CHAPTER SIX
OTHER FICTIONAL WORKS

There is plenty of imagery and Symbolism in other novels of Joseph Conrad such as Nostromo, Almayer's Folly, The Nigger of Narcissus, Under Western Eyes and Typhoon. Most of the novels of Joseph Conrad are full of symbolism with resemblance by major characters which are as:

Nostromo is another great novel of Conrad. It is based on the history of a south American Revolution. In the Republic of Costaguana, in South America, there is one prosperous and contented province, whose capital Sulaco is the head quarter of the famous "Gould Copany", owners of the San Tome silver mine, which has brought wealth and security to the whole district. The head of the company is an English Costaguana, Charles Gould—a reserved man, hiding in his silence an inherited love of order and hatred of political unrest that make of him a formidable type of fanatic. His wife, the frail and compassionate Dona Emilia, is the most moving figure in the whole of conrad's books. The slow decay of Charles Gould's love of her in his intense absorption in silver is a tragic undercurrent to this story of visible
terror and anarchy. The wealth of Sulaco has attracted, at last, the politicians from beyond the mountains, and all the vilest characters of the Republic. In an attempt to upset the reign of the humane President dictator Ribiera (the one hope of Costaguana), a wild rush is made for Sulaco, both from the mountains and the sea. The whole social fabric, built up with such care, falls to pieces at the breath of revolution. The Sulaco aristocracy, powerless in the hands of a mob who fickle and cringing to the successful welcome, the victorious revolutionaries with orgies of disorder and joy, await exile or shameful death. But in that gloom and horror is born a new, the great idea of the province, that it should be a Republic. It is the idea of the young Decoud, a journalist. His plan is that the Province should cut itself off from the rest of Costaguana and declare itself a republic. And, in fact, that is what takes place. For at the height of the terror, when Charles Gould and other are expecting instant death, General Barrios, one of the faithful Generals of the Ribiera regime, returns with his army and drives off the invaders.

_Nostromo_ who is popularly known as Capataz de Cargadores, is the most reliable, the most useful and the most feared man in Sulaco. "He is a person of almost
boundless vanity and resource, and the revelation of his curious, complex character makes, as it were, one of the foundations of the book. For he is a man suffering from a grievance, which he never reveals—a grievance against society he takes too much for granted, that cheats him of his reward, that cannot adequately recognise all that he has done for it." On the night before the invasion of Sulaco he is asked to remove the silver treasure out to sea. This voyage of his with Decoud who is fleeing for his life, is one of the most wonderful things in Conrad. He hides the treasure safely in a desert island but he never reveals its resting place to any one else. With Decoud's death and the sinking of the ship the treasure is supposed to be lost for ever at the bottom of the sea. And Nostromo keeps the secret in his breast and grows rich, "very slowly", visiting the island at night to take away one silver bar after another. And it is there he meets his death by a tragic misunderstanding. For on the lonely island a lighthouse has been erected now and it is guarded by old Giorgio Viola, and his two daughters, the dark Linda and the fair Gizelle. To Linda Nostromo is betrothed but it is Gizelle that he loves. The Garibaldino, knowing nothing of the treasure or of his love, shoots him as he comes to the island one night, thinking he is some other man come on shore to meet his daughter Gizelle.
It is this interaction of the natural and the human which makes Conrad's atmospheres so thrilling and exciting. It is for this reason that the atmosphere of Nostromo is so very thrilling and wonderful. In this novel, as in many a other novels, the atmosphere is created by a cumulative effect, by sustained and subtle interaction of the physical and the spiritual characteristics of the land and its people. The emotion evoked in this way is intensely profound and thrilling. The action takes place in Costaguana in South America. Conrad had visited this South American Republic only briefly and yet, such is the power of the novelist's imagination that Costaguana lives before us in the very poetry of a marelous realism.

In the sense that Conrad deliberately presents his stories as though they have applications beyond their own confines, it is useful to think of him as a writer who uses images symbolically. The whole of The Nigger of the Narcissus and The Secret Sharer can be thought of in this way. It is a method of writing which has its dangers, particularly if it is resorted to often or is allowed to get in the way of the plain story. But at its best it can be very powerful.

Here is Nostromo awakening on the morning after he has stolen the silver:
He lay as if dead. A rey-zamuro, appearing like a tiny black speck in the blue, stooped circling prudently with a stealthiness of flight startling in a bird of that great size. The shadow of his perly-white body, of his black-tipped wings, fell on the grass no more silently than he alighted himself on a hillock of rubbish within three yards of that man, lying as still as a corpse. The bird ..... sinking his head deeply into his soft plumage, he settled himself to wait ......... When the man got up the vulture hopped away ....... Long after he had vanished, Nostromo, lifting his eyes up to the sky, muttered, "I am not dead yet." (Ted Billy. Leonard Orr, A Joseph Conrad Companion, 1996, pp.47-48.)

There is a Graham Greene repulsion about the bird-the vultures at the start of both The Heart of the Matter and The Power and the Glory have the same effect on the reader. Its patient waiting for Nostromo's corruption anticipates
a process already begun by the theft. Its noiseless arrival and departure suggest the scarcely noticeable inevitability of Nostromo's future moral deterioration. Physically, he is "not dead yet", morally he is. Moments like this are one mark of Conrad's greatness.

*Almayer's Folly* is a story of illusion, weariness, and powerful passion. In the opening paragraphs of *Almayer's Folly*, Almayer has been dreaming and imagining his future in Europe with his daughter, wealthy and respected. The swollen river by which he stands is carrying driftwood past him. If we wish to think of the opening of this novel symbolically, we may say that the drifting log transfers our thoughts to Almayer himself, a man without direction and at the mercy of events; the "brutal violence" of the river, the log's future course become Almayer's ultimate fate. There cannot be much doubt that Conrad intended something of this because he shows us the floating tree through Almayer's eyes. Almayer, we are told, "envied the lot of the that inanimate thing", and this implies a comparison between them. Almayer is the white trader the only white trader, of Sambir, a distant and obscure village in an island, in the Dutch East Indies. He has been there many, many years, first with high hope, with much business, and under
the protection of powerful Captain Lingard, the famous and dreaded "Rajah Launt", but actually with nothing left to him but his love for his daughter Nina, and his belief in a vast treasure waiting for him in the interior of the island. For Captain Lingard has disappeared for ever, ruined and broken, and the wily Abdulla, a treacherous Arab has sapped the very life of his trade. The once influential Almayer now lives a despised and perilous existence. At last hope, in the form of Dain Maroola, a Malay of noble family, comes to him with the promise of wealth. For it is with the help of Dain that the great expedition into the interior is to be made. And with the gold thus obtained he and Nina will escape to Europe, and all the misery of the past will be blotted out. But in these visions of a splendid future Almayer is blind to the present, and even as he dreams of future happiness, Dain, the conspirator, steals the heart of Nina. And far from that forlorn and hopeless spot she flies with him across the sea. Almayer, weakly violent and affectionate by turns, sinks and dies under the double blow of calamity and disappointment.

The novel is remarkable for its evocation of the atmosphere of the topics.

The Nigger of the "Narcissus" is the story of one of
the voyages of the ship Narcissus from Bombay to London. *The Nigger of the Narcissus* is James Wait, a huge negro, who is dying from consumption but who clings to existence with scorn, with terror, and with evil words. "His sinking life hangs like a mill-stone round the hearts of the sailors. Only donkin, the villain, who pilfers from the dying man, feels in his dirty little soul no touch of compassion." It is, in fact, the negro who is the central figure of the book. From the moment he steps aboard at Bombay till the moment his dead body is lowered into the northern sea, he dominates the whole life of the ship. Donkin is cunning enough to use him and his illness as a lever for stirring up unrest in the hearts of the crew. They admire their officers but they cannot understand their attitude towards the dying man. This gives rise to dissatisfaction and then to indiscipline.

During the course of the voyage, there is a terrible storm. It is this storm which saves the situation. The men again pull together in their effort to defeat their common enemy, the sea. "Here the story touches sublimity without becoming ponderous or wordy" (Newhouse). At the height of the tempest, Mr. Baker, the first mate, asks the cook to make a hot drink. The cook is at first too busy talking about the life to come. Mr. Baker says he will prepare the
drink himself, but the cook cannot permit this. He goes towards his wrecked kitchen, shouting: "As long as she swims I will cook." The cook finds his stove 'reared up on end' and is forced, the crew think, 'to use breadboard for a raft'. Even so at the risk of his life, he achieves the apparently impossible task of preparing the drink and puts fresh heart into the weary men. After burying James Wait at sea, they reach home showing that it is the man, and not the ship, which matters.

We now turn to Under Western Eyes, and the imaginary body lying in the snow, we find an immediate likeness to the scene in Almayer's Folly: description and thought are closely interwoven. Razumov, like Almayer, is interpreting to himself the meaning of what he sees about him. This being so, there is really no question of symbol or deeper meaning. We are simply sharing Razumov's life and thoughts. Symbolism is seen in Razumov's confession to Miss Haldin. At the time, Miss Haldin is wearing a veil which falls to the floor. Razumov picks it up, presses it to his face and carries it away with him. This action, and indeed the whole business with the veil, is clearly meant to symbolise something—presumably the fact that the barrier between Razumov and Miss Haldin is at last being broken down. But the reader
is in the main only vaguely and uneasily aware that the
veil ought to have special significance: he is not clear what
that significance is. And, as usually happens, Conrad's prose
betrays his uncertainty of touch: It is over-dramatic and
portentous. The plot of Under Western Eyes is simple.
Razumov, the illegitimate son of an aristocrat, is without
a home or family. 'No home influences had shaped his
opinions or feelings. He was as honely in the world as a
man swimming in the deep sea'. For him, his own name
is a mere word, a 'label of solitary individuality'. He does
not so much choose detachment from life as finds it forced
upon him. He shrinks mentally from the fray of the world
'as a good-natured man may shrink from taking definite
sides in a violent family quarrel.' His ambition is high academic
success, the gaining of a silver medal and perhaps even
of a professorship. With dramatic effect and fine irony, Conrad
shows Razumov climbing the stairs to his own room as
he day-dreams of an announcement in the papers that he
is this year's silver medalist. When he enters his room a
moment later, it is to find the murderer, Haldin, asking for
his help. Razumov has found involvement thrust upon him.

He is sent out by Haldin to arrange for his escape,
but he denounces him to the police. This midnight betrayal
is the most tremendous thing in the book, and the only result of the betrayal is that Razumov becomes convinced that he himself is suspected by the police. Caught thus in the web of suspicion, Razumov consents to go out as a government spy to Geneva, where there is a large group of Russian conspirators. Here, as fate would have it, he meets Haldin's sister, who considers him a hero, as he is supposed to have been her brother's last associate and helper. He too falls passionately in love with Nathalie Haldin. She is presented as a beautiful and true nature whose trust in Ramuzov is unbounded. Slowly, under the influence of love, this life of lies grows impossible to him. He resolves to confess. At midnight, in a room full of determined and reckless men, he makes his atonement. As a punishment, he is deafened for ever by having the drums of both his ears broken. Early that same morning, tottering on the road in the perfect silence of the surrounding world, he gets run over by a tramcar and is severely hurt. He is tended by a Russian woman, who devotes her life to him, and at the close of the novel he is shown living with her in the South of Russia, slowly dying.

Commenting on the novel Richard Curle writes:
"the story gets its name from the fact that it is told by an old English teacher of languages in Geneva, partly in his own words and partly from a diary left by Razumov. Under Western Eyes is really a one man book, and as such, all other figures are naturally subsidiary to the main one, Razumov, the believer in order and in the hard role of constant opposition. His is the psychology of a man in revolt against revolt. His appeal to one's sympathy lacks sentiment but is poignant all the same. The book is written with great precision and subtlety of language, and marks a step forward in Conrad's exactitude of style. (Paul Wiley. Conrad's Measure of Man, op.cit. pp.147-148.)

Of all Conrad's novels, Chance is the most elaborately indirect, particularly in the handling of time, but its plot is quite simple. Marlow, in Chance, utters a good deal of epistemological theory including some theories about language. His function is to raise the factual, imperceptive reports
of characters like Fyne and Powell to another level of truth. Just as the other major figures of *Chance* are symbolic, So Marlow is an intellectual construct. Here Marlow is brilliant, despite the fact that the motives he perceives are rarely allowed to reveal themselves through the concrete detail of dialogue and action. The novel has a number of characters but is concerned mainly with two characters, Flora de Barral, the daughter of a famous financier, and Captain Roderick Anthony, son of a poet and master of the ship Fernadale. After the financial crash which sent de Barral, Flora's father, to penal servitude and herself to the horrors of extreme poverty, Miss de Barral's best friends prove to be a Mr. and Mrs. Fyne, whom she had known slightly in the days of her prosperity. It is at their house that she meets Captain Anthony, Mrs. Fyne's brother, come home from sea on one of his rare visits. Anthony sees into the depths of the forlorn and despairing soul. He falls in love with her and carries her off with him—thus offending mortall the correct and decorous Mrs. Fyne. And it is on board the Fernadale that Flora, now Mrs. Anthony, brings her father, the ex-convict. His insane hatred of the Captain, who has come between his daughter and the brilliant marriage of his dreams, gives a sinister background to the misunderstanding troubling the life of Anthony and his wife. For she believes that his
love is founded entirely upon pity—a thing intolerable to her
pround heart—and he believes that to her he is merely the
means of freedom for herself and refuge for her father. It
is only after de Barral’s attempt to poison Anthony that
the barriers of misunderstanding are swept away and the
two really begin to love and understand each other.

As its name suggests; the irony of chance is the leading
link of the whole structure. The two main characters are
drawn with Conrad's minutest and most thrilling insight. It
is a work of the finest shades and of the highest tensions.
In many ways, it is the most finished of all his novels.

