新刊紹介

Mark Vallely

Amar Acheraïou and Nursel Içöz, eds.,
Joseph Conrad and the Orient
Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press, Lublin, 2012. 341pp.

My first impression of the title is the word "Orient." This word is so evocative of an older time when that part of the world seemed farther away, less known and more mysterious. To travel to the Orient you would have to take months out of your life. You would have to say goodbye to your family and friends with the expectation of not seeing them again for a long time and then take a perhaps perilous sea journey and if you really felt adventurous, a far from uneventful land journey. Contacting the people back home would be harder still. Though various types of long-distance communication had been devised by Conrad's time, compared to today's technology, the prospect of corresponding with those left behind could would require greater deliberation. The culture of the Orient too would have seemed very different and largely unknown to most. It is assumed that Conrad took advantage of this in his stories. The title of this book seems really to connect with the contemporary life of Conrad's time.

We can compare this title with another recent work. *Conrad in the Twenty-First Century*, a collection of essays published by Routledge in 2005, appears very now and as if moving Conrad from the nineteenth century, through the twentieth and into the twenty-first. It appears a futuristic title connecting the work of Conrad with the present and its continued relevance into the future. Themes such as terrorism, globalism,

imperialism and empire, the mass-media and identity which in their importance are always new because they are always changing, yet have never gone away because they always feel contemporary, are approached in this work. However, while *Conrad in the Twenty-First Century* suggests a time *Conrad and the Orient* suggests a place, a vast geographical expanse from the Middle East to edge of continental Asia and beyond. Through the name the Orient we can look across time and space at the mystery of culture and changing relationships of peoples. Even though the title includes the word "Orient," the writers draw attention to how ahead of his time Conrad was at the time he wrote his stories. Also, "Heart of Darkness" is included in this collection. Africa, the principal yet unstated setting for "Heart of Darkness," is now part of the Orient, so it seems. However, as Amar Acheraïou points out in the introduction, the themes in this work still connect with those contained within his Malay fiction. Also, I think it would be difficult to publish a book of essays about Conrad's work without including at least one about "Heart of Darkness."

The introduction to this collection of essays is by Amar Acheraïou and is an excellent guide to what lies within. Through these few pages, we can appreciate not only the vast critical and philosophical background the writers draw upon, but also the vast geographical expanse of Conrad's influence in academia: "The twelve essays included in this volume are written by eminent and emerging Conrad scholars from various corners of the world: the USA, Canada, Australia, Singapore, South Africa, India, France and Turkey" (1). As we can see, from Acheraïou in Canada to Tamara Wagner in Singapore, the very centre of Conrad country in the East, and places in between, Conrad's novels and short stories still have the power to make scholars produce critical works in the pursuit of literary meaning. It is a good idea for the reader intending to study an entire essay to read first of all the summary in the introduction.

However, by reading the entire book right through beginning to end

for this review, I was impressed by the range of writing styles. While some writers appear to construct sentences in a clause and sub-clause manner as if building meaning brick by brick in an almost circumlocutionary style, others present punchier styles in a succession of sentences that take the reader by the hand in a race to the centre of the meaning. Tamara Wagner's essay begins, "It is a markedly self-referential evocation of an ambiguous literary nostalgia that is nonetheless endorsed in the novel," suggesting we can expect a very interesting lecture in a grand hall. While Terry Collits and Ira Raja's essay "Conrad's Chinese Orientalism, Eurocentrism, Racism" begins, "In a letter he wrote late in his life to Bertrand Russell, Joseph Conrad confided that he had 'always liked the Chinese,'" reflecting the conversational style of Conrad's letter to Russell and an appropriately dialogically sensitive approach to the subject of the essay in its title. In between these two styles we have Ted Billy who if we visualized his personal delivery, would not be speaking to a vast audience like Tamara Wagner, but a small gathering in a more informal setting. Such are the different styles and how they hint at the origins of the people who wrote them. Also, each essay could be encapsulated in a single word. This is not to detract from the complexity of the essays and the very close detail of their arguments. For Acheraïou's it is "geopolitics" while in Alexia Hannis' essay the word is "desire" and of course for Collits and Iraga's it is "racism." Sometimes this perspective is good in helping us appreciate their ideas. We can focus on one word and build our knowledge of each essay around this keystone.

What kind of background do the essays offer? The history of colonialism in the East; the relations between orientalism and Eurocentrism; the contrasting speeches and silences and their cultural significance between East and West and more. In terms of information, these essays produce a context in which we can better appreciate Conrad's Malay fiction. The historical progress of imperialism from one

country's dominance to another; from Dutch to Portuguese imperialism in the fifteenth century to nineteenth-century British imperialism and how through the need to protect trade and commercial enterprise, the British situated "advisers" in sultanates. In Wagner's essay "The Ends of Occidentalist Desire in Conrad's 'Malay' Novels: 'Every Name in History is I,'" nostalgia for the East pervades literary fiction from Conrad to Somerset Maugham to Paul Theroux. This suggests that even though we see clearly through the lens of post-colonial studies the relationship between oriental and occidental world views, there is still the tendency for writers of fiction to examine critically the West's relationship with the Orient through the assumed "misty" (52) historical grasp of a bygone age. This, it seems, does not conflict with Edward Said's belief that just as the West has a cultural dialogic relationship with the East, so the East should with the West.

Connected with the geopolitical, financial and commercial takeover of the Malay Archipelago is the focusing on the personal colonialism of cultural absorption. This issue is addressed in Yannick Le Boulicaut's essay "Crossing Cultural Lines in *The Rescue*." The character of Mrs. Travers, initially dismissive of the Orient, succumbs to its attraction climaxed by the purloining of Immada's clothes. However, in spite of this Mrs. Travers remains a colonial whose view of the Orient is that of the other. This idea is also expressed through the theme of alterity. This is very much a matter of perspective. While Willems in *An Outcast of the Islands* is at the centre of society when he works for Hudig and is the master of the Da Souza family, he is very much the other when with Aissa. In David Tenenbaum's essay "The Continental Divide: Ethics and Alterity in Conrad's Lingard Trilogy," the Western characters faced with the otherness of Eastern cultural values are unable to live within the parameters of their own moral code. As Tenenbaum comments, "For characters like Almayer, Willems and Lingard, the danger of Eastern influence lies not simply in the impact of their primitive nature but in the

potential for their hopelessness to undermine the Europeans' commitment to whatever honor might have initially fueled their imperial ambitions" (138). When drawn into the world of their colonial subjects, these characters at first seeing the Malays as others, soon feel their otherness in regard to the Malays. Separated from and devoid of the ambitions of their Western compatriots, they assume the habits and perspectives of their colonial subjects and relinquish the rigours of their Western values.

Not only are the desires, the geopolitical formations, the colonial discourses, cross-cultural encounters and affinities and discordance examined in these essays, the nature of their utterances and silences are accounted for also. Margaret J-M Sönmez's "The Speech and Silences of Orientals in Conrad's Malay Novels" examines the occurrences of speech or otherwise according to scene, relationship and cultural background. As Acheraïou remarks in the introduction, "She argues that Conrad's handling of speech and silence in his Malay fiction brings into play a complex, productive dynamics sustained by a network of imagery and soundscapes: silence, stillness, darkness, noise, light, etc." (8). In this incredibly detailed essay she asks, "In *An Outcast of the Islands*, for instance, what language do Almayer and Willems use in their conversation?" (264). Of course, Conrad's stories are in English, but through a use of stylistic, linguistic, syntactical and native dialects, the great cultural diversity is expressed from Babalatchi's "O Dispenser of Allah's gifts!" (Oxford World's Classics, 121), to Wang's "Me no savee levolvel [revolver]" (267, *Victory* [Oxford World's Classics, 312]). Her analysis is channeled through the work of Braj B. Kachru's work on "'broken' English" (270) and particularly through his four principles of interpretive analysis (271-72). In her analysis of silences, Sönmez finds that the natives' are cultural, while the Westerners' are personal.

In "Migratory Rhetorics: Conrad, Salih, and the Limits of Culture," Russell Ford compares "Heart of Darkness" to Taleb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*. From the beginning he establishes a range of

similarities that equate Conrad's novella with Salih's novel; the location, colonialism, the narrators, and light and darkness. He further delineates the distinctiveness of Salih's novel, but also how in setting out to write in a more conventional form, Salih was influenced by "Heart of Darkness" to produce a more complex work. The result is a "double-voiced discourse" (212) and what Ford describes as a "Bakhtinian parody" (212), where "Discourse becomes an arena of battle between two voices" (213; quoted from Bakhtin). Ford then explains his theory of Conrad's work in the transition of Western literary tradition basing his ideas on those of Raymond Williams. This rupture in the transition elicited by James, Pound, Eliot, Conrad and others is followed by a detailed account of the ruptures in Marlow's story. It seems that as Marlow seeks to make sense of his experiences in Africa, and in doing so provokes his audience into sharp rebuke, yet never losing their attention, so these Modernist writers pushed language in new directions in their pursuit of meaning. This rupturing in Marlow's story, Ford writes, can also be seen in Salih's novel, which is "fragmentary, hallucinatory, upsetting its own temporal order" (225). Just as Marlow's narrative in the Congo returns to the darkness of the Thames, Sa'eed's narrative returns to an inner darkness of Salih's narrator. In "Heart of Darkness" Marlow backs away from the darkness of Kurtz's experience culminating in his lie to the Intended. In Salih's novel the cigarette becomes the symbol of freedom – the freedom to choose by the narrator. According to Ford, "The cigarette is the decision of the self that breaks the perpetual cycle of illusion" (231) – as the narrator declares, "All my life I had not chosen, had not decided. Now I am making a decision. I choose life" (231; quoted from Salih). Ford's conclusion that though "Heart of Darkness" inspired Salih to produce a greater work than he initially intended, "Salih's parodic repetition of Conrad, [escapes] the residues of romanticism that still occupy the latter's work" (231).

Laëtitia Crémona's essay "Screening Decolonization: Richard

Brooks's *Lord Jim*" examines the transfer to mainstream cinema of Conrad's famous work. As the title suggests, this is Richard Brooks's *Lord Jim*. The essay outlines a brief history of film adaptations of Conrad's work and then details the film's critical backlash at the time of its release, mainly for the portrayal of Jim and the near total exclusion of Marlow denying the narrative its complexity and psychological depth, according to some critics. Though some of the characters, narrative, colonial and post-colonial situations are changed, Crémona defends Brooks's film. Her view is that artistic productions should be autonomous whether in film or literary form: "Why should, after all, film directors be more faithful to their sources of inspiration than should fiction writers?" (307). She also states, "I am of the view that adaptations should be read as original creations, rather than as mere copies of some absolute literary original" (308). Crémona then examines the differences between the two, for example, the voice-over at the beginning of the film: "As in most mainstream cinema, in Brooks's film, too, the voice-over functions as an omniscient agency. It is profoundly didactic, leading the viewer by the hand and explaining to him/her Jim's history" (309). Marlow is present only at the beginning, but this is "both technically and discursively extremely useful" (310).

In adapting the story for modern audiences, Brooks has changed the protagonists in the depiction and nature of colonialism. The Bugis now struggle against the French and in particular the General. Gentleman Brown's role is presented not as piratical opportunism but as "commercial and economic rapacity" (315). Crémona explains that these and other changes may be a "way of conveying the complex and politically sensitive idea of decolonization to his Western audience" (314). Also, the film "does not fully reject the colonial enterprise; it maintains instead a dual representation of colonialism; a duality which is reflected in Jim's portrait as both an insider and outsider to the colonial culture" (316). Finally, in the funeral scene, "the colonizer-colonized relationships

are romanticized" (320). Jim's presence in the form of his cremated ashes maintains the presence of British colonialism in the "decolonized Bugis community" (320). From Laëtitia Crémona's essay we can see that film adaptations will always be problematic, mainly because of expectation and the difficulty of transferring the complexity of literary technique to the cinema. However, that should not deter the production of films inspired by great works of literature.

As I commented at the beginning, what impressed me most of all about the title was the word Orient, and its power of evocation. I also contrasted the title, *Joseph Conrad and Orient*, with that of *Conrad in the Twenty-First Century* and how this futuristic title so well fits with the turn of our century, while *Joseph Conrad and the Orient* suggests Conrad's own time. In *Conrad in the Twenty-First Century* there is a foreword by J. Hillis Miller which "is a word that comes before the real words" (1). In *Joseph Conrad and the Orient*, the final essay, the shortest, by Lawrence Ware entitled "To the Converted" concludes this volume. Lawrence Ware documents the potency of Conrad's works and the beneficial influence they can have on personal lives. On his own early experiences he comments that he started reading them "At the ripe age of fourteen," and "His [Conrad's] stories insidiously whispered to a side of me I had not yet realised was there, a somewhat darker side" (325). In J. Hillis Miller's foreword, he comments "The first Conrad work I read was *Typhoon*. I came upon the book by sheer accident, in the way such things frequently happen" (9). "I was about 13 or 14 at the time…" He goes on, "The words on the page exerted a magic power to take me to an imaginary place and to cause me to relive an imaginary action" (9). For Lawrence Ware, "His stories reflect our souls and consistently prompt us to deep ethical reflection" (326), while for J. Hillis Miller, "Last night I was again on the *Nan-Shan* battling a typhoon in the China sea. I claim that this kind of reading is a primordial and authentic way to be related to a literary work. All the superstructure of criticism, analysis, and

commentary is erected on the foundation of such an 'enchanted' reading. If such a reading were not a common response to Conrad's work, that work would not be worth talking about, in praise or in blame" (10). Conrad's works are very much connected with life and how we live our lives. Their power to enfold us the imaginary worlds of their narratives and characters also exhort us to look within ourselves. For both Lawrence Ware and J. Hillis Miller their early experiences of Conrad's works presented a turning point in their relationship with words, with language. In contrast to the other essays in their respective books, they present a personal account of Conrad's influence, and Conrad's ability to provoke the imagination and coincidentally at a comparable early "ripe" age. It's possible that each of the other contributors to both books had similar personal experiences of reading Conrad, but ordinarily there would be no place for it in a scholarly work.

Joseph Conrad and the Orient presents a wide range of theoretical perspectives on Conrad's Malay fiction. It is an excellent source of fascinating critical analysis. The diversity and range of the sources contributing to this compilation is a tribute to the continuing powerful influence of Conrad's Malay fiction. And that at this range in the twenty-first century academics are still appraising his works and revising critical interpretations indicates the universal yet particular appeal Conrad's fiction extends for over century after their creation.

（マーク・ヴァレリー Lecturer, Kanagawa University 神奈川大学専任講師）