

Political Violence in Conrad's Evil Hunted Cities

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Abstract

Bombs and approaches of political violence are at the core of political evil in our own world. We tend to name terrorists according to their colour of skin or religion but we miss the real identity of terrorists and anarchists that cannot be explained in the context of race or religious ideologies. Political violence is nothing but the utter nihilism of life. Discussing the nature of political violence in Conrad's fictional world is only an attempt to understand institutional violence in our contemporary times. In postmodern historical records, political violence became a tool of political groups all over the world in the US, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. The growth of international terrorism led to hijacking of airplanes, bombing of buildings and armed attacks on governments. Many places of the world are providing international political violence with training, weapons and safe havens. This paper attempts to understand the philosophical foundations behind such violence and how far this is reflected in its imaginative presentation in the fictional world. In other words, this is an attempt to draw the lines between reality and fantasy while dealing with international political violence situated in Conrad's fictional geography.

Key words: *Joseph Conrad; political violence; revolution; history; fictional geography.*

Introduction

Joseph Conrad or Josef Teodor Nalecz Korzeniowski was born in Russian occupied Poland in 1857. He was named after Konrad Wallenrod, the hero of a famous Polish patriotic poem and his second name, Nalecz was the heraldic name of the family's coat of arms. He was born in an area of the Ukraine that was part of the Kingdom of Poland that was held for four centuries preceding the First Partition of Poland in 1793 in which it became part of the Russian State. Poland was a patriotic country; its people were proud of their cultural riches and their heroism down the ages. In the late eighteenth century, it was one of the liberal European nations, having an elective monarchy. But in 1772, one third of Poland was seized and divided by Prussia, Austria and Russia. A second partition followed in 1793 when Russia seized more land. The third partition was in 1795 and the whole of the country was engulfed by the three autocracies. But the Poles kept up resistance and led revolts in 1830 and 1863. (Meyers, 2001).

Conrad's family had a rich patriotic heritage with military and political involvement. Conrad's father, Apolo Korzeniowski was a member of the land-owning gentry. His interests were literature and Polish politics. He was the founder of a group known as "Mieroslawski's Reds." They were uncompromising in the territorial demands and activists in their methods. They struggle for national independence. Apolo's major achievement was his initiative in founding the City Committee, from which emerged the Central National Committee that gave direction on the revolution of 1863. In 1861, Apolo was arrested and imprisoned and sentenced to a political exile with his wife and four-year-old son. That son was Joseph Conrad who started the bitter journey to the far-off Russian province of Vologda. The harshness of exile and the severe weather affected badly the health of Conrad's mother who died in

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1865. Conrad became an orphan at the age of eleven. Since childhood, Conrad acquired a sense of social and political destiny and was shocked by an impact of evil being represented by a tyrannical political system.

Conrad avoided all political commitment. He never voted in a British election in spite of his respect for English institutions; nor was he ever involved in Polish affairs. He distrusted socialism as well as capitalism. He also considered autocracy and revolution as faces of the same coin. His sense of nationalism was never imperialistic or autocratic and his sense of social commitment is based on self-discipline and duty to others. His depiction of terrorism and political violence is free of any specific political ideology, yet he attempts at showing what kind of philosophy is behind these criminal acts. In doing so, he is a pioneer in drawing a fearful image of terrorism which was translated later on, in our own contemporary world, as a wide range of legislations.

Political Violence and the British legislations

In 1999 Prevention of Terrorism Bill, British government defined terrorism broadly as the use of serious violence against persons or property or the threat to use such violence, to intimidate a government and the public to promote political, social and ideological objectives. The more recent United Kingdom Terrorism Act of 2000 defines terrorism in Section (1): “Terrorism means the use of threat of action where the action falls within subsection (2) (i.e., violence, serious damage, endangering life, etc.) and (b) the use or threat is designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and (c) the use or threat is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.” (Haara, 2020).

Scholars notice that English law doesn't say much about the element of intent. But how much can legislators say to define crimes against humanity.

The political criminal needs the support of the masses but is usually isolated from his followers. This isolation is both psychological and intellectual. Political criminals are those who inflict a criminal blow upon an ideology as a whole or who attempt to assault it. They always act in the name of justice. They believe in an ideal concept of justice. The political crime is a very argumentative issue in the criminal law. Its penalty should be based on what sociology terms as a super universalistic understanding of crime. This term means that the political-social power emphasizes the political ideology so that it stands above not only individual interests, but also above the conventional group of interests of the society, that is the interests of the universe.

The history of Poland shows another prominent figure of Conrad's family, that is his uncle Stefan Bobrowski who was one of the leaders of the 1863 revolution. He called for the unconditional and permanent emancipation of the complete enfranchisement of every person in the Polish realm without regard to race and religion. He also initiated a reconciliation of the two parties, the Reds and the whites, which brought the Polish revolt financial support from the bourgeoisie and aristocracy. His politics stood in the tradition of Western liberalism, the mainstream of the nationalist independence movement in Poland.

Conrad inherited from his uncle the Western, democratic nationalistic tradition. Conrad's Polishness is the frame of his political attitudes. This is very much reflected in his sense of nationalism and his feelings about imperialism. But he rejected any form of radical violence and was influenced by the attitudes of his uncle and guardian, Tadeusz Bombrowski whose beliefs were a mixture of moral idealism and worldly pragmatism.

Conrad contributed so much to the patriotic heritage of his family by presenting his attitudes on democracy, anarchy and revolution. Having crisscrossed the Indian Ocean and the Western Pacific, Conrad was losing his zest for the sea. The old thrill of adventure was replaced by a sense of boredom as the long journey's following each other bringing no risk or challenge. He decided to realize one of the dreams of his childhood by taking a trip to the Congo. Europe was occupied by what we may call the Congo illusion created by Geographic discovery, colonial wealth, and coupled with a new wave of missionary zeal to carry the word of God to the dark heart of Africa. In 1890, Conrad was on his way to his new adventure. But the Congo venture marked a crucial turn in Conrad's life. It put an end to his

career as a sailor but gave him a kind of understanding to existence. The Congo becomes the frame of every fictional geography he ever created. Every city or town in his novels can be the trap of human brutality and greed. Politics, chaos and violence are the bases of his political reality depicted in all his novels.

Conrad's portrayal of Political Violence

In every novel of Joseph Conrad, we find political and anthropological material are interweaving in a complex narrative that reflects his cynicism and his deep sympathy for the suffering humanity. In his Personal Record, Conrad claimed that his Polish heritage. The meaning of good and evil are the outline of Conrad's portrayal of human suffering. Good for Conrad means the individual's responsibility to achieve human virtues particularly, fidelity which is considered by Conrad as the fountain head of all human virtues, involving courage, endurance, decisiveness, humility, self-sacrifice and so on. Hence, violence means for Conrad a force of irresponsibility on the part of the individual or on the social and political systems of his community. Or as Edward Crankshaw puts it: "Conrad judging by his villains seems to have been oppressed by a sense of evil and evil to him meant an irresponsible force wandering at large in an ordered and respectable society. There is nothing to be done with it at all. It is a perpetual menace, and the part of every member within the Gate." (Crankshaw, 1995)

Conrad's humanism forms his political vision. Even his concern for the working class in his political novels doesn't reflect his belief in a specific theory but it reflects his imaginative response to the miseries of others. He believes that every political activity may fail because most men are selfish, those who are not selfish are victims of their own obsession and thus incapable of achieving whatever is good for the community. Conrad creates imagined worlds with a political and historical dimension to show how man is struggling against forces of evil. In these novels, violence is reflected in the political institutions. These institutions are defective even when they are born of noble motives and lofty ideals. Institutions degenerate as a result of the inherent weakness of human nature.

The Philosophy of the Bomb and Conrad's novel *The Secret Agent*

The Secret Agent shows a world of political violence which is responsible for a chaos in the life of every character in the novel. This chaos is termed by the critics as a cosmic chaos. Its frantic tone and severe depression may have bearings on Conrad's life at the time of writing it. The period from 1899 to 1904 is crucial to Conrad because he was for the first time able to get away from the sea and from maritime geography. Fredrick Karl points out, that the succession of the novels in this period starting with *The Secret Agent*, continuing through *Under Western Eyes* and *Chance* and ending with *Victory* share the same family scenes and domestic violence in which alienation from family and society and the bitter reality of the criminal acts are predominant.

In *The Secret Agent*, the father is dead and the mother is becoming senile. Their daughter Winnie becomes the "mother" of her brother who is mentally retarded. She also plays the role of the "father" holding the group together. She marries Verloc chiefly to provide security for her brother, Stevie. She also works in Verloc's seedy shop in Soho. The shop provides cover for Verloc who works as a secret agent. He works as a spy for a foreign embassy and an informer for Chief Inspector Heat of Scotland Yard. But Winnie is ignorant of Verloc's spying activities. The foreign embassy is planning a series of outrages aimed at discrediting the revolutionary group which will be held responsible. The first target is the Greenwich Observatory and the unwilling Verloc is ordered to engineer the explosion. He uses the poor innocent Stevie as an accomplice, but the boy is blown to pieces while carrying the bomb. Winnie, stricken by her brother's death and outraged by her husband's reality, kills him with a knife. As she is fleeing, she encounters the anarchist Ossipon and they plan to leave the country. But when he discovers Verloc's murder he steals her money and abandons her. Winnie, alone and in terror of the gallows, throws herself overboard from the Channel ferry. The world of the novel is full of terrible images and terrible motivation, full of resentment and desire for revenge.

Margaret Scanlan states that Conrad belongs to a new serious generation of novelists "to brood over resemblance between 'the men in small rooms' who write novels and those who plot terror". He found terrorists

themes to be the best to explore the relationship between fiction, history and politics. Language and violence became the medium to reflect his own image of political reality torn by political crimes. (Scanlan, 2001)

From Conrad's viewpoint, political violence involved planning, daring, deception and savage indifference to institutions and human life. Conrad saw the world as anarchy or a gigantic circus. Every attempt to control the social situation was a move toward chaos and every act was an act of disorder. The novel shows society as rotten at the core, as a vast half-deliberate conspiracy of police, thieves, anarchists, and tradesmen, ministers of state and ambassadors of foreign powers. Conrad's symbol for this web of secret connections is London, the enormous commercial and industrial city. Within the city everyone is related to everyone else but often in hidden and unlawful ways, but at the same time each person is cut off from his neighbours in a solitude "as lonely and unsafe as though [he] had been situated in the midst of a forest" (Conrad, 2005, p.201). The picture of London is an image of dark background from which the characters and events of the story "disengaged themselves": "Then the vision of an enormous town presented itself, of a monstrous town more populous than some continents and in it man-made might as if indifferent to heaven's frowns and smiles, a cruel devourer of the world's light. There was room enough there to place any story, depth enough there for any passion, variety enough there for any setting, darkness enough to bury five millions of lives." (Conrad, 2005, p.xxi).

The city is the place imposing the mode of human relationships but it is also man-made, a monstrous human construction surrounds man and generates its own darkness in the form of futile life and blindness of its citizens. All men, anarchists, policemen, tradesmen and thieves agree that life is a game with rules that everyone must obey. They all deny the cooperation with others for human purposes. They are alike in their refusal to look for the truth behind the surface of things. They waste "no portion of this transient life seeking for fundamental information" (Conrad, 2005, p.169).

Conrad chooses two ways of separating his reader from the dark city. The first is the point of view of the narrator. Yet, the narrator's stance is ironic. The detachment of an ironic perspective clears the vision of the uninvolved reader. Irony is Conrad's second way of enabling the reader to see in the darkness of the city of the novel. E. M. Tillyard points out that Conrad makes exceptions or modifications in his ironic method as he deals with certain characters such as the Assistant Commissioner and the Home Secretary. (Peters, 2013). The character is not as he seems to the reader. He is not the one who is caught in the coils of officialdom. He is aware of his situation. Far from being imprisoned by administration, he has an adventurous nature. He prefers an active post in the tropics such as he once had. He cannot fulfil his wish because in moment of blindness he has married the wrong woman. He is aware of his ironic fate. He is the only character whose plans do not miscarry. He achieves successes that his predecessors had failed to achieve. In spite of his wife, he is able to have some adventure in his job. Conrad says that "he had a full evening." Through this character we are shown a glimpse of the higher sphere of national parliamentary politics, where we meet the Home Secretary who wants lucid report, but no details. He has "other fish to fry" and is too busy to want anything but an assurance that there will be no more bombs.

The Assistant Commissioner decides to rid London of its double, secret, and foreign agents, spies and bomb throwers. It is something good to get rid of the secrecy and intrigues and to make things a little better. But he is doomed to failure morally because his motives are selfish. He cannot let Heat arrest Michaelis because of personal reasons concerning his wife's relation to Michaelis, "Great Lady," the rich lady who supports him. He is also using secret information from Chief Inspector Heat, and he builds his career on information from Verloc. We may consider the Assistant Commissioner's actions as classical Kantian examples of behaviour patterns which are not moral even though they might lead to something good according to certain ideology. The outcome of his efforts could have been the arrest of both Verloc and Vladimir. But this would never stop the corrupting forces of the city. As a member of the police, he works for the protection of society. A society which in *The Secret Agent* is just as unchangeable and chaotic as the Chesham Square where Verloc walks on his way to the embassy in the first morning of the novel.

The reader in his turn participates to discover this reality. A reality shows how political violence turns the dream into a nightmarish daily life. Behind the shape and colours of things, there is something else, the substance of which these things are made, “the majesty of inorganic nature, of matter that never dies” (Conrad, 2005, p.14). Being part of the city itself, these things may symbolize the spirit of political terror that never dies. This spirit is identified with man himself being either a force of terrorism as in the case of Verloc or a victim who can never escape from facing it. As Mr. Verloc walks in the street, he is described as “a rock-a soft kind of rock-marched now a long a street which could with every property be described as private” (Conrad, 2005, p.13). While the street itself is described as being part of this “inorganic nature” in its “emptiness,” “breadth” and “extent.” Both Verloc and the street belong to the same force. A third one is “a thick police constable, looking a stranger to every emotion, as if he too, were part of inorganic nature.” It is a motionless and lonely world of stone. Even man can be stone-hearted. This “inorganic nature” is also seen when Stevie is dead. He is not annihilated. He is transformed into “a heap of nameless fragments.” He is “blown to small bits: limbs, gravel, clothing, bones, splinters-all mixed up together” (Conrad, 2005, p.210). Though his consciousness vanishes after his death, he does not leave a vacuum behind him. He leaves “an enormous hole in the ground under a tree filled with smashed roots and broken branches. All round fragments of a man’s body blown to pieces”.

Humankind cannot see reality as it is because they are afraid of facing it; this is the cause of the collapse of human relation to the world. London with its cold and wet houses and streets is seen by Mr. Verlo through a window as if he needs a protection to face a danger hiding somewhere. This novel reflects Conrad’s growing mastery in technique and sustained narration. Conrad uses some symbolic images to work out the major theme of the novel which is depicting “the forces that deaden the individual’s moral sensibility”. Such terrorism is the only outcome of the modern city symbolized by London. Most of the symbolic images are images of light and darkness and “box” imagery. The symbolism of the bomb inside the box in Mr Verlo’s house stands for the terrifying emptiness which reduces the individual to utter insignificance.

According to Jeffrey Meyers, *The Secret Agent* is Conrad’s darkest novel showing his very pessimistic philosophy about the future of humanity. Conrad loves humanity but believes they are unable to improve. The world of the novel appears as a web of many secrets underlying and affecting the life of the individuals. (Meyers, 2001). The political world is organized upon a hierarchy of secrecy. Chief Inspector Heat has secret contacts with agents as Verloc using their secret information in order to avoid his legal limitations and enlarge his activities. He defends his relationship with a double agent as “private information.” He placed his personal interest ahead of his official duty. He has been promoted rapidly because of the information supplied by Verloc. Inspector Heat’s direct superior is the Assistant Commissioner who learns about Heat’s private source of information and tries to contact secretly with Verloc. The superior of the Assistant Commissioner is the Home Secretary. This indicates the instability of the social order which is threatened by secret intrigues and bombing attacks. We may ask: what is the value of information or knowledge in such a world? Conrad draws our attention to the meaninglessness of knowledge of the truth. In one of the final images in the novel after Winnie has the knowledge of her brother’s death and her husband’s responsibility for his killing. She commits her murder and her knowledge is confronted with a blank wall “Mrs. Verloc gazed at the white washed wall. A blank wall-perfectly blank. A blankness to run at and dash your head against.” (Conrad, 2005, p.244).

Knowing the truth should bring people together, but in this world, it leads people to destroy each other when they learn of terror veiled or disguised. Knowledge has lost its value when there are no firm beliefs in life. Therefore, Conrad uses many times words like “ignorance,” “fool” and “madness.” He characterizes his anarchists as madmen who wish to destroy everything around them. The Professor is the son of a preacher. He has reacted against his father’s religious fanaticism and makes a new “religion of destruction.” He believes in revolutionary acts but only driven by his psychological fantasy. Conrad makes this clear “the way of even the most justifiable revolutions is prepared by personal impulses disguised into creeds”. Conrad associates the anarchist’s condition of unrest with that of humanity at large “in their own way the most ardent of revolutionaries are perhaps doing no more but seeking for peace in

common with the rest of mankind-the peace of soothed vanity, of satisfied appetites, or perhaps of appeased conscience". The novel examines spaces of modernity through an influential Hegelian tradition of political philosophy. Such spaces embrace three ethical powers in modernity: the family, civil society and the state.

When the Assistant Commissioner confronts Vladimir with his knowledge about the latter's involvement in the bomb plot, Vladimir calls Verloc, his accuser "a lying dog of some sort." The investigator on the bomb plot remarks: "What pleased me most in this affair . . . is that it makes such an excellent starting-point for a piece of work which I've felt must be taken in hand-that is, the clearing out of this country of all the foreign political spies, police, and the sort of-of dogs" (Conrad, 2005, p.226).

The Professor is described at the end of the novel as a "pest in the street full of men". He feels that this community is of animal existence. This society seems a jungle of animals killing each other to survive. People are regarded to be things for use or stones without feelings or dogs, pigs and fish. People can be also mere meat, food for political intrigues like the remains of Stevie that are compared to the "raw material for a cannibal feast". When Inspector Heat looks at Stevie's fragmented remains which are lying on a waterproof sheet spread over a table in the manner of a tablecloth, he examines them with "the slightly anxious attention of an indigent customer bending over what might be called the by-products of a butcher's shop with a view to an inexpensive Sunday dinner" (Conrad, 2005, p.88).

Stevie is blown into "nameless fragments" in contrast to the survival of the name written on his coat. Heat's concern with the named fragment of the coat instead of the nameless fragment of Stevie shows how Heat is concerned with tokens, clues, names, rather than with people. Another terrible example is the funeral banquet. It is metaphorically suggesting how Stevie's remains are laid out on the table and Verloc is eating the flesh of Stevie: The piece of beef, laid out in the likeness of funeral baked meats for Stevie's obsequies offered itself largely to his notice.

Later on, Verloc himself will be a mere meat and, the carving knife with which he cuts the beef will become the instrument with which his wife will kill him. After Winnie commits her murder, we are left with the shadow of Verloc's corpse, his "dark, swift, thin blood" dripping like the ticking of a clock, his hat "rocking slightly on its crown" in the middle of the floor, and his blood forms a "beastly pool" around his solitary hat. This horror is attributed to the modern society itself as Karl Yandt, the repulsive anarchist in the novel, says: "Do you know how I would call the nature of the present economic condition? I would call it cannibalistic. That's what it is! They are nourishing their greed on the quivering flesh and the warm blood of the people—nothing else (Conrad, 2005, p.51).

At half-past twelve the clock tower booms. "He looked at the dial" and then he walks aimlessly all night. Finally, he sleeps "in the sunlight." After Winnie's death he is found carrying a paper eight days old. He talks with the Professor on the scientific possibilities of extending time. Although he is "scientifically afraid of insanity," he continues living in the world with all its pressures. Another type of anarchists is the humanitarian sentimentalist, Michaelis. He believes that all "idealization makes life poorer." He conceives time "with scornful disregard, as it were a rather vulgar convention submitted to be the mass of interior mankind" (p.104). He was jailed for fifteen years. He experienced the life in a prison cell because he was engaged in an attempt to release some prisoners and kill a constable. In his cell Michaelis was fattened to a monstrous size because of too much food combined with lack of exercise. The focus on food suggests a life suitable for animals. This points out to a world lacks the demands of normal life. The cell is described as "hygienic" and "damp and lightless." It is similar to a grave.

Terrorism in modern world has reduced man to nothingness. The death of Verloc is the final vision of man. The Secret Agent is a portrayal of the sociological concept of "anomie-radical disorder in the social structure and consequent personal dislocation." The novel shows the value of human community and how dangerous some individuals are when they become means of corrupting regardless of their identities or jobs.

Conrad presents the revolutionaries as anarchists because they are not sincere. The bomb plot is not a revolutionary, but a reactionary act showing the climate of English public life. As Jacques Berthoud remarks the novel

is concerned with social conservatism in the form of national policy of moderation. This moderation is “to neutralize revolutionary activity, it follows that its antithesis is not anarchism but extremism, whether the left or the right.” (Berthoud, 1979) Conrad draws the characters of two opposing extremists, the Russian agent Vladimir and the American terrorist, the Professor. Although these characters are antagonists, they share the same hatred of English *laissez faire*.

The Greenwich Explosion is a crime against humanity and it is symbolically an attempt to achieve timelessness. Inspector Heat says that his job makes “above the vulgar conception of time” after the explosion event as he examines the remains of the victim. This event is recorded not only by individuals but also calendars. It is part of history but Inspector Heat says it confronts the rationality of reality. Heat does not stand the character of the Professor who carries enough explosives to send himself and twenty others into death driven by so much hate and despair. Political violence in reality comes out in fictional geography to present timeless death in which time as it is measured in nature does not exist.

The world faced a total crisis embracing all mankind and the whole life of society, its intellectual foundation, its spiritual outlook, its social order, its political forms and its economic structure. The application of force was recognized as an evil which had its justification in the diminishing imperfection of man and society. Involving in political violence has been considered a kind of social medicine that offers momentary relief from the painful pressures of the world. Men and women all over the world believe that revolution will transform permanently and beneficially the bad conditions of life when political corruption becomes a fact in their societies. But revolution may turn into anarchy and political violence acts as a narcotic feeling freeing its victims from their social commitments and responsibilities and involving them in an illusion of the promised day. At the same time, it drives them to misguided actions and social crime. The political criminal needs the support of the masses but is usually isolated from his followers. This isolation is both psychological and intellectual.

The political criminals are those who inflict a criminal blow upon the ideology as a whole or who attempt to assault it. They always act in the name of justice. They believe in an ideal concept of justice. The political crime is a very argumentative issue in the criminal law. Its penalty should be based on what sociology terms as a super universalistic understanding of crime. Conrad is not concerned with the limitation of place and time in the world of the novel—for they are apparently corrupt and evil. In fact, he is concerned with the future of humanity. One thing is certain, about a proposed vision of this future, that language would lose its function.

The political novels of Joseph Conrad are novels of society and colonialism. Political issues are discussed and worked out with representatives of common humanity. Conrad deals with politics in response to the forces of society which manifest themselves in the cultural area. Evil becomes in Conrad’s novel a main cultural issue. It takes different political and social forms. Conrad depicts evil with the Victorian and Edwardian view, emphasized by the Fabian socialism. This view shows that progress is inevitable and man must solve the problems of civilization which become an influential factor in the body politic. The problem of cultural inferiority has appeared as the most dangerous fact of the modern world. It affects the mentality of the people who run the political issues in different parts of the world. Yet, Conrad approaches political questions with more prejudice than information because he was deeply suspicious of intellectual theories. Each novel is a historical panorama showing the shortcomings of paradigmatic social and political communities. The world of his novel is dominated by materialism, anarchy and various forms of tyranny. In such a world, Conrad affirms the importance of family and personal relationships.

Conrad focuses on the intricacies of the individual psyche—its motives, needs, obsessions and compulsions. He regards man’s morality as a psychological phenomenon. Thus, he examines how a character comes to beliefs and acts according to them when he faces evil in life.

Conclusion

Conrad treats political violence as a psychologist and not as a moralist. Yet, his moral outlook centres on how the individual's actions determine man's fate. Such actions are reflected either in a positive personal engagement in the common life or in a negative individual failure to move out of his self-enclosed egoism. Like the earlier works, Conrad's political novels have the theme of self-betrayal or betrayal of the community to which one belongs as an evil force within man, and its terrible consequences are reflected in the environment in which he lives.

Conrad is concerned with individual obsessions and social realities that shape man's behaviour, but these novels should be also understood in terms of his evolving psyche. The betrayal of Razumov who is called "an Englishman," shadows Conrad's own sense of guilt for betraying Poland and seeking a new life in a foreign country. Getting the English nationality did not change the fact that Conrad felt as an alienated outsider rather than a participant. His interior life remained chaotic. He believes that each man depends on his illusions to cope with the world and as Marlow remarks in *Heart of Darkness*, "we live, as we dream-alone." Conrad has a nostalgic faith in the shipboard life and in simple value—courage, fidelity and hard work that make life on ship endurable. But he realizes that shipboard life depends on a hierarchy that cannot bind a large social and political community. However, fidelity, that is the sense of solidarity with the human race, enables man to overcome the evil in life.

Political evil is presented as an affair of blood and physical sickness in a life threatened by violence, political tyranny, and domination of materialism and cultural uprooting. It is the ever-present reality that cripples and destroys being present at the base of every human situation. Conrad does not have a sense of political evil but a concept of political violence. Political violence is represented in ideological falsehood and beliefs which are disguising brutal measures against humanity. Politics, the world of ideas, is the frame in which life is portrayed. The individual faces the political reality of his nation, participates in building his community, yet, he fails and ends in loneliness and isolation. Conrad's characters are obsessed with special uses of language. This reflects Conrad's own fears that communication may be impossible. Political violence seems to him universal and unavoidable. However, disguised it may be, it is located in the human heart and manifests itself in the domination of one person or class over another. The choice of any person results in either good or evil for others. All the characters suffer a loss of life or love and end in a severe spiritual suffering. This indicates that the effects of evil ruin one's chances for happiness, and on a wider range reduce modern societies to primitivism and the life of the jungle.

The textual analyses of Conrad's political novels such as *The Secret Agent* demonstrates that the maturing moral consciousness through experience is the only way with which man is able to triumph over evil spiritually, although loss and suffering are still inevitable. Besides, there is always a hope that moral development may change the ugliness of political violence in life.

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