising Puritan of patriotism with no taint of the slightest worldliness in her thoughts. I was not the only one in love with her; but it was I who had to hear oftenest her scathing criticism of my levities—very much like poor Decour—or stand the brunt of her austere, unanswerable invective. She did not quite understand—but never mind. That afternoon when I came in, a shrinking yet defiant sinner, to say the final goodbye, I received a hand-squeeze that made my heart leap and saw a tear that took my breath away. She was softened at the last as though she had suddenly perceived (we were such children still!) that I was really going away for good, going very far away—even as far as Sulaco, lying unknown, hidden from our eyes, in the darkness of the Placid Gulf.¹

Conrad’s ambition to go to sea was slowly achieved. When he first made the suggestion, it was received with anxiety by his family and with resentment by the society in which he was known. Both families, his father’s and his mother’s, were land-tilling gentry and ardent patriots in the apparently lost cause of Polish independence. The traditions of the army and politics were strong on each side, although the Korzeniowskis were also literary. To the Bobrowskis Conrad’s desire to go to sea was disturbing. They tried ineffectively to disregard it while he was in school in Cracow in 1873, but he persisted. Tadeusz journeyed from Ukraine to Cracow to have a serious talk with his nephew. The uncle suggested that seafaring was not morally suitable for the son of two families which had sacrificed so much for a country without naval interests. He told the boy, Conrad later recorded, that he must

¹Joseph Conrad, Nostromo. Author’s Note, p. vii.
not only think of himself, but of others and weigh the claims of affection and conscience against his own sincerity of purpose. And from A Personal Record we know how persevering Conrad was, to overcome the obstinacy of his uncle.

I don't mean to say that a whole country had been convulsed by my desire to go to sea. But for a boy between fifteen and sixteen, sensitive enough, in all conscience, the commotion of his little world had seemed a very considerable thing indeed. So considerable that, absurdly enough, the echoes of it linger to this day. I catch myself in hours of solitude and retrospect meeting arguments and charges made thirty-five years ago by voices now forever still; finding things to say that an assailed boy could not have found, simply because of the mysteriousness of his impulses to himself. I understood no more than the people who called upon me to explain myself. There was no precedent. I verily believe mine was the only case of a boy of my nationality and antecedents taking a, so to speak, standing jump out of his racial surroundings and associations.²

Conrad's intention excited considerable comment in the society of well-born and patriotic Poles to which he belonged. "It stirred up a mass of remonstrance, indignation, pitying wonder, bitter irony and downright chaff," he admitted. "I could hardly breathe under its weight, and certainly had no words for an answer."³

It has already been said that he had read enormously. Much of the reading was connected with the sea. His first acquaintance with the sea in literature, was just after his mother's death. His father had recently completed his Polish translation of Victor Hugo's Toilers of the Sea, and, being ill in

²Joseph Conrad, A Personal Record, pp. 120-121.
³Ibidem, p. 16.
bed, had his young son read the proofs to him. The unhappy conditions of
grief and exile, and the responsibility of his task, must have impressed the
story indelibly upon Conrad's mind. Perhaps the impression, reinforced by
family friendships in Marseilles, later made him choose the French Merchant
Marine.

As a boy, Conrad probably read Polish translations of English sea sto-
ries. The article "Tales of the Sea" published in 1898, discusses Cooper and
Marryat, whom he called "the enslaver of youth," with "irresistible power to
reach the adventurous side in the character, not only of his own but of all
nations."4 However, Conrad's interest in the sea did not come entirely from
fiction. When he was ten, he read a French translation of Sir Leopold
McCIntock's Voyage of the "Fox" in the Arctic Seas, the story of the last
day of Sir John Franklin. The boy's enthusiasm was instantaneous and he
declared that the great spirit of the realities of the story sent him off on
the romantic exploration of his inner-self; to the discovery of the taste
for poring over maps; and revealed to him the existence of a latent devotion
to geography which interfered with his devotion to his school-work.5

More fundamental to Conrad's departure was the political history of the
Bobrowskis and the Korzeniowski. Both families were well known to the re-
pressive Russian authorities. A boy whose parents had given their lives to
Poland and who had an uncle in Siberia would be under the secret surveillance

of the police all his life. It has not been sufficiently emphasized that Conrad must have been oppressively aware of his position. His bitterness can be surmised from *Under Western Eyes* in which the hero Razumov found himself, like Conrad, through no action of his own, suspect to the Russian secret police. He realized that life in Russia was over for him and left for Switzerland. Conrad showed the paralyzing effect of the word 'suspect' by repeating it at least seven times during the fateful hours when Razumov grasped his situation. He became aware of "the incarnate suspicion, the incarnate anger, the incarnate ruthlessness of a political and social regime on its defence."\(^6\)

The meaning of such suspicion overwhelmed him: "Razumov sat up in anguish. Was he to remain a political suspect all his days? Was he to go through life as a man not wholly to be trusted—with a bad secret police note tacked on to his record? What sort of future could he look forward to?"\(^7\) The only future in which he would not be "menaced by the lawlessness of autocracy . . . and the lawlessness of revolution lay outside his native country."\(^8\) Razumov's decision grew from Conrad's own predicament.

Whatever be the motive, Conrad was fascinated by the sea, for he wrote in *A Personal Record*: "the truth is that what I had in view was not a naval career, but the sea."\(^9\)

Loti's vocation to the sea is more definite. He counts among his ances-

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\(^6\)Joseph Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, p. 84.

\(^7\)Ibidem, pp. 70-71.

\(^8\)Ibidem, p. 77.

tors a large number of seamen and sailors. One of them had been killed at Trafalgar: another, the Commander Renaudin, died heroically when his ship Le Vengeur foundered. An uncle of his disappeared in a shipwreck. The young Pierre could nourish his imagination by visiting his uncle's museum of classified exotic plants and shells. Although Pierre was not interested in the classification of the plants, he dreamed about the enchanted countries from which they came. But the main influence was that of his brother Gustave, who wrote to him when he was at Tahiti. Once, this brother was ordered by the Navy's Minister to embark. The whole family accompanied him to the railroad station. After he had left, Mrs. Viaud told Pierre: "Grace à Dieu, au moins nous te gardons toi." Already having one son sailing the sea, the Viauds might naturally have shrunk from thrusting another one upon it, but their financial stress forced them to subdue this reluctance. It has never been told what his father had proposed to make of Louis Julien. Whatever his design might have been, he now saw fit to abandon it. Louis Julien would have to earn his own living. In addition to that, the appeal of the sea was so fascinating that he could no longer listen to his parents' prayers. He wrote his decision to his brother and started to prepare for the examination to be admitted to the Navy School. Loti alluded to his mother's hopes, when he wrote in his novel Matelot:

Tandis qu'elle (sa mère), plus anxieusement le regardait, lui trouvant l'air si distrait et si ailleurs! ... Depuis longtemps elle avait son idée, son plan obstiné, pour garder ce fils unique en Provence et vieillir auprès de lui. ... Mais à ce diner de Pâques, elle s'attristait plus désespérément de lui voir la tête sans cesse tournée
vers cette fenêtre ouverte, par où le port apparaissait, avec les navires, les tartanes et l'îchappée bleue du large.10

CHAPTER III

CLASSIFICATION OF THEIR WORKS

The mere matter of statistics may be interesting first. Following is a list of the novels and stories of Joseph Conrad, classified according to the point of view. The date following each is the time when Conrad began the writing, as nearly as it can be determined. These dates are given, with a few exceptions, on the authority of M. Jean-Aubry.\(^1\) The collaborations with F. M. Hueffer have been omitted.

1. Novels and short stories:

Of the fifteen novels, eight are told in the conventional third person, omniscient way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Novel</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Almayer's Folly</td>
<td>1889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Outcast of the Islands</td>
<td>1894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rescue</td>
<td>1896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typhoon</td>
<td>1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nostromo</td>
<td>1903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Secret Agent</td>
<td>1905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspense</td>
<td>1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rover</td>
<td>1921</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three novels are told in regular first person style. Two of these,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Novel</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Shadow Line</td>
<td>1914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Arrow of Gold</td>
<td>1917</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

are told by the chief character, and one,

by a minor character.

There are two which have a shifting point of view, from first person to third person:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under Western Eyes</td>
<td>1908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victory</td>
<td>1912</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two more shift from third to first person:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lord Jim</td>
<td>1898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chance</td>
<td>1906</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These four hybrids are difficult to classify; strictly, they are as they have been listed, even though the story, in the first two, often covers up the narrator.

Of the twenty-eight shorter pieces, six are told in regular third person style:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;An Outpost of Progress&quot;</td>
<td>1896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The Return&quot;</td>
<td>1897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The End of the Tether&quot;</td>
<td>1898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Tomorrow&quot;</td>
<td>1901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The Duel&quot;</td>
<td>1906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The Planter of Malata&quot;</td>
<td>1913</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two are told in the first person, with no shift in the point of view, by one who is really a part of the action:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The Secret Sharer&quot;</td>
<td>1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;A Smile of Fortune&quot;</td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sixteen are told by an unnamed "I": they begin in the first person (however soon leaving it) and break into the narrative of another. "I" is not a person much concerned in the action.
"The Black Mate" 1884
"The Idiots" 1896
"Karain" 1897
"Youth" 1898
"Heart of Darkness" 1898
"Falk" 1901
"Amy Foster" 1901
"An Anarchist" 1905
"The Informer" 1905
"Il Conde" 1907
"The Brute" 1907
"The Partner" 1910
"Freya of the Seven Isles" 1910
"Prince Roman" 1911
"The Inn of the Two Witches" 1912
"Because of the Dollars" 1912

Four stories begin in the third person and break quickly into first person narrative:

"The Lagoon" 1897
"Gaspar Ruiz" 1905
"The Warrior's Soul" 1916
"The Tale" 1916

Among the tales, almost one-fourth are in the straight third person, a few in the straight first person, and by far the largest number are hybrids of one sort or another.

Grouping the entire forty-three pieces of fiction together, five are consistently first person, fourteen are consistently third, and twenty-four (more than half) are of the mixed sort. It seems justifiable to suppose that this last, for whatever reason or reasons, was Conrad's favorite method, and that he adopted the others only when the circumstances of the story demanded.
2. Autobiographical Works:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Mirror of the Sea</td>
<td>1906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Reminiscences</td>
<td>1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Personal Record</td>
<td>1919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes on Life and Letters</td>
<td>1921</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident that when the works are classified as to the point of view employed the dates refuse to fall into any coherent pattern. The chief fact which stands out is that Conrad wrote only one story ("The Planter of Malata") in the conventional third person from 1906 to 1920; but he was, of course, working at The Rescue from time to time.

Conrad's conception of the high purpose of his art explains that curious trick he has of frequently detaching the reader from the presence of the character and the momentary episode. In a story of Conrad's we are at one instant agog with the rush of action and at the next contemplating man and deed through other eyes, and down the long perspective of years. This accounts for what many readers dislike in Conrad. This is the reason for the presence of Marlow in Lord Jim and in Chance. One is not merely to experience the sensations of the character at the moment of action, but one is also to see it from afar, in its relations, and as qualified by the judgment of a kind of Greek chorus that stands for mankind.

Another basis in classification must be followed for Loti's works. It has already been mentioned that most of his works are autobiographical. Many of his novels and short stories are narrated in the first person. However, Loti is not preoccupied with the making of a novel. The appeal of his works to his readers does not come from the building of his novels but rather from
the originality of his style. The following classification, therefore, has been drawn for the purpose of showing the many fields into which he has put forth his skill.

1. The first group of novels and novelettes in which Loti has described his own sentimental affairs in the exotic countries, include the following:

- Mariage de Loti 1880
- Fantôme d'Orient 1892
- Aziadé 1879
- Suleima 1882
- Pasquala Svanovitch 1882
- Passage de Carmencita 1898
- Un vieux collier 1910
- Madame Chrysantème 1887
- Femmes japonaises 1893
- Japoneries d'automne 1889
- Troisième jeunesse de Madame Prune 1905

2. A second group embodies novels praising the life of sailors and soldiers serving their country in the colonies. The best of his works are found in this group.

- Matelot 1893
- Le roman d'un Spahi 1881
- Pêcheur d'Islande 1886
- Mon Frère Yves 1883
- Les trois dames de la Kasbah 1882
- Un vieux 1887

3. Loti did not find any god but that of Pity. He wrote many novels in which he expressed his compassion.

   a. His compassion towards humanity is expressed in the following works.

   - Passage d'enfant 1898
   - La chanson des vieux époux 1889
   - Chagrin d'un vieux forçat 1890
Vieille barque, vieux batelier 1910
Chemineaux 1899
Le mur d'en face 1898
L'Oeuvre de mer 1898
L'Oeuvre de Pen-Brom 1890
Vieilles femmes 1899
Veuves de pêcheurs 1890
La Turquie agonisante 1913
Les Désenchantées 1906

b. The following works reveal his compassion towards animals.

Vieux cheval 1889
Chiens et chats 1889
Aubades 1889
Les derniers chasses 1889
Noyade de chat 1910
Une bête galeuse 1890
Vie de Deux Chasses 1890
Viande de boucherie 1890

c. Loti's compassion towards things is displayed in these works.

Le Chateau de la Belle-au-bois dormant 1910
L'agonie d'Euzkalerria 1910
La mort de Philae 1909

4. Loti sometimes had to defend himself or some of his friends and therefore several of his works are apologetic.

Carmen Sylva 1892
L'Exilée 1892
Alphonse Daudet 1899
À la mémoire de Madame Lee Childe 1887
Sur la mort de L'Amiral Courbet 1885
Séance à l'Académie française 1910

5. In this fifth group are included works which are merely autobiographical.

Le roman d'un enfant 1890
Fleurs d'ennui 1882
Vacances de Pâques 1898
Tante Claire nous quitte 1890
La maison des aïeules 1910
Photographies d'hier et d'aujourd'hui 1910
Prime Jeunesse 1919
Suprêmes visions d'Orient 1921
Un jeune officier pauvre 1923

6. A few meditations which are not very well known, although very interestingly written in informal essays, are included in this sixth group.

Nocturne 1899
Rêve 1890
Pays sans nom 1890
Dans le passé mort 1890
Instants de recueillement 1898
Après une lecture de Michelet 1889
Quelques pensées vraiment aimables 1910

7. During the first World War, Loti wrote many stirring pages in the following works.

Quelques aspects du vertige mondial 1917
La hyène enragée 1916
L'horreur allemande 1918
La mort de notre chère France en Orient 1919

8. The last group listed contains accounts of Loti's travels on every continent with the exception of the American continent.

Europe

"A Madrid" 1899
"Procession de Vendredi-Saint" 1910
"A Loyola" 1898
"L'alcade sur la mer" 1898
"La grotte d'Isturitz" 1898
"Impression de cathédrale" 1898
"Adieux au pays basque" 1899
"La danse des épées" 1899
"Dimanche d'hiver" 1899
"Le gai pèlerinage de S. Martial" 1910
"Premier aspect de Londres" 1910
"Berlin vu de la mer des Indes" 1910
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Après l'effondrement de Messine&quot;</td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Passage de Sultan&quot;</td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Constantinople en 1890&quot;</td>
<td>1893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Voyage au Montenegro&quot;</td>
<td>1882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Africa</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Obock&quot;</td>
<td>1883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Une audience chez le grand Sphinx&quot;</td>
<td>1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La mort de Philae</td>
<td>1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Au Maroc&quot;</td>
<td>1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Charmeurs de serpents&quot;</td>
<td>1893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asie</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pèlerin d'Angkor</td>
<td>1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Une relâche de trois heures&quot;</td>
<td>1887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Mahe des Indes&quot;</td>
<td>1889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Vers Isphahan&quot;</td>
<td>1904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Pagodes souterraines&quot;</td>
<td>1887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Les pagodes d'art&quot;</td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L'Inde (sans les Anglais)</td>
<td>1903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Trois journées de guerre en Annam&quot;</td>
<td>1902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Galilée</td>
<td>1894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>1894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le desert</td>
<td>1894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les derniers jours de Pekin</td>
<td>1902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Océanie</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;L'Ile de Pâques&quot;</td>
<td>1898</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER IV

ELEMENTS INFLUENCING THEIR MOODS OF CREATION

"I never made a note of a fact, of an impression or an anecdote in my life."

(A Personal Record)

"Tous les soirs avant de me coucher, j'écris au crayon ce que je veux retenir de ma journée. Sans cela, le lendemain, l'impression serait déjà effacée."

(Le Phare des Charentes)

Conrad has given us a very exact account of the beginning of his literary career in Chapter IV of A Personal Record and there is no better source than his own confession. On the other hand, Loti's literary career has been revealed to us by his diary. In this chapter we do not intend to discourse very long but rather draw a parallel by means of excerpts from the works of each writer, for the purpose of displaying the similar or dissimilar elements which might have influenced their writings.

A. Similarities:

1. Both of their fathers were literary men.

He (Conrad's father) wrote his Memoirs, which began with the preparations for the insurrection, but these he decided to destroy before his death. Sometimes little Conrad would enter softly the room in which his father was writing. One day his father found him there kneeling in his chair, head on elbows, absorbed in the translation of Two Gentlemen of Verona, upon which Korzeniowski was at work. This was Conrad's first taste of
English literature. A month before, Apollo Korzeniowski, being sick in bed, the child had read aloud to him the proofs of his translation of Victor Hugo's *Travailleurs de la Mer.*

For his heart (Conrad) I have no fear, for it is his mother's and as far as his intellectual gifts are concerned (though these are hardly enviable) he has inherited mine.

Tres lettre (Loti's father), et poete a ses heures, aquarelliste distingue, auteur en collaboration d'une bonne Histoire de la ville et du port de Rochefort, tres attache a ce qu'il semble aux vieilles traditions litteraires, il s'affligeait de voir son fils toujours irremediablement dernier en composition francaise.

2. Neither Conrad nor Loti intended to be a writer.

Having confessed that my first novel was begun in idleness—a holiday task—I think I have also given the impression that it was a much-delayed book. It was never dismissed from my mind, even when the hope of ever finishing it was very faint. Many things came in its way, daily duties, new impressions, old memories. It was not the outcome of a need—the famous need of self-expression which artists find in their search for motives. The necessity which impelled me was hidden, obscure necessity, a completely masked and unaccountable phenomenon...The conception of a planned book was entirely outside my mental range when I sat down to write; the ambition of being an author had never turned up amongst these gracious imaginary existences one creates fondly for oneself at times in the stillness and immobility of a day-dream; yet it stands clear as the sun at noonday that from the moment I had done blackening over the first manu--

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As long as his sight was limited to a monotonous life, Loti did not write for anyone, but himself. He did not care whether he was going to be read or not. However, when he began to sail toward the exotic countries, he realized that the annotations and impressions which he had been writing in his diary each night, might hold a particular interest for the public. The changing spectacle of nature forced the young officer to analyze his soul upon contact with the strange and distant countries to which he was taken by his travels. When he became conscious of his skill as a writer, when the adventures he had gone through gave unity to his impressions, then he dared to display them to the public. Like all the Romanticists he desired to utter his fate and to collect sympathy.

... Un livre que j'ai publié, par besoin déjà de chanter mon mal, de le crier bien fort aux passants quelconques du chemin.  

Loti, also, is very much afraid of death and the need of writing seemed to give him the hope of leaving something of himself.

Avec une obstination puérile et désolée, depuis ma prime jeunesse, je me suis épousé à vouloir fixer tout ce qui se passe, et ce vain effort de chaque


5 Pierre Loti, Fantome d'Orient, p. 6.
jour aura contribué à l'usure de ma vie. J'ai voulu arrêter le temps, reconstituer des aspects effacés, conserver des vieilles demeures, prolonger des arbres à bout de sève, éterniser jusqu'à d'humbles choses qui n'auraient du être qu'éphémères, mais auxquelles j'ai donné la durée fantomatique des momies et qui à present m'espouvent...  

3. Works of both men are autobiographical. After having published Almayer's Folly, Conrad, who suffered many spells of gout and fever caught in the Central part of Africa, settled in England and wrote what he had witnessed during his trips on the sea and on every continent. However, it can not be said that his purpose is like Loti's "de chanter son mal" but in some of his novels and short stories the allusions to some of the hardships, disappointments, and sufferings which he had experienced are perceived. Two troubles disturbed Conrad's mood of creation, poverty and ill-health. Of the two, poverty was less demoralizing, though it caused him many agonized hours, but he eventually achieved prosperity. He never escaped from ill-health. The work considered in his study was accomplished under the most acute suffering from both difficulties. They affected his habits of writing and induced moods injurious to creation. From 1896 onwards, money was of great importance to him. He became engaged to Jessie George. About two weeks before his marriage the company in which he had invested all his money failed, and he began married life with only "a few hundred pounds."7 Not until 1912 did Conrad's writings support him. Prior to that time he desired

6Pierre Loti, Prime Jeunesse; p. 6.

to make a competent living by writing, and because of his ambitions and ability, was acutely disappointed when he found himself unable to do so. He pressed himself harder and added to the intolerable tension under which he had worked so long.

Great as it was, his financial difficulty was less troublesome than his ill-health. After his service in the Congo in 1890, he was subject to intermittent malaria. In his letters to Mme. Poradowska, he successively complained of "rheumatisme de jambe gauche et neuralgie de bras droit;" "jambes dans mauvais etat et estomac aussi;" "nerfs desorganises . . . palpitations de coeur et des acces d'etouffement;" "une attaque de malaria sous forme de dyspepsie;" "un peu de fievre encore tous les jours." Such chronic ill-health inevitably hurt Conrad's work. It interrupted his writing routine.

Before leaving Poland, while he was still going to school, he loved a young girl whose character and feature he transferred to Antonia Avellanos in Nostromo. We have already quoted this passage. Also at the beginning of Chance, Conrad put in the mouth of the young Powell, the expectation of his examination to be a third mate. By reading A Personal Record we find that Powell and Conrad are the same. Powell narrates how the happiest time in their lives was "as youngsters in good ships with no care in the world but not to lose a watch below when at sea and not a moment's time in going ashore after work hours when in harbour." The fellows agreed also "as to the proud-

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9 See pages 14 and 15 of this thesis.
est moment they had known in that calling which is never embraced on rational and practical grounds, because of the glamour of its romantic associations."

Then the place of the Marine Board examination is located at the St. Katherine's Dock House on Tower Hill. He describes the view of the surroundings: "the historic locality, with the gardens to the left, the front of the Mint to the right, the miserable tumble-down little houses farther away." This was the finest day of his life. He goes on to tell how he had emerged from the entrance of St. Katherine's Dock House a full-fledged second mate after the hottest time of his life with Captain R---, "the most dreaded of the three seamanship Examiners, who, at the time, were responsible for the merchant service officers qualifying in the Port of London."

Powell tells how tired he was and how discouraged by this lesson of disillusion following swiftly upon the finest day of his life. He tells how he went the round of all the ship-owners' offices in the City where some junior clerk would furnish him with printed forms of application which he took home to fill in during the evening. He narrates that he used "to run out just before midnight to post them in the nearest pillar-box."

In his short story, Youth, under the cover of the pseudonym Judea, Conrad portrayed the barque Palestine and related his own experiences when he was almost burned. Youth is the complete story of the Palestine. Marlow speaks:

I went to a music-hall, I believe, lunched, dined, and supped in a swell place in Regent Street, and

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10 Joseph Conrad, Chance, p. 4-6.
was back to time, with nothing but a complete set of Byron's works, and a new railway rug to show for three months' work. The boat-man who pulled me off to the ship said: 'Hallo! I thought you had left the old thing. "She" will never get to Bankok.' 'That's all "you" know about it,' I said scornfully --but I didn't like that prophecy at all.11

Compared with A Personal Record:

The next time I met them was in a five shilling one-volume edition of the dramatic works of William Shakespeare, read in Falmouth, at odd moments of the day, to the noisy accompaniment of caulkers' mallets driving oakum into the deck-seams of a ship in dry dock. We had run in, in a sinking condition and with the crew refusing duty after a month of weary battling with the gales of the North Atlantic.12

After they were blown up, they took places in three little boats. Marlow still speaks:

I thought I would part company as soon as I could. I wanted to have my first command all to myself. I wasn't going to sail in a squadron if there were a chance for independent cruising. I would make land by myself. I would beat the other boats. Youth! All youth! The silly, charming, beautiful youth. . . We made our way north. A breeze sprang up, and about noon all the boats came together for the last time. I had no mast or sail in mine, but I made a mast out of a spare oar and hoisted a boat-awning for a sail, with a boat-hook for a yard. She was certainly overmasted, but I had the satisfaction of knowing that with the wind aft I could beat the other two.

. . . Next day I sat steering my cockle-shell--my first command--with nothing but water and sky around me. I did sight in the afternoon the upper sails of a ship far away, but said nothing, and my men did not notice her. You see I was afraid she might be

11Joseph Conrad, Youth, p. 16.
12Joseph Conrad, A Personal Record, p. 72.
homeward bound, and I had no mind to turn back from
the portals of the East.13

We know that he was in Singapore at that time, by a certificate of discharge,
dated Singapore, April 3, 1883.

When he received the command of the ship Otago, Conrad could not hide
his joy. He related what happened during the expedition in *The Shadow Line*
and the short story *Falk*. When we know how they suffered on the China Sea,
we can conclude with Conrad in *Falk*: "Everything in this world, even the
command of a nice little barque may be a delusion and a snare for the unwary
spirit of pride in men."14

All of Loti's works have been imbued with himself. It will be necessary
to restrict the quotations in order to maintain a balance in this work.

_Roman d'un Enfant, Prime Jeunesse, Axiadé, Le Mariage de Loti, Suprêmes
Visions d'Orient, Le Pèlerin d'Angkor, Galilée, and Roman d'un Spahi_ are com-
pletely autobiographical. Moreover, Loti himself, affirmed that he had
written "pour laisser quelque chose qui dure." Let us consider this model
of an autobiographical page:

Pour aller prendre le mauvais petit bateau économique
de la Charente, je traversai la ville, muette à cette
heure-là, et surchauffée par le soleil. J'étais triste,
un peu humilié peut-être de ce départ de pauvre, et
aussi de mes vêtements de l'an dernier, défraichis et
trop courts; mais ce n'était rien auprès d'une angoisse
inexpliquée que je subissais, angoisse comme de désir
et d'attente; pour la première fois depuis seize ans
que j'existais, j'avais cruellement la perception très

In his early childhood Loti began to write down his daily impressions and as a result found a large part of his stories in his own diary. Let us compare one page of this diary and the correspondent text of _Un jeune officier pauvre_, in order that we may see the little change he has carried out; that will also explain how autobiographical his works are:

Je suis descendu ce soir pour la première fois à Smyrne. C'était reste qu'une demi-heure. Il était 9 heures et nuit close; la pluie tombait par torrents, les chiens errants hurlaient dans ces dédales de rues étroites et sombres; des gens costumés comme dans les fées, se croisaient avec des lanternes, des bâtons et des armes; de longues files de bêtes colossales cheminaient dans l'obscurité en faisant tinter des milliers de clochettes. Je compris après réflexion, que c'étaient des chameaux et des caravanes. C'était comme un rêve.  

Je suis descendu ce soir à Smyrne pour la première fois de ma vie. C'était pour une corvée militaire et je n'y suis reste qu'une demi-heure. Le pluie tombait par torrents et la nuit était noire. Les chiens errants hurlaient dans ces dédales de rues étroites et sombres. Des gens costumés comme des personnages de férie, se croisaient avec des lanternes, des bâtons et des armes; le longues files de bêtes colossales cheminaient dans l'ombre en faisant tinter des milliers de clochettes. Je compris que c'étaient les chameaux des grandes caravanes d'Asie... Tout cela m'apparut comme dans un rêve.

B. Dissimilarities:

1. Their preparations as writers were unlike: Conrad was a voracious reader; Loti did not read extensively.


16Pierre Loti, _Journal Intime_.

We have already quoted a lengthy passage indicating that Conrad "was a reading boy" while he was in Poland. He never gave up reading, as he wrote in *A Personal Record*:

Since the age of five I have been a great reader, as is not perhaps wonderful in a child who was never aware of learning to read. At ten years of age I had read much of Victor Hugo and other romantics. I had read in Polish and in French, history, voyages, novels; I knew "Gil Blas" and "Don Quixote" in abridged editions; I had read in early boyhood Polish poets and some French poets, but I cannot say what I read on the evening before I began to write myself. I believe it was a novel, and it is quite possible that it was one of Anthony Trollope's novels. ... My first introduction to English imaginative literature was "Nicholas Nickleby." It is extraordinary how well Nickleby could chatter disconnectedly in Polish and the sinister Ralph rage in that language.\(^{18}\)

Pierre Loti often boasted that he had read very little. Nevertheless, if he did not read much, it may be established that he read attentively. However, he certainly became acquainted with the classical authors inscribed in the program of the colleges. He was very exclusive in his admirations and he did not care much for poets. Most of them, with the exception of Musset, displeased him. He preferred prose writers. After having met Alphonse Daudet, he contracted a strong friendship with him and it has been said, that Daudet was his closest friend. Among Daudet's works, he praised *Les Lettres de mon moulin* and *Les Rois en exil*. Although he recognized Anatole France as a skilful writer, he despised his scepticism. He hated Émile Zola frankly. Paul Flaubert was his favorite and Loti often remarked

that he was delighted by reading *Un Coeur simple*, *La Tentation de Saint-Antoine*, and *Salammbô*.

2. Conrad never took a note. Loti wrote his impressions every night.

Till I began to write that novel (*Almayer's Folly*), I had written nothing but letters, and not very many of these. I never made a note of a fact, of an impression or of an anecdote in my life.  

Tous les soirs, avant de me coucher, j'écris au crayon ce que je veux retenir de ma journée. Sans cela, le lendemain, l'impression serait déjà effacée. Au grand air, avec cette vie toute physique, la fatigue vous terrasse à la fin du jour et on dort lourdement; aussi, il m'est arrivé, dans de précédents voyages, de tomber de sommeil sur mon papier. Cette fois, j'emmène avec moi, dans ma petite troupe, deux musiciens arabes...  

3. Conrad, although he intended to set sail again, settled down when he began to write (except for *Almayer's Folly* and *An Outcast of the Islands*), but Loti continued to navigate. In his Author's Preface to *An Outcast of the Islands*, Conrad wrote:

The only doubt I suffered from, after the publication of *Almayer's Folly*, was whether I should write another line for print. Those days, now grown so dim, had their poignant moments. Neither in my mind nor in my heart had I then given up the sea. In truth I was clinging to it desperately, all the more desperately because, against my will, I could not help feeling that there was something changed in my relation to it. *Almayer's Folly* had been finished and done with. The mood itself was gone.


Shortly after the publication of *An Outcast of the Islands*, he mentally accepted the new work into which he had drifted. "Only literature remains to me as a means of existence," he admitted. You understand . . . that if I have undertaken this thing, it is with the firm resolution to make a name."\(^{22}\) Conviction that he could be a successful writer came to Conrad, and afterwards he did not make any serious attempt to escape to the sea. In the development of any great writer, there are always mysteries which cannot be penetrated. Through a series of parallel driftings he became first a seaman and then a writer. His desire for the sea, fostered by reading, made him leave Poland. Family tradition, an interest in literature, and his own impressions made him write. The potential seaman was influenced by peculiar conditions in Poland that cut off any satisfactory life, and the potential novelist by failure to find a position at sea that would support him. A slow growth from amateur to professional was characteristic of Conrad in both his careers. Until he was forced by misadventures to leave the Mediterranean, he was an amateur seaman. Until he was forced to accept his dependence on writing, he was an amateur writer. But once the necessary stimulus moved him, he had the power to achieve his highest aims, to become a master seaman and a master novelist.

Loti's literary career is intermingled with his travels. Following his sister's advice, he began to sketch his childish impressions and he wrote until his death. He was not preoccupied by money as much as Conrad was. Loti also enjoyed better health than Conrad and did not put forth so much

effort in his writing. Wherever he was, he consigned each night to his
diary, his daily impressions. Nevertheless, he brought the precision of a
serious novelist to most of his works. For instance, before writing Pecheur
d'Islande, he asked an old, experienced captain many questions about the
fishing in the north sea, the life of the fisherman, and the caprices of
the weather.
"Realism, Romanticism, Naturalism, even the unofficial sentimentalism (which like the poor, is exceedingly difficult to get rid of), all these gods must, after a short period of fellowship, abandon him."

(Conrad: Preface--The Nigger of the Narcissus)

"Ce qui est très particulier chez vous ... c'est l'indépendance aisée avec laquelle vous paraissez vous dégager de tout ce que trente siècles ont apporté à l'humanité."

(Plumket à Loti)

Conrad's style is a source of never-ceasing wonder. He was twenty before he learned the English language. Those who knew him tell us that in his use of it he displayed a kind of dual personality, speaking it in ordinary conversation with a foreign accent, and with the hesitations of a man who gropes for words. Yet, when he began to dictate his stories, not only did his ample vocabulary flow freely, but his very voice forgot its foreignness, and he spoke with the easy accuracy of a cultured native. Of course, his earlier familiarity with the French language and literature, as well as with French ports and people, could not fail to leave its mark upon his work. We can feel his intimacy with the French psychological climate, and especially with the atmosphere of the Revolutionary period, in his last story, "The
Rover." The unforgettable character of Peyrol, Frenchman and seaman, who only in his evening years, after an expatriate lifetime, realizes how much thicker is his French blood than the sea water which for half a century has salted his soul, is a study only possible to a man of genius thoroughly intimate with the sea and at home in France.

When one reads Conrad's works, one cannot fancy exactly what it is that makes his style so startling. It is not a common English style. Although he uses a great variety of English words, the mass of impressions caused by the total of these words represent a non-English style. Many critics have tried to explain the characteristics of Conrad's style by his Slav temperament. However, he revolted against this judgment of the critics and refused to have anything common with the Russians for whom he had no regard. Richard Curle wrote that "he is volcanic without being anarchic."1 Richard Curle also explains how Conrad is not popular because of the lack of English characteristics. Another critic, Joseph Reilly, explains the foreignness of Conrad's writings:

He lacks the perfection of form which is French, the restraint and the acquiescence in things as they are which is English, the compactness and verve which we think of as American. He has the melancholy, the regret for joyous yesterdays, the brooding sympathy with all the children of Eve who must battle against mischance and poverty and weakness and heartbreak, only to find death at the end, which is typical in a marked degree of the Celt and of the Slav.2

Conrad's Slavic temperament, reinforced by his life upon the sea, has made him abidingly conscious of this truth, as when he speaks of "the tremendous fact of our isolation, of the loneliness, impenetrable and transparent, elusive and everlasting." In no other writer of English fiction is this note so persuasive, so insistent.

Even Garnett, the reader of the manuscript of *Almayer's Folly*, which was the starting point of a close friendship until death, attributes him a Slavic affinity. In a letter to Garnett, Conrad wrote:

> You remember always that I am a Slav (it's your idée fixe) but you seem to forget that I am a Pole. You forget that we have been used to go to battle without illusions. It's you Britishers that "go to win" only. We have been "going in" these last hundred years repeatedly, to be knocked on the head only—as was visible to any calm intellect, no doubt. Never mind, I won't say any more or you'll call it a mutiny and shoot me with some nasty preface perhaps.

We have already mentioned Conrad's readings as a boy. He himself never told that he had read in Russian. On the contrary, he explains that his romanticism comes from French literature. Answering a criticism of Mencken, Conrad wrote to his friend, George T. Keating. He explained to him that he went out into the world before he was seventeen. He went to France and to England and in neither country did he feel himself a stranger for a moment; neither as regards ideas, sentiments nor institutions. If Mr. Keating meant that he had been influenced by so-called Slavonic literature, then he was utterly wrong. The few novels he had read, he read in translation. Apart

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3 *Ibidem*, p. 175.

from Polish his youth had been fed on French and English literature. He was a boy, not of a savage, but of chivalrous tradition, and if his mind took a tinge from anything it was from French romanticism, perhaps.

In A Familiar Preface to A Personal Record, Conrad explains the purpose of his writings. After having told us that we would certainly find a part of himself in his characters, he writes that he wanted to pay his tribute to the sea, its ships and its men to whom he remains indebted for so much which has gone to make what he was. During a period of many years Conrad admired the colors created by different aspects of the sea and by the superb sunrises and sunsets in the tropics. The calmness of the sea, the fury of its storms, the brightness of the skies of the exotic countries, and the variety of nuances of the luxuriant vegetation urged him to create a very vivid style with which to describe what he had seen. Let us consider this description at the beginning of "The Lagoon":

At the end of the straight avenue of forests cut by the intense glitter of the river, the sun appeared unclouded and dazzling, poised low over the water that shone smoothly like a band of metal. The forests, sombre and dull, stood motionless and silent on each side of the broad stream. At the foot of big, towering trees, trunkless nipa palms rose from the mud of the bank, in bunches of leaves enormous and heavy, that hung unstirring over the brown swirl of eddies. In the stillness of the air every tree, every leaf, every bough, every tendril of creeper and every petal of minute blossoms seemed to have been bewitched into an immobility perfect and final.5

This is a calm scene. The enchantment and the charm of this landscape predisposes us for what we shall see in Arsat's hut. Conrad also knows how

to describe a terrific storm scene as in The Nigger of the Narcissus:

A big, foaming sea came out of the mist; it made for the ship, roaring wildly, and in its rush it looked as mischievous and discomposing as a madman with an axe. One or two, shouting, scrambled up the rigging; most, with a convulsive catch of the breath, held on where they stood. Singleton dug his knees under the wheelbox, and carefully eased the helm to the headlong pitch of the ship, but without taking his eyes off the coming wave. It towered close-to and high, like a wall of green glass topped with snow. The ship rose to it as though she had soared on wings, and for a moment rested poised upon the foaming crest as if she had been a great sea-bird.6

The storm the Narcissus goes through, and the typhoon that the Nan-Shan survives, would alone suffice to immortalize Conrad as a literary artist. Few indeed are the tales that bring home to your very heart and nerves such a sense of men at the utter extremity of human endurance. And, without being pessimists, we can appreciate the sailor's foreboding that even though he win through a few such tussles, still the siren sea is but biding her time, and has but withdrawn for the moment, to strike later with surer aim.

It must be conceded that Conrad, when he tells us in the preface to his Personal Record, "I have never been very well acquainted with the art of conversation," was confessing to what is a very real weakness in his work. Marvellous in monologue, he stumbles and stutters in dialogue; his characters cannot converse; they can only exchange shorthand symbols and telegraphic hints.

Suddenly some one cried:--"Where's Jimmy?" and we were appalled once more. On the end of the row

the boatswain shouted hoarsely:—"Has any one seed him come out?" Voices exclaimed dismally:—"Drowned—is he?... No! In his cabin!... . . Good Lord!... Caught like a bloomin' rat in a trap.... Couldn't open his door.... Aye! She went over too quick and the water jammed it.... Poor beggar!... No help for 'im.... Let's go and see...."

"Damn him, who could go?" screamed Donkin.—7

Conrad, besides his power of analyzing the wounded or bewildered soul, knew all the secrets of the sea and the wondrous gift of language by which he utters them. The sea is to the realizing imagination of sailors a living and personal power, with a will and purpose of its own, subtle, sportive, making malevolent and contemptuous fun of the human insects that dare to challenge its capricious patience. Seamen are seldom vocal; but give your sailor language, and he must needs speak poetry to you. Unless he does that, he is not really telling you his experience. Conrad, a born lover of the sea, and for nearly twenty years a ship-dwelling struggler with his dreadful mistress, was chosen by the gods to speak the truth about her various moods, to the very limit of the power of human speech to render it. And so in his books the sea plays the role of that grim form of Fate, con-strainer of the very gods, which looms over the Greek tragedies.

To Conrad, the sea and its simple-minded and single-hearted farers were as a well-conned and mastered book. Landsmen he knew, by comparison, only remotely and externally. Thus he is truly at home only on the ship after she has left port, and his seamen are far more alive than his landsmen, about whom, truth to tell, there is always something ghostlike and unap-
proachable.

Therefore, Conrad formed a style of his own. He lived in the jungle, he travelled under all skies and sailed on the sea which was sometimes smiling and sometimes grumbling. He knew the seamen, the Malays, and the folk of the harbors. Such are the main influences in the elaboration of his style.

Loti always boasted that he never read and that he was free of any influences. Nevertheless, his mind was not deprived of any intellectual food. The first among his masters was the Bible. It has been said that each night the Bible was read aloud in Loti's home. The Bible was all at once his first school of exotic love and initiation to the apocalyptic world. Later on he will travel through Galilee, studying the Bible. In some of his novels in which there is nothing concerned with the Biblical inspiration one unexpectedly finds an echo of his holy remembrances: "Cette image du soleil que la Bible eût appelé un signe du ciel disparaît lentement comme un pale météore" and also: "Aux premiers ages géologiques, avant que le jour fut séparé des ténèbres, les choses devaient avoir de ces tranquillités d'attente."8 At the beginning of Fècheurs d'Islande the same line is found: "La lumière matinale, la lumière vraie, avait fini par venir; comme au temps de la Genèse elle s'était séparée d'avec les ténèbres."9

At seventeen years he ceased his study of Greek and Latin. He knew Corneille and Lafontaine and was very much influenced by Bernardin de St.

8Pierre Loti, Le Roman d'un Spahi, p. 219-225.
Pierre and Chateaubriand. From the realistic authors he holds the intimate detail and the concrete word. He is a realist by his time, his literary environment and his obsession of the idea of nothingness. He is also a romanticist by his sensibility, the remembrance of his childhood and his wandering youth.

These observations caused many critics to attempt an explanation of his literary formation but their solutions prove most whimsical. We have already pointed out the factor of heredity; Loti’s father being gifted and having written a history of his town, and also his own delicate education which was supervised by his sister, Marie. This influence was certainly a strong one, for Marie herself possessed a beautiful style. Serban, in his work about Loti found a small, thin book entitled, Autour de Paulette, in which Marie narrated some adventures of the members of her family. The names have been changed but we can easily recognize Loti’s family. In order to know Marie’s style, which is not banal, it is worthwhile to quote some excerpts of this booklet:

Elle coule tranquillement son eau pure et fraîche, son eau de cristal sous la voute épaisse de deux chênes séculaires... Elle arrose les mousses pendantes, attachées aux vieilles pierres... Des morceaux de rocs, en contrefort, ont été posés comme par la main des fées de chaque côté du mince filet d’eau; le cours incessant de la source a modélée et arrondi leurs arêtes, tapissées de capillaires aux fils de soir, et de fines fougères, aux palmes déliées; sa fraîcheur est exquise; les gens du village prochain l’ont respectée et n’ont point souillé ses abords, bien qu’ils viennent quotidiennement puiser son eau pure.10

As we can see, Marie possessed the command of a wide vocabulary and a certain turn for writing. In that short piece of fiction, in contemplation of the charming shores of a tropical country, the hero would have lost his faith like Loti himself. Marie taught her brother how to write and how to draw, and she sponsored his piano lessons also. So it was from his own family that Loti developed his artistic personality which was to allow him to express with an exquisite sensibility the scenes he was to see later.

However, it is also true that Loti, as an individual was naturally gifted. His literary skill, cultivated by his sister and brother, and reenforced by a few attentive readings, mentioned heretofore, ought to rank him among "Les Immortels." He was scarcely seventeen years old when he had already developed a style of his own. In a diary begun in Paris when he was eight or nine years old he wrote:

Cela se passait a la Limoise quand j'avais huit ou neuf ans. Il devait être midi en juillet, par une chaleur torride. La vieille maison grise, fermée contre le soleil, semblait assoupie sous ses arbres. ... J'ent'r'ouvris donc la porte du jardin qui laissa entrer dans notre pénombre un violent rayon de lumière et puis je la refermai sur moi, et me trouvai dehors au milieu de toute la silencieuse splendeur de ce midi d'été. ... Les chênes-vert des bois dormaient. Le ciel était d'un bleu violent et profond, et sur les lointaine on voyait remuer des reseaux de vapeurs tremblotantes comme il s'en forme au-dessus des brasiers.11

We can already recognize Loti's style. It expresses deep impressions vividly felt by a few details very well chosen and sparingly evocative, by

epithets of which the suggestive virtue is chiefly caused by a fine accuracy and a fortunate and subtle matching of words, by a singular mixing of simplicity and refinement, a discreet realism and poetry. In those few lines written at seventeen we find the germ of the rich pages of Mon frère Yves and Pêcheur d'Islande.
CHAPTER II

THE MAGIC OF THEIR WORDS

Conrad and Loti were two musicians who had at their disposition a certain number of notes and who created the most sonorous melodies by a skilful fitting up of these notes. However, Conrad felt a greater need of words and he enriched his vocabulary by many means, especially by the use of compound words. Loti was more modest; he used the words of everyone and the success of his style resides in their marvellous associations. Nevertheless they have used common artifices, such as repetition of words, clauses, and the utilization of alliteration, consonance, and assonance.

Repetition is the reiteration of a word in a sentence for the purpose of producing a special effect. In most instances the effect is to intensify the situation, to show something of a cumulation, or to speed an action already violent and strenuous. We must admit that Conrad is more talented than Loti in the use of repetition. Loti employs repetition chiefly to stress the depth of a feeling. Conrad can produce a more variant effect by the method of repetition. Both used the repetition of the adverb, the adjective and the noun.

Conrad

The sunshine enveloped him, very brilliant, very still, very hot. (Victory p. 319.)

They remained still, dead still. (Ibidem p. 325.)

Loti

Jamais en passant dans ce quartier, jamais une porte ouverte, jamais un bruit de vie, jamais une lumière. (Fantome d'Orient p. 147.)

Il fait un temps rare, et si doux si étonnamment doux. (Ibid. p.137.)
I saw a trail, a broad trail.

I tried to break the spell—the heavy, mute spell.

Take care of the motives—right motives.

(The Heart of Darkness p. 161.)

However, Loti does not employ repetition on a high scale as Conrad does.

He spoke to her of his own island. . . He spoke of its terraced fields. . . he spoke also of the mountain peak. . . He spoke of vast horizons. . . He spoke of his forefathers. . . and so on through the scene until he is moved "to speak to her of the sea."  

One of the classical instances is that found in Lord Jim when Conrad wants his reader to realize the precipitation of the pilgrims streaming aboard the Patna.

They streamed aboard over three gangways, they streamed in urged by faith and the hope of paradise, they streamed in with a continuous tramp and shuffle of bare feet, without a word, a murmur, or a look back; and when clear of confining rails spread on all sides over the deck, flowed forward and aft, overflowed down the yawning hatchways, filled the inner recesses of the ship—like water filling a cistern, like water flowing into crevices and crannies, like water rising silently even with the rim.  

The repetition of the word "streamed" produces an effect of continuity and a wonderful gradation of stressing is expressed by the words "like water filling a cistern, like water flowing . . . like water rising . . . ."

Alliteration is the intended or non-intended repetition of the same sound at the beginning of two or more consecutive words, which produces an agreeable melody if well used.

When this repetition is based on a consonantal sound it is called consonance.

Assonance is the imperfect rhyme based on the likeness of the accented vowel and sometimes those that follow, the consonants of the words being unlike. For instance; in English: holy, story; in French: sombre, tondre, ame, age.

Let us consider together the assonance and the consonance in the works of Conrad and Loti. We shall also say a few words about alliteration although both writers have interwoven the use of assonance with alliteration.

**Assonance and Consonance**

**Conrad**

sending slender tendrils

eyes shut tight, his teeth hard set

where he could see the sky and feel the breeze

the fire gleamed like an eye

water that lapped about his lips

by the creek a frog croaked

a chorus of loud roars and plaintive calls rose

*(Joseph Conrad. *Almayer’s Folly*. pp. 165 ff.)*

**Loti**

Rarahu avait des yeux d’un noir roux . . d’une douceur caline, comme celle des jeunes chats quand on les caresse.

*(Pierre Loti: *Le Mariage de Loti* p. 8)*

On voit rarement dans notre monde civilisé des scènes aussi saisissantes;

*(Ibidem. p. 110.)*
pair of eyes glistened in the sway of light glaring wildly
blown overboard
began to struggle up the rigging flattened them against the ratlines
the sea spat at it
the forecastle doors flew open
(The Nigger of the Narcissus. pp. 57 ff.)
timid women muffled up under the sinister splendour
luminous and smooth
smooth and cool to the eye like a sheet of ice
in the blurred circles
the lone old men slept
The ash-buckets racketed, clanking
(Lord Jim. pp. 10 ff.)
plunged in rushing water like a diver
green gleam of the starboard light shining feebly
the enormous discord of noises
(Typhoon. pp. 42 ff.)

Figure ridée, brune, carrée, dure.
(Ibidem. p. 161.)
C'était le soir; le soleil déjà très bas ne pénétrait plus guère sous l'épais couvert de la forêt.
(Ibidem. p. 260.)
A mesure que nous avançons vers la mer Noire, l'air se fait moins froid.
(Fantôme d'Orient. p. 45.)
Enfin Varna paraît, et je salue les premiers minarets, les premières mosquées.
(Ibidem. p. 57.)
Cette végétation de coccotiers et d'arekiers.
(Un Pèlerin d'Angkor. p. 54.)
Un pont des vieux âges, construit en blocs cyclopéens.
(Ibidem. p. 57.)
Fenêtres festonnées... personnages au crâne rasé.
(Ibidem. p. 119.)
Il y a surtout un personnage là-bas rougeâtre comme un cadavre écorché.
(Ibidem. p. 119.)
Aziadé est en Asie; elle est en visite avec son harem.
(Aziadé. p. 166.)
Il a vu dans la journée repêcher un noyé, lequel était, il paraît, si vilain et lui a fait tant de peur.
(Ibidem. p. 167.)
Loti, quand tu seras parti; je m'ennui joyeuse vie et je me griserai tous les jours.
(Ibidem. p. 168.)

Des caisses mouillées, des paquets trempés de pluie, s'embarrquent dans une caïque.
(Ibidem. p. 269.)
As for alliteration, it seems to produce a greater effect in Conrad's style than in Loti's. Moreover, we can be sure that almost every application of alliteration is intended by Conrad; on the contrary, Loti does not make a special usage of it and we can affirm that it is not intended.

Conrad

bits of burnt wood
a big blaze
corruption of countless ages
dreamy delight
a sigh full of unspeakable sorrow
the silver shower
(Joseph Conrad. Almayer's Folly. pp. 165-175.)
pious purposes
progress of the pilgrimage
a flame flicked at her
full of fierce anger
bared breast glistened
ground heavily in the grooves
She cleared the straits, crossed the bay, continued on her way.
(Lord Jim. pp. 10-22.)

Loti

Harahu était d'une petite taille, admirablement prise, admirablement proportionnée; sa poitrine était pure et polie.
(Pierre Loti. Le Mariage de Loti, p. 8.)
Le ruisseau courait doucement sur les pierres polies, entraînant des peuplades de poissons microscopiques et de mouches d'eau. Le sol était tapissé de fines graminées, de petites plantes délicates, d'ou sortait une senteur pareille à celle de nos foins d'Europe pendant le beau mois de juin, senteur exquise, rendue par ce seul mot tahitien:
(Ibidem. p. 60.)
Dans cette vieille figure ridée, brune, carrée, dure.
(Ibidem. p. 161.)
sur les caïques silencieux qui glissent en tous sens.
(Fantôme d'Orient. p. 137.)
essuyant pour moi ses tasses grossières de pauvresse, je vois des larmes silencieuses, de grosses larmes qui descendent le long de ses joues.
(Ibidem. p. 121.)
par ces souvenirs d'ivresses passées.
(Ibidem. p. 141.)
place silencieuse bordée de berceaux de vigne.
(Ibidem. p. 88.)
Finally we give some instances of alliterative uses which are complex in their structure and subtle in their effects. Loti combined assonance and alliteration to a large extent unconsciously. Conrad, however, was not always conscious of these artifices but rather preoccupied with giving an exact picture of what he wrote.

Conrad

(saved his body and steadied his soul)

(it rose ... it rolled)

in the blind night, bracing each other...
in the manner of two battered hulks
(Joseph Conrad, Typhoon. pp. 39 ff.)

disquieting like reckless ghosts of decapitated seamen dancing in a tempest

men crawled aloft through a merciless buffeting, saved the canvas, and crawled down ... to bear in panting silence the cruel battering of the seas

Forward the forecastle doors flew open
(The Nigger of the Narcissus, pp. 66 ff.)

of sombre pride, of ruthless power

a big fire burned illuminating fitfully a crooked corner

the crowd ... behind the curtain of trees... flowed out of the woods... filled the clearing, covered the slope with ... breathing, quivering, bronze bodies beating with its terrible tail and breathing black smoke
(The Heart of Darkness. pp. 140 ff.)
Loti

Rarahu avait des yeux d'un noir roux, pleins d'une langueur exotique, d'une douceur caline, comme celle des jeunes chats quand on les caresse; ses cils étaient si longs, si noirs qu'on les eût pris pour des plumes peintes. Son nez était court et fin, comme celui de certaines figures d'arabes; sa bouche, un peu plus épaissse, un peu plus fendue que le type classique, avait des coins profonds, d'un contour délicieux. En riant, elle découvrait jusqu'au fond des dents un peu larges, blanches comme de l'émail blanc, dents que les années n'avaient pas eu le temps de beaucoup polir, et qui conservaient encore les stries légères de l'enfance.

(Pierre Loti, Le Mariage de Loti. p. 8.)

The following passage is one in which Loti, by the combination of words tries to express the nuances and the different noises he hears in the temple of Angkor-Vat. It produces in reality, an onomatopoeic effect.

Les Apsaras, les monstres, les bas-reliefs à demi-effacés, les amas de grandes pierres défuntes, baignent à présent dans une sorte d'ironique et morne magnificence. Et les milliers de petits envahisseurs du sanctuaire, ceux qui volent, ceux qui courent ou ceux qui rampant, viennent de se remettre à butiner après s'être cachés pendant l'averse; on entend bruire partout des serpents, des lézards, chanter des tourterelles et des oiselets, miauler des chats sauvages; de larges papillons se promènent, semblables à des découpages de soie précieuse, et des mouches par myriades, en corselet de velours ou d'or vert, mêlent à la psalmodie des bonzes leur murmure comme un bourdonnement de cloches lointaines. Seules, les chauves-souris, les obsédantes chauves-souris, principales maîtresses d'Angkor-Vat, dorment toujours à l'ombre perpétuelle, collées sous les voutes des cloîtres.

(Un Pèlerin d'Angkor. pp. 126-27)

Conrad also exploited this effect of words and perhaps on a wider scale than Loti. Although the latter pretended to be a musician, his descriptions
appealed rather to our sense of view. We are able to visualize the scene because the accurate descriptions and the usage of the words create a painting. The greatest part is therefore for the enjoyment of the eyes. Conrad, through consonantal sounds charms the ear and tries to render every sensation which strikes the senses. Following is a short passage illustrating that which we call "stifling sounds, sounds expressing the difficulty to breathe in a corrupted atmosphere:"

An acrid smell of damp earth and of decaying leaves took him by the throat, and he drew back with a scared face, as if he had been touched by the breath of Death itself. The very air seemed dead in there --heavy and stagnating, poisoned with the corruption of countless ages. He went on, staggering on his way, urged by the nervous restlessness that made him feel tired yet caused him to loathe the very idea of immobility and repose. 3

For the purpose of drawing a picture of the difference between Conrad and Loti, there follows a quotation of descriptions by both of them of a storm on the sea.

Conrad

The motion of the ship was extravagant. Her lurches had an appalling helplessness: she pitched as if taking a header into a void, and seemed to find a wall to hit every time. When she rolled she fell on her side headlong, and she would be righted back by such a demolishing blow that Jukes felt her reeling as a clubbed man reels before he collapses. The gale howled and scuffled about gigantically in the darkness, as though the entire world were one black gully. At certain moments the air streamed against the ship as if sucked through a tunnel with a concentrated solid force of impact that

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seemed to lift her clean out of the water and keep her up for an instant with only a quiver running through her from end to end. And then she would begin her tumbling again as if dropped back into a boiling cauldron.\(^4\)

Loti

Quelquefois la Médée se cabrait, leur montait dessus, comme prise, elle aussi, de fureur contre elles. Et puis elle retombait toujours, la tête en avant, dans des creux traitres qui étaient derrière; elle touchait le fond de ces espèces de vallées qu'on voyait s'ouvrir rapides, entre de hautes parois d'eau; et on avait hâte de monter encore, de sortir d'entre ces parois courbes, luisantes, verdâtres, prêtes à se refermer.

Une pluie glacée rayait l'air en longues flèches blanches, fouettait, cuisait comme des coups de lanières. Nous nous étions rapprochés du nord, en nous élevant le long de la côte chinoise, et ce froid inattendu nous saisissait.

En haut, dans la maturité, on essayait de serrer les huniers, déjà au bas ris; la cape était déjà dure à tenir, et maintenant il fallait, coute que coute, marcher droit contre le vent, à cause de terres douteuses qui pouvaient être là, derrière nous.

Il y avait deux heures que les gabiers étaient à ce travail, aveuglés, cinglés, brûlés par tout ce qui leur tombait dessus, gerbes d'écume lancées de la mer, pluie et grêle lancées du ciel; essayant, avec leurs mains crispées de froid qui saignaient, de crocher dans cette toile raide et mouillée qui ballonnait sous le vent furieux.\(^5\)

It would be interesting to quote the long story of both storms in *Typhoon* and *Mon frère Yves*, as both are masterpieces and represent the creed of art of their composers.


Fiction, said Conrad, must be, like painting, like music, like all art, the appeal of one temperament to all the other innumerable temperaments whose subtle and resistless power endows passing events with their true meaning, and creates the moral, the emotional atmosphere of the place and time.  

On m'avait confié, écrit Loti, à un excellent professeur de piano qui s'intéressait à ce qu'il appelait ma qualité de son, m'apprenait surtout à faire chanter mes doigts.

His style ought to have this quality of sound as Loti learned how to direct his fingers on the complex and difficult clavier, which is the French language.

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CHAPTER III

THE ACUTENESS AND

SUGGESTIVENESS OF THEIR DESCRIPTIONS

The readers of Conrad and Loti may become tired of the stories of the former and the lassitude and the weariness of the latter. In fact, one reading Conrad is fascinated and startled by the frightful events which are going to happen. However, nothing ever really happens; therefore Conrad's success lays in the might he possesses to hold his reader's emotive mood in a high tension by the acuteness of his descriptions. Loti's stories are dull on account of his conception of love, which is diminished to the very simple expression: carnal pleasure. Most of his characters are primitive persons living the lowest standards of life. We must understand that Loti had to make up the deficiency of his plots by the art in his style and chiefly by his descriptions, in order to hold the reader's interest. Both of these writers will always be remembered for the exactness and the correctness of their descriptions. Whether writing about the darkness of the jungle or the brightness of the reflection of the desert, and whether describing the dead calmness or the violent foaming of the sea, they pictured their scenes with a rare precision. Both Conrad and Loti had lived in and witnessed the various scenes about which they wrote. Moreover, Conrad, who was a sailor, made the sea the setting for most of his heroes. Frank CHughwa has an original comparison:
In Typhoon it seems like Egdon Heath in The Return of the Native or better like the great whale in Moby Dick to symbolize the Fate. Nor could the actual descriptions of the sea be easily surpassed: the unforgettable storm of Typhoon and The Nigger of the Narcissus.1

Conrad possessed the imagination and the conscientiousness of the artist. His writings tend toward bold preciseness and imagery. He searched for the right word: "Give me the right word and the right accent and I will move the world."2 On the other hand, Loti also is an excellent observer. The habit of consigning his impressions in a diary every night developed his sense of observation. Even where there is nothing to be seen, Loti finds all the words to express a painting; as for example, the following spectacle of a night on the ocean when we can hardly visualize anything, Loti delineates a wonderful sketch:

..les nuits mêmes étaient lumineuses. Quand tout s'était endormi dans des silences morts, les étoiles apparaissaient en haut plus éclatantes que dans aucune autre région du monde.

Et la mer aussi éclairait par en dessous. Il y avait une sorte d'immense lueur diffuse dans les eaux. Les mouvements les plus légers, le navire dans sa marche lente, le requin en se retournant derrière, dégageaient dans les remous tièdes des clartés couleur de ver-luisant. Et puis, sur le grand miroir phosphorescent de la mer, il y avait des milliers de flammes folles; c'étaient comme des petites lampes qui s'allumaient d'elles-mêmes partout, mystérieuses, brulaient quelques secondes et puis mouraient. Ces nuits étaient pleines de chaleur, pleines de phosphore, et toute cette immensité


étouinte couvait de la lumière, et toutes ces eaux enfermaient de la vie latente à l’état rudimentaire comme jadis les eaux mornes du monde primitif.3

This is a marvellous art very well characterized by the following words of Doumic:

...mais ce dont nul ne s’était avisé, c’est de rendre visible ce qui est sans contours arrêtés, ce qui n’a pas de forme, pas de couleur tranchée et qui est fait au contraire de l’inconsistance harmonie des nuances indécises et imprécises.4

One who studies Loti’s art minutely, discovers an art so subtle and refined that its main virtue is its indisputable character of naturalness and simplicity. This writer whose nicety is really rare does not do anything more than note his own emotions awakened in him by contact with exterior things. A safe instinct seems to reveal to him that it is the only condition of the success of his genius. A second virtue of Loti’s art lies in the display of the simplest and most familiar words, especially when he expresses the most delicate hues. Among all the descriptive writers of our time, Loti is certainly the one who knew how to evoke a tableau whether large or small, most completely: he could skilfully depict a large landscape as well as a flower on the route, a human smile as well as a city. Meanwhile he is the one whose vocabulary is very modest and limited to ordinary terms; he keeps away from slang and handles easily technical epithets while avoiding neologism. He guessed with the superior tact of a toiler of style, the precise limitation of French prose.

3Pierre Loti, Mon frère Yves. p. 73.
Conrad adorned his descriptions with many figures of speech of which simile, metaphor, and personification are the most numerous. Loti used the simile abundantly, although he almost neglected the other figures of speech. It was natural for both, in writing about the sea, that ships conveyed to them real personalities. To Conrad and Loti, the winds, and the waves are also real personalities: an organic part of the sailor's existence. They are "adversaries whose wiles you must defeat, whose violence you must resist, and yet with whom you must live in the intimacies of nights and days." Also, "la Médée se cabrait, leur montait dessus, était prise de fureur." 

The similes are very abundant and very various in their kind. To classify or analyse them would be beyond the frame of this work. However, there follows a few instances of each one. To Conrad the steamer Patna is "a local steamer as old as the hills," "lean like a greyhound," "eaten up with rust worse than a condemned water-tank." "The night descended on her like a benediction," "the young moon...was like a slender shaving thrown up from a bar of gold." "The Arabian Sea, smooth and cool to the eye like a sheet of ice." 

In Victory, Ricardo is likened to a member of the cat family:

Ricardo advanced...more in the manner of a squirrel than a cat...he was watching with an animal-like patience: this unblinking watchfulness gave him the dreamy air of a cat posed on a hearth-rug...he

prowled as a stray cat entering a strange place...his pupils, like a cat's dilating swiftly...a mood of ferocity woke up in him; the instinct for the feral spring could no longer be denied...after a quick glance over his shoulder, which hunters of big game tell us no lion or tiger omits to give before charging home, Ricardo charged: ...and Ricardo,...crest-fallen like a beast of prey that had missed its spring.  

To Loti, "les grandes figures de Brahma sont les vieilles dames débonnaires;" les Apsaras, "elles ondulent comme des reptiles ces petites creatures;" "les chauves-souris sont des pochettes de velours;" les toits des pagodes sont "plusieurs taureaux géants décoiffés." To compare to the descriptions of Conrad's Ricardo, Loti's Rarahu is represented as similar to a young cat and a young monkey.

Rarahu avait des yeux... d'une douceur caline, comme celle des jeunes chats... Ses cils étaient si longs... qu'on les eût pris pour des plumes peintes... Quand elle riait... une finesse maligne d'un jeune ouistiti.  

Finally, in order to avoid a longer discourse and discussion on the value of Conrad's and Loti's style, there follows a few excerpts telling about the same scenes. Loti's best descriptions are about the South Pacific in Mon frère Yves and the North Sea near Iceland in Pêcheur d'Islande. Two

11Ibidem. p. 117.
scenes of the sea and two descriptions of persons are here compared.

Conrad

She (the Patna) held on straight for the Red Sea under a serene sky, under a sky scorching and unclouded, enveloped in a fulgor of sunshine that killed all thought, oppressed the heart, withered all impulses of strength and energy. And under the sinister splendour of that sky the sea, blue and profound, remained still, without a stir, without a ripple, without a wrinkle—vicious, stagnant, dead. The Patna, with a slight hiss, passed over that plain luminous and smooth, unrolled a black ribbon of smoke across the sky, left behind her on the water a white ribbon of foam that vanished at once, like the phantom of a track drawn upon a lifeless sea by the phantom of a steamer.

Every morning the sun, as if keeping pace in his revolutions with the progress of the pilgrimage, emerged with a silent burst of light exactly at the same distance astern of the ship, caught up with her at noon, pouring the concentrated fire of his rays on the pious purposes of the men, glided past on his descent, and sank mysteriously into the sea evening after evening, preserving the same distance ahead of her advancing bows... Such were the days, still, hot, heavy, disappearing one by one into the past, as if falling into an abyss forever open in the wake of the ship; and the ship, lonely under a wisp of smoke, held on her steadfast way black and smouldering in a luminous immensity, as if scorched by a flame flicked at her from a heaven without pity.

The nights descended on her like a benediction.

Loti

Et la mer aussi éclairait par en dessous. Il y avait une sorte d'immense lueur diffuse dans les eaux. Les mouvements les plus légers, le navire dans sa marche lente, le requin en se retournant derrière, dégageaient dans les remous tièdes des clartés couleur de verluisant. Et puis, sur le grand miroir phosphorescent de la mer, il y avait des milliers de flammes folles; c'étaient comme des

petites lampes qui s'allumaient d'elles-mêmes partout, mystérieuses, brulaient quelques secondes et puis mouraient.15

And such as is the passionate silent tragedy of Yann and Gaud, of Yvonne and Sylvestre, even such, in varying degree, are the rest of Loti's volumes. They cannot be called narratives, but pages torn from life, with no little of the pain and the blood in them still, that betray their origin. The art of transitions, the skill which completes a story from given outlines, the denouement so long a tradition, have yielded in his instance to a manner at once thoughtful and careless, intent on a bold stroke here and there, but leaving much to be guessed, and not a little for the reader's interpretation. Thus far Loti is an Impressionist, one that speaks to his experience, but would prefer not to be at the same time judge or jury. The essence of his description is its fragmentary truth; where vision fails him, he loses his voice. He is all moods and colors; and like the most unconscious of artists, when he endeavors to think, he can but reproduce his emotions.

Conrad and Loti differ more in the portraying of their characters, although both of them give a fundamentally psychological figure. Conrad describes his heroes in connection with the sea. How much the sea has impressed them! How it has modeled their souls, like Tom Lingard:

Tom Lingard was a master, a lover, a servant of the sea. The sea took him young, fashioned him body and soul; gave him his fierce aspect, his loud voice, his fearless eyes, his stupidly guileless heart. Generously it gave him his absurd faith in himself, his universal love of creation, his wide

15Pierre Loti, Mon frère Yves. p. 73.
indulgence, his contemptuous severity, his straightforward simplicity of motive and honesty of aim. Having made him what he was, womanlike, the sea served him humbly and let him bask unharmed in the sunshine of its terribly uncertain favour. Tom Lingard grew rich on the sea and by the sea. He loved it with the ardent affection of a lover, he made light of it with the assurance of perfect mastery, he feared it with the wise fear of a brave man, and he took liberties with it as a spoiled child might do with a paternal and good-natured ogre. He was grateful to it, with the gratitude of an honest heart. His greatest pride lay in his profound conviction of its faithfulness—in the deep sense of his unerring knowledge of its treachery.16

Loti always established a connection with the physical and the moral character of his heroes. Let us see how he introduces the fisherman, Yann, to us.

Il dépassait un peu trop les proportions ordinaires des hommes, surtout par sa carrure qui était droite comme une barre; quand il se présentait de face, les muscles de ses épaules, dessinés sous son tricot bleu, formaient comme deux boules en haut de ses bras. Il avait de grands yeux bruns très mobiles, à l'expression sauvage et superbe.17

Also this description of Aziadé:

•••deux grands yeux verts fixés sur les miens. Les sourcils étaient bruns, légèrement froncés, rapprochés jusqu'à se rejoindre; l'expression de ce regard était un mélange d'énergie et de naïveté; on eût dit un regard d'enfant, tant il avait de fraicheur et de jeunesse.18

18Pierre Loti, Aziyadé. p. 6.
The interest of their descriptions ranked at the beginning in the works of both Conrad and Loti. The images and the suggestive comparisons in their writings reveal the unsurpassed artistic skill of each of these authors.
CHAPTER IV

CONRAD’S SONORITY OF STYLE AND LOTI’S TURN OF SENTENCE

SUGGEST THE IMAGE

There is still a great deal more to be said about Conrad’s and Loti’s style. However, the purpose of this paper is not to analyse their styles in every detail, but to draw a parallel by pointing out the similarities and dissimilarities. The major similarity between the two writers is the one by which they obtain literary glory. Conrad has declared in his creed: “My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel—it is, before all, to make you see.”¹ To realize his purpose he has appealed to all the senses. At first he fascinates and charms the eye by an extended display of colors; so does Loti. Out first observation will be: Conrad and Loti have displayed all varieties and nuances of colors, as evidenced by the following instances:

**Conrad**

- pale green iridescence
- fine white ash of bygone fires
- a black line of young trees
- the glowing embers shone redly
- crouching in his shady hiding-place
- leaping out into the sunlight
- he glanced into its shade
- stood... in dark green foliage
- crowning... with pink and blue flowers.

*(Joseph Conrad, *Almayer’s Folly.* pp. 165-167.)*

**Loti**

- la vigne effeuillé prend des teintes d’or rouge
- Une nuance d’or se répand
- Les dômes des pâles mosquées
- Maison de bois teinte en rouge sombre
- sur lesquels étaient peints des papillons jaunes et des tulipes bleues
- ce crépuscule éclairant en rose
- la maison sombre

*(Pierre Loti, *Fantôme d’Orient.* pp. 115 ff.)*

The Arabian Sea . . . cool to the eye like a sheet of ice extended its perfect level to the perfect circle.

The wheel whose brass rim shone fragmentarily in the oval of light.

He saw the white streak of the wake drawn as straight . . . as a black line

The half transparent dome covering the flat disc of an opaque sea

(Lord Jim. pp. 13 ff.)

Both Conrad and Loti put forth a real ability to charm the sight by displaying the most various of colors; all are there: black, dusk, green, blue, pink, red, bronze, silver, opaque rosy flame, gold, yellow, grey, white; and many other words merely suggestive: light, dark, sky, fire ash, scorched, and blood.

A second observation: Conrad, by the imagery of his words suggests the climax of the scene he pictures. It will be seen that Conrad's imagery shows much complexity; he uses two or three images to one sentence element. These are the most common, with the single image running a close third. Form, motion, sound, and color are intermingled.

1. Form is highest in Lord Jim, in a scene of calmness:

The young moon recurred, and shining low in the west, was like a slender shaving thrown up from a bar of gold, and the Arabian Sea, smooth and cool to the eye like a sheet of ice, extended its perfect level to the perfect circle of a dark horizon. . . . Jim on
the bridge was penetrated by the great certitude of unbounded safety and peace that could be read on the silent aspect of nature like the certitude of fostering love upon the placid tenderness of a mother's face. Below the roof of awnings, surrendered to the wisdom of white men and to their courage, trusting the power of their belief and the iron sheel of their fire-ship, the pilgrims of an exacting faith slept on mats, on blankets, on bare planks, on every deck, in all the dark corners, wrapped in dyed cloths, muffled in soiled rags, with their heads resting on small bundles, with their faces pressed to bent forearms: the men, the women, the children; the old with the young, the decrepit with the lusty—all equal before sleep, death's brother.2

The scene depicted is one typical of the hot bright afternoons; things are seen very distinctly and form predominates. These examples illustrate:

"The Arabian Sea ... cool to the eye like a sheet of ice extended its perfect level to the perfect circle." ... "the iron sheel of their fire-ship" and further, "the wheel whose brass rim shone fragmentarily in the oval of light" ... "he saw the white streak of the wake drawn as straight ... as the black line" ... "the half-transparent dome covering the flat disc of an opaque sea."3

2. Motion is another element of imagery and the action is expressed as much by participles as by verbs. It is very high in scenes of greatest physical action.

Captain Allistoun leaped up, and fell; Archie rolled over him, screaming:—"She will rise!" She gave another lurch to leeward; the lower deadeyes dipped heavily; the men's feet flew from under them, and

they hung kicking above the slanting poop. They could see the ship putting her side in the water, and shouted all together:--"She's going!" Forward the forecastle doors flew open, and the watch below were seen leaping out one after another, throwing their arms up; and, falling on hands and knees, scrambled aft on all fours along the high side of the deck, sloping more than the roof of a house. From leeward the seas rose, pursuing them; they looked wretched in a hopeless struggle, like vermin fleeing before a flood; they fought up the weather ladder of the poop one after another, half naked and staring wildly.4

It was like an outlying rock with the water boiling up, streaming over, pouring off, beating round—like a rock in the surf to which shipwrecked people cling before they let go—only it rose, it sank, it rolled continuously, without respite and rest, like a rock that should have miraculously struck adrift from a coast and gone wallowing upon the sea.5

Consider: "leaped up . . . fell . . . rolled over" . . . "dipped heavily" . . . "they hung kicking above the slanting poop" . . . "were seen leaping out" . . . "throwing their arms up" . . . "falling on hands and knees" . . . "sloping more than the roof of a house" . . . "like vermin fleeing before a flood."6 . . . "the water boiling up, streaming over, pouring off, beating round" . . . "only it rose, it sank, it rolled continuously" . . . "and gone wallowing upon the sea."7

3. Sound is also prominent in The Nigger of the Narcissus and Typhoon, as might be expected in the two violent tempests on the sea.

5Joseph Conrad, Typhoon. pp. 43-44.
7Joseph Conrad, Typhoon. pp. 43-44 passim.
the ship roaring wildly.
one or two shouting.
they brought up with their ribs against the iron stanchions of the rail.
then groaning, they rolled in a confused mass.
A black squall howled low over the ship.

the gale howled and scuffled.
he heard that voice in the enormous discord of noises.
while the whole atmosphere roaring away.
Captain MacWhirr and Jukes.
deafened by the noise, gagged by the wind; and the great physical tumult beating about their bodies.
wild and appalling shrieks that are heard.

In studying Conrad's imagery, one readily ascertains how much this artifice of style overlaps with other style processes, particularly sound, form, motion, color, with alliteration, assonance and also figurative uses. These are the means by which Conrad suggests the scenery to his reader, makes him feel the various states of the soul and makes vibrant the whole gamut of terrors, fears, and joys.

Loti has not neglected those artifices of style, but he did not use them on so large a scale. We have already observed that he employed the ordinary words of the language. However, his success has been produced by the disposition of these words and the turn of his sentences. Serban has summarized Loti's originality of style:

La composition des romans de Loti est plutôt étrange.
Rien des règles classiques de la composition française.
Pas d'unité d'intrigue, pas de suite logique dans l'en-chainement des scènes ou dans le développement de l'analyse psychologique; mais une composition lâche qui re-sulte de retouches successives, retouches qui finissent cependant par laisser l'impression d'unité.10

In some of his works where Loti does not talk about himself, the impersonal element is a real masterpiece. In a short story published in the Revue des Deux Mondes, one can verify this artistic effort. The very first quality of his style is without any discussion "le mot juste" and also "le terme évocateur." What an original way of describing the refuge of the sailors in Pêcheur d'Islande:

Il étaient cinq, aux carrures terribles, accoudés à boire, dans une sorte de logis sombre qui sentait la saumure et la mer. Le gîte, trop bas pour leurs tailles, s'effilait par un bout, comme l'intérieur d'une grande mouette vidée; il oscil-laît faiblement, en rendant une plainte monotone, avec une lenteur de sommeil.11

No conjunctions of subordination, but suspended sentences lacking verbs and a frequent usage of demonstrative adjectives are some of his artifices. Perhaps this is the influence of Alphonse Daudet, whom Loti always admired.

However, Loti marked his personality by adding particular descriptive exclamations or analyses which are picturesque and rare. Le Roman d'un Spahi, Un Pèlerin d'Angkor, Mon frère Yves, and Pêcheur d'Islande, are filled with those special turns of sentence which ranked Loti among the impressionists, but of another kind from that of Conrad. Still, the best way to show the

qualities of his style here, is to give a few instances.

Loti wishes to show the narrowness of the sailor's lodgings:

Leur table massive occupait toute leur demeure; elle en prenait très exactement la forme, et il restait juste de quoi se couler autour pour s'asseoir sur des caissons étroits scellés aux murailles de chêne. De grosses poutres passaient au-dessus d'eux, presque à toucher leurs têtes; et, derrière leur dos, des couchettes qui semblaient creusées dans l'épaisseur de la charpente s'ouvraient comme les nicher d'un caveau pour mettre les morts. Toutes ces boiseries étaient grossières et frustes, imprégnées d'humidité et de sel; usées, polies par les frotttements de leurs mains.12

We know that in the northern part of the American hemisphere, during a certain part of the year, the day becomes twenty-four hours long. Loti tries to draw a picture of the appearance of the sea at that particular epoch of the year for us in the following passage.

Dehors il faisait jour, éternellement jour. Mais c'était une lumière pâle, pâle, qui ne ressemblait à rien; elle trainait sur les choses comme des reflets de soleil mort. Autour d'eux, tout de suite commençait un vide immense qui n'était d'aucune couleur, et en dehors des planches de leur navire, tout semblait diaphane, impalpable, chimérique.

L'œil saisissait à peine ce qui devait être la mer; d'abord cela prenait l'aspect d'une sorte de miroir tremblant qui n'aurait aucune image à refléter; en se prolongeant, cela paraissait devenir une plaine de vapeurs,—et puis, plus rien; cela n'avait ni horizon ni contours.

La fraîcheur humide de l'air était plus intense, plus pénétrante que du vrai froid, et, en respirant, on sentait très fort le goût du sel. Tout était calme et il ne pleuvait plus; en haut, des nuages informes et incolores sem-

12 Pierre Loti, Pêcheur d'Islande. p. 4.
blaient contenir cette lumière latente qui ne s'expliquait pas; on voyait clair, en ayant cependant conscience de la nuit, et toutes ces pales choses n'étaient d'aucune nuance pouvant être nommée. 13

Does Loti wish to make us feel the poignant despair of Gaud, whom Yann's father tries to comfort?

Il avait le coeur angoisse, lui aussi; car son Yann, son beau Yann était son ainé, son préféré, sa gloire. Mais il ne désesperait pas, non vraiment, il ne désesperait pas encore. Il se mit à rassurer Gaud d'une manière très douce: d'abord les derniers rentrés d'Islande parlaient tous de brumes très épaisse qui avaient bien pu retarder le navire; et puis surtout il lui était venu une idée: une relâche aux îles Féroé, qui sont des îles lointaines situées sur la route et d'ou les lettres mettent très longtemps à venir; cela lui était arrivé à lui-même, il y avait une quarantaine d'années, et sa pauvre défunte mère avait déjà fait dire une messe pour son âme. . . Un si bon bateau la Léopoldine, presque neuf, et de si forts marins qu'ils étaient tous à bord... 14

These words give Gaud a faint glimmer of hope, and he tries to sustain this hope. Loti, however, pictures the physical ravage caused on Gaud's face by her sorrow: "Elle était devenue pâle, pâle, et se tenait toujours plus affaissée, comme si la vieillesse l'êt déjà froissée de son aile chauve."

How suggestive are the following words showing the desolate Gaud striving to remember her beloved Yann as she last saw him, frequently gazing upon clothes.

13Pierre Loti, Pêcheur d'Islande. p. 11.
Très souvent elle touchait les effets de son Yann, ses beaux habits de noces, les dépliant, les repliant comme une maniaque,—surtout un de ses maillots en laine bleue qui avait gardé la forme de son corps; quand on le jetait doucement sur la table, il dessinait de lui-même, comme par habitude, les reliefs de ses épaules et de sa poitrine; aussi à la fin elle l'avait posé tout seul dans une étagère de leur armoire, ne voulant plus le remuer pour qu'il gardât plus longtemps cette empreinte.15

However, we learn immediately of the horrible tragedy. This last chapter of *Pêcheur d'Islande* is a masterpiece.

A. Loti shatters Gaud's hopes by four words: "Il ne revint jamais."

B. Yann's death is likened to a wedding; for we must remember that Yann, at the beginning of the story had said he would have a marriage ceremony with the sea.

Une nuit d'août, là-bas, au large de la sombre Islande, au milieu d'un grand bruit de fureur, avaient été célébrées ses noces avec la mer. . . .

Avec la mer qui autrefois avait été aussi sa mourrice; c'était elle qui l'avait bécié, qui l'avait fait adolescent large et fort,—et ensuite elle l'avait repris, dans sa virilité superbe, pour elle seule. Un profond mystère avait enveloppé ces noces monstrueuses. Tout le temps, des voiles obscurs s'étaient agités au-dessus, des rideaux mouvants et tourmentés, tendus pour cacher la fête; et la fiancée donnait de la voix, faisait toujours son plus grand bruit horrible pour étouffer les cris.—Lui, se souvenant de Gaud, sa femme de chair, s'était défendu, dans une lutte de géant, contre cette épousée de tombeau. Jusqu'au moment où il s'était abandonné, les bras ouverts pour la recevoir, avec un grand cri profond comme un taureau qui râle, la bouche déjà emplie d'eau; les bras ouverts, étendus et raidis pour jamais.16

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C. They were all there, but we must remember the young Sylvestre, Yann's friend.

Et à ses noces, ils y étaient tous, ceux qu'il avait conviés jadis. Tous, excepte Sylvestre, qui, lui, s'en était alle dormir dans des jardins enchantés, — très loin, de l'autre côté de la Terre... 17

We can multiply the quotations, but there is the possibility of being too extensive. Before concluding this part of the work the following passage from Le Roman d'un Spahi, in which Loti tells us of Jean Peyral's death, should be quoted. Peyral has been stabbed and as his blood is shed, his sufferings dim. Jean thinks about his parents whom he has left in the Cevennes, about his youth, his Catholic education, and in a sandy setting glittering under a very bright sun, Jean dies.

Jean, se trainant sous les tamaris au feuillage grêle, chercha un endroit où sa tête fût à l'ombre, et s'y installa pour mourir.

Il avait soif, une soif ardente, et de petits mouvements convulsifs commençait à agiter sa gorge... Le sang coulait de son côté, et le sable aride buvait ce sang comme une rosée.

Pourtant il souffrait moins; à part cette soif, toujours qui le brulait, il ne souffrait presque plus.

Loti takes his reader to France to the birth-place of the hero. In a vision, the poor Spahi sees the years of his childhood, he hears the curfew-bell of his village, and those remembrances bring tears to the eyes of the dying Spahi.

Il avait des visions étranges, le pauvre spahi; la chaîne des Cevennes, les sites familiers d'autrefois,

et sa chaumière dans la montagne... 

Des souvenirs de son enfance revivaient maintenant en foules dans sa tête, avec une netteté étrange. Il entendait une vieille chanson du pays, avec laquelle jadis sa mère l'endormait, tout petit enfant dans son berceau; et puis, tout à coup, la cloche de son village sonnait bruyamment au milieu du désert l'Angelus du soir.

Alors, des larmes coulèrent sur ses joues bronzées; ses prières d'autrefois lui revinrent à la mémoire, et lui, le pauvre soldat, se mit à prier avec une ferveur d'enfant; il prit dans ses mains une médaille de la Vierge, attachée à son cou par sa mère; il eût la force de la porter à ses levres, et l'embrassa avec un immense amour...

Again the reader is taken back to the desert to attend the last breath of Jean Peyral.

Il était alors près de midi. Jean souffrait de moins en moins; le désert, sous l'intense lumière tropicale, lui apparaissait comme un grand brasier de feu blanc, dont la chaleur ne le brulait même plus. Pourtant sa poitrine se dilatait comme pour aspirer plus d'air, sa bouche s'ouvrait comme pour demander de l'eau.

Et puis la mâchoire inférieure tomba tout à fait, la bouche s'ouvrit toute grande pour la dernière fois, et Jean mourut assez doucement, dans un éblouissement de soleil.  

This last paragraph is very suggestive on account of its realism. The desert scene is so well pictured that one feels the thirst of Jean and suffers his agony.

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CHAPTER V

JOSEPH CONRAD, THE PLOT-MAKER,

AND PIERRE LOTI, THE PROSE POET OF MUSIC

The purpose of this chapter is to consider the writers, Conrad and Loti in the capacities in which they are each at their best. Conrad is unexcelled as a maker of plots and Loti, whose musical education was well provided for, reveals in his works of prose a natural talent in the appreciation and expression of music.

One of the most individual of the many distinctive things about Conrad is his method of presenting his stories. Henry James has said that it seems to him Conrad has deliberately set himself the problem of doing a thing in the hardest way possible for pure pleasure in the difficulty of the task. It is certain that a Conrad story seldom presents itself as a straightforward narrative in the old chronological sequence of cause and effect, to the climax of events, which the formulas propose should be usually as surprising as possible and endure until the very end of the tale. Conrad does not often construct his stories in this conventional manner; he has been accused of having no plot at all in some of his tales. He has shown us in Typhoon, The Secret Sharer, and The Shadow Line, for instance, that he can, when he wishes, construct a stereotyped plot of incident.

It is The Nigger of the Narcissus that most obviously reveals Conrad's purpose of structure. Little really happens: a ship starts to sea with a
crew usual enough but for one puzzling exception; a storm comes up; the officers quell an incipient mutiny; a man dies of a lingering disease and is buried at sea; the ship reaches the port and the crew disperses. That is all. Here is a powerful study two hundred pages long of the meaning of one phase of the "spectacle of life" as reflected in the reactions of a small group of men. It is only after things have happened that we realize what it all meant.

Almost every one of Conrad's stories therefore, progresses retrogressively, starting with a personality in a certain situation, as in Lord Jim, for instance, and gradually revealing how he came to be where he is; or the novelist may stop in the middle of an episode to pick up the threads of past events that will account for the state of mind or the actions which are to follow. Since Conrad's object is to make the story known as it would be in actuality, it is necessary that the events be retold after they have happened. In order to do this, Conrad uses a mouthpiece. The most famous is Marlow. This Marlow may be identified with Conrad himself; he is a retired sea captain of middle age who entered the service when he was twenty, and the physical description of him is a good portrait of Conrad.

Marlow holds his readers as he holds his listeners. Through his mind, Lord Jim, Flora de Barral, the officer of the "Judes" are made known. Sometimes Marlow relates the story as a first-hand experience of his own, sometimes as others have told it to him, as in Chance. This retrospective method of narration is startling until the reader realizes that Conrad has been
trusting to his own institution of the denouement. In fact, the reader should perceive the inevitable outcome of what has passed his eyes, for he has had sign after sign laid before him. Here again, Conrad departs from the strictness of realistic method to sound the romantic tune of forewarning. It may be a premonition, like Marlow's uneasiness on beginning his voyage to the heart of darkness; it may be a prediction like that of Captain Giles about the dangers of the Gulf of Siam to the young captain in The Shadow Line; it may be a mere incident such as Monsieur George's strange encounter with the comic Ortega. It may be a superstition, as when the rats left the "Judea."

There are episodes in Conrad's stories which puzzle the reader as much as the actors themselves, others which keep them in breathless suspense, others which confound them with their unexpectedness. For instance, in Nostromo what a tense situation when Denoud and the capataz de cargadores are projected suddenly into that startling adventure with Hirsh and Sotillo's fleet. "The Secret Sharer" is one tense question from beginning to end. Will he be discovered? The reader shudders at every narrow escape.

The main merit of Conrad is to render character through the plot of the story. "Every action, every conversation, every recollective remark, brings the reader one step nearer to an understanding of the man or woman created before him,"¹ wrote Stauffer. Conrad never preaches. He puts before his reader, as some one else has seen it, the actions of another human being, and lets the reader create with him the thoughts and the motives which lead to

those actions. One reading Conrad's Lord Jim, upon arriving at the end, is entirely satisfied with the long sequence of happenings. Conrad ranked among the great plot-makers by many qualities. Could a hearer listen so long to a story-teller like Marlow? This question has been discussed. Nevertheless, the reader is anxious to get through the novel and consequently retains a great interest in the plot of the story.

In mechanism of style and charm of cadence Loti is one of the most original and perfect French writers of the second half of the nineteenth century, and his art of word painting is curiously like that of the descriptive musician. In the literary beauty, fragrance and melody of Loti's novels, the melody is by no means the quality least in evidence. In the impressions conveyed to his sensitive nerves by the appeal of unfamiliar exotic forms, colors, perfumes and sounds, the sounds are never neglected. Nor is his love for music uninformed: an indocile scholar in his boyhood and youth, he prided himself in making an exception where music and painting were concerned. He confesses that music and painting were the only two things at which he worked a little. And when he made the acquaintance of Chopin, which he did at a very early age, the latter's "hallucinate" music completely upset his delicate nervous system. Afterward literature preempted his attention; yet he never ceased to love and to cultivate music, and was never able to escape the "evocative enchantment" of its spell. Loti both played and sang. His first teacher was a little girl friend, Lucette, who gave him lessons by stealth, as he recounts in his Le Roman d'un Enfant, and made it possible for him to
produce himself triumphantly as a pianist at a family reunion with the airs "Le petit Suisse" and "Le Rocher de St. Malo." Lucette was his instructress until he reached Chopin and Liszt, when his musical education was confided to an excellent teacher, one who took special interest in developing what he called "sound quality" and "making the fingers sing." Loti learned to play piano decidedly well, and while studying in Paris appeared with marked success at musical evenings given there by a cousin of his mother. His mother's approval, her pleasure in his playing, meant a great deal to him and he spent much time in preparing for her, with slow practice, such things as the Beethoven "Appassionata" and "that miracle known as the 'Aurora.'" Beethoven continued to charm his leisure moments aboard ship after he had entered the French Navy, and to his ability as a pianist he joined talents as a singer. Mme. Alphonse Daudet, in her Souvenirs d'Autour d'un Groupe Littéraire, says that he noted down Haitian folk-songs and sang them with great charm, indulging himself in these exotic souvenirs.

Turning first of all to those novels which deal more especially with what the French would term "moeurs maritimes" and which are more definitely French, and specifically Breton in locale—though the exotic interest constantly obtrudes itself—we find that Loti makes an altogether Wagnerian use of songs or musical nature themes which run through the book, appearing and reappearing with new contexts, thus giving the works a kind of musical unity in a literary sense. Even in that account of his boyhood which antedates the sea romances, Le Roman d'un Enfant, Loti uses this device. He speaks of his
old, old grandmother, who has lost her young husband in the battle of Trafalgar, and whose senility in part took the form of singing "La Marseillaise," "Le Chant du Départ" and "La Parisienne," those great hymns of the transition period which in her youthful days had impassioned all France, and these echoes of the Revolution and the Empire recur together with the song of the old cakewoman of his native town.

These songs are the musical motives of the author's childhood. Later on he provides motives in similar fashion for his characters. Matelot is one of those stories of touching melancholy in which Loti depicts the errant, come-day go-day life of the youth of action—in this case a French Navy sailor—who has a vague aspiration, a vague desire to attain to higher things, but who drifts through his brief life along the line of least resistance, condemned to an early death by the fevers of Cochin-China. What might be called the musical motif in this tale is an Old French sea-chantey, with a gay recurring refrain, "Vieux Neptune, roi des eaux." It accompanies the hero on his second-last outward voyage. On his last and beautifully told, in a character study of the Breton sailor in voyage, homeward bound, dying of his Asiatic fever, it sounds again. Jean, the hero, has been carried on deck from the stifling sick-bay below:

On ne chanta pas ce soir-là, à cause de lui; mais, des le lendemain, la chanson du "Vieux Neptune," entonnée d'abord par quelques voix, fut bientôt reprise en choeur. Et, comme si de rien n'était, la Saone continuâ sa route monotone vers la France.

Who will deny that Loti knows how to give his songs a proper setting in his novels? A master of description, he presents his music "in costume," so to speak, and it loses none of its appeal thereby.

In Mon Frère Yves, the exotic musical suggestion obtrudes itself less than in his other maritime novels. The tale, simply uniform, and of the growth of a genuine fraternal relation between enlisted man and officer, with the latter's successful endeavor to aid his "brother" to find permanent happiness in the love of a good woman and the joys of parenthood and home life. What music there is in its pages is the folk-song music of Brittany. These Breton folk-songs return again and again in the pages of Mon Frère Yves. In the cottage of Yves' mother, "Jean began a navy song known to all the Breton sailors, 'Nous étions trois marins de Croix!' . . . while Yves and Loti himself sang bass, and the old mother marked the measure with her head and the pedal of her spinning-wheel." 4

Yet decidedly more "musical" than Mon Frère Yves is Loti's novel of life among the Breton fisher-folk, Pécheur d'Islande. Near the beginning of the tale is found an instance of the author's sensitiveness to all sound which is of a quasi-musical nature. Yann, the fisherman, is describing a hasty putting out to sea of the fishing smacks at the unexpected sight of a great school of fish off the Breton coast and is singing, "Jean François de Nantes."

The whole book, in fact, is alive with music. The letter which has announced to Yann the death of Sylvestre in far-off China, crackling against his chest as he lies in his bunk, has "un son grêle rappelant la réalité de

la mort." The little old grandmother of Sylvestre, grown weak-minded in her grief, sings with a little thread of broken, fluted voice seeming to come from under the ground, in the chimney corner. In Yann's courtship of Gaud, on the bench before the humble Breton cottage: "C'était la musique la plus harmonieuse que cette voix fraîche de Gaud alternant avec celle de Yann."

And there is a Breton fisherman's wedding which the author describes with much charm of detail. From the surrounding hamlets the beggars, the halt, the maimed and the blind, lined the road to the church "avec des instrument de musiques, des accordéons et des violons" to receive the alms which Yann flung to them; while the fiddler who led the procession, almost blown over by the wind, "played as the devil let him; his tunes reaching the ears by gusts, and in the noise of the squalls, seeming like odd bits of music, shriller than a sea-gull's cries." And sure enough, Loti, who is well able to distinguish between the greater and the lesser music, whether of nature or art, soon calls attention to the look on the sea, and the violinist, perched on a great rock, is still trying to gasp forth, between two gusts of wind, the measure of his square dance, Yann tells him: "Cessez votre musique mon ami, l'océan joue pour vous une mélodie plus entraînante que la vôtre."

There are the human songs at the wedding supper and the Houhou, houhou! of the wind on the wedding night, which after a cavernous roar, repeats its menace more softly, "avec une pointe de malice et des sons persiflants comme la voix du hibou." And in that final chapter, in which Yann is ravished by the hungry feminine sea from the arms of his bride of flesh and blood, "la
fiancée donnait de la voix, faisait toujours son plus grand bruit horrible pour étouffer les cris."

Loti's Ramuntcho, his novellistic idyl of the Basque country, for all its European geographic setting is decidedly exotic, and Loti himself, no doubt, given his predilections, would incline to that ethnic theory which makes the modern Basques the descendants of the fairer Berber tribes of Northern Africa.

Basque music, however, is European in spite of its primitive originality, and such being the case, consideration of Loti's Ramuntcho may logically follow that of his maritime novels. Loti's Ramuntcho is the one among his novels whose story has supplied the libretto for a grand opera.

Loti certainly cannot be accused of not offering enough in the way of musical opportunities to the composer. The mournful story is simple and direct. Ramuntcho, the hero, a fine young fellow, who holds his own among the contrabandistas, his village companions engaged in smuggling in the passes of the Pyrenees, is an illegitimate child. The love of his mother Franchita, a Magdalen, for this child conceived in sin, is, however, the purifying flame of her life. Graziosa, the youth's sweetheart, also has a mother living, unfortunately a woman whose hateful virtue cannot forgive Ramuntcho his tarnished name. Compelled to leave his village to serve his three year term in the French army, Ramuntcho returns with the military medal to find that his mother is dying, and that Graziosa has been hounded by her mother into a nunnery. The despairing lover, with the aid of the girl's

5Pierre Loti, Pêcheur d'Islande. passim.
brother, his friend, visits her at the convent with the hope of inducing her to flee with him to Uruguay, where a wealthy uncle has offered to advance his fortunes. But Graziosa, though broken-hearted, will not consent to break her vows, and her lover departs without hope to take up life again in South America.

As in so many of his other novels Loti provides Ramuntcho with a musical leading-motif which recurs again and again:

"Et, en alternant, tantôt l'un, tantôt l'autre, tous deux vous discuterez, en couplets de longueur égale, les plaisirs de votre métier, sur l'air... sur l'air d'Iru damacho. Allez!... Ils chantent avec un certain effort du gosier, comme les muezzins des mosquées, en des tonalités hautes."6

This music of words, however, is to some degree a result and a complement of Loti's deep sensitiveness to the music of tone. No one, not instinctively a music-lover, with a keen ear for the subtlest nuance in expression, could have written of music, could have described it as he has done. Every exotic land which Loti knew had its tonal and musical aspect for his ears: he was as sensitive to exoticism in its audible as in its visual appeal.

PART THREE
THE PHILOSOPHY OF THEIR HEROES

CHAPTER I
THE PHILOSOPHY OF CONRAD AND LOTI

It has been said that an author cannot avoid reflecting himself through his works. In delineating the philosophy of the characters of these two writers, Conrad and Loti, it is expedient that an outline of each author's personal philosophy be considered foremost. Although neither of them deliberately attempted to set forth a system of philosophy, they had nevertheless, through common incidents of life assumed a certain philosophical creed. Conrad, on the one hand, divulges a more serious and complex experience of life, whereas Loti, to be exact, did not actually acclaim any particular philosophy. His creed has been reduced to the simplest expression. Let themselves declare their belief.

A. Conrad

In a letter written to Edward Noble under date of November 2, 1895, Conrad affirmed:

Everyone must walk in the light of his own heart's gospel. No man's light is good to any of his fellows. That's my creed from beginning to end. That's my view of life,—a view that rejects all formulas, dogmas and principles of other people's making. These are only a web of illusions. We are too varied. Another man's truth is only a dismal lie to me.1

In a letter written on the 28th of November, 1895, to the same Noble Conrad

answered that death is not the most pathetic thing, and that we must treat
events only as illustrative of human sensation, as the outward sign of inward
feelings. He reminds Noble that his imagination should be used to create
human souls, to disclose human hearts, and not to create events that are
properly speaking accidents only. In order to accomplish this, he advises
his friend to cultivate his poetic faculty by giving himself up to his emo-
tions, which is no easy task.

Conrad's marked and distinguishing characteristics were plain in his
earliest work. There was development of style, growth in facility and
felicity of expression, but in essentials no change. Almayer, the born
failure and born self-idolater, who, as Conrad has told us, haunted his
creator for so many years, by no means accepted his conge when his story left
its author's hands. Or, at all events, many of the later children of his
fancy behaved to Mr. Conrad much as Almayer had done. Half the story con-
sists of Almayer's reverie. What happens within him is vastly more inter-
esting than what happens to him: which is likewise true of Jim, of Baron
Heyst, and of many another figure in Conrad's gallery. No novelist has more
impressively suggested, because none has more deeply felt, the infinite
loneliness of each human soul, that necessary correlative of its uniqueness,
which is often more tragically experienced in the midst of the urban crowd
than in the remotest of Conrad's Eastern tropic isles.

At the end of his life, Conrad was shocked by those critics who dared
to call him a writer of the sea. He pretended at least to have been an
analyst of the "ideal value of the events." He wrote to Sir Sidney Colvin:

Perhaps you won't find it presumption if, after 22 years of work, I may say that I have not been very well understood. I have been called a writer of the sea, of the tropics, a descriptive writer, a romantic writer—and also a realist. But as a matter of fact all my concern has been with the "ideal" value of things, events and people. That and nothing else. The humorous, the pathetic, the passionate, the sentimental aspects came in of themselves—mais en vérité c'est les valeurs idéales des faits et gestes humains qui se sont imposés à mon activité artistique.

Whatever dramatic and narrative gifts I may have are always, instinctively, used with that object—to get at, to bring forth les valeurs idéales. ²

Conrad therefore intended to analyse the inner soul of man. "I am speaking now," wrote Conrad, "of that innermost life containing the best and the worst that can happen to us in the temperamental depths of our being, where a man indeed must live alone, but need not give up all hope of holding converse with his kind."³ The pictures of the sea and tropics are only the accidents which allow his heroes to act, struggle, and fight against their environments. Bancroft wrote:

His stories cannot be separated from his philosophy of life. Razumov, for instance, detached from the scenes of his activity, offers little interpretation. His story-material is like the canvas upon which the picture is painted—it is the necessary support for the symbolization of the artist's dream.⁴

To Conrad we are all, with few exceptions, victims of our own environ-

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ment. We cannot escape this environment and in other regards we must obey the moral law. Through obedience to it, we respect the law of human solidarity, whereas by refusing to obey it, we become rejected and outcast. That is the dilemma. Conrad sets his heroes in such a dilemma. They struggle against the elements, but they do not escape. In spite of the deed, the endeavors of the best, themselves fallible, they will be overcome. He chooses, in almost every case, the most solid and unimaginative of human beings. They command our pity, our reverence, and our tenderness. But, at the end, Conrad with an ironic shrug of his shoulders will say: "You see, I told you so. He may even think he has won. We know better, you and I." The end of Lord Jim is typical. Jim wins his victory indeed, but at the close, what sadness: "And that's the end. He passes away under a cloud, inscrutable at heart, forgotten, unforgiven and excessively romantic... He goes away from a living woman to celebrate his pitiless wedding with a shadowy ideal of conduct."5 Conrad, through Marlow's story, with an ironical smile has watched with tenderness the story of Jim's endeavors. At the last he proclaims that that pursuit has been vain like Stein's butterflies. Bancroft, who studied Conrad's philosophy of life deeply, defined that dilemma very well.

The particular and practical question is this. What matters it whether one believes or not in the safety of his surroundings, or whether one puts his trust in life? In the first, life seems cruel, disappointments are the results of struggle, gain has little or no meaning, and life is empty and without peace. In the second, such a trust discovers one's true relationship with that which gives true value;

hardships are transmuted into hope, faith, and honest endeavor, and disappointments become simply episodes in the drama of final triumph. To rest upon the first is to increase the uncertainty in the discovery of the permanent. That is to say, to do what is felt to be right, because it requires no argument, no self-justification, is peace, is happiness, is answered prayer, and the reward of faith in God.  

B. Loti

Loti's philosophy is that of an atheist. Was he sincere, or did he not attempt to fool us? The second is more acceptable. Loti puts no large philosophy in the lives of his heroes. The human will, so powerful in fact, so splendid a resource as it ought to be in literature, is with him of small account. Like oil floating on water, which slips over it but does not mingle with it, the human Ego, in these great circles of sky and sea, emerges, floats for a little, is dissipated one knows not how, and Nature alone remains, a triumph and a mystery. Passive enjoyment, passive contemplation, yielding sorrow,—these make the Eastern temper, which is that of Loti. Compare with it the Greek artist's principle of energy, resistant or creative, and see what that has done in the world. With the cultivation of inward moods, there is no slight tendency in pity to become self-pity; the natural impulses may be trained as on the stage to play a part in which the acting is everything.

Nor do we believe that Loti's pessimism will guarantee him against these consequences. Its arrogance may be a protest on behalf of man that there is in him a spirit, a character, which does not deserve to be mocked by

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6William Wallace Bancroft, Joseph Conrad: His Philosophy of Life. p. 87.
the dead things that shine and kill, by the world of blind forces now too strong for him. But the Supreme is not a mocked; and "Baal" and "Shiva," whom Loti, as we learn from the quaint little story of "Suleima" is inclined to worship, are false gods. The terror of the unknown is one thing; quite another is the melancholy of the Unknowable. It is astonishing that Loti should not perceive either in science or in faith a lifting over his head of the spiritual heavens with their infinite azure, when he has always the eyes, and very often the heart, of a child. However, he has given us his complete creed of faith and consequently his philosophy of life in Aziadé, in a letter written to William Brown.

J'ai essayé d'être chrétien, je ne l'ai pas pu.
Cette illusion sublime qui peut élever le courage de certains hommes, de certaines femmes,—nos mères par exemple,—jusqu'à l'héroïsme, cette illusion m'est refusée.
Croyez-moi, mon pauvre ami, le temps et la débauche sont deux grands remèdes; le coeur s'engourdit à la longue, et c'est alors qu'on ne souffre plus...
Il n'y a pas de Dieu, il n'y a pas de morale, rien n'existe de tout ce qu'on nous a enseigné à respecter; il y a une vie qui passe, à laquelle il est logique de demander le plus de jouissances possible, en attendant l'espouvante finale qui est la mort.
Les vraies misères, ce sont les maladies, les laideurs et la vieillesse; ni vous ni moi, nous n'avons ces misères-là; nous pouvons avoir encore une foule de maîtresses, et jouir de la vie.
Je vais vous ouvrir mon cœur, vous faire ma profession de foi: j'ai pour règle de conduite de faire toujours ce qui me plaît, en dépit de toute moralité, de toute convention sociale. Je ne crois à rien ni à personne, je n'aime personne ni rien; je n'ai ni foi ni espérance.
Je n'ai mis vingt-sept ans à en venir là; si je suis tombé plus bas que la moyenne des hommes j'étais aussi parti de plus haut.

Loti's whole life will be the realization of this program. He will try
to escape the flight of time, and to further put off everything which recalls
death to him. A friend of his, Chasseriau, told this fact which illustrates
Loti's fear of the hereafter.

Assis tous les deux dans l'obscurité silencieuse ou le clapotis monotone de l'eau ... revelaient seuls la palpitation de la vie, nous nous taisions. Pour-quoi le temps ne s'arrête-t-il pas? Fit-il. Ne serait-ce que quelques minutes, ce serait toujours ça de gagné. Quelle terreur dans ces mots pour qui le connaissait. ...Et comme je restais muet: Tu dors, demanda-t-il? - Non. - Tu es triste? - Oui. - Console-toi, ce serait pire. Et il se mettait à rire comme un enfant nerveux.8

Nevertheless, at the end of his life, Loti looked for the faith he had
lost. His pilgrimages to Jerusalem and to Angkor were accomplished for this
purpose, but again he failed to find it. Therefore, most of his novels have
a sad ending. His characters, after having experienced sensual pleasure for
a period of a few years are deprived of this pleasure and left to flounder in
deep despair. They have not the courage to defend themselves against the in-
fluence of their environment. That is why, if we exclude Mon frère Yves, Le
Roman d'un Spahi, and Pêcheur d'Islande, the characters of Loti cannot be
compared to those of Conrad.

The philosophy of Joseph Conrad and Pierre Loti can be outlined as fol-

8Frederic Chasseriau, Mes Souvenirs sur Pierre Loti et Francis Jammes.
Paris: Librairie Plon, 1937, p. 44.
Conrad

I. Similarity

Man is the victim of his surroundings

II. Dissimilarities

A. God and Providence
B. There is a Moral Law
C. Man must have a religion
D. Conrad believes in Human Solidarity, and his heroes are punished if they disrespect it.

Loti

I. Similarity

Man is the victim of his surroundings

II. Dissimilarities

A. No God nor Providence
B. There is no Moral Law
C. Man does not need religion
D. Loti does not believe in Human Solidarity and his heroes do not even deal with it.
CHAPTER II

THE STRUGGLES AND THE DEFEATS OF THEIR HEROES

The philosophy of Conrad is more complex than that of Loti and consequently his heroes face different destinies and evolve in more numerous fields. Loti drew only a few characters in his novels, chiefly characters in which he shows a great zeal and devotedness for their motherland in the colonies. He also wanted to picture the life of the Bretons, all fishermen, struggling against the sea; women, mothers, sisters, and sweethearts wait for them at home. Aged parents wait for an only son. They have saved their earnings for him, but he will never return. The fever prevalent in the China Sea, or savage tribes of the desert have been the cause of his death. So we observe that all the heroes of Loti have to defend themselves against their surroundings, which are the sea, the charm and danger of an exotic country, or the love of a native.

In Le Roman d'un Spahi, the hero is the soldier, Jean Peyral who was raised in the mountains of Cevennes, and sent for his service into the desert of Senegambia. St. Louis du Senegal is a station cut off from civilized mankind, where the sun is always blazing and the sands are interminable, where there is nothing to do, and the moral atmosphere is a pestilence breathed in common by negroes, half-castes, and Europeans given to drink and debauchery. Mussulman, Christian, and fetish worshipper tread on each other's heels, in that horrible melee of beliefs and practices which here, within a narrow com-
pass reproduces the corrupt world of Singapore and such human Babels. Only
the silence is dreadful at St. Louis; there is a monotony in the confusion of
things which the soundest reason can hardly fight against. Loti knows the
region well; he has seen the French soldier in exile there; and Le Roman d'un
Spahi which has its points of resemblance to Kipling's Indian Stories, sets
forth his impressions with an energy and a tragic feeling so remarkable, that
we must suppose it due to the remoteness of the scene and the strange horror,
culminating towards the last pages, of Jean Peyral's doom, if the work has
not almost attained the popularity of Pecheurs d'Islande. Jean Peyral is a
strong man and proud of his strength. During the first days of his temporary
exile, he dreams of his return to his parents and his fiancée. In the lines
which follow there is expressed his desire to flee towards his homeland.

Oh! retourner la-bas, près de ses vieux parents! 
habiter une petite maison avec Jeanne Mery, tout
auprès du modeste toit paternel! ...Pourquoi
l'avait-on exilé sur cette terre d'Afrique? Quoi
de commun entre lui et ce pays? Et ce costume
rouge et ce fez arabe, et qui pourtant lui don-
naient si grand air,—quel déguisement pour lui,
pauvre petit paysan des Cévennes!1

He always intends to keep his word to Jeanne Mery. Yet the dark child,
Fatou, his slave, whom he can scarcely be said to love, who is a renegade
from Islam, baptized but hung about with amulets; who cannot be trusted not to
steal his money or his watch, and who is sometimes more apelike than human,—
this creature it is that wins from the Spahi first compassion, and then the
blindest of attachments, too strong for ridicule, rebuke, or the memory of

home. He feels himself to be under a degrading spell, which nothing will break. The fierce African spring, the nights of Sahara cold and clear, the negro music, the wild and uncouth dancing of the bamboula, the very lonesomeness of the infinite sands, have transformed him into the mood of nature they so variously yet so powerfully portrayed. He is no longer the peasant of Central France, but something hybrid and indescribable, touched by the sun with madness.

When his chance of relief comes, and he is standing on the deck of the vessel that would have taken him to Algeria, whence he would certainly have gone home, Fatou-gaye is crouching at his side; the merest accident suffices to rivet his chains once more. With great and tranquil power it is told how he came back as he went, a captive, doomed to feed the jackals in some nameless fighting with the ebony king, Bourbakar Segou. His eyes were "dazzled and fatigued" all day long with the motionless burning air; at night fell the white mists, terrible as death. Fatou has no shadow of a dream that she is the Spahi's destruction. How should she imagine it? She is quite willing to be killed by him, but her heart sinks when he throws her amulets out of the window and bids her begone. For a very little while he is himself again. He sets out on his last expedition, with his friend Nyaor Fall, the "statue carved in black marble," and Fritz Muller, the Alsatian. They sail up the great river, on whose banks, everywhere thickly wooded or spreading out in lawns of delicate green, "all the pastorals of Watteau might have been displayed"; and, among the negresses who crowd upon the boat, Jean discovers
Fatou-gaye. She has followed him silently with their child, whom the Spahi sees now for the first time. Reconciliation ensues, and an hour of strangely peaceful home life, though in the depth of the African forest.

It is the only break in the storm of lightning and rain that is to overwhelm them all three. Before the day of combat, Fatou, with the last pieces of gold that Jean had given her, bought amulets and poison of a famous marabout, as well skilled in medicine as in prayer. The Spahis went out hunting for Bourbakar, the dark chief; they were set upon in ambush, and their horses killed; Jean felt the huge knife of a negro in his breast; and under the dreadful sun, in the tangle of the forest, tormented by a raging thirst, the sound of the Angelus bell ringing from old times in his dying ears, the end comes upon him. Fatou, searching for his dead body and at length finding it, strangles her child by his side, then swallows the poison which the marabout had sold to her. On the same day, Jeanne Mery, away in the village of les Cevennes, is wedded. And the jackals celebrate their feast in Africa, when the sun has gone down, upon the bodies among the tamarisks and mimosas. Francoise Peyral would never know what kind of lugubrious funeral had been given to her son. The black Venus had conquered.

In Matelot, Jean Berny attracted by a sailor's career, follows this attraction in spite of his mother's tears. He contracts malaria fever in the China Sea. He is sent back to France, but on the return trip succumbs to the fever and is buried at sea. When the ship arrives, Jean's mother awaits her son on the wharf and none of the crew has the courage to impart the unfortunate news of her son to her.
Mon frère Yves is not so desolate. The tale breaks off, and there is less of a plot in this endeavor to paint "la monotonie de la mer" than in the English classic with which it may be compared, Two Years before the Mast, by the American, Dana. Yves is only Yann a little more kindly handled by fortune, who drinks in mad Breton fashion, and does foolish things "quand il n'est pas lui-même." With his disdainful but not cruel lip, his love of silence, his attachment to the moss-grown cabin where his old mother lives, down at Plouherzel in the land of Goelo, his great strength of muscles, and boyish want of self-control when the drink is in him, Yves represents, in a way that makes the reader like him and feel angry with him by turns, the blue-jacket whose home is in Morbihan, and whose forefathers from time immemorial have bequeathed to him their longing for the sea, their untamed savagery, and their disastrous love of liquor. But the wild sea-dog is by no means a brute, although beyond question a savage. Loti, his superior officer, who has struck up a close friendship with Yves, and helps him over his troubles afloat and ashore, remarks with astonishment that his comrade of the forecastle is no less given to dream and muse upon the things of Nature than he, the born artist, elect among ten thousand. Both are full of childish reminiscences, and live in their associations with objects which to all others would be trifling, but to them have a sacredness deeper than language may fathom. Their silence is not vacancy; it is a day-dream into which the commonplaces of education do not enter. They have no sort of fellow-feeling with civilized man at the desk, or in his wife's drawing room. A deal of
the old world still lives in them; they are really brothers, for all the difference of their bringing up. Officer and sailor alike, they succumb to the enigma of "the flaming sun, the desert of blue waters, and the idle magnificence," which burst upon them in their voyages south of the Line. "La grande splendeur inconsciente et aveugle des choses" is too much for them; and from that, and besetting scruples of their own, and the waste of existence all round, they conclude in silence to man's mortality. The wholesome and good in their thoughts is derived from their first memories. Brittany, the "country of old times," has become a religion to them. Mon frère Yves is noticeably the only novel of Loti's in which the character wins over the influence of his environment.

Pêcheur d'Islande offers the picture of the long and centennial struggle of a people against the sea. These fishermen have to leave Britain early in the Spring and return again in the Fall. Some of them never know the Summer. The sea is cruel to them, taking without warning, the lives of many, while mothers, wives, sisters, expect them with anguish in their hearts. Yann is a kind-hearted, silent, proud, and unmanageable fisherman, serving in the Iceland fleet, which goes on a fishing expedition every year at the beginning of winter and returns towards the end of August. His friend, Silvestre Moan, who accompanies him, is persuaded that this handsome Breton giant ought to marry Gaud, or Catharine Mevel, herself a fisherman's daughter, but well-to-do, and now looked upon as a "demoiselle," not the paysanne she might have been.

Why should they not marry? For two years poor Gaud asks herself that
question; but Yann is too proud to ask it, he will not again so much as look at her. Then Silvestre is drawn for the conscription, goes out as an able seaman to the Far East, gets bewildered amid its great lights and all the strangeness of his new experience, is wounded in battle with the Tonkinese, and dies on his way home. Gaud's father, according to the political economy which prevails in fiction, as he is rich must die after bankrupt; and the brave girl earns her own living, while she continues to support Yvonne, Silvestre's grandmother, who has lost her reason on hearing of her boy's unexpected end. It is now time for Yann to show his finest qualities. A pitiable, half-ludicrous mishap which befalls the old grandmother, herself almost too tragic a figure is enough; the lovers come to understand one another; and their wedding follows on a stormy day, when the wind is abroad and the waves are leaping over the rocks. Their honeymoon does not last a week. The Iceland boats are sailing, and Yann goes aboard the Leopoldine. It is a new boat, with captain and crew of the choicest; and the season favors them. But how can their good fortune last? Long ago Yann had jestingly talked of his marriage with the sea, and invited his comrades to meet him there. All the fishing-smacks return, except the Leopoldine, which is never heard of more. Gaud waits and watches with the sickness of hope deferred, turning gradually to despair and a dreadful silence. Then consumption lays its hand upon her throat. We know that she is dying; but as the curtain slowly falls, it shows us afar off the tempest that has celebrated Yann's nuptials with the sea.

The exotic climate, the tropical fever, the inheritance of drunkenness,
and the sea, are the surroundings against which Loti's heroes have to struggle. They cannot escape these unseen forces, at once indifferent and unordered, against which the consciousness of man, as expressed in his hopes, will, and ambitions, plays a drama of tragic significance.

Conrad's characters possess that universality known as type; but as he displays it, it is a type arising from established careers or environments rather than from personality itself. The men of the sea: sailors, mates, captains; adventurers and derelicts compose the largest class of one particular type. Another type consists of men of the land; anarchists, plotters of revolutions and occasionally financiers, men of the world of society. In their company we meet women, few in number, all with a certain mysterious quality in their taciturnity, whether they be savage or cockney, others respectably bourgeois or picaresque. It is only in the minor characters in which a pure type is found, a type similar to Conrad himself. For the most part, these minor characters are a background mass which our imaginations are to conjure up from the selected types given us. However, Conrad does not look for type, he concentrates on seeking the individual. It is in the individuality of personality that his interest lies.

Conrad's heroes have to face three kinds of antagonists.

1. They must face the material environment which is the sea, often called by him the "immensity of indifference." This one is as inescapable as are those of Loti.

2. They must face also the obedience of the moral law, and every
time they try to resist it, this moral power brings a dark shadow upon their lives. Razumov, the student of philosophy, the Planter of Malata, the cultured yachtsman represented by Travers, and Lingard, the rough sailor, all felt the force of the moral law. Those who tried to defeat it, suffered; those who obeyed, triumphed.

3. They must respect human solidarity. This is an obligation for everyone and is bound by a kind of "fellowship" from one generation to the next in what is called by Conrad himself as the "sense of mystery surrounding our lives" and:

...to the latent feeling of fellowship with all creation—and to the subtle but invincible conviction of solidarity that knits together the loneliness of innumerable hearts, to the solidarity in dreams, in joy, in sorrow, in aspirations, in illusions, in hope, in fear, which binds men to each other, which binds together all humanity—the dead to the living and the living to the unborn.²

The best illustration of the influence of the surroundings is given in The Nigger of the Narcissus. The Narcissus is pictured upon the lonely sea. The men upon her decks are linked with her. Around them stretches "the immensity of indifference," indifference to the value of the lives confined to her keeping. The Narcissus represents the collection of individual worlds. Her freight is an intangible one composed of hopes and fears, truth and falsehood, "an intolerable load of regrets and hopes. On her lived timid truth and audacious lies; and, like the earth, she was unconscious, fair to

see—and condemned by men to an ignoble fate."³

The end of the Nigger has meaning only in relation to those surroundings.

Night and day the head and shoulders of a seaman could be seen aft by the wheel, outlined high against sunshine or starlight, very steady above the stir of revolving spokes. The faces change, passing in rotation. Youthful faces, bearded faces, dark faces; faces serene, or faces moody, but all akin with the brotherhood of the sea; all with the same attentive expression of eyes, carefully watching the compass or the sails.⁴

This environment is a kind of immutable law which makes Conrad say at the end: "Haven't we, together and upon the immortal sea, wrung out a meaning from our sinful lives?"⁵ Although Conrad recognizes that man can transmute this immutable law he realizes that most of the miseries and misunderstandings in life are due to the deductions that are made from outward circumstances. The logic of life's processes proceed from the inner soul of man. Events may follow their natural course but they have an inward side for the individual. Razumov, after his betrayal, meditated as follows:

For instance a man goes out of a room for a walk. Nothing more trivial in appearance. . . He comes back,--he has seen perhaps a drunken brute, taken particular notice of the snow on the ground—and behold he is no longer the same man.⁶

No one would have noticed anything unusual in the behavior of this Russian student, but within his mind and heart were violence, tragedy, and despair. These resulted from the first step in falsehood that lay "deep in the necessities of existence, in secret fears and half-formed ambitions."⁷

⁷Ibidem. p. 34.
CHAPTER III

THE PESSIMISM OF CONRAD AND LOTI

This chapter is a corollary to the preceding two rather than a distinct one in itself. A philosophy which teaches that surroundings are more powerful than the human will, is deterministic and consequently has the tendency to develop in the believer a pessimistic state of mind. It is not necessary to discourse at any great length in order to prove that Joseph Conrad and Pierre Loti were both pessimists. From the lines of Almayer's Folly through the pages of Suspense, Conrad's thought is pessimistic.

Williams was an ignorant man. One day, trying to escape the monotony of his environment, he explored the several creeks which indented the island. He met Aissa, Omar's daughter. Thereafter, the two frequently met, though fear and disgust mingled in the heart of Williams at her approach. Each time he left her, he decided never to return, but he could not resist to go "just this once" and finally he is crushed.

Renouard, in The Planter of Malata was enchanted by Miss Moorsom. One day after leaving her, he no longer deceived himself. He resolved not to return. Against this resolution, born of conviction, he argued and planned to prolong the search for the man he knew was dead in order to keep Miss Moorsom near him. That fatal decision resulted in the loss of Miss Moorsom and his own tragic destruction.

In Victory, Heyst was separated by his stifled emotions and pessimistic
outlook. When he realized that his philosophy of contempt had made him an outcast and shut him off from the enjoyments of life; it was too late: "Oh! Davidson, woe to the man whose heart has not learned while young to hope, to love and to put its trust in life."¹

In "The End of the Tether" the sympathetic Captain Whalley, now seventy years old, and who had been famous in his time, wants to help his daughter, who has no money. At the same time he is facing blindness, but prays that this fact may not be discovered. As the steamer leaves the jetty and steams out toward the reefs, Massey, ignorant of Whalley's defect, decides to wreck the Sofala in order to secure the insurance money. Filling his jackets with iron weights, Massey hung it unobserved near the compass to deflect the magnetic needle. The Serang read the compass indication to Whalley and the steamer struck the reefs. Whalley finding the jacket with its iron weights put it on and disappeared with the steamer in the depths of the sea. What a sad end: and Conrad cries: "My God, why has thou forsaken me?"

Lord Jim, who was shot by his father's friend, is another example.

He passes away under a cloud . . . Was I so very wrong after all? Now he is no more, there are days when the reality of his existence comes to me with an immense, with an overwhelming force; . . . He is gone inscrutable at heart; and the poor girl is leading a sort of soundless inert life. . . . Stein is preparing to leave. . . .²

Conrad's personality, as revealed through his stories, is not that of the disillusioned materialist. His books are never joyful, but leave the

reader not only thoughtful, but often depressed. His humor is that of the serious man. He never creates merriment for others, nor joins in that created by someone else. He is the observer only. A man's character may be explained by an analysis of his racial heredity and environment. He reacts according to understood psychological laws. In every one of his stories Conrad shows this. The characters Almayer, Kurtz, Razumov, Heyst, Charles Gould, Decoud, Singleton, Donkin and several others are all delineated out of the tendencies inherited from their social background and the forces of their physical surroundings. Conrad uses every word, every deed, and every bit of description within his creative power to make this analysis explicit. He is completely absorbed in the mysterious element of character evolution in life. Jim and the officers of the "Fatna" had every reason to believe that the rotten bulkhead would give way any instant; but it held out after all. Almayer thought that he was furthering his plans for a happy future with Nina when he took Dain Maroola as his confederate; but Nina loved the Malay chief, and Almayer fell in with bitter anguish. Verloc supposed that Steevie would be an innocent, unscathed tool to his careful plot; but Steevie stumbled. Emilia Gould joined enthusiastically in her husband's plans to use the San Tome mine as a means to rehabilitate Sulaco, and Charles Gould proved its slave, and her happiness was ruined. In each of these instances things turn out contrary to all expectation.

The tragic irony of human existence is exemplified in these unexpected turns of fate. De Barral might just as well have engaged a perfectly harm-
less usual specimen of governess for his daughter, but "chance being incal-culable" he fell upon that vulgar-minded woman who nearly ruined Flora's life. It was chance that brought Flora and Captain Anthony together. It was chance, or fatality, that led Heyst to Schomberg's hotel at Bangkok on the night when Zangiacomo's Ladies' Orchestra was established there. It was chance, or fatality, that Ziemianitch should have been steeped in a sodden, drunken sleep so that Razumov could not wake him even by a brutal beating. The examples of things happening by chance are too numerous to mention. Possibly the strange chances experienced in his own career led Conrad to perceive with lucidity the manifest part which chance plays in life. Happenings such as these are outside the control of the men and women whose destinies they shape. Even stranger are the unaccountable acts of men. In this manner Fate puts man to the test which will shatter his self-assurance.

Conrad's aim is to show up evil and reveal goodness. He shows that human nature, even at its best, is not perfect. It is the striving for worth while things in spiritual evaluation that makes a character an ad-mirable one. Fine qualities are instinctive. Conrad reveals them unadulter-at ed in the simplest natures.

During his whole life Loti feared this triple perspective: the dread of old age, the anguish of death, and the horror of nothingness. That will be the leitmotif of his works. In his autobiographical works as well as in his most impersonal ones, we hear his song of sadness and despair. Even as a child, Loti feared the future and his soul was filled with gloominess. In
Le Roman d'un Enfant, he told us how much impressed he was by a sunbeam on a Sunday. Writing about some remembrances of his early childhood, he talks about a sad sunbeam which left a melancholic conception of the Sunday's rest in his little town. This sunbeam coming through a window gave him a keen impression of the brevity of life. 3

In 1879 he had already written: "J'ai peur de vieillir;" and he was then not yet thirty years old. A materialist and an atheist, Loti was right to be afraid of death, but even if he had believed in the hereafter, he would have been afraid to die. Conrad's pessimism springs outward from the surroundings of his youth; the Russian oppression and the miseries of trying to obtain a living aboard the ships. Loti's pessimism originates inwardly from his extreme sensitiveness and his ardor to taste the joys of life. Lefèbre wrote: "Le secret de la tristesse de Loti, c'est d'avoir trop aimé la vie." 4

Le Roman d'un Spahi really has a sad ending. Jean is quite finished with his service in the Senegambie, but he will not see his native village in France in spite of the great expectation written in the letters from his parents. He is killed. Fatou-gaye strangles her child, and we hear the strident cry of Loti: "Quel Dieu l'avait poussé dans la vie, celui-la, l'enfant du spahi?" 5 And in France:

Le même soir, le cortège de noces de Jeanne passait la-bas, au pied des Cévennes, devant la chaumière

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In *Matelot*, Jean, returning to France believes that he will recover from malaria. However, he dies and is buried at sea. With what anguish his mother is expecting him! Let us listen to his utterances: "Qu'est ce donc qu'il avait fait à Dieu, son fils, son Jean, ... jamais de bonheur pour lui." Although we witness here something unusual in Loti, Jean's mother, after a strong crisis makes up her mind to accept her fate with resignation, and she seeks consolation in prayer.

In *Pêcheur d'Islande*, why should the young Sylvester die? He was the only comfort of his grandmother. Yann perished in the sea during the first trip of the fisherboat "la Léopoldine." He had been Gaud's husband for five days.

A pessimist through his characters, Loti remains one by his many declarations in his writings. Sadness, nothingness, loneliness, the shortness of life, and the approach of death are the terms spangled in his works.

Enfermé dans mon logis particulier, errant sans but d'une pièce dans une autre, je reste indéfiniment songeur, comme à la veille de mes grands départs de marin pour des campagnes longues et lointaines, et, en dedans de moi-même, je passe une lente revue sinistre de temps accomplis, de choses à jamais...

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finies, de visages morts. 8

En plus de ma tristesse à moi, qui me montre aujourd'hui les choses vivantes sous leurs aspects de mort, quelle autre tristesse demeure donc éternellement là, et plane sur ces abords de Constantinople... J'avais essayé de l'exprimer, dans un de mes premiers livres, mais je n'avais pu y parvenir, et aujourd'hui, à chaque pierre, à chaque tombe que je reconnais sur ma route, me reviennent les impressions indécises d'autrefois, avec ce tourment intérieur, qui aura été un des plus continus de ma vie, de me trouver impuissant à peindre et à fixer avec de mots ce que je vois et ce que je sens, ce que je souffre... 9

Nevertheless, Loti sometimes forgets his sadness to enjoy the materialistic pleasures of life.

Il y a encore de beaux jours dans la vie, de belles heures de jeunesse et d'oubli. Au diable toutes les rêveries mélancoliques, tous les songes maladifs des tristes poètes! Il fait bon courir, la poitrine au vent, en compagnie des plus joyeux d'entre les enfants du peuple. La santé et la jeunesse, c'est tout ce qu'il y a de vrai sur terre, avec la gaité simple et brutale, et les chants des matelots! 10

However, the most interesting confession of the state of his soul is contained in the last two pages of Un Pèlerin d'Angkor, where he assumes that he did find God, but a God of Pity.

Et cependant, de cette vie si brève, éparpillée par toute la terre, j'aurai retiré quelque chose, une sorte d'enseignement qui ne suffit pas encore mais qui est déjà pour apporter une ébauche de sérénité. Tant de lieux d'adoration éperdue

que j'ai rencontrés sur ma route et qui répondent chacun à une forme particulière de l'angoisse humaine, tant de pagodes, de mosquées, de cathédrales, ou la même prière s'élève du fond des âmes les plus diverses! Tout cela ne m'a pas fait entrevoir seulement cette demi-preuve si froide de l'existence d'un Dieu que l'on indiquait dans les cours de philosophie de ma jeunesse... Non, mais ce qui importe infiniment plus, c'est qu'un tel ensemble de supplications, de larmes brûlantes, implique la confiance presque universelle de ce que Dieu ne saurait être qu'un Dieu de pitié... La Pitié suprême vers laquelle se tendent nos mains de désespérés, il faut qu'elle existe, quelque nom qu'on lui donne; il faut qu'elle soit la, capable d'entendre, au moment des séparations de la mort, notre clameur d'infinie détresse, sans quoi la Création, à laquelle on ne peut raisonnablement plus accorder l'inconscience comme excuse deviendrait une cruauté par trop inadmissible à force d'être odieuse et à force d'être lâche. Et de mes pèlerinages sans nombre, les futilles ou les graves, ce faible argument si peu nouveau est encore tout ce que j'ai rapporté qui vaille.11

It is the shriek of despair of Loti's restless life. During his complete life he pursued a false happiness which could not give an answer to his troubled conceptions of the present life and the hereafter. Like his heroes, Yann, Gaud, and Jean, who were victims and hopeless fighters against their surroundings, Loti's mind was crushed by Nature which he has depicted so wonderfully well, but whose Creator he failed to recognize.

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**Books**


Periodicals


Unpublished Materials


The thesis submitted by Reverend Gerard Riopel has been read and approved by three members of the Department of English.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

March 11, 1945
Date

S.M. Steward
Signature of Adviser