

SPACE AND EMPIRE
IN THE FICTION
OF JOSEPH CONRAD
AND GRAHAM GREENE

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Andrew Martin Purssell hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is clearly stated.

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ABSTRACT

MY THESIS IS a dual-author study of the Polish-born novelist Joseph Conrad and the English novelist Graham Greene. It examines how space is used, imagined and theorized by Conrad and Greene, two authors whose fiction charts the making and unmaking of empire – Conrad its apogee, Greene its decline – between the late-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries. Because the theory and practice of empire is fundamentally bound-up with its manipulation and control, “space” – an increasingly important area of debate in colonial and postcolonial studies – offers an illuminating approach to two authors whose fiction, then as now, has helped shape how we think about empire. Drawing on a wide range of primary materials including prefaces, essays, reviews and letters, this study builds on previous research into Conrad’s literary influence on Greene by exploring a shared imaginative investment between the two in the European imperial project, particularly its geographical character and effects. Accordingly, the arguments laid out and developed in this study centre on Conrad and Greene’s engagement with key issues of cultural and historical geography, including: spaces of performance, play and authenticity in contemporary cultures of travel and exploration; imperial cartography and the achievement of “closed space” at the turn of the twentieth century; the fantasy of the imperial archive and an empire unified by information; the centrality of the scopic drive in the imperial project; and the relationship between constructions of “race” and “place” in the colonial settlement of British

West Africa and Australia. Modern spatial theory conceives of space not as inert, but as invested with cultural meaning; as being, in short, **culturally produced**. As two authors for whom matters of space and representation, as well as empire, were key concerns, Conrad and Greene are well-placed to provide new insights into the imperial production, and uses, of space during the colonial period.

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Note on Abbreviations

UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED, all references to Conrad and Greene's works are, respectively, to Joseph Conrad, **The Uniform Edition** (22 vols., London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1923-1928); and Graham Greene, **The Collected Edition** (20 vols., London: William Heinemann and The Bodley Head, 1970-82). Quotations are identified in the text by abbreviated title and page number.

APR	A Personal Record
C	Chance
CD	The Congo Diary (London: Penguin, 1995)
LE	Last Essays
LJ	Lord Jim
N	Nostromo
NLL	Notes on Life and Letters
NN	The Nigger of the "Narcissus"
OI	An Outcast of the Islands
SA	The Secret Agent
SS	A Set of Six
TU	Tales of Unrest
TLS	'Twixt Land and Sea
V	Victory
WTT	Within the Tides
Y	Youth, a Narrative, and Two Other Stories

* * *

ASL	<i>A Sort of Life</i>
BC	<i>A Burnt-Out Case</i>
CE	<i>Collected Essays</i> (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969)
EA	<i>The End of the Affair</i>
EMM	<i>England Made Me</i>
HM	<i>The Heart of the Matter</i>
ISC	<i>In Search of a Character</i> (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968)
JWM	<i>Journey Without Maps</i>
LR	<i>The Lawless Roads</i>
OMH	<i>Our Man in Havana</i>
QA	<i>The Quiet American</i>
ST	<i>Stamboul Train</i>
WE	<i>Ways of Escape</i>

In addition, unless otherwise indicated all references to Conrad's correspondence are to **The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad**, edited by Frederick R. Karl and Laurence Davies, **et al.** (9 vols., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983-2008). Quotations are identified in the text by abbreviated title (**CL**), volume, and page number.

Introduction

IN THE LATE 1980s, the American critic Edward Soja called for the re-assertion of “space” in critical theory. Soja’s call seems largely to have been answered by the wide range of space-centred approaches to have emerged in academe since, from the belated translations into English of the continental philosophy of Bachelard (1994), Foucault (1986) and Lefebvre (1991), to the cultural histories of critics such as Paul Carter (1987), to influential contributions to cultural and political geography by David Harvey (1996, 2001) and Derek Gregory (1994, 2004). There remains, however – especially given the considerable shift in Western literary theory since Soja made this pronouncement towards matters of empire – much scope for discussion.

This study examines how space is used, imagined and theorized by Joseph Conrad and Graham Greene, two authors whose fiction charts the making and unmaking of empire – Conrad its apogee, Greene its decline – during the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Because the theory and practice of empire is fundamentally bound-up with its manipulation and control across ideological as well as physical terrains, “space” offers a resonant critical approach to two authors whose fiction, then as now, exerts a shaping effect upon how we think about empire.¹ Indeed, perhaps the most famous example of this core

¹ “Space,” it should be emphasized, is not necessarily interchangeable with “place.” For more on the differences between the two, see de Certeau (1984) and Casey (1996).

relation between geography and empire, not just in Conrad but in the whole of modern European fiction, is to be found in the pages of “Heart of Darkness” (1899) and Marlow’s cynical reduction of the European imperial project, thus: “The conquest of the earth . . . mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves” (Y 50). As with other recent critical explorations, then, most notably Christopher GoGwilt’s **The Invention of the West: Joseph Conrad and the Double-Mapping of Europe and Empire** (1995) and Robert Hampson’s **Cross-Cultural Encounters in Joseph Conrad’s Malay Fiction** (2000), the present discussion is sensitized both to Conrad and Greene’s own writings on geography, and to their mutual attentiveness to the role of space in cultural experience and the European imperial imagination.²

The doubling of Conrad with Greene responds to a research context articulated as far back as 1977 by Frederick R. Karl, author of the biography **Joseph Conrad: The Three Lives** (1979) and initially general editor of **The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad**. Surveying the then-clotted state of Conrad studies, Karl recommended a moratorium on further studies devoted to a writer “about whom very little remains to be said,” “**unless** as a result of original scholarship” including “hitherto unexamined relations with other writers” (326; emphasis in original).

² Other useful space-oriented readings of Conrad include: Baxter (2004); Coroneos (1994 and 2002); Hampson (2003, 2005 and 2006); Ho (2007); Kerr (2003); Larabee (2003); Le Boulicaut (2005); Lippe (1985 and 1991); Rawdon Wilson (1992); Sewlall (2008); van Marle and Lefranc (1988); and Visser (1993). There are, by comparison, far fewer critical excavations of similar territory in Greene studies. See Diephouse (2002), Stotesbury (2002) and Kort (2004).

The sheer weight of criticism amassed since Karl made this pronouncement, including a welter of comparative analyses devoted to Conrad's relations with other writers,³ suggests that Conrad studies remains a heavily subscribed area of study today; so much so, indeed, that Cedric Watts's remark about "the customary formula" for critical books on Conrad being to "defend the need for yet another book" (1981, 341) still carries much weight. The relationship between Conrad and Greene, however, is an important area of study yet to be fully or properly explored.⁴ Thus while early reviews of Greene's fiction (as typified by notices in the **Bookman**, the **Listener**, **Nation and Athenæum**, and the **New York Times Book Review**) frequently remarked upon the consonances between the two – even going so far as to posit Greene as being "somewhere between Stevenson and Conrad" ("Novels in Brief," **Nation and Athenæum** [3 August 1929], 602) – this

³ These include: Conrad and Carlyle (Meyers [1990]); Conrad and Crane (Hays [1978] and Nettels [1978]); Conrad and Dickens (Caserio [1981] and Lesser [1985]); Conrad and James (Nettels [1977] and Schneider [1984]); Conrad and Joyce (Ford [1985]); Conrad and Kipling (McClure [1981 and 1985] and Lyon [1989]); Conrad and Lowry (Bradbrook [1976]); Conrad and Mann (McIntyre [1975]); Conrad and Shakespeare (Gillon [1976]); Conrad and Swift (Rawson [1983]); Conrad and Twain (Leon Higdon [1985]); and Conrad and Wells (McCarthy [1986] and Ray [1986]).

⁴ To date there has been only one full-length study of Conrad and Greene, Robert Pendleton's **Graham Greene's Conradian Masterplot** (1996). However, Pendleton's focus, on genre, is markedly different to mine. Articles and chapters touching on the relationship between the two include: Kunkel (1959), Bryden (1962), Cheney (1970), Steadman (1971), and Harkness (1974).

has largely not been followed up by modern scholars.⁵ A further element of the research context is supplied by another biographer, in this case of Greene rather than of Conrad. Norman Sherry's protracted biographical project **The Life of Graham Greene**, published over three volumes between 1989 and 2004, gave him exclusive access to materials, thus discouraging new scholarship; the lifting of this restriction with the publication of the final volume in 2004, however, has created room for new avenues of discussion.⁶

Two related issues provide the platform for the present discussion: the question of Conrad's literary influence on Greene's fiction; and a shared imaginative investment between the two in the European imperial project, particularly its geographical character and effects. Accordingly, the arguments laid out and developed in each of this study's five chapters draw on key issues of cultural and historical geography. Focusing on the cultures of travel and exploration of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, and drawing on current performance theory, Chapter One examines the represented theatricality

⁵ Notices of Greene's debut novel, the historical romance **The Man Within** (1929), by Paul Allen and Vita Sackville-West were among the first to point up the Conradian aspects of Greene's work. The comparison with Stevenson in **Nation and Athenaeum**, meanwhile, no doubt would have intrigued Greene, whose mother was first cousin to the Scottish author: "He had always seemed to me 'one of the family.' . . . Names which appeared in his Collected Letters were photographs in our family album" (ASL 197). For more on Greene's extended family, see Lewis (2010).

⁶ For a detailed discussion of Sherry's claims to exclusivity and the wider impact of these claims on Greene studies, see R. Greene (2006). See also R. Greene, ed. (2007), pp. 430-32.

of the colonial encounter in Conrad's early Malay-set short fiction, and how Greene's early travel writing foregrounds the ways in which the spaces of tourism made available through empire likewise have a theatrical construction. Drawing on early-twentieth-century debates in British geographical circles over the apparent achievement of "closed space" (which Conrad mentions in his late essay "Geography and Some Explorers"), Chapter Two looks more closely at the legacy of the imperial cartographic project and Conrad's influence on Greene through a comparative reading of Greene's 1936 African travelogue **Journey Without Maps** and Conrad's 1899 novella "Heart of Darkness." The middle section of the thesis, comprising Chapters Three and Four, situates Conrad and Greene's engagement with empire in two interrelated theoretical contexts. Building on the recent archival "turn" in the academy, and proceeding from the understanding that the scientific construction of global space that characterized empire was as much an archival as a geographical endeavour, Chapter Three charts an engagement with archival contexts and theory in one of Conrad's hitherto-neglected late short stories, "Freya of the Seven Isles" (1912), and Greene's **Our Man in Havana** (1958). Chapter Four builds on previous studies of the centrality of vision in Western thought in general (and in geography in particular) to explore the ways in which Conrad and Greene are attentive to the centrality of the scopic drive in the imperial project. After examining Greene's engagement with Victorian constructions of West Africa as a sepulchral space ("The White Man's Grave") in his post-war novel **The Heart of the Matter** (1948),

Chapter Five applies racial theory and colonial policy contemporary with Conrad to one of his lesser-known short tales, “The Planter of Malata” (1913).

*

In his 1923 essay, “Travel,” Conrad takes aim at modern tourism, which he sees as one of the less laudable consequences of a geography “triumphant” which produces and contemplates the comprehensively-mapped world: “Nowadays many people encompass the globe. That kind of victory became to a certain extent fashionable for some years after the piercing of the Isthmus of Suez” (LE 123-24). Both the “extent” of this “victory,” and the forms taken by it, are recurrent themes in Conrad’s fiction. The revolution in global communications attending this new state of geographic affairs – here typified by the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 – has not just had an impact on the professional lives of seaman such as Captain Whalley in Conrad’s early short tale “The End of the Tether” (1902): “The piercing of the Isthmus of Suez, like the breaking of a dam, had let in upon the East a flood of new ships, new men, new methods of trade,” irretrievably “chang[ing] the face of the Eastern seas” (Y 168); in addition, it has produced a new cultural phenomenon: “the periodical invasions of tourists from some passenger steamer in the harbour flitted through” the East “like relays of migratory shades condemned to speed headlong round the earth,” but “without leaving a trace” (184). Whether this lack of “a trace” refers to that left upon the

cultural lives of these European tourists or upon those inhabitants of the East through which they “flit,” is unclear; what is clear is that the changes in cultural geography produced by tourism are more elusive than the appreciable impact upon trade or those changes in the physical landscape – such as the construction of the Suez Canal, which dramatically reduced the journey time between Europe and the East – that enable these tourists in increasing numbers to “speed” to, and through, the East. As “Travel” shows, tourism for Conrad represents one of the most fundamental, if not the most immediately self-evident, effects of early-twentieth-century colonial modernity.

Although Conrad objects to the “many people” who now “encompass the globe,” given his experience as mate on the **Torrens**, he could not be unaware of the exclusivity of organized travel, then still only available to the privileged elite.⁷ It is no accident, therefore, that the Moorsom family who presumably have embarked on one of Cook’s famous “Round the World Tours” in Conrad’s 1913 story “The Planter of Malata,” are drawn from the upper strata of British society. In addition to this class dimension, Conrad’s statement has a clear Eurocentric orientation. The inherent Eurocentrism of Conrad’s statement that “Nowadays many people encompass the globe” has, in the context of current theorizations of

⁷ In **A Personal Record** (1909), Conrad compares his role with the short-lived “Franco-Canadian Transport Company” to that of a Cook’s operative giving tours on deck to the local “petit bourgeois”: “I was always in evidence in my best uniform to give information as though I had been a Cook’s tourist’s interpreter, while our quarter-masters reaped a harvest of small change from personally conducted parties” (12).

postcolonial global modernity, considerable political resonance. For the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, “tourism” offers an apt metaphor of the inability of “many” non-Western peoples to share in the kinds of geographical mobility available to the Europeans at whom Conrad takes aim in “Travel.”⁸ Although a caricature, Bauman’s distinction does, as Derek Gregory points out, describe a familiar cultural scenario. As he suggests, “part of the shock of September 11 was surely its abrupt reversal of metropolitan privilege” (2004, 250). Gregory goes on to note that this reversal was both visibly manifest and measurable: “one of the immediate consequences of September 11 was to contract the space of American tourism as flights were cancelled and aircraft flew half empty” (256-57). Gregory’s framing of this recent epochal event uncannily echoes Greene’s own exploration of this issue of place and metropolitan privilege in his 1941 essay “Mr Cook’s Century.” Greene’s essay, pointing up the empty spaces of London’s railways and gateways to continental Europe, imagines, as we will see, a similar sudden contraction of space in a time of war.

Like Bauman’s use of “tourism,” “travel” provides the metaphorical ground for some influential analyses of early-twentieth-century colonial

⁸ As Derek Gregory explains, Bauman sees globalization as, if not producing, then underlining the prior existence of two separate socio-geographic orders. On the one hand, there are “‘residents of the second world’ – ‘vagabonds’ – who live pre-eminently in space, ‘heavy, resilient, untouchable,’ and who travel surreptitiously and often illegally because they have no other ... choice.” On the other, are “‘residents of the first world,’” whom Bauman terms “tourists”: those “who . . . live pre-eminently in time, who can span every distance with effortless ease, and who move because they want to” (Gregory 2004, 249-50).

modernity, notably Gayatri Spivak's concept of "worlding," where "one section of humanity" is depicted as "restless and expansive, the rest rooted and immobile" (Clifford 1997, 78), or Edward Said's concept of the "voyage in," which, in a reversal of Spivak's image of a "restless" West and "rooted" Other, describes "the massive infusions of non-European cultures into the metropolitan heartland" during the twentieth century and interwar period, fundamentally altering "the very fabric of a society that largely believed itself . . . homogeneously white and Western" (Said 1994, 242). James Clifford, meanwhile, argues that "travel" should not be viewed as merely one of the cultural trappings attending the "diffusion outward" of Western "civilization, industry, science, or capital" (precisely the type of "granite to grass" trajectory implicit, for instance, in the epigraph, taken from Auden's "Epilogue" [1931], of Greene's **Journey Without Maps**),⁹ but rather as troubling "the localism" on which this very idea of travel rests: "Dwelling [is] understood to be the local ground of collective life, travel a supplement; roots always precede routes. But what . . . if travel were . . . seen as a complex and pervasive spectrum of human experiences? Practices of displacement might emerge as constitutive of all cultural meanings rather than their simple transfer or extension" (1997, 3). Clifford's shifting concept of "travel" also requires that terms familiar to colonial and postcolonial criticism such as "centre" and "periphery" should be, if not discarded, then rethought;

⁹ For a discussion of this binary in **Journey Without Maps** and Greene's broader interest in the Primitive, see Schwartz (2002).

viewed less as referring to pre-existent “socio-cultural wholes subsequently brought into relationship,” than to “systems **already** constituted relationally” (7; emphasis added). Crystallizing this point, Clifford notes that “the region called ‘Europe’ has been constantly remade . . . by influences beyond its borders” (3), a fact to which Conrad’s “Heart of Darkness” famously alludes. Just as Kurtz is, as Marlow muses, the mongrel product of “All Europe” (Y 117), so, too, is “Europe” presented as having something of a relational constitution. Marlow begins his narrative, in a subversive twist on the colonialist commonplace of comparing Britain’s empire to that of imperial Rome, with an invocation “of very old times, when the Romans first came here, nineteen hundred years ago” (Y 49). As Robert Hampson notes, the Roman legions who “arrived in Britain in 45BC . . . would have included soldiers from North Africa. The Angles and Saxons, from whom the English derive, did not arrive for several more centuries.” As such, there “were Africans in Britain before the English” (Hampson 1995, 128n.). It is apt that Marlow’s nod to this distant past and a Britain remade by influences beyond its borders takes place on the River Thames, which, as both a conduit of Britain’s current power as a colonizer and one of the circuits by means of which Britain was itself once colonized, produces a sense of an English past rooted, to adapt Clifford, in “routes.”

Another reason for Conrad’s dismissal of tourism in “Travel,” in addition to its growing popularity in his contemporary moment, is that, compared to the great age of imperial discovery and exploration, tourism is “mere performance” in

“already explored space” (LE 122, 128). While recent discussion in Conrad studies likewise has covered theatrical ground, its focus has largely been on Conrad’s relationship with the theatre as an **institution**;¹⁰ in Chapter One, however, the emphasis is on how Conrad’s characterization of tourism as “performance” offers, across the interrelated contexts of Conrad’s early fiction, Greene’s travel writing, and modern anthropologies of tourism, a remarkably valid and versatile theoretical term. Other recent critical discussion has emphasized the ways in which space, rather than simply harbouring performers and performances, as Conrad suggests here in “Travel,” can itself be seen as something performed. As Derek Gregory, building on Edward Said’s concept of the representational power, and the imperial applications, of “imaginative geographies,” puts it: “We might usefully think of imaginative geographies as fabrications, a word that usefully combines ‘something fictionalized’ and ‘something made real,’ because they are imaginations given substance” (2004, 17). Moreover, the structure that authorizes these fabrications is “in some substantial sense **performative**,” because it “**produces** the effects that it names” (18-19; emphasis in original). Put simply, space “is an effect of practices of representation, valorization, and articulation; it is fabricated through and in these practices and is thus not only a domain but also a ‘doing’” (*Ibid.*). In this performative context, page and place are inextricably linked. This is exemplified in the famous claim, made in an unsigned review of

¹⁰ See, for example, Hand (2005); and Baxter and Hand, ed. (2009).

Tales of Unrest (1898) for **The Academy**, that, with the tale's opening story "Karain: A Memory," Conrad had "annexed the Malay Peninsula" on behalf of his European audience, thereby "open[ing] a new world to the untravelled reader" (14 January 1899. In Sherry, ed. 1973, 110). This refers not to a part of the world that is "out there" so much as to a space that Conrad, through his Malay fictions, has helped to produce.

How this "new world" is opened is presented by **The Academy** thus:

Here, from 'Karain' . . . is a passage from a picture of a Malayan paradise. The writer is observing the land from the sea – looking upon it for the first time: 'A torrent wound about like a dropped thread. Clumps of fruit-trees marked the villages; slim palms put their nodding heads together above the low houses; dried palm-leaf roofs shone afar, like roofs of gold, behind the dark colonnades of tree trunks; figures passed vivid and vanishing; the smoke of fires stood upright above the masses of flowering bushes; bamboo fences glittered, running away in broken lines between the fields. . . . Nothing moved. The sun blazed down into a shadowless hollow of colours and stillness.' (In Sherry, ed. 1973, 110)

This excerpt from “Karain: A Memory,” with its focus on “the first time” that the unnamed English narrator sees, and sets foot in, the Eastern enclave ruled over by the Bugis chief of the title, is a representation of what Michel de Certeau calls the “inaugural scene” of colonial encounter (1988, xxv). De Certeau’s use of a theatrical term is, as Diana Taylor suggests, advised. Taylor argues that this “‘encounter’ is a theatrical scenario structured in a predictable, formulaic, hence repeatable fashion”: “No matter who restages the colonial encounter from the West’s perspective – the novelist, the playwright, the discoverer, or the government official – it stars the same white male protagonist-subject and the same brown, found ‘object’” (2003, 13). It could be argued that Conrad is a notable exception to Taylor’s rule, with his frequent use of multiple viewpoints instead of privileging a single, authorizing European one, and with his attentiveness to presenting the colonial encounter (“inaugural” or otherwise) from “native” as well as European perspectives. (In his novel **Victory** [1915], he deliberately crosses the two when Heyst’s shock at the incursion of Jones and Ricardo on Samburan is knowingly filtered through an indigenous [probably Samoan] narrative¹¹ of encounter with imperial Europe: “It was more like those myths, current in Polynesia, of amazing strangers, who arrive at an island . . . bringing . . . gifts of unknown things, words never heard before” [V 227-28].) The point to make, however, is that if, as Gregory argues, there are performative

¹¹ For more on the probable origins of this myth, see Hampson (1989), p. 400n. See also Luyat (2008).

elements to spatial representation – that space is also a “doing” as well as a domain – then the representation of this particular scene of colonial encounter in “Karain” is, in its rehearsal of a specific convention of colonial discourse, importantly also a “re-doing.” This reliance upon and re-staging of discursive convention in “Karain” perhaps comes as no surprise given that this scene is concerned as much with the attempt to represent the narrator’s first encounter with the East as with the experience itself; this, as Christopher GoGwilt points out, is not “a first impression,” but “the reconstruction of a first impression” (1995, 48). Yet it was not for its proto-modernist approach to such complexities of representation, but its strain of exoticism, that “Karain” and its housing collection **Tales of Unrest** were commended by **The Academy**, as the above excerpt, with its stress on Conrad’s having painted a “picture of a Malayan paradise,” illustrates. Nevertheless, the reasons behind **The Academy**’s choice to “crown” **Tales** in “Our Awards for 1898” perhaps matter less than the act of coronation itself – and not just in the context of Conrad’s burgeoning career as a writer of fiction, as his first substantive piece of critical acclaim. For this theatrical act of “crowning” **Tales of Unrest** is peculiarly apt given the themes of royalty, theatricality and performance examined by Conrad in “Karain: A Memory.”

Another of Conrad’s late essays, “Geography and Some Explorers,” opens with a generalization on the broad appeal of maps: “It may be an effect of the incorrigible frivolity inherent in human nature, but most of us would agree that a map is more fascinating to look at than a figure in a treatise on conic

sections” (LE 1). Mid-way through the essay Conrad goes on to elaborate how his own fascination with maps, on which this generalization is based, dates back to a childhood encounter with imperial cartography, from which he developed an addiction to “map-gazing” (14). As several critics have noted, Conrad had already put this moment to autobiographical use in **A Personal Record** (1909), with the recollection, “in 1868, when nine years old or thereabouts,” of “looking at a map of Africa” (13); and to fictional use in “Heart of Darkness” (1899), where Marlow likewise recalls having, “when I was a little chap,” “a passion for maps” (Y 52).¹²

David Harvey identifies the existence of a similar, but problematic, “passion” for maps in Western academe and beyond, in what he sees as a widespread critical misuse of the “the mapping metaphor.” Harvey’s ground for complaint is that such critical discussion “unfortunately evades the problem that mapping requires a map and that maps are typically totalizing, usually 2D, Cartesian, and . . . undialectical devices with which it is possible to propound any mixture of extraordinary insights and monstrous lies” (1996, 4-5); evades, that is, the fact that maps, as objects of material culture, are also historically- and culturally-situated, and above all politically-slanted, texts.¹³ Accordingly, the

¹² See GoGwilt (1995), pp. 109-10; and Hampson (2003), p. 34.

¹³ Harvey’s complaint carries an after-echo of one made by Henri Lefebvre in the mid-1970s, about what he saw as a growing “fetishization” of “space” – cartography’s putative subject – in critical thought: “We are forever hearing about the space of this and/or the space of that: about literary space, ideological space, the space of the dream, psychoanalytic topologies, and so on and so forth” (Lefebvre 1991, 3). For a

following discussion of the use and representation of maps by Conrad and Greene in Chapter Two is attentive to the specific, imperial contexts and contingencies in which maps are produced and circulated.

The growth of academic interest in cartography as an object of critical attention, as Denis Cosgrove argues, is connected with the ever-increasing, and “instrumental,” use of maps in everyday life (1999, 2-3). To illustrate this, Cosgrove points to “the iconic map of the commercial advertisement” (2), of which the map accompanying the Tropical Belt Coal Company’s promotional literature “for the edification of the shareholders” in Conrad’s *Victory* (1915) is an early example. This map, with its graphic, overblown “figuring” of Samburan as “a mysterious and effective star” – “the central spot of the Eastern Hemisphere” (23) – rather than having any geographical reference (or usefulness), instead appears to serve the kind of iconic, commercial function that Cosgrove describes. Robert Hampson notes that Conrad’s maritime career “involved . . . a varied involvement with maps and charts as a daily part of his life,” and Conrad “probably was more involved with maps and mapping than any other major nineteenth- or twentieth-century British novelist,” an involvement that “leaves its mark on his fiction” (2003, 44). In addition, as several critics have commented,¹⁴ Conrad also lived and worked during the first great era of mass communications,

discussion of the spread of the mapping metaphor in a specifically postcolonialist context, see Huggan (1989).

¹⁴ See, for example, Watts (1989), p. 133.

a world in which, with “its seemingly limitless capacities for producing, reproducing and transmitting graphic images,” maps increasingly were becoming “a ubiquitous feature of daily life” (Cosgrove, 2). The Inner Circle Line commuters portrayed at the beginning of Conrad’s “The Return” (1897), for example, would have carried, or as part of their daily “unthinking” stare (TU 119) at least had access to, cartographic representations of their rail journey, produced jointly by the Metropolitan Railway and Metropolitan District Railway from the 1860s onwards (and in pocket-form from the 1880s).¹⁵ The prospectus map in **Victory**, although produced for a particular group rather than the general public (namely potential investors in the Tropical Belt Coal Company), similarly speaks of a cultural moment when maps are no longer the preserve of the few, but are “familiar, naturalized . . . objects working within a modern society” of growing, albeit unevenly spread, “cartographic literacy” (Cosgrove, 2).

Such “cartographic literacy” was precisely what the discipline of British geography expressly sought to promote and develop during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. At the Board of Education’s Imperial Education Conference in 1911, Halford J. Mackinder, the foremost British geographer of the period, delivered a lecture entitled “The teaching of geography” (Cited in Ryan 1994, 157). In the published version of this lecture, Mackinder went on to posit that geography is **the** discipline of empire, underlining that this was a subject

¹⁵ Michael Kitchen, London Transport Museum, private communication, 2010.

that had imperial, as well as pedagogical, applications. One of the founding aims of the Geographical Association, established with Mackinder's assistance in 1893, had been to familiarize "Britain's young with distant colonial prospects" through the use of maps, along with lantern-slides and other visual media (Ryan, 161). Mackinder believed that, through the emplacement of geography in British classrooms, "men could acquire 'the power of roaming at ease imaginatively over the vast surface of the globe,'" producing the "real geographer": "the man 'who sees the world-drama as he reads his morning paper'" (Cited in Ryan, 169). Interestingly, Conrad's "Karain: A Memory," which begins with the narrator searching the "newspapers" for elements of the geopolitical "world-drama" – here "the intelligence of native risings in the Eastern Archipelago" (TU 3) – appeals to the very capacity that Mackinder hoped that geography would, at the classroom level, help to instil.

In "Geography and Some Explorers" Conrad recalls how his "early geographical enthusiasm," "the taste for poring over maps," "interfered with my devotion (such as it was) to my other schoolwork" – a taste that, transposed from Conrad's Polish to a turn-of-the century British educational context, no doubt would have met favourably with the kind of geographical pedagogy then being promoted; instead: "the marks awarded for that subject were almost as few as the hours apportioned to it in the school curriculum" (LE 17, 24). (In Conrad's native Poland, erased from the map of Europe following the Third Partition of 1795, geography would have been an unavoidably political subject, and therefore

a subject to be avoided.)¹⁶ Equally, the type of cumulative, corrective mapping that Conrad recalls practising on his “beloved old atlas,” as well as usefully equipping him for a future career at sea, would in this pedagogical context have had appreciable imperial value: “I stand here confessed as a contemporary of the Great Lakes. Yes, I could have heard of their discovery in my cradle, and it was only right that, grown to a boy’s estate, I should have in the later ’sixties done my first bit of map-drawing and paid my first homage to the prestige of their first explorers. It consisted in entering laboriously in pencil the outline of Tanganyika on my beloved old atlas, which, having been published in 1852, knew nothing, of course, of the Great Lakes” (LE 20). There is a similar point to make about Greene. Several critical readings of Greene’s fiction have foregrounded Greene’s own heavy emphasis on his education, finding, for example, in the “green baize door” (ASL 61) which separated family from school life at Berkhamsted School, where his father was headmaster, an apt emblem for the themes of loyalty and betrayal that run throughout his fiction.¹⁷ Yet, Greene’s assertion elsewhere that “at Oxford” his generation either “went into the colonial service or the foreign office” (Allain 1983, 43) is, given this pedagogical context, equally salient.

¹⁶ As Conrad puts it in “The Crime of Partition” (1919): “Poland deprived of its independence, of its historical continuity, with its religion and language persecuted and repressed, became a mere geographical expression” (NLL 118; emphasis added).

¹⁷ See, for example, Pendleton (1996).

Like Conrad, Greene professed to having had a childhood interest in imperial exploration – with the same project of filling-in the map of empire. Interestingly, this shared childhood interest in imperial mapping and exploration grew out from, and was nourished by, a shared early interest in polar exploration. In “Geography and Some Explorers,” Conrad recalls how his geographical imagination was first pricked by the “great tale” of Polar exploration (LE 15), and by one tale in particular: Sir Francis Leopold McClintock’s **The Voyage of the “Fox” in the Arctic Seas** (1859):

There could hardly have been imagined a better book for letting in the breath of the stern romance of Polar exploration into the existence of a boy whose knowledge of the poles of the earth had been till then of an abstract formal kind as mere imaginary ends of the imaginary axis upon which the earth turns. The great spirit of the realities of the story sent me off on the romantic explorations of my inner self; to the discovery of the taste for poring over maps. (LE 16-17)

The Polar origins of Conrad’s “discovery” of cartography, in his playful turn of phrase, echo the origins of Marlow’s childhood “passion for maps” in “Heart of Darkness”: “At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map . . . I would put my finger on it

and say, When I grow up I will go there. The North Pole was on of these places, I remember” (Y 52). As Robert Hampson has observed, McClintock also uses the phrase “blank spaces” a number of times in **The Voyage of the “Fox”** in relation to the Arctic, reflecting how it appeared on European maps of the period (Hampson 1995, 129n). One of the striking features of Marlow’s remembrance, as Hampson notes elsewhere, is the “colonial solipsism” whereby “Marlow equates the map and the place”: “there are not just ‘blanks’ on the map; there are ‘blank spaces on the earth.’ In his mind, it is as if places did not exist until mapped by Europeans” (Hampson 2003, 35). That Marlow’s recollection of his childhood passion for maps centres, much as does Conrad’s in “Geography and Some Explorers,” on cartographic representations of the Arctic is therefore apt, as a space whose “realities,” as Conrad puts it, are seemingly no different from its “abstract” expression on the map; that is, as a region whose physical geography – “the geography of open spaces and wide horizons” (LE 18) (being in Greene’s words “only a continent of ice” [Allain 1983, 31]) – seemingly mirrors its appearance on the map of empire as a blank space.

McClintock’s **The Voyage of the “Fox”** is an account of his 1857 expedition to the Arctic to determine the fate there of another British explorer, Sir John Franklin, who in 1847 led an attempt to locate a north-west passage linking the North Atlantic and the North Pacific; Franklin’s ships, the **Erebus** and **Terror**, as the frame narrator of “Heart of Darkness” notes, “never returned” (Y 47). Conrad explains that McClintock’s **Voyage** came into his hands because “the fate

of Sir John Franklin was a matter” not only of British but “of European interest,” to the point that “Sir Leopold McClintock’s book was translated . . . into every language of the white races” (LE 16). Conrad further exaggerates the wide appeal and availability of McClintock’s book by pushing forward the year of his birth from 1857 to coincide with “the year of its publication” (15-16). Having “sold 12,000 copies by 1863,” as Andrea White notes (White 1993, 10), McClintock’s narrative was certainly a best seller, reflecting a corresponding public interest in polar exploration. Prior to McClintock’s expedition, however, there was little official interest in the Arctic; so little, indeed, that the rescue venture was privately backed by Franklin’s widow (White, 19-20). As White observes, “the centres of [British] power” were occupied by other distractions: “Crimea demanded the government’s interest,” “as did the Indian mutiny of 1857”; in addition, “African exploration was continuing apace and few gains were seen for the Arctic” (19). Africa was one of several imperial interests diverting attention, and funds, away from Arctic exploration during the mid-nineteenth century. By the end of the century, when Africa was thrust centre stage as the European “scramble” for the continent gathered momentum, the Arctic was edged out further still: “The glamour’s off,” as Marlow underscores in “Heart of Darkness” (Y 52). That Marlow’s fascination with the blank spaces of the North Pole is replaced by an interest in those residing, according to the map of empire, in central Africa – “the biggest, the most blank” area represented on that map (*Ibid.*) – therefore reflects a similar shift in British imperial policy.

Like Marlow's, Greene's adult concern for the blank spaces represented on the map of empire also stems from a boyhood interest in polar exploration. And, like Conrad's, Greene's interest centres on a specific text:

Well before I was sixteen I wanted to explore the Antarctic too. Only the Antarctic – the North Pole didn't interest me; it was only a continent of ice compared to the South Pole with its high plateaux. I remember, when I was almost fourteen, I wrote a little note to an explorer called Bruce, criticizing his book, **Polar Expedition**, in the Home University Library. He replied with a most charming letter.¹⁸ I can't remember what I found to criticize. I imagined, in spite of my loathing for uniforms (I was never a Boy Scout), that if I became a Sea Scout I might join a polar expedition. (Allain, 31-32)

This passage carries with it something of Marlow's sentiment regarding the "glamour," or the apparent lack thereof, of North Pole exploration; it also suggests that one of the reasons for that waning lay, in part, in a corresponding rise in British imperial interest in its Southern counterpart, the Antarctic.

¹⁸ Neither of these letters survive. See R. Greene, ed. (2007), p. 23.

The book in question, **Polar Expedition** (1911), is an account by the Scottish explorer William Spears Bruce of his expedition to the Antarctic between 1901 and 1904. Disgruntled over an apparent lack of official British interest in civilian polar explorers, Bruce offered his Antarctic base to Argentina, the occupation of which became key to subsequent Argentine claims on Britain's polar empire (Dodds 2002, 17). Thus, the legacy of Bruce's donation lends Greene's recollection of his boyhood interest in Antarctica – made in the early 1980s, when Argentine claims to the nearby Falkland Islands, formally annexed by Britain in 1833, were again being pressed – a certain geopolitical resonance. Equally resonant is the historical moment when Greene's interest in the Antarctic began, “when . . . almost fourteen”: this was also when British geographical and political interests in the South Pole arguably were at their peak. In 1920, after Britain had formally incorporated the Antarctic Peninsula and island chains such as the South Shetlands, South Orkneys and South Georgia, Sir Leopold Amery, then Under-Secretary of State at the Colonial Office, voiced the hope “that the entire Antarctic continent would be annexed to the British Empire” (Dodds 2002, xvii). If Marlow's shifting geographic interests seem to correspond to those of the imperial establishment, so, too, do Greene's.

The findings of Bruce's expedition were disregarded in official circles, but his summary in **Polar Exploration** of the continent's geography, and a prevailing European ignorance about it, suggests some common ground between Bruce and the British imperial establishment. Delegates to the 1896 International

Geographical Congress had complained of the lack of reliable geographical knowledge about Antarctica (Dodds 1997, 30). As Bruce summarizes: “So far we know little of this vast continent, which is probably as large as Europe and Australia combined. What coast-line has been discovered was nearly all discovered [in] 1844,” long “before any of the more recent expeditions sailed to the south”; “Of the interior of the Antarctic continent,” meanwhile, “we know but little” (1911, 18-19). One of the reasons for this lack was the fact that Antarctica, unlike the North Pole, had no indigenous population. This absence had two obvious implications for imperial geography. Lacking the networks and types of local knowledge through which other parts of the map of empire were gradually filled in (most notably in British India),¹⁹ it would necessarily take longer to fill in that map. Yet this lack also presented “unprecedented opportunities for place naming” to imperial administrators such as Amery who looked to possess the space politically, and who recognized that the inscription of place names on the map was “part of the exercise of ‘effective occupation’” and thus “essential in the defence of imperial polar claims” (Dodds 2002, 26).

Bruce goes on to acclaim the “pioneer” role played by powered flight, which has given the West its “first insight” into Antarctica’s spatial extent and make-up (1911, 19). Cosgrove argues that powered flight, “as Patrick Geddes and other modernist visionaries foresaw,” would in the first part of the twentieth

¹⁹ For more on this, see Edney (1997).

century force “a revisioning of a cartographic imagination inherited . . . from the military and political spatialities of nineteenth century states” (Cosgrove, 5). Greene himself appears to share this vision, as a letter from March 1926, commenting on “some splendid photos . . . in to-day’s **Times** taken by the expedition which has been exploring the Amazon by air,” reveals: “The next twenty years will be full of that type of expedition – what with the Amazon, the Poles and New Guinea” (Cited in Sherry 1989, 294). In Bruce’s **Polar Expedition**, however, this new technical means of surveying space appears firmly in the service of, rather than divorced from, the military and political spatialities to which Cosgrove refers.

Key to Britain’s imperial ambition in the Antarctic during this period was the influence of Amery’s contemporary, Halford J. Mackinder. On 25 January 1904, Mackinder delivered a hugely influential paper to the Royal Geographical Society in London. In it, he declared “the era of geographic exploration as nearly over,” to be supplanted by an era of “closed space” (1904, 421-22) – a world where all earthly space “is charted, claimed [and] interconnected” (Coroneos 2002, 15). In this closed-space world, Antarctica was widely recognised as being “one of the last pockets of unclaimed and unstated space” (Dodds 1997, 30). One of the central geographic observations made by Marlow in “Heart of Darkness,” that Africa has “ceased to be a blank space of delightful mystery – a white patch for a boy to dream gloriously over” (Y 52), therefore carries with it something of the professional opinion of imperial geographers such as Mackinder

at the turn of the twentieth century. In mid-1930s Liberia, however, Greene claimed to have found not only another of the map of empire's "last pockets" of blank space, but one residing, moreover, **in** Africa. The casting of Liberia as an unknown, blank space in Greene's 1936 West African travelogue **Journey Without Maps**, seemingly born less of the "Geography Triumphant" of his contemporary moment than of the "Geography Militant" of the preceding century, provides the basis of discussion in Chapter Two.

Chapter Three focuses on the archive, a subject that, as Antoinette Burton argues, has through a recent proliferation of theoretical applications somewhat slipped its critical moorings. As Burton puts it, "the archive is everywhere and hence nowhere" (2006, 5). Jacques Derrida's hugely influential 1996 study, **Archive Fever**, provides an important touchstone here, both as one of the wellsprings of this recent proliferation, and as the cause of some not inconsiderable fever of its own among other critics who found that it had little to do with the "archive" in the conventional sense, as a physical institution, at all. Instead, Derrida removes the archive from its traditional spatial and semantic definitions, making central the interrelated issues of time and memory. For Derrida the archive is not so much a space as a "moment." He focuses on what he calls the "moment proper to the archive": "the instant of archivization strictly speaking . . . is not so-called live or spontaneous memory," but "a certain hypomnesic and prosthetic experience of the technical substrate" (1996, 26). To put it less gnomically, "archivization" represents the moment of writing, utilizing

the inscriptive capacities of writing as a technology. As a characteristic piece of authorial trickery reveals, whereby the “moment” of the archive is simultaneously conjured by and co-present with his writing about it, Derrida has one particular technology in mind:

Was it not at this very instant that, having written something or other on the screen, the letters remaining as if suspended and floating yet at the surface of a liquid element, I pushed a certain key to ‘save’ a text undamaged, in a hard and lasting way, to protect marks from being erased . . . to stock, to accumulate, and . . . to make the surface available in this way for printing and reprinting, for reproduction? (26)

By emphasizing computer technology, Derrida offers a much more fluid concept of the archive than traditional notions of its materiality and fixity allow for. Yet Derrida’s definition is also in some ways restrictive. Conrad’s famous opening observation in **A Personal Record** that “Books may be written in all sorts of places” (3) carries with it a corresponding implication, bound up with Eurocentric ideas of what constitutes “literature,” that they are not. Similarly, Derrida’s siting of the archive in computer technology (through which archival resources such as the internet can be accessed “in all sorts of places”) seems interlaced with problems of exclusivity and access. That such problems attach to Derrida’s definition is

nothing if not apt, however, given the classical notion of the archive as the place “where men and gods command” (Derrida 1996, 1).

In recent theorizations the archive is seen less in terms of locality and emplacement, than as “encompass[ing] the whole of modern information technology, its storage, retrieval and communication” (Steedman 2001, 4), as these passages from Derrida suggest. Put in this context, Conrad’s attentiveness throughout much of his fiction to the spread and nature of early mass communications, from the telegraph to the mail-boat, needs reconsidering. As well as being keyed to more recent critical explorations of the archive, Chapter Three is grounded in theorizations contemporary with Conrad’s life and works. The Greenwich bomb outrage featured in Conrad’s 1907 novel **The Secret Agent** is presented as an attack on Western science, “The sacro-sanct fetish of to-day” (31), and in particular the science of time, Greenwich being the then-recently ratified “first meridian” (37), the centre-point of global time. Conrad’s 1920 adaptation of the novel for the stage carries what might usefully be seen as a postscript to Vladimir’s assessment of “science,” here spoken by the Assistant Commissioner: “in the end everything gets reduced to writing” (**The Secret Agent: A Drama in Three Acts**, 87). Thus, added to the “sacro-sanct fetish” of modern science is a corresponding fetish surrounding the archive, the “archive fever” later anatomized by Derrida. Conrad’s assertion in the stage version of **The Secret Agent** that “everything gets reduced to writing” provides the platform for discussion in Chapter Three, which concerns debates then taking place in Conrad’s

contemporary moment surrounding the concept, production, and validity of an imperial archive: “the organization of all knowledges into an imperial whole” (Richards 1993, 6-7). As Neil Smith observes, the imperial project was in many ways an archival project, too, marked by the scramble not just for territories, but also a “scrambl[e] to learn from and to surpass the recorded knowledge of the Greeks and Romans as well as later Arab thinkers” (1992, 261). These geographical and inscriptive projects, of course, went hand-in-hand, as is suggested by Derek Gregory’s description of one of the first such applications of imperial power-knowledge, the monolithic **Description de l’Égypte** (1809-1829), as “an unprecedented textual appropriation of one country by another” (2000, 316). As we have seen, Conrad’s Malay fictions were likewise seen in imperial Britain as belonging to this appropriation, as is shown by an oft-quoted article from **The Academy**, in which Conrad’s early short tales “Karain: A Memory” (1897) and “The Lagoon” (1897) were lauded for their perceived geo-graphing of Malaya – for “the real transference to paper of something of the very heart of the country” (Unsigned, 14 January 1899. In Sherry, ed. 1973, 109). My exploration of the interplay between archive and empire in Chapter Three, however, does not centre on these short tales, or on **The Secret Agent**. Rather, my focus is on Conrad’s long-neglected 1912 short story “Freya of the Seven Isles,” which, unlike his much-celebrated political novel (the critical reputation of which was recently further underlined and enhanced by the series of international conferences and scholarly

publications devoted to it during its centennial year),²⁰ Conrad studies have seemed content to let gather dust.

In the Preface to **The Nigger of the “Narcissus”** (1897), perhaps the closest he ever came to expressing an artistic credo, Conrad declares that: “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**. That – and no more, and it is everything” (x; emphasis in original). For some of his early critics, however, the power of the written word, as arranged on the page by Conrad, was not so much a revelatory as an obfuscatory one. One such critic, later Conrad’s friend, was the novelist H.G. Wells. Reviewing Conrad’s second novel **An Outcast of the Islands**, which appeared the year before his Preface to **The Nigger**, first published in the December 1897 issue of **The New Review**, in 1896, Wells described Conrad’s narrative method thus: “Mr Conrad is wordy; his storytelling is not so much told as **seen intermittently through a haze of sentences**” (1896, 509; emphasis added).²¹ The technical bravura that later critics took as a mark of Conrad’s early Modernist credentials was at the time merely an affirmation, for some, of Conrad’s

²⁰ In particular, see the Centennial Essays issue of **The Conradian** 32.1 (Spring 2007).

²¹ While some early critics such as Wells bemoaned Conrad’s stylistic “haze” (a charge subsequently picked up and apotheosized by E.M. Forster’s famous criticism in his review of **Notes on Life and Letters** [1921] that Conrad was misty in the middle as well as at the edges), such a view, though influential, was not strictly consensual; others saw in Conrad’s writing a “comprehensiveness of vision” and an “amplitude of outlook” which made him “more than just a story teller” (**The Academy**, 14 January 1899. In Sherry, ed. 1973, 109).

“foreignness,” “as if this somehow explained the complexity and ‘strangeness’” of his fiction (Simmons 2006, 221). Yet Wells’s deliberations on **An Outcast** also anticipate later criticisms where the aesthetic value of Conrad’s narrative method lay precisely in its “haziness.”

One of the most influential of these criticisms, Ian Watt’s monumental **Conrad in the Nineteenth Century** (1979), for instance, situates Conrad’s “approach to visual description” in Impressionism, introducing the notion of “delayed decoding” to describe the gap between sensory experience – including sight – and cognitive understanding (1980, 175).²² More recent readings by Martine Hennard Dutheil de La Rochère and Stephen Donovan similarly follow visual paths, uncovering interesting connections between Conrad’s fiction and contemporary technology, popular culture, and philosophy.²³ Hennard Dutheil de La Rochère (2004) looks at the influence of contemporaneous technological advances in medical science, in particular the X-ray (“discovered” by Wilhelm Röntgen in 1895), on the representation of the “hollow men” of “Heart of Darkness” (1899),²⁴ while Donovan examines Conrad’s response to technological developments in the arts, particularly the rise of new visual media such as motion

²² See also Knapp Hay (1975) and Thornton (1976). For a more recent full length study of the impact of Impressionism on Conrad, see Peters (2001).

²³ See also Jones (1999), pp. 177-91; and Yeow (2009).

²⁴ Stephen Kern makes a similar argument for the X-ray’s impact on the art of the period, in particular the Cubism of Picasso and Braque. See Kern (2003), p. 143.

photography (2005, 15-62).²⁵ Indeed, all three of these technological, popular cultural and philosophical threads are brought together in the example of cinema. Contemporary study of the workings of the human mind had led the French philosopher Henri Bergson to claim, in his *L'Évolution créatrice* (1907), that consciousness worked on cinematic lines: “Whether we would think . . . or express it, or even perceive it, we hardly do anything else than set going a kind of cinematograph inside us.” Bergson concluded that “the **mechanism of our ordinary knowledge is of a cinematographical kind** (1911, 306; emphasis in original). As if to illustrate Bergson’s conclusions, Conrad’s 1907 novel *The Secret Agent*, published the same year as Bergson’s treatise, carries a striking passage in which Winnie Verloc dwells on the grisly demise of her younger brother, Stevie, the victim of the novel’s bungled attack on Western “science”:

She remembered now what she had heard, and she remembered it pictorially. They had to gather him up with the shovel. Trembling all over with irrepressible shudders, she saw before her the very implement with its ghastly load scraped up from the ground. Mrs. Verloc closed her eyes desperately, throwing upon that vision the night of her eyelids, where after a rainlike fall of mangled limbs the decapitated head of Stevie lingered suspended

²⁵ For an analysis of the ways in which Conrad’s narrative method carries with it echoes of cinematic techniques, see Spiegel (1976).

alone, and fading out slowly like the last star of a pyrotechnic display. (260)²⁶

Hannah Arendt has argued that, “Since Bergson,” the centrality of sight in Western philosophical discourse “has kept dwindling . . . as emphasis and interest have shifted entirely from contemplation to speech, from **nous** to **logos**” (Cited in Levin 1993, 2). The point to make, however, is that in the early decades of the twentieth century Bergson’s ideas about consciousness were still hugely influential, and this leaves its mark on Conrad’s fiction.

Bergson’s ideas were clearly still current when Greene’s fourth novel **Stamboul Train** was published in 1932, as an early scene, recalling Bergson’s “cinematograph inside us” (1911, 306), reveals: “The stir of life, the passage of porters and paper-boys, recalled for a moment the goose market, and to the memory of the market she clung, tried to externalize it in her mind, to build the bricks and lay the stalls, until they had as much reality as the cold rain-washed quay, the changing signal lamps” (**ST** 9-10). The inclusion in **Stamboul Train** of a fictional popular novelist, Q.C. Savory, almost led to the novel being blocked and Greene being dropped by his publisher when his contemporary at Heinemann, J.B. Priestley, believing that Savory was based on himself, threatened to sue for libel (**ASL** 213). While Savory was, as Greene repeatedly emphasized, not

²⁶ For a discussion of this passage in relation to the novel’s subsequent adaption for the screen, see Hampson (2009).

modelled on Priestley,²⁷ there is an interesting consonance between Savory and Greene himself, whereby the reflections of his fictional counterpart on the lessons “the films had taught the eye” – lessons which “must be conveyed in prose” (*ST* 122)²⁸ – chime with Greene’s own feelings about the galvanizing effect of the new medium of cinema on literature.²⁹

Stamboul Train was the first of many of Greene’s novels to be adapted for the screen (as **Orient Express**), indicating another set of relations between page and screen. Whereas earlier writers including Conrad had approached the medium with suspicion,³⁰ Greene had, in his own self-mythologizing words, deliberately “set out to write a book . . . which with luck might be made into a film” (*WE* 26). Indeed, the sale of **Stamboul Train** to Twentieth-Century Fox in May 1933 gave Greene the first financial security he had had since leaving his editorial post at the **Times** at the end of 1929 in order to commit to writing full-time (Sherry 1989,

²⁷ See Sherry (1989), pp. 435-36.

²⁸ As Greene later remarked: “When I describe a scene, I capture it with the eye of the cine-camera rather than the photographer’s eye – which leaves it frozen. In this precise domain I think the cinema has influenced me” (Allain 1983, 132). For a brief discussion of the consonances between Greene and Savory, see Smith (1986), p. 28.

²⁹ The contemporary notice of **Stamboul Train** in the 28 December 1932 issue of **Punch** magazine pointed up this effect, if not its cause, when singling out Greene’s “powers of observation” (“En Route,” 1932, 726).

³⁰ For Conrad’s attitude to the cinema, see Moore (1997), pp. 37-38. For an account of the views of other writers of the period including Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, D.H. Lawrence and Aldous Huxley, see Seed (2005), esp. p. 61.

475).³¹ Greene's five-year stint as a film reviewer also began during this period, when he was appointed film critic of **The Spectator** on his return from Liberia in mid-1935 (**WE** 58). Yet, if writing for the cinema had given Greene's early career some much-needed stability (as the sale of **Stamboul Train** underlines), writing **about** it proved to be of less benefit. Greene's litigious review of the 1937 Shirley Temple production **Wee Willie Winkie** (based on Rudyard Kipling's 1888 imperial children's tale) for **Night and Day** saw substantial damages awarded against him and helped bring about the end of the equally cash-strapped magazine, which he co-edited.³²

Whilst inevitably touching upon Conrad and Greene's engagement with cinema, the main thrust of discussion in Chapter Four is directed more to exploring the ways in which these two authors are attentive to the overriding ocularcentrism of colonial modernity. Critics such as David Michael Levin have cautioned against monolithic representations of ocularcentrism as a single, coherent force operative within Western culture, stressing instead that its "forms of incorporation, power, and normativity" are "historically distinctive" (Levin 1993, 3). The present discussion does not, therefore, treat the "imperial gaze" as a totalizing phenomenon, but threads together some of its "historically distinctive" forms, from the imperial geography of Halford J. Mackinder, to the

³¹ Greene's own account of the boost given to his career by the sale of the film rights to **Stamboul Train** can be found in a 1958 article, "The Novelist and the Cinema: A Personal Experience" (Rpt. in **Reflections**, 200-5).

³² For an account of Greene's review and the ensuing libel action, see Sherry (1989), pp. 619-22.

contemporary race theory of the British ethnographer W.H.R. Rivers, to the discursive legacy of nineteenth-century European and twentieth-century American forms of Orientalism.

We have already touched upon how the Napoleonic **Description de l'Égypte**, produced during the first decades of the nineteenth century, offers a prime example of the imperial project's archival element as "an unprecedented textual appropriation of one country by another" (Gregory 2000, 316). As Derek Gregory has emphasized, the **Description** also offers a key example of that project's disciplinary gaze, inasmuch as its accompanying illustrative plates put forward a vision of the order "the East" was perceived by Europeans to lack – an order which is implemented, of course, in the pages of the **Description** itself. In a direct echo of Conrad's declaration of his "task" as an artist in the Preface to **The Nigger of the "Narcissus,"** one critic, in an unsigned article proclaiming **The Academy's** "Crowned' Books for 1898," declared that Conrad "makes us see" the represented geographies of his Malay fiction: "This description opens a new world to the untravelled reader. It is the East" (In Sherry, ed. 1973, 110). The coercive aspect of Conrad's imperious statement of artistic intent carries in this Orientalist context of a regimented, ordered "East" a particular charge, providing a useful touchstone for the discussion in Chapter Four of two works that take the East as their backdrop: Conrad's early short tale "The End of the Tether" (1902) and Greene's mid-career novel **The Quiet American** (1955).

The discourse of race has long had a place in Conrad criticism. It emerged as a shaping detail of Conrad's early reception when contemporary critics – perhaps most notably Conrad's friend and early mentor Edward Garnett – began referring to him as a "Slav" (Simmons 2009b, 189): "that label," as Conrad put it just prior to his death in 1924 (Letter to Charles Chassé, January 1924. Cited in GoGwilt, 1995, 39). Although Garnett intended it as "a mark of the cultural prestige of Conrad's Polish origins" (GoGwilt 1995, 131), Conrad himself found the attribution, given his profound resentment of Russia and the nationalist and imperialist concept of "Pan-Slavism," to be misplaced, chiding Garnett in letters for his "**idée fixe**" (CL3, 492).³³ In the years since, Conrad's complex engagement with matters of race and empire in his fiction has likewise generated some heated discussion. In a now-infamous lecture delivered at the University of Massachusetts in February 1975, the Nigerian novelist and critic Chinua Achebe dismissed "Heart of Darkness" for "reducing Africa to the role of props for the break-up of one petty European mind," and attacked Conrad

³³ Greene succinctly draws a line under this disagreement in his 1937 review of *Conrad's Prefaces to his Works*, in which Garnett had again raised the issue of Conrad's racial origins and affiliation in his introductory essay: "Edward Garnett brings up again the old legend of Slavic influence which Conrad expressly denied. The Polish people are not Slavs" ("Remembering Mr. Jones," *The Spectator* CLIX [17 September 1937]: 469-70. Rpt. in CE 140). For an extended discussion of Conrad's response to, and struggle to correct, this designation, see GoGwilt (1995), pp. 38-42; 131-55.

himself as “a thoroughgoing racist” (1988, 257).³⁴ Achebe’s dismissal significantly altered the landscape of Conrad scholarship. Indeed, it is through Achebe that Conrad lives up to, half a century after penning, his own playful epithet: “Conrad controversial” (“Author’s Note,” *NLL* vi). Achebe implicitly questioned Conrad’s canonical place, sealed by F.R. Leavis’s *The Great Tradition* (1948), by questioning that of “Heart of Darkness,” identified by Achebe as “perhaps the most commonly prescribed novel [sic] in twentieth-century literature courses in . . . American universities” (1988, 259). In fact, because it approached the text from a singularly psychoanalytical perspective – and thus **made it about** “the break-up of one petty European mind” – it is to this North American context and a received interpretation of “Heart of Darkness,” as much as the text itself, that Achebe responds. Nonetheless, Achebe’s remains a key intervention for its anticipation of a shift in Western literary theory in the 1980s and 1990s towards issues of race and imperialism, following the publication in 1978 of Edward Said’s path-breaking study *Orientalism*.

Rather than revisit “Heart of Darkness,” discussion in Chapter Five centres instead on the representation of race in one of Conrad’s lesser known short stories, “The Planter of Malata” (1913), set not in Central Africa, scene of Conrad’s exploits whilst acting master of the **Roi des Belges**, but in and around Australia, where Conrad had a much more felicitous experience during his sea

³⁴ Achebe originally used the words “bloody racist” in his lecture. See *Massachusetts Review* 18.4 (1977): 782-94.

For counter responses, see Watts (1983) and Hampson (2007).

years, nearly settling there in the early 1890s. An early review of the story for **The New Statesman** noted this setting thus: “**The Planter of Malata** takes us to ‘a great colonial city’ [Sydney] and an island out in the wastes of the Pacific” (6 March 1915, 538). Valuing the story more for its depiction of troubled psychological terrains, however, the reviewer concluded that “the essence of it **is not the locality**” (*Ibid.*; emphasis added). For the purposes of the present discussion, however, locality and location – “that particular spot on the earth’s surface” (*WTT* viii) as Conrad later put it in the Author’s Note to **Within the Tides** (1915) – are, if not the essence, then hugely important to a story that, as we will see, is keenly attuned to the growing convergence of issues of race and place in Australian national politics at the turn of the twentieth century.

The critical reevaluation of Greene’s output in the years following his death in 1991 has tended to accrete around the idea of a defining “major phase.”³⁵ This phase typically comprises **The Power and the Glory** (1940), **The Heart of the Matter** (1948), and **The End of the Affair** (1951), thus seeming to privilege Greene’s interests in religion³⁶ rather than his examination of the end of empire (“Colonialism in hurried and undignified retreat,” as Greene put it elsewhere [*ISC* 79]) that characterized later works such as **The Quiet American** (1955). For

³⁵ See, for instance, Roston (2006).

³⁶ Greene himself bridled at being called a “Catholic writer” (“detestable term!” [*WE* 74]), preferring instead to be known as “a writer who happens to be Catholic” (*Ibid.*). For a counter response, see Symons (1983), p. 6.

contemporary critics such as George Orwell, however, the second of this triumvirate of “major” novels, **The Heart of the Matter**, was anything but. Despite its obvious colonial setting, Orwell saw **The Heart of the Matter** as essentially a religious drama, which “might as well be happening in a London suburb” as “a West African British colony” (In Hynes, ed. 1973, 105-6).³⁷ Echoing Achebe’s indictment that Africa merely serves as background and “props” in “Heart of Darkness,” Orwell concluded that in Greene’s novel “Africans exist only as an occasionally mentioned background” (*Ibid.*). (Orwell’s assumption that the colony in question is not Sierra Leone but “probably the Gold Coast” (*Ibid.*), suggests that geography is as much a side issue in his article as in the novel under review.) For modern critics such as Jeffrey Meyers, meanwhile, the novel’s represented West African setting is merely a projection of the central character Scobie’s inner religious torment: “an African hell where the sordid nature of the colonial setting incites his corruption” (1973, 102). Yet, to dismiss the novel’s represented spatial context as mere “background,” or as a spatial reflection of Greene’s “private . . . idea of religion” (Meyers 1973, 102),³⁸ is to ignore the ways in which **The Heart of the Matter**, like “The Planter of Malata,” is attentive to the centrality of ideas of place in the imperialist construction of race during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

³⁷ Orwell was not alone in this opinion; see, for example, Haber (1957).

³⁸ For another theological reading of space in Greene’s fiction, see Diephouse (2002).

1. “A never-ceasing performance”:

Space, Tourism, Theatricality and Empire

IN ONE OF Conrad’s *Last Essays*, “Travel” (1926), he touches upon “the conditions of an explored earth in which the latitudes and longitudes,” “having been recorded once for all,” “have become things of no importance.” “Travel,” as such, gestures toward one of the then-recent accomplishments of modern geography: the production of “the much-surveyed earth,” within which “Nothing obviously strange remains for our eyes now.” With the “basic facts of geography” thus “ascertained” (LE 130-31), this is an era of “closed space” – “a world in which all earthly space is charted, claimed, interconnected” (Coroneos 2000, 15).³⁹ The visual terms of Conrad’s description are particularly of interest. In underlining the production of space, and of spaces, for “our eyes” Conrad points to Europe as the authority and location of this seeing. Moreover, tourism, rather than simply underscoring geography’s demise (or at least the demise of the kinds of geography valorized by Conrad), operates within a similar discipline of surveillance to geography, whereby the earth is opened up to and made available

³⁹ This can be set against Halford J. Mackinder’s famous 1904 proclamation that the “Columbian” era of exploration and expansion, which had structured the pattern of world politics for five hundred years, had passed (Driver 2001, 199). In this context, Marlow’s description of how Africa “had ceased to be a blank space of delightful mystery” (Y 52), applies to “the much-surveyed earth” as a whole: in an era of closed space there have ceased to be, by definition, **any** blank spaces. This assumption, as explored in Greene’s *Journey Without Maps* (1936), will be examined in greater detail in Chapter Two.

for inspection by Europe and Europeans.⁴⁰ So it is apt when, in his second autobiographical instalment **Ways of Escape** (1980), Greene (sounding rather like Captain Mitchell in Conrad's **Nostromo**) describes his travels as emanating from "A restlessness . . . which has never quite been allayed: a desire to be **a spectator of history**, history in which I found I was concerned myself" (**WE** 76; emphasis added). That Greene's summary of the origins of these travel experiences has something of a theatrical element is equally apt, given Conrad's other grumble in "Travel," about the performative nature of tourism: that, in addition to there being, after the culmination of the great era of imperial discovery and exploration, nothing left for the scopic régime of tourism to disclose (there being "nothing . . . strange for our eyes now"), tourism is, in these new "closed space" conditions, "mere performance" in "already explored space" (**LE** 122, 128). Conrad's characterization of the early-twentieth century cultures of travel as being marked by performance provides a key touchstone for our discussion of Greene's own exploration of the cultural terrain of tourism in his essays and travel writing.

⁴⁰ Conrad goes on to complain that: "Presently there will be no back-yard left in the heart of Central Africa that has not been peeped into by some person more or less commissioned for the purpose" (**LE** 129). Conrad's grumble offers an interesting overlap between himself and Greene, who was himself commissioned for such a scopic purpose during the Second World War when, in 1941, he was recruited to Secret Intelligence by his sister Elisabeth and "sent . . . to Sierra Leone as an MI6 officer – a lonely, out-of-the-way posting" (R. Greene, ed. 2007, xxv). On the relevance of Conrad's complaint to Greene's journey to Liberia in 1935, see Chapter Two.

In a sense “closed space” consists, by a curious reversal, in it being “open,” inasmuch that the geographical mastery lauded by Conrad now gives Europeans greater access to the globe. Greene’s 1951 novel **The End of The Affair** makes a brief allusion to this type of spaciousness. The narrator, Bendrix, recalls “one of those early brown photographs in an Oxford frame,” the man within brimming with what he identifies as “the Victorian look of confidence”: “of being at home in the world and knowing the way around” (EA 9-10). At one level, “being at home” and “knowing the way around” speak figuratively for that Victorian “confidence.” At the same time, however, there is the suggestion of a closer, more literal connection: that the untroubled imperial confidence discernible here is not restricted to Europe or an emergent idea of “the West,” but co-extensive with the world at large.⁴¹ Such confidence, in other words, derives from a very particular, and unprecedented, sense of place for Europeans during the late-Victorian period.

Greene’s 1941 essay, “Mr Cook’s Century,”⁴² written around the same historical moment in which **The End of the Affair** is set, explores these inherited ideas of place in greater depth. Like Conrad’s “Travel,” “Mr Cook’s Century” is concerned with the global character of mass tourism. And, like “Travel,” Greene’s essay has a retrospective element, one of “now” versus “then.” For

⁴¹ For more on the construction and consolidation of the idea of “the West,” see GoGwilt (1995).

⁴² Greene’s essay was originally published as an op. ed. piece in the 4 July 1941 issue of **The Spectator** (Rpt. in CE 234-37).

Conrad this is occasioned by the perception that geographical knowledge, having reached its apogee, has shrunk the globe. Writing against the backdrop of the London blitz in 1941, Greene is also prompted by the sense that the world, made available through tourism, has, with the practise of tourism currently suspended, contracted. This is more than just a case, then, of bemoaning the “insular nature of Great Britain” (SA 282) referred to in Conrad’s *The Secret Agent*. Greene’s essay begins by lauding the fact that Thomas Cook and Son “in 1938 could have arranged you an independent tour to Central Africa as easily as to Ostend” (CE 235). But “the Continental platform at Victoria” – the bustling scene of international departure up until then – is noted for its emptiness now: the “notice, ‘Unexploded Bomb,’ casually explaining what . . . seem[s] the end of everything” (236-37). Backed by the emblematic image of the “stopped” clock, the “end of everything” posits, in an obvious, temporal sense, the end of an era. In a less obvious, spatial sense, this “end” also suggests the very delimitation of horizons which for Greene have brought that end about.

Hence Greene’s nostalgia for the closing years of what he celebrates as “Mr Cook’s Century,” a period when, he claims, “there were few places in the world to which an excursion had not been arranged” (CE 236) by the famed tourist firm. In short, Greene is nostalgic for the very sort of elite, organized travel for the privileged amateur, as offered by Cooks, whose ascendancy Conrad

laments in the late essay “Travel” and throughout much of his writing.⁴³ Thomas Cook started out in Leicester in 1841 as a small, rail-based concern. However, a decade later the company was firmly on the map, having helped transport some 150,000 people from around Yorkshire and the Midlands to the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London’s Hyde Park. This feat was followed in 1855 by the company’s first continental tour, and, in the mid- to late-1860s, by tours to North America (1866) and Egypt and Palestine (1869). By 1872, Cook and Sons, now based in London, was able to offer a 212-day Round the World Tour for 200 guineas, journeying westwards from Britain, across the continental United States, and taking in Japan, China, and India.⁴⁴ The strides taken by Cook’s over this thirty year period can be seen to provide a measure of the pace of change in geographical knowledge – as well as in transport and communications – during the mid- to late-Victorian period.

One cause of Conrad’s displeasure in “Travel” is that the modern, global form of European travel (particularly the long-haul variety in which Thomas Cook and Sons specialized) necessarily depends upon, and thereby registers, the achievement of closed space. The mere fact of the new tourism relegates to the

⁴³ For more on this see Donovan (2005), esp. pp. 75, 79, 82-92. Conrad’s prejudice, shared by other writers such as his close friend Stephen Crane, was as Felix Driver has argued “utterly conventional” (2001, 5) during this period.

⁴⁴ There is some speculation that the Moorsom family of Conrad’s 1913 tale “The Planter of Malata” have taken this tour. See Donovan (2005), p. 86.

past that which, in the first place, helped to bring this geographic closure about – confirms, in short, the passing of what in Conrad’s eyes was a more exalted era of imperial discovery and exploration, mapping and survey, the period of “Geography Militant” designated in another of his **Last Essays**, “Geography and Some Explorers.” Furthermore, the arrival of such “tourist modernity,” as Stephen Donovan terms it (2005, 202), does more than simply confirm an “epochal shift in the nature of travel” (75); there is also something of an epistemological shift. Those “unknown” spaces of “the days of heroic travel” are now a set of “seldom-visited places” (**LE** 128-29), characterized, that is, by where they fit into the reticulation of the modern world by tourism – rather than geography – as “a systematized knowledge of the world” (Culler 1981, 139).

“Mr Cook’s Century” dourly concludes that, for Cook in particular and tourism in general, 1941 has been “a rather sad, centenary year” (**CE** 237). In private correspondence, meanwhile, Greene gleefully re-casts London and its bomb-sites as touristic ones, of a sort: “London is extraordinarily pleasant these days with all the new open spaces, and the rather Mexican effect of ruined churches” (To Anthony Powell, 16 December 1940. In R. Greene, ed. 2007, 106). While this smashed topography is clearly suited to the fictional settings of “Greenland,” the label by which critics have come to know Greene’s represented, and recognisably seedy, worlds,⁴⁵ Greene’s eye for a ruin is

⁴⁵ See, for instance, the description of Pinkie and Rose’s “common geography” in **Brighton Rock** (1938): “the houses which looked as if they had passed through an intensive bombardment, flapping gutters and

noteworthy for other reasons. As David Harvey points out, the German sociologist (and rough contemporary of Conrad) Georg Simmel saw ruins as symbolizing the conditions of “a rapidly transforming world” (1989, 272). Such globally transformative conditions have, symbolism aside, produced these ruins that Greene perceives as being in some way “Mexican.” For although the war might bring with it a sense of enclosure at odds with the growing expansiveness that for Greene characterizes “Cook’s Century” (when “there were few places to which an excursion had not been arranged”), in his eyes it has also produced, **within** what was once the hub of this prior age of European tourism, a kind of space similar to that which Cook’s tourists might have visited. The drawing of such similarities (whatever their truth-value) typifies how tourism produces space, according to Jonathan Culler, “by articulating the world as a series of equivalent spectacles” (1981, 139).⁴⁶

Greene, of course, has good reason to make this particular comparison, having been to Mexico and visited a series of ruins there; moreover, Greene’s

glassless windows, an iron bedstead rusting in a front garden, the smashed and wasted ground in front where houses had been pulled down for model flats which had never gone up” (90). The term “Greenland,” which has since become an entry in **The Oxford English Dictionary**, is thought to derive from an overheard song in Greene’s 1936 novel **A Gun For Sale**. For more on the term’s genesis and evolution, and Greene’s response to it, see Hoggart (1973), Spurling (1983), pp. 60-61, and Watts (2006), p. 13.

⁴⁶ As well as this globalizing effect tourism can, on the other hand, also have a localizing one. As Susie O’Brien has argued, “the expansion of consumer and tourism markets” also leads to “the intensification of some local differences” (2007, 85).

visits to what he terms “the archaeologists’ Mexico” (LR 14), were made as part of a Cook’s tour. This experience is recorded in Greene’s Mexican travelogue, **The Lawless Roads** (1939):

One day I went on a Cook’s tour of the Monastery of San Agustín Acolman and the pyramids of Teotihuacán. The monastery lies below the level of what was once all lake; it had to be abandoned more than a hundred years ago. It was founded by twelve survivors of twenty Augustinian friars who landed in Mexico at the beginning of the sixteenth century, before the city of Mexico had fallen to Cortés. The monastery was built first and the little balcony still remains where Mass was said in view of the Indians on the plain outside. Then after twenty years, in 1539, the great tall church was completed, and one wonders how it was that twelve friars, picked at random by Providence to survive, were able to plan a building of such beauty. They planned, I suppose, on the lines of what they knew, but what an exact – and loving – memory they must have had of the Spanish monasteries. We think of these churches now as Mexican, or Colonial; but in those first decades in a continent which had been discovered less than fifty years before, in the appalling strangeness of a land which

should have been over the world's edge, they must have seemed not a style of architecture, but an acre of home. (88-89)

In this passage, Greene focuses less on the contacts freshly established by, and played out between, European friars and indigenous "Indians." Rather, the emphasis is on the architectural character of the contact maintained by these friars between the New World and Europe. If tourism operates, as Culler argues, through making a series of equivalences between spaces, Greene intimates how, in its earliest phases, colonialism is involved in the construction of a similar set of equivalences.

In Greene's account, indigenous ruins, such as "the pyramids of Teotihuacán" which date back to before the Spanish conquest, are passed over in favour of an emphasis on the remnants of early European settlement. Historically speaking, Greene places the action near to the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century beginnings of "Geography Militant," the name given by Conrad in "Geography and Some Explorers" to the phase of imperial discovery and exploration that paved the way for European expansion in the modern colonial period, supplanting the "fabulous" geography of the medieval period, when "the medieval mind . . . crowded its maps with pictures of strange pageants, strange trees, strange beasts [and] imaginary kingdoms" (LE 2); such "circumstantially extravagant speculation" (*Ibid.*), when Europe has a colonial presence in "a land which should have been over the world's edge," as Greene puts it in **The Lawless**

Roads, no longer has any theoretical purchase. As Robert Hampson elaborates, this “new period began with Prince Henry the Navigator and Portuguese exploration of the African coast,” which led both to “the discovery of the New World and the opening of the Indian Ocean,” and a “return to empirical mapping, based on the daily experience of sailors, rather than [the] dogmatic and fabulous geography” of medieval Christian cartography (2000, 20). Yet, as Conrad complains in “Travel,” this era of “militant” geography has, like the “extravagantly” speculative medieval one before it, now ended. At one level, then, Greene’s tourist experience, in his eyes, brings into the present the very era of territorial expansion and conquest whose passing tourist modernity has, in Conrad’s historical vision of geography, confirmed.⁴⁷

From casting an eye over human, architectural interventions in the Mexican landscape, Greene finds its natural life – and, moreover, attempts at describing it – equally beguiling: “The Romantics would have enjoyed the Mexican scene, describing it as ‘sublime’ and ‘awe-inspiring’” (LR 63). However,

⁴⁷ In fact, the longer Greene stays in Mexico, the further back in time, it seems, is his mind cast. In later pages, Greene finds in Mexico something akin to Conrad’s “fabulous” pre-Columbian geography: “we came out of the forest on what seemed to be at last the top of the world . . . the last pale golden light welling across the plain, dropping down over the ridge which ended as if over the world’s edge, so that you thought of the light going on and on through quiet peaceful uninhabited space. It was like a scene from the past before the human race had bred its millions – England of the Conquest before the forests had been cut, a herd called Sweyn, the wattle huts, the world of Ivanhoe” (LR 203-4). The European emphasis in this reverie is notable, evoking, paradoxically, a historical moment when Mexico did not for Europeans exist.

Greene only invokes how the Romantics might have represented Mexico so as to put distance between their project and his own. Rather than make the grand, sweeping flourishes of a Romanticist textuality (while at the same time making, by invoking, them) and trying to take in “the Mexican scene” as a “sublime” whole, Greene’s attempts at landscape description operate at a more local level. Hence a focus on such things as: “cacti . . . like some simple shorthand sign for such words as ‘barrenness’ and ‘drought’; you felt they were less the product than the cause of this dryness” (LR 38). Greene’s grapple with signification is particularly salient given his tourist context. As Jonathan Culler argues, “tourists are the accomplices of semiotics,” because “[a]ll over the world [they] are engaged in semiotic projects, reading cities, landscapes, and cultures as sign systems” (1981, 128). Taking for granted the global character of tourist modernity bemoaned by Conrad (as something practised “all over the world”), Culler flags up the degree to which Greene’s semiotically-driven spatial engagement is as equally widespread a phenomenon within tourism itself.

In “Mr Cook’s Century,” Greene is keenly aware of another semiotic engagement. This essay, which emphasizes the ever-growing list of geographies made available for European travel during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, also alludes to the growing influence of advertising as one of the motor forces behind this expanding travel. Greene begins the essay by stressing that the scene of its writing is, coterminously, one of reading, too: “I have before me a copy of a paper called Cook’s Excursionist, for 18 March 1899” (CE 236). He

goes on to list “the advertisements – for Dr E. D. Moore’s Cocoa and Milk, and the Compactum Tea Baskets,” remarking that: “I like to feel that this – the spring of 1899 – marks the serene height of Mr Cook’s Tours” (*Ibid.*). There is more than the hint of a suggestion, having already established that Cook’s literature is co-present (“before me”) with his writing about it, that Greene’s sense of this “serene height” is both the design and product of these advertisements. Stephen Donovan has commented that Conrad’s fiction sustains a complex engagement with advertising not simply at the level of the self-evident (such as Marlow’s dismissal of political propaganda as “rot let loose in print” [Y 59]), but also, beneath this, on a more discrete plane. Advertising can be seen as a less than “tangible discourse regulating the inner-most desires of individuals” such as the Russian harlequin in “Heart of Darkness” who “praises ‘the excellent English tobacco’” (Donovan 2005, 116). Even Marlow’s apparently casual comparison of his “tin-pot steamboat” to “an empty Huntley & Palmer biscuit-tin” (Y 85) constitutes an engagement with this discourse, as Val Cunningham has shown (1994, 253).⁴⁸ In “Mr Cook’s Century,” Greene brings this discourse closer to the surface by intimating a correlation, perhaps even a causative link, between what he “like[s] to feel” and the advertisement-heavy travel literature before him.

⁴⁸ “What Huntley & Palmers stood for was one of the most extraordinary and far-flung triumphs of colonialist marketing and propaganda that Victorian Britain knew. Huntley & Palmer biscuits, well-preserved in their tins, went simply everywhere” (Cunningham 1994, 253).

The commercial objects presented in this literature, whether “Dr E. D. Moore’s Cocoa and Milk” or “Compactum Tea Baskets,” are imprinted with advertising’s long relationship with empire. As Felix Driver explains:

Visual references to the British imperial frontier in general, and explorers in particular, are common in late-Victorian advertisements for commodities such as soap, tea and pills. As Thomas Richards has argued, ‘the commodity was represented as the bulwark of Empire – as both a stabilising influence and a major weapon in England’s struggle against a bewildering variety of enemies.’ . . . One advertising card [from 1882] for the patent medicine manufactured by Thomas Holloway, for example, presents a striking picture of imperial progress: boxes of pills and ointment are piled up on quays from Constantinople to Canton, signifiers of the global reach of commercial civilization. (2001, 207-9)

This example is particularly instructive: “In late Victorian advertisements, the commodity itself – a biscuit tin, a package of pills, a bar of soap” – or, as in Greene’s copy of the **Excursionist**, a particular brand of cocoa – “was intended to function as a sign of reassurance: the fact that Holloway’s pills were consumed even at the frontiers of the known world was a measure of the global reach of the

values of civilized commerce, and **their immunity to difference**' (210-11; emphasis added).

As Greene's reading of the **Excursionist** in "Mr Cook's Century" amply illustrates, this imaginative investment in the commodity carries over into the newer contexts of tourism, but in a slightly different way. Deriving from a focus on cultures of exploration which by and large precede tourist modernity, the advertisements selected by Driver privilege a particular relation between colonial periphery and centre: "by picturing the commodity on the frontiers of knowledge and power, the glamour of overseas exploration could be associated with consumption at home" (2001, 207). Specifically, these advertisements presuppose a rooted, domestic audience who are interpellated as subjects of Empire. The advertisements that Greene picks up on in the **Excursionist**, on the other hand, address potential consumers for whom, as tourists, "the frontiers of the known world," as Driver puts it, are encountered not just vicariously through the commodity itself, but also at first hand. It is not just the immunity to difference of Western values, but also the traveller's own, personal susceptibility, that is at issue here. Thus: "At John Piggot's in Cheapside you can buy," along with "all the clothes . . . need[ed] for a conducted tour," "the Gladstone bag strapped and double-strapped, secure against the dubious chambermaid and the foreign porter" (CE 236). Greene's foregrounding of luggage security – and the anxiety that attaches to it – is particularly suggestive given the imperial context of these advertisements. Derek Gregory argues that the expansion of European tourism

into other parts of the world during the nineteenth century was partly characterized by the cultivation of a necessary distance – of a kind of “cultural prophylaxis.” In a double-move, the tourist is at once part of, but **apart from**, things (Gregory 2006). “[S]trapped and double-strapped” thus, the Gladstone offers a metonym of this securing of cultural boundaries, lest they blur. Similarly, the scornful depiction of tourists in **Lord Jim** focuses on their “luggage.” Like them, this “would be labelled as having passed through this and that place,” the “gummed tickets on their portmanteaus” supplying the necessary “documentary evidence” – indeed, “the only permanent trace” – of “their improving enterprise” (77). If recent anthropologically-inflected theorizations of its “host” and “guest” relations have centred on the degree to which tourism in its modern form is “a major agent of culture change” for the “host” non-European society (Smith 1989, 9), here the emphasis is on the disavowal of any such possibility on the part of the European “guest.”

In these representations by Conrad and Greene, tourism is accompanied by the erection and maintenance of barriers of a cultural kind. At the same time, tourism is dependent upon – and as an encroachingly global practice reflects – the collapse of real geographical barriers. Greene’s sense of the “serene height” of nineteenth-century tourism is accentuated by the fact that: “By the end of the century . . . there were few places in the world to which an excursion had not been arranged – from the Tea and Coffee Rooms of Bora Bimki to the Deansgate Temperance Hotel in Manchester” (CE 236). This sentence links a

scene in which one kind of beverage is consumed⁴⁹ to one in which the non-consumption of another kind is celebrated – divergent spaces unified by tourism as a transcendent form of cultural consumption. The juxtaposition of Bora Bimki and Manchester, moreover, representing the yoking together of the far-flung and the local, gestures toward the collapse of the same spatial barriers to which Conrad’s “Travel” refers.

Written as “A preface to Richard Curle’s ‘Into the East,’” Conrad’s essay “Travel” opens by appearing to denounce, as “the most assailable of all men’s literary productions” (LE 121), just the sort of travel writing for which he is supplying an introduction.⁵⁰ Conrad proceeds to attack “modern” travel, the means for which such writing is an end, thus:

Nowadays many people encompass the globe. That kind of victory became to a certain extent fashionable for some years after the piercing of the Isthmus of Suez. Multitudes rushed through that short cut with blank minds and, alas, also blank note-books, where the megalomania, from which we all more or

⁴⁹ In Britain during this period tea drinking was packaged as a form of tourism: “Victorian histories of tea . . . present the tea drinker as participating in a type of armchair tourism, vicariously . . . travelling to distant lands via the economic and naval power of British trading companies” (Fromer 2003, 99-101).

⁵⁰ Completed in early August 1922, the essay first appeared in 1923 as the preface to Richard Curle’s **Into the East: Notes on Burma and Malaya**, before it was collected as “Travel” in **Last Essays**, published in 1926.

less suffer, got recorded in the shape of “Impressions.” The inanity of the mass of travel-books the Suez Canal is responsible for took the proportions of an enormous and melancholy joke. (123-24)

In this passage, the “many people encompass[ing] the globe” through tourism are presumably European.⁵¹ There is a clear connection here between the geopolitical mastery that has supplied this “short cut” and the beginnings of mass

⁵¹ This Eurocentric focus derives from Conrad’s inclination to “forget” non-European forms and books of travel – though there does not appear to be much to “forget”: “Of course, I am an ignorant person, from circumstances which it would not be to my advantage to disclose, but I can only call to my mind one Arab traveller who has written a book; and surely if there had been shoals of them I would have heard of another” (LE 123). The Arab traveller to whom Conrad refers is probably Ibn Battutah (or Battuta), who during the early to mid-fourteenth century travelled throughout Africa and the Middle East, India, Ceylon, Malaya and China, and also reached Andalusia. *Rihlah: My Travels*, a record of his travels, was published in translation as *Voyages d’Ibn Battutah, accompagné d’une traduction* in the mid-1880s (See Stevens and Stape, ed. 2010, 428). There is, of course, an important difference between Conrad’s forgetting about non-European travel narratives and his not knowing of them in the first place. As Robert Hampson points out, for example, there are Japanese travel writers and writings in circulation at around the same time that Conrad makes these claims; Sōseki Natsume’s reflections on early-twentieth-century London, *The Cuckoo* (1901-03), *Drifting in Space* (1906), and *Short Pieces for Long Days* (1909), are three such examples. Published in Japanese only, however, these narratives would certainly have been beyond Conrad’s ken, notwithstanding his facility for languages (Hampson, private communication, 2009). This Japanese context assumes further relevance given Conrad’s evident passing interest in Japanese political history: in his 1905 essay, “Autocracy and War,” Conrad unfavourably compares Russian imperialism with the régime of Imperial Japan.

tourism – the global encroachment of which supplies another way in which European mastery is implicitly made manifest. This geographic mastery does not however produce, but rather inhibits, any corresponding textual mastery: in this shrinking world of geographic “short cuts” the kind and quantity of travel book produced thanks to that contraction do not match up to “the classics of travel” of the sort written by or about “the discoverers and the circumnavigators of the globe” (126-27). In any case: “The world of explorers and discoverers, the heroes of my boyhood, has vanished almost to nothing in the nineteenth century” (126). As such, “the time for such books of travel is past on this earth girt about with cables, with an atmosphere made restless by the waves of ether, lighted by that sun of the twentieth century under which there is nothing new left now, and but very little of what may still be called obscure” (128). In inverse proportion to the “mass” of literature for which the Suez Canal “is responsible,” then, is the paucity of unexplored space – and therefore of books about the discovery and exploration of such spaces. Closed space has, in a way, closed down the possibilities of significant textual production.⁵²

⁵² According to Fredric Jameson, one of the consequences of Europe’s imperial expansion during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century is a metropolitan “inability to grasp the way the system functions as a whole” (Cited in Chrisman 1998, 57). This is despite the fact, as Laura Chrisman has since observed, that “[t]he metropole was flooded during [the same] period . . . with representations of imperialism itself as a system and totality” (1998, 58). It could be argued that the mass of travel-books of which Conrad complains have similarly helped to produce a flood of representations, but no insight into the system as a whole.

In **The Lawless Roads**, Greene refers to such a “girt about” earth – particularly the technical means by which it is encompassed:

The neighbours sat round the radio listening to news of Spain, picking out the ravaged villages on a map hung on the wall, marking with enthusiasm Franco’s advance. Somebody said, ‘Turn on the news from London,’ and ‘This is London,’ they said to me. It was still a Spanish voice speaking in Spanish, but it came from London. It welled out of that solid and complacent building in Portland Place, over the Queen’s Hall and Oxford Circus, over the curve of the world, the Atlantic and the Gulf and the Tropic of Capricorn, over the cemetery with ‘SILENCIO’ in black letters . . . over the swamps and rivers, and the mountains and the forests... (205-6)

By placing it in abstract Cartesian grids, maps produce space as homogenous. The scene over which this particular map presides is also marked by the reduction of difference; in this case, through the collapse into one another of different domestic spaces. The wall upon which the map hangs is, literally, a domestic boundary. Within the room contained by this boundary other, disparate domestic spaces are conjured up, brought together, and confused. The map itself is a site of political investment for the Spanish expatriates whose house this is, signifying

Spain as the seat of the domestic in a national (and, as Greene later comes to reflect, troublingly nationalistic) sense. Spain's domestic convulsions are hereby implicitly set against the political and religious schism that first drew Greene to Mexico. That these Spanish concerns are sited in a "London" context, meanwhile, troubles the once stable locus of Greene's own domestic attachments and sense of national identity at the very moment when, as a tourist in what to him is an increasingly alienating Mexico, he has grown needful of re-asserting that identity.⁵³

The conflation of separate, even disparate, geographies is repeated through the technologies connecting Europe with where the listeners are now, thanks to the "waves of ether" which attract Conrad's suspicion in "Travel." Greene's emphasis on the disembodied voice, on the geographies in which it originates and across which it spans – and moreover **links** – suggests a new spatial context for the self, other than the body. Shawn Rosenheim argues that, with the spread of the telegraph in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries – culminating in "Travel" in an earth "girt about" by "cables," traditional boundaries of the self were challenged by the possibility of its "prosthetic extension . . . over a network of wires" (1997, 91).⁵⁴ This brings to mind Conrad's

⁵³ For more on Greene's fraught relationship with Mexico during his travels there, see Sherry (1989), pp. 161-64.

⁵⁴ Conrad's reference to electrification – "that sun of the twentieth century under which there is nothing new left now" – suggests another medium for this technical power.

well-known self-description, **homo duplex**, which distinguishes between his careers as a mariner and as a writer, and his identifications across Polish and English contexts. Conrad claims that “Homo duplex has in my case more than one meaning” (CL3, 89), and Conrad’s self-description might also be used to describe this new spatialized ontology, whereby the self is an essential part of the technical apparatus by which two places are connected. Greene’s list of geographies – ranging “from London,” “over the curve of the world . . . the swamps and rivers, mountains and the forests” – as well as offering a précis of his own journey also suggests a collection of spaces that, thanks to a broader, global reticulation of technologies, are now available to that modern self.

The idea of a self split across two places also informs contemporary commentary surrounding the invention and introduction of an important part of this new technical apparatus: the telephone. As Philip Horne puts it: “in a telephonic exchange the persons speaking to each other are imaginatively in two places at once, their selves divided in a way which disturbs previous conceptions of **presence**. Where, really, **is** a person speaking on the telephone?” (2003, 19-20; emphasis in original). This question of presence becomes, within a Catholic context, especially pertinent, “determin[ing] the saving or not of souls” (*Ibid.*, 20). The crux is spelt out in the prolix title of an 1887 tract by the French theologian le Père Abbé Eschbach, **La Confession par Téléphone, ou, si, dans un cas extrême, un prêtre pourrait confesser et absoudre valablement par le téléphone un absent** (“Confession over the Telephone, or, whether, in an extreme case, a priest could validly confess and

absolve an absent person by telephone”). This tract, “larded with Latin and copious authorities” and directed from Rome, the institutional base of the Catholic Church, sought to produce the definitive answer to its title’s framing question. For Eschbach, the answer is no: “For sacramental purposes a telephone connection does not constitute a real presence” (Horne 2003, 20-21). Such weighty theological matters inevitably would have been of interest to Greene for whom, as a Catholic convert, religion had become a deeply serious issue.

Greene was, furthermore, a convert to psychoanalysis long before taking religious instruction.⁵⁵ As such, Freud’s remarks in **Civilization and Its Discontents** (1930) provide another germane context: “With every tool man is perfecting his own organs, whether motor or sensory, or is removing the limits to their functioning. . . . With the help of the telephone he can hear at distances which would be respected as unattainable even in a fairy tale. These things do not only sound like a fairy tale, they are an actual fulfilment of every – or almost every – fairy-tale wish” (1975, 27-28). Freud’s emphasis on the fantastic is crucial. For, within this vaunting of the telephone user’s ability to collapse distance, there lies a darker implication. As Horne argues, the telephone can be seen – and in the fiction of the period often was seen – as “cast[ing] reality” itself “into doubt”: “it

⁵⁵ Greene first undertook psychoanalysis between 1920 and 1921 aged 17; hitherto an atheist, he was received into the Roman Catholic Church in 1925, aged 22. For more on this, see Sherry (1989), esp. pp. 92-108 (on Greene’s psychoanalysis), and pp. 254-65 (on his conversion). See also Greene’s first autobiography **A Sort of Life** (1971), esp. pp. 69-76 and pp. 118-21; and R. Greene, ed. (2007), pp. 1, 3, 258 and pp. 21, 23.

offers in the present something analogous to what memory offers from the past: a vivid intangibility, a paradoxical half-reality” (Horne 2003, 24). Underneath Freud’s praise of the telephonic possibilities for the self to be in two places at once, then, is the suggestion that it is wholly **in neither**. It perhaps comes as no surprise, therefore, that in addition to Greene’s stress on the seeming omnipresence of modern communication technology (“one had to admire the organization that enabled the message to be printed, to reach Tabasco on the [ship] **Ruiz Cano** . . . and to penetrate even to this derelict northern territory of Chiapas so promptly” [LR 188]), **The Lawless Roads** offers a corresponding glimpse of a narrating European self split between the West, and another, Other space which “didn’t seem to be the same world” (172).

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Greene’s attentiveness in “Mr Cook’s Century” to the accoutrements of travel carries an implicit suggestion that to be a tourist is as much to “play” at being one.⁵⁶ In addition to being attentive to the seemingly extra-corporeal, or rather, prosthetic, component of modern travel, then, Greene also alludes to the ways in which tourism is a performative, embodied practice. It is in part because of this

⁵⁶ There is a considerable literature examining this. See, for example, Callaway (1992).

perceived, and perceptible, theatrical component that Conrad takes such a dim view of modern global tourism in “Travel.” “The traveller,” he writes:

is to be admired for enduring a spectacle almost intolerably gorgeous and varied, but with only hints, here and there, of dramatic scenes, with, practically, no star actors in it, with the knowledge that the curtain will not fall for months to come; and that he must play the exacting part of a spectator. . . . Imagine a lover of drama and of stage effects forced to sleep in his very stall, and, every day, opening his eyes upon a never-ceasing performance. (LE 122)

This passage is doubly reflexive. First, it can be read intertextually in relation to Conrad’s early short tale “Karain: A Memory” (1897), in which the same theatrical frame is thrust, so to speak, centre stage.⁵⁷ In a narrower way it relates directly back to the essay from which it is lifted: where theatricality is also a framing device for those “discoverers and . . . circumnavigators of the globe” (127), the “protagonist[s]” of what for Conrad was a more exalted age of geographical exploration and expansion. Taking Bougainville and Cook as examples, Christopher Balme demonstrates that European representations of

⁵⁷ Several critics have touched upon this. See Johnson (1963), Ambrosini (1991), Drouart (1992), and Hampson (2000).

cross-cultural contact during this era often utilized a vocabulary drawn from the theatre, framing them as “a ‘scène’ or ‘spectacle’” (2007, 1), a practice which in turn reflects how many of these represented encounters regularly did depend on performance as a means of communication on the ground (**Ibid.**). In other words, the re-casting of cultural as theatrical space within such representations has a basis in the reality of contact. This theatrical mode of reference, however, can in the same context prove problematic, as is shown by Conrad’s “Karain: A Memory.”

Balme defines theatricality as “a mode of perception that brackets moments of action or particular places in such a way that they are imbued with extreme concentration and focus.”⁵⁸ As such, it “invariably emphasizes the visual senses and moves the beholder to become aware of his . . . act of spectating” (2007, 6). The unnamed narrator in “Karain” is inherently aware as a stranger to Karain’s geographical and cultural situation – not least because Karain’s domestic authority actually turns upon theatrical display – of his act of spectating. Yet

⁵⁸ My argument draws upon both theatre and (in particular) performance studies, which, it is worth underlining, are more divergent fields of debate than their names suggest. Mary Luckhurst (2008), for example, identifies a schism between the two. According to Luckhurst, the former singularly represents the study of theatre both as text and live art form, whose institutional place and character is very carefully, even restrictively, defined. Equally exclusively, in performance studies everything **but** theatre is scrutinized for its “theatricalness.” Put simply, performance studies seems not so much concerned with theatre as a live art form or institution as with the bracketing and examination of “real” events as inherently theatrical (though definitions of it as **anti**-theatrical, even **anti**-text, perhaps tend toward overstatement).

because “this mode of perception depends on the recognition of pre-existing patterns and conventions” (*Ibid.*), imported into and imposed onto a colonial context, and because the narrator, positioned thus in the role of spectating subject recognizes this recognition, his experience of the cultural encounter, whatever it has to offer him that is **new** on this, “our first visit” (TU 5), inevitably carries with it “a sense of second-handedness” (Balme, 6). Indeed, the spatial, night-time “reality” (TU 9) of this Eastern world seems secondary to its perceived theatricality: “at sunset the night descended upon [Karain] quickly, like a falling curtain. [T]he glittering confusion of stars resembled a mad turmoil stilled by a gesture; sounds ceased, men slept, forms vanished – and **the reality of the universe alone remained** – a marvellous thing of darkness and glimmers” (9; emphasis added). That reality “remains,” suggests the narrator’s acknowledgement of its prior presence, beneath the apparent fakery and “condensed falseness” (6-7). But its perception also remains to some degree a product of the theatrical frame, whereby what is real is not self-evident, but discernible only through the establishment first of what is not. This discursive entanglement has an important bearing on “Travel,” and the “first impressions” (LE 133) that are attached to it. As “Karain” illustrates, the fact that such impressions are subordinate to a prior order of experience inevitably qualifies their “firstness.”

Conrad, as we have seen, disparages modern travel for its geographical second-handedness, as mere “performance” in “already explored” space (LE 122, 128). Yet as Balme suggests, even in “the days of heroic travel” exalted by

Conrad, those spaces of discovery and exploration – before the world was “already explored” – were equally spaces of performance. Recalling Conrad’s claim that “there is nothing new left now,” it could be argued that the pervasive presence of this theatrical frame inevitably qualifies what might have been termed “new” **then**. This is not to dismiss Conrad’s charge. Much like the exploratory project on whose coat-tails it follows, tourism is, as theorizations of it consistently demonstrate, theatrical in character.⁵⁹ As such, Conrad’s term “performance” describes precisely how modern theorists view the adoptive roles encouraged by a tourism which produces the world as a series of stages.⁶⁰

Tourist modernity operates as an extension of the colonial apparatus by which Europeans come to “know” the world, to produce it as theatre and spectacle, in a dramaturgical variant of what Timothy Mitchell identifies as “the world as exhibition” (Mitchell, 1989). That Western tourism carries with it an after-echo of imperialism is hardly surprising, given that, especially in its early phases, it “followed closely on the heels of imperial and commercial expansion” (Graburn 1989, 30). The two waves of mythically-named steamers which intrude upon the Golfo Placido – all owned and operated by the Oceanic Steam

⁵⁹ While “to consider all tourism in a single theoretical scheme” might be problematic (Smith, 38), theatricality has emerged as one of its more broadly agreed upon traits (Balme 2007). That “theatricality” remains something of a “travelling concept,” moreover, is punningly apt given its use as a theoretical term across tourist contexts.

⁶⁰ See Smith (1989), p. 271.

Navigation Company (“the O.S.N. of familiar speech” [N 9]) – in Conrad’s *Nostromo* (1904), underline this overlap. The first wave (comprising the **Juno**, **Ganymede**, **Cerberus**, and **Minerva**) is in the service of Western trade and commerce, part of the novel’s “chronicle of a society in transition from old colonialism to new imperialism” (Parry 1983, 99). That the ships which make up this “new imperialist” presence bear names borrowed from a mythology alien to Costaguanan culture is suggestive of the cultural collision attending this invasion. The second wave (comprising the **Ceres**, **Juno** and **Pallas**), carrying “privileged passengers” (N 474) into Sulaco, is in the service of Western travel and tourism. There is an apt symmetry in the fact that Captain Mitchell, introduced at the beginning of *Nostromo* as the O.S.N. Company’s superintendent in Sulaco, is by the end of the novel a tourist guide, of sorts, for the “more or less willing victim[s]” ferried in by the firm. This double use of Mitchell gives the sense of a framing continuity between the first operation in which the Company is involved (the importation of Western cultural, political, and economic influence during the high imperial era), and the second (the inflow of tourism and its attendant structures). Similarly, the carrying over of mythical names also generates the sense of an equivalence between these two historically separate, and yet, in terms of cultural impact, similar, invasions.

“Mr Cook’s Century” further underlines this point, glossing how Thomas Cook and Son did not just open up the world to the eyes of tourists, but also played a similarly expansive role in support of military and colonial actions:

“they transported Gordon up the Nile, and afterwards the relief expedition – 18,000 troops, 130,000 tons of stores, and 65,000 tons of coal; they reformed the pilgrim traffic to Mecca, deported ‘undesirables’ from South Africa during the Boer War, brought the railway up Vesuvius, and knocked a gap in the walls of Jerusalem to let the Kaiser in” (CE 235). As Stephen Donovan points out, “during the 1885 Sudan campaign Cook’s had . . . transported Kitchener’s army to Khartoum.” Furthermore: “No tourist party or destination seemed impossible to Cook’s. On 10 March 1894, barely four months after the troops of Cecil Rhodes’s British South Africa Company had defeated King Lobengula’s impis, Cook’s monthly magazine **The Excursionist** began advertising a five-month tour of Mataberland for £395. On 2 April, it publicized the launch of a South African battlefields tour, and on 10 September that year . . . reported the opening of a Cook’s office in Cape Town, ‘now that the war is almost over’” (Donovan 2005, 87-88).

In “Mr Cook’s Century,” Greene alludes to how Europeans were oriented to these new spaces of tourism through the publicization in manuals like **The Excursionist** of “points of interest” (CE 235). What is notable here is not what these points themselves describe, but the system by which such spaces (or “points”) are marked as being “of interest.” In **The Lawless Roads**, Greene recalls “Conscience [telling] me that I hadn’t visited any of the right places” (252). Behind Greene’s “conscience,” of course, is a touristic code which prompts it, producing the sense of what “ought not to [be] miss[ed]” (Culler, 139). Before his

Mexican departure Greene describes the scene in “Metroland” – or rather what cannot be seen – touching, in the process, upon the idea of visibility, something tropologically important to tourism and its theorizations: “with visibility shut down to fifty yards you got no sense of a world, of simultaneous existences” (LR 7). Although this obfuscation suggests that there are challenges to European panopticism, that panoptical ability is registered, at the same time, as the norm; thus for the remainder of the narrative concerning his travel to and inspection of alien, non-European spaces, Greene re-asserts that European capacity to know simultaneous spaces and existences.

In order to visit “the right places,” Greene must get back “on the tourist track” (237), implying that prior to this point he has been privy to the “real” Mexico (something implicit in the book’s US title, **Another Mexico**). Yet in spite of the suggested separation of this touristic from a real Mexico, the very idea of a real Mexico is a product of tourism.⁶¹ In any case, the “real” or authentic Mexico is for Greene anything but authentic. Much like the frame narrator in “Karain,” **The Lawless Roads** stresses the seeming artifice of the Mexican scene, a conceptual manoeuvre crystallized by Greene’s pronouncement that “most Mexican things” are “a bit fake” (168). This problem of authenticity, or an apparent lack thereof, is intimately bound up with the inscription of “points of interest.” These “points,” marked thus, inevitably produce a compensatory requirement for “authentic”

⁶¹ For a fuller account of this semiotic double-bind, see MacCannell (1973) and Culler (1981).

space – that is, for places unmarked by tourism.⁶² Dean MacCannell describes tourism spatially, as being notionally divided into “front” and “back” regions. Thus: “In their quest for authentic experience, tourists want to see the inside of things, so social and economic arrangements are made to take them behind the scenes” (Culler, 137-38), an operation that MacCannell terms “staged authenticity.” This theatrical operation of going “behind the scenes,” however, is far from simple – indeed, it might even be seen as paradoxical. Because the “inside” experience must necessarily be distinguished as being such, the touristic code cannot be said to have been left behind; neither, therefore, can the “front” region beyond which “authenticity” supposedly lies. Thus to attempt to travel “behind the scenes” is to trace “an infinite regression of stage sets” (Culler 1981, 138-39). In this way, although “modern travel” takes place upon an earth in which geographical discovery and exploration are no longer deemed possible by Conrad, it nonetheless remains dependent upon the idea, albeit an equally forlorn one, of discovery: of an abstracted, impossible space.

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⁶² The paradoxical idea of a Mexico that is simultaneously real and yet manufactured as such structures even Greene’s attitude to domestic arrangements: “I changed my hotel – it was too brand-new – for a dustier, noisier, more native brand” (LR 71). This sentence captures the way in which his quest for the authentic is bound up with experiencing indigeneity. Greene’s choice of the word “brand” – and the shift from “brand-new” to “brand,” furthermore, is particularly interesting, hinting at an awareness of the processes by which authenticity is marked and inscribed – not to mention commercialized.

In his 1910 essay “The Ascending Effort,” Conrad distinguishes between pre- and post-Ptolemaic conceptions of space: “between a cosmos made to man’s measure and a universe which is alien, meaningless and indifferent” (Erdinast-Vulcan 1991, 1). Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan sees this as fundamentally a distinction “between pre-modernity and modernity,” finding that Conrad’s famous self-description, “Homo duplex,” as well as gesturing to a self split culturally between Polish and British contexts, or between the professions of seaman and writer, also crystallizes a further dichotomy: that of “a modernist at war with modernity” (1991, 1-6). Hence, Erdinast-Vulcan concludes, Conrad’s fascination with remote, exotic settings, where Western forms of “modernity” have yet to intrude. In “Karain: A Memory,” Jackson’s fascination with the remote, exotic setting of Mindanao can be seen as growing out from a similar reaction to Western forms of modernity, which, in a reversal of the narrator’s own binarist assumptions of East and West, similarly sets the supposed “authenticity” of the one against the “inauthenticity” of the other. For Jackson, it is not the East that is “theatrical” and thus “unreal,” as in the narrator’s Orientalizing view, but the West. In other words, Jackson’s perception of Western theatricality offers a transvaluation of the frame narrator’s, and fellow European’s, way of making sense of the world. Conrad hereby suggestively re-directs the European theatrical gaze – an institutionalized perspective or way of bringing “Other,” especially Eastern, parts

of the world into view – back at the cultural location from which it gathers force.⁶³

Christopher Balme argues that Western modernity is in part characterized by a self-reflexiveness as to its everyday artifice – what he calls “the ubiquitous theatricality of modernity,” after Jonas Barish’s discussion in **The Anti-theatrical Prejudice** (1981) of the pejorative meanings which attach to concepts of theatricality in Western culture.⁶⁴ On the back of this perception, Balme argues that Western modernity “creates its own antithesis through an interest” in supposedly more “authentic,” “traditional societies,” a movement and tradition of which Jackson seems to be a part:

⁶³ If Jackson’s perception of Western theatricality plays out as a transvaluation of his shipmate and fellow European’s way of making sense of the world, both viewpoints – although they appear incommensurate – belong to the same discursive frame. Theatricality as a “mode of perception” entails that “things and actions, peoples and places” are not intrinsically “theatrical,” but “are rendered such by a combination of aesthetic conventions and discursive practices” (Balme 2007, 5). Of course, what the narrator and Jackson both insist upon is precisely the inherent theatricality of “peoples and places” – of cultural and material geographies: for one it is the East, for the other, the West. On the European construction of the East as “theatre,” see Said (2003), esp. p. 63.

⁶⁴ An “anti-theatrical prejudice” of another sort is discernible in Conrad’s critical heritage, directed not against the “theatricality” of people and places (as in “Karain: A Memory”), but at the perceived theatrical component of Conrad’s fiction. As Richard Hand observes: “Although the dramatic and theatrical is a remarkably important dimension to many examples of Conrad’s fiction, it has at times been used as a rod with which to beat him” (2005, 3).

[E]ntwined with the moral idea of social intercourse being inherently theatrical is a counteractive tendency towards valuing objects or forms of behaviour that emphasise authenticity. The discourse of authenticity emerges roughly at the same time and can be regarded as the flipside of the unease provoked by an all-pervasive theatricality of everyday life. (Balme 2007, 5-6)

The representation in “Karain” of emergent mass media inflects this theatrical context. Meeting the narrator “in the Strand” (TU 53), Jackson mentions having seen “a paper this morning,” remarking that “they are fighting over there again” (54) – a reference to the “various native risings” (3) in the Malay Archipelago against European rule which he and the narrator, during their gun-running past, have helped to foment. Jackson’s suspicion that the metropolitan scene to which they have both returned is nothing like “as real” as Karain’s Eastern scene (“the other thing” [55]), is countered, in the last line of the story, by the narrator’s own suspicion “that, decidedly, [Jackson] had been too long away from home” (*Ibid.*). Conversely, it could be argued that the explanation lies not in Jackson’s absence from, but his return to, this domestic scene, which, as a centre for the production and circulation of the emergent mass media, has become what Jean Baudrillard describes as “a world where there is more and more information, and less and less meaning,” producing an attendant “impossibility of rediscovering an absolute level of the real” (Baudrillard 1997, 79, 19). If Karain and the East he inhabits are

posited by the frame narrator as the not-quite-real, the domestic scene from which this East is narrated is, in Jackson's eyes, equally reflective of "the real as a lost referent" (Baudrillard, 47).⁶⁵ As vehicles for information, then, the newspapers which at the tale's opening conjure for the narrator the sense of a shared scene of reading, and thereby a preserved connection, between him and his fellow European adventurers Hollis and Jackson, here function collectively as a barrier to the rediscovery of that connection.

Also present in this closing scene in the Strand, is "a line of yellow boards with blue letters" held aloft "like some queer wreckage adrift upon a river of hats" (TU 55). Momentarily providing a point of focus amid the represented chaos of London, there is, however, a corresponding lack of signification; the suggestion is that this failure to signify is less one of the symptoms, than the cause, of this overwhelming sense of tumult. These are advertising boards – literally signs of advertising – marking, as in Greene's "Mr Cook's Century," a brief but complex engagement with advertising as a sign system on Conrad's part. Although there remains a lack of consensus about exactly when in nineteenth-century Britain advertising establishes itself fully as part of the common symbolic

⁶⁵ Writing of Conrad's relation to contemporary propaganda, Mark Wollaeger registers a wider scepticism within Conrad studies toward the kind of postmodernist criticism that Baudrillard represents, "a classic case of heat with no light" (2003, 68). In the present context, however, Baudrillard's comments seem as illuminating as they are provocative.

culture,⁶⁶ Stephen Donovan argues that Conrad's writing, at least, clearly expresses a "resentment" towards advertising as a process, rooted "in a more acute unease about the ascendancy of the commodity" (2005, 122). This "resentment" is widely felt in the closing pages of "Karain: A Memory." Baudrillard's use of a theatrical metaphor to describe advertising's cultural hold and effect seems apt to the final scene "on the greasy pavement" (TU 55) between Jackson and the narrator. As part of mass media which produce the event as sign, advertising produces "the social as a script, whose bewildered audience we are" (Baudrillard 1997, 88). Approached from this angle, Jackson's bewilderment in a sense is, after all, as the narrator says, the result of his having "been too long away from home"; of his unfamiliarity with the "script" through which the "real" is produced.

The "East" of Jackson's remembrance likewise exerts a powerful hold upon the narrator. He begins by recalling the geographic isolation of Karain's location, so "shut off from the land" that "it was difficult to believe in the

⁶⁶ Donovan provides an interesting summary sketch of the claims and counter-claims made for advertising's importance to the British economy in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Thomas Richards's *The Commodity Culture of Late Victorian England* (1990), for instance, observes how the Great Exhibition of 1851 triggered "a national shift towards commodity consumption." Roy Church, meanwhile, argues "that the working class remained largely untouched by advertising until the 1880s" (Donovan 2005, 119). The point to make, though, is that by the represented historical moment of "Karain: A Memory," set some years after the Royal Jubilee commemorated by the sixpenny piece given by Hollis to Karain, the force of advertising was increasingly felt.

existence of any neighbourhood” (TU 5). Yet, his purpose in this remembered location was to supply Karain with arms – “powder” and “serviceable, if old” rifles (19) – to suppress those same neighbourhoods whose existence he seems to question. Critics might see this incongruity as evidence of an unreliable narrator.⁶⁷ Yet, from another approach, this narrative incongruity is marked not by either a willed or indeliberate confusing of events, so much as by what David Harvey, in a variation on Bachelard’s poetics of space, calls the “power of place”: “the straight fetishism of endowing a thing” such as space “with power” (Harvey 1996, 209; this is manifest elsewhere in a slightly different sense, in Karain’s “dislike” of “open space” [TU 11].) That is to say that the narrator finds it “**difficult** to believe in,” as opposed to disbelieving, “the existence of any neighbourhood.”

This fetishization of place is enacted elsewhere in “Karain,” as Robert Hampson explains:

When the narrator . . . attends to ‘the firm, pulsating beat of the two ship’s chronometers ticking off steadily the seconds of Greenwich Time’ as ‘a protection and a relief’ from the ‘noiseless phantoms’ (TU [40]) that Karain’s telling of his tale seems to have summoned up in the ship’s cabin, he is not merely asserting a European scientific and rational order against Karain’s very different reality; **he is also very precisely attending to the fetish which**

⁶⁷ See, for example, Conroy (1994), p. 3.

confirms his identity by always allowing him to know exactly where he is.

(2000, 22; emphasis added)

Although it establishes for the narrator a sense of “home,” the chronometer is ironically the sort of technological development which, as an agent of the space-time compression familiarized by Marx, has hastened “the collapse of certain kinds of spatial barrier” and “undermined older and seemingly secure material and territorial definitions of space” – such as “home” and “nation” – in the first place (Harvey 1996, 208-9). It is revealing, then, that once in Mindanao “the rest of the world,” including the European world around which the narrator’s concepts of “home” and “nation” cluster, no longer seem to have any geographical existence: “There could be nothing outside” (TU 7).

At the same time, Mindanao seems not to have any geographical existence either – at least insofar as that existence is postulated by Europe. To the narrator, Mindanao is “still, complete, **unknown**” (TU 5; emphasis added), “as if the earth had gone on spinning, and had left that crumb of its surface alone in space” (7-8). The narrator later ponders “what the reader thinks” (52). With this almost post-modern rhetorical flourish, Conrad appears to suggest that the narrator’s geographic ignorance might well be shared with the audience at whom “Karain: A Memory” is pitched, that of **Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine**, where the story was serialized in November 1897 (thus initiating the “Blackwood’s period” [Simmons 2006, 159] of Conrad’s literary career, which culminated with the

appearance of **Lord Jim** in 1902). Geared towards a readership drawn largely from the professional classes, **Blackwood's** (or "**Maga**" as it was popularly known) was an influential "pro-imperialist" (Middleton 2006, 36) periodical, and was, as Conrad later put it, seemingly read in "every corner" of the British Empire (CL4 49). Given the dual appeal to this readership's existence, and to the probability that Mindanao's existence is itself "unknown" (TU 5) by this readership, both the frame tale and the tale delivered by Karain which it frames and re-presents offer a means by which the picture of this "isolated corner" (TU 7) might be fleshed-out, to adapt Conrad's phrase from **Last Essays**, within "the scientific domain of the geography triumphant of our day" (LE 9), producing a "reality" that can be measured against the one masked by the "befogged respectability" of those English newspapers whose "intelligence of various native risings in the Eastern Archipelago" (TU 3) first stimulates the memory, and then the telling, of Karain's tale. The suggestion that "Karain: A Memory" might be seen to provide a geographing of "Malaya" for the imperial-slanted audience of **Maga** is strengthened if we examine the contemporary critical consensus that was then being shaped around Conrad following the publication of the early novels **Almayer's Folly** (1895) and **An Outcast of the Islands** (1896), positing him as a future "Kipling of the Malay archipelago" (**The Spectator**, 19 October 1895, 530. In Sherry, ed. 1973, 61).⁶⁸ As

⁶⁸ As Linda Dryden has suggested, Conrad's choice of Eastern settings sat happily with a contemporary lack of other fictions set there: "The choice of the Malay Archipelago offered Conrad relatively uncharted literary territory for his narratives": "Writers like Rider Haggard were making imperial fiction about Africa

one review of **Tales of Unrest**, which appeared in the 14 January 1899 issue of **The Academy**, put it: “It is Mr. Conrad’s achievement to have brought the East to our very doors. . . . He is one of the notable literary colonists. He has annexed the Malay Peninsula for us” (*Ibid.*, 110). Although presumably the other Malay-set tale from **Tales of Unrest**, “The Lagoon,” which rounds out the collection, also falls under this praise, the review singles out “Karain” both as an “ethnological fact[ual]” record and, in particular, as a piece of geographical description: “the real transference to paper of something of the very heart of the country, the nation, described” (*Ibid.*).

In another review for **The Academy**, Edward Garnett praised the “great breadth of vision” of **Tales of Unrest** (Sherry, ed. 1973, 106), arguing that Conrad’s “power of making us **see** a constant succession of changing pictures is what dominates the reader and leaves him no possible way of escaping from the author’s subtle and vivid world.” As in the other **Academy** review, Garnett’s focus is drawn towards Conrad’s represented East: “His technique is modern in the sense that Flaubert and Turgenev are modern, but he develops at times a luxuriance, and to English people an extravagance of phrase which leads us towards the East” (1973, 107; emphasis in original). Garnett evidently had read and taken note of Conrad’s declaration of artistic intent in the Preface to **The Nigger of the “Narcissus”** (1897), repeating in his review of **Tales** the ocular

popular; Kipling was making India his own; R.M. Ballantyne had written about Polynesia; but Malaya remained a relative mystery” (2009, 16).

imperative outlined in the Preface (not to mention its italicized stress on the ocular), to “before all . . . make you **see**” (ix; emphasis in original). As well as acknowledging, thus, the credo from **The Nigger** (of which, indeed, Garnett was the dedicatee), Garnett’s installation of the reader as spectator, like his subsequent evocation of “the East” as a kind of **tableaux vivant**, carries in the context of “Karain,” the opening story of the work under review, a particular relevance, producing “the East,” like “Karain,” as theatre and spectacle.

Yet one critic, Conrad’s later friend Sir Hugh Clifford, notably dissented from this metropolitan consensus. In a review of 1898, Clifford adjudged that: “Mr Conrad’s Malays are only creatures of Mr Conrad, very vividly described, very powerfully drawn, **but not Malays**” (1898, 142; emphasis added). Clifford’s charge, one authorized by his years of experience as a colonial official in Malaya, was that Conrad had failed to capture the “true” Malay character, to which Conrad, in a letter to his publisher William Blackwood, dryly countered that he had not intentionally “set up as an authority on Malaysia” (13 December 1898; CL2 129-30).⁶⁹ The fact that shortly after the serial appearance of “Karain: A Memory” the “authenticity” of Conrad’s represented Malay world was being challenged is nothing if not apt, given that in “Karain” the narrator’s engagement with this world is predicated on a belief in its fundamental artifice. Indeed, whatever its geographical, cultural, religious or political reality, the narrator’s

⁶⁹ For a discussion of Conrad’s exchange with Clifford and its broader representational context, see GoGwilt (1995), pp. 69-87.

sustained insistence on the theatrical and illusory nature of Karain's "scene" works to keep that reality at bay. This sustained insistence grows out as much from the narrator's sense of self (and the needs of place out of which this sense of self is cast), as from the familiar strategy of Orientalism whereby "the East" is constructed as a theatrical space (Said 2003, 63). The narrator's sustained insistence is part of an obfuscating strategy – a refusal fully to know **this** place – by which he can attend to his sense of another. As Douglas Kerr observes, the authority and identity of the European subject are to a degree "guaranteed" across the cross-cultural scenarios conjured by empire by the cultivation of what he calls "a prophylactic ignorance." "The close contact of intimate knowledge is risky, and the enquirer might be swallowed up in that dark . . . and alien interior, and disappear into it for good" (Kerr 2003, 39). As such, the narrator's "prophylactic ignorance," maintained through his insistence on the fundamental theatricality and artifice of Eastern geography and culture, functions like the chronometer as a means by which the co-ordinates of "home" and "nation" can be plotted and re-plotted.

These metaphors of "swallowing" and "alien interiors," evoking European anxieties over the imagined effects of cross-cultural encounter, are clearly at issue in "Karain" when the narrator seems troubled less by the seeming theatricality of Karain and his cultural setting (or "set"), than by what lies, or rather what might **not** lie, beneath it: "He was ornate and disturbing . . . one could not imagine **what depth of horrible void** such an elaborate front could be worthy to

hide” (6; emphasis added). What his perception of a theatrical “front” also registers, then, is a fear of “unnatural space,” in the shape of the vacuum. Conrad draws here upon an anxiety stretching back in Western thought “at least as far back as the Aristotelian **horror vacui**” (Coroneos 2002, 1), which, by definition – “the dislike of leaving empty spaces, e.g. in an artistic composition” (OED) – connects representational practices to spatial thinking.⁷⁰

The narrator’s contemplation of this “horrible void” hinges precisely on the inability to – because “one **could not**” – “imagine” it. This failure of imagination points up a deeper problem of representation, as Edward Grant, writing on the central problem posed by the void in the history of Western spatial theory, from classical Greece to the scientific revolution in Western Europe and beyond, explains. The very idea of the vacuum – the “identification of real, albeit empty, space with ‘nothing’” – is, he suggests, paradoxical:

Described and defined as nothing . . . the void was from the outset . . . subjected to a double entendre. Was it an unintelligible, total privation incapable of existence – a true ‘nothing’? Or was it a nothing conceived of as a something, a something with definite

⁷⁰ It could be argued that, in the late-nineteenth-century context of empire, where one of the central mobilizing metaphors was that of the blank map, the positivist geography of Conrad’s “Geography Militant” was marked and to a significant extent driven by such an **horror vacui**.

properties that could range from a pure dimensionless emptiness
to a three-dimensional magnitude? (1981, 3-4)

Confronted with this ambiguity, “the history of spatial theories represents . . . an attempt to describe and define the properties and characteristics of a real, though for the most part only hypothetically real, separate nothing.” The guiding assumption – and paradox – of this descriptive project, then, is that this “separate empty space [is] conceptually unintelligible and utterly incapable of existence, or even description” (*Ibid.*).

The narrator’s contemplation of the East not only speaks back to the classical roots of Western spatial theory, but is also marked by a problem of representation borne of nineteenth-century Orientalism. Robert Young, returning to one of the central threads of argument in Edward Said’s **Orientalism** (1978), argues “that the discursive construction of Orientalism was self-generating, and bore little, if any, relation to the actuality of its putative object, ‘the Orient’” (1995, 159-61). The crux is that Western discourse about “the East” “**create[s]** not only knowledge but also the very reality [it] appear[s] to describe” (Said 2003, 94; emphasis in original). The double implication, as Young suggests, is that this corpus of knowledge about the East bears no necessary relation at all to its reality, and, following from this, that there is “no alternative to the Western construction of the Orient” – no “real” Orient with geographical and political shape – “because the Orient is itself an Orientalist concept,” located not in the East but in

the West and its institutions (Young 1995, 161). If Orientalism's investment in theatricality as a representational strategy posits one way of knowing "the East," the concern in "Karain" over absences suggests something more than just a corresponding lacuna in this body of knowledge, registering how Orientalism, both in its disciplinary context and as a broader discursive formation, produces "the East" **as** absence.

Correspondingly, the narrator's concern with this "horrible void" does not just attach to the figure of Karain, but colours his recollection of Karain's wider spatial context, being discernible, for example, in his pronouncements on Karain's "isolated corner," of which "[t]here could be nothing outside. It was as if the earth had gone on spinning, and had left that crumb of its surface alone in space" (TU 7-8); and his recollection of "our first" arrival: of a "bay . . . like a bottomless pit of intense light," its "shores enclosing . . . an opaque ring of earth floating in an emptiness of transparent blue" (5). Similarly, the attempt to represent how Karain pictures Europeans and the colonial enterprise couches "the East" as spatial absence: "He looked round the little cabin, at the painted beams, at the tarnished varnish of bulkheads; he looked round as if appealing to all its shabby strangeness, to the disorderly jumble of unfamiliar things that belong to an inconceivable life of stress, of power, of endeavour, of unbelief – to **the strong life of white men, which rolls on irresistible and hard on the edge of outer darkness**" (25-26; emphasis added). That the narrator's experience of the East is projected

as an encounter with spatial absence, can, at a deeper level, be seen as reflecting the structural absence of a “real East” in Orientalist discourse about it.

The narrator reviews the scene of his past exploits precisely **as a scene**, in language appropriate to scenography: “we came to know [Karain’s] stage well . . . the crude and blended colouring . . . the suspicious immobility of a painted scene,” which “enclosed so perfectly the accomplished acting of his amazing performances” (TU 7). However, one of the key scenes in “Karain,” concerning the sharing of the sixpenny piece, hinges on a theatrical display not by Karain, but by the Europeans in the story. For, Hollis’s exhortation to his fellow Europeans “This is no play!” (46) notwithstanding, the efficacy of this charm which he concocts for Karain depends precisely on a carefully-calibrated piece of theatre, one that begins with the stage direction, given to his English shipmates, to “Look serious” (TU 46). For the narrator, this performance conjures a pejorative sense of theatricality, as something “revolving around ideas of **deceit** and **duplicity**” (Balme 2007, 5). To him, Hollis’s claim, “This is no play,” is less a refutation than part of their collaborative (albeit well-intended) “lie.” It could also be argued that Hollis’s claim stems from an ingenuous appreciation, rather than a flippant dismissal, of the seriousness of Karain’s problem. Yet, whatever the motivations behind it, this scene momentarily displaces the framing view of an East performing for European eyes, with one of Europeans performing for Eastern eyes. Said’s point that Orientalism characteristically constructs “the East” as “a theatrical stage affixed to Europe” (2003, 63) is, to a degree, played out in this

scene. But Europeans are here part, rather than mere spectators, of this Eastern drama.

Although much discussed by critics, the sharing of the sixpence remains to be approached from the perspective of theatricality.⁷¹ “Theatricality,” as well as describing the dramaturgical overtones of the sixpence scene, as a theoretical term offers a useful point of leverage with which to engage the sets of cultural relations enacted within it. These relations are heavy with what Balme calls “**cross-cultural** theatricality” (2007, 7; emphasis in original), a term which describes the enactment, in a quite literal sense, of meaning-making across geographical and cultural divisions. In “Karain,” for instance, the theatricality that elsewhere in the story is found a barrier to cultural understanding is, in the sixpence scene, facilitative of it. For, in the same way that theatre “has an integral transformative power – the ability to make a table into a mountain by a simple word or gesture” – cross-cultural contexts have the ability to “transform and redefine signs” (*Ibid.*). Thus, gestures or articles of clothing (in “Karain,” a gilt “Jubilee sixpence,” a “bit of [dark blue] silk ribbon,” or part of “a narrow white glove” [TU 48-49]), “can become theatrical signs as members of different cultures meet and attempt to make sense of each others’ cultural signs.” This kind of theatricality “is particularly marked in first contact encounters, but continues even as cultures become better acquainted with one another” (2007, 6) – precisely the arc

⁷¹ See, for instance, GoGwilt (1991), Adams (2001), and Watts (2003).

described in “Karain,” from the narrator’s recollection of “our first” (TU 5) contact with Mindanao, through to the familiarity bred over the “two years at short intervals [that] we visited him” (18).

Diana Taylor proposes that, in such contexts, performance can be viewed not merely as an embodied and thereby ephemeral practice, but rather archivally, “as a system of learning, storing, and transmitting knowledge” (2003, 16).⁷² It is apt, then, that the sixpence scene relies upon the material presence of an archive, in the shape of the “small, leather box” (TU 46) where the sentimental trinkets and effects – “Amulets of white men!” (48) – of which Hollis makes use are deposited. Key here is Stephen Greenblatt’s term, “mimetic capital,” coined to describe the dynamics of what happens as new signs produced through cross-cultural theatricality begin to circulate. As a term it refers to “the global proliferation, circulation, and also **the stockpiling of representations**” (Balme 2007, 7; emphasis added). At one level, then, Hollis’s recourse to this archive of sentimental effects points, in turn, to a reliance upon a notional archive, wherein the cross-culturally valid representations of which he makes use, and on which the success of his exchange with Karain depends, are “stockpiled.” As Greenblatt

⁷² In taking this archival position, both Taylor (2003) and Balme (2007) challenge the received consensus of performance theory, as adumbrated by Gillian Rose: “Performance, as an iterative act, assumes that no performance outlasts the moment of its acting; the act must be repeated in order to reassert its meaning and power again” (1999, 250).

explains, mimetic capital consolidates over time, as “a set of images and image making devices”:

are accumulated, ‘banked,’ as it were, in books, archives, collections, cultural storehouses, until such time as these representations are called upon to generate new representations. The images that matter, that merit the term capital, are those that achieve reproductive power, maintaining and multiplying themselves by transforming cultural contacts into novel and often unexpected forms. (Cited in Balme, 7)

Hollis’s box is not just an object to be viewed: “[Karain’s] eyes flew to it – and so did ours . . . it was something positive to look at” (TU 46); rather, as a manifestation of such a “cultural storehouse,” it contains objects out of which can be generated “new representations” of cultural meaning pertinent both to his and Karain’s current context.

Just as cross-cultural theatricality connects distant geographies through bodily practice, mimetic capital, on which such practice draws, can therefore be seen as supplementing European expansion. As part of its “global proliferation and circulation of representations,” one of the images that matter in “Karain,” to adapt Greenblatt, is that “of the Great Queen” embossed on the sixpence. Acknowledged by Karain as “the most powerful thing the white men know” (TU

49), the coin underscores the imperial importance of capital in another sense: that the empire over which “the Great Queen” presides relies upon the global proliferation and circulation of capital in its monetary form. While it can safely be assumed that, with “a hole punched near the rim” (*Ibid.*), the sixpence is no longer part of this economic circulation of capital, it nonetheless retains a productive role in imperial expansion by helping to cement on the ground the cross-cultural relations engendered by empire. Although defaced, the sixpence is not a dormant reflection of the economic forces involved in Britain’s geographic expansion during the Victorian era which it commemorates. Rather, brought back into circulation of a theatrical, cross-cultural kind, the coin is, in a sense, actively engaged once more in the imperial project.

The sharing of the sixpence in “Karain” also reveals much about ideas of European power and the nature of its limits. Greg Dening notes that:

Spaces privileged for performance are common to all cultures. They need not be bounded by material or be architectural. Conventional gestures, attentive postures, crowd silences will do. A Tahitian **heiva** or dance ground where natives mocked the grotesqueries of the intruding strangers, a scaffold (a word significantly borrowed from the stage) where a victim was sacrificed to the abstractions of the law, were spaces where actors and spectators entered conventionalities of what Victor Turner

has called ‘the subjunctive’, the ‘as if it were.’ It happens in law courts, on altars, in market places, in books. (1996, 116-18)⁷³

Of the performative spaces inventoried here, the scaffold seems especially pertinent to “Karain,” given the frame narrator’s illicit purpose in Mindanao: “in those days we were imaginative enough to look with a kind of joyous equanimity on any chance there was of being quietly hanged **somewhere out of the way of diplomatic remonstrance**” (TU 7; emphasis added). The “joyous equanimity” entertained by these Englishmen at the prospect of such a punishment suggests there is not so much “any,” as little, chance of being caught by “the moribund Spanish” authorities which administer the region (TU 7). Thus, although the narrator’s seeming insouciance might, as GoGwilt puts it, represent an “inflated heroic

⁷³ That spaces privileged for performance are **common to all cultures** offers a reminder that Karain’s performance, which instils a “solemn respect accorded in the irreverent West only to the monarchs of the stage” (TU 6), has a Western equivalent in the figure over whom he obsesses. As Eric Hobsbawm puts it, Queen Victoria, like “practically all nineteenth-century [European] monarchs,” “had to put on national fancy-dress, since hardly any . . . were natives of the countries they ruled” (2005, 149). Karain’s “accomplished acting” (TU 7) can also be set against Judith Butler’s proposition that identity is ontologically “a string of performances that constitute and contest the coherence” of the subject (1991, 18) – what Gilles Deleuze calls “ultimate theatre” (Cited in Butler, 13). Cast in this light, Karain’s enactment of kingship is not so much the dissemblance that the narrator sees, as the maintenance of his kingly, regal self. To say that Karain “plays” at being “monarch,” to adapt Butler, is not to say that he is not “really” one; rather, how he plays at being one “is the way in which that ‘being’ gets established, instituted, circulated, and confirmed” (Butler, 18). For more on the performative character of Malay identity, see Hampson (2000).

ideal” (1991, 79), this reference to “somewhere out of the way,” positing a space beyond the practical reach of Europe’s juridical gaze, could equally be at the root of his unruffledness. Thus, if the narrator’s comment that Karain “was fascinated by the holder of a sceptre the shadow of which, stretching from the westward over the earth and over the seas, passed far beyond his own hand’s-breadth of conquered land” (TU 12-13), betrays an assumption of a “Malay” idea of Britain’s imperial power, his knowledge of the reality on the ground – “somewhere out of the way” – at once reveals the geographic limits of imperial power.

At the same time, he and his fellow Englishmen conspire, using the sixpence, to conceal these limits from Karain. Celebrating sixty years of monarchical rule,⁷⁴ the jubilee sixpenny piece is by extension celebratory of imperial cohesion, of Britain’s “success” at maintaining an empire. Moreover, the coin emblemizes the spatial **fantasy** of the British Empire, “the shadow of which,” in the narrator’s rehearsal of empire’s heliotropic mythology, “stretch[ed] from the westward over the earth and over the seas, pass[ing] far beyond [Karain’s] own hand’s-breadth of conquered land” (TU 12-13). Called upon to add to this mythic representation of the secular reach into the East of “the unbelieving West” (48) – “to impress [Karain] powerfully; to suggest absolute safety – the end of all trouble” (51) – the sixpence is used to promote the same relations of power celebrated via its original, “unpunched,” circulation. The coin and the European performances clustering around it are part of a wider

⁷⁴ For more on the function of the tale’s representation of Queen Victoria see Adams (2001).

enactment of a necessary, regulatory fiction, invoking some of the more prosaic ways in which “the spectacle of empire,” as Jan Morris terms it, was projected: “That the Empire survived was due as much to the overweening idea of it” (1982, 146), and this idea in turn by the 1890s came increasingly “to depend mightily on aesthetic display” (Boehmer 1995, 31-32). The fact that none of the three gun-running Europeans operating at the geographical limits of “the unbelieving West” necessarily believe in the global reach of Britain’s imperial power, is therefore beside the point. Rather, by maintaining Karain’s belief in this power they consolidate the necessary **appearance** of a Western, imperial order of things – for, as Hollis observes, “everything’s in that” (TU 50).⁷⁵

While Karain pictures Western modernity in terms of its “unbelieving,” secular character, the Europeans in the story conversely view him and the particular Malay society he represents as fundamentally structured by religion and superstition. Hollis is sensitive to the possibility that giving Karain the sixpence might be an affront to the Bugis chief’s Islamic faith, “on account of its being a likeness – an engraved image” (48). The degree to which Karain “is fanatical” –

⁷⁵ The “spectacle of empire” is perhaps also at issue in “Heart of Darkness,” where the French gunboat “fir[es] into a continent” (Y 62) at something unseen. On the one hand, this image of “gunboat diplomacy” augments Marlow’s earlier description of European colonialisms “going at it blind” (50). Yet the key to this scene, staying within this visual economy, is that it be treated precisely **as a scene**, viewed, in short, as part of the “spectacle” of empire. Thus Marlow’s emphasis on the apparent lack of any effect beyond the merely pyrotechnical (“nothing happened” [62]) overlooks the spectacular impression that these effects might have had on those unseen Africans.

that is, “very strict in his faith” (*Ibid.*) – has a bearing beyond the immediate performance context of the sixpence scene, attaching to the wider performance and cultural contexts of Islam. As Derek Gregory observes: “Throughout the nineteenth century European Orientalists . . . had marvelled at the choreography of Islam’s profession of faith, the intricate sequence of bodily gestures and movements repeated by Muslims all over the world as they face Mecca” (2004, 209). Gregory goes on to remark how more recent observers such as Jonathan Raban have “recognized its extraordinary significance for the constitution of Islam as a political and cultural communion”: “As the world turns, ‘the entire **ummah** [the global community of Muslims] goes down on its knees in a never-ending wave of synchronized prayer,’ endowing “the **ummah** – ‘a body literally made up of bodies’ – with ‘a corporeal substance.’” Gregory calls this the “space” of the **ummah**. Gregory describes this space, in language that recalls European anxieties in “Karain” as to “what depth of horrible void” lurks behind the titular Bugis chief’s “performance,” as being “not empty, abstract, hollowed out; it has a palpable fleshiness, filled with and constituted through interconnected bodies whose affiliations cannot be sundered by the geometries of colonial power” (Gregory 2004, 209); by, that is, the effects of the kinds of cartographic and political divisions and re-divisions of space touched upon by Marlow in “Heart of Darkness” and Greene in *Journey Without Maps* (as will be discussed in Chapter Two). From this performance point of view, Islam, imagined through the **ummah**,

can be seen to have as correspondingly vast a reach as Karain believes of the irreligious West.

If the narrator's sustained reference to Karain's "theatricality" draws upon and extends western strategies of othering colonial peoples and places – in particular the Orientalism of an intrinsically theatrical "East" whereby "the East" is pictured as a stage affixed to, and whose performances are made available for, the West (Said 2003, 63) – both Raban and Gregory draw on and risk repeating another Orientalist trope, by representing Islam, in an echo of one of the most reverberant Orientalist images of "the East," as "a crowd," constituted by and of bodies (Kerr 1994). Nonetheless, their analysis helps add flesh to one of the key but as yet critically overlooked contexts of "Karain: A Memory." As Gregory argues: "This [Islamic] way of seeing – and being in – the world involves a radically different conception of the self to the autonomous individual constructed under the sign of European modernity." Within the cultures of Islam, "the self is not an artifact of interior construction but an unavoidably public act" (2004, 209). Robert Hampson has remarked that "Karain" "ends . . . by re-asserting different realities and not sub-ordinating the Malay world-view to the European" (2000, 127). Conrad's construction of the Malay world inhabited by Karain using a layering of performative and religious reference can, by suggesting an alternate, Islamic spatiality, be read as part of this assertion of different realities.

2. Blank Maps and Closed Space:

Conrad, Greene, and Africa

IN THE PREVIOUS chapter I drew attention to a curious passage from Conrad's 1923 essay "Travel," in which Conrad voices his scepticism toward modern twentieth-century travel and tourism: "Imagine a lover of drama and of stage effects forced to sleep in his very stall, and, every day, opening his eyes upon a never-ceasing performance" (LE 84). The reasons for Conrad's scepticism are grounded in Conrad's contemporary geographical context. He goes on to describe "the conditions of an explored earth in which the latitudes and longitudes," "having been recorded once for all," have become "things of no importance," touching, in the process, upon one of the then-recent accomplishments of modern geography: the production of "the much surveyed earth." The "basic facts of geography" thus "ascertained" (90), his is an era of "closed space," in which "all earthly space is charted, claimed, interconnected" (Coroneos 2002, 15). Conrad therefore disparages modern travel and tourism for its seeming geographical second-handedness, as mere "performance" in "already explored space" (LE 85, 89). In Chapter One we saw how, in the era preceding this less exalted age of tourism, the spaces of discovery and exploration whose mapping made tourism possible, were already spaces of performance, because the kinds of cross-cultural encounter through which they were "added . . . to the scientific domain of the geography triumphant of our day" (LE 9) regularly

utilized, and indeed depended upon, performance as a means of communication on the ground. Put simply, the theatrical element which for Conrad separates the great age of imperial exploration from the travel context of his contemporary moment, is, given this cross-cultural scenario, less a marker of division than of continuity. In Chapter Two I examine more closely the geographic assumption upon which Conrad bases his dismissal of modern travel, and a question which runs through Greene's 1936 West African travelogue, **Journey Without Maps**: namely, the extent to which "closed space," the crowning moment of imperial geography, had in fact been achieved.

The apparent achievement of closed space by the beginning of the twentieth century was trumpeted not only by Conrad but also by imperial geographers such as Halford J. Mackinder, who concluded that the "Columbian epoch" (Mackinder 1904, 421) of imperial exploration and discovery – which Conrad in "Geography and Some Explorers" famously terms "Geography Militant" – had, as an enterprise, come to an end. As a discourse, however, Geography Militant had (and indeed still has) a definite afterlife. As Felix Driver explains: "According to Joseph Conrad . . . the forces of modernization . . . had swept away the conditions for authentic exploration: 'The days of heroic travel are gone; unless, of course, in the newspaper sense, in which heroism like everything else in the world becomes as common, if not as nourishing, as our daily bread'" (Driver 2001, 199). However, as Driver argues, because "the motifs of Geography Militant" are reproduced "within the realms of public culture" by

being installed “in a variety of objects, from books to biscuits, whose market value depends” in no small part “on [an] association with [its] histor[y] and memor[y],” and because its “traditions are embedded in a range of cultural forms (such as advertising, photography, tourist guidebooks or film)” (216, 201), Geography Militant can be understood less as having ended with the beginning of the twentieth century, than as having been regenerated throughout the course of it. As such, Geography Militant “has . . . not merely survived the processes of modernization and globalization” – forces which Conrad like Mackinder saw as heralding and confirming its end – but, **thanks to** these forces, “has been regenerated in a variety of ever-proliferating forms, from the pages of fashion magazines to the sale-rooms of auction houses” (217). Geography Militant’s persistent discursive presence can certainly be felt in Greene’s own contemporary moment, when reviews of **Journey Without Maps**, such as that for the 30 March 1936 issue of **The New Statesman and Nation**, appeared alongside advertisements for products including “Barney’s Empire tobacco” – products whose sale, as Driver argues (and as Conrad’s dig at “the newspaper sense” also seems to suggest), relied in no small part on their association with the motifs, and memory, of imperial exploration.⁷⁶ That **Journey Without Maps** both draws upon and extends

⁷⁶ This half-page advertisement for “Barney’s Empire” (“The best empire yet”), which appears in the same issue of the **New Statesman and Nation** as the review of Greene’s **Journey Without Maps**, is especially interesting both as an example of the discursive reinvention of Geography Militant that Driver describes and for its thematic consonance with Conrad’s “Heart of Darkness.” The advertisement is staged around a “most

the tropes of *Geography Militant* is, given this discursive longevity, perhaps no surprise. Equally, the degree to which *Journey Without Maps* both explores and questions the geographic “reality” of closed space sits in tension with, and needs disentangling from, this wider reinvention of *Geography Militant*.

Whether real or mythic, the achievement of closed space represents, for Conrad, something of a pyrrhic victory, as is witnessed by his grudging acknowledgement in “Travel” that, “Presently there will be no back-yard left in the heart of Central Africa that has not been peeped into by some person more or less commissioned for the purpose” (LE 129). Greene was, interestingly, commissioned for precisely such a role. One of the reasons given for Greene’s visit, if not to “the heart” of Africa, then the West African republic of Liberia, in early 1935, was to investigate the truth of a recent League of Nations report condemning “present oppressions” there, “including slavery,” on behalf of the

interesting” piece of correspondence “from a World-travelled journalist who writes from Durban, South Africa,” that tells of an encounter on another distant imperial frontier, “from 70° South”: “I shipped with the Norwegian Whaling Fleet and spent eight long and weary months in the ice-pack off Kemp and Enderby Lands and in the Ross Sea and Bay of Whales. After six months at sea under the most appalling conditions most of the crew had run out of tobacco” (1936, 863). This predicament leads to a scene of sailorly tobacco-sharing that recalls a similar “brotherly” episode in “Heart of Darkness,” between Marlow and his new acquaintance, the Russian “harlequin” (Y 123, 122): “He helped himself, with a wink at me, to a handful of my tobacco. ‘Between sailors—you know—good English tobacco’” (139-40).

Anti-Slavery Society (Sherry 1989, 511).⁷⁷ If it was the offer of such a commission “that gave [Greene] the idea of going there” (Cited in Sherry, 511), the facts, and the fruits, of this commission, in an echo of the ambivalence of Conrad’s “more or less,” remain uncertain. Whether Greene ever “wrote a report about slavery” cannot, as Sherry notes, be verified from the available evidence; indeed, Sherry doubts if ever “there was a commission” (*Ibid.*).⁷⁸ This professional purpose aside, another reason given by Greene for going to Liberia, as the title of the ensuing narrative of this experience, **Journey Without Maps**, suggests, was that it represented one of the few unmapped spaces left on the planet. As Greene later recalled, he “set out on the venture” armed only with the reading “experience” “of books by various explorers of West Africa” and a desire “to . . . enter areas where no white man” – let alone a team of surveyors “commissioned for the purpose” – “had been seen before” (Allain 1983, 68). Recent criticisms which suggest that Greene “belonged to the last generation that could think of the world as containing unexplored spaces” (R. Greene, ed. 2007, xxii), however, merely accept at face value the central geographic claim made by Greene in **Journey Without Maps**, and subsequently re-iterated in the autobiography **Ways of Escape** (1980) or Marie-

⁷⁷ In a case, perhaps, of life imitating art, Greene’s commissioned purpose recalls the similar sponsorship of Kurtz in “Heart of Darkness”: “the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs had intrusted him with the making of a report, for its future guidance” (Y 117).

⁷⁸ Two recently published letters of 18 August and 26 November 1934, in which Greene hints at this commission, are equally unforthcoming. See R. Greene, ed. (2007), pp. 64-65, 66-67.

Françoise Allain's collected interviews **The Other Man** (1983), that Liberia was "as yet" unmapped and comparatively unknown (Allain, 67). In the present discussion we shall investigate more deeply the reasons behind, and the relative truth of, Greene's claim – a claim which, as we shall see, is problematized by Greene's affinity for, and the affinities **Journey Without Maps** has with, Conrad.

In "The Congo Journal,"⁷⁹ a record of Greene's 1959 visit to a Congolese leproserie to gather material for his 1961 novel **A Burnt-Out Case**, the extent, and moreover the effects, of his affinity for Conrad are made clear.⁸⁰ In a revealing moment of authorial self-consciousness, Greene wonders if Conrad's "trick" of comparing "something concrete to something abstract" is something that he has "caught" himself (ISC 44). This suggestion of contagion is fitting, given that one of the purposes served by Greene's journal is as an etiological record of leprosy and its effects, anticipating the concern in **A Burnt-Out Case** for cartographies of a

⁷⁹ "The Congo Journal" was serialized in the January 1962 issue of *Harper's Magazine* (Rpt. in CE).

⁸⁰ As his letters suggest, Greene had first looked into visiting "a leper hospital in Bamaco," Mali, but opted against going to a region, like "the Sahara," "which I don't know." Instead, "[i]t occurred to me that there might be some place in the Belgian Congo" (Letter to Hansi Lambert, 15 September 1958. In R. Greene, ed. 2007, 230). Having at this point only been to British and French West Africa, Greene equally had no discernible grounds for knowing the Congo any more than he did the Sahara, but he may have felt, because of his reading of Conrad, that the former was somehow more "familiar," as Greene's coy aside, "I have a certain knowledge of the background" (*Ibid.*), seems to suggest. This implicit connection between page and place is confirmed by Greene's having, as he later reported, "found myself with **Heart of Darkness** in a small paddle boat travelling up a Congo tributary in 1959 from one leper colony to another" (ASL 208).

corporeal, rather than a geographical, kind, as emblemized by Dr. Colin's "Atlas of Leprosy" (15). More important, it also hints at the perceived pernicious effects of what Greene elsewhere in the "Journal" calls Conrad's "great . . . and disastrous" influence on his early attempts at writing fiction (ISC 42), on whose "heavy pages" all that remained "was the distorted ghost of Conrad" (ASL 202). That Greene foregrounds Conrad in "The Congo Journal," however, stems not from a need to dwell on the legacy of this influence, but from the realization that Conrad offers Greene, given his present African situation and his desire to create a narrative from it, a certain descriptive "shorthand." For instance, Greene takes Marlow's famous evocation of Britain's ancient past as an outpost of the Roman empire from "Heart of Darkness," and maps it onto the African landscape before him: "'And this also,' said Marlow suddenly, 'has been one of the dark places of the earth'" (ISC 15). Indeed, Greene makes sustained reference to Conrad throughout "The Congo Journal" (the very title of which suggestively echoes that of Conrad's **The Congo Diary**), whether brooding that the Congo river "has not changed since Conrad's day" (ISC 18), or loosely citing "Heart of Darkness" to give literary weight and shape to his impressions of the African littoral about him: "'An empty stream, a great silence, an impenetrable forest'" (*Ibid.*). In fact, so shaped is Greene's idea of "Africa" by Conrad that, in "Analysis of a Journey," written for the 27 September 1935 issue of **The Spectator** – that is, prior to any actual encounter with or experience of Africa – Greene feels able to pronounce "[t]his Africa" as being indelibly that "of Conrad's 'Congo diary'" (**Reflections**, 35).

Such borrowing is, of course, one of the generic staples of imperial travel writing – what Derek Gregory terms its intrinsic, “citationary structure” (1999, 119), where the citation of an “exemplary predecessor” offers a “precarious guarantee” (*Ibid.*) of the author’s own experience. As Gregory puts it: “routes . . . are routinized, and each trip in its turn contributes to the layering and sedimentation of powerful imaginative geographies that shape (though they do not fully determine) the expectations and experiences of subsequent travellers” (116-17). This structure provides one of the means by which the “blank notebooks” carried by the modern tourist are, to adapt Conrad’s grumble in “Travel,” filled with – and, the point of his grumble, too often **published** as – ““Impressions”” (**LE** 85-86). The implication is that such a text reflects more an agglomerated textual tradition, than the author’s own individual “impression.” By presupposing and making use of an outside frame of reference, usually a prior narrative covering similar – even the same – geographical and cultural terrain, the onus inevitably is less on producing new accounts than palimpsestic spaces, a point about which Greene, describing the Mexico of his other ’30s travelogue **The Lawless Roads** (1939) as “a big amorphous overwritten scene” (Letter to David Higham, 17 January 1938. In R. Greene, ed. 2007, 88), seems cautiously aware. In **Journey Without Maps**, however, Greene is at pains to point out that, in the case of Liberia, there are not many “exemplary predecessors” in whose footsteps to follow, and that those such as the British explorer Sir Alfred Sharpe – whose

Liberian journey Greene's own partly re-traces – only went so far. In other words, that his is not “a route routinized.”⁸¹

Nevertheless, **Journey Without Maps** is, notwithstanding either this absence or the lack of cartographic information indicated in the title, the narrative of a journey across what is, discursively-speaking, a pre-mapped terrain. In the early pages, Greene muses that Africa represents for him “the sense of nostalgia for something lost . . . a stage further back”: “the chance of finding . . . King Solomon's Mines, the ‘heart of darkness’ if one is romantically inclined, or more simply, as Herr Heuser puts it in his African novel, **The Inner Journey**, one's place in time, based on a knowledge . . . of the past from which one has emerged” (**JWM** 7). Here, Greene draws on and extends nineteenth-century European representations of Africa; notably, as in “Heart of Darkness” (1899) where Marlow acknowledges a “remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar” (**Y** 96), the trope by which the African other is incorporated into a history of the European self, but – via a conceptual manoeuvre whereby differences in geographical space are apprehended as a difference in historical time – is “referred to an earlier, and more primitive, period, thus reinforcing the superior

⁸¹ Imperial travel writing can be seen as having a certain epistemological affinity with – even as serving – the colonial project, insofar as colonial power, as Timothy Mitchell argues, “required [a] country to become readable, like a book, in [a Western] sense of the term” (1988, 33). Such travel writing is discursively entangled not just with other texts, then, but with a particular formation of power. Thus “The Congo Journal,” which notes the incipient disintegration “of European Africa” (**ISC** 56), belongs to a textual tradition that played a part in the formation and maintenance of a colonial presence there in the first place.

site of [that] modern [European self]" (Duncan and Ley 1993, 13).⁸² What interests us here, however, is that Greene's mention of H. Rider Haggard's **King**

⁸² In **Totem and Taboo** (1912-13), made widely available in a paperback English translation shortly after the publication of **Journey Without Maps**, Freud questions the underlying logic of modernity's interest in the primitive upon which Greene draws: "we have no right to expect that they" – the so-called "primitive races" – "have preserved their original ideas and institutions for our information without any evolution or distortion" (1938, 161-62). Freud's argument thus frustrates Greene's use of "primitive" Africa in **Journey Without Maps** as a space in which to "satisfy," and recuperate, "the sense of nostalgia for something lost" (JWM 7). Freud's influence can also be felt in Greene's "Analysis of a Journey." In this article, written shortly before he left for Liberia for the 27 September 1935 issue of **The Spectator**, Greene, playing the scientific researcher, explores the psychological terrain of his choice of destination: "I noticed, as I acted the analyst with the stop-watch, that if I said 'South Africa' the reaction was immediate: Rhodes and British Empire and an ugly building in South Parks Road and Trafalgar Square. If I said 'Kenya,' there was no hesitation: gentleman farmers, the seedy aristocracy, gossip columns and Lord Castlerosse. 'Rhodesia' produced: failure, Empire Tobacco, and, after a long pause, failure again" (**Reflections**, 33-34). Unlike "these particular parts of Africa," "where the white settler has been most successful in reproducing the conditions of his [home] country," Liberia conjures up a "quality of darkness [and] of the unexplicable [sic]" (35). Greene's Freudian meditation on free association, given his formative experience of psychiatric analysis whilst in his teens (Sherry 1989, 92-108), has an obvious biographical resonance and explanation. But this invocation of Freud is, in the context of a discursive overlap between the spatial and social sciences, especially noteworthy. In **The Interpretation of Dreams** (1900), as Derek Gregory notes, Freud puts forward "psychoanalysis as a process of quasi-archaeological excavation and disclosure," drawing "upon archaeology for a stratified and spatial figure of the psyche in which those things hidden and concealed from 'surface consciousness' can be brought into the light." Greene's idea of his Liberian trip as part of a self-uncovering "of darkness" and "the unexplicable" carries clear echoes of this process. Moreover, Gregory argues that "the appeal to archaeology also allowed Freud to invoke a [then] remarkably successful and highly popular science as a cover . . . for the otherwise suspect and even discreditable science of psychoanalysis" (Gregory 1994, 336). Equally, Greene's appeal to Freud in "Analysis of a

Solomon's Mines, Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" and Kurt Heuser's 1931 novel **The Inward** (not the "Inner") **Journey** – about a cartographic survey in German East Africa – concerned as they are with unmapped, recently-mapped, and to-be-mapped parts of Africa, also touches upon the European geographical mastery of Africa, and, in so doing, upon another imperial narrative, about the gradual achievement of closed space.

Of these texts enumerated by Greene, it is Conrad's novella with which **Journey Without Maps** engages most. "Heart of Darkness," which at one level is about the "unspeakable and indescribable" (Cunningham 1988, 411), has become a story about which some critics feel, because of the sheer amount of criticism given over to it, that there is now little new left to say.⁸³ The dialogue between Conrad's novella and Greene's **Journey Without Maps** on the subject of geographic debates concerning "closed space" demonstrates that, on the contrary, there remains much room for discussion. And we should be chary of claims which, by

Journey" and the subsequent **Journey Without Maps** implicitly lends these texts the epistemological weight of a now creditable discourse.

⁸³ Early reviews of Conrad's **Last Essays** (1926), where "Travel" (1923) and "Geography and Some Explorers" (1924) are collected, similarly express their concerns through a vocabulary – here, of exploration and discovery – seemingly borrowed from the work under review. One review, for example, for the 1 May 1926 issue of **The New Statesman**, opens thus: "Joseph Conrad, we are told by Mr. Richard Curle in his Introduction to these Essays, had a very uncertain memory for his own work, so that, although the **Notes on Life and Letters** and the present volume contain practically all his miscellaneous writings, **discoveries may yet be made**" (84; emphasis added).

marking the novella as already fully critically-mapped out and explored, repeat at a conceptual level the totalizing assumption about imperial geography made in it by Marlow, whose remembered contemplation of the now filled-in map of Africa in the window of a Fleet Street shop is by extension a contemplation of the comprehensively-mapped world.

The concept of “closed space” was set out in “The Geographical Pivot of History,” a hugely influential paper by the British geographer Halford J. Mackinder, delivered to the Royal Geographical Society on 25 January 1904.⁸⁴ In this paper, Mackinder reflects back upon the cartographic achievements of “the Columbian epoch,” which “ended” “soon after the year 1900.” “[T]he opening of the twentieth century is appropriate as the end of a great historic epoch,” for “[i]n 400 years the outline of the map of the world has been completed with approximate accuracy, and even in the polar regions the voyages of [Fridtjof] Nansen and [Robert] Scott have very narrowly reduced the last possibility of dramatic discoveries.” All that remains for the twentieth-century geographer is to look back upon and “chronicle [the globe’s] virtually complete political appropriation.” For Mackinder, the “era of geographic exploration” has, with the

⁸⁴ Mackinder’s paper was subsequently published in the April 1904 number of *The Geographical Journal*. On its influence, see Dodds and Sidaway (2004). While he was its most famous proponent, Mackinder was not the first to formulate the concept of “closed space”; as far as European exploration was concerned it was quite an old theme (Driver, private communication, 2010). On the development of theories of “closed space,” see Driver (1992). For more on Mackinder and closed space, see Kearns (2009).

opening of the twentieth century, been supplanted by an era of “closed space” (1904, 421-22), a world in which there exist few “pockets of unclaimed and unstated space” (Dodds 1997, 30). One of the central geographic observations made by Marlow in “Heart of Darkness,” that Africa “had ceased to be a blank space of delightful mystery—a white patch for a boy to dream gloriously over” (Y 52), thus carries – as do Conrad’s pronouncements on geography in “Travel” and “Geography and Some Explorers” – something of the professional opinion of imperial geographers of the period like Mackinder.⁸⁵

The extent to which Marlow’s Congo had “ceased to be” this cartographic blind-spot has been suggested by Stephen Donovan. Donovan notes that the travel company Thomas Cook and Sons had, according to its promotional brochure **The Excursionist**, taken a party of tourists on “precisely” the route taken by Marlow “only six months before Conrad began writing the novella”:

The Conducted Tour to West Africa and the Congo, **The Excursionist** announced on 16 April 1898, would ‘enabl[e] those who are interested in that great development of civilization to

⁸⁵ Edward Said suggests that Conrad may have been aware of Mackinder’s lectures during the composition of “Heart of Darkness” (1993, 23-24). This seems unlikely, however, given that Mackinder’s lectures were delivered several years after Conrad’s novella appeared. Nevertheless, Said’s wider point that Conrad may have been aware of, if not present at, Mackinder’s lectures, carries considerable weight.

take part in the inauguration of the railway from Matadi to Stanley Pool, the laying of which has occupied some nine years.' Mr Stanley would be there in person, it promised. (2005, 87)

Donovan also suggests that the "Fleet Street" window where Marlow recalls having seen the all but "filled" (Y 53, 52) map of Africa could well have belonged to Cook and Sons, whose world headquarters were at the street's Ludgate Circus end (Donovan, 87-88). Furthermore, these same offices probably "were displaying a map of Africa in 1890" – the year Conrad realized his childhood ambition to "go **there**" (APR 26; emphasis in original) – "and, in the year of [Cook's] Conducted Tour . . . perhaps even of the river Congo itself" (Donovan, 88). Following this speculative but compelling thread, Marlow's Congo, cartographically-marked and mastered thus, might now be seen as inviting another, and for Conrad altogether more trivial, series of inscriptions, namely the "Impressions" issuing from "the blank minds and, alas . . . blank-note-books" of the modern European tourist (LE 85-86).⁸⁶

⁸⁶ This very state of affairs apparently is behind a wryly dismissive anonymous review of Diana Strickland's *Through the Belgian Congo* (1926), published the same year as Conrad's *Last Essays*: "So long as 'of making many books there is no end,' and so long as there are women of adequate wealth and intelligence to make them out of sporting trips in Africa, just so long, presumably, such books as Mrs. Diana Strickland's will be published. God and the publishers alone know who wants to read them. There is nothing to say about this one except that it is better written than most of its kind" (*New Statesman*, 13 March 1926, 684).

There is a similarly coded reference in Marlow's "extraordinary find" – his discovery in Africa of "**An Inquiry into some Points of Seamanship** by a man Towser, Towson—some such name—Master in his Majesty's Navy" – to the processes which lie behind this apparent geographical mastery of Africa: "Such a book being there was wonderful enough; but still more astounding were the notes pencilled in the margin, and plainly referring to the text. I couldn't believe my eyes! They were in cipher! . . . Fancy a man lugging with him a book of that description into this nowhere and studying it—and making notes—in cipher at that! It was an extravagant mystery" (Y 99). Critics tend to concentrate on what has been added to this text – an addition which "makes it appear" to Marlow "luminous with another than professional light" (GoGwilt 1995, 123) – rather than the text itself. GoGwilt, for example, finds in the "opposition between Cyrillic Russian script and English text" a biographical echo, gesturing towards "the opposition of Slavonism and Westernism of Conrad's later years" (1995, 125). Yet the text itself, its present situation in this African "nowhere," and the "professional" purposes of seamanship and navigation for which – whatever its current cryptic usage – this text was intended, are in the context of Marlow's nostalgic contemplation of the now filled-in map of empire at the outset of his narrative, equally if not more salient. As Robert Hampson explains, the return to empirical mapping that heralded the end of medieval dogmatic and fabulous geography, and laid the ground for the "geography triumphant" of Conrad's contemporary moment, was based in no small part in the "daily experience of

sailors” (2000, 20).⁸⁷ (The nautical metaphor used by Mackinder to describe the reverberations of modern geopolitics in the new closed-space world – “There [being] a vast difference of effect in the fall of a shell into an earthwork and its fall amid the closed spaces and rigid structures of a . . . ship” [1904, 422] – has in this context, like the shell to which he refers, a particular resonance.) Put simply, this “luminous” text relates to a range of practices through which the map of empire was gradually filled in, and, through this relation, is not so far removed from the “large shining map” that adorns the Continental Trading Company’s waiting-room wall, upon which Europe’s imperial interests are “marked with all the colours of a rainbow” (Y 55), as its apparently incongruous presence “Dead in the centre” (56) of Africa at first suggests.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Hampson also points out that “Conrad’s maritime career involved not only a professional practice of observation and notation,” “but also a varied involvement with maps and charts as a daily part of his life.” As a consequence, Conrad “probably was more involved with maps and mapping than any other major nineteenth- or twentieth-century British novelist and this leaves its mark on his fiction” (2003, 44). Seamen such as Conrad, then, trained on the real-life equivalents of this fictional nautical text in “Heart of Darkness,” were in many ways integral to a modern geography which “produce[d] and contemplate[s] the comprehensively mapped world” (Hampson 2005, 218).

⁸⁸ G.W. Stephen Brodsky suggests that the inspiration for the fictional Towson’s *Inquiry* may have been the work of the English navigational scientist John T. Towson (1804-1881), author of *Practical information on the Deviation of the Compass on Board Iron Steamers Proceeding to the Southern Hemisphere* (1853), *Tables to Facilitate the Practice of Great Circle Sailing and the Determination of Azimuths* (1856), and *Tables for the Reduction of Ex-Meridian Latitudes* (1856). Brodsky argues that Towson’s navigational tables were “an enduring standard reference during Conrad’s sea years, and Conrad likely used them himself” (2005, 29).

As if taking its cue from Marlow's "passion" for the blank spaces once found at the heart of European maps of Africa, critical discussion of "Heart of Darkness," then as now, has had much to say about centres, particularly absent ones.⁸⁹ Yet, while Marlow's remembered encounter with the map of Africa focuses on what sits – or perhaps does not – at its represented heart, his encounter with it as a concrete, physical space begins not at its centre, but at its edge. During the slow voyage down the coast of West Africa "in a French steamer" (Y 60), Marlow passes the time "watch[ing] the coast": "This one was almost featureless, as if still in the making, with an aspect of monotonous grimness. The edge of a colossal jungle so dark-green as to be almost black, fringed with white surf, **ran straight, like a ruled line**, far, far away along a blue sea whose glitter was blurred by a creeping mist" (*Ibid.*; emphasis added). Framing Marlow's encounter with Africa as a physical, geographical space, are his prior encounters with its mapped representations, as a two-dimensional space upon which have been traced a succession of imperial claims. Marlow's choice of simile, "like a ruled line," whilst referring to the ruled line drawn by a ship's captain to chart the daily progress of the ship, also brings to mind the "shining" map seen in the offices of the Continental Trading Company and a space

⁸⁹ See, for example, Woolf (1925), Forster (1936), and Huggan (1989).

partitioned, post-“scramble,” by the political exigencies of a colonial straight edge.⁹⁰

One of the “blamed ports” in which Marlow calls during the voyage out is named as “Gran’ Bassam” (present-day Grand Bassa; Y 60-61) – the same port from which Greene leaves Liberia after the titular, map-less trek through the interior described in *Journey Without Maps*. Marlow’s reference in “Heart of Darkness” to this particular location has, strangely, mistakenly been identified as belonging not to Liberia, but rather its neighbouring French colony the Ivory Coast (Cf. Sherry 1971, 23; Hampson, ed. 1995, 132n). This misreading of the represented geography of “Heart of Darkness” is, on the other hand, entirely in keeping with the text’s wilful and deliberate reticence in providing place-names (where, for example, Marlow’s point of departure for this coastal-wise passage, named in the manuscript as “Dakar” [Kimbrough, ed. 1988, 16], is omitted from

⁹⁰ This “almost featureless” stretch of African coast is not, however, entirely so: “Here and there grayish-whitish specks showed up clustered inside the white surf, with a flag flying above them perhaps. Settlements some centuries old, and still **no bigger than pinheads on the untouched expanse of their background**” (Y 60; emphasis added). The suggestive likeness of these “flag flying” settlements – the first signs of the “fantastic invasion” (Y 76) of Africa by European imperial power that Marlow sees – to “pinheads” intimates again how they might be marked on the map, their cartographic representation being just as imperative as their physical presence in this space to the exercise of any territorial claim.

subsequent versions of the text).⁹¹ This misreading also has a particular resonance given the represented moment of **Journey Without Maps**, when Liberia figures as a space over which the discipline of geography – as contemporary debates in geographical circles over a persistent gap in Western knowledge about Liberia reveal – likewise had little command.

One of the main characters of Greene's 1935 novel **England Made Me**, published just prior to his departure for Liberia, is reported to feel “the weariness of a traveller who discovers that his maps again are faulty” (EMM 179) – an arresting metaphor that chimes with, and anticipates, one of the all-too-real encumbrances besetting the cartographically ill-equipped adventure described in Greene's **Journey Without Maps**.⁹² Greene identifies this lack, and his journey's main hindrance, thus: “It would have been easier if I had been able to obtain maps. But the Republic is almost entirely covered by forest, and has never been properly mapped, mapped that is to say even to the rough extent of the French colonies which lie on two sides of it” (JWM 41). The lack of proper mapping mentioned in **Journey Without Maps** gains another dimension when set against its early

⁹¹ The geographical reticence in “Heart of Darkness” reflects a broader authorial strategy throughout Conrad's fiction, part of a wider “policy of concealment,” in Norman Sherry's suggestive phrase (Sherry 1966, 173).

⁹² **England Made Me** is, at one level, a novel of, if not directly about, closed space. As Val Cunningham notes, Greene's “[w]riting had . . . entered the era of aeroplanes and aerodromes”: “How recurrent Croydon aerodrome becomes and how characteristically knowing [are its characters] about air travel?” (1988, 252-53).

publishing history and the publishing context into which it was received. **Journey Without Maps** was published by Heinemann on 11 May 1936, but, under threat of a libel action, was subsequently withdrawn and remained so until 1946 when, as a publisher at Eyre and Spottiswoode, Greene found himself in a position to rescue the work (Sherry 1989, 565).⁹³ That **Journey Without Maps** had something of a precarious existence is ironic, given that it is about an expedition through a country which, as Greene's cousin and companion for this experience Barbara Greene later remarked, equally seemed, in view of an apparent lack of European texts about it, not to have "existed at all" (B. Greene 1938, 11).

If there was a paucity of recent European texts about Liberia before the Greenes' journey there, the situation was beginning to change by the time of their return, with the publication of **Unknown Liberia** (1936) by Harry J. Greenwall and Roland Wild, and subsequently Barbara Greene's own account of her Liberian experience, **Land Benighted** (1938). Greene's later admission that, despite the attempt in **Journey Without Maps** at "thick description," his cousin's note-taking and observation was missed by his own (WE 47), suggests how any claim as to the lack of European texts about Liberia perhaps is as much the product of

⁹³ Greene identifies the litigious "fly in the ointment" in a letter to his younger brother Hugh from December 1936: "I don't know whether you remember the drunk party at Freetown in **Journey Without Maps**. I called the drunk, whose real name was quite different, Pa Oakley. It now turns out that there is a Dr P.D. Oakley, head of the Sierra Leone Medical Service. The book's been withdrawn . . . writs have been served, and he's out for damages!" (R. Greene, ed. 2007, 81).

convenient oversight as careful research. That is, Greene perhaps exaggerated this textual lack in order that the Liberia represented in **Journey Without Maps** should not appear to readers and critics alike as resembling the Mexico of his later 1939 travelogue **The Lawless Roads**, which, in Greene's appraisal, seemed then "a big amorphous overwritten scene" (**Op. Cit.**).⁹⁴

Greene was more keenly sighted over the appearance of **Unknown Liberia**, as another review, "Two Tall Travellers," shows.⁹⁵ Greene uses the review to reiterate the existence of a gap in European knowledge of Liberia, a gap which **Unknown Liberia** evidently is geared to address. However:

'Unknown Liberia' – fortunate indeed for Mr Greenwall . . . and Mr Wild . . . that Liberia **is** comparatively speaking unknown, so that there will be few people to call their bluff or question their almost incredible effrontery. (**Reflections**, 40; emphasis in original)

⁹⁴ Indeed, Liberia is not quite the untextualized space that Greene makes out. Other examples include Johann Büttikofer's two-volume zoological text **Reisebilder aus Liberia Resultate geographischer, naturwissenschaftlicher und ethnographischer untersuchungen der jahre 1879-1882 und 1886-1887**, Dorothy Mills's **Through Liberia** (1926), Sidney de la Rue's **The Land of the Pepper Bird** (1930), and Etta Donner's **Hinterland Liberia** (1939). Greene certainly knew of the latter, having positively reviewed it for **The Spectator** ("Three Travellers," 8 December 1939, 838).

⁹⁵ Originally published in the 11 September 1936 issue of **The Spectator**.

Greene goes on to complain that few of the book's "260-odd pages" "deal with the authors' personal observations (if one may call their culinary grumbles by that name) in the hinterland." "The rest of the book," meanwhile, "is compiled from published histories, from interviews in a far from unknown capital served by regular steamship services . . . from League of Nation reports and from unreliable gossip." Similarly, by pointing up their use of "the main route from Monrovia to Kolahun and the English border" with Sierra Leone – "the regular official route from the capital used by missionaries and Government servants" and hardly "little known" – Greene dismisses any suggestion that Greenwall and Wild have travelled off the map; indeed, the authors of **Unknown Liberia** "might just as well have stayed in England, where . . . almost all their material might easily have been compiled" (40-41).⁹⁶ Greene hereby references Britain's "natural" position, during a period when it was still in the imperial ascendant, as an archiving centre, hinting at the ingrained networks "through which distant places were mapped into European knowledge systems," "as imperial . . . centres sought accurately to map peripheries" (Cosgrove 1999, 21). Greene does not mean by this dismissal that Liberia has already fully been "mapped" into, and by, such knowledge systems;

⁹⁶ Greene's criticism is not dissimilar to Mary Louise Pratt's analysis of the competing exploits of the naturalists Alexandre von Humboldt and Aimé Bonpland in South America during the late-eighteenth century: "in all their explorations [they] never once stepped beyond the boundaries of the Spanish colonial infrastructure," relying "entirely on the networks of villages, missions, outposts, haciendas, roadways, and colonial labor systems to sustain themselves and their project, for food, shelter, and the labor pool to guide them and transport their immense equipage" (1992, 127).

but rather that Greenwall and Wild have not added to, but merely reproduced in the field, the incomplete picture already held by the West of Liberia. Greene's broadside might best be understood as an expression of his frustration at the perceived "suppress[ion]" (WE 47) of his own African text which, while likewise claiming to get to grips with unknown Liberia, remained, thanks to the legal problems which still attached to it when this review appeared, itself relatively unknown to the public. More important, by discrediting the extent to which **Unknown Liberia** gets to grips with Liberia at all ("it leaves unknown Liberia more unknown than ever" [Reflections, 40]), Greene's review prepares the ground for the subsequent re-publication of **Journey Without Maps**, and its representation of Liberia as a still largely unknown, blank space.

Another mediating influence in the presentation of this cartographic lack in **Journey Without Maps** is Conrad. In his first autobiographical instalment, **A Sort of Life** (1971), Greene recreates the scene in the offices of Heinemann where, in late 1928, his first novel **The Man Within** was accepted for publication; it is a scene over which he pictures presiding "[t]he bearded ghost of Conrad" (ASL 192). According to Greene, Conrad had such an inhibiting influence on his early writing that: "There was nothing for me to do but dismantle all that elaborate scaffolding built from an older writer's blue print, write it off as apprentice work and start again at the beginning" (208). Of course, we must be careful not to find elements of Conrad's prose in Greene's own – especially the early "apprentice work" **The Man Within** (1928), **The Name of Action** (1930) and **Rumour at Nightfall**

(1931) – simply because Greene insists that they are there. Yet, undeniably, there are concrete echoes of Conrad in **Journey Without Maps**.⁹⁷

Greene implicitly filters his fascination with Africa and Western cartographic representations of it through Marlow's own, by invoking – even aping – the map-pointing scene in “Heart of Darkness” and Marlow's declaration, “I will go there” (Y 52): “I could remember . . . thinking, ‘In three weeks I shall be **there**’” (JWM 196; emphasis in original). This re-iteration of “Heart of Darkness” is no surprise given that, at around the time of his departure for Liberia, as he later confessed, Greene repeatedly returned to “the volume **Youth** for the sake of **The Heart of Darkness** [sic]” (ISC 42).⁹⁸ Equally, if Greene's anticipation of his journey to West Africa is cast thus in Conradian terms, so, too, is that journey's end, which sees Greene “standing in the cold empty [English]

⁹⁷ Contemporary reviews similarly found in this “apprentice work” a distinct Conradian element. For example, in an unsigned review for the November 8 1930 issue of **The New Statesman**, one critic described Greene's characters as “hav[ing] stepped from the pages of Conrad” (148). On other echoes of Conrad elsewhere in Greene, see Watts (2006). It is also worth noting here that, just as there are echoes of Conrad in **Journey Without Maps**, so, too, are there definite echoes of **Journey Without Maps** elsewhere in Greene, who, as Val Cunningham notes, “openly used material twice, recycling travel-book stuff in [his] fictions” (1988, 354).

⁹⁸ Interestingly, the review of **Journey Without Maps** for the 30 May 1936 issue of **The New Statesman and Nation** begins with a similarly Marlovian invocation of map-pointing: “It is always satisfactory to be able to draw one's finger across the map – over seas, through straits, up the course of rivers – remarking as it moves: ‘I have been there . . . there . . . there’” (868). With this plurality of deictic reference (“there . . . there . . . there”), however, the review erases, and thereby appears to miss, the specificity of reference in Greene's twice-repeated “**there**” (JWM 46, 196) to Conrad and Marlow.

Customs shed” reflecting on the small amount of “loot” with which he has returned from West Africa (JWM 297). Perhaps picking up on these closing remarks, one contemporary critic of Greene’s travelogue couches his appraisal in similar terms: “for many years, no doubt, Mr. Graham Greene, when he catches sight of the map of Africa, will allow a pleased glance to travel in the direction of the Liberian Republic, remembering how he spent an arduous, unhealthy and – from a prosaic point of view – **almost entirely unremunerative month**” (Quennell 1936, 868; emphasis added). The “value” of Greene’s closing remarks, however, are to be seen from an intertextual, rather than this “prosaic,” point of view. Greene suggestively draws on the Author’s Notes to **Tales of Unrest** (1898) and to **Youth** (1902) – Notes with which, as his 1937 review of **Conrad’s Prefaces to his Works** shows, he was keenly acquainted⁹⁹ – which similarly see Conrad reflecting on the “very small amount of plunder” (TU vii) that his own African experience, twice re-shaped as the literary “spoils” (Y xi) “An Outpost of Progress” and “Heart of Darkness,” represents. Furthermore, when writing his own series of Prefaces for the Collected Edition of his works, Greene begins that to **Journey Without Maps** with the deliberately enigmatic recollection of his discovery of “a scrap of indecipherable writing found in a Vai hut” (ix), which, as well as carrying with it more than a suggestion of Marlow’s similarly cryptic “extraordinary find,” frames

⁹⁹ This acquaintance with Conrad’s Prefaces is further evidenced by a later article by Greene entitled “The Prefaces of Conrad and James,” which appeared in the 18 October 1962 issue of **The Spectator**.

that recollection of Africa, like Marlow's in "Heart of Darkness," as a space fraught with problems of legibility.

Another consonance – or rather clash – between "Heart of Darkness" and **Journey Without Maps**, of course, stems from Marlow's comment that Africa by and large has "ceased to be a blank space of delightful mystery – a white patch for a boy to dream gloriously over" (Y 52). However, in 1930's Liberia, Greene claims to have found not only another of the map of empire's last remaining "blank spaces," but one residing moreover **in** Africa. That Greene contests Marlow's assertion perhaps derives, like his aping of the map-pointing scene in "Heart of Darkness," from his recent reading of Conrad and a desire to reproduce for his journey the conditions of Marlow's own. As Felix Driver points out, "the discourse of exploration" is often "constructed as a narrative of loss"; indeed, "Conrad's tribute to Geography Militant" was "written **in memoriam**" of the epoch it celebrated (2001, 216). The implication, then, is that by positing Liberia as "unknown," **Journey Without Maps** is less attuned to contemporary Western geographic knowledge of the republic than it is marked, via Greene's regard for Conrad in general and for "Heart of Darkness" in particular, by a nostalgia for an age that has already passed. Moreover, Greene would later cast his Liberian adventure in terms of its "period relevance" (Cunningham, 407), both as belonging to the 1930s resurgence of travel writing¹⁰⁰ and as one of

¹⁰⁰ For more on this resurgence, see Carr (2002).

several writerly **rites de passage** – “a way of proving oneself” – undertaken by fellow authors of his generation: “Peter Fleming had his **Brazilian Adventure** [1933]: he went off in search of a Colonel Fawcett who had vanished somewhere in the Amazon basin”; “Evelyn Waugh made a difficult trip round British Guiana which forms a chapter in one of his novels [**A Handful of Dust** (1934)]” (Allain 1983, 67).¹⁰¹ There is also a suggestion, then, that Greene’s representation of Liberia in **Journey Without Maps** as a Marlovian blank space may, like the journey itself, merely be a calculated piece of authorial self-fashioning, a means of situating his own travel exploits amongst, while also distinguishing them from – perhaps even elevating them above – those of his contemporaries. At the same time, however, Liberia as we shall see **was** then framed, much as Marlow’s central Africa once was, as a predominantly blank space inviting “completion” by Western maps of the period.

Journey Without Maps opens with a description of Greene’s visit to the Liberian Consulate in London in order to secure official permission for his trip to the Republic. This beginning, however, which sees Greene frustrated in his attempt to locate the Consulate seemingly “anywhere,” is rather a series of false starts: “It wasn’t the sort of beginning I’d expected” (1). The representation of this frustrated attempt – where Greene finds “the entrance of St Dunstan’s Church” (**ibid.**) where he expects that of the Consulate to be – recalls Conrad’s

¹⁰¹ Waugh’s experience also features in the travelogue **Ninety-Two Days** (1934).

The Secret Agent (1907) and its portrayal of “London’s topographical mysteries”:
“Why powers are not asked of Parliament . . . for compelling those edifices to
return where they belong is one of the mysteries of municipal administration”
(14-15).¹⁰² Yet, any suggestion that Greene’s writing of this experience in **Journey
Without Maps** might, like his re-iteration of the map-pointing scene, be distorted

¹⁰² Greene was certainly more than familiar with **The Secret Agent**, as his 1934 novel **It’s a Battlefield**, which is heavily indebted to Conrad’s novel, attests. On this overlap, see Cheney (1970), Watts (2006) and Rebai-Maamri (2005). Having eventually located it, Greene goes on to describe the Consulate thus: “Three men, I could not distinguish their nationality, overcrowded the tiny room which was deeply buried in the huge new glittering office block. . . . The room was like a shabby caravan held up for a moment in a smart bright street. One doubted whether, returning in a few hours’ time to the gleaming mechanized block, one would still find it there; it would almost certainly have moved on” (**JWM** 2). Of course, Greene’s impression of the Consulate’s seeming nomadic character speaks of the “topographical” trials endured in locating it. Yet this impression also bears the imprint of what Tony Tanner calls “a characteristic Conradian strategy: the ironic juxtaposition of . . . opposed realms, or more exactly segments of the world in which life in all its cultural aspects – linguistic, religious, ethical, etc. – is structured differently,” a prime example being the juxtaposition in “Heart of Darkness” of “London and the Congo” (Tanner 1976, 18). As Tanner argues, the “enforced co-presence of differing types of consciousness, different ranges of experience, different assumptions, values, terminologies, helps to generate that probing and disturbing irony which we associate with Conrad”: “Although [Conrad] appears to operate dualistically – London/the Congo – his fiction works to dissolve the dangerous habit of dualistic . . . thinking. So one effect of **Heart of Darkness** is not to endorse either the West or the jungle but to erode some of the un-examined assumptions which make such either/or thinking possible” (18-19). By invoking the temporary shelter of the restless nomad deep within “the huge new glittering office block” – thus mapping his received idea of what Liberia will be like onto the metropolitan realms from which the preparations for his journey to the republic begin – Greene makes this dissolution more readily apparent.

by his recent reading of Conrad, is countermanded by Barbara Greene's depiction of a similar ordeal, and a similarly unnavigable London, in **Land Benighted** (1938):

One of the few things that I had to do for myself was to get my visa from the Liberian Consulate in London. This was not so easy as might be thought. As I could not find where the Consulate was from the telephone book, I approached Thos. Cook. After a long wait I was given an address in the City. The numbers in what must surely be the most deserted street in London had apparently all been changed, for the number I was looking at was now a church. (2)

In his 1941 essay "Mr Cook's Century," Greene claims that Cook and Sons "in 1938" – the year in which **Land Benighted** was published – could have arranged . . . an independent tour to Central Africa as easily as to Ostend" (CE 235). Greene's claim is based on his perusal of Cook's promotional brochure **The Excursionist**. As we saw earlier, Stephen Donovan's more recent reading of **The Excursionist** led to his observation that Cook's, "only six months before Conrad began writing" "Heart of Darkness," had "taken a party of tourists on precisely [the] route" taken by Marlow in Conrad's novella. Here, however, the inference is that Cook and Sons do not possess a corresponding topographical grasp of the metropolitan spaces from which such an independent tour might be made. That

the Liberian Consulate seemingly eludes representation on the map is, of course, fitting. For, as Greene – having eventually found the Consulate and “examined the usual blank map upon the wall” (JWM 3) – is at pains to suggest, so, too, does Liberia itself.

One reason for this lack is that Liberia was never an imperial possession, and so was not part of the imperial “scramble” for Africa colourfully referenced in the Company map contemplated by Marlow in “Heart of Darkness.” Rather, not unlike neighbouring Sierra Leone (the setting for Greene’s 1948 novel **The Heart of The Matter**), Liberia was established as a colony for freed-slaves from the United States. Matthew Edney argues that “Imperialism and mapmaking intersect in the most basic manner,” both being “fundamentally concerned with territory and knowledge”: “To govern territories, one must know them” (1997, 1). Because Liberia remained one of “the only part[s] of Africa where white men do not rule” (JWM 295), neither of these interrelated practical and epistemological concerns directly applied. Nevertheless, Liberia had, since its founding in 1822, always been a space cross-cut with Western interests. “[T]he Republic was founded,” as Greene notes, by “[a]n American philanthropic society at the beginning of the nineteenth century” “as an example to all Africa of a Christian and self-governing state” (2). Thomas Jefferson – President of the United States when the American Colonization Society, the “philanthropic society” to which Greene refers, was founded in Washington in 1816 – outlined another, altogether less philanthropic, motivation behind the planting of the colony. In his **Notes on the State of Virginia**

(1794), Jefferson declared that black and white could not live together in American society without “the extermination of one or the other race” (1853, 149); instead, he proposed the wholesale expulsion of America’s black population. The “colonization” movement in the United States was therefore driven by two entwined desires: the Christianization of Africa, and “the ‘purification’ of white America from its ‘black taint’” (Fyfe 1976, 90). To these ends, the American Colonization Society, its “many influential sponsors,” and like-minded advocates such as Jefferson, all “saw Africa (as their ancestors had seen America) as **tabula rasa**, where colonists could fulfil their potentialities undisturbed” (*Ibid.*).¹⁰³

The Society had maps drawn up and circulated amongst potential backers, promoting the settlement of the new colony. These maps of Liberia produce the republic as **tabula rasa**. One such map, for example – whilst giving a comparatively detailed picture (given its scale of 1:900,000) of the Liberian coastline (the agglomerated fruit of several British hydrographic surveys), inland topography near the coast and a resident, human presence (“Bays Town; “Villages of Tahon”) – depicts an interior unmarked save for lines of longitude and latitude, and invitingly left blank (“Map of Liberia,” The American Colonization Society, Washington DC, 1892).¹⁰⁴ Given the specific political and

¹⁰³ See also Schama (2009).

¹⁰⁴ A copy of this map is held at the British Library.

religious interests, located beyond its bounding frame, to which this map is graphically geared, these blank spaces are less a confession of cartographic ignorance than an invitation to further settlement. On the one hand, Greene's encounter with the "usual blank map" in the Liberian Consulate can be seen to be marked generally, and inevitably, as that word "usual" suggests, by the same imperial discourse of Africa as a blank space which nourishes and is nourished by Conrad's "Heart of Darkness." Indeed, Greene's 1952 essay "The Explorers," about the establishment of the Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa "on 9 June 1788," touches upon the long discursive prevalence of the idea of a "blank" Africa: "this unknown territory six times the size of Europe, the biggest white space on the contemporary map" (CE 237). Yet, on the other, such readings should not overlook the fact that this encounter is also marked by an historically specific, situated set of American interests.

Greene's reference to "the usual blank map" in the Consulate is the prelude to the practical inability, during his preparations for the voyage out, to procure anything resembling a complete map of Liberia:

I could find only two large-scale maps for sale. One, issued by the British General Staff, quite openly confesses ignorance; there is a large white space covering the greater part of the Republic, with a few dotted lines indicating the conjectured course of rivers (incorrectly, I usually found) and a fringe of names along the

boundary. . . . The other map is issued by the United States War Department. There is a dashing quality about it; it shows a vigorous imagination. Where the English map is content to leave a blank space, the American in large letters fills it with the word ‘Cannibals.’ It has no use for dotted lines and confessions of ignorance; it is so inaccurate that it would be useless, perhaps even dangerous, to follow it, though there is something Elizabethan in its imagination. ‘Dense Forest’; ‘Cannibals’; rivers which don’t exist, at any rate anywhere near where they are put; one expects to find Eldorado, two-headed men and fabulous beasts represented in little pictures in the Gola Forest. (JWM 41-42)

The difference between these British and American maps – that the former is “content to leave,” while the latter is impelled to fill-in, “a blank space” – recalls Conrad’s own contribution to the historiography of European cartography, “Geography and Some Explorers” (1924). Conrad’s tri-partite history begins with the era of medieval Christian “fabulous geography”: a “phase of circumstantially extravagant speculation” when “the medieval mind . . . crowded its maps with pictures of strange pageants, strange trees, strange beasts . . . imaginary kingdoms . . . inhabited by men with reversed feet, or eyes in the middle of their heads” (LE 2). Succeeding this is the great age of imperial expansion, “geography militant,”

which commences with the re-discovery during the Renaissance of Ptolemy's universal and uniform system of latitude and longitude and a return to empirical mapping based on the daily experience of sailors, and culminates in geography "triumphant," the cartographic mastery of the planet by Europe during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Daniel Boorstin suggests that "the greatest act of self-control" of these early Renaissance cartographers was "to leave parts of the earth blank" (Cited in Hampson 2000, 20). Key to this apparent "self-restraint" was a new governing epistemology, whereby "[t]he unknown became the not-yet-known," and the blank spaces on the map, which previously were populated by the products of "extravagant speculation," instead "called out for completion" within a rigid, universal frame (Hampson 2000, 20). In the "English" map's confession of geographic "ignorance" in *Journey Without Maps*, then, is an appeal to geographic knowledge.

Meanwhile, the United States map, in its "dashing" and "vigorous" annotation, seemingly has much in common with the preceding era of dogmatic, "fabulous" geography. Yet despite its anachronistic flavour, this map can also be firmly situated in Greene's contemporary moment. That Greene's attention is drawn to the area of the map inscribed, "in large letters," "with the word 'Cannibals,'" is particularly salient here. As Derek Gregory argues: "The language of the monstrous is significant, because colonial imaginaries typically let monsters loose in the far-away," monsters which are inextricable from and which "mirror metropolitan conceits." "[D]iscourses that mobilize monstrosity as a screen for

otherness,” in other words, “are always involved in circuits of normalizing power as well” (2004, 45-46). In **The Invention of the West**, Christopher GoGwilt discusses the Tropical Belt Coal Company map in **Victory**, and the Company’s cartographic pretensions regarding its imagined “influence” “as the central spot in the Eastern Hemisphere” (V 23). GoGwilt points up the “ironic failure of this map,” which stems from the absence of “a corresponding power” on the ground (1995, 67). In the case of the United States War Department map, however, whether any “corresponding power” exists on the ground is beside the point; this map is concerned with the projection, rather than with the realities, of power. Behind this map, in other words, and whatever the truth of its anthropophagical assertions, is the then-recent efflorescence of U.S. imperial power confidently prophesied by Holroyd in Conrad’s **Nostramo** (1904).¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ GoGwilt also observes that, across the body of his fictional output, Conrad’s attention was “most consistently engaged” by “the scramble” not for Africa, but “for Southeast Asia” – a scramble “which brought the Malay peninsula and parts of Borneo under formal British rule between 1874 and 1896,” “saw the consolidation of Dutch rule in the Dutch East Indies,” and – notably – “witnessed the emergence of the new imperialism of the United States in the Philippines” (1995, 67). Greene himself explores the imperial effects of the United States’ later, post-War presence in Southeast Asia in his 1955 novel **The Quiet American**. Greene’s novel emphasizes that this U.S. presence, although described by its taciturn representative Pyle, under the banner of what Edward Said terms “American exceptionalism” (1994, 285), as being free of “the taint of colonialism,” inevitably was marked by and inherited much from the prior presence there of the “old colonial powers” of Europe (QA 137). As the attentiveness to American maps of Liberia in **Journey Without Maps** demonstrates, Greene was interested in the make-up of this inheritance,

There was only one map issued by the “British General Staff” (JWM 41) in circulation during the mid-1930s. The “English map” that Greene takes with him to Liberia in all probability was that issued by the War Office in London, a composite, corrected map on a scale of 1:1000,000 from 1914, based on an original survey conducted in 1905.¹⁰⁶ It represents a space whose boundaries, whilst not those of a European colony, are shared with European colonies and are, as a result, subject to delineation and, sometimes, re-arrangement by the map of empire. One reason why this map re-produces the Liberian interior as a largely blank space is that it proceeds from such a delineation and re-arrangement, following a series of surveys at the turn of the twentieth century of the shared border with British Sierra Leone; thus, although this map is ostensibly a representation of Liberia its focus, as a result, lies elsewhere. In “The Hinterland of Liberia,” a paper delivered to The Royal Geographical Society on 17 November 1919, the British explorer Sir Alfred Sharpe – parts of whose 1919 journey Greene himself roughly re-traces (JWM 190) – suggests another reason: “What one longs for in this country is a view, which is never to be had. You are forever enveloped in forest or scrub and can never see what the country looks like. As for compass survey, plane-table work, or triangulation, they are out of the question” (1920, 299). Sharpe describes a landscape seemingly resistant to particularly its cartographic dimension, much earlier than the publication date of *The Quiet American* acknowledges.

¹⁰⁶ A copy of this map is held at the British Library.

techniques of mapping such as triangulation, and thereby to Europe's cartographic gaze.

A subsequent report compiled by George Shattuck, delivered to the Society on 21 May 1928, reinforces Sharpe's view. Shattuck compares several of the older "published" maps of Liberia, from which he has compiled a new "sketch-map": "The sketch-map was adapted from that of the Firestone Company, which in turn was outlined from the British Admiralty charts of the coast and from the work of various boundary commissions." Interestingly, Shattuck refers to the United States map rejected by Greene in **Journey Without Maps**, as "the best" of those presently "published." However: "Some . . . of the towns and roads in this map no longer exist, and the courses of several rivers are grossly inaccurate. The dotted courses of important rivers . . . indicate that the real courses are still unknown." Meanwhile, "[t]he position and height of mountains shown on other maps are so uncertain that they have not been included" on Shattuck's new map. Any suggestion that Shattuck's new map is much of a corrective, however, is soon dispelled: "Unfortunately, many of [the] observations" upon which this map was based "were accidentally destroyed"; moreover, "[t]o put in the names of all the towns and half-towns passed through upon our route would overcrowd the map. Many of them have therefore been omitted" (1929, 236). Shattuck's map and his accompanying report, in other words, seem concerned less with filling-in the map than re-producing it as blank,

by erasing (either by accident or design), or challenging, its existing exiguous inscriptions.

On 23 March 1931, just three years before Greene began to draw up his travel plans during the autumn and winter of 1934, the English naturalist and explorer Cuthbert Christy delivered a further report to the Society. Christy, who had also overseen the same International Commission report on slavery in Liberia whose findings Greene may have been sent to investigate (1932, 340), concluded that: “The interior of Liberia is comparatively little known, scarcely more than it was in 1906 when [the explorer Sir Harry] Johnston described it as ‘still the least known part of Africa’” (1931, 516).¹⁰⁷ Thus, in much the same way as Marlow’s geographic observations in “Heart of Darkness” can, as we have seen, be said to reflect the professional opinion of imperial geographers such as Mackinder at the turn of the twentieth century, so, too, do Greene’s on Liberia reflect an official, contemporary British consensus. Furthermore, the “English map” that Greene takes with him has, given the appeal for geographic knowledge with which Christy rounds off his report, a considerable contextual baggage which belies its relative lack of content:

¹⁰⁷ See Johnston (1905). Greene asserts that Johnston “knew only the coast districts of Liberia, never penetrating . . . much farther inland than his rubber plantation at Mount Barclay outside [the capital] Monrovia” (JWM 163-64).

What we are interested in and what we would like to know is much more about the geography of the country farther inland. . . . Anything that people going to Liberia can do to encourage whatever Government there is to map the country, find out what is inside worth bringing down, make those communications which lead, as we in this society choose to think, to freedom and civilization – roads, mapping, geography generally – we shall be very glad to assist and encourage. (540)

In other words, Greene's English map not only appeals generally, as do all maps produced during the imperial era of geography militant, to the furtherance of geographic knowledge, with the intent of accessing and removing "what is worth bringing down," but can also be referred to a quite specific moment when the problem of its filling-in was just then being contemplated.

Christy's enlistment of "people going to Liberia" in the cause of "geography generally" chimes with what, since its establishment in 1830, had been one of the foremost concerns of the Royal Geographical Society. For the Society's founders, the collection of reliable geographical information "was not merely a matter of constructing an authoritative archive of books, journals, maps and charts" – collectively "a record of the progress of exploration" – "but also of instructing travellers on what remained to be done" (Driver 2001, 49). Although the Society had, in manuals such as **Hints to Travellers**, first published in 1854 and

thereafter in successive updated editions, long attempted to promote a coherent and “authoritative ‘way of seeing’ in the field” by differentiating the view of the “scientific explorer from that of the ordinary traveller” (*Ibid.*), the traditional separation of “scientific travel and literary tourism” (52) had, as Felix Driver notes, since been muddied by “the requirements of the ‘new imperialism’ of the late nineteenth century” (41) – a distinction which, owing to the shrouded, semi-official auspices under which he claimed to have travelled, is in Greene’s case likewise anything but clear. During the summer of 1935 Greene reports “ha[ving] read” not *Hints to Travellers*, but another book issuing from the centres of British officialdom: “a British Government Blue Book” about Liberia. “There was,” he recalls, “something satisfyingly complete about [the] picture” presented of the republic in this text: “It really seemed as though you couldn’t go deeper than that” (*JWM* 4-5). Greene’s remark about the Blue Book’s apparent “completeness,” given that all he can glean from it about “the interior” are “the principal diseases” and a loose estimate that there are “three or four missionary doctors working” there (5), is, it seems, intended ironically. In view of the potential strategic use of “non-scientific” travellers and travel writing for the RGS and of Christy’s appeal, however, Greene’s mapless journey, and the resulting narrative of it, could well have been viewed as helping to produce a more “complete . . . picture” of Liberia. Just as a function of maps produced by imperial cartographers was to mark out “useful” resources, so travel narratives such as Greene’s, thanks to the then-recent erasure of the distinction between

scientific travel and literary tourism, were increasingly viewed as resources with a certain geographical value.¹⁰⁸

In “Heart of Darkness,” Marlow’s memory of “the biggest, the most blank” space on the map of empire for which, as “a little chap,” he “had a hankering,” is contrasted with the diegetic moment of his narration, “by [which] time it was not a blank space any more”: “It had got filled since my boyhood with rivers and lakes and names” (Y 52). Marlow underlines, in this brief sketch, the

¹⁰⁸ Indeed, the *New Statesman and Nation* review of Freya Stark’s *The Southern Gates of Arabia* (1936), which appears next to that of *Journey Without Maps*, begins by stressing how with previous texts such as *The Valleys of the Assassins* Stark “established her reputation with geographers” (Quennell 1936, 870). Greene perhaps would not have been displeased by the potential geographic use, and usefulness, of *Journey Without Maps*, given his roughly contemporary statement on issues of space and representation in the 1945 essay “François Mauriac.” In a phrase that recalls Conrad’s injunction in the Preface to *The Nigger of the ‘Narcissus’* to “before all . . . make you see” (ix; emphasis in original), Greene lauds his fellow Catholic novelist Mauriac (then, like Conrad, something of a literary mentor to Greene) as “a writer for whom the visible world has not ceased to exist” (CE 92), whilst bemoaning the “paper-thin” worlds of Forster and Woolf: “Mrs Dalloway walking down Regent Street was aware of the glitter of shop windows, the smooth passage of cars, the conversation of shoppers, but it was only a Regent Street seen by Mrs Dalloway that was conveyed to the reader”: “a current of air, a touch of scent, a sparkle of glass. But, we protest, Regent Street too has a right to exist; it is more real than Mrs Dalloway” (91-92). Greene’s later, querulous defences of the “reality” of “Greenland” – a term used by critics to denote, and often to denounce as “unreal,” the seedy topographies typically found in Greene’s fiction and non-fiction (Spurling 1983, 60) – suggest that he kept to this view: “Some critics have referred to a strange violent ‘seedy’ region of the mind . . . which they call Greenland, and I have sometimes wondered whether they go round the world blinkered. ‘This is Indo-China,’ I want to exclaim, ‘this is Mexico, this is Sierra Leone carefully and accurately described’” (WE 77).

agglomerated processes of cartographic inscription through which the vast “white patch” of Africa that he used “to dream gloriously over” has been “filled” (*Ibid.*) Mary Louise Pratt describes the key moments of spatial discovery, encounter, and survey through which sites like “the rivers and lakes” upon which Marlow touches here were added to the map. The “discovery” of a site involved “making one’s way to the region and asking the local inhabitants if they knew of any big lakes, etc. in the area, then hiring them to take you there, whereupon, with their guidance and support, you proceeded to discover what they already knew” (1992, 202). Yet the “discovery” only gets “made” for real after the traveller returns home and brings it into being through texts: “a name on a map, a report to the Royal Geographical Society, the Foreign Office, the London Mission Society, a diary, a lecture, a travel book” (*Ibid.*, 204): “made,” that is, by being recuperated to the sort of authorizing institutional context in which the sketch-maps, lectures, and reports to the RGS by Shattuck, Sharpe and Christy circulated at around the time of Greene’s departure for Liberia.

The childhood experience that Conrad recollects in “Geography and Some Explorers,” of “entering laboriously in pencil the outline” of new discoveries “on my beloved old atlas, which, having been published in 1852, knew nothing” of contemporary gains in geographical knowledge (*LE* 14), adds to Pratt’s sketch of this underlying narrative of imperial cartography. Geographical “discoveries” are further made real as the map, thanks to the circulation of texts outlining such gains, is **cumulatively** updated. Crucially, through

the cumulative updating of the map previous errors are, in theory, corrected; it is not just the prior absence of geographical knowledge that is corrected, then, but also the presence of prior, “incorrect” knowledge. The idea of its implicit capacity to self-correct lends imperial cartography, as Denis Cosgrove notes, the “teleological naturalism which assumes that the [most] contemporary map is the truest representation” (1999, 8). Greene both invokes, and implicitly challenges, this assumption in **Journey Without Maps**. His reason for selecting the apparently older “English map” over the United States map is because, as the less “filled” and more openly tentative and provisional of the two – little more than “a few dotted lines . . . and a fringe of names” (41) – it represents, counter to the logic of cumulative, corrective mapping, a “truer” picture of Western geographical knowledge of Liberia.

In an attempt to re-orient the English map to its represented Liberian context, Greene approaches “Mr D,” a member of the Kru, one of Liberia’s several indigenous peoples, to help “fill-in” the blanks: “this was where Mr D, the elderly Kruman, could help; he knew the Republic” (42). However:

On the blank spaces of the English map, Mr D made his pencilled suggestions; he couldn’t really be sure to a matter of ten miles where to put the places he mentioned; the English map confused him with its inaccuracies. At last he gave up altogether, and I simply wrote the names down in my notebook, spelling

them as best I might . . . until my small book was filled with lists of probably mis-spelt names in smudged pencil of places I never succeeded in finding. (43)

Here, the underlying narrative of imperial cartography as enumerated by Pratt is traced in reverse. The “discovery,” which is “made” real and given fixity within a specific European textual and cartographic context, and which in the first place derives from a European encounter on the ground with local African knowledge, is “unmade” through the re-presentation of the map to an African audience located within the very geographic context it purports to depict. At the same time, the local knowledge is itself undermined – partly through the errors introduced in transcription and partly through the failure of validation by the explorer. With the already tentative fixity of what it represents thus further compromised, Greene comes to view the English map with the same suspicion as he does its American counterpart. The title of Greene’s travel narrative therefore names not just the practical hindrance presented by the absence of any “complete” maps of Liberia, but also the eventual rejection by Greene of what maps do exist. At one level, through this contestation of existing Western cartographic knowledge of Liberia, a contestation which effectively sees the English map emptied of its content, Greene re-creates the conditions of Marlow’s childhood map of Africa in his own contemporary moment. This, however, is where the similarity ends. Marlow’s now-superseded map of Africa, in declaring

its tentative and provisional nature and inviting at least imaginative “completion” as “a white patch . . . to dream gloriously over” (Y 52), is, as Edney suggests, fundamental to the imperial project. With this image, and Marlow’s affection for it, “Heart of Darkness” hints at how the achievement of closed space was one of the legitimating myths and driving narratives of imperialism – “An idea at the back of it,” to adapt Marlow (Y 51). **Journey Without Maps** on the other hand can be read as a rejection of maps and systems of mapping, and, with this rejection, as a questioning of the cartographic means, and thus the very concept, of “closed space.”

Conrad’s dual concern with geography and mapping is for Conrad criticism a fairly well-explored terrain. Indeed, as if in response to Conrad’s private adumbration, in a letter to Richard Curle, of his “policy of concealment” regarding the presence, or lack thereof, of place names in his fiction – “the paragraph, when pinned to a particular spot, must appear diminished – a fake. And yet it’s true!” (Cited in Sherry 1966, 173) – some critics have striven to chart the extent to which the represented worlds across Conrad’s fictions – whether early novels such as **Almayer’s Folly** (1895), critically-lauded texts such as **Lord Jim** (1900), or more neglected, supposedly “lesser,” tales such as “Freya of the Seven Isles” (1912) – correspond to “real” physical geographies.¹⁰⁹ As we have seen,

¹⁰⁹ See, respectively, Visser (1993); Van Marle and Lefranc (1988); and Larabee (2003). Anticipating this scholarship, the U.S. edition of **Victory** (1915) included a map (which Conrad had seen and made corrections to) plotting the scenes, sea-routes, and other general locations featured in Conrad’s fiction,

when Greene claims of Central Africa in “The Congo Journal” that it “has not changed since Conrad’s day,” he is not so much acting within this tradition in Conrad criticism begun by Curle (1914) of mapping the consonances between page and place, as revealing a more complex, and often fraught, relationship between Conrad’s writing and his own. Other Conrad criticisms, as if inflected by that inescapable political fact of Conrad biography, that post-partition Poland had no existence on the map of Europe, have made critical hay by exploring the superimposed and composite character of some of Conrad’s fictional sites.¹¹⁰ One critic, perhaps taking up Conrad’s oft-overlooked stress on the aural in his 1920 Preface to **The Nigger of the “Narcissus”** (1897) “to make you **hear**” (ix; emphasis added), has, using period maps of metropolitan London, read works including **The Secret Agent** (1907) **archaeologically**, examining the ways in which Conrad “sought to capture the acoustic qualities of disappearing topographical feature[s]” (Pye 2007, 31). Conversely, although some critics are similarly inclined to view

ranging from London (“the setting for ‘The Secret Agent’ . . . ‘Chance’ . . . ‘The Return’ [and] ‘The Informer’”) to “The Island of Samburan, the scene of ‘Victory.’” Accompanying, and to a degree undercutting, this literary cartography is a Note in the legend which reads: “It must be borne in mind that the markings on the map are only approximations based many times on invented names.” Indeed, as subsequent scholarship has shown, Samburan “cannot be positively identified nor even precisely located” (Hampson, ed. 1989, 389n.). Conrad’s U.S. publishers, like the “Company promoters” behind the prospectus map featured in the novel, evidently had “an imagination of their own” (73). This map is reprinted in Mursia (1983), pp. 112-13.

¹¹⁰ See, for example, Hampson (2005).

Greene's fiction as an historical and geographical document (for example, where Sherry maps the chief locales of **Brighton Rock** [1938] onto a topography of present-day Brighton [1989, 632]), there remains a countermanding consensual emphasis on the artifice, rather than the mimetic properties, of "Greenland" – a term which, seemingly applied indiscriminately to Greene's non-fictional as well as his fictional writings, might be seen to unsettle the putative authenticity of representations of "Other" geographies in works like **Journey Without Maps**. Yet, given the cartographic contexts explored in Greene's West African travelogue, this instability is apt. For, feeding into this critical tradition of "mapping" the correspondences between page and place, we have seen how works such as "Heart of Darkness" and **Journey Without Maps** are more deeply engagements with – and, in the case of Greene's **Journey Without Maps**, a contestation of – imperial, cartographic constructions of space.

3. “Where civilization brushes against wild mystery”:

Empire and the Archive

THE “ARCHIVAL TURN” has of late generated much critical discussion within the academy, yet this “turn,” in turn, does not strictly focus on archives, and archival labour, as bases of a scholarly, “extractive enterprise” (Stoler 2006, 268). Rather, it is something of a descriptive catch-all, concerning a strand of theory in which the archive refers not only to institutions of knowledge, but also the metaphoric, unlocatable, capitalized “elsewhere” from which such institutions gather force. The “archival turn” can also be characterized as an inward one, directed against the archive in a questioning of our privileging it as a storehouse of “facts” (Spivak 1999, 202). This chapter is not necessarily, then, a record of time spent immersed in the Berg Collection or in some other repository of Conradiana.

Another thread of argument feeds out from the understanding, put simply but instructively by Neil Smith, that “the ‘scientific’ construction of global space, empire and the geographical elsewhere” characterizing the imperial project, was marked by a European “scrambl[e] to learn from and to surpass the recorded knowledge of the Greeks and Romans as well as later Arab thinkers” (Smith 1992, 261). In short, that empire in its modern European forms was as much an archival as a geographical endeavour. Indeed, in this imperial context archival and geographic endeavours are inextricably linked. The cartographic project examined in Chapter Two represents, as Robert Hampson has argued, “a system of

surveying, naming, and recording that combines particular professional practices with supporting institutions **for the construction of a scientific and imperial archive**” (2005, 121; emphasis added). As such, the maps featured in **Journey Without Maps**, though representing different political interests, grow out from much the same archival impulse, being geared to the construction of such a monument.

The word **archive**, reflecting a broad range of significations, has here more than simply one referent. “[A]rchive,” as Caroline Steedman puts it, is a “portmanteau term” (2001, 4), with considerable conceptual baggage. By paying close attention to archival contexts and theory, and to Conrad’s engagement with them in his 1912 short tale “Freya of the Seven Isles,” this chapter aims both to unpack some of this baggage and, in so doing, shed new light on a story about which some critics would seemingly rather forget. In his 1969 study **Conrad’s Short Fiction**, Lawrence Graver cast a memorably critical eye over Conrad’s 1912 collection, **Twixt Land and Sea**. Comprising “A Smile of Fortune,” “The Secret Sharer,” and “Freya of the Seven Isles,” Graver judged the collection as “draw[ing] from the best **and worst** of Conrad” (1969, 150; emphasis added). Any doubt into which category “Freya” falls is quickly dispelled. “[O]ne of the most clumsily protracted of all Conrad’s stories,” he writes, “‘Freya’ customarily reduces critics to compassionate silence” (163). Although recent articles hardly speak of a total critical silence,¹¹¹ Graver’s point still carries weight. For “Freya of

¹¹¹ See Larabee (2003) and Monod (2006). The latter, however, seems to be part of the tradition that Graver alludes to, describing “Freya” – which is sub-titled “A Story of Shallow Waters” – to be, “in fact, a tale of

the Seven Isles” remains a tale that Conrad criticism characteristically seems content to shelve.

This critical heritage, positing “Freya” as best forgotten, perhaps surprisingly begins with Conrad himself. In the Author’s Note to **Twixt Land and Sea** from 1920, Conrad recollects the “much enfeebled state” (viii) in which the tales comprising this collection were written, thanks to the breakdown brought on by **Under Western Eyes**. Conrad glosses that the “little success” which greeted **Twixt Land and Sea** proved “a most timely tonic for my enfeebled bodily frame” (vii). Yet, Conrad’s description of – or rather his attempt to describe – the origins and development of this collection of tales suggests the persistence of another sort of ailment. In a playful echo of the unnamed narrator’s almost incantatory urge in “Freya” to “remember” (TLS 147) Conrad’s Note is characterized by slippages, and the imprecision – if not the outright failure – of memory. If Conrad’s memory of “The Secret Sharer” is, as he suggests in the Note, only incidentally “hazy” (viii), his recollection of “Freya” is wilfully obscured: “nothing remains now,” Conrad writes, “but the pages of the story which I cannot recall

intellectually very shallow waters” (Monod 2006, 88). Cf. “Conrad’s subtitle . . . may indicate his own misgivings about a tale which depends upon a lack of moral and artistic depth” (Schwartz 1982, 21). Other exceptions to this general avoidance include: an examination of the transtextual links between “Freya” and the preceding story in **Twixt Land and Sea**, “The Secret Sharer” (Casarino 1997), a Bakhtinian reading of the *ménage à quatre* in “Freya” (Erdinast-Vulcan 1999), and examinations of the story’s gender biases by Elbert (1994) and Schneider (2003).

and **would not recall if I could**” (x; emphasis added).¹¹² The aporetic nature of memory is not solely to blame, therefore, for the problems in re-presenting “Freya” for the purposes of the Author’s Note. Conrad’s prefatory Notes must also be set “within the wider context of his collaboration with his publishers in the plan to crown his career with a fittingly prepared monument” (Knowles and Moore 2000, 26). In them, Conrad is deeply involved in the shaping of his own literary legacy; in this particular Note, however, Conrad seems keen to minimize the role of “Freya” in the production of such a memorial.¹¹³

There has been a strong tendency to theorize the archive along the lines of memory and vice versa. On this overlap, Dorothea McEwan (2007), speaking from a museum studies context, has stressed the imaginative intervention that takes place between an event and its storage in, and as, memory. This intervention is such that what ends up in the archive traces a line not from event to memory, but from memory to event. In this interpretation, memory as an archive, of sorts, does not merely store, but actively shapes – or even produces – what it stores. McEwan also stresses that memory is, moreover, a **biological** thing.

¹¹² Conrad’s critical disregard for “Freya” is similarly played out in his letters. For instance, in a 1911 letter to Edward Garnett, Conrad refers to being “near the end” of “writing a silly story.” Before it was even finished, “Freya” was for Conrad mere “truck” (CL4 407).

¹¹³ Jeremy Hawthorn discusses Conrad’s Note in Freudian terms, whereby its slippages “bespeak . . . a measure of unease on Conrad’s part, or even a measure of guilt of concealment” (2007, 126). According to Hawthorn, there is much about the story – not least its “exploration of sadistic-exhibitionist sexual pleasure in a woman” – that Conrad may have wished to conceal (129).

Thus the repeated emphasis, not just in Conrad's Note, but in "Freya" too, on mental and physical illness, suggests how the archive's biological basis might be problematic in a tale that, told "many years" (TLS 147) after the events it describes, relies on various kinds of remembrance for its coherence.

This conjugation of illness and memory echoes a key thread of Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever* (1996). As Caroline Steedman puts it: "The fever, or sickness of the archive is to do with its very establishment, which is at one and the same time the establishment of state power and authority. And then there is the feverish desire . . . that Derrida indicated for the archive: the fever not so much to enter it and use it, as to **have** it, or just for it to be there in the first place" (2001, 1-2; emphasis in original). In other words, whereas critics such as McEwan see sickness as compromising the archive from within, Derrida sees it as being the archive's motive force.

In "Freya of the Seven Isles" the narrator is possessed of a similar sort of archive fever, in his assemblage, collation, and presentation of various different story strands, bits of gossip and professional talk, from different times, and across vast distances, as one coherent narrative – whereupon the transmission of the story itself serves a mnemonic function. This function is crystallized in the "long, chatty letter" from one of the narrator's "old chums and fellow-wanderers in Eastern waters," that stimulates the memory, and then the telling, of Freya's tale: "The letter was of the reminiscent 'do you remember' kind – a wistful letter of

backward glances” (TLS 147).¹¹⁴ As Fredric Jameson observes, storytelling has traditionally served as “a form of primitive data storage,” and thereby, “of social reproduction” (1984, xii). And, as Caroline Steedman elsewhere seems to suggest, narrative might **best** be understood as a “technology of memory,” “one of a set of techniques developed in order that societies might remember” (2001, 66-67). The “long, chatty letter,” and the moment of its being read recalled at the beginning of “Freya,” promotes the archive as a metaphor for the scene, and substance, of individual remembrance. That the ensuing narration is seemingly generated by the narrator’s seizing upon this letter’s single mention of the name of “old Nelson (or Nielson)” (TLS 147), recalls Steedman’s description of the archive as a kind of “oneiric” place, “where a whole world, a social order, may be imagined by the recurrence of a name [on] a scrap of paper, or some other little piece of flotsam” (2001, 80-81).

Yet, there are evident limits to the basis of the narrator’s remembrance. His emphatic, “Remember old Nelson! Rather!” is immediately qualified thus: “Truly, none of us in my generation had known him in his active days” (TLS 148). This slippery historiography could be seen, as some critics have, to be an early indication of the presence of an unreliable (or even “duplicitous”) narrator¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ The memory-jogging letter carries with it an echo of the Author’s Note to *Twixt Land and Sea*, in which Conrad claims that some of the story matter was based on memories stimulated by the visit in early 1910 of Captain Carlos Marris, an old acquaintance from Conrad’s time in the East during his sea-years.

¹¹⁵ For more on this, see Erdinast-Vulcan (1999).

(especially given that shortly after this acknowledgement he appears to present himself an authority on memory, offhandedly remarking that Freya “When Jasper was in sight . . . was not likely to remember that anybody else in the world was there” [153]). On the other hand, the narrator’s apparently slippery grasp of the historical record might be better understood with reference to Steedman’s view of the mnemonic power of given scenes of reading. Thus, although the narrator never in fact knew the “active” Nelson of old, his store of tales about the Dane, assembled through hearsay and re-animated by the “chatty letter,” seem to him as real as the memory of a superannuated “old” Nelson forged through physical contact: “It was really pitiable to see the anxious circumspection of his dealings with some official or other . . . remember[ing] that this man had been known to stroll up to a village of cannibals in New Guinea in a quiet, fearless manner . . . on some matter of barter that did not amount perhaps to fifty pounds in the end” (148).

Michel Foucault gives his own response to the “question of the archive” in his 1969 work **The Archaeology of Knowledge**. Here, “the archive is not an institution but ‘the law of what can and cannot be said’; not a library of events but ‘that system that establishes statements as events and things, that system of their enunciability[.]’” (Stoler 2006, 269). In Foucault’s order of things, then, the archive represents an overarching regime of truth, within which all discourse is formed, and against which all forms of discourse are measured. This order recalls the narrator’s self-appointed role in “Freya of the Seven Isles.” Aside from the

authority invested in him **as** narrator, there is also about him something of the **archon** – the official custodian of truth, in the classical sense of the archive (or **arkhe**) as the place where knowledge and power originate.¹¹⁶

This inflection is particularly apparent when the narrator builds up to the fate of the **Bonito** by appealing to a sequential “record” of what transpired: “Next, it must be recorded that the same day the gunboat **Neptun**, steering east, passed the brig **Bonito** becalmed in sight of Carimata, with her head to the eastward, too” (TLS 208). Closing this sequence of things that “must be recorded” is, naturally, “The last thing to be recorded:” “Lieutenant Heemskirk¹¹⁷ instead of pursuing his

¹¹⁶ The changes Conrad made to drafts of the story are of interest here. As Daniel Schwarz suggests, the narrator was much more of “a minor character” in serial variants of the text: “The changes Conrad made in the story when preparing the magazine version for the volume **Twixt Land and Sea** indicate that he wanted to increase the characterization of the narrator.” Schwarz concludes, however, that Conrad’s alterations make the narrator in subsequent versions “a tediously loquacious Pandarus figure,” one disposed to prolixity and with an obsessive “interest in pedestrian detail” (1982, 19-21). Yet, although Schwarz feels that such changes in their preciseness add nothing to the story, these changes, and this preciseness, are essential to the story’s engagement with the archive.

¹¹⁷ Conrad’s 1923 essay “Geography and Some Explorers” contains a possible source for the combative Dutch lieutenant. In his roll-call of the great explorers of the post-Columbian period, Conrad touches upon the Dutch navigator Abel Tasman, whose fleet included the “**Heemskirk**” (LE 10). As with the fictional Heemskirk, Tasman was a figure of some controversy. He was famously suspended in November 1649 for having summarily executed one of his crew. Conrad alludes to Tasman’s involvement in “some disreputable scrape” and his subsequent suspension by “the honourable council in Batavia” (then, as in “Freya of the Seven Isles,” the seat of Dutch colonial power in the Malay Archipelago). “This action of the council,” he concludes, “fixes the character of the man better than any scandalous story” (LE 12). In

course towards Ternate, where he was expected, went out of his way to call at Makassar, where no one was looking for his arrival” (209). Whether this knowledge is grounded in “the letter mentioned in the very first lines of this narrative” from “that friend of mine” in Makassar (227) – itself an amalgam of local witness accounts and unofficial gossip (“the talk of the Archipelago” [208]) – or an official, Dutch version of events (the difference between mere records, and **the** record), remains unclear.

Conrad’s revision to the typescript of “Freya of the Seven Isles” is revealing on this issue.¹¹⁸ The narrator’s reference to “The last thing to be recorded,” before it was revised, reads, “The last thing **to record**” (emphasis added). Unremarkable in itself, this adjustment produces, in this context, a fine distinction. Whereas the former, pre-revised text suggests that the narrator is merely the one doing the recording – involved, in short, in the production of yet another unofficial account of the **Bonito** case – post revision the intimation is of an **archon**-like ability to survey all records, whatever the kind or category. In other words, that the exact source of his information is unclear is both beside and yet precisely the point.

addition to the name of one of Tasman’s ships, perhaps Conrad also lifted a little of Tasman’s reputed, and disreputable, character, too.

¹¹⁸ The typescript of “Freya of the Seven Isles” is held in the Berg Collection at New York Public Library.

Similarly, the narrator often claims to know much more than personal experience would seem to allow; for instance, when he reflects on the dubious history of Jasper's new mate, Schultz:

I don't credit absolutely that story Captain Robinson tells of Schultz conspiring in Chantabun with some ruffians in a Chinese junk to steal the anchor off the starboard bow of the **Bohemian Girl**. . . . Robinson's story is too ingenious altogether. That other tale of the engineers of the **Nan-Shan** finding Schultz at midnight in the engine-room busy hammering at the brass bearings to carry them off for sale on shore seems to me more authentic. (TLS 169)

As Cedric Watts (1982) has pointed out, there are some interesting transtextual links in this passage. It is the steamer **Nan-Shan** that withstands the eponymous sea-storm in "Typhoon." Meanwhile Captain Robinson – referred to variously as "[t]he notorious Robinson," "Holy-Terror Robinson," and (gesturing at definitiveness) "**the** Robinson" – makes a brief cameo appearance in **Lord Jim** (162; emphasis in original). At a surface level, then, "Freya of the Seven Isles" draws upon the earlier fictional role of Robinson and the realized world of his earlier fictional appearance (Hampson 2002, 99). In so doing, the text appeals to

the reader's memory of Conrad's other fiction as a kind of structuring, archival resource.

It is apt, then, that this transtextual relationship between "Freya" and **Lord Jim** also happens to touch upon issues of archival power (in the Foucauldian sense of it), by turns positing and questioning an ultimate point of gathering from which the veracity or otherwise of things can be measured. The Robinson of "Freya of the Seven Isles" is responsible for circulating stories, such as that of Schultz; in **Lord Jim** he is himself the subject, rather than the source, of some equally tall tales – known for having "smuggled more opium and bagged more seals in his time than any loose Johnny now alive," not to mention a reputed, one-time cannibalism (*Ibid.*) – which ill sit with the rather sorry, careworn figure he now cuts. That "the Holy Terror" is prone to "submissive little" jumps (168-69), illustrates with a deft irony this discrepancy between story and "fact." The Robinson of **Lord Jim**, moreover, is hardly a hive of information, let alone an authority: Chester's oft-repeated insistence (elsewhere referred to by Marlow as "a sort of bullying deference" [168]) that "Captain Robinson here can tell you," is met with a sad-eyed, "senile" befuddlement (164-65) suggesting otherwise.

Returning to the passage at hand, at first glance, the narrator's refusal in "Freya" to take any sort of evidence at face value references an archival scepticism of a now familiar kind.¹¹⁹ Undercutting this, a second glance reveals

¹¹⁹ For more on this, see Burton (2006), p. 21.

how this refusal presupposes the narrator's ultimate grip on knowledge. The bases of this knowledge lie deeper than personal history and gossip. The narrator appears to know – or claim to know – everything about Jasper's mate Schultz, right down to a minute appreciation of his "psychology" – the only way to properly "understand" (TLS 169-70) this "nautical kleptomaniac" (174). While the writing of "Freya of the Seven Isles" was for Conrad profoundly connected with reflections on his own psychological recovery after the strain of **Under Western Eyes**: "For this may indeed be called the book of a man's convalescence" (Author's Note, vii), its narrator keeps tabs on the psychological lives of others, rather than his own. In so doing, he aligns himself with a then-new archival science. Derrida in **Archive Fever** refers to psychoanalysis as "a scientific project which . . . aspires to be a general science of the archive, of everything that can happen to the economy of memory and to its substrates, traces, documents" (1996, 33-34).

That the narrator similarly feels able to measure the "benighted intelligence" (TLS 233) of others also provides the measure of the imperial, archival attitude on which British imperialism in part rested. In this context, the archive represents less a specific institution of knowledge than a guiding, "epistemological complex," as Thomas Richards has shown (1993, 14). In **The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire**, Richards sets out to excavate the creation of "a myth of a unified archive" during the era of high colonialism in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, namely, "the organization of all

knowledges into a coherent imperial whole” (1993, 6-7). This, like other imperial mythologies, shapes and gives substance to imperial actions. Thus the archive can be seen as centrally supportive of European colonialisms, where control over a part of the world is brought about, exemplified and stabilized by knowledge and its institutions (Kerr 2003, 33). To this end, knowledge does not so much supplement power, as substitute for it (Richards 1993, 5).

The “fantasy of an imperial archive” is in no small degree what drives the European positivist project of Conrad’s moment, whereby the control of empire “hinges on a . . . monopoly over knowledge” (1993, 6-7). And, though the fantasy of an empire unified by a systematized body of knowledge is later at odds with an inability to administer the explosion of information thrown up by Europe’s colonial expansion, the **fantasy of the** archive nonetheless remains in place as a necessary, regulatory fiction. That is to say that, while the positivist belief in the archive as “the sum total of the known and knowable that once seemed an attainable goal hovering on the horizon of possibility” (Richards 1993, 44) may fall away, the central importance to empire of controlling the forms and production of knowledge does not. In addition, although the imperial archive represents an impossible, utopic project, empire can be seen as being made up of not one but “a series of archives, each arising out of local concerns, but braided together, however imperfectly, by institutional exchanges, webs of personal correspondence and shared bodies of knowledge,” as Tony Ballantyne has argued (2002, 8). In this context, the “long, chatty letter” (TLS 147) that opens and

underpins “Freya of the Seven Isles” is, beyond the immediate telling of the story, of imperial as well as narrative import, gesturing to such networks of exchange and, with it, to empire’s archival undercurrents.

Archive and empire likewise provide an important touchstone for the representation of space in “Freya of the Seven Isles.” Conrad’s revisions, particularly those made to the opening of the story, are germane here. This opening marks one of several substantive revisions which Conrad made to the text following its first serial appearance in the April 1912 issue of the **Metropolitan Magazine**. This first serial version begins, as Graver notes, not with “Old Nelson” and a potted history of his activities in the East, but with a remark about the tale’s eponymous heroine: “Freya Nelson (or Nielson) was the kind of a girl one remembers” (TLS 149). It was only for the July 1912 issue of the **London Magazine** that Conrad fashioned a new three-page opening, centring on Old Nelson’s past exploits in the East. This new opening was kept for the subsequent volume **“Twixt Land and Sea** (1912).¹²⁰ In an echo of the influential achievement-and-decline thesis propounded by Thomas Moser (1957), Graver sees Conrad’s revision as further evidence of the sort of technical “clumsiness” that he argues besets much of Conrad’s late fiction (1969, 165). According to Graver, Conrad’s revision to the opening of “Freya” is only of interest as an “attempt to give the frail magazine version something of the elaborate structure which he used in his best

¹²⁰ Graver is mistaken in his insistence that neither serial version carries this revised opening (1969, 165). For more on the variations between the text’s serial and collected versions, see Schwarz (1982), pp. 18-21.

early work” (*Ibid.*). Yet, for the present discussion, this revised opening is pertinent for other than just technical or stylistic reasons.

The potted history of old Nelson with which the narrative opens is also a spatial history of the spread of Western influence in the East. The imagined map of Nelson’s movements – which, “if plotted out, would have covered . . . the Archipelago like a cobweb” (TLS 148) – provides a corresponding symbol of this influence. Indeed, the narrator’s subsequent description of Nelson’s wanderings, “in all directions through the Eastern Archipelago across and around, transversely, diagonally, perpendicularly, in semi-circles, and zigzags, and figures of eights, for years and years” (147),¹²¹ might be seen as constituting just such a “plotting out.” In any case, this imagined map of European commercial penetration, at whose vanguard Nielson seemingly once operated, answers to a broader archival project in which cartographic practices play an important part. Key here is Denis Cosgrove’s description of “mobile knowledge,” those “processes of seeing, recording, remembering and forgetting through which distant places were mapped into European knowledge systems,” “as imperial archiving centres sought accurately to map peripheries” (1999, 21). The narrator’s

¹²¹ In “Geography and Some Explorers,” Conrad puts “the superiority of geography over geometry” down to “the appeal of its figures” (LE 1). In “Freya,” the narrator’s description suggests a contrary preference for geometric “figures.”

description in “Freya” of a zone of “wild mystery” against which “civilization” “brushes,” marks one such periphery (171).¹²²

What this “civilization” entails is partly suggested by the narrative’s attention to the shape and spread of modern Western communications. Although Nelson had come out East “long before the advent of telegraph cables” (TLS 147), it seems safe to assume, given the narrator’s everyday reliance on “cable messages,” the “mailboat,” and other kinds of “notes” (178), that this and other communication technologies have since spread in a not dissimilar fashion to Nelson’s “wanderings”: “There was not a nook or cranny of these tropical waters that the enterprise of old Nelson (or Nielson) had not penetrated in an eminently pacific way” (147). Furthermore, the “enterprise” in which Nelson is engaged may have had a real causative, as well as this figurative, link with the suggested encroachment of this technological apparatus.

While the represented thoroughness with which Nelson covers space (“across and around, transversely, diagonally, perpendicularly, in semi-circles, and zigzags”) is a caricature, it is a recognizable one. As Agnes Yeow puts it, “the influential European private country traders,” of whom Nelson is one,

¹²² We might note here that the “brushing” to which the narrator refers can be seen as more broadly emblematic of a constitutive moment of self-fashioning on the part of imperial Europe, involving archival disciplines other than geography and cartography: “modernity was not fashioned in Europe and then projected out to colonies in the periphery”; rather, “the key enumerative and surveillance apparatuses of the modern state – from fingerprinting to the survey, from the census to the passport – were elaborated and refined in colonial contexts” (Ballantyne 2002, 8).

“practically combed the waters of the Malay Archipelago” during the period (2009, 55). What Nelson might have combed the Archipelago for before he “retired” to the Seven Isles to farm tobacco (TLS 148, 180) however, is, like the tangled image of his trading past, unclear. (Perhaps these details might be found in the “account-books” with which old Nelson “retire[s] early to his room to soothe himself for a night’s rest” (177), or the “shabby pocket-book full of papers” (234) over which the narrator later finds Nelson poring, but whose contents are never revealed.) Several possibilities are provided by G.J. Resink’s sketch of the flow of goods in and around the Archipelago during the late-nineteenth century: “The international trade carried on across the seas between . . . islands and realms outside Java, in a world where there were still few if any Western agricultural or mining enterprises, picked up high-quality market products – gold and diamonds, rattan and beeswax, pepper and edible birds’ nests, pearl-shells and trepang, gutta-percha, dammar, and other forest products” (1968, 321). The allusion to Nelson’s past “dealings” with “cannibals in New Guinea . . . on some matter of barter” (TLS 148) suggests the type of remote trading described here by Resink.¹²³

¹²³ These references to Nelson’s past dealings with “cannibals” in New Guinea indicate an area that was, when “Freya” appeared, still comparatively unknown and unmapped by Europeans; here that knowledge-gap is confirmed by the typical colonial gesture, as we saw in Chapter Two, of marking the unknown with the language of the monstrous.

Many of the commodities listed by Resink were exclusively for Chinese and Indian markets.¹²⁴ Yet one product, gutta-percha, was “of tremendous “importance to . . . industrial Europe,” having become integral to a general revolution in Western communications, as Yeow points out. Gutta-percha (from the Malay **gatah**, or “rubber”), a natural latex produced from the sap of trees local to South East Asia, was deemed “the only substance that could protect submarine telegraph cables” then being laid (Yeow 2009, 44). Indeed, the growing European need and pursuit of this raw material is part and parcel of a modernity measured in “technological advances in steam, print, and [telegraphy]” (**Ibid.**).¹²⁵ Because he “had come out East long before the advent of the telegraph

¹²⁴ John Crawford’s contemporary study *A Dictionary of the Indian Islands and Adjacent Countries* (1856) gives the following uses: “Damar,” literally “resin” (Malay and Javanese), is applied “to most of the uses to which [Europeans] put tar, pitch, and resin, and . . . forms an article of exportation to Continental India” (118); “Mother-of-Pearl,” or “indung-mutyara” (Malay), is “highly-prized, being nearly always in demand at Singapore for the European and Chinese markets. This oyster produces few real pearls, but gnarled semi-transparent excrescences are occasionally found on the surface of the inner shell, which are so highly esteemed by the Chinese that they fetch enormous prices” (330); “Tripang” (Malay) and “Siala” (Celebes) – also known to early Portuguese traders as “bêche-de-mer” – once “guttled, dried in the sun and smoked,” “is considered cured, and fit for its only market, that of China, to which many hundred tons are yearly sent for the consumption of the curious epicures of that country” (440) – much as are “Sarang-burung” (Malay) and “Susuh” (Javanese), or “Birds’ nests” (54-55). For more on the overlaps between Crawford and Conrad, particularly in *Victory*, see Moore (2007).

¹²⁵ According to George Shiers, the telegraph long retained its early glamour as the “wonder of the age”: “Its utility was clearly recognized in financial and business worlds and by certain trades and commercial interests; it was indispensable to newspapers and stock markets, and a vital part of railroad operations”

cables” (TLS 147), Yeow sees Nelson as “a pre-modern figure” (2009, 44-45). The point to make, however, is that Nelson does not only pre-date colonial modernity. Rather, by having traded, perhaps, in products like gutta-percha, so instrumental to telegraphy (and by extension Western communications technology on the whole), Nelson has actively to help produce that modernity. It is apt, then, that the serial version of “Freya” published in the **Metropolitan Magazine**, though lacking the account of Nelson’s trading past in and around the Malay Archipelago added to subsequent versions, appeared alongside advertisements for the American Telephone and Telegraph Company.

The represented eastward encroachment of European technologies in the later serial and collected versions of Conrad’s tale recalls Richards’s point that, in a British imperial context, the concept of the archive was lent coherence by an underlying problem of geography, that “of control at a distance” (1993, 1). It was imagined that the archive would help to negate problems attending what was an unprecedented era of British expansion by producing “an empire united not by force but by information” (*ibid.*). The represented spread of this informational apparatus in “Freya,” and Richards’s point about its imperial origins and applications, also tessellates with more recent definitions of the archive which, eschewing any idea of “its connection to the idea of a place where official

(1977, 6). Submarine telegraphic projects were particularly vaunted. The completion in 1866 of the first Atlantic cable between Britain and the United States was widely reported at the time as being the “peak” of telegraphic achievement (*ibid.*).

documents are stored for administrative reference,” seem instead to “encompass the whole of modern information technology, its storage, retrieval and communication” (Steedman 2001, 4). According to Derek Gregory, the imperial project was “not . . . autogenerated at the centre and implemented through a series of peripheral circuits; it has always been cobbled together, patched up and improvised through mobile and multiple, imperfect and branching relays” (2005, 372). Although intended metaphorically, Gregory’s discussion of the “circuits” and “relays” of imperial power has, given the archive’s technical constitution and imperial applications, another, non-figurative, reference, gesturing to one of the ways in which that power was consolidated and maintained. In this context, Conrad’s thinly-veiled allusion to the spread of telegraphy in **Last Essays** (1926) in his remarks about “this earth girt about with cables, with an atmosphere made restless by the waves of ether, lighted by that sun of the twentieth century” (126), carries a certain imperial resonance.

Defined thus, the archive is integral to the collapse of spatial barriers familiarized by David Harvey, part of a new, globalized order, in which geographically distant spaces are brought intimately close.¹²⁶ A narrative analogue of this process is supplied in “Freya” when the narrator, now in London having left the East on the instruction of a “cable” (178), comes by the knowledge needed to tell the remainder of the tale, in the shape of “the bulky, kindly meant

¹²⁶ See, for example, Harvey (1989) and Harvey (1996).

epistle” (232) with which it opens. For some critics, the narrator’s removal from the scene is a “dismaying” technical “blunder” (Graver 1969, 164) and further evidence of Conrad’s waning ability for those subscribing to Moser’s achievement-and-decline thesis. Seen another way, the narrator’s subsequent dependence upon the telegraphic and mail networks laid out by empire, invoking separated worlds united by travelling text, is essential to the tale’s underlying archival theme.

All of this serves to underline the central importance to the narrative of writing, and its conveyance back and forth across imperial space. Indeed, there would perhaps **not be** a narrative, such as it is presented here, were it not for the final letter from old Nelson which encourages the narrator to seek him out in London and so hear the conclusion of Freya’s tale.

I waited with uneasy impatience for whatever disclosure could come . . . but my impatience had time to wear out before my eyes beheld old Nelson’s trembling, painfully formed hand-writing, senile and childish at the same time, on an envelope bearing a penny stamp and the postal mark of the Notting Hill office. (TLS 233)

Equally, were it not for “the bulky, kindly-meant epistle” that precedes the arrival of Nielson’s own, the story would surely have come to an end with the narrator’s unanswered notes to Freya and Jasper (178-79).

Mary Carruthers defines writing precisely **as** an archival practice. Thus: “anything that encodes information in order to stimulate the memory to store or retrieve information is ‘writing,’ whether it be alphabet, hieroglyph, ideogram, American Indian picture writing, or Inca knot-writing” (Cited in Frow 2007, 151). Here, traditional, Eurocentric definitions of what constitutes “writing” are secondary to this broader archival one. This archival definition of writing is taken to its furthest extreme in “Freya of the Seven Isles” when, at a crucial moment, writing exists less as an agent of communication, than a system of storage. This comes with the close of the **Bonito** inquiry. As the narrator cynically puts it, the case “had been referred to Batavia, where no doubt it would fade away **in a fog of official papers**” (232; emphasis added). In this typically dark Conradian spin on things – so dark, indeed, that several publishers turned down “Freya”¹²⁷ – the

¹²⁷ Conrad responds in a letter to J.B. Pinker to one such rejection by **Scribner’s**, on the grounds of the story’s “Unrelieved gloom”: “‘Unrelieved gloom’ seems to me a bit too strong. Of course the story is not the stuff for a comic paper; but I’ve tried to keep the pathetic side of the tale in the background” (25 March 1911, **CL4**, 430). **Century** also passed on the chance to publish, which led to a cooling of Conrad’s relationship with Edward Garnett, then a reader for the magazine. Having failed in addition to place the story with **Blackwood’s**, “Freya” was eventually serialized in the **Metropolitan Magazine**, in April 1912. For a detailed discussion of the story’s fortunes through press, see **Twixt Land and Sea**, ed. J.A. Berthoud, **et al.** (2008), pp. 249-80.

archive becomes a space where information is not so much stored, as conveniently lost.¹²⁸ Heemskirk's professional role, as the narrator glosses, is "to look after the [European] traders" operating in and around the Seven Isles group (159). Representative thus of Dutch military and colonial power, his use of the Batavian archives to "look after" Jasper in quite another way charts a far subtler, but no less devastating, application of that power.

This produces a sense not just of the European, imperial rivalries (British and Dutch in particular) stewing in the region at the time,¹²⁹ but also the extent to which this spatial and cultural collision is played out through competing archival apparatuses and bodies of knowledge.¹³⁰ Richards describes the British empire as

¹²⁸ In the Author's Note to *Twixt Land and Sea* Conrad playfully sketches responses to "Freya," both public and private: "I was considerably abused for writing that story on the ground of its cruelty, both in public prints and in private letters" (ix). To one of the latter, from "a man in America who was quite furiously angry," Conrad mentally composed "a reply of mild argument, a reply of lofty detachment" – "but they never got on paper in the end and I have forgotten their phrasing" (x). Writing would here have served just the sort of archival purpose that Carruthers describes. Meanwhile, the Note preserves the memory of the character, if not the content, of this letter that never was.

¹²⁹ For more on this, see Tarling (1999), pp. 9-2. For a long view of Anglo-Dutch rivalry in the region, see Tarling (1962).

¹³⁰ In *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896), Conrad (whose main experience of the Malay Archipelago "was mediated through Arab rather than European trading networks" [Hampson 2000, 29]) indicates the separate existence and importance of an Arab archival apparatus. Syed Abdulla has connections that "lay like a network over the islands" (OI 110) of the Archipelago:

being “one of the most data-intensive” (1993, 4). Conrad in “Freya of the Seven Isles” suggests that the Dutch empire was no less so. Just as Jasper is partly reliant upon information provided by local informants – such as the “Celebes trader” from whom he learns that Heemskirk is responsible for “knocking down my beacons” (TLS 172) – so, too, were the Dutch. As Yeow points out, the Dutch attempted to shore-up control of the Archipelago and stymie “outside” influence by “post[ing] spies to gather intelligence on [the] covert activities” of British “country traders” (2009, 57). Jasper, of course, represents this group and its activities, the covert nature of which is indicated by the fact that they escape even

In every port there were rich and influential men eager to see him, there was business to talk over, there were important letters to read: an immense correspondence, enclosed in silk envelopes – a correspondence which had nothing to do with the infidels [that is, Europeans or those working for Europeans] of colonial post-offices, but came into his hands by devious, yet safe, ways. It was left for him by taciturn nakhodas of native trading craft, or was delivered with profound salaams by travel-stained and weary men who would withdraw from his presence calling upon Allah to bless the generous giver of splendid rewards. And the news was always good, and all his attempts always succeeded, and in his ears there rang always a chorus of admiration, of gratitude, of humble entreaties. (111)

Abdulla’s affairs are depicted as part of a knowledge régime external to that of Europe. Yet, although this network has evolved and appears to exist separately from its European equivalent, it none the less would have been required to respond to the encroachment of European power in the region. The quarter and pass system, for instance, introduced by the Dutch to restrict the mobility of Arab traders in Dutch East Indies territories, no doubt would have presented an obstacle to Abdulla’s method of gathering information. For more on this system, see Yeow (2009), p. 123.

the narrator's self-styled omniscience: "I didn't press him for anything more definite on [the] point . . . of the general run of his business" (TLS 147). Contextualized thus, Heemskirk's spying on the English trader Jasper, while serving a personal purpose, would have had the cover of official sanction.¹³¹

The narrator notes the basis of the legal pretext on which Heemskirk ambushes and destroys Jasper's brig, the **Bonito**: "At one time all ships trading in the China Seas had a licence to carry a certain quantity of firearms for purposes of defence" (TLS 216).¹³² Thus Heemskirk's pretext is established through this formal knowledge, and British concessions to it, that the **Bonito** has (or once had) eighteen rifles. Having "been declared" thus (216), the **Bonito** and her contents are folded into, and made answerable to, the official legal and political discourses of Dutch-held territory, the logic and "economy of controlled information" (Richards 1993, 74) through which Dutch colonial rule, much like its British

¹³¹ For a different reading of "spying" in "Freya," in particular its voyeuristic and sexual aspects, see Hawthorn (2007), p. 127.

¹³² Heemskirk's harassment of old Nelson is likewise given sanction by a legal pretext: "The lieutenant had frightened old Nelson very much by expressing a sinister wonder at the Government permitting a white man to settle down in that part [of the Archipelago] at all. 'It is against our declared policy,' he had remarked. . . . He had even tried to pick a quarrel with him for not learning to speak Dutch" (TLS 175). On the surface, this quarrel is about a problem of discourse in the linguistic sense of the word, concerning old Nelson's not having learned the official European language of the Seven Isles. Beneath the surface, this quarrel is also, and fundamentally, about the Foucauldian sense of discourse as power: namely Heemskirk's abuse, as an official representative of the pre-eminent colonial power in the region, of a privileged discourse position.

counterpart (*Ibid.*, 3-4), was exercised. Whilst the material absence of the **Bonito**'s store of arms is important to Heemskirk's plot (and by extension, that of the story), so too is this record of those arms, held in Dutch archives. In a crucial sense, then, the "case of the **Bonito**" has its beginnings in the same sort of "official papers" in whose "fog" it later becomes lost.

As several critics have noted, the **Bonito** is central to the story. As is implicit in her name (**Bonito** being Spanish for "pretty"), she "eclips[ed] easily the professional good looks of any pleasure yacht that ever came to the East in those days." Her "cloth[ing]" of white paint, "kept clean by [Jasper's] badgered crew of picked Malays, that no costly enamel such as jewellers use for their work could have looked better and felt smoother to the touch," is topped by "[a] narrow gilt moulding" that "defined her elegant sheer as she sat on the water" (TLS 157). Indeed, "no decoration could be gorgeous enough for the future abode of his Freya" (158). If the future of the **Bonito** – geared thus toward the domestic – is clearly defined, its past is less so. Indeed, whilst the "facts" of the **Bonito**'s demise are, as we have seen, shrouded, the precise situation of the brig before Jasper came to own it is likewise lost in an archival haze.

Jasper, as the narrator glosses, "bought her in Manila from a certain middle-aged Peruvian . . . who, for all I know, might have stolen her on the South American coast" (TLS 156): "The brig herself was then all black and enigmatical, and very dirty; a tarnished gem of the sea, or, rather, a neglected work of art. For he must have been an artist, the obscure builder who had put her body together

on lovely lines out of the hardest tropical timber fastened with the purest copper” (157). If what the brig is made of is known, then where, and for what purpose, can only be guessed at:

Goodness only knows in what part of the world she was built. Jasper himself had not been able to ascertain much of her history from his sententious, saturnine Peruvian – if the fellow was a Peruvian, and not the devil himself in disguise, as Jasper jocularly pretended to believe. My opinion is that she was old enough to have been one of the last pirates, a slaver perhaps . . . (157)¹³³

Correspondingly, the **Bonito**’s apparent beauty is not just “indissolubly” tied to Freya’s, as it is in Jasper’s eyes (158), but to this supposed, prior function as well.¹³⁴ “The reasons,” as Marcus Wood argues in **Blind Memory**, his study of the

¹³³ Robert Hampson suggests that Conrad may well have had in mind Herman Melville’s novella about a slave ship, “Benito Cereno,” when writing “Freya of the Seven Isles” (private communication, 2011). We know from scattered references in his letters and the testimony of close friends such as Richard Curle (1928, 165) that Conrad had read several of Melville’s works (and was even asked to write a preface to an edition of one of them [Karl 1979, 615]), including **The Piazza Tales**, where “Benito Cereno,” first serialized in 1855, was collected in 1856. See also Tutein (1990), p. 69.

¹³⁴ That the fates of Jasper and Freya seem tragically, almost magically, fastened to that of the **Bonito**, in a figurative echo of the very real ties that bound its previous “occupants,” is worth contextualizing against the early reader reports that focused on the “Unrelieved gloom” (CL4 430) of the tale’s dénouement. For,

Atlantic slave-trade in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, lie in “the rigours of slave-running in a world where it was officially illegal.” The “beauty” of these “last slavers to sail between Africa and the American, Cuban and South American coasts” is “anchored in a terrible economic necessity” (2000, 302): to escape slave patrols, they had to be fast.¹³⁵

Moreover, that the narrator’s statement on the **Bonito** is, unlike every other he makes, tentative and provisional, is apt. For his “opinion,” if correct, points to why the exact nature of the brig’s history remains unclear. As Wood explains elsewhere, “The balance sheets in the financial offices of the great maritime slaving ports listed numbers” for insurance purposes, “not the names of individual slaves” (2000, 46). Neither, at least in the context of Britain’s slave trade, were slavers themselves “preserved.” Rather, “they were adapted to other trade and sailed on, and when they wore out . . . were scrapped” (17). Perhaps the **Bonito**’s prior function is, like these other slavers, not so much stored in, as obscured by, the archive. If so, then its history – difficult to check or to reference thus – **must** to some degree remain unknowable. Correspondingly, the narrator’s

although its context is buried, slavery could, at one level, be seen as being generative of the tenor of “Freya.”

¹³⁵ Wood writes out of an art history context, linking “Freya of the Seven Isles” to Anglo-American visual representations of slavery: “What Conrad writes can give new force to the way we . . . see pictures of the slave ships. After reading ‘Freya’ it is not possible to look at the beautiful lines of the last slave-trading brigs in the same way again” (2000, 301). It is unclear in “Freya” whether the narrator’s aesthetic regard for the **Bonito**’s beauty is irrespective of, or stems from, the possibility that she might once have been a slaver.

subsequent impression that the **Bonito** “had been taken out of a glass case and put delicately into the water that very moment” (TLS 165), suggesting that she has neither a history nor an historical function prior to this point (one involving slavery for instance), confirms the brig’s ambiguous relation to the historical record.¹³⁶

The archive represents a corpus of forgotten as well as remembered things, as Heemskirk discovers to his profit, as we have seen. In a British imperial context, we have also touched upon the idea of the archive as a utopic project, the possibilities of which stretch only so far. This is where the title of this chapter,

¹³⁶ In the typescript, the narrator enlarges on the brig’s purchase thus:

Jasper used to tell us the whole story of his queer [protractions?] which ended in him being given possession of his purchase at dusk, the Peruvian’s people going hurriedly ashore all together in a boat, carrying off a woman who appeared amongst them at the last moment from some recess down below where Jasper had never even suspected her presence. By her voice he judged her to be a young creature with a temper of her own, because while that ruffianly gang were helping her over the side she kept on scolding them with astonishing volubility. The black-coated, enigmatic Peruvian remained the last on deck and turning to Jasper declared he was glad to leave the vessel in the hands of a gentleman.

This elision appears consistent with Conrad’s general “policy of concealment,” as outlined in a letter to Richard Curle (Cited in Sherry 1966, 173). That Conrad chose to omit this passage concerning the brig from subsequent drafts of “Freya” seems especially significant, however, given the archival issues explored in the story.

and the quotation within it, come in again. The passage from which this is taken, where the narrator relates his knowledge “of the general run of [Jasper’s] business” (TLS 171), is worth quoting more fully:

The brig’s business was on uncivilized coasts, with obscure rajahs dwelling in nearly unknown bays; with native settlements up mysterious rivers. . . . She would be glimpsed suddenly on misty, squally days dashing disdainfully aside the short aggressive waves of the Java Sea, or be seen far, far away, a tiny dazzling white speck flying across the brooding purple masses of thunder-clouds piled up on the horizon. Sometimes, on the rare mail tracks, where civilization brushes against wild mystery . . . the naïve passengers crowding along the rail exclaimed, pointing at her with interest: ‘Oh! here’s a yacht!’ (170-71)

This expository summary of “the brig’s business” is consistent with the narrator’s nearly, but not quite fully, knowing where Jasper is “going to this time” (171). In this region, “where civilization brushes against wild mystery,” European knowledge has – in spite of its best efforts – made only fitful inroads. These “rare mail tracks,” pictured here at the limits of Europe’s eastward reach, are as informational networks an integral part of Europe’s archival apparatus, as we have seen. Thus, with this image of this particular network coming to an abrupt

geographical end, Conrad hints more broadly at the limits of European knowledge.¹³⁷ Echoing Eric Ketelaar's recent description (adapting Foucault) of "The Panoptical Archive" (2006), the limits of knowledge are also represented along ocular lines. Jasper's brig is either briefly just in sight – "glimpsed suddenly," or, "a tiny dazzling white speck" (140) – disappearing out of it, into "native" spaces unknown, in any real depth, by Europeans such as the narrator.

This subtly bears on the outcome of the **Bonito** inquiry. Whereas Heemskirk destroys the brig on a personal whim, others venture a colonial imperative: missing her store of rifles, the Makassar shore crowd assumes the weapons have been traded, later to be put to anti-colonial use against Dutch rule: "The fellow [Jasper] must have been feeding that river with firearms for the last year or two . . . It's a fact" (TLS 223).¹³⁸ (Conrad's choice of location lends weight

¹³⁷ Whereas in "Freya" these limits are a discomfort to the narrator, for Marlow in **Lord Jim** they are something of a boon: "do you notice how, three hundred miles beyond the end of the telegraph cables and mail-boat lines, the haggard utilitarian lies of our civilization wither and die, to be replaced by pure exercises of imagination....?" (LJ 282).

¹³⁸ Yeow makes the point that gun-running and other such illicit activity is not always geared around "anti-colonial sentiment" in Conrad's fiction. Such practices "also reflect the turbulence . . . of the Malay Archipelago where internecine civil wars, succession disputes, colonial invasions, and subsequent migrations had been the rule of the day" centuries before European involvement (2009, 55). The point to make here, however, is that in "Freya" the emphasis is on what the Makassar shore crowd think has happened, rather than what actually has happened, to the **Bonito's** rifles. The assumption that they are to be put to some vaguely-imagined anti-colonial use chimes generally with Dutch concerns over anti-colonial feeling, the all too apparent existence of which, given protracted and costly military operations such as the

to this assumption: Makassar at the time had some “notoriety” as “the smuggling centre of the Archipelago” [Yeow 2009, 55].) What is fact, according to the narrator, is that Schultz “had recently sold these rifles in the dead of night to a certain person up the river” (TLS 227). “He went to Mesman with his story. He says that some rascally white man living amongst the natives up that river made him drunk with some gin one evening” (230). But, although the “colonial-born Dutchman” is sympathetic (223), Schultz’s tale carries no official weight: “for what Dutch court, having once got hold of an English trader, would accept such an explanation; and, indeed, how, when, where could one hope to find proofs of such a tale” (231).

This hypothetical question is clearly meant ironically, given the apparent eagerness of the Dutch to prosecute (the idea of which evidently is shot through with the English narrator’s own national bias). Less obvious, perhaps, is how this question also gestures towards an indigenous space from which such testimony might indeed be recuperated, but about which too little, in any case, is known. Conrad’s letters from the period 1911-13 contain many references to the origins and evolution of “Freya,” and, in one striking example, traces of an apparently heated disagreement between his literary agent J.B. Pinker and Edward Garnett

Achinese War of 1873-1904 (alluded to by Jasper as “the troubles” [214]), over barely seven years before Conrad came to write “Freya,” remained something of a political sore-point.

over the date of its composition (CL4, 470-71).¹³⁹ One letter, in which Conrad discusses his approach to spatial representation in “Freya,” is particularly salient here. In this letter, Conrad adjudges the story “Perfectly safe. Eastern setting, but not too much setting” (to Warrington Dawson, 15 February 1911, CL4 413). Put in this context of imperial knowledge regimes, Conrad’s aesthetic regard for the formal balance of the story (the very point on which critics such as Graver later take him to task) also makes surreptitiously manifest its thematic concern with the restraints and limits of colonial knowledge, for “The total archive never became a reality,” and “colonial knowledge of ‘native’ society and politics” always “remained imperfect” (Ballantyne 2002, 10).¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Garnett, then a reader for the *Century* magazine, had written to Pinker on 26 July 1911 about “Freya of the Seven Isles,” claiming to have read the story “years ago” (CL4, 470n.). Conrad (who was himself prone to ascribing dates incorrectly) responded to Garnett’s mistake in a letter to Pinker of 9 August 1911: “What makes me sick – positively sick – is the **thundering lie** he told you – God knows why – that he had seen the story **years ago!!!** . . . I declare to you solemnly that not a line of that story – **neither sketch, synopsis or even a mere note on that subject** – has been written before the 25th of Dec 1910 when I wrote the first page and then laid it aside till the 10th of Jan 1911. . . . Why G[arnett] made that monstrous false statement to you I can’t imagine. I am too indignant to think of it calmly” (CL4, 470; emphasis in original). This incident compounded, and was compounded by, Garnett’s earlier having turned down “Freya” for publication in the *Century* (See CL4, 430-31). For a brief discussion of this contretemps between Conrad and Garnett, see Schneider (2003).

¹⁴⁰ In the context of British India it was precisely these kinds of lacunae – combined with the threat (or fear) of anti-colonial sentiment – that helped to mobilize the archive: “imperial agents worried constantly about flows of knowledge and their ability to . . . forestall rebellion on the fringes of empire. These ‘information

By the same token, the representation of this epistemic lack in “Freya of the Seven Isles” could simply reflect Western unconcern as much as ignorance. Studies such as C.A. Bayly’s **Empire and Information** (1996) have demonstrated how essential “a working (if imperfect) knowledge of the local cultural and political **episteme** was for the colonizer” (Tickell 2004, 30). Yet in “Freya” the narrator makes scant reference to, and seems not to care for, such a local, “native” presence. Rather, his narrative seems concerned more with the petty entanglements of Europeans, than with other, non-European existences. This discriminating, cultural distinction can also be construed as having an archival slant. Much like those enslaved bodies which the narrator presumes the **Bonito** to have once carried, in short, these existences are automatically deemed extraneous to his narrative because, to adapt Antoinette Burton, they are “not considered legitimate subjects of history – and hence of archivization” (2006, 2).

Greene’s 1958 novel, **Our Man in Havana**, offers a parody of the vision of the imperial archive presented in “Freya of the Seven Isles.”¹⁴¹ Set during the

panics’ . . . intensified as indigenous groups were ‘pacified’ by the state’s coercive power in the wake of uprisings against British rule and during periods of political mobilization by indigenous groups. Colonial concerns with such forms of ‘rebel consciousness’ . . . was an important stimulus for the study of folk religion, local dialect and the surveillance of new religious movements on the frontiers of empire.” (Ballantyne 2002, 10).

¹⁴¹ Greene’s novel also flags up a similar concern with “extraneous” existences, via a sustained reference to “the torturable class” (OMH 150) and the kinds of “geographies of exception” (Minca 2006, 388) theorized by Giorgio Agamben (1998).

Cold War, Greene's novel is, like "Freya," concerned with imperial rivalries (here British, American and Russian rather than British and Dutch) played out through competing archival apparatuses and bodies of knowledge. **Our Man in Havana** centres on the figure of Wormold, an English vacuum cleaner salesman based in Havana during the last days of the Batista régime, who is recruited by British Intelligence as the secret agent of the title. Wormold reports to London, where his reports are discussed, and then filed away, in "the basement of the big steel and concrete building near Maida Vale" (OMH 46):

a light over a door changed from red to green, and Hawthorne entered. . . . The Chief sat behind a desk on which an enormous green marble paper-weight held down a single sheet of paper. A half-drunk glass of milk, a bottle of grey pills and a packet of Kleenex stood by the black telephone. (The red one was for scrambling.) His black morning coat, black tie and black monocle hiding the left eye gave him the appearance of an undertaker, just as the basement room had the effect of a vault, a mausoleum, a grave. (Ibid.)

This image of the imperial archive as a moribund, mausoleum-like space, serves as a subtle yet telling comment on Britain's crumbling Empire; the novel appeared, after all, during the late 1950s, a period of imperial "Emergency" in

British Malaya and Kenya,¹⁴² which Greene elsewhere memorably characterized as one of “Colonialism in hurried and undignified retreat” (ISC 79). Here, via the arresting incongruity of a single sheet of paper held down by an “enormous” paper-weight, this “retreat” is couched in terms of an ever-decreasing mastery over the networks of knowledge so pivotal, as we have seen, to the structures and maintenance of imperial power.¹⁴³

This point is driven home as Wormold, cast by his recruiters as a Lingardesque “merchant-adventurer” – someone who “belongs – you might say – to the Kipling age. Walking with kings – how does it go? . . . crowds and the common touch” (OMH 49) – steers even further than his employers from the “facts” supposedly housed in this institution, by actively fictionalizing his reports: “With the help of a large map, the weekly number of **Time**, which gave generous space to Cuba in its section on the Western Hemisphere, various economic publications issued by the Government, above all with the help of his imagination, he had been able to arrange at least one report a week” (109). Equally, Wormold’s cache

¹⁴² Greene had reported on both conflicts during visits to Malaya between late 1950 and early 1951, and Kenya between 1953 and 1954, providing articles for **Life** magazine and the **Sunday Times**. For more on this, see Sherry (1994), esp. pp. 339-58, 461-69.

¹⁴³ Compare this scene with a similar one in Conrad’s **Chance** (1912), where Young Powell encounters the equally vault-like basement-room of the Port of London Shipping Office, with its “Solid, heavy stacks of paper fill[ing] all the corners half-way up to the ceiling” (C 11) – almost literally supporting the edifice housing them – and whose paper-intensive goings-on, “connected in some way with ships and sailors and the sea” (*ibid.*), Powell dimly apprehends as being essential to the day-to-day running of empire.

of flammable “celluloid sheets,” kept “ready for a final conflagration” (116) should he need to destroy any data gathered through his purely notional activities as a spy (recalling the use of photographic paraphernalia put to destructive ends in **The Secret Agent** in the form of the Professor’s detonator, based on “the principle of the pneumatic instantaneous shutter for a camera lens” [66]), are on standby to erase “facts” which never existed in the first place. In appearing to send up the British intelligence gathering community thus, **Our Man in Havana** can be taken as a parody of Greene’s more serious contributions to spy fiction in earlier novels such as **The Confidential Agent** (1939), **The Ministry of Fear** (1943) and **The Heart of the Matter** (based, of course, of Greene’s own time as a British intelligence operative in West Africa during the Second World War), and in later novels such as **The Human Factor** (1978) (whose credentials as a serious novel rather than an “entertainment” are signalled by Greene’s choice of epigraph, taken from Conrad’s **Victory**: “He who forms a tie is lost. The germ of corruption has already entered into his soul”). Yet, as well as standing in parodic counterpoint to Greene’s non-comedic contributions to the genre, **Our Man in Havana** also offers a profound and serious comment on the end of empire, tracing, through its portrayal of archive and empire in interrelated states of decay, the archival vision presented in “Freya of the Seven Isles” to its inevitable endpoint.

4. “Picture-producing power”:

Conrad, Greene, and the Place of Vision

BENITA PARRY ONCE characterized Conrad as having “double vision” (1983, 3). While it may seem yet another entry in the catalogue of physical impairments that variously affected Conrad during his lifetime,¹⁴⁴ Parry’s use of the term is more critical than biographical, part of an attempt to plot Conrad’s ambivalent, Janus-like position at the intersection of late-Victorian culture and early Modernism.¹⁴⁵ Rather than attending to vision’s articulation as a critical metaphor in Conrad studies, the first part of this chapter focuses on the more literal presence of vision in Conrad’s fiction, specifically in the early novella “The End of the Tether,” whose main protagonist, Whalley, is faced not with double vision but total blindness. Notwithstanding a positive early response following its appearance in late 1902, “The End of the Tether” is generally dismissed as the least of the three tales collected in *Youth* (1902), a volume that in addition to the oft-discussed title story also contains “Heart of Darkness,” the wellspring of an extraordinary

¹⁴⁴ Letters circulated around the time of publication of “The End of the Tether” suggest that Conrad did suffer from unspecified eye trouble. This could explain Conrad’s allusion in one such letter to the story’s “Very personal” subject matter (to George Blackwood, 28 January 1902, CL2, 376). For more on Conrad’s various maladies, see Stape (2007), *passim*.

¹⁴⁵ Andrea White also puts this term to much the same use in her prefacing remarks to *Joseph Conrad and the Adventure Tradition* (1993).

proliferation of criticism which, long after Jonah Raskin first identified the “Heart of Darkness ‘craze’” (1967, 113) in the late 1960s, shows no sign of abating.¹⁴⁶ “The End of the Tether,” on the other hand, became and has remained one of Conrad’s more overlooked works.¹⁴⁷

David Harvey has argued that “Space, like cartography, is as much a mental as a material construct,” because “the measurement systems and mathematical constructs . . . that are used to represent spatiality are products of human thought” (2001, 223). The emphasis in “Heart of Darkness” on the European cartographical imagination via Marlow’s “passion for maps,” intimates the ways in which this particular construction is, in the imperial context of Conrad’s novella, very much structured and implemented along visual lines. Aptly, as the tale collected after “Heart of Darkness” in **Youth**, “The End of the Tether” picks up and develops this visual thread. For, as well as being very much about one man “going at it blind,” to adapt Marlow’s anatomization of European imperialism in “Heart of Darkness” (Y 50), Conrad’s thematization of vision in “The End of the Tether” also signals a deeper engagement with the centrality of vision both in Western thought in general, and in the imperial project in particular.

¹⁴⁶ For a discussion of the modern reception of “Heart of Darkness,” see Knowles (2010), pp. lxii-lxviii.

¹⁴⁷ As Owen Knowles puts it, “The End of the Tether” is “often silently omitted in full-length studies of Conrad’s works or summarily dismissed” (2010, lxi).

The second part of this chapter examines Greene's 1955 novel **The Quiet American**, set during the last years of colonial rule in French Indochina. Critical discussions of **The Quiet American** frequently invoke an implicitly figurative visuality, by underscoring the novel's "foresight" given the massive American political and military commitment in South East Asia in the years after its publication: "what has come to be called Greene's 'ominous prophecy'" (Pratt 1996, xi).¹⁴⁸ Other criticisms have invoked an implicit auralty in touching upon the way that Pyle, the quiet American of the title, is not just in his taciturnity an exception to the stereotypical "American" (a caricature present elsewhere in the novel in the bulky shape of Pyle's loud and "oafish" [QA 66] compatriot Granger), but through this taciturnity is the very embodiment of "American exceptionalism" (Said 1994, 290): an imperialism that dare not speak its name.¹⁴⁹ As Edward Said has remarked, "Greene's character Pyle . . . embodies this cultural formation with merciless accuracy" (1994, 9).

For Fowler,¹⁵⁰ the novel's English narrator and (in an echo of the narrator in Conrad's "Freya") self-appointed expert on matters of empire, this notion of

¹⁴⁸ As John Clark Pratt points out, the novel has become something of a set text in history and political science courses in the United States (1996, xvi-xvii). See also Sherry (1994), p. 475; and Whitfield (1996).

¹⁴⁹ For a discussion of the contemporary currency of Greene's chosen adjective, see Nashel (1996).

¹⁵⁰ As with Conrad and Marlow, there has been a critical tendency to equate Fowler's politics with Greene's own, leading inevitably to accusations of anti-Americanism on Greene's part. Greene's perceived anti-Americanism colours early notices of **The Quiet American** in the United States, most notably that which

exceptionalism is one of the more insidious aspects of American foreign policy in the years after the Second World War. Whereas in “Heart of Darkness” Marlow characterizes late-nineteenth-century European imperialism as “men going at it blind” (Y 50), the issue for Fowler in **The Quiet American** is the **Pax Americana** of the mid-twentieth century, and Americans “going at it” quietly. Yet, as well as being “stamped by ideas of American exceptionalism” (Said 1994, 290) thus, Greene’s novel, not unlike Conrad’s “Heart of Darkness” with its range of focus from early Roman encounters with Britain to the European “scramble” for Africa during the late-nineteenth century, also takes a much longer view of imperialism than usually tends to be acknowledged. For although the narrator, consistent with his professional need as a reporter for political disengagement, claims not to be interested in “Isms and ocracies” (QA 101), **The Quiet American** is also stamped by two overlapping and characteristic strands of Western colonial modernity, Orientalism and ocularcentrism.

appeared in the 2 January 1956 issue of **Newsweek**, two months in advance of the novel’s U.S. publication (Sherry 1994, 472); and A.J. Liebling’s provocative review, “A Talkative Something-or-Other,” for the 7 April 1956 issue of **The New Yorker**. The alteration of the title of this review to “A Talkative Jerk” for a 1963 collection of his journalism provides a measure of Liebling’s own antipathy towards Greene. For a discussion of Liebling’s review and Greene’s response to it, see Vargo (1984). For a discussion of Greene’s reception in the United States and perceived anti-Americanism, see Sherry (1994), pp. 472-75

I.

In his classic essay “The Nobility of Sight: A Study in the Phenomenology of the Senses,” published just prior to **The Quiet American** in 1954, Hans Jonas looks at the historical privileging of sight within Western philosophical discourse. Jonas examines not only how, but why Western thought has long been drawn to the tuition, and the authority, of sight. He locates the beginnings of this trend in the very beginnings of Classical philosophy:

Since the days of Greek philosophy sight has been hailed as the most excellent of the senses. The noblest activity of the mind, **theoria**, is described in metaphors mostly taken from the visual sphere. Plato, and Western Philosophy after him, speaks of the “eye of the soul” and of the “light of reason.” Sight, in addition to furnishing the analogues for the intellectual upper-structure, has tended to serve as the model of perception in general and thus as the measure of the other senses. Aristotle, in the first of the **Metaphysics**, relates the desire for the knowledge inherent in the nature of all men to the common delight in perception, most of all in vision. (Spicker, ed. 1970, 312–13)

What perhaps is most notable is an explicit connection drawn between vision and knowledge. As well as enjoying it for its own sake, the chief virtue of vision for

Aristotle is that, of all the senses, it yields the most knowledge. Vision is hereby not merely an analogue for intellectual cognition, a metaphor for knowledge, as in Plato's "eye of the soul." Rather, vision has a basic epistemological utility as the means by which knowledge itself is gathered.

This connection between seeing and knowing is at the very heart of the Enlightenment project in the form of empiricism, an epistemological practice founded upon experiment and observation. Empiricism is important because of its centrality to Europe's growing fascination with science – memorably apotheosized as "The sacro-sanct fetish of to-day" in Conrad's 1907 novel **The Secret Agent** (31) – in general. More specifically, empiricism helped give rise during the eighteenth century to what Mary Louise Pratt terms "Europe's 'planetary consciousness'" (1992, 15), via the then-emergent science of natural history. Natural history was first developed by the Swedish scientist Carl Linnæus in his **Systema Naturae** ("System of Nature"), published in 1735. According to Pratt, **The System of Nature** was "a descriptive system designed to classify all the plants on the earth, known and unknown, according to the characteristics of their reproductive parts" (1992, 24). All plants on earth, Linnaeus claimed, could be incorporated into this single system. In other words, this system fitted the whole of the natural world into a vision-based taxonomy.¹⁵¹ Natural history therefore represented a

¹⁵¹ The project of natural history provides one of the central threads of Michel Foucault's **The Order of Things** (1966). For Foucault the importance of this project stems from the fact that, in addition to utilizing the visual at a practical level through Linnaean classification, its systems of representation were part and parcel

system whereby all the different parts of the globe could be conceived of as connected. Pratt observes that, while today's readers might find it "a modest and in fact rather quaint achievement," **The System of Nature** made "a deep and lasting impact" on the way Europeans understood global space and "made sense of their place on the planet." It also launched a European knowledge-building enterprise of unprecedented scale and appeal (1992, 24-25).

In Conrad's "The End of the Tether," the "Admiralty Charts" and the "**General Directory**, vol. ii. p. 410" (Y 168), provide a record of Captain Whalley's

of an epistemic shift in Europe between Renaissance and seventeenth- and eighteenth-century understandings of what Conrad in his Preface to **The Nigger of the "Narissus"** calls "the visible world" (x). As Derek Gregory explains: "In Renaissance Europe [there] was no gap between 'words' and 'things,' no difference between signs on parchment and signs in nature." The world "was known through a ramifying network of signatures, each one providing a glimpse into the design of the perfect whole." According to Foucault, this reliance upon "resemblance" was pivotal to the pre-Enlightenment "order of things." Gregory continues:

In the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, however, Foucault claims that a space opened up between the two: as 'words' were dissociated from 'things' so resemblance yielded to representation. And it was within that gap that the discourse of natural history was constituted as part of a project to navigate the passage between the two or, as Foucault puts it, 'to bring language as close as possible to the observing gaze, and things observed as close as possible to words.' (1994, 21)

The original French title of Foucault's work, **Les Mots et les choses**, hints at these epistemological issues.

fame, a fame acquired through participation in a similar sort of knowledge-building enterprise – of which the Admiralty Charts and the **General Directory** are products: “Captain Whalley, Henry Whalley, otherwise Dare-devil Harry Whalley, of the **Condor** . . . had made famous passages, had been the pioneer of new routes and new trades . . . had steered across the unsurveyed tracts of the South Seas, and had seen the sun rise on uncharted islands” (167). Of course, it is precisely through such acts of steering and seeing – where steering is contingent on the visible – that these “unsurveyed” and “uncharted” spaces become surveyed, charted and, as Conrad puts it in “Geography and Some Explorers” (1924), “added . . . to the scientific domain of the geography triumphant” (LE 9).

This interrelation of sailorly scopic practice and cartographic inscription is alluded to in **Lord Jim** (1900):

Jim would glance at the compass, would glance around the unattainable horizon. . . . From time to time he glanced idly at a chart pegged out with four drawing-pins on a low three-legged table abaft the steering-gear case. The sheet of paper portraying the depths of the sea presented a shiny surface under the light of a bull’s-eye lamp lashed to a stanchion, a surface as level and smooth as the glimmering surface of the waters. Parallel rulers with a pair of dividers reposed on it; the ship’s position at last noon was marked

with a small black cross, and the straight pencil-line drawn firmly as far as Perim figured the course of the ship . . . while the pencil with its sharp end touching the Somali coast lay round and still like a naked ship's spar floating in the pool of a sheltered dock . . . and when he happened to glance back he saw the white streak of the wake drawn as straight by the ship's keel upon the sea as the black line drawn by the pencil upon the chart. (19-20)

It is not without irony that the pencil, the means of inscription here, resembles the kind of uncharted, submerged hulk on which the **Patna** later founders. By this means Conrad underlines that, notwithstanding the gradual European cartographic mastery of global space to which Whalley's efforts have contributed, there are inevitably limits to this scopic drive.¹⁵²

“The End of the Tether” also underlines how this cartographic mastery, and the global sense of space produced through this mastery, come with typically gloomy Conradian qualifiers: namely, the lack of personal place and a sense of exile. This situation is crystallized in a moment between Whalley and his fellow European and veteran of marine life, Captain Elliot: “‘The earth is big,’ [Whalley] said, vaguely.” “The other, as if to test the statement, stared all round from his

¹⁵² This consonance between “The End of the Tether” and **Lord Jim** is apt given that the latter, having outgrown its original concept as a short story, was replaced by the former in **Youth**.

driving-seat” (Y 209). This scene, taken from a moment when Whalley can still see, is recalled in a later moment, during which Whalley’s world, due to the effects of encroaching blindness, is visibly receding: “The old ship was his last friend; he was not afraid of her; he knew every inch of her deck; but at her, too, he hardly dared to look, for fear of finding he could see less than the day before. . . . The horizon was gone . . . as if the light were ebbing out of the world” (303–04).

Whalley associates his pioneering past with **la mission civilisatrice**, as talk of the “natives” with another fellow European, Van Wyk, makes clear: “What [they] wanted was to be checked by superior intelligence, by superior knowledge, by superior force, too – yes, by force held in trust from God and sanctified by its use in accordance with His declared will” (Y 289). Whalley’s sense of “the light ebbing . . . out of the world” is therefore assuaged by a personal faith in a countervailing spread of European Christian values, as is crystallized when, during one of his tramps around the novella’s represented Singapore, Whalley encounters the city’s cathedral, through whose “glass . . . rosace” is reflected “the **light and glory of the west**” (Y 198; emphasis added). More important, however, is the novella’s engagement with the secular, scientific aspect of empire. Following on from the Enlightenment, sight becomes valorized as instrumental to Europe’s imperial mission to bring light to “the dark places of the earth,” by bringing these

places into its ocular orbit.¹⁵³ The “imperial gaze” is more than a metaphor, however, inasmuch as this “unveiling” was performed through the then-emergent science of geography, a primarily ocularcentric discipline.¹⁵⁴ The image of Whalley’s ever-decreasing visible world is also framed by this geographic project. Whalley, as one flashback reminds us, came out East “with his head full of a plan for opening a new trade with a distant part of the Archipelago” (193). As a consequence of his supplying this geographic project with the coordinates of “Whalley Island” and “Condor Reef” (168), he has helped open this region up, first, to Europe’s cartographic gaze, and second, to the economic and cultural penetration that follows from this. While Whalley grows blinder, the amount of global space to which the European gaze is blind grows ever smaller. This irony is thickened by the fact that subsequent generations of traders and seamen are figuratively blind to his involvement in opening up the region: “The piercing of the Isthmus of Suez, like the breaking of a dam, had let in upon the East a flood of new ships, new men, new methods of trade. It had changed the face of the Eastern seas and the very spirit of their life; so that his early experiences meant nothing whatever to the new generation of seamen” (168).¹⁵⁵ Edward Garnett

¹⁵³ For the widespread use of this phrase from the Psalms in colonialist discourse, see Stape (2004).

¹⁵⁴ See Gregory (1994), esp. p. 39.

¹⁵⁵ On the massive impact of the Suez Canal, see Gregory (1994), p. 38, and Said (2003), pp. 89, 92. Said notes that the canal’s completion was represented at the time as “the genuine imposition of the power of modern [i.e. Western] technology and intellectual will upon formerly stable and divided geographical

may have had this irony in mind when, in an unsigned review for the 6 December 1902 issue of the *Academy*, he praised the novella as a study of an old seaman who finds himself “dispossessed by the perfected routine of the British empire overseas he has helped to build” (In Sherry, ed. 1973, 131-33).

Western thought was likewise traditionally characterized by a figurative blindness. As Hannah Arendt observes in *The Life of the Mind*: “the predominance of sight is so deeply embedded in Greek speech and therefore our conceptual language that we seldom find any consideration bestowed on it, as though it belonged among things too obvious to be noticed” (1978, 110). Yet, whereas the discipline of geography “remained . . . blind to the politics of its own gaze” until relatively recently, as Georoid Ó Tuathail argues (1996, 57), in Western philosophy this process of self-recognition began much earlier – indeed, during Conrad’s lifetime.¹⁵⁶ In the late-nineteenth century Friedrich Nietzsche – whose philosophy Conrad was, as scattered references throughout his letters show, “well aware of” (Tutein 1990, 75) – formulated a powerful critique of “the privileging of vision, and of the foundational position of vision-centred concepts and methods in the history of modern philosophy” (Levin 1993, 4). In short, Nietzsche dismissed sight as the basis of, or the means by which to articulate, an

entities like East and West” (2003, 89). No longer could Europeans “speak of the Orient as belonging to another world. . . . There was only ‘our’ world, ‘one’ world.” (92).

¹⁵⁶ Ó Tuathail notes that before the “thorough revisionism” of the mid-1970s (1996, 58), geography “appear[ed] to have been a force reconsolidating the dominance of Cartesian perspectivalism” (71-72).

epistemology. For example, in **The Genealogy of Morals** (1887), Nietzsche attacks philosophy's presupposition of a single eye outside time and history, "an eye that no living being can imagine" (Cited in **Ibid.**, 4). Nietzsche thought "the vision of the philosophers to be too abstract, too theoretical, too detached from actual practices, and even from their own senses and sensibility" (**Ibid.**). In other words, this presence of vision in Western thought did not facilitate philosophical insight, but amounted to philosophical blindness.

This more cautionary view of Nietzsche's carries through to post-modern thinking. Perhaps the most notable and most noted example of a more cautionary approach to ocularcentrism is Michel Foucault's 1975 work **Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison** (published in English in 1977 as **Discipline and Punish**). In this, Foucault unpacks the disturbing implications of the Panopticon, a prison designed by the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham. The Panopticon was designed so that an inspector could observe inmates from a vantage-point that itself remained unseen. The intended result was "to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (Foucault 1991, 201). Although no true panopticons were ever built in Britain during Bentham's lifetime, and few anywhere in the British Empire,¹⁵⁷ it is,

¹⁵⁷ There is an interesting biographical overlap here: Conrad "settled into lodgings at Bessborough Gardens in Pimlico, just to the south of Millbank Prison" in 1889 (Stape 2007, 56). Closed in 1893, the prison, although differing in some aspects of its design, was in effect a panopticon. See Wilson (2002), esp. pp. 364-70.

in Marlovian terms, the “idea at the back of it” that is important (Y 51). For what Foucault sees in the panopticon are the origins of modern surveillance society: the shift from the detached, contemplative view of Descartes, to a dominating gaze. For Foucault, “the power to see, the power to make visible, is the power to control” (Levin 1993, 4).

In the context of “The End of the Tether” – an age of high imperialism, and the commercial and cultural penetration that accompanied empire – this structure of seeing spills beyond the boundaries of Europe to those far-flung spaces over which Europe sought control. In **Colonial and Postcolonial Literature** Elleke Boehmer refers to how a colonizing nation “weaves an interpretive net over much of the earth’s surface” (1995, 36). Vision does not merely form one of the threads of this interpretive net, as the basis of the empirical and geographic projects underwriting empire. Rather, considered as a whole, this net is a visual metaphor, a self-image of Europe’s imperial reach and power. At the height of imperialism during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, Europe saw itself as possessing the representational capacity, the means, and the authority, to survey space globally. Conrad notably dissents from this vision. In “Heart of Darkness,” which appears immediately before “The End of the Tether” in the **Youth** volume, Marlow’s self-conscious narrative struggle registers the limits of representation, positing Africa as a space that, to use Benita Parry’s phrase, cannot “be fixed, named and possessed in the language available to imperialism’s explanatory system” (1997, 231).

In Conrad's other African-set tale "An Outpost of Progress" (1898), these limits are played out in specifically scopic terms. Kayerts and Carlier, its European protagonists, live out their Congo days:

like blind men in a large room, aware only of what came in contact with them (and of that only imperfectly), but unable to see the general aspect of things. The river, the forest, all the great land throbbing with life, were like a great emptiness. Even the brilliant sunshine disclosed nothing intelligible. Things appeared and disappeared before their eyes in an unconnected and aimless kind of way. The river seemed to come from nowhere and flow nowhither. It flowed through a void. Out of that void, at times, came canoes, and men with spears in their hands would suddenly crowd the yard of the station. They were naked, glossy black, ornamented with snowy shells and glistening brass wire, perfect of limb. They made an uncouth babbling noise when they spoke, moved in a stately manner, and sent quick, wild glances out of their startled, never-resting eyes. Those warriors would squat in long rows, four or more deep, before the verandah, while their chiefs bargained for hours with Makola over an elephant tusk. Kayerts sat on his chair and looked down on proceedings, understanding nothing. (TU 92-93)

In an echo of Parry, Simon Gikandi remarks that, for Conrad, “the African forest is the symbol of hermeneutical failure, of the European subject’s incapacity to deploy the cognitive systems inherited from the Enlightenment” (1996, 167). This lack of connection is suggested in this passage, whereby light, the very vehicle of optics and symbol of the Enlightenment and colonial projects,¹⁵⁸ fails to provide any sort of hermeneutical leverage (“even the brilliant sunshine disclosed nothing intelligible”). Tellingly, the apparent surveillant mastery afforded by Kayerts’s elevated position comes without any kind of cognitive mastery either.

Europe’s need to inspect and interpret global space registers how, for colonial modernity, vision is never far from supervision.¹⁵⁹ Conrad approaches

¹⁵⁸ This symbolism is invoked when Kayerts and Carlier come across “some old copies of a home paper” extolling “what it was pleased to call ‘Our Colonial Expansion,’” “bringing light, and faith and commerce to the dark places of the earth” (TU 94). As Cedric Watts points out in the Oxford World’s Classics collected edition of the serial text, what Kayerts and Carlier find in “That print” apes speeches given by King Leopold II of Belgium, which since they were “widely reported,” Conrad had presumably come across (2002, 192n).

¹⁵⁹ Poststructuralist historians such as Foucault have tended to see modernity as more an attitude than an era (Levin, 274). That said, modernity is prone to periodization, and conceptions of vision have played a key part in this. Although the Enlightenment is often seen as the starting-point of “modernity,” David Michael Levin dates its beginnings in “the ‘discovery’ of perspectivalism” in the Italian Renaissance (3). Connected thus to the mechanics of vision, modernity is defined through, and based in, a new way of seeing and representing the world. What is also interesting is the way this dates modernity as coinciding with the birth of modern colonialism, suggesting perhaps that this new way of seeing and representing the world helped Europe to envisage a new role in it.

this issue of vision and supervision in “The End of the Tether” from a colonialist perspective. This approach centres on the three figures of Sterne, Whalley, and the Malay serang, aboard the **Sofala**. Sterne is: “Always – as he was ready to confess – **on the lookout** for an opening to get on” (Y 239; emphasis added). On the one hand, this represents just one of the tale’s many optically-based figures of speech. Yet on the other this is exactly what Sterne is up to: “it had become an instinct with him to **watch** the conduct of his immediate superiors for something ‘that one could lay hold of’” (239; emphasis added). In the service of this devious empirical instinct, Sterne sets about watching Captain Whalley. What he sees, however, is irretrievably shaped by colonialist and Orientalist discourse: “That old skipper must have been growing lazy for years. They all grew lazy out East here . . . that bodily indolence which overtakes white men in the East” (249).

Sterne’s perception of Whalley’s “behaviour” draws on a strand of Orientalist discourse that conceives of the East as a space in which Europeans go to seed. Sterne’s perception, then, frames the relationship of Whalley and the **Sofala**’s serang in terms of a racial superiority: the indolence of the European is catered for, and to an extent is created, by his apparent mastery over the apparently subservient other. However, it soon becomes clear to Sterne that the serang, acting as Whalley’s eyes, is the one who occupies a position of mastery: “Sterne’s discovery was made. It was repugnant to his imagination, shocking to his ideas of honesty, shocking to his conception of mankind. This enormity affected one’s outlook on what was possible in this world: it was . . . **as though the**

earth had started turning the other way’ (251; emphasis added).¹⁶⁰ This last sentence captures the upside-down-ness of what he perceives. If seeing is believing, Sterne cannot quite bring himself to believe what his eyes disclose: “He had gone on looking at nothing else, till at last one day it occurred to him that the thing was so obvious that no one [that is, no other European on board] could miss seeing it” (255). To put this another way, what Sterne’s empirical observation reveals does not fit in with – in fact, collides with – his colonialist view of the order of things: his “outlook on what was possible in this world.” What Sterne sees turns on its head a sense of racial superiority, as innate to him as it is central to European colonialism generally.¹⁶¹

How the narrative describes the Malay serang’s visual relationship with the world around him is, in this racialized context, particularly salient:

¹⁶⁰ This phrase carries with it an echo of the troubled circumstances surrounding the composition of “The End of the Tether.” In letters following the now-infamous lamp-exploding incident, in which parts of the manuscript were lost, Conrad recollects “looking at the pile of charred paper – MS and typed copy – my head swam; it seemed to me the earth was turning backwards” (to Ford Madox Ford, 24 June 1902, CL2, 428).

¹⁶¹ The title phrase of the tale names several of its narrative layers. The OED connects “tether” to the Old German word for the rope used to confine an animal “to the spot.” As well as being synonymous for the state of monetary and emotional desperation into which Whalley has fallen, then, the title also alludes to the task to which Whalley has tethered himself and has pledged to see through. Another, more specific meaning, is of a tow-rope. This is suggestive, as before, of Whalley’s being drawn by a purpose. In view of Sterne’s “repugnant” discovery, it also is suggestive of his being drawn by another. As such, the title could be seen as alluding to the racial subtext sketched here.

The record of the visual world fell through his eyes upon his unsuspecting mind as on a sensitized plate through the lens of a camera. His knowledge was absolute and precise; nevertheless, had he been asked his opinion, and especially if questioned in the downright, alarming manner of white men, he would have displayed the hesitation of ignorance. (Y 228)

Some critics have interpreted this conflation of the uncomprehending glance with the technical processes of photography as one of several instances throughout Conrad's fiction where his negative opinion of "the camera's inadequacy" is manifested (Donovan 2005, 28). For instance, Stephen Donovan argues that "The End of the Tether," by "casually elid[ing] photography in an orientalizing portrait of the serang helmsman" thus, "indicate[s] that Conrad saw photography as defined by indiscriminating inclusiveness and relentless equivalence" – "in effect, as a mere footprint of the visual" (*Ibid.*). This reading foregrounds a broader comment upon photography, to which Conrad's "orientalizing portrait" merely seems incidental. Yet, from another angle Conrad's use of photography is as much a comment on the processes through which the serang is orientalized as on the medium itself. For, as well as marking an engagement with visual media such as photography, Conrad's representation of the **Sofala's** serang is calibrated to contemporary race theory at the turn of the twentieth century.

In December 1899, its centennial year, the Royal Institution advertised “A course of three lectures on The Senses Of Primitive Man,” to be delivered by the renowned social anthropologist, ethnographer and psychiatrist W.H.R. Rivers.¹⁶² This series of lectures was evidently structured according to the classical hierarchy of the senses analysed by Jonas half a century later. Despite the promise of inclusiveness in the title of this series, only the last lecture (comprising “Acuteness and range of hearing,” “smell and taste” and “The touch and temperature senses”) is given over to “The Other Senses.” The first two lectures, providing a “Comparison of savage with European eyesight,” are centred on, and privilege, the visual. The first of these lectures, entitled “Acuteness of Vision,” is especially germane to Conrad’s vision-centred representation of the Other in “The End of the Tether.” The anthropological “material” for this keynote lecture derives, as the syllabus announces, from fieldwork conducted in “the Torres Straits and New Guinea” as part of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition.¹⁶³ Rivers’s address is therefore based upon a part of the world with which Conrad was familiar from his years as a seaman,¹⁶⁴ and a part of the world with which Captain Whalley, either in his “Dare-devil” past as a pioneer of new

¹⁶² I am grateful to Patricia Pye for supplying a copy of this advertisement.

¹⁶³ Rivers’s research into vision was later published as part one of the two-part **Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Torres Straits** (1901-03).

¹⁶⁴ Notably between September 1888 and January 1889 whilst captain of the **Otago**. For more on this phase of Conrad’s nautical career, see Sherry (1966), pp. 34-35, and Allen (1967), pp. 245-53.

routes “between China and Australia” (Y 168), or during more recent visits to his daughter in Melbourne from his base in Singapore, has likewise at some point had contact. By pointing up an apparent need “for exact investigation” into a “General belief in the great acuteness” of the visual sense in “savage races,” Rivers’s lectures promote science as a legitimating frame for the spread of empire. Moreover, these lectures, like the fieldwork on which they are based, can also be seen as retrospectively affirming the racial legitimation on which imperial expansion was, in part, based. For a key supposition underpinning this research is that the “acuteness of [the visual] sense” is a hindrance to high mental development” among the so-called “savage races.” According to this European scientific view, then, sight is not conducive to insight, but is rather the sign of its absence. “The End of the Tether,” roughly contemporaneous with the “scientific” views circulated in these lectures, draws a similar line between the visual acuity and “ignorance” of Malays, as the above passage demonstrates.¹⁶⁵

The **Sofala** charts a “monotonous huckster’s round, up and down the Straits”: “Malacca to begin with, in at daylight and out at dusk, to cross over with a rigid phosphorescent wake this highway of the Far East,” before “steaming

¹⁶⁵ Rivers’s work on vision was highly and widely regarded by his contemporaries in the scientific community, as an appreciation following his death in 1922 by Charles S. Myers, who accompanied him on the Torres Straits Expedition, underlines: “Rivers’s work on vision is still regarded as the most accurate and careful account of the whole subject in the English language. . . . His psychological investigations among the Torres Straits islanders . . . will ever stand as models of precise, methodological observations in the field of ethnological psychology” (1923, 154-59).

through the maze of an archipelago of small islands up to a large native town at the end of the beat”: “the old round of 1,600 miles and thirty days” (Y 166-67). Whalley’s stock of local knowledge of this part of the Straits (here the Malacca rather than the Torres Straits) is therefore considerable. He “knew its order and its sights and its people” (166). The “sights” of the Straits here serve a navigational purpose, corresponding to places to be seen and steered by, thus marking a category into which local, sailorly knowledge of the Straits is condensed. In its presentation of the visually “alert” Malay, “The End of the Tether” hints at a parallel narrative, whereby “sight” also provides European ethnographers such as Rivers with an index by which to measure, and moreover affirm, Western preconceptions about an underlying order of races. Whalley’s conception of the underlying “order” of the Straits region and “its sights and its people” has, in this context, a broader scientific reference and resonance.

The second of Rivers’s lectures, delivered on 25 January 1900, focuses on the topic of “Primitive Colour Vision.” As before, the lecture centres on a marked binary opposition of “savage” and “civilized.” Providing the measure of “civilization” is a spectrum of examples drawn from Western literature, ranging from “Homer [to] Gladstone,” highlighting a perceived depth of colour vocabulary in Western societies. Opposing this, the comparatively small “colour vocabulary . . . among existing primitive races” – for whom “native” peoples from in and around the Torres Straits again provide the cross-section – offers, according to Rivers, linguistic evidence of a “Deficiency in colour sense.” Rivers’s

first lecture posits that “savages” might see better than Westerners, but without any corresponding cognitive facility. In this second lecture, which posits that “savages” have little linguistic capacity for representing colour, the argument that vision is indexical of race, and racial “inferiority” in particular, is sealed. Conrad’s artistic appeal in the Preface to **The Nigger** to “render[ing] the highest kind of justice to the visible universe,” including “its colours” (xii), takes on in this context a hitherto unremarked, comparative ethnic slant.

In addition to this racial context, both “The End of the Tether” and Conrad’s Preface to **The Nigger** are also germane to another debate then taking place. The representation of the decline of vision in one man in “The End of the Tether” also speaks to a wider aesthetic context, the “so-called crisis of representation” of Modernism (Jameson 1984, viii). This crisis was fuelled in part by contemporary developments in visual technologies and media (most notably cinema)¹⁶⁶ which had given rise to a new visual culture, what Guy Debord later termed the “Society of the Spectacle” (Cited in **Ibid.** vii). The rise of this new, distinctly modern context had a double-implication for literature. On the one hand, the visual capacities of “old” forms of representation such as literature might be seen to acquire new currency within this visual culture. On the other,

¹⁶⁶ As Gene Moore suggests, Conrad cautiously embraced cinema, adapting his short story “Gaspar Ruiz” (1906) for the screen, and giving a talk entitled “Author and Cinematograph” during his visit to America in 1923 (Moore 1997, 37-38). For a useful précis of the changing attitudes of other modernist writers in relation to the emergence of cinema, see Seed (2005), p. 61.

what was called into question by these new visual media was precisely literature's visual capacity. In view of this, Conrad's much-discussed declaration in the Preface to **The Nigger** of his "task" as a writer – "to make you see" (x; emphasis in original) – now seems a pregnant riposte, a re-assertion of "the power of the written word" and, with it, of literature's representational capacities.¹⁶⁷ The meticulous visual descriptions in "The End of the Tether," which seem to mock Whalley's own unseeing eyes, can be seen to realize this response. Not for nothing, then, does Conrad write to Ford Madox Ford in the summer of 1902 whilst applying the finishing touches to "The End of the Tether," praising "the picture-producing power of arranged words" (CL2, 435).

Debates clustering around the visual capacities of literature also intersect with contemporary early-twentieth-century theorizations of geography in Britain.

¹⁶⁷ That the Preface also lays stress on other forms of sensory perception is often elided by Conrad criticism. Although seeing might come "before all," the first "task" underlined by Conrad is "to make you hear," connecting writing and reading to auditory as well as visual experience. As well as registering what Whalley can hear but not see as his grip on the visual gradually slips, the representation of sound in "The End of the Tether" also speaks back to the novella's imperial context. For example: "After a few last ponderous turns the engines stopped, and the prolonged clanging of the gong signified that the captain had done with them. A great number of boats and canoes of all sizes boarded the off-side of the **Sofala**. Then after a time the tumult of splashing, of cries, of shuffling feet, of packages dropped with a thump, the noise of the native passengers going away, subsided slowly" (Y 273). While relations between the Europeans and the "native passengers" aboard the **Sofala** are conducted sonically, through "the prolonged clanging of the gong," that native presence, significantly, is not visually manifest but registers here only as noise. For more on Conrad and sound, see Pye (2007).

In 1908, Halford J. Mackinder, the prominent British geographer of Conrad's moment, put forward his "geographical philosophy," that "to be able to visualize is the very essence of geographical power" (Cited in GoGwilt 2000, 28). This is no mere rhetorical flourish on Mackinder's part, because vision is so embedded in and instrumental to geography as a modern discipline, as Derek Gregory suggests. According to Gregory, "geography's visual obsession" runs so deep that it appears to take "graphos, not logos," as its governing logic (1994, 39).¹⁶⁸ Of course, geography not only consolidated its disciplinary position during an era of high imperialism in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, but also went hand-in-hand with that imperialism.¹⁶⁹ Indeed, for Mackinder "thinking geographically' also meant 'thinking imperially'" (Ryan 1994, 157). Put in this context, Conrad's coercive "to make you see" from the Preface to *The Nigger* becomes more than an imperious gesture confined to literature: it also describes one of the guiding tenets of an imperial geography such as Mackinder's, to which Whalley's efforts in the field are, of course, a contribution.

Exemplifying this braiding of geography, vision and the new imperialism, Mackinder helped establish the Colonial Office Visual Instruction Committee in 1902, the very year that "The End of the Tether" appeared. By developing "an Empire-wide scheme of lantern-slide lectures to instruct the children of Britain about their Empire, the Committee aimed at "construct[ing] a solid visual

¹⁶⁸ See also Ó Tuathail (1996), pp. 71-72.

¹⁶⁹ See Driver (2001).

framework into which parts of the Empire and their inhabitants could be firmly placed as imperial possessions” (Ryan 1994, 157-59). It was thought that these efforts would augment the pre-existing educational apparatus of the Geographical Association, formed, also with Mackinder’s help, in 1893. The Geographical Association aimed, again through the use of lantern-slides, as well as maps, geographical pictures and other aids to “visualization,” to cultivate among Britain’s schoolchildren “a special mode and habit of thought,” as Mackinder put it (Cited in **Ibid.**, 157). This concerted pedagogical effort was designed to produce, as we saw earlier, what he called the “real geographer,” one who, equipped with “the power of roaming at ease imaginatively over the vast surface of the globe,” “sees the world-drama as he reads his morning paper” (Cited in **Ibid.**, 169). Mackinder hoped to make imperial capital from promoting precisely the kind of youthful interest in geography that Conrad recollects having had himself in **A Personal Record** (26-27), thus galvanizing interest in Britain’s imperial dominions at a grass-roots level at a time “of widespread anxiety about the fitness of Britain’s imperial spirit” (Ryan 1994, 160). The representation in “The End of the Tether” of the challenge to Britain’s maritime dominance in the East by other imperial powers, suggests one of the bases for this anxiety: Captain Elliot complains how “by-and-by a squad of confounded German tramps turned up east of Suez Canal and swept up all the crumbs” of trade (Y 205-6); while

Whalley sells his old command the **Fair Maid** to the Japanese, who “at that time . . . were casting far and wide for ships of European build” (180).¹⁷⁰

The novella posits Whalley as a witness, of sorts, to both this and other kinds of change that have occurred to the Malay Archipelago since he first ventured East – changes which, of course, include his own name having been inscribed on the map of empire. As Whalley himself remarks to Van Wyk: “I can look further back even – on a whole half-century” (Y 285). This conversation is unfolded in one of the narrative’s several flashbacks, and is thus freighted with the irony that “looking back,” as it were, will soon be the sole extent of Whalley’s scopic facility. Equally, if the task announced in the Preface to **The Nigger** is “to make [the reader] see,” at the beginning of “The End of the Tether” it is to make the reader see, in precise detail, what Whalley cannot. However, the ironic gloss at the opening of the narrative, that Whalley “could not hope to see anything new upon this lane of the sea” (165), is ironic only in retrospect, coming as it does before the revelation that Whalley at this point is blind. Stripped of this narrative insight – until further readings disclose it – the reader at this point might be said to share something of Whalley’s blindness. Conrad alludes to this technical aspect of the story in a letter to David Meldrum from 1902, remarking that: “I depend upon the reader looking back” (CL2, 441). Conrad also wrote to assure William Blackwood, who had read the first instalment of “The End of the Tether” (then

¹⁷⁰ For a brief account of the growth of German and Japanese commercial influence in the East and its damaging effect on Britain’s economy, see Simmons (2006), pp. 6-7.

being serialized in **Blackwood's Magazine**) and felt that “one can hardly say one has got into the story yet,” citing this technical aspect: that, in retrospect, “the whole story in all its descriptive detail shall fall into place – acquire its value and its significance. This is my method based on deliberate conviction” (31 May 1902, CL2, 417).

As well as underscoring the prodigious technical gifts that Conrad brought to a profession that was still comparatively new to him, the narrative trickery displayed in “The End of the Tether” crucially also reflects back on one of the day-to-day aspects of his previous profession as a mariner. Even the primary substance of Whalley’s geographic environment, the sea, appears to be in on Conrad’s narrative jape; it is described as “profound and glistening like the gaze of a dark-blue eye” (Y 189). This simile, in which the sea mirrors the scopic apparatus – the eye – through which it is seen, provides a reminder that marine life, an activity central to the story, is tethered to careful observation: that a professional seaman must also be a seeing man. Thus, as well as speaking to Modernist debates on issues of representation and the entwined concerns of geography and empire, “The End of the Tether” is also a meditation on the life of a professional mariner, the career Conrad abandoned in order to take up writing. Considered in this biographical context, Whalley’s disclosure to Van Wyk that “A ship’s unseaworthy when her captain can’t see” (300), must have held for Conrad a particularly melancholic force.

The vital connection between seeing and seafaring registers in the text's depiction of space, such as when Singapore's past is recalled during one of Whalley's peregrinations about the port:

[I]t was from that patent slip in a lonely wooded bay that had sprung the workshops of the Consolidated Docks Company, with its three graving basins carved out of solid rock, its wharves, its jetties, its electric-light plant, its steam-power houses – with its gigantic sheer-legs, fit to lift the heaviest weight ever carried afloat, and whose head could be seen like the top of a queer white monument peeping over bushy points of land and sandy promontories, as you approached the New Harbour from the west. (Y 194)¹⁷¹

Tellingly, this “monument” to maritime technology is itself presented through the embodied viewpoint of the men on the ships it serves. Though ostensibly presenting as monumental the technological advances made in maritime affairs since Whalley came out East, this passage therefore also makes discreet reference to the capacity to see on which seafaring, notwithstanding such technological developments, ultimately and fundamentally rests.

¹⁷¹ For more on the representation of Singapore in “The End of the Tether,” see Stape (1992).

“The End of the Tether” might therefore be taken as addressing the generic expectations of those early critics of Conrad who, in view of the “wrestle with wind and weather” (CL2, 354) featured in early stories including **The Nigger of the “Narcissus”** (1897), “Typhoon” (1902), “Youth” (1902), and “Falk” (1903), were apt to label him a writer of “sea stories.”¹⁷² Yet, as other critics have noted, “The End of the Tether” has a much wider range of reference than this generic distinction appears to allow for. John Lyon observes that the trope of blindness in “The End of the Tether” recurs elsewhere in the fiction of the late-Victorian period, most notably in Rudyard Kipling’s 1891 novel **The Light That Failed**. This link with colonial fiction is particularly salient given that “The End of the Tether” was serialized between July and December 1902 in the bellicosely imperialist **Mag**, a publication that, as Conrad himself later pointed out, found its way into every “club . . . mess room and man-of-war” in the British Empire (CL4, 506).¹⁷³ Lyon sees both Kipling’s and Conrad’s later tale as recording “a male anxiety, much manifested at the turn of the century, over blindness as a kind of

¹⁷² The American journalist and novelist Harold Frederic, for example, wrote approvingly that “Conrad gives us the sea as no other story-teller of our generation has been able to render it” (Cited in Simmons 2009a, 61).

¹⁷³ On the idea of empire prevailing in **Blackwood’s** and its readership, and Conrad’s relationship with the generic expectations invested in the magazine, see Hampson (1989).

emasculatation, cutting its victim off from an ever-expanding world of action and travel” (1995, xiv).¹⁷⁴

Yet, as Conrad laments in his late essay “Travel” (1923), this age of adventure and exploration had already been supplanted, ironically thanks to its own achievements, by an age of mass tourism, as we saw in Chapter One. The “geography triumphant” lauded in “Geography and Some Explorers” (1924) is for Conrad something of a pyrrhic victory, as is revealed by his plangent claim in “Travel” – via a telling nod to the pretence to panopticism framing the Enlightenment and imperial knowledge-gathering projects – that “Nothing obviously strange remains for our eyes now” (LE 131). “The End of the Tether” itself makes derisive reference to tourism and the cult of sightseeing. It describes how:

¹⁷⁴ The narrator of *The Quiet American* likewise dreams of becoming blind, “that my eyebrows had frozen together and someone was inserting a chisel to prise them apart, and I wanted to warn them not to damage the eyeballs beneath but couldn’t speak and the chisel bit through” (QA 124). As well as reflecting a sense of emasculatation at having been pushed to the fringes of a *ménage à trios*, his dream also plugs into this wider literary channelling, to adapt Andrew Michael Roberts, of a “highly problematic sense of masculinity as fractured, insecure and repeatedly failing in its attempts to master the world” (2000, 3). If these cracks in the imperial edifice were just beginning to show when “The End of the Tether” appeared shortly after the end of the Second Boer War in 1902, they were more clearly and abundantly in evidence when *The Quiet American* was published in 1955, a period that Greene himself later characterized as “Colonialism in hurried and undignified retreat” (ISC 79).

the periodical invasions of tourists from some passenger steamer in the harbour flitted through . . . like relays of migratory shades condemned to speed headlong round the earth without leaving a trace. The babble of their irruptions ebbed out as suddenly as it had arisen; the draughty corridors and the long chairs of the verandahs knew their sight-seeing hurry or their prostrate repose no more. (Y 184)

This represents, then, one of “the fundamental changes of the world” to which, in an expression that couches vision as a metaphor of revelation, Whalley has “opened his eyes” (176). One of the ironies of the story is that Whalley, as an agent of exploration in his youth, helped bring about this change. The East whose commercial penetration he has helped facilitate has now become a site of tourism, and a sight for tourists. A further irony is supplied by the narrative hint that these tourists, in “their sight-seeing hurry,” do not actually **see** the East at all.¹⁷⁵

Conrad’s contemporary concern with seeing as a form of consumption connects back to the moment when this part of the world was first seen by the European ancestors of these modern consumers. Conrad describes the coast along which the **Sofala** makes its unchanging route, conjuring an image of what

¹⁷⁵ For more on the representation of tourism in the novella, see Donovan (2005), pp. 74-75.

Marlow in “Youth” (1902) calls “the East of the ancient navigators” (Y 41): “Unscathed by storms, resisting the work of years, unfretted by the strife of the world, there it lay unchanged as on that day, four hundred years ago, when first beheld by Western eyes from the deck of a high-pooped caravel” (Y 242). While again laying stress on how seeing is a central aspect of seamanship, this description also enframes the original moment of European contact with the region within the scopic regime of empire. Also implicit in this description of geographies into which European affairs have yet to intrude, is that in Conrad’s Eastern world, as the text’s concerns with the entwined spread of tourism and capitalism amply illustrate, relatively untouched spaces such as this are few and far between. But they do exist, as this description of “native life” makes clear:

their lives ran out silently; the homes where they were born, went to rest, and died – flimsy sheds of rushes and coarse grass eked out with a few ragged mats – were hidden out of sight from the open sea. No glow of their household fires ever kindled for a seaman a red spark upon the blind night of the group. (244)

In this passage the narrative eye ranges to spaces beyond the tourist’s purview. At the same time, given Foucault’s consideration that “the gaze that sees is the gaze that dominates” (Levin 1993, 279), this feat of narrative mastery is placed uncomfortably close to Europe’s imperial mission to bring light to “the dark

places of the earth,” by bringing these spaces into its ocular orbit. Fredric Jameson has argued that one of the consequences of Europe’s imperial expansion during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century was a metropolitan “inability to grasp the way the system functions as a whole” (Cited in Chrisman 1998, 57). Laura Chrisman posits that, on the contrary: “The metropole was flooded during this period . . . with representations of imperialism itself as a system and totality” (*Ibid.*, 58). This feat of panopticism in “The End of the Tether” marks one of the ways in which such a totality is invoked.

It is telling, then, that the narrative knowledge produced through this gaze generates a sense of native ignorance which corresponds, at a fundamental level, to this imperial mission, as in this description of the **Sofala** making way under indigenous eyes:

Sometimes there were human eyes open to watch them come nearer, travelling smoothly in the sombre void; the eyes of a naked fisherman in his canoe floating over a reef. He thought drowsily: ‘Ha! The fire-ship that once in every moon goes in and comes out of Pangu bay.’ More he did not know of her. (Y 243-44)

This passage appears to posit a space “hidden out of sight,” as in the earlier example, located beyond, and hidden from, the gaze of Europeans. At the same

time, however, it could be argued that this seeing is itself “seen,” framed by what Donna Haraway terms the “god trick” of Western representation (1988, 581). Much like the comparison between the **Sofala**’s serang and the processes of photography elsewhere in the narrative, the Malay gaze is here represented, and moreover neutralized, as passive, unthinking spectatorship.

It should be noted that vision comes across as an organizing element not just in “The End of the Tether,” but in much of Conrad’s short fiction. Seeing structures the cross-cultural encounter between Marlow and the East in “Youth” (1902), one of Conrad’s earlier short works; it is also generative of narrative discourse in “The Tale” (1917), one of his last.¹⁷⁶ In “Karain: A Memory” (1897), the eponymous Bugis chief addresses the West from which the frame narrator has come, thus: “your people who live in unbelief; to whom day is day, and night is night – nothing more, because you understand **all things seen**, and despise all else!” (TU 44; emphasis added). Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan interprets Karain’s comment as an acknowledgment of “the power of Western rationality” (1999, 63). More important, Karain’s stress on “things seen” also appears to acknowledge the habituated ocularcentrism in which that rationality is grounded. As such, what might otherwise be dismissed as a rather hackneyed Western representation of Eastern superstition actually shrouds a powerful statement on – or insight into – the West.

¹⁷⁶ See Hampson (2000), pp. 6-8; and Erdinast-Vulcan (1999), pp. 172-84.

Karain's pronouncement on this Western investment in the primacy of "things seen" is also characteristic of the binaristic assumptions that structured some Orientalist discourses of the period. If "the East" was "known in the West as its great complementary opposite since antiquity," as Edward Said puts it (2003, 58), here that division is represented in terms of a scopically-regimented West and its Oriental "opposite." Other critics have seemed to suggest that Karain's perorations on European scopophilia have in them a germ of cultural and historical fact. For instance, Martin Jay points out that there "may well have been some link between the absence of such scopic regimes in Eastern cultures . . . and their general lack of indigenous [scientific] revolutions" (1988, 19-20). Yet, when mapped onto Conrad's Malay fiction this point is of limited use, because the view of a technologically "backward" East in both "Karain: A Memory" and "The End of the Tether" is in many ways the product of, and cannot easily be disentangled from, a shared Orientalist perspective.

The authority of nineteenth-century Orientalism derived, in no small part (and aptly, given its philological underpinnings), from "the supposed inability of 'the Orient' to speak for itself" (Gregory 2005, 374). In addition, Orientalism also operated via a series of structuring sight-based metaphors. As Derek Gregory puts it, the authority of Orientalism "also depended on its claim to transform the opacities of 'the Orient' into spaces fully transparent to a European audience" (2005, 374), thus "stripping it" – in Said's playfully Orientalized wording of Orientalism's aims – "of its veils" (2003, 76).

The first part of Said's groundbreaking 1978 work **Orientalism**, entitled "The Scope of Orientalism," hereby refers not just to the period spanned by the modern project of Orientalism, ranging from early seminal texts such as d'Herbelot's **Bibliothèque orientale** (1697), to the archetypal **Description de l'Égypte** (1809-1828) and beyond; or, indeed, to the breadth and depth of Orientalism's theoretical and practical aims and applications. Rather, the "scope" of Orientalism also entails, as this word suggests, the mobilizing visual metaphors that helped to structure and sustain it as a project. Since Greene's 1955 novel **The Quiet American**, set on the outer circumference of the "magic circle" (V 7) of Conrad's **Victory** (1915) in French Saigon, leans heavily on visual figures of speech and frames of reference, it therefore demands a closer look.

II.

We have already touched upon how Conrad's engagement with Anglo-Dutch colonial rivalries in the Malay Archipelago during the late-nineteenth century forms one of the subplots of his 1912 short story, "Freya of the Seven Isles." **The Quiet American** is likewise concerned with clashing imperialisms, this time of Britain and France. The English narrator, Fowler, is the correspondent in Saigon of a London newspaper published in a "grim Victorian building near Blackfriars station with a plaque of Lord Salisbury by the lift" (QA 69). Though small, this detail of setting is important: as a former foreign secretary and prime minister of Britain, Lord Salisbury was a figure deeply involved in the imperial affairs of state,

some of which are perhaps picked out by the “plaque” noted here by Fowler. Salisbury oversaw Britain’s involvement in events of enormous geopolitical significance, including the partition of Africa and the “Fashoda Incident” of 1898, a territorial dispute in Eastern Africa which had brought Britain and France to the brink of war.¹⁷⁷ It was “the desire to match Britain’s imperial achievements” (Said 2003, 218) elsewhere that had led to France’s colonial establishment in South East Asia, as one of the founding aims of the **Société académique indo-chinoise**, “to turn Cochin China into a ‘French India’” (*Ibid.*), suggests.¹⁷⁸ This rivalry is alluded to elsewhere in Greene’s novel. In a key scene, Fowler accompanies a French squadron on an air raid. This experience, however, appears to have more than just a journalistic purpose, as is revealed when, after the bombs are released, the pilot directs Fowler to the scopic delights to be had from the air:

‘We will make a little detour. The sunset is wonderful on the **calcaire**. You must not miss it,’ he added kindly, like a host who is showing the beauty of his estate, and for a hundred miles we trailed the sunset over the Baie d’Along. The helmeted Martian face looked wistfully out, down the golden groves among the

¹⁷⁷ For a discussion of the latter, see Sanderson (1985), esp. pp. 109, 149.

¹⁷⁸ See also Tarling (1999), p. 37. For a contemporary British response, see Cunningham (1902).

great humps and arches of porous stone, and the wounds of
murder ceased to bleed. (QA 168)

While critics including Norman Sherry tend to view this scene in terms of what it borrows from Greene's own war reportage (Sherry 1994, 387), made during several trips to Vietnam between late January 1951 and the spring of 1955 (*Ibid.*, 364, 506), it is also noteworthy for reasons other than what it reveals about Greene's biography or compositional methods.¹⁷⁹ With its emphasis on "unmissable" spaces, this scene recalls the spectacular tourism adumbrated by Greene in *The Lawless Roads* (1938).¹⁸⁰ However, the overseeing presence of the "helmeted Martian" bomber pilot, enforcing the disciplinary gaze of French colonial power, provides a reminder that these spaces are not for the gaze of tourists. Here, French colonial possessions are displayed to an English onlooker, which, given that Anglo-French rivalry was the context for France's intervention in Vietnam, endows both Fowler's act of looking and the invitation to do so with a certain political resonance. It is no accident, then, that Fowler is reminded as he surveys the scene below of a childhood visit to "the Wembley Exhibition" (QA 166); this took place in north London in 1924 and 1925, and was more commonly known as the British Empire Exhibition. Thus an imaginative

¹⁷⁹ This passage, like the representation of the bombing raid as a whole, is repeated almost verbatim from Greene's "A Memory of Indo-China," an article published in the 15 September 1955 issue of the *Listener*.

¹⁸⁰ See Chapter One.

comparison is implicitly made between the French territory displayed before him, and a remembered space wherein British imperial spoils and achievements were topographically laid out and celebrated.¹⁸¹

Nicholas Tarling points out that, as with Africa, “The political map of Southeast Asia was redrawn so that the region was almost entirely fragmented among the European powers. The process of drawing the frontiers was a long one; it was not complete – even on the map, let alone on the ground – till the early-twentieth century” (1999, 2). Of course, these political boundaries are not visible to Fowler from the air. Yet this aerial platform does afford something of a cartographic perspective. Like the conjuring of the East as “first beheld by Western eyes” (Y 242) in “The End of the Tether,” Fowler conflates what he currently sees with an imaginary moment in the distant past when the space below him was “first” beheld and represented by European cartographers:

We came up the Red River, slowly climbing, and the Red River at this hour was really red. It was as though one had gone far back in time and saw it with the old geographer’s eyes who had named

¹⁸¹ This detail differs from the *Listener* piece adapted by Greene for this scene in the novel. In the *Listener* piece, Greene compares the sensation felt during this raid not to the Wembley Exhibition but “the Festival Gardens,” a feature at the 1951 Festival of Britain. In putting this piece to fictional use, Greene changes the emphasis from a celebration of nation to a celebration of empire, thus adding to this scene’s already charged political context.

it first, at just such an hour when the late sun filled it from bank
to bank. (QA 165-66)

Throughout this episode Fowler is “crammed on to a little metal pad the size of a bicycle seat with my knees against the navigator’s back” (165); thus whilst Fowler’s view of the scene below figuratively rests upon the imaginary viewpoint of some distant cartographer, he is himself literally resting upon a crew-member engaged in reading a map.

If “the Red River at this hour was really red,” so, too, is “the Black River” “really black”: “full of shadows, missing the angle of the light” (166). Fowler’s close association of cartography with the inscription of place names is interesting, for “the green-encircled village” (*Ibid.*) whose destruction he witnesses is not given a name, referred to only in terms of its proximity to other places: “near the Chinese border . . . Near Lai Chau” (165). Just as the ascribing of places with names confirms for Fowler their geographic reality, the non-naming of **this** place heralds its obliteration on the ground and its erasure from the map, there being nothing left but “smoke” (167). Correspondingly, after the raid the names of landmarks that conjured the “geographer’s eye” no longer appear anchored in the topographies to which they are nominally attached: “the geographer’s moment had passed: the Black River was no longer black, and the Red River was only gold” (*Ibid.*).

Aptly, Fowler's sense that this geographic "moment" has passed is followed by a sudden puncturing of the privileged, cartographic perspective from which he observes the raid: "Down we went . . . towards the river, flattening out over the neglected rice-fields, aimed like a bullet at one small sampan on the yellow stream. The cannon gave a single burst of tracer, and the sampan blew apart in a shower of sparks: we didn't even wait to see our victims struggling to survive, but climbed and made for home" (167). The "victims" of this brutal and spontaneous act remain – like those of the village just obliterated – unseen, relegated instead to an abstract, tabulated space where "our little quota" of "the world's dead" are added (168).

Key here is Derek Gregory's description of how imperialism produces "spaces of constructed invisibility" (2004, 199). This phrase names the double operation whereby the West takes for granted its capacity to disclose and render "transparent" "the opacities of 'other spaces'" (*Ibid.*, 12) through cultural practices ranging from cartography to travel-writing, whilst concealing the cultural and political situatedness of this disclosure, a conceptual manoeuvre that Donna Haraway identifies as "the god trick of seeing everything from nowhere" (1988, 581). Such a manoeuvre colours Fowler's location of the raid in an almost Archimedean perspective which, seemingly located above all partisan interests, emblemizes his claims to political neutrality and journalistic objectivity – of being, in his phrase, "degagé." At the same time, of course, this view, afforded "through the side window" (167) of a French bomber, is nothing if not politically

situated.¹⁸² The benefit in reducing combat spaces to an abstract, cartographic register is made devastatingly clear by the pilot whom Fowler accompanies on the raid: “God knows what you would see from the ground” (169). As well as betokening the imperial privilege of seeing everything from nowhere, as Haraway has it, this register also carries with it the additional privilege of being able only to see so much.

This elevated, cartographic perspective represents an imaginative mastery of territory, part of the same “disciplinary mechanism” to which actual maps produced by imperial geography also belonged, as “a technology of vision and control” (Edney 1997, 25) integral to the exercise of colonial authority in French South East Asia. What corresponding power exists on the ground, however, has long since begun to fade, as Fowler’s friend from the *Armée de l’Air* confides: “we can’t win . . . the road to Hanoi is cut and mined every night . . . we lose one class of St Cyr every year. . . . But . . . we . . . go on fighting till the politicians tell us to stop” (QA 170). The assertion of this panoptic aerial gaze is therefore something of an empty gesture. It asserts control over space, while the realities on the ground evidence the resistance and rejection of such domination.

This empty gesture is repeated in the novel’s representation of an ineffectual network of French watch towers, manned by both local troops and

¹⁸² The politics of this gaze are further problematized when we consider that its platform belongs to the same influx of “new American planes” that Fowler watches being unloaded by “the river-front” (QA 1) in the opening lines of the novel, and again at the beginning of the penultimate chapter (202).

those drawn from France's African colonies. Fowler encounters this network during a visit to the "Caodaist festival at the Holy See in Tanyin," "eighty kilometres to the north-west of Saigon" (85): "Every kilometre a small mud watch tower stood up above the flat fields like an exclamation-mark, and every ten kilometres there was a larger fort" (86); as one "tower sank behind, another appeared, like weights on a balance" (93). Fowler's metaphor of "weights on a balance" suggests, as do the towers themselves, the instruments and implementation of geographic survey, and thereby the mathematical process by which this space was first produced within a rigidly Euclidean framework, preparing the ground for colonial rule. This "spatial architecture" was rooted in Western rather than autochthonous Vietnamese mathematics and structures, part of an expressly "**European** panopticon" (Edney 1997, 25; emphasis added). Thus, as well as being an acutely visible, physical expression of the insertion into this landscape of an alien European presence, these towers are also emblematic of the geographical ways in which that landscape has been re-envisioned within an epistemological framework that is alien to it.¹⁸³

While the Caodaist festival – a cinematic "Walt Disney fantasia of the East, dragons and snakes in technicolour" (QA 85) – appears to belong to the realm of the fantastic, the dangers inherent in getting to and from it are for Fowler all too real: "Everybody wanted to reach Tanyin, see the show and get

¹⁸³ Norman Sherry sees these towers as indices of the political state of affairs after the French withdrawal: "the watch-towers were left to crumble and anarchy was returning" (1994, 506).

back as quickly as possible; curfew was at seven” (86), after which the roads were under enemy control: “It was not the kind of country one associates with ambush, but men could conceal themselves neck-deep in the drowned fields within a few yards of the road” (93). Stranded after curfew, having run out of fuel during the return trip, Fowler and Pyle take refuge in one of these watch towers from the gathering presence of the enemy outside: “A voice came right into the tower with us, it seemed to speak from the shadows by the trap – a hollow megaphone voice saying something in Vietnamese. . . . I looked quickly out: there was nothing to be seen . . . the voice went on saying the same thing over again” (113-14). That the enemy presence can only be heard and not seen signals a local failure of the imperial gaze, consistent with the wider representation of the collapse of colonial power in the novel.

How these watch towers are themselves seen and described by Fowler is equally pertinent. During the morning passage to Tanyin they strike him as resembling “exclamation-mark[s]” (86) – a presage, perhaps, of the danger to come. Later, “against the grey neutral sky” as the “last colours of sunset . . . were dripping over the edge” of the horizon, they appear “as black as print” (95). This sustained simile, likening the towers to articles of typography, can be situated in the novel’s broader Orientalist context. Said has demonstrated that, as an institutionalized scholarly practice, Orientalism was central to imperial projects such as France’s, because it supplemented “the subjugation of a country” with a corresponding “scriptural fortification” (Cited in Gregory 2000, 312). The

resemblance, in Fowler's eyes, of these very real military fortifications to marks of written inscription, hints at this scriptural counterpart.

From the opening scene where Fowler watches the unloading of "the new American planes" by "the river-front" (1), **The Quiet American** is attentive to America's increasingly visible political presence in Vietnam. The novel also suggests an imbalance between America's sizeable military power – of which these planes, aid to an ailing French war effort, provide the material evidence – and the textual bases of American power in the East; put simply, that the "scriptural fortification" of American power is itself lacking. According to Said, the "specifically American contribution to the history of Orientalism," noting an "efflorescence of Near Eastern studies in the United States" during the post-war period (2003, 295), was "its conversion from a fundamentally philological discipline" into "a social science specialty" (290).¹⁸⁴ Greene alludes to this disciplinary conversion (still recent when the novel appeared) through Fowler's snort that Pyle has probably "taken a good degree in . . . Far Eastern Studies" (QA 14).

The Quiet American points up the new framing of "the East" within this North American academic context in other ways. Rather than follow in the footsteps of his famous geologist father, "Professor Harold C. Pyle" (whose image Fowler dimly recalls from "the cover of **Time**" [25]), Pyle is instead a keen

¹⁸⁴ Said offers an updated view of this topic in his Preface to the recent Penguin edition of **Orientalism**. See Said (2003), p. 26.

student of the American Orientalist York Harding, as the “two rows of books” in “Pyle’s library” of Harding’s “complete works” (23) indicate. Fowler dismisses Harding’s brand of politically-slanted Orientalism for lacking any experiential basis: Harding has, as Fowler notes, only ever passed through the East “once on his way from Bangkok to Tokyo” (186). This offstage yet ever-present character is emblematic of the new institutional framing of the Orient as an object of study in the United States, whereby the Orient is not so much something to be encountered directly as seen, as it were, from afar.

While there is some consensual agreement about the model on whom Greene based the fictional figure of Pyle,¹⁸⁵ critics have yet to investigate properly possible sources for York Harding. Candidates include the Harvard-based economist Walt Rostow, who, like Harding’s fictional protégé and fellow New Englander Pyle, had faith in the concept of a “third force” between communism and colonialism in South East Asia (Nashel 1996, 316-17), and the American political scientist Robert Payne, whose 1951 text **Red Storm Over Asia**, like Harding’s **The Rôle of the West**, put forward a “vision of what America’s role should be” in the world (Pratt 1996, xvi). Greene may also have had in mind the Scottish Orientalist H.A.R. Gibb, who, as director of Harvard’s Center for Middle Eastern Studies during the 1950s, had helped oversee the post-war “efflorescence” of

¹⁸⁵ The prime candidate is CIA operative Edward Lansdale. See Nashel (1996); and Pratt (1996), esp. pp. xiv-xv. For possible sources of some of the novel’s other characters, see Rudman (1961), Hazen (1987), and Sherry (1994), pp. 399, 410.

Orientalism in North American academe described by Said.¹⁸⁶ In much the same way as it is for Harding in *The Quiet American*, “The Orient for Gibb was not a place one encountered directly.” Rather, “it was something one read about, studied, [and] wrote about within the confines of learned societies, the university, the scholarly conference” (Said 2003, 275). Equally, Pyle favours “read[ing] the straight stuff as you got it from York” over “what the man on the spot has to say” (QA 17). What Fowler thinks of Pyle’s devotion to Harding’s brand of Orientalism is suggested through an interplay of visual metaphors. During their first encounter, Fowler is arrested by one of Pyle’s chief traits, “his wide campus gaze” (9). This gaze, however, as Fowler’s subsequent appraisal of Pyle’s meagre “library” and its sole focus on Harding attests, is also somewhat narrow. (In this context, Pyle’s later, seemingly off-hand remark to Fowler – almost the last words he utters – that he is “as blind as a coot” and that his nickname at college was “Bat” [199], seems similarly pregnant.)

If Harding and Pyle present together two aspects of this new, American formation of Orientalism, then the narrator Fowler is something of an amateur exponent, as the depiction of his “Annamite lover” Phuong demonstrates. When introduced by Fowler in the narrative’s opening paragraphs, Phuong is partially shrouded in darkness, halfway between visibility and invisibility: “I couldn’t see her face, only the white silk trousers and the long flowered robe, but I knew her

¹⁸⁶ For an overview of Scottish Orientalism, see Rendall (1982).

for all that” (1). This opening image of an Eastern body melded with its Eastern background signals the basic conceptual manoeuvre on which Fowler’s romanticized idea of the East pivots. For *Phuong* is a component part of a broader poetics of space, a mere piece of “the real background that held you,” in Fowler’s Proustian gloss, “as a smell does” (18), and which also comprises:

the gold of the rice-fields under a flat late sun: the fishers’ fragile cranes hovering over the fields like mosquitoes: the cups of tea on an old abbot’s platform, with his bed and his commercial calendars, his buckets and broken cups and the junk of a lifetime washed up around his chair: the mollusc hats of the girls repairing the road where a mine had burst: the gold and the young green and the bright dresses of the south, and in the north the deep browns and the black clothes and the circle of enemy mountains and the drone of planes. (18-19)

This “background” clearly also held some of the novel’s early critics, as is suggested by the review in the 9 December 1955 issue of **The Spectator**, which rhapsodizes about “those little twinkling civilizations suspended between the giants of India and China” that “afford the most felicitous setting” (Champness 1955, 820).

In addition to its personal significance, Fowler's conflation of woman and landscape is also reminiscent of a similar gendered conflation characterizing the project of nineteenth-century Orientalism: the trope of "the Orient-as-woman," "reclining before the scopic virilities" of the Western spectator (Gregory 2000, 316). This relationship is less about the representative fidelity of Western narratives to the Eastern worlds framed by such narratives, than the power precisely to frame these worlds in a particular way. The fact that this power has little, or nothing, to do with what Conrad in the Preface to *The Nigger* calls "the visible universe" (vii), is suggested by Fowler's closed-eyed appraisal of Phuong as she prepares his opium pipe:

I shut my eyes and . . . she was the hiss of steam, the clink of a cup, she was a certain hour of the night and the promise of rest. . . . I thought that if I smelt her skin it would have the faintest fragrance of opium, and her colour was that of the small flame. I had seen the flowers on her dress beside the canals in the north, she was indigenous like a herb, and I never wanted to go home.
(QA 2-5)

Fowler's floral simile, meanwhile, mirrors and is mirrored in the domestic layout of his apartment: "the tree I had set up weeks ago for the Chinese New Year had shed most of its yellow blossoms. They had fallen between the keys of

my typewriter” (2). On the one hand, Fowler’s little “yellow tree” is indexical of narrative chronology, providing a point of calendrical reference: bought for “the Chinese New Year,” it has by the moment of the represented action “shed most of its yellow blossoms.” On the other hand, and more importantly, the fact that these leaves present an obstacle to the physical act of writing (having “fallen between the keys of [Fowler’s] typewriter”), also suggests a particular relation between place and page. Through this attentiveness to Fowler’s typewriter, literally entangled thus with the products of the Eastern landscape within which it sits, the novel not only points up Fowler’s fascination with the exotic, but also self-consciously hints, through this image, at how his narrative is actively engaged in producing or writing that exotic. Books are frequently a plot device in Greene’s fiction, notably in the espionage novel **The Human Factor** (1978), where novels by Tolstoy and Trollope provide the main character Castle with his code texts; and in **The Quiet American** itself, where Fowler’s reading of a passage from “Dipsychus” (1850) by the Victorian poet A.H. Clough (a line from whom also gives the novel its epigraph),¹⁸⁷ signals, quite literally, his betrayal of Pyle. What concerns us here, however, is a much deeper level of self-reflexive engagement.

This interplay of page and landscape suggests that “the East” as it exists for Fowler is a heavily textualized space. The project of much nineteenth-century Orientalist writing was, as Said argues, metaphorically to strip the Orient of “its

¹⁸⁷ See Rudman (1961).

veils” (Said 2003, 76). Fowler’s narrative, whilst inevitably drawing on that project, casts off its positivism by representing such acts of disclosure as fundamentally compromised, as typified by Fowler’s closed-eyed appraisal of Phuong and the attendant admission that, at best, he “was inventing a character” (QA 149). It is no accident that York Harding’s **The Rôle of the West**, Pyle’s much-coveted bible of North American Orientalism, has swapped his bookcase for Fowler’s at the end of the novel (210). In spite of their differences, neither Pyle nor Fowler “see” the East for what it is, but as it has been Orientalized by a textual project.

This glimpse of Western ignorance about the Orient, however, is offset, and downplayed, by the sustained representation (echoing that of Conrad’s Malays in “The End of the Tether”) of Eastern ignorance about the West. For the construction of this contrapuntal image, Phuong again provides the focal point. Fowler remarks that: “Phuong . . . was wonderfully ignorant . . . and had only the vaguest knowledge of European geography” (QA 3). The intuition that Fowler ascribes to Phuong when recalling that it was she who gave Pyle his “quiet” moniker (“the adjective which she was the first to use” [33]), extends only to people, not places:

She said, ‘Are there skyscrapers in London?’ and I loved her for the innocence of her question. . . .

‘No,’ I said, ‘you have to go to America for them.’ . . .

‘And the Statue of Liberty...’ she said.

‘No, Phuong, that’s American too.’ (84-85)

Fowler underscores throughout that Phuong fails to comprehend even a spatial distinction – let alone any cultural, political, or historical distinction – between these centres of empire old and new. Yet what Fowler takes as ignorance in fact carries with it a germ of geopolitical insight. As Clifford puts it: “When we speak today of the West we are usually referring to a force – technological, economic, political – no longer radiating in any simple way from a discrete geographical and cultural centre” (1988, 272). Phuong’s engagement with “the West” is not, after all, as a place but as a power – something that necessarily eludes representation on the map.

Phuong’s idea of the West is formed through an engagement with Western visual culture. The history, and forms, of this culture are never far from the surface of Fowler’s narrative, whether shaping his description of a battle which, seen from the elevated perspective of “the bell tower of [a] Cathedral,” appears “picturesque like a panorama of the Boer War in an old **Illustrated London News**” (43); or the antiquated “press” used to manufacture the explosive materials for the novel’s set piece (a bungled bomb outrage not dissimilar to the one carried out in Conrad’s **The Secret Agent**), which Fowler imagines “belonged to the same era as the nickelodeon” (QA 160); or, more contemporaneously, the “technicolour” film that Fowler goes to see after betraying Pyle (203). This same

culture also affords Phuong – who shares with Van Wyk a fondness for illustrated magazines (Y 279) and picture books such as **Paris Match** and **London in Colour** (advertisements for which appeared alongside early notices for **The Quiet American** in **The Spectator**) a window onto the West.¹⁸⁸ Phuong’s idea of the West, formed thus through the illustrated press, presents an interesting scopic reversal whereby one of the framing epistemologies of imperialism, the notion of “the-world-as-exhibition” (Mitchell 1989), is recuperated to an Eastern subjectivity. The conventional locus, and focus, of this gaze are switched, so that the West itself becomes construed as an “exhibition” of sorts – a pageant, in Phuong’s eyes, of coronations and skyscrapers (QA 3, 85).

However, the view that this window provides is a particular and partial one. Whereas in “The End of the Tether” Van Wyk’s fondness for the illustrated magazines shipped to him via the **Sofala** supplies the lone “white man of Batu Beru” with a means of plotting the cultural co-ordinates of Europe, and thus “home,” Phuong’s partiality for the same signifies a different sort, and set, of cultural attachments. Given Said’s view of the deep and lasting impact of empire on Eastern culture, Phuong’s obsession can be seen as representing one of the “infinity of traces” left upon her by a culture “whose domination has been so powerful a factor in the life of all Orientals” (Cited in Gregory 2000, 304). In

¹⁸⁸ It is interesting that, though markedly different from the novel (much to Greene’s annoyance), Joseph Mankiewicz’s 1957 adaptation for the screen retains Phuong’s interest in illustrated serials imported from the West. For a useful summary of these differences, see Christopher (1994).

other words, the impress left upon Phuong by Western visual culture could be seen as presenting another way in which the daily imposition of Western power – what Said terms “the micro-physics of imperialism” (Cited in **Ibid.**, 310) – also leaves its imprint, one as infinitesimal as the halftone dots that make up the pictures in her imported **Illustrated News**.

III.

As Norman Sherry has underlined, “The End of the Tether” was in the main well received by critics on its publication in 1902. In an unsigned review of **Youth** for the 12 December 1902 issue of the **Times Literary Supplement**, Sir William Beach Thomas not only praised the story as the best in the collection, but argued that it should have formed “the forefront of the book” (In Sherry, ed. 1973, 136). This, remember, was a collection that also boasted “Youth” and “Heart of Darkness.” Although such a re-arrangement would have unsettled the volume’s “three ages of man” structure,¹⁸⁹ Beach Thomas felt that “many readers . . . would not get beyond the barren and not very pretty philosophy of ‘Youth’,” and those who did “might feel they had had enough horror at the end of ‘The Heart of Darkness’” (Cited in **Ibid.**). In a piece for the 31 January 1903 number of the **Speaker**, the poet John Masefield likewise favourably compared “The End of the Tether” to the narrative “cobweb” of “Heart of Darkness,” declaring the former “a more precise

¹⁸⁹ For a discussion of Conrad’s use of this discourse, which has an ancestry stretching back to Aristotle’s **Rhetoric**, see Kerr (1998).

piece of creation” (Cited in *Ibid.*, 141-42).¹⁹⁰ Yet, in spite of this early critical acclaim (repeated when the popular success of *Chance* in 1914 led to renewed interest in *Youth* and appreciations by Richard Curle, Wilson Follett, H.L. Mencken and Virginia Woolf), “The End of the Tether” has mainly tended to remain outside the purview of later Conrad scholarship. “The End of the Tether” deserves critical re-appraisal not simply for being one of Conrad’s more neglected fictions, however, but for its subtle and complex engagement with the oculo-centrism that underpins the philosophic traditions and imperial discourses of Conrad’s cultural moment.

Conversely, *The Quiet American*, having had fairly mixed reviews after its publication in Britain in December 1955 and in America in March the following year (Sherry 1994, 472), has since “been elevated to the status of one of Greene’s major works” (Pratt 1996, xiii). Lacking typical frames of generic or thematic reference for a Greene novel, whether the “entertainment” tag of the early thrillers or the religious element characterizing other works,¹⁹¹ critics seemed unsure where to place *The Quiet American* before events in South East Asia after the French withdrawal endowed the novel, in retrospect, with a certain geopolitical prescience. Noteworthy for being only the second of Greene’s novels to deploy a first-person narrator (following *The End of the Affair* [1951]) – an

¹⁹⁰ For a useful summary of the volume’s early reception, see Knowles (2010), pp. liv-lix

¹⁹¹ Greene’s generic distinctions between “serious” (“novel”) and “non-serious” (“entertainment”) works were dropped upon publication of the Collected Edition by Heinemann.

eschewal of authorial omniscience that chimes with its broader interrogation of privileged perspectives – **The Quiet American** was also only his second novel with a fully realized (rather than an alluded to) colonial setting, after **The Heart of the Matter** (1948). Set in French Saigon, **The Quiet American** is the first of Greene’s novels fully to locate itself in the East, a space that (mirroring Greene’s own flirtation with it, having almost been posted to China during a brief stint with “the British-American Tobacco Company” in 1925 [ASL 148])¹⁹² had hitherto only featured indirectly in his fiction: as a remembered space where the Assistant Commissioner of **It’s a Battlefield** (1934), like the Assistant Commissioner of Conrad’s **The Secret Agent**, once saw colonial service, or as an equally offstage presence in **England Made Me** (1935), whose main character has, as “cables from the East tremblingly opened” by his family reveal, been expelled from positions in “Shanghai . . . Bangkok . . . Aden, creeping remorselessly nearer” (4).

Greene’s novel shares much with Conrad’s “major” political novels, its central theme of personal betrayal and political engagement being threads that run throughout works such as **The Secret Agent** (1907) and **Under Western Eyes** (1911). Indeed, Fowler’s ultimately futile policy of remaining politically “dégagé” mirrors Heyst’s similarly compromised maxim in **Victory** (1915) to “Look on –

¹⁹² For more on this flirtation and Greene’s stint with B.A.T., see Sherry (1989), pp. 194-210. One of the few stones left unturned by Sherry’s otherwise near-exhaustive biography, Greene also claims to have very nearly taken up a post at the “department of English at Chulankarana University near Bangkok” (ASL 214.)

make no sound” (175), a consonance that carries further weight if we consider that Greene, in “Remembering Mr Jones,” a 1937 review of **Conrad’s Prefaces to his Works**, named **Victory** one of “the great English novels of the last fifty years” (CE 139). As his **Congo Journal** reveals, Greene had also long admired “**Youth** for the sake of **The Heart of Darkness**” (ISC 42), whilst bemoaning the “great and disastrous” influence of Conrad’s African novella on his own writing (**Ibid.**). As the shared concern in **The Quiet American** with the scopic regimes of Western colonial modernity suggests, “The End of the Tether” also appears to have made a less disastrous, and altogether more subtle, impression.

5. Contexts of Race and Place:

The Heart of the Matter and “The Planter of Malata”

CONRAD'S STAY IN the Congo between 12 June and 4 December 1890 in the service of the Société Anonyme Belge pour le Commerce du Haut-Congo yielded two notebooks. One contains **The Congo Diary**, a record of Conrad's overland trek from Matadi to Nselemba between 13 June and 1 August. Recalling Conrad's description of "Twixt Land and Sea" (1912), put together after the mental exertions of **Under Western Eyes** (1911), as "the book of a man's convalescence" ("Author's Note," TLS vii), **The Congo Diary** offers itself as a book of the various tropical maladies suffered by Conrad and the other Europeans with whom he travelled and came into contact. Conrad was accompanied on the overland trek by a "Mr Harou" (CD 150) – a figure since identified as Prosper Harou, a Belgian agent of the Société Anonyme Belge who arrived in Africa from Europe in the same boat as Conrad, the **Ville de Maceio** (Hampson, ed. 1995, 163). Like Conrad, Harou was sick throughout the course of the trek, and Conrad's diary is as much a chart of the progress – or lack thereof – of Harou's physical health as it is of their geographical progress to Nselemba; this is typified by the final entry: "Harou not very well" (CD 161). Conrad also mentions meeting a "Mrs Comber" and a "Mr Davis" at the Mission of Sutili, and having just failed to meet another missionary, "Rev. Bentley" (*Ibid.*, 157). Bentley's **Pioneering on the Congo**, which appeared just after "Heart of Darkness" in 1900, mentions that both Comber and Davis died

apparently not long after meeting Conrad, in December 1890 and December 1895, respectively (Bentley 1900, 354). Thus, in amongst the numerous mundane entries (regarding the times of markets, the vagaries of the Congo weather, topography, and so on) and those of a more shocking nature (namely the encounters with the dead and dying which anticipate Marlow's encounters with the discarded workers at the Central Station), **The Congo Diary** presents a picture of a seemingly beleaguered European presence, contributing to the then-prevailing European discourse of Africa as a sepulchral space.¹⁹³

In the second notebook, which he called his "Up-river Book," Conrad recorded his subsequent journey up the Congo aboard the **Roi des Belges** between Kinshasa, the Central Station of "Heart of Darkness," and Stanley Falls. Conrad began the "Up-river Book" on 3 August 1890, ten days prior to leaving for Stanley Falls, before stopping, abruptly, on 19 August. A probable reason for this premature curtailment was that he "got sick," having suffered three debilitating "attacks of tropical fever" during the course of the journey up-river, as Zdzisław Najder has suggested (ed. 1978, 5). Conrad then took command of the **Roi de Belges** when the captain also fell ill on the return journey, during the course of which another sick company agent, Georges Antoine Klein (who, as Conrad's

¹⁹³ Of course, this contribution was to a significant degree retrospective, inasmuch that **The Congo Diary** was not published until 1926, two years after Conrad's death, by his close friend and co-executor of his estate Richard Curle. For more on the construction and hardening of this discourse of Africa during the mid- to late-nineteenth century, see Curtin (1964), and Killam (1968), esp. pp. 1-15.

manuscript revisions show, was a model for Kurtz), was taken on board, dying before they reached Kinshasa. The next three months “were occupied with Conrad’s own illness, convalescence and a slow, six-week journey to the coast” (Hampson, ed. 1995, xxiii). Whereas **The Congo Diary** grew out from the wish “to put down some distinct and concrete impressions – in order to be able later to bolster his memories with hard data” (Najder, ed. 1978, 4), the “Up-river Book” was written with the purely practical purpose of assisting future navigations up-river (Hampson, ed. 1995, 144-45; Najder, ed. 1978, 3). This fundamental difference aside, both texts bear the imprint of the enormous physical impact of this period on Conrad – the one curtailed by, the other about, his experience of illness while in Africa.

Greene likewise became ill – and, if Barbara Greene’s account in **Land Benighted** (1938) is any measure, very nearly died – during their overland trek through Sierra Leone and Liberia in early 1935.¹⁹⁴ Yet this experience of illness, as Greene later noted in the 1978 Preface to the Collected Edition, is conspicuously absent from preceding editions of **Journey Without Maps** (1936).¹⁹⁵ In his 1948 novel

¹⁹⁴ She writes: “The same thought was in all our minds. Graham would die. I never doubted it for a minute. He looked like a dead man already” (B. Greene 1938, 174).

¹⁹⁵ Greene revisits this aspect of the journey in his 1980 memoir, **Ways of Escape**. He describes the persistent memory, whilst “[aid] up . . . sweating as if I had influenza,” of a cautionary tale from another burnt-out case, Mr Van Gogh, a trading partner of “C,” the enigmatic “young Dutchman” who, in an echo of Conrad’s Kurtz – one strengthened by the echo of the literal meaning of “Kurtz” in his foreshortened name – has likewise disappeared into the African bush in search of imperial plunder (**JWM** 53): “I kept

The Heart of the Matter, however, Greene would draw upon this experience of Africa, and extend the discursive image of Africa nourished by Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" (1899) and **The Congo Diary** (1926), with a novel that produces "Africa" as a similarly sepulchral space.

I.

The Heart of the Matter is set during the Second World War in the British colony of Sierra Leone.¹⁹⁶ The establishment of the colony in the late-eighteenth century had set a crucial precedent for the coming partition of Africa by Europe during the closing years of the nineteenth. Before the end of the eighteenth century, as Christopher Fyfe points out, "[s]trictly speaking, the only European colony on the Western side of Africa . . . was Portuguese Angola" (Fyfe 1976, 170). This colony had, ever since the Portuguese were first permitted by local African rulers to build a fort at Elmina in 1482, set the long-term pattern for European settlement: land was leased to European traders on the condition that "they made regular payments in return" (Fyfe, 170). Native sovereignty, in short, was not surrendered.

remembering Van Gogh at Bolahun burnt out with fever. He said you had to lie up for at least a week: there wasn't any danger in malaria if you lay up long enough" (WE 53).

¹⁹⁶ **The Heart of the Matter** depends for much of its descriptive materials on Greene's wartime experience of the colony, where he served as a British Intelligence operative between 1941-43. See Sherry (1994), pp. 82-155, and R. Greene, ed. (2007), pp. 111-24.

The planting of the Sierra Leone colony, however, dramatically altered the terrain of these Euro-African relations. When, in August 1788, the Temne rulers with whom the terms of the new settlement were agreed put their marks to a document they could not read, they “inadvertently renounced sovereignty over land and admitted into West Africa a completely new principle which transferred sovereign rights to aliens” (Fyfe, 175). If in “Heart of Darkness” and **Journey Without Maps** Conrad and Greene frame “Africa” as an unreadable text, here that problem of illegibility had real, and lasting, political consequences. In the opening pages of **The Heart of the Matter**, Major Scobie, through whom the narrative is focalized, looks to “the old cotton tree, where the earliest settlers had gathered their first day on the unfriendly shore” (HM 5).¹⁹⁷ At one level this reference to “unfriendly” conditions gestures to the changing shape of Euro-African relations during the period of early settlement, a period which saw repeated, but ultimately unsuccessful, attempts by the Temne to oust the new settlers and regain lost land (Fyfe, 179). At another level, Scobie’s perception of these West African shores as “unfriendly” crystallizes a broader European view of Africa which grew out from

¹⁹⁷ Several sources and real-life models have been suggested for the main character in **The Heart of the Matter** (including Greene himself). Norman Sherry notes that there was “a railway station in Sierra Leone called ‘Scobie’” during Greene’s time in the colony (Sherry 1994, 118). Jeffrey Meyers, meanwhile, suggests that this name choice, rather than being informed by the memory of the physical environment in which Greene lived and worked during the early years of the war, is instead characteristic of the sort of wordplay by which Greene regularly conjured names for his fictional characters: “Scobie lives in a[n African] swamp and his name suggests scabby and scorbutic” (Meyers 1973, 106).

this early phase of settlement, where mortality, rather than any “native” forms of resistance, came to be seen as the chief threat to European efforts to gain, and later consolidate, a “foothold on the very edge of a strange continent” (HM 33).

In his autobiography **Ways of Escape** (1980), Greene recalls that the novel had an equally “unfriendly” critical response:

My critics have complained, perhaps with justice, that ‘I laid it on too thick,’ but the material **was** thick. The real fault . . . lay in the rustiness of my long inaction [having not written anything substantial since **The Ministry of Fear** in 1943]. . . . Like the man suffering from ju-ju I had to go back to my proper region to be cured. (WE 118; emphasis in original)

Greene associates illness with the problems of textual composition, namely those encountered when putting together **The Heart of the Matter**. Greene’s association carries with it an added resonance in the context of **The Heart of the Matter**, insofar as illness – specifically the idea and lived effects of tropical illness which give shape to contemporary racial and geographical debates concerning the ability of Europeans to survive, never mind govern, some of the further reaches of empire – is one of the key themes explored in the novel.

George Orwell may well have been one of the “critics” to whom Greene refers in this passage. Anticipating Chinua Achebe’s now infamous criticism of

Conrad's "Heart of Darkness,"¹⁹⁸ Orwell, in a contemporary review of **The Heart of the Matter**, grumbled that, though it is set in Sierra Leone, "Africans exist" in the novel "only as **an occasionally mentioned background**" (1973, 106; emphasis added).¹⁹⁹ It could be argued that what Orwell fails to notice is that, in displacing this African presence to the narrative margins, **The Heart of the Matter** produces a kind of narratological mimicry of the colonization process. (Similarly, when the novel does focus on Africans and what Africans think, as in the representation of a "native" discernment between the Syrian trader who "might one day go home to his own land" and "the English [who] stayed" [HM 196], it could be seen to be merely a form of narrative ventriloquism authorizing a European presence.) However, when Scobie during one of his peregrinations around the port looks to the spot "in front of the old cotton tree, where the earliest settlers had gathered

¹⁹⁸ In a 1975 lecture entitled "An image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's **Heart of Darkness**," Achebe bristles at what he sees as the reduction of Africa in Conrad's novella "to the role of props," "setting and backdrop," thus "eliminat[ing] the African as human factor" (Rpt. in Kimbrough, ed. 1988, 257). Whether Greene (who as his library reveals kept an interest in Conrad criticism [see McNeil and Denys 1993]) had Achebe's comments in mind during the composition of his 1978 novel **The Human Factor**, set partly in apartheid-era South Africa, remains intriguingly unclear.

¹⁹⁹ Orwell's review of **The Heart of the Matter** appeared under the banner "The Sanctified Sinner" in the 17 July 1948 issue of **The New Yorker**. Orwell went on to argue that "the whole thing might as well [be] happening in a London suburb" (1973, 105-6). Orwell's point is not dissimilar to one later made by Norman Sherry, concerning the biographical undertones in Greene's novel. According to Sherry, Greene "transferred his problems with his wife [Vivian Greene] and his mistress [Catherine Walston] to an African setting" (Sherry 1994, 264).

their first day on the unfriendly shore,” it is not strictly-speaking the founding of a **white** colony that is being commemorated.

The colony of Sierra Leone was conceived jointly in Europe and the United States, not as a European settlement, but as a settlement for freed African slaves (Schama 2009).²⁰⁰ Its population was thus largely made up of “re-captives” from slavers involved in the Atlantic trade, escaped slaves from the southern United States who had re-settled in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, Maroons from Jamaica, and ex-sailors who had served in British vessels during the War of American Independence – all from homelands extending from the Senegal to the Congo, and as far as East Africa and Lake Malawi (Fyfe, 175-90). The colony was therefore the combined product of a series of historical displacements of African peoples, and outside Western pressures. As Robert Hampson glosses:

²⁰⁰ Some of the patterns of exchange between Europe and Africa which had sustained slavery, however, continued to leave their impress upon the new colony after slavery’s abolition. During slavery, European traders offered in return for slaves a wide range of manufactured goods otherwise unobtainable in West Africa. In the push for abolition, moral arguments for the eradication of slavery had behind them the force of a parallel, economic argument; this was, after all, a period in which free trade principles (to which Conrad nods in “The Planter of Malata” via Willie Dunster, a Cobdenite) were steadily gaining intellectual currency. These arguments declared that it would be “better business” if Africans were treated **en masse** as customers, rather than as bodies for sale as labour overseas (Fyfe, 170-71). **The Heart of the Matter** describes the patterns embroidering the “shapeless cotton gowns” as worn by the African women in the colony – “one with a design of match-boxes: another with kerosene lamps: the third – the latest from Manchester – covered with mauve cigarette-lighters on a yellow ground” (195); in this description is a silent reference to a historical shift in patterns of trade between Europe and Africa, whereby Africans came to be viewed as a consumer base for European products, rather than as commodities to be exchanged for them.

Sierra Leone was in a sense a bi-product [sic] of the American Civil War. In 1791 the Sierra Leone Company was set up in London by supporters of the anti-slavery movement to establish [a] colony. The Company recruited settlers in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick from among communities of former slaves. In 1808, the Company was wound up and the British Government took over [the colony]. After the 1807 Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, Sierra Leone became an important base for intercepting slave ships, and the population increased through the influx of people freed from these ships. . . . [T]he people of Sierra Leone had European names and European clothes. They also developed a culture of trade and enterprise, which rapidly produced a black bourgeoisie. They sent their children to Britain to be educated and produced an intelligentsia of doctors, lawyers, churchmen and administrators. (2002, 222)

In Scobie's reverie down by "the old cotton tree," **The Heart of the Matter** casts a backward glance toward the founding of a colony which, whilst displacing the indigenous Temne, also brought together displaced Africans.²⁰¹ However, the

²⁰¹ Hampson further suggests that Henry Price, the "wandering" "Sierra Leone nigger" (TU 86) in Conrad's early short story "An Outpost of Progress" (1897), is the product of, and represents, a second phase of displacement. That is to say that Sierra Leone, as well as being made up of non-indigenous Africans, had

novel's study of the effects of racial displacement are, as Orwell's criticism suggests, restricted to the colony's much smaller white European community.²⁰²

The effects of tropical Africa upon this white community are put into broader historical context by Philip Curtin. Curtin, with ironic understatement, observes that Europeans had long recognized that West Africa “was not a healthy place” (1998, 3). But it was only with the beginnings of large-scale settlement that this recognition was given sharper, statistical focus: “Public records from the period show that, in the first year of the settlement of Sierra Leone, forty-six percent of . . . white settlers died. When the Sierra Leone Company took over the settlement in 1792-93, forty-nine percent [of white settlers] died in the first year” (3-4). Malaria proved one of the main killers. The anti-malarial drug quinine – a compound isolated from the bark and root of the Andean cinchona tree in 1820,

by the second half of the nineteenth century seen many of its inhabitants, involved in various forms of enterprise, “scattered over” Africa again (Fyfe, 190).

²⁰² Orwell's review gestures to the physical organization of space described by Frantz Fanon in **Les damnés de la terre** (1961) (**The Wretched of the Earth** [1965]). Fanon's famous view of colonial geography, of a Manichaean separation of worlds within colonial society, is outlined in this work: “The colonial world is a world cut in two. . . . This world [is] divided into compartments. . . . This world divided into compartments [is] inhabited by two different species. . . . [I]t is evident that what parcels out the world is to begin with the fact of belonging or not belonging to a given race” (1967, 29-31). Orwell's cavil is that Greene simply did not bother to represent the “Other half” of this duotone, black and white image of colonial Africa. Seen another way, however, it could be argued that **The Heart of the Matter** does not necessarily ignore a black African presence, but represents **through** this narrative absence the kind of worlds divided along racial lines later described by Fanon.

and “produced commercially in Britain from 1827 onward” (23) – was developed to help combat this threat to the growing colonial presence of Europeans in Africa. Yet as Greene suggests elsewhere, quinine was by the early 1940s – when **The Heart of the Matter** is set – increasingly in short supply. (Perhaps the same submarine-infested waters featured in Greene’s novel – traditionally seen in terms of their relationship to the novel’s wider symbolic landscape²⁰³ – were at issue here.) Consequently “atabrine,” the trade-name of the synthetic substitute for quinine which features heavily in the novel, was in great demand. In an open letter to the **Listener** from 10 April 1947, Greene sets the record – and a reader who had written to the magazine – straight: “Mr Bradshaw . . . is quite wrong in thinking that atebtrin [sic] was not in fairly general use on the Coast before 1943. By the summer of 1942 quinine was already severely rationed.”²⁰⁴ He goes on to add: “Nor can I imagine that [anybody] of sense would abandon atebtrin for quinine . . . for the sake of [his or her] complexion. After all, the white skin has a horrible albino out-of-place look in Africa whatever the shade of white” (In Hawtree, ed.,

²⁰³ Other features of this landscape include the rusty handcuffs and broken rosary which Scobie keeps in his desk drawer, emblemizing his fraught relationships with, respectively, the institutions of marriage and Catholicism (Meyers 1973, 102-3).

²⁰⁴ Christopher Hawtree contextualizes this piece of correspondence between Greene and the **Listener** thus: “In a talk, ‘Heroes are made in Childhood,’” “Greene [speaks] of his young discovery of reading, in particular, of Haggard and **King Solomon’s Mines** [and of] ‘white women yellowed by atropin’” (Hawtree, ed. 1989, 5). Hawtree appears to mistake Greene’s interest in the effects of “atropin” (or “atebtrin”) as formed during childhood, rather than by his later experience in Africa.

5).²⁰⁵ In this last sentence Greene gestures to a side-effect of the drug, which, it transpired, imparted to the skin the same yellowish hue as the tablets it was issued in. This sentence also gestures to how in **The Heart of the Matter** Greene makes the white skins of the novel's European characters the outward, visible sign that they are, in a significant sense, "out-of-place"; that, in other words, these Europeans (and more broadly-speaking Europeans in general) do not **belong** in Africa.

In perhaps one of the most important scenes in the novel, Scobie is pictured at his desk writing, for what is to be the last time, in his diary: "Scobie laid down his pen and wiped his wrist on the blotting-paper" (HM 307). The dénouement of the novel, of course, depends upon what Scobie has written: Wilson sees through Scobie's incompetently forged diary entries ("You've only to compare the colour of the ink" [316]), which, far from covering-up, instead provide evidence of Scobie's suicide. Wilson's interpretation of Scobie's diary writings is followed by a more unusual reading by Father Rank, which, in an allusion to the title of Greene's novel, notably deviates from Roman Catholic

²⁰⁵ Greene had a spell as a fire-warden in London during the Blitz before he was posted to Sierra Leone in December 1941. Greene's post during this spell was located in Gower Street, "under the School of Tropical Medicine" (WE 100). Greene's experience of disease in Africa and his subsequent knowledge of tropical medicine, then, are immediately pre-dated by this interesting coincidence of location. The London School of Tropical Medicine was founded in 1899 (a year after the founding of its sister institute the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine), partly in response to an influential 1898 report by the Malaria Committee of the Royal Society, exploring the impact of the disease in India and West Africa. See Cranefield (1991), pp. 125-33.

orthodoxy by suggesting that Scobie, despite having committed this act, is not necessarily damned: “The Church knows all the rules. But it doesn’t know what goes on in a single human heart” (320).²⁰⁶ In this scene, then, is a conflation of the novel’s borrowings from detective fiction,²⁰⁷ and a typical, for Greene, probing of the nature and limits of faith. Yet, for present purposes what Scobie has written is less important than the represented physicality of writing itself. As for other Europeans in the novel, writing for Scobie necessitates “put[ting] a piece of blotting-paper under his wrist to absorb the sweat as he wrote” (78-9). In both of these examples, writing and the skin’s exudations are mixed – or risk mixing – on the page. With this literal intermingling of skin and text, Greene underlines the novel’s attentiveness throughout to the representation of white skin.

The Heart of the Matter begins by comparing the white skin of Wilson, newly arrived from Europe, to “the lagging finger of the barometer, still pointing to Fair long after its companion has moved to Stormy” (1). Like this instrument, Wilson’s whiteness is indexical: “Sitting there, facing [Freetown’s] Bond Street,

²⁰⁶ This theme of the “Sanctified Sinner” provides the chief reason for complaint in Orwell’s review essay, as its title suggests. Scobie’s suicide and its theological implications form the subject of a letter to Evelyn Waugh, Greene’s friend and fellow convert to Catholicism, from July 1948: “A small point – I did not regard Scobie as a saint, and his offering his damnation up was intended to show how muddled a mind full of good will could become when once ‘off the rails’” (R. Greene, ed. 2007, 160). The reference to Scobie’s “sanctification” indicates that Greene may have been pricked by Orwell’s review, which appeared the same month.

²⁰⁷ For more on this topic, see Malamet (1993).

[with] his face turned to the sea . . . [h]is pallor showed how recently he had emerged from it into the port” (*Ibid.*). Another marker of Wilson’s newness is his voice: “the words vibrated with sincerity: it gave them the sound of a foreign language – the sound of English spoken in England. . . . You could tell that Wilson was fresh from home” (39). The attentiveness to Wilson’s “pallor” is one of several ways by which the novel charts his time in Africa, through the effects of this relocation on the body. Yet this focus on skin is especially important, given that in colonial contexts skin is inevitably a marker of race. The fact that the novel concentrates throughout on the gradual change in the skin-colour of other Europeans – a spectrum running from the pallor of new arrivals to the yellowed “ivory tinge” (14) produced by the prophylactic atabrine – underlines how Wilson’s relocation is, first and foremost, part of a broader **racial** relocation. Greene’s represented Africa is not, however, necessarily a place to which all Europeans become accustomed. This is reflected in Scobie’s view of the old colonial building, “the Secretariat,” which, with “its long balconies . . . had always reminded him of a hospital”: “For fifteen years he had watched the arrival of a succession of patients; periodically at the end of eighteen months certain patients were sent home, yellow and nervy, and others took their place – Colonial Secretaries, Secretaries of Agriculture, Treasurers and Directors of Public Works” (5). Scobie’s view of European colonists as “patients” places them in the same sort of medicalized, racial frame as that which, as we shall see, was drawn around white settlement in Australia.

Race was throughout the nineteenth century a subject of fierce geographical debate. Numbering among Scobie's many now-departed possessions is a "large coloured map of the port" (6). As David Livingstone points out, European geography produced, in addition to the coloured, political map of Africa referenced in "Heart of Darkness," maps which featured colour not as a tool of representation, but as a subject:

The notion that ethnic constitution was riveted to climatic circumstance implied that racial character was spatially referenced and could thus be presented in cartographic form. The . . . business of what might be called anthropometric cartography was a project . . . taken up with varying degrees of ideological gusto by anthropologists and geographers alike. (1992, 225)

Livingstone cites "Climatic Cycles and Evolution" as an example, a 1919 paper for the **Geographical Review** by the British-born Australian geographer and anthropologist Thomas Griffith Taylor, who refers to climates "as 'strenuous,' 'favourable,' 'healthful,' 'energy-promoting,'" "authenticat[ing] the whole undertaking with an impressive piece of coloured cartographic rhetoric depicting the 'zones of migration showing the evolution of the races'" (229-30). Livingstone points out that such projects obtained in Western geography right up until the late 1930s, providing a key scientific context for Greene's novel, which is set just after

this historical moment. This cartographic enterprise which Livingstone describes sought to prove what he calls “the moral economy of climate”: in other words, that the “lesser” races of man had been either **produced** by their climate, or been **placed** there by nature or God (222). This geographical distinction, however, proved double-edged. For these mappings at the same time suggested that there were, conversely, regions “unsuitable for white settlement” (227). British geography, whose establishment and growth as a discipline were in large part fed by empire, now appeared to suggest that empire was not for racial reasons a sustainable project. Yet, via a further conceptual manoeuvre, whereby this cartography of races came to be seen in terms of an underlying moral economy, a way was found around such a paradox: “[Those] who urged the possibility of acclimatization frequently presented their advice on how to survive the tropics in the moralistic language of prudence, abstemiousness, circumspection, and hygienic discipline” (241). Interestingly, Harris, the cable-censor in **The Heart of the Matter**, locates his “belie[f] in dental hygiene” in just such a discipline. As he tells Wilson: “It’s cleaning my teeth before and after every meal that’s kept me so well in this bloody climate” (63). Far from being an idiosyncratic, isolated quirk, this belief has, as Livingstone suggests, been nourished by scientific discourse. Harris’s “pale exhausted face” (*Ibid.*), on the other hand, suggests that this discursive nourishment – the “magic” by which, to adapt Scobie, white men “kept [a] foothold on the very edge of a strange continent” (33) – goes only so far.

Books, namely those shipped regularly “from England” (HM 252), provide another means by which this foothold is kept. To Scobie’s wife Louise, “home” is signified by the accumulation “of things” (22; emphasis in original), including books: “In the living-room there was a bookcase full of her books, rugs on the floor, a native mask from Nigeria, more photographs. The books had to be wiped daily to remove the damp, and she had not succeeded very well in disguising with flowery curtains the food safe which stood with each foot in a little enamel basin of water to keep the ants out” (22). Like the contents of the food safe, books are for her a source of intellectual nutrition, as a key ingredient in the fortification of a transplanted sense of “English culture” (the definition and re-definition of which being then something of an object of contemporary inquiry, as T.S. Eliot’s **Notes Towards the Definition of Culture**, published the same year as **The Heart of the Matter**, shows). In this category, “fantasy figures like Shakespeare . . . Charles Dickens, Jane Austen [and] William Blake . . . are coded as the property of something called English culture, which is defined as white and handed down by birth” (Ware 2002, 198). Conrad’s **Lord Jim** (1900) offers an interesting touchstone here. Marlow, cataloguing Jim’s belongings, notes: “three books in the tumble; two small, in dark covers, and a thick green-and-gold volume – a half-crown complete Shakespeare. ‘You read this?’ I asked. ‘Yes. Best thing to cheer up a fellow,’ he said, hastily. I was struck by this appreciation, but there was no time for Shakespearian talk” (LJ 237). Tellingly, this discussion of Shakespeare comes just before Jim’s absorption into the community of Patusan and, with it,

“native” life. If romance and adventure fiction have hitherto provided the measure of Jim’s actions, here Shakespeare – that is, the cultural idea of “Shakespeare” as much as any one Shakespeare text – provides Jim with a necessary point of cultural reference. Equally, in Greene’s novel, the imported “parcel[s]” (HM 297) containing Shakespeare and other canonical texts (which Scobie’s Syrian antagonist, Yusef, calls “the gems of English literature” [288]) are freighted with cultural meaning as well as texts.²⁰⁸ No book, as Wilson, himself a keen reader, notes, “survived the [African] climate long” (172), thus explaining the need for an inflow of new ones. That the narrative throughout underlines how these books are, through a clash of materials and climate, literally out of their element, provides reinforcement to the idea that the Britons to whom they culturally “belong” are, likewise, out of place.

If, as Vron Ware suggests, ideas of Englishness are “handed down by birth,” it is worth briefly noting the imperial context in which the canon, which makes up part of this cultural inheritance, took shape. Towards the end of **The Heart of the Matter** Scobie, concerned he can no longer trust his “boy,” Ali, visits Yusef for “help” (HM 287). It is, of course, during this pivotal encounter that

²⁰⁸ There is an interesting biographical overlap here. Greene kept a journal between early December 1941 and early January 1942 documenting the sea-voyage out to his wartime posting in Sierra Leone. This journal was later serialized as “Convoy to West Africa” in the *Mint* in 1946 (and reprinted in *In Search of a Character* [1961]). In Greene’s list of what he jocularly refers to as “Books for a desert island” – in other words “what I have brought with me for the Coast” – is a copy, similar to the one carried by Jim, of “Blackwell’s one-volume Shakespeare” (ISC 87).

Scobie agrees, almost – but not quite – by accident, to have Ali killed by Yusef: “their hands touched . . . like a pledge between conspirators” (286). What concerns us here, however, is the seemingly idle chatter which seals the bargain:

Yusef said, ‘I have always dreamed of an evening just like this with two glasses by our side and darkness and time to talk about important things, Major Scobie. God. The family. Poetry. I have great appreciation of Shakespeare. The Royal Ordnance Corps have very fine actors and they have made me appreciate the gems of English literature. I am crazy about Shakespeare. Sometimes because of Shakespeare I would like to be able to read, but I am too old to learn.’²⁰⁹ (288)

If empire placed strains upon European bodies relocated to its tropical extremities, it also necessitated, from a psychological point of view, a certain cultural shoring-up. As Terry Eagleton has argued, it is no accident that the “era of the academic establishment of English is also the era of high imperialism in England.” Empire – “the squalid, undignified scramble of too much capital chasing too few overseas territories,” in Eagleton’s derisive formula – to a considerable degree “created [an] urgent,” corresponding “need for a sense of

²⁰⁹ For an alternative reading of Greene’s use of Shakespeare in *The Heart of the Matter*, see Schafer (1991).

national mission and identity” (1983, 24). Taking up this thread of argument, Richard Hand more recently has underlined that the growth and consolidation of the English sense of literary heritage during this period was given particular coherence and shape by the figure of Shakespeare, who by then had come to be “perceived as an artistic deity” (2005, 8). Yusef’s statement brings together both of these strands, whereby “the gems” of what was then still a recently consolidated English literary tradition – with Shakespeare now clearly at the pinnacle – are made available to him, in a telling conflation of culture and empire, via a series of performances by the British military.²¹⁰

Greene’s 1952 review essay “The Explorers,” which perhaps has a claim to being to Greene studies what “Geography and Some Explorers” is to Conrad studies, is salient here. Greene uses the essay as a platform to speculate on the effect that the exploration and subsequent colonization of West Africa has had on the English cultural imagination. He begins the essay by situating this effect within a broader imaginative topography: “The imagination has its own geography which alters with the centuries”: “in Shakespeare’s youth it was India, Arabia, the East, and a little later, in the days of Raleigh, Central America and Eldorado: in the

²¹⁰ A pedagogic, coercive context also suggests itself, inasmuch that Yusef has been “made” (HM 288) to appreciate these gems as being such. As Stephen Slemon underlines: “It has often been noted . . . that one of colonialism’s most salient technologies for social containment and control is the circulation within colonial cultures of the canonical European literary text. Mediated through the colonial educational apparatus, the European literary text becomes a powerful machinery for forging what [Antonio] Gramsci called cultural domination by consent” (1989, 7).

eighteenth century, Australia and the South Seas: the nineteenth century, Africa – in particular, West Africa and the Niger” (CE 237). Greene’s phrase, “in particular,” is clearly felt. He avers that: “No other part of Africa has cast so deep a spell on Englishmen as the Coast” – “the only coast in the world dignified by a capital letter and needing no qualification” – “with the damp mists, the mangrove swamps, the malaria, the blackwater and the yellow fever” (CE 239). In an echo of Ware’s point about the cultural idea and appropriation of “Shakespeare,” Greene casts “the Coast” in culturally-exclusive terms, as having a hold on **Englishmen**. The imaginative hold that “the Coast” exerts on the minds of Englishmen, moreover, seems directly proportional to its pernicious effects on English bodies. The discourse of West Africa as “the White Man’s Grave” (CE 238) in **The Heart of the Matter** is deeply inscribed – so deep, indeed, that it even plays to Scobie’s sense of personal circumstance and entrapment, whereby rooms appear to him as being “like . . . tomb[s]” (HM 105). This view of a sepulchral Africa, moreover, is concretized in the English imaginary – the same imaginary to which “The Explorers” gestures – by books of the same “late Victorian” (143) vintage that Scobie finds up in the Freetown Mission library.²¹¹ Greene’s novel, in thematizing

²¹¹ For more on this image of Africa and its consolidation, see Killam (1968).

the deleterious effects of the colonizing process upon Europeans, like these books both draws upon and extends this particular, European image of Africa.²¹²

One critic, in a perhaps deliberate echo of Orwell's earlier complaint, has argued that "the atmosphere of [Greene's] novels," whether set "in England, Mexico, Sweden, Indo-China or Africa, is always the same," with "Greene . . . limit[ing] himself to exploiting the generic qualities of the various settings to produce his characteristic mood and effects, rather than approaching the setting on its own terms and utilizing its specific and individual qualities" (Meyers 1973, 98). Instead, it is argued that Greene's represented "Africa" is merely a stage on which to dramatize his "private, romantic idea of religion":

Greene enlarges Scobie's capacity for damnation by confining him to an African hell where the sordid nature of the colonial setting incites his corruption. . . . The dispirited, fever-soaked

²¹² Andrea White's *Joseph Conrad and the Adventure Tradition* contains a brief analysis of Greene's own consumption of late-Victorian adventure fiction. "In remembering the impact on him of his early reading [in the 1947 essay 'The Lost Childhood'] . . . Greene recalls that the book 'above all other books at that time in my life' was [Rider Haggard's] *King Solomon's Mines*." "But," White insists, "Greene was a reader, rather than a consumer": "for many [nineteenth- and early-twentieth century] readers . . . the books were as palpable and convincingly real as actual experience itself, and in some cases more so. Many of those who were persuaded to devour the fiction whole went into the military or government. Green [sic] was exceptional in doing neither; instead, he became a writer" (1993, 60-61). This statement overlooks the fact that Greene wrote "The Lost Childhood" having – as he indeed reflects in this essay (CE 15) – recently served in the colonies.

Vichy in French West Africa are likened to the rebellious fallen angels on the Heights of Abraham, the English colonists compared to the damned in the Cities of the Plain. . . . There is also the ubiquitous presence of repulsive and horrifying creatures – rats and vultures. Disfigured and starving pye-dogs wail and whine or lie swollen and supperating in the rain-soaked gutters; flying ants sear themselves against stark light bulbs; the splattered insides of crushed cockroaches decorate the walls; mosquitoes breed malaria and dive into proffered gins. . . . The misery is intensified by the tawdriness and dreariness of the standardized surroundings – green black-out curtains, ugly government furniture, hideous rotting cushions – that seem like the furnishings of hell. (102-3)

By implication, the Sierra Leone of **The Heart of the Matter** is merely an extension of “Greeneland,” the label by which critics have come to know Greene’s represented, and recognisably seedy, worlds.²¹³ Yet, by de-specifying the spatiality of colonialism represented in the novel and stressing its supposedly generic, even transtextual character – thereby **making** the novel’s represented setting as

²¹³ The term, which has since become an entry in **The Oxford English Dictionary**, is thought to derive from an overheard song in Greene’s 1936 novel **A Gun For Sale**. For more on the term’s genesis and evolution, and Greene’s response to it, see Hoggart (1973), Spurling (1983), pp. 60-61, and Watts (2006), p. 13.

“standardized” as the colonial furnishings featured in it rather than merely reflecting the fact – such readings, like Orwell’s earlier review, miss the point; that **The Heart of the Matter**, like Conrad’s 1913 short tale “The Planter of Malata,” is on the contrary very much about the geographic specifics, keyed as it is to an idea and experience of colonialism centred on the problem of place.

II.

Chapter six of “The Planter of Malata” opens with a striking remembrance by the chief protagonist Renouard: “While being pulled on shore” for dinner with the Moorsoms, “he remembered suddenly the wild beauty of a waterfall seen when hardly more than a boy, years ago, in Menado” (**WTT** 43-44). This remembrance impels, and frames, a further remembrance, concerning one of Menado’s myths: “There was a legend of a governor-general of the Dutch East Indies, on official tour, committing suicide on that spot by leaping into the chasm. It was supposed that a painful disease had made him weary of life” (**Ibid.**).²¹⁴ Renouard’s memory

²¹⁴ Conrad borrows for this scene, as elsewhere in his fiction, from **The Malay Archipelago: the Land of the Orang-utan, and the Bird of Paradise: A Narrative of Travel, with Sketches of man and Nature**, by the English naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace. According to Conrad’s close friend Richard Curle, Wallace’s book – an account of his journeys of scientific exploration in Borneo and other islands of the Dutch East Indies between 1854 and 1862 – was Conrad’s “favourite bedside book” (Curle 1934, 431). In Chapter XVII of Volume One, Wallace recounts visiting a “celebrated waterfall” in Tondámo, near Menado, in the northern Celebes (present-day Sulawesi): “It was here that, four years before my visit the Governor General of the Netherlands Indies committed suicide by leaping into the torrent. This at least is the general opinion, as he

of the Menado legend is, of course, only striking in retrospect, giving, on a second reading of the story, a proleptic clue to his own suicide by drowning. Yet the focus here is not on this remembered suicide, or indeed Renouard's own, but the "painful disease" supposedly at its root. For Renouard's remembrance also introduces the theme of tropical disease, and the susceptibility of Europeans to it, as a key contextual element in the story.

The setting for Conrad's story, Australasia, features prominently in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century debates on race, as a space whose geography and climate seemed inherently resistant to European settlement. This perceived recalcitrance posed an obvious question as to the legitimacy of an imperial presence in Australia, suggesting that Europeans perhaps did not after all "belong" there. How Europe sought to cultivate the Australian continent as fit for foreign, white bodies was not just a problem for colonial geography and medicine, but a question that, as both an exile himself (one, indeed, who very nearly settled in Australia) and a keen anatomist, following his experience in the Congo, of European colonialism, inevitably interested Conrad. For some critics "The Planter of Malata" furnishes further evidence of Conrad's decline after the acclaimed earlier work, as an example of what Conrad himself elsewhere described as "secondhand Conradese" (To Edward Garnett, 14 August 1896. *CL*1, 302) – a piece of genre-specific magazine writing driven less by artistic impulse or

suffered from a painful disease which was supposed to have made him weary of his life" (1869, 252). For more on the interfaces between Conrad and Wallace, see Hampson (2005).

aspirations for critical recognition than by financial necessity. Cast aside by critics unable, then as now, to reach any sort of consensus as to its relative “worth,” “The Planter of Malata” deserves re-appraisal as an historically-nuanced reflection of the British experience of colonialism in Australia, and the discursive framing of that encounter as being, at a fundamental level, a clash between race and place.

In the Author’s Note to **Within the Tides** (1915), where “The Planter of Malata” is collected, Conrad flags up some formal concerns with space – namely that, having devoted almost all of the Note to discussing “The Planter,” he has “left . . . no space to talk about the other three stories” (“The Partner,” “The Inn of the Two Witches” and “Because of the Dollars”) included in the collection (ix). That Conrad comments at such length on “The Planter of Malata” speaks of the lingering concerns he had with the story, concerns which appear in his correspondence with close friends Edward Garnett and John Galsworthy (whose “valued” private criticisms are acknowledged in the Author’s Note), and which seemingly were given good cause by the critical “objections” it accreted soon after publication (vii).²¹⁵ Conrad wrote this Note in 1920 as part of the planned collected editions of his works by Doubleday, Page (in the United States) and Heinemann (in Britain), some five years after **Within the Tides** first appeared, time

²¹⁵ For Conrad’s correspondence on this subject, see CL5, 451, 455. Conrad apparently had four particular reviews in mind, parts of which are quoted almost verbatim in the Author’s Note. See **Daily Telegraph** (3 March 1915), p. 4; **Manchester Guardian** (4 March 1915), p. 5; **The Standard** (5 March 1915), p. 3; **The Saturday Review** (20 March 1915), pp. 311-12.

in which these critical broadsides clearly had had chance to percolate rather than fade given the apparent lengths to which he goes to address them in the Note. That Conrad in so doing playfully underlines the issue of space is apt, since it echoes the conceptual concerns with space in the story in question. This spatial aspect of the story relates to one of the questions underlying, and to an extent undermining, British colonization in Australia, namely the ability of Britons to adapt to it **as a place**. Perhaps this aspect of the story was appreciated by the editors of the bellicosely imperialist **Empire Magazine**, where “The Planter of Malata” was serialized in September 1914, alongside essays on the topic of Australia and “Imperial Migration” by G.A. Williamson and H.S. Gullett.²¹⁶ Part of the magazine’s stated “Policy” was, after all, to address “big Current Questions.”²¹⁷

Elsewhere in the Author’s Note, Conrad avers that: “The nature of the knowledge, suggestions or hints used in my imaginative work has depended directly on **the conditions of my active life**” (v; emphasis added). By “active life,” Conrad is of course referring to his previous career as a mariner, during which, between October 1878 and July 1893, he made several visits to (and, as some

²¹⁶ Gullett’s handbook on Australian rural life, **The Opportunity in Australia**, designed to promote British emigration to Australia, appeared the same year.

²¹⁷ “Our Policy.” **The Empire Magazine** 9.7 (September 1914), i.

letters suggest,²¹⁸ nearly settled in) Australia.²¹⁹ More important, Conrad's reference to the "conditions" of this active life takes on a meteorological bent in light of a letter sent, during what was to be the last of these visits, from Port Adelaide to his friend and early mentor Marguerite Poradowska,²²⁰ on 3 February 1893:

Your letter has a cheerful tone. Mine would also but for my health, which is not magnificent. I was severely indisposed for a fortnight before our arrival here. Reminder of Africa. So I am now going to take a week's leave . . . which I shall spend in the

²¹⁸ For example, in a letter of 20 December 1893 to Marguerite Poradowska, Conrad mentions having taken "steps – or having them taken for me – to get a position in the pearl fisheries off the Australian coast" (CL1, 137).

²¹⁹ The first of Conrad's encounters with the continent was as an ordinary seaman in the **Duke of Sutherland**, which made the round trip from London to Sydney between 15 October 1878 and 19 October 1879. (It was while the **Duke of Sutherland** waited for cargo that Conrad enjoyed his longest stay in Sydney, from 31 January to 5 July 1879.) The second of these encounters was as third mate in the **Loch Etive**, taking the same route between 21 August 1880 and 24 April 1881. Conrad returned to Sydney a third time in January 1888, this time from Bangkok, via Singapore, as captain of the **Otago**. Having resigned his command on 26 March 1889, Conrad went back to London via steamer, this time as a passenger, in June 1889. Two more round trips to Australia were made as chief mate in the **Torrens**, this time from London to Adelaide between 20 November 1891 and 2 September 1892, and between 25 October 1892 and 27 July 1893. See Allen (1967).

²²⁰ For more on Conrad's relationship with Poradowska, see Arnold (2009).

vicinity of Adelaide, where the higher ground enjoys a much cooler climate than the coast. (CL1, 125)

The Australian climate, as this letter suggests, made a keen impression on Conrad at the time. As the climatic references in “The Planter of Malata” show, this impression – one of many “hints and suggestions” for the story “received . . . in distant parts of the globe,” as Conrad puts it in the Author’s Note (WTT vii) – was also a lasting one. Specifically, what Conrad is “reminded” of is a period of serious illness following on from his stint in the Congo as captain of the **Roi des Belges** between 1890 and 1891 – an experience given fictional shape in “Heart of Darkness” (1899) when Marlow almost takes the same, terminal “last stride” as does Kurtz (Y 151). Conrad’s letter from Australia hereby makes an interesting comparison between his prior encounter with Africa and his more recent experience of Australia, hinting at the similarities between the discursive image of Africa as the “White Man’s Grave” which nourishes and is nourished by Conrad’s “Heart of Darkness,” and a corresponding discourse about colonial Australia as a sepulchral space, on which “The Planter of Malata” draws.²²¹

As with Conrad’s early short tales “The Lagoon” (1897) and “Karain: A Memory” (1897), “The Planter” is part ghost story, and, as with his later fiction, notably **Victory** (1915), part colonial romance; it is also, in part, a detective story,

²²¹ For a general account of this discourse and its construction, consolidation, and eventual overturning during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, see Anderson (2002).

the motor force being the search for the missing figure of Arthur, who, not unlike “the Great de Barral” in Conrad’s breakthrough novel **Chance** (1913), has fled a much-publicized financial disgrace in London for anonymity in Australia, where Renouard has employed him, under a pseudonym, as his assistant.²²² Arthur’s fiancée Felicia Moorsom, with her father and aunt in tow, have followed him there from Europe to attempt a reconciliation – something in which Arthur, if his willed disappearance is any measure, apparently has no interest: “the fellow,” as Renouard’s friend the Editor observes, “asked nothing better than to be forgotten.” However:

‘he didn’t find it easy to do so himself, because he would write home now and then. Not to any of his friends though. He had no near relations . . . No, the poor devil wrote now and then to an old retired butler of his late father, somewhere in the country.’

(WTT 19)

The demise of “the old butler” – who, having given “his last gasp – with a bad heart,” leaves those looking for “Master Arthur” without ““much to go by”” (20) – is therefore a key plot device.²²³ At the same time, echoing Conrad’s experience of

²²² Conrad’s draft title for the story was “The Assistant.”

²²³ A “bad heart” plays a similarly key role in Conrad’s late novella **The Shadow-Line** (1917), published two years after **Within the Tides**, in the shape of the heroic but sickly figure of Ransome. For a discussion of the

illness outside the tale, illness is introduced as an important element within it. Yet this butler died not in Australia, or some other outpost of empire, but back in Britain, “somewhere in the country.” The butler’s presence serves to point up another important narrative element: namely, the global spread of modern telecommunications by which he and “Master Arthur” corresponded, and by which the chasing Moorsoms are able to track the missing man.

The Editor explains to Renouard how “the campaign” to find this missing man, as he terms it, has been organized: “Aha! I’ll tell you how . . . We have telegraphed his description to the police of every township up and down the land. And what’s more we’ve ascertained definitely that he hasn’t been in this town for the last three months at least” (25).²²⁴ The story hereby makes reference to the then recent production of what Conrad in one of his **Last Essays**, “Travel” (1922), calls “this earth girt about with cables, with an atmosphere made restless by the waves of ether, lighted by that sun of the twentieth century,” electricity (LE 126). Australia’s first telegraph line was erected between Melbourne and Williamstown in 1853 and 1854, nine years after the system’s invention by Samuel Morse. The Overland Telegraph Line, perhaps the most ambitious of the

pathology of the heart in **The Shadow-Line** in relation to the wider aesthetic and scientific contexts of modernism, see Coroneos (2000).

²²⁴ This method of tracking the missing Arthur recalls the similar (and pioneering) use of telegraphy in the Crippen case of 1910. Conrad had apparently been asked to address the case in one his short-lived series of Saturday columns for the **Daily Mail** (Hampson, private communication, 2011).

telegraphic projects designed to link the continent, was begun in September 1870 and completed in August 1872, connecting Melbourne and Adelaide with Sydney in the south, and Darwin in the far north. Thus the Editor's apparently casual, deictic reference to "up and down" signals a recent major achievement. Moreover, it was from Darwin that Australia was connected, via an undersea cable to Java, with Britain and the rest of the world.²²⁵ By the historical moment in which the story is set, then, the vast geography of Australia had been mastered by technology.²²⁶

Less obvious perhaps is another, parallel narrative of imperial mastery, concerning the attendant conquest of disease in Australia by the medical sciences. This other narrative is alluded to by the missing Arthur's prospective father-in-law – "the fashionable philosopher of the age" – Professor Moorsom (WTT 14). To Renouard, "It [is] evident" that Moorsom, fresh from England and keen to leave Australia behind, "wished [the missing Arthur] to remain lost": "Perhaps the unprecedented heat of the season made him long for the cool spaces of the Pacific, the sweep of the ocean's free wind along the promenade decks, cumbered with long chairs, of a ship steaming towards the Californian coast." It is also

²²⁵ For an historical overview of the telegraph's development, applications and global impact, see Shiers, ed. (1977).

²²⁶ There is the suggestion that Renouard, as the "leader of two tragically successful expeditions" (WTT 48), is acquainted with the human cost of this continental mastery.

evident to an “amazed” Renouard that this “most treacherous” man wishes Arthur **more** than lost:

‘He may be dead,’ the professor murmured.

‘Why? People don’t die here sooner than in Europe. If he had gone to hide in Italy, for instance, you wouldn’t think of saying that.’ (39-40)

That the Professor makes an imaginative jump from his wish to be away from the “unprecedented heat,” to this extreme assumption as to Arthur’s whereabouts, is revealing. For, in spite of Renouard’s protestations to the contrary, Australia was once viewed as somewhere inimical to European settlement. The comparatively high rates of mortality among white European settlers had led some nineteenth-century observers, pondering the racial limits of Europeans to acclimatization in Australia, to conclude that “an isolated white [population] permanently resident there would eventually degenerate and die out” (Anderson 2002, 12-13). Renouard’s closing comparison of Australia to Italy seems to confirm that this discourse about Australia remains if not a pressing, then a recent, concern.

The scene “out on the terrace,” where Renouard and the Professor have stepped in order to have this conversation, is set thus:

The heat was great, the air was still, all the long windows of the house stood wide open. At the further end, grouped round a lady's work-table, several chairs disposed sociably suggested invisible occupants, a company of conversing shades. Renouard looked towards them with a sort of dread. A most elusive, faint sound of ghostly talk issuing from one of the rooms added to the illusion and stopped his already hesitating footsteps. (WTT 36-37)

This picture of an invisible, ghostly presence could be taken as yet another narrative hint as to the fate of the missing Arthur – such as when Renouard, having told the Moorsom party that the lost man has gone on “a short tour . . . westward” (64), openly hints, through this euphemism for death, at the truth of what has happened.²²⁷ For Renouard knows – but is withholding the knowledge – that Arthur in fact is already dead. Moreover, given that the conversation between Renouard and the Professor alludes to the pathological effects that Australian climate and geography were widely held to have had upon transplanted, European bodies, this scene is also pertinently suggestive of past concerns over rates of mortality among settlers, and how conditions in Australia once might have offered a possible explanation of how these seats came to be depopulated of their notional occupants.

²²⁷ See also Donovan (2005), p. 64.

Warwick Anderson's recent, seminal study uncovers the medical interventions through which the prevailing European image of Australia, as a space which seemed inherently unsuited to non-native, European constitutions, was overturned.²²⁸ At one level this overturning also represents something of a discursive reversal: Western medical narratives that attended the European settlement of Australia were geared to overturning an image of Australia which they themselves had, in the first place, helped create and consolidate. Thus for Anderson the very idea of Australia – namely modern “white Australia” – has strong claims to having medical, as much as political, foundations. An interesting strand of Anderson's discussion is how these foundational forces coalesced. Eschewing a conventional narrative approach to the history of medicine – where traditionally the focus is on “institution-building, [pioneering practitioners], and scientific and technical progress” – Anderson instead points up the political and social realms upon which medicine and medical discourses have had a shaping effect. Put simply, medicine can be seen as having “produced a civic subjectivity [in Australia] as surely as did literature, art, film and other cultural enterprises.” Thus, Anderson argues, “the clinic and the laboratory should be added to those sites where the nation . . . may be imagined” (2002, 1-2) – sites which surely

²²⁸ As the later chapters of Anderson's study suggest, perhaps the best example of this overturning is to be found in the promotion of Australia as a tourist destination during the early-twentieth century. Anderson's example is all the more intriguing given that the Moorsoms are ostensibly in Australia as tourists (WTT 22) (with Thomas Cook probably their tour providers, as Stephen Donovan has pointed out [2005, 84]).

include both the offices, and the pages, of the fiercely nationalist “principal newspaper” of the “great colonial city” of Sydney in which “The Planter” is, in part, set (WTT 3).²²⁹

Another key site is the fictional island named in the title of the story, where Renouard devotes himself to “experimenting with the silk plant” (WTT 7). As Laurence Davies points out in his introduction to the forthcoming Cambridge Edition of **Within the Tides**, “Malata’s location is not specified: the island is basaltic and bears a resemblance to Lord Howe, 600 kilometres east of Sydney, but the description also matches some of the western islands in the Torres Strait, through which Conrad took the **Otago** in 1888” (Davies, forthcoming).²³⁰ Whether Malata, like Sambir or Sulaco, is a fictional topography – albeit one described, as a contemporary review of Hugh Walpole’s retrospective **Joseph Conrad** put it, “in an almost insect-like abundance of vital detail” (“Mr Conrad,” **New Statesman**, 10 June 1916, 236) – or, like the Congo of “An Outpost of Progress” (1897) and “Heart of Darkness” (1899), is a thinly-veiled and, for partly political reasons, restrained,

²²⁹ Unnamed in published versions of the text, the “great colonial city” is named in the manuscript as Sydney.

The “principal newspaper” meanwhile, as Conrad’s letters indicate, is the Sydney-based **Bulletin**.

²³⁰ Cf. Meyer (1967): “The origin of Malata is a matter of speculation. There is a lake by that name in southern Australia near the coast, northeast of Coffin Bay in Eyre’s Peninsula.” “Jerry Allen [in **The Sea Years of Joseph Conrad**, 1965] states that the name is derived from TANJONG (POINT) MALATAJOER, on the south coast of Borneo, which was a landmark on one of the voyages between Singapore and Palau Laut of the **Vidar**, the steamship on which Conrad sailed in 1887-88” (78).

representation of somewhere “real,” in this context hardly matters.²³¹ The point to make is that, geographical indeterminacy – and, indeed, natural geographical borders – aside, Malata is presented as an extension of the Australian outback; hence, drawing on a range of rustic slang and cliché, the Editor, “[s]peaking as a city man himself,” “imagines the missing Arthur ‘riding boundaries, or droving cattle, or humping his swag about the back-blocks.’ A gap has opened between bush and city – and Malata is another version of the bush” (Davies, forthcoming). This stress on Malata’s “bush” designation and character is, as will be seen, thematically pertinent to the wider exploration of the then-potent issue of race in the story.

Although Malata may, along with more famous examples such as Sulaco, the banana republic of his 1904 novel *Nostromo*, solely be the product of Conrad’s geographic imagination, its presence and purpose in the story underlines the very real economic and political importance of such islands to the newly-formed Australian government, which had been quick to take over the administration of former British island protectorates after Federation in 1901 in order both to consolidate and extend the new nation’s influence in the Western Pacific. The “silk plant” on which Renouard is working there is key to this consolidation. Recent scholarship has argued that this refers not to mulberry, the source of natural silk, but to “white ramie” (*Boehmeria nivea*). Also known as “China grass,” it

²³¹ For more on the composite construction of Conrad’s represented topographies, see Hampson (2005).

is native to Assam, China, Japan and the Malay Archipelago, the scene of many of Conrad's personal and fictional adventures. If the Australian climate seemed inimical to the planting of white colonies, that same climate was, because similar to these native habitats, ideally suited to growing white ramie. "[T]ranshipped to Liverpool for experimental manufacture," this product appears to have "Eminent capitalists" in Britain "very much interested" (WTT 16). Renouard's experiments, in other words, connect with contemporary economic botany and renewed attempts to discover an industrially viable artificial silk.²³² The market for silk had been significantly expanded, first, by the late-nineteenth-century cult of extended mourning set by Queen Victoria; and second, in the early-twentieth century, by its use in a range of things, from stockings to wallpaper, aircraft, and even experimental knee surgery (Lane 2007, 281). (No doubt this last usage would have interested Conrad, whose wife Jessie underwent several operations, and very nearly an amputation, because of a chronic knee complaint.)²³³ As such, Renouard is involved in the search for a means to produce a material with which, among other things, to clothe European bodies (the dyad of "big F's," "Fashion and

²³² For more on Conrad's engagement with colonial and economic botany, an engagement that dates back to early novels such as *Almayer's Folly* (1895) and *Lord Jim* (1900), see Francis (2009).

²³³ Jessie Conrad's operations were performed by Sir Robert Jones, who, as the pre-eminent bone and joint specialist of the period, might well have performed, and at the very least would have known about, such an experimental procedure. For an exhaustive bibliography of his surgical writings, see *The Journal of Joint and Bone Surgery* 39B (1957): 212-17.

Finance,” referred to by the Editor [WTT 17]) and, in extreme cases, to help reconstruct them. In this way, the subject of the European body in Conrad’s story is never far from the narrative surface.

In an echo of what is produced through the fruits of Renouard’s labours (or at least those of his indentured workforce), Conrad’s story is attentive to the ways in which the body is always already “clothed” by the cultural meanings with which it is inscribed. “The Planter of Malata” first appeared in collected form in 1915. As is shown by a leading article from the 29 May 1915 issue of the **British Medical Journal**, it is around this time that “the healing powers of sunlight” begin to be celebrated,²³⁴ a celebration which discreetly signals an attendant adjustment to some of the prevailing Western perceptions about race. Conrad’s story is attuned to how a new culture of tanning had arisen, constituting the skin, in a not dissimilar way to the colonial discourses of race, as “a site of value and power” (Ahmed 1994, 40). As Sara Ahmed suggests, tanned colour had by this point come to be seen less as the visible, somatic sign that white Europeans had, through their imperial endeavours, been somehow racially “compromised,” than as having “a relation to the marking of status and health” (Ahmed, 41). This double-marking of bodily health and societal status would have given discursive shape to the type of long-haul tourism, then available only to the elite classes, on

²³⁴ “The Healing Powers of Sunlight.” **British Medical Journal** 1.2839 (29 May 1915), 936. For respondents, see J. Lynn Thomas, “Correspondence.” **British Medical Journal** 1.2841 (12 June 1915), 1026; and G.H. Hickling, “Correspondence.” **British Medical Journal** 1.2842 (19 June 1915), 1067.

which the Moorsoms are ostensibly embarked: “It was given out at home as a trip round the world of the usual kind” (WTT 22). Renouard’s “energetic sun-tanned features,” meanwhile, befit his current occupation on Malata, and his past occupation as an adventurer and explorer. Though these features signify not the leisure time of tourism but the working body, they likewise unambiguously typify the healthy body. This unambiguosness suggests that the medical discourses that Anderson argues helped to overturn Australia’s image as inhospitable to white bodies – and thereby white settlement – are by now, like the broader community of transplanted Europeans Renouard represents,²³⁵ firmly in place.

This emplacement came about despite a perceived fundamental, and for some insurmountable, geographic difference between the continental north and south. In a 1916 review (roughly contemporary with the publication of “The Planter”) of Elsie Masson’s **An Untamed Territory: The Northern Territory of Australia**, the effects of this difference on Australia’s colonization are succinctly put: “Although the Northern Territory was the first discovered, it is the last colonised part of Australia” (“An Untamed Territory,” 577). The perceived reasons behind this belatedness are to be found in medical narratives from the period which, since the beginning of the great “Australian experiment in human transplantation,” as one commentator called it, had always been geographically-sensitive (Cited in

²³⁵ Renouard is himself the creolized product of several sets of colonial displacements, having been born in Canada to, we might presume (as do the Moorsoms), French parents, lived and worked in London, and immigrated to Australia.

Anderson 2002, 86). As these narratives reveal, some medical commentators initially found the country unsettling in a quite literal sense, in as much that the climate and the landscape itself “seemed to contest the European presence” (Anderson, 32). As David Livingstone argues, the idea that “climatic regions on both local and global scales implied an ethnic . . . topography . . . weaves its way throughout the corpus of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century geographical writings” (Livingstone 1992, 221-22). The Scottish physician, colonial administrator and ethnographer John Crawford, for example, in a lecture of 19 November 1861 entitled “On the Connexion between Climate and Racial Constitution,” concluded that Australia’s “inauspicious climates” were fit only for what they had “produced,” namely, “the feeblest . . . hordes of black, ill-formed, unseemly, naked savages” (Cited in *Ibid.*).²³⁶ By the end of the nineteenth century, however, with advances in medical understandings of disease, this unsettlement was no longer seen as having an expressly geographical cause: “the physical environment, including climate, was largely exonerated in the latest medical texts as a cause of disease and degeneration” (Anderson, 68). Yet the geographical flavour of these early debates was not entirely dispensed with. Whereas the south-eastern parts of the continent had, by the second part of the nineteenth century, become gradually “domesticated,” the intemperate northern tropics continued to be seen as presenting a challenge to settlement by Europeans. Significantly, whilst

²³⁶ See also Crawford (1863). For an interesting reading of Conrad’s *Victory* (1915) utilizing Crawford’s 1856 ethnographic study, *A Descriptive Dictionary of the Indian Islands and Adjacent Countries*, see Moore (2007).

visiting his financial and political sponsor, the influential “old Dunster,” Renouard receives instructions “that his next public task would be a careful survey” of these “Northern Districts” in order “to discover tracts suitable for the cultivation of the silk plant” (WTT 32-33). In hinting at the availability of spaces ripe for exploration and “survey,” this scene alludes to a “history of failed and forsaken settlements in the north” (Anderson, 76).

“Old Dunster” is named “Deacon” in early drafts of Conrad’s story. On 2 January 1914 Conrad wrote to his agent J.B. Pinker, then in possession of the second typescript, to request “that the name Deacon throughout the story . . . be replaced by the name Dunster,” adding, “There’s a good reason for this” (CL3, 329). This reason is not further glossed in Conrad’s letters; however, the alteration was almost certainly motivated by the character’s strong similarity to another “eminent colonial statesman” (WTT, 3) (as Dunster is labelled elsewhere), former Australian Prime Minister Alfred Deakin, who, in much the same way as the narrator claims of the fictional Dunster, had been well received on visits to Britain. (That Dunster is, like Deakin, a committed vegetarian adds biographical flesh to this overlap.) Deakin had helped lead the push for Federation, Australia’s transition from a set of British colonial “parts” into an individuated national “whole,” achieved in January 1901. Deakin as part of this push had been a vocal proponent of the idea of a “White Australia,” an idea which lent the new nation a coherent sense of racial identity while also affirming continuity with Britain. In the way of this idea stood the tropical north, a region thought fit only for the so-called

“darker races,” which then largely comprised the native aboriginal population and imported, indentured “Kanakan” labour.²³⁷ Kanakas, of course, notably make up Renouard’s plantation workforce on Malata. The outside sourcing of labour was necessitated by the widely-held belief that whites in the northern tropics could not work the land themselves. The political essayist R.W. Dale, for example, cautioned that: “If tropical Australia is ever to be thickly populated it will not be by men belonging to the great race which has erected Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, for they cannot endure severe and continuous labour in a tropical climate.” Rather, “Englishmen, Scotchmen, Irishmen may find the capital, and may direct the labour; but the labourers themselves, who must form the great majority of the population, will be coloured people” (Cited in Anderson, 83).

In counterpoint to this prevailing racial assumption, Deakin averred that “British men **could thrive**” in the “torrid” northern territories (Anderson, 84; emphasis added). This led to a gradual sea-change, not of medical, but of political opinion: “From the 1880s onwards many more commentators were prepared to assert the naturalisation of whites in the [northern] tropics, regardless of medical and geographical theories.” In 1885 one such commentator, visiting the Gulf of Carpentaria in the continental far north, “had met with ‘the bronzed pioneer squatter’,” noting “his easy self-reliant style” (Cited in Anderson, 87). As well as

²³⁷ From the Polynesian for “men,” the word denoted any native of the South Sea islands. Kanakas provided a source of indentured labour to British colonies other than Australia, including Fiji and British Columbia. The appellation, as it was used by Europeans in these contexts, had a definite pejorative aspect.

providing tentative “proof” of the ability of whites to acclimatize to conditions in the tropical north, this pioneer figure assumed an almost mythical primacy in, and reflected the increasingly racial aspect of, the political framing of the emergent nation. The dual-emphasis in **Within the Tides** on Renouard’s “energetic sun-tanned features” and his “solitary manner of life away” on Malata (WTT 26, 4) – typifying the “bronzed,” “self-reliant” character at the crux of this new national mythos – seems, in this context, especially pertinent. Put simply, the narrative investment in Renouard as a pioneer figure gestures to a political investment outside the narrative, where the identification of such a figure becomes integral to an increasingly widespread aspiration to help keep the continent for a white race.

These combined national and racial aspirations are most signally manifest when, shortly after Federation in 1901, the new Australian parliament passed the Pacific Islanders Act. This, together with the Immigration Restriction Act (passed the same year), formed the legislative core of, and supplied a potent illustration of the institutional power organized behind, the “White Australia” policy.²³⁸ In one of a series of anonymous articles for the London **Morning Post** from 12 November 1901, Alfred Deakin – the “old Dunster” of Conrad’s tale – outlined the new border restrictions: “The yellow, the brown, and the copper-coloured are to be

²³⁸ Passed in 1901, the Pacific Islanders Act had a long gestation; it had also been played out on a local level first. Samuel Griffith, the liberal premier of Queensland had introduced a similar act in 1885, signalling an end to the labour trade; but this was repealed in 1889. For more on this, see Anderson (2002), esp. pp. 87-95. On the policy’s class dimensions, see Hobsbawm (2005), p. 72.

forbidden to land anywhere.” At the hub of the Pacific Islanders Act was the stipulation that no more indentured labourers would be brought into the northern tropics after 1904; those already in the country and these northern territories, meanwhile, would be deported at the end of their contracts, “[b]y which time it is probable that an appreciable reduction will have been made in the number of Asiatics among us.” This prediction was based on another: namely, that if “the successful among them invariably return[ed] to their native lands,” it followed that “a stoppage of reinforcements” would lead to “the extinction in one generation of this alien element in our midst.”²³⁹ With this legislative **cordón sanitaire** in effect Deakin confidently prophesied that Australia, having been “a Dark Continent in every sense of the term . . . [l]ittle more than a hundred years ago,” would “[i]n another century be a White Continent with not a black or even dark skin among its inhabitants” (1901).²⁴⁰

²³⁹ This politically-enforced removal of the “alien” Other might usefully be compared with the contemporaneous “salvage ethnography” of Daisy Bates and her work with Australian aborigines. See, for example, Bates (1938).

²⁴⁰ That Deakin was the author of these anonymous articles for the **Post** was an open secret; the paper’s telegraphed proposal to Deakin for a run of weekly articles on Australian subjects, dated 28 November 1900, can be viewed online at: www.nla.gov.au/nla.ms-ms1540-7-8. As a regular reader of a wide variety of English newspapers (Tutein 1990, xii), including the **Morning Post** (as scattered references in his letters indicate), Conrad may well have come across these articles by Deakin. See **CL3**, p. 161; **CL4**, pp. 174, 486; **CL6**, pp. 457, 459-60; **CL7**, p. 118; and **CL9**, p. 227.

Following his father's exhortation to Renouard to make "a careful survey" of "the Northern Districts," Willie Dunster ventures his own opinion: that Renouard's experiments with the silk plant "may yet change the history of our country. For economic conditions do shape the history of nations" (WTT 33). In so doing, Willie underlines the importance of the north, economically-speaking, to Australia's self-imagining as a new nation. During the 1890s, the Queensland government had restructured the sugar industry in response to both the rising cost of imported Islander labour and the collapse of the international market for sugar, which hitherto had been the chief plantation crop farmed in northern Australia.²⁴¹ Pacific Islanders were now seen as competition to white farmers and their families looking to cut their own cane. As such, the racial feeling that nourished the political vision of a "White Australia" can be seen as having grown out, in the north of Australia at least, from economic roots. The cultivation of the northern tropics to which Willie refers, then, is intimately connected to a broader, less literal type of cultivation: namely, the production of a new, and above all **white**, national identity. The expulsion of the very peoples to whom the role of cultivating the tropical north had, prior to Federation, been delegated, seemed an obvious first step in consolidating that identity.

There is an interesting parallel to be drawn between these political acts and Renouard's last act on Malata before his suicide. The Moorsoms, having

²⁴¹ This market is alluded to in "The Brute" (1906), Conrad's only other Australian-set tale, when the father of the doomed Maggie Colchester is identified as being "in the sugar-broking business" (ASS 103).

learned of Arthur's death, leave "the soil of Malata" to return to Europe and Renouard to withdraw to his bungalow: "Nobody disturbed Renouard in that room where he had shut himself in . . . till late in the afternoon when the half-caste [Luiz] was heard on the other side of the door":

He wanted the master to know that the trader **Janet** was just entering the cove.

Renouard's strong voice on his side of the door gave him most unexpected instructions. He was to pay off the boys with the cash in the office and arrange with the captain of the **Janet** to take every worker away from Malata, returning them to their respective homes. An order on the Dunster firm would be given to him in payment.

And again the silence of the bungalow remained unbroken till, next morning, the half-caste came to report that everything was done. The plantation boys were embarking now.

Through a crack in the door a hand thrust at him a piece of paper, and the door slammed to so sharply that Luiz stepped back. Then approaching cringingly the keyhole, in a propitiatory tone he asked:

'Do I go too, master?'

'Yes. You too. Everybody.' (WTT 83)

As letters written during his first visits to Sydney suggest, Conrad had himself become interested in the “White Australia” policy.²⁴² Indeed, debates about a “White Australia” had featured prominently in the pages of the **Bulletin**, the same Sydney weekly on which “the principal newspaper” (**WTT** 3) in “The Planter of Malata” was, as evidence suggests, based, and which Conrad evidently had read during his stays in Sydney.²⁴³ Matthew Rubery argues that for Conrad the foreign press “offered compensatory insight into societies grasped only intermittently through experience,” furnishing an outsider like himself with “a degree of cultural literacy difficult to acquire through the limited contact during stays in port” (2004, 754). Conrad was probably aware from this reading, then, that the represented tidying-up of Renouard’s personal affairs offered a staging, in miniature, of wider national policy.

Yet Renouard’s suicide after his dismissal of Malata’s Kanaka workforce is, rather than the act which precedes it, what, then as now, tends to stimulate critical discussion. The influential critic W.L. Courtney, whose earlier notices of **The Nigger of the “Narcissus”** (1897) had extolled Conrad’s “unflinching realism,”

²⁴² For more on the growth of this political interest, see Stape (2007), p. 38.

²⁴³ Founded in 1880, the **Bulletin** was the most influential weekly in Australia. That Conrad had read the newspaper is acknowledged in an open reply to its literary forum the **Red Page**, printed in the March 1916 issue: “It is always a pleasure to hear from Sydney, the town of my youthful affection – not to mention THE BULLETIN, where the Torch of Letters has been kept burning at the Antipodes for so many years” (**CL**5, 554-55). On the debates in the **Bulletin** over the “White Australia” policy, see Anderson (2002), pp. 89-90.

found the same a limitation in the “The Planter of Malata” (Cited in Sherry, ed. 1973, 85-88). In a review for the 3 March 1915 issue of the **Daily Telegraph**, Courtney denounced the story as “an example of false realism – a realism . . . so afraid of a happy ending that it obstinately assumes a face of gloom and betrays reality through a perverse desire to make our flesh creep.” The Author’s Note to **Within the Tides** carries Conrad’s droll, characteristically finely-wrought, reply: “Where (and of what sort) there are to be found in ‘The Planter of Malata’ any germs of happiness that could have fructified at the end I am at a loss to see” (WTT vii). Conrad might well have added that his fictions frequently close not with the “happy ending” craved by Courtney but with the death, and often the suicide, of a principal player, including that of Kayerts in “An Outpost of Progress” (1898), Jim in **Lord Jim** (1900), Whalley in “The End of the Tether” (1902), Winnie Verloc in **The Secret Agent** (1907), and Axel Heyst in **Victory** (1915). Whether the apparent frequency with which Conrad’s chief characters take their own lives relates in any way to Conrad’s own, fabled attempt to do the same as a young man in Marseilles in early 1878, or indeed whether Renouard’s suicide after Felicia Moorsom spurns him has any basis in Conrad’s failed courtship of Eugénie Renouf during his stint as skipper of the **Otago** off Australia between January 1888 and March 1889, is beyond the bounds of the present discussion. Speculation aside, how Renouard takes his own life, by “calmly . . . swim[ming] beyond the confines of life – with a steady stroke – his eyes fixed on a star!” (WTT 85), has strong echoes of other contemporary fiction of the period, notably the ending of

Kate Chopin's **The Awakening** (1899) and, more particularly, that of H.G. Wells's **The Sea Lady** (1901), which, as Conrad's one-time friend and collaborator Ford Madox Ford (whose own fantasy novel **Mr Apollo** [1908] also leaves its imprint on the pages of Conrad's story) later commented, "made up at that date" one of the few pieces of "English writing that, acting as it were as a junta, we absolutely admired" (1923, 43).²⁴⁴

Parts of "The Planter of Malata" also bear striking similarity to another island-set colonial romance that ends with the suicide of its chief protagonist, Conrad's own novel **Victory** (1915), which he had put to one side to write "The Planter" (along with "Because of the Dollars," the last tale in **Within the Tides**) between late October 1913 and January 1914. Conrad probably put the finishing touches to **Victory** whilst staying with Ralph and Iris Wedgwood, to whom he dedicated **Within the Tides**, thus surreptitiously signalling the overlap between the two works. That both "The Planter" and **Victory** derive from much the same imaginative vein is more explicit in the finer details: for instance, the "obscure impulse" (WTT 55) that sees Renouard, characteristically a loner, hire the ill-fated Arthur as his assistant, mirrors Heyst's involvement with the equally ill-fated

²⁴⁴ On this imprint, see Hampson (1992), pp. 180, 185. The impress of Ford's personality, as well as his fiction, can also be detected in "The Planter": the figure of the Editor was possibly based on him. In an open letter printed in the 23 March 1916 issue of the **Red Pag**, the literary forum of the **Bulletin**, Conrad hints that an episode in the story was based upon a real event that had taken place in the editorial room "of a still rather young review" (CL5, 555) – most likely the **English Review**, founded by Ford in December 1908. For a discussion of Ford as a possible source, see Moore (2010).

Morrison in **Victory**; or the “shopkeepers’ legend” by which Renouard, like Heyst, has been damagingly misrepresented (WTT 74). However, such comparative and intertextual readings of “The Planter of Malata,” whether viewed in terms of the subtle impress left on it by contemporaries such as Wells and Ford, or as a magazine piece in which Conrad developed elements of **Victory**, perhaps, not unlike Courtney’s review, miss the point. For such readings overlook the specific political and cultural contexts – in particular, the entwined racial and geographic debates framing Australia’s colonization and emergence as a nation – to which “The Planter” is attuned.

Conclusion

IN HIS FIRST instalment of autobiography **A Sort of Life** (1971), Greene describes the scene at William Heinemann, “one day in the winter of 1928,” following the acceptance of his “first book” **The Man Within** (1929). He recalls “expect[ing] at any moment the legendary figures of Heinemann authors” – of whom Greene was now a contemporary – “to enter the room behind me, Mr Galsworthy, Mr John Masefield, Mr Maugham, Mr George Moore, Mr Joseph Hergesheimer,” over whom he pictures presiding the “bearded ghost” of the recently-deceased Conrad, “rumbl[ing] on the rooftops with the rain” (**ASL** 191-92); Heinemann, of course, had just brought out their twenty-volume Collected Edition (the “Orlestone Edition”) of Conrad’s works, a project rounded off with the addition of the posthumous **Suspense** in 1927.²⁴⁵ This image of Conrad’s “bearded ghost” reveals much about Greene’s new feelings toward Conrad. Greene’s youthful regard for Conrad is publicized in early poetry, where he effuses that “no Browne brings me such pleasure/as my loved Barrie, Conrad, Bernard Shaw”²⁴⁶ (**Weekly Westminster**, 30 September 1922. Cited in Pendleton 1996, 1); and whispered in

²⁴⁵ The Heinemann Collected Edition was planned as a joint project with the American publishing house Doubleday, Page, who put out their “Sun-Dial” Edition in the United States. For more on the different Collected Editions put out by Heinemann and Doubleday, and the British Uniform Edition by J.M. Dent, see Knowles and Moore (2000), pp. 64-67.

²⁴⁶ Greene later adapted Shaw’s **Saint Joan** (1923) for the screen.

private letters to his future wife Vivian Dayrell-Browning, whom he claimed to “love . . . more than John Donne . . . and Joseph Conrad” (Cited in **Ibid.**). By the appearance of **The Man Within**, however, this adolescent fondness for Conrad had become tainted by growing anxieties over Conrad’s influence. Hence Greene’s subsequent suggestion that Conrad is also phantasmagorically present in the pages of this, his debut novel, which, he concedes, contain little more than the “elaborate scaffolding” of the “older writer’s blue print” (**ASL** 208). Greene’s reference to Conrad’s ghost, then, acknowledges the haunting imprint of Conrad’s literary corpus – monumentalized by the recent collected editions put out on both sides of the Atlantic by Heinemann and J.M. Dent (in Britain) and Doubleday, Page (in the United States) – on his own early fiction.

Studies of the intertextual echoes found across Conrad and Greene’s works by David Leon Higdon (who posits Conrad as Greene’s “ghostly adversary” [1979, 41]), and more recently by Cedric Watts (2006), each take their cue from Greene’s “haunting” metaphor. Robert Pendleton’s 1996 study of the imprint left by Conrad’s fiction on Greene’s work offers another metaphor for these writerly relations. Pendleton seizes upon the “Conradian epigraph” (1996, 158) to Greene’s 1978 spy novel, **The Human Factor**: “He who forms a tie is lost. The germ of corruption has already entered into his soul.” According to Pendleton, these words (from **Victory**, which Greene earlier had hailed as “one of the great English novels of the last fifty years” [**CE** 139]) not only underscore the dangers of commitment which prove the main character’s undoing (the “human

factor” of the title); more important, they also capture something of Greene’s own problematic ties with Conrad. Thus:

This ‘germ of corruption’ may stand as a metaphor for Greene and Conrad’s intertextuality as well as for their common themes of faith and betrayal. Similarly, ‘the germ of corruption’ . . . takes root in Greene’s early fiction as Conrad’s ‘disastrous influence’ produc[ing] a complex affinity between two writers engaged in similar generic and thematic endeavours. (Pendleton, 158-59)

It is apt, given this metaphor, that the novel in which Conrad’s influence is arguably most visible,²⁴⁷ **A Burnt-Out Case** – Greene’s 1961 homage to “Heart of Darkness” – should make disease and contagion central themes.

²⁴⁷ The other main candidates are his third novel **Rumour at Nightfall** (1931), with a Carlist plot and setting lifted straight from **The Arrow of Gold** (1919) (“the most dangerous of all [Conrad’s] books . . . written when he had himself fallen under the tutelage of Henry James” [ASL 151]); and his fifth novel **It’s a Battlefield** (1934), which, featuring a murky London setting, and an equally murky political situation with which an Assistant Commissioner, formerly of the colonial police, is trying to get to grips, bears more than a passing resemblance to Conrad’s **The Secret Agent** (1907). In a letter from mid-1949 to Mieczyslaw Grydzewski, editor of the Polish-language journal **Wiadamosci**, Greene claims to have been “since the age of sixteen a very great admirer of . . . **The Secret Agent**” (15 April 1949. In R. Greene, ed. 2007, 163-64). In the same letter from 1949, Greene ventures that “the reaction against” Conrad’s work “experienced in the thirties is very temporary” (*Ibid.*); this, given the then-recent appearance of F. R. Leavis’s **The Great Tradition** (1948) and the subsequent boom in Conrad studies, proved to be a perceptive comment.

This “germ of corruption” had such a detrimental effect on the early novels **The Man Within** and **Rumour at Nightfall** that Greene subsequently refrained from reading Conrad in a bid to, if not excise, then attenuate his influence.²⁴⁸ Greene makes the almost ecclesiastical insistence that this “vow” was “kept for more than a quarter of a century” (ASL 208), when in 1959 he found himself journeying up the River Congo, with a copy of “Heart of Darkness” in hand, in order to gather material for **A Bumt-Out Case** – by which time his own authorial persona, shaped over the course of some sixteen novels, arguably was comparatively secure. How this identity was secured, however, ironically shares much with one of Conrad’s own strategies of authorial self-invention. Conrad’s famous description of his early short tale “The Lagoon” (1897) as “the usual forest-stars-wind sunrise, and so on – and lots of secondhand Conradese” (To Edward Garnett, 14 August 1896, CL1, 302), marks one such strategy. As Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan explains: “At this early point in his career, when he was about to discard one identity option – the marine officer – purchased with great

²⁴⁸ Such was Greene’s dissatisfaction with **Rumour at Nightfall** that he suppressed its republication, instructing his heirs never to reprint the work (a fate which also befell his second novel, the Buchan-esque thriller **The Name of Action** [1930]). See R. Greene, ed. (2007), pp. 42, 42n. R.A. Wobbe argues that Greene’s suppression can be felt in the British first edition of **Journey Without Maps**, published by Heinemann: “The author’s advertisement on page (ii) of the preliminaries makes no mention of either **The Name of Action** or **Rumour at Nightfall**. This is the first of Greene’s books which does not carry these titles on the advertisement and an indication, perhaps, that the author’s suppression of them is more or less complete by this time” (1979, 36).

difficulties over a long period of time, for another still uncertain and difficult redefinition of himself as a writer against tremendous odds, Conrad's stylistic mannerisms were also a strategy for the containment of authorial subjectivity, a fingerprinting of the text. A self-parody, 'secondhand Conradese,' was one way of claiming a public persona for himself" (Erdinast-Vulcan 1999, 56).²⁴⁹ The recurrence in Greene's fiction of the equally familiar tropes and terrains of "Greenland" can likewise be seen to mark a fingerprinting of the text, conferring, and confirming, to adapt Erdinast-Vulcan, "the hallmark of authorial presence" (1999, 56). Indeed, so abundantly recognisable was this presence to contemporary audiences that in 1949 Walter Allen, then literary editor of the **New Statesman**, invited readers to submit parodies of Greene's fiction, the first of two such competitions.²⁵⁰ Yet to some extent this enactment of authorial individuation on Greene's part rests, ironically, on the unconscious repetition of a similar gesture by Conrad. This irony is thickened by the fact that **A Bunt-Out Case**, which with its recognisably seedy and claustrophobic socio-geographical

²⁴⁹ For another interesting discussion of Conrad's strategies of authorial presence in the early short fiction, see Davies (2009).

²⁵⁰ For Greene's responses, see Hawtree, ed. (1989), pp. 9-12. R.A. Wobbe points out that there is some evidence that Greene "entered at least five **New Statesman** "Weekend Competitions" (1979, 205).

terrains is arguably the most remarkably “Greeneian” of his works, should also be arguably his most “Conradian.”²⁵¹

Norman Sherry underscores that Greene at the time felt that **A Burnt-Out Case** “would be his last novel” (2005, 154); that he was, like the architect “who has lost his vocation” (Allen 1966, 73) at the centre of the novel, creatively-speaking a burnt-out case (a judgement seemingly confirmed by early criticisms of the novel²⁵² and by the decision of Greene’s lifelong friend Evelyn Waugh not to review an advance copy for the **Daily Mail** [Sherry 2005, 258]).²⁵³ Greene could not have been unaware that there was a neat symmetry to the fact that, having as a young writer worried about Conrad’s influence, he should “try his hand at setting a novel” – perhaps his last – “in Conrad territory” (*Ibid.*). Greene’s correspondence with Dr Michel Lechat, who operated the leprosy clinic at Yonda, the model for the leproserie featured in the novel, appears to bear this

²⁵¹ In a contemporary essay on **A Burnt-Out Case**, John K. Simon notes that “The author of **Heart of Darkness** and **Victory** is obviously a constant mental companion and nemesis” (1964, 168); yet Simon also sees Greene’s novel as belonging more to the traditions of French existentialism typified by Gide, Malraux and Camus. Jeffrey Meyers likewise detects traces of **Victory** in **A Burnt-Out Case**: “both novels concern the flight to a remote tropical retreat by a lonely man who attempts to extinguish all human emotions. Both heroes are non-believers who . . . become unwilling subjects of a legend. . . . As the outside world breaks into their isolation they meet their death and achieve their victory or cure” (1973, 109-10).

²⁵² For example, see Simon (1964) and Meyers (1973).

²⁵³ The novel was better received in the United States, however, where it was awarded the Book of the Month Choice (Sherry 2005, 545).

out. Lechat prepared for Greene “a large chart describing two dozen places throughout Africa” which he thought would ably “accommodate [Greene] and the gestation of a potential novel.” These sites included leprosaria at “Ndan in Cameroon, Mikomeseng in Spanish Guinea, Ossiomo in Nigeria,” and “Tshunbe Ste Marie in the Belgian Congo” (*Ibid.*, 155-56). As his letters suggest,²⁵⁴ Greene was inclined toward the Congo even before he received Lechat’s advice; Lechat’s remark that his own leproserie at Yonda was “located in a real ‘Heart of Darkness’” (Sherry 2005, 156) no doubt put the seal on Greene’s decision.

The consonances with “Heart of Darkness” are signalled on the very first page of *A Burnt-Out Case*, with its epigraph taken from Dante’s *Inferno*: “‘To non mori’, e non rimasi vivo.’ (I did not die, yet nothing of life remained).” As well as providing a paratextual glimpse of the titular psychological crisis which has led the main character Querry “towards what geographers might have called the centre of Africa” (BC 9), the epigraph recalls Marlow’s comparison of the African jungle to the topography of Hell drawn by Dante: “it seemed to me I had stepped into the gloomy circle of some Inferno” (Y 66).²⁵⁵ Marlow’s discourses upon African geography provide further echoes with Greene’s novel when, during one of his peregrinations around the Central Station, he foresees the eventual rejection of a European imperial presence by the African jungle: “the silent

²⁵⁴ See R. Greene, ed. (2007), esp. pp. 230-31.

²⁵⁵ On these analogies with Dante, see Evans (1956).

wilderness surrounding this cleared speck on the earth struck me as something great and invincible . . . waiting patiently for the passing away of this fantastic invasion” (Y 76). The jungle of Greene’s **A Burnt-Out Case**, meanwhile, rather than merely await this “passing away,” has seemingly become an active accomplice in the rejection and erasure of the imperial presence and its attendant infrastructure, “the deposits of a dead culture” (30): “After a few years of complete neglect the road would have disappeared completely and forever. The forest would soon convert it to a surface scrawl, like the first scratches on a wall of early man” (28). Marlow’s prophecy of a post-colonial Africa may have struck contemporary readers as somewhat fanciful, especially those of the pro-Empire serial **Maga** where “Heart of Darkness” first appeared;²⁵⁶ far less of an imaginative leap was required of readers of **A Burnt-Out Case** to connect these topographical predictions to the mention of “riots” (43) in Leopoldville which heralded the end of Belgian rule.

Whereas **A Burnt-Out Case** is set during the last days of the Belgian Congo (the novel came out in Britain not long after the formal handover of power, in January 1961), Conrad’s novella is set very much during the peak of colonial power in the then Congo Free State. Marlow’s narrative struggles in front of his audience aboard the **Nellie** echo his “experience of disorientation” at encountering “the horrors of economic exploitation” at first hand, such as when

²⁵⁶ For a discussion of the serial contexts in which “Heart of Darkness” was read and circulated, see Ruppel (1989).

he happens upon “the crowd of discarded and dying [native] workers” (GoGwilt 1995, 124) scattered, “as in some picture of a massacre or a pestilence,” around the Central Station: “He had tied a bit of white worsted round his neck. . . . Was it a badge – an ornament – a charm – a propitiatory act? Was there any idea at all connected with it? It looked startling round his black neck, this bit of white thread from beyond the seas” (Y 67). Homi Bhabha notes that Marlow’s bewilderment appears to be condensed around “the odd, inappropriate, ‘colonial’ transformation of a textile into an uncertain textual sign, possibly a fetish” (Bhabha 2006, 149). This interplay of text and textile leads Bhabha to suggest that “white thread” offers a metonym for narrative and “white writing” and a reflection on the uncertain act of narration itself, Marlow’s attempt to provide an experience seemingly resistant to narrative explanation or exegesis with a degree of narrative shape. In other words, Marlow’s re-presentation of this scene and his seizing upon the odd detail of the white thread betrays “the unconscious desire to repeat the traumatic intervention of modern colonialism within the compass of a **seaman’s yarn**” (*Ibid.*, 151; emphasis added).²⁵⁷

Meanwhile the narrative of imperialism in **A Bumt-Out Case** seems, as we have seen, to be unfolding not in the leproserie context where the main action takes place, but offstage, in centres of colonial rule such as Leopoldville. Yet, while **A Bumt-Out Case** is not obviously **about** colonialism, it gestures through the

²⁵⁷ See also GoGwilt (1995), pp. 124-25.

figure of the leper to the kinds of colonial subjectivity on which European rule was, in part, based. John K. Simon notes that leprosy – in particular the figure of the burnt-out leper, in whom the disease has run its course – plays an important emblematic role in the novel, “constituting the external counterpart to Querry’s lack of faith in his work and himself” (1964, 165), a spiritual emptiness also found in the modernist church designs for which he was famed in Europe: “[the] building of glass and steel . . . might have been taken for a concert-hall, or perhaps even for an **orangerie**, if a great cross planted like a belfry outside the door had not indicated it was a church” (BC 38). Such a reading might be seen to invite a similar charge to that levelled by Achebe at “Heart of Darkness,” inasmuch that Africa seems merely to provide the “metaphysical battlefield” (Achebe 1988, 257) if not for the “break-up,” then the salvation, of one European mind (a charge to which Greene arguably leaves himself open in a letter to Michel Lechat, his host at Yonda and the dedicatee of **A Burnt-Out Case**, where he explains that the novel’s “real subject . . . is a theological and psychological argument, which, for reasons I can’t go into for fear of destroying this still nebulous idea, **should take place against a background of an African hospital settlement**” [15 December 1958. In R. Greene, ed. 2007, 237; emphasis added]).

In many ways, of course, the novel supports such a reading. Although driven by a desire “to be in an empty place” (BC 47), Querry’s voyage to Africa has less to do with a Marlow-esque fascination with “the biggest, most blank” spot on the Victorian Atlas and the work of empire, than private, personal needs,

to which the imperial discourse of Africa referenced in “Heart of Darkness” is shaped to fit. The leproserie, a relic of **la mission civilisatrice** located, like Kurtz’s Inner Station, at the apparent limits of European penetration (“The boat goes no further” [BC 14]), presents Query with the absolute space he seeks to enact the transcendence of an unwanted social identity, an “empty space” upon which to re-draw the inner architecture of the self (the eventual failure of which is implicit in Query’s name, which as Cedric Watts suggests probably derives from the Latin “quaere,” “to question, search for or seek **in vain**” [Watts 1997, 157; emphasis added]).²⁵⁸ Equally, just as Query’s decision not to bring any clothing to Africa (BC 172) is attuned to this need to slip off an old identity – the second skin which clothing represents – so the condition of leprosy itself – the shedding of cutaneous and somatic matter – dovetails with the sloughing off of social roles which drives his journeying.

From another angle, however, the figure of the leper and the carefully circumscribed space in which he exists – a colony cut off from the world by flooded rivers and “woody spaces” seemingly less known to the Western gaze than the “craters of the moon” (BC 58) – do not merely serve to analogize Query’s lack of spiritual or emotional feeling, or to provide a space where he can enact the “very literal return to nature” which precedes a “spiritual rebirth” (Simon, 165); rather, they provide the substance of an exploration of colonialism

²⁵⁸ For a fuller allegorical reading of names and naming in **A Burnt-Out Case**, see Pisano (1991).

and colonial subjectivity which, unlike “Heart of Darkness,” perhaps, is not as self-evident on a first reading.

The presentation of this fictional version of Yonda as a quasi-island space chimes with the systematization of leprosy treatment during the high colonial era, when a policy of containment over treatment prevailed, for which islands were ideally suited as “natural” sites of quarantine. There is an intriguing overlap between this geo-medical approach to the disease and contemporary ideas about the colonial other. As Rod Edmond explains:

Within the leper settlement the truly powerless native subject could be isolated, reconstructed and incorporated into a community whose authority structure was a model of the ideal colony. This figure of the leper was doubly colonised, disfigured and disempowered by disease, and controlled through the dispensation of medical material and spiritual aid. By learning to be a leper and accepting the loss of all other identities, the patient became an ideal type of the colonial subject, marooned and dependent. (1999, 133-34)²⁵⁹

²⁵⁹ For a discussion of the representation of leprosy in *A Burnt-Out Case*, see Edmond (2006), pp. 220-44, and Edmond (2007).

Edmond's description of the marooned and dependent, model colonial subject, corresponds to Greene's representation of the mutilated figure of Deo Gratias: the disease has "burnt" itself out but he is reluctant to leave the colony. To suggest, therefore, that Deo Gratias serves only to physically mirror Querry's troubled inner state (Simon 1964, 165), overlooks how his presence is part of an engagement with the legacy of the same imperialism pictured collapsing on the narrative fringes of the novel.

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In one of his **Collected Essays**, published two years before Conrad's ghostly figuration in **A Sort of Life**, it is not Conrad's spirit, but spiritual matters, that occupies Greene. Greene concludes his 1937 review of **Conrad's Prefaces** by noting that: "Conrad was born a Catholic and ended – formally – in consecrated ground, but all he retained of Catholicism was the ironic sense of an omniscience and of the final unimportance of human life under the watching eyes" (CE 140). Greene's insight into what lies behind Conrad's "agnostic prose" (*Ibid.*) recalls Conrad's famous "knitting machine" metaphor in a letter to R.B. Cunninghame Graham:

There is a – let us say – a machine. It evolved itself (I am severely scientific) out of a chaos of scraps of iron and behold! – it knits. I

am horrified at the horrible work and stand appalled. I feel it ought to embroider – but it goes on knitting. . . . And the most withering thought is that the infamous thing has made itself; made itself without thought, without conscience, without foresight, without eyes, without heart. It is a tragic accident – and it has happened. You can't interfere with it. The last drop of bitterness is in the suspicion that you can't even smash it... (20 December, 1897. In Watts, ed. 1969, 56-57.)

Mark A. Wollaeger suggests that Conrad's metaphor, as well as offering a "technical version" of Schopenhauerian blind will worthy of Heyst Senior, above all offers a comment on secular modernity from one "deeply engaged in the indignity of God's departure" (Wollaeger 2010, 68) ("the rhetoric of an abandoned faith," as Greene puts it in his review [CE 140]). According to Wollaeger, "the machine represents . . . Conrad's anxious attempt to fill with his imagination the vacancy left by God," an **horror vacui** comparable to "Marlow's impulsive attraction as a child to 'the most blank' space on the map" (2010, 68).²⁶⁰

Conrad's image of an authorless universe – a "thing" which "has made itself" – also bears a remarkable similarity to ideas about the self-generative power of colonialism circulating at the time. As Robert Young explains: "the concept of colonial discourse implies an understanding of colonialism as 'a text without an

²⁶⁰ For a sustained engagement with Conrad's knitting machine metaphor, see Said (1966), pp. 29-41.

author': there will always be authors of individual texts, but colonial discourse as such makes up a signifying system without an author. Colonialism therefore **becomes a kind of machine**. . . . It was indeed as a machine that the colonialists themselves often envisaged the operations of colonial power. [Edward] Said cites Lord Cromer's famous essay on 'The Government of Subject Races' (1908), in which he 'envisions a seat of power in the West, and radiating out from it towards the East **a great embracing machine**, sustaining the central authority yet commanded by it'" (Young 1995, 166; emphasis added). As we have seen, Conrad's engagement with the imperial archive in "Freya of the Seven Isles" (1912) imagines a similarly centralized, all-embracing epistemic structure for producing and sustaining imperial power.

In another of his **Collected Essays**, a 1945 review article about his contemporary and fellow Catholic François Mauriac, Greene again picks up the thread of Conrad's "agnostic prose." He locates Conrad within the traditions of "the dogmatically 'pure' novel" – a "tradition founded in Flaubert and reaching its magnificent tortuous climax in England in the works of Henry James" – using a metaphor every bit as striking as Conrad's "knitting machine":

One is reminded of those puzzles in children's papers which take the form of a maze. The child is encouraged to trace with his pencil a path to the centre of the maze. But in the pure novel the reader begins at the centre and has to find his way to the gate. He

runs his pencil down avenues which must surely go to the circumference, the world outside the maze . . . but the printed channels slip and twist and slide, landing him back where he began, and he finds on close examination that the designer of the maze has in fact overprinted the only exit. (CE 92-93)

Although less a statement of philosophy than a piece of literary criticism, this passage could easily be mistaken for a proto-Barthesian comment about the death of “the Author-God” (1990, 230) or a quasi-Derridan statement about the world outside the text (1976, 163), a point which reveals much about the deceptive simplicity of Greene’s writing (when set against the “difficulty” of Conrad’s) on the whole. While it refers specifically to Greene’s misgivings about how “Flaubertian form” (CE 93) in general, and the modern novel in particular, are characterized by an “exclusion of the author” (93), this spatial metaphor, like Conrad’s “knitting machine,” is equally applicable to Greene’s own literary output, which, as we have seen, posits similarly ineluctable models of the world-as-text: from the touristic paradox of “staged authenticity” explored in **The Lawless Roads**, for example, to the “citationary structures” of travel writing itself, which ensure that foreign geographies are seen through the veil of a prior literary cartography – one provided, in Greene’s case, by Conrad.

This is no idle metaphor: during Conrad’s first brush with major critical recognition towards the end of 1898 when **Tales of Unrest** was singled out by the

Academy as one of its “Crowned’ Books,” his writing **was** seen in terms of a literary cartography, “the real transference to paper of something of the very heart of the country, the nation described” (In Sherry, ed. 1973, 110), as we have seen. Edward Said has influentially argued for the “immensely important” place of literature “in the formation of imperial attitudes, references, and experiences” (1994, xii), and Conrad’s geo-graphing of “Malaya” in the early novels and short fiction was given just such a prominence at the time, as the claims made by the **Academy** as to the “colonising” power of his fiction show: “He is one of the most notable literary colonists. He has annexed the Malay Peninsula for us” (In Sherry, ed. 1973, 110). (Of course, as the ironic dislocations of “Heart of Darkness” subsequently forced home, Conrad, while a former “employee of the imperial system” [Said 1994, 23], was no advocate for it.) Yet, whereas Conrad’s “Malay” fictions frequently were seen as a “geo-graphing” of the geopolitical and ethnographic realities of far-flung and hitherto “unknown” Eastern spaces for a European readership (Hugh Clifford’s grumble that this geo-graphing was inaccurate merely underscores that this was then a standard context for discussing Conrad’s work), such a correspondence between page and place was frustratingly denied Greene: “‘This is Indo-China,’ I want to exclaim, ‘this is Mexico, this is Sierra Leone carefully and accurately described’” (WE 77). One of the critical commonplaces about “Greenland” is that it presents a purely **textual** spatiality, a sedimentation of inter- and transtextual layers of reference rather than a perceived plotting, as with Conrad’s fiction, of the realities of place outside the

text. Yet, far from being merely an abstraction, “Greeneland” **has** a materiality. As Derek Gregory, in an argument to which both Conrad’s “knitting machine” and Greene’s “maze” metaphors might usefully be adapted, underlines: “we live in a world not only of commodities but also of representations, and these are at once abstractions **and densely concrete fabrications**” (2000, 337; emphasis in original). To understand this is surely a precondition of any critical grappling with Greene’s engagement with how space is used, imagined and theorized across imperial contexts, an engagement which, as we have seen, is every bit as multiform and as complex as Conrad’s.

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