CHAPTER - III

POLITICAL FINANCE AND FINANCIAL POLITICS: Nostromo.
Nostromo is Conrad's most ambitious work. In Nostromo, Conrad exposes the inherent dangers of the mad pursuit of material interests and the consequent futility of political action based on it. He also attempts a strong condemnation of imperialism. Nostromo is the story of the corroding effects of wealth represented by the San Tomé mine. It is "radically pessimistic about political ideology, condemning not only Charles Gould's faith in imperialistic capitalism, and Avellanos's faith in abolishing 'liberalism', but also Giorgio Viola's faith in the ultimate triumph of a people's democracy; Nostromo once politically enlightened, is led immediately to personal corruption. Nostromo further questions the notions of 'progress' in the satire directed at Captain Mitchell; of heroism, in Monygham's experience, as well as in Nostromo's career; of fidelity..."¹ Nostromo handles convincingly many concerns relevant to contemporary life.

Conrad writes about men living in one community. He discusses their relation with each other within the restricted society. The novel provides a detailed survey of the human relationships. Conrad extends his range to the interaction of historical forces on the public plane. He delineates skilfully the lives and fates of his characters and projects the physical and political state. Costaguana, the imaginary South American Republic with its atmosphere, is the product of his imagination. The three principal characters in Nostromo are involved in activities for the
good of the community as a whole. The characters are
dedicated to serve the community and promote its welfare.
The larger interests of the nation are a paramount concern
for them. But in the process of economic development,
constructing railways and exploiting the mineral resources,
each character ironically turns out to be an isolated
individual. *Nostromo* is the most complicated novel of
Conrad. It is about "a confused struggle among Costaguana
and foreigners, conservatives and revolutionaries, masters
and servants."²

"*Nostromo* is the most anxiously mediated of [Conrad's]
longer novels."³ In this novel Conrad realizes the dreams of
his artistic vision. He refers to diverse material to serve
his artistic purpose. In *A Personal Record*, Conrad writes
about the troubles he has faced while composing his
masterpiece. For twenty months he has neglected the joys of
life.⁴

Silver is the cause of corruption in the political life
of Costaguana. It corrupts everybody, the ordinary man the
clergyman, the politician, and the general. The Silver of
the San Tome' mine has the main focus in the book. In a
letter to Earnest Bendz Conrad writes:

> I will take the liberty to point out that Nostromo
> has never been intended for the hero of the Tales
> of the Sea-board. Silver is the pivot of the moral
> and material events affecting the lives of
everybody in the tale.
All the characters in the novel decide their respective position on the basis of their 'material interests'. They are the motivating force behind imperialism. At the end of the novel, Dr. Monygham makes his famous speech declaring material interests as immoral and inhuman:

There is no peace and no rest in the development of material interests. They have their law, and their justice. But it is founded on expediency, and is inhuman; it is without rectitude, without the continuity and the force that can be found only in a moral principle. Mrs. Gould, the time approaches when all that the Gould Concession stands for shall weigh as heavily upon the people as the barbarism, cruelty, and misrule of a few years back.

In *Nostromo*, Conrad indirectly shows that the pursuit of material interests alone cannot bring justice, prosperity and good life to the poor and the downtrodden. Costaguana is a country torn by civil war, revolutions and counter-revolutions. In this country the individual man is a victim. He is a victim of wealth, of a mad pursuit of material interests. As a humanist, Conrad exposes indirectly the evil practices of the new colonizers. The phase of chaos and anarchy prevailing in the Republic cannot maintain the honour and the dignity of the individual intact.

In this chapter an attempt has been made to highlight Conrad's concern with the mad pursuit of material interests which results in utter disregard of human considerations and values. Conrad is much concerned with the humanity and dignity of the individual who lives in Latin America
dominated by the political forces of our time. As a liberal humanist, Conrad is concerned with the destiny of the individual man who finds himself exposed to the violence of civil war, revolution and the economic forces of imperialism in Costaguana. Conrad feels that the capitalist enterprises in South America are mere illusions. He predicts that the progress of material interests means loss of human and spiritual values.

The opinion of Conrad is reflected in Mrs. Gould's disillusionment with material interests. Mrs. Gould sees a terrible vision of capitalism:

She saw the San Tomé mountain hanging over the Campo, over the whole land, feared, hated, wealthy; more soulless than any tyrant, more pitiless and autocratic than the worst Government; ready to crush innumerable lives in the expansion of its greatness.

Don José Avellanos longs for a stable government to rule his country. He is fed up with disorder, violence and class struggle. He is a patriotic politician, a man of liberal convictions who dreams of seeing stability and order prevail in the country after the tyrannical rule of Guzman Bento. Even "the fatuous Captain Mitchell bewails the rise of socialism among the Italian immigrants and the native labourers." It is observed that material interests reduce everything to a commodity in Costaguana. These interests do not care for the individual's prosperity and good life. They need peace and order for their developments but they do not
offer man any justice. There can be no doubt that the moral impulses and the material interests of Costaguana, which seem to play now the game of disintegration for the benefit of the foreign capitalists, will in the end bring the natives some kind of order. It may be that it is a false order, but it will be good for sometime. It is possible for a new state to emerge but it won't be possible to put an end to the suffering of human beings. Dr. Monygham tells Antonia: "the material interests will not let you jeopardize their development for a mere idea of pity and justice."9 Perhaps Conrad wants to tell us in *Nostrromo* that neither economic imperialism nor a mere pursuit of material interests can bring harmony, stability, order and justice in society. They bring "a false order, an order imposed, an order which destroys the rhythms of the native life and gives rise to the fumes of nationalism."10

Silver has a destructive effect on the life of Charles Gould and many other characters. Gould becomes corrupt by bribing the politicians to protect his mine. "The mine had corrupted his judgement by making him sick of bribing and intriguing merely to have his work left alone from day to day. Like his father, he did not like to be robbed. It exasperated him."11 The mine brings the Goulds nothing but misfortune. It brings the death of his father, but Charles accepts the challenge and tries to make a success of the mine. He disobeys the will of his father and operates the mine as an attempt to redeem his father's suffering. "It was
imperative sometimes to know how to disobey the solemn wishes of the dead... The mine had been the cause of an absurd moral disaster; its working must be made a serious and moral success." Gould becomes a materialist whose first aim and favourite interest in life is amassing silver. The mine separates him from his wife. It has destroyed his emotional life and left him without emotions. He loses his sanity, and his personality has been reduced to a single fixed idea. Even Nostromo, the "incorruptible" is corrupted by silver. Decoud dies of isolation and loneliness when he is entrusted to save the silver with Nostromo. Mrs. Gould is deprived of her husband's love. Linda loses her lover. Also, Antonia loses her lover Decoud. The mine becomes an obsession with Charles Gould. He is unable to distinguish between his personal wishes and the wishes of others. He becomes committed to the idea of progress which to him is the progress of material interests. Conrad feels that "the civil war brings capitalism and capitalism will bring civil war, progress has come out of chaos but it is the kind of progress that is likely to end in chaos."¹³

The imperialist movement in Nostromo is also economic in character. The European powers dominate many parts of the world, and try to prove that they are the best guides to the under-developed people. They try to secure new markets and new fields of investment. They move towards political control to safeguard markets. But the Europeans claim that
they are out on humanitarian missions to serve the need of the sullen races. They go overseas in exile to carry the "White Man's Burden" if we may borrow the nomenclature of Kipling's classic formulation of the idea:

To us— to us, and not to others— a certain definite duty has been assigned. To carry light and civilization into the dark places of the world, to touch the mind of Asia and Africa with the ethical ideas of Europe: to give to the thronging millions, who would otherwise never know peace or security, these first conditions of human advance.15

The expansionist movement is politico-economic in character. The white Europeans insist that they are the torch-bearers of light to the dark regions. Kipling's "white man is a martyr to the burden of civilizing and redeeming the non-white captive races... the white man constructs the road of progress for the conquered people and marks its milestones with his death. Obviously, the white man is a Christ-figure in Kipling."16

George Eliot feels that fiction is capable of modifying the minds of some people. It can bring to them truth and guide them to the correct moral behaviour. It can also modify one's conduct. Her writings convey a specific moral purpose. And, actually, this is the purpose of Conrad's writings. At the core of his writings in their totality, he has the good of man at his heart. Eliot writes:

If art does not enlarge men's sympathies, it does nothing morally. I have had heart-cutting experience that opinions are a poor cement between
human souls: and the only effect I ardently long to produce is, that those who read them should be better able to imagine and to feel the pains and the joys of those who differ from themselves in everything but the broad fact of being struggling, erring human creatures.  

Art must keep up an awareness of morality and human predicament. By implication it conveys a human message to the race of man. Conrad the humanist presents in Nostromo a devastating exposure of the inhuman capacities inflicted on the colonized people. He paints many scenes of the impoverished life of the natives. Conrad exposes the evil practices of the economic imperialism in exploiting Costaguana. It is a neo-colonialism subjugating the natives and dominating their wealth and material resources. It is true that imperialism in Nostromo does not take the form of colonization, as it happens in the Belgian Congo, but it controls the country’s economy by foreign capital. The capitalist Holroyd from the United States of America has financed the San Tome mine. He encourages and supports the development of material interests in Costaguana. It is a colonization of an essentially economic nature. The capitalists like Holroyd, Sir John and Gould are the new conquerors of Costaguana who come under a heavy attack from Conrad. They are badly castigated for their involvement in this modern economic conquest.

Conrad, as a liberal humanist, is much concerned with the goodness of the natives’ life. Thus, he has exposed the evil designs of the neo-colonizers who have used their
capital to colonize Costaguana. They do not use their forces, but they use their money. Material interests for Conrad mean capitalism. They do not bring the ordinary man prosperity or the promised heaven. They bring a good life but only for a short time. Conrad shows us that after the mine has started operating it has brought some kind of stability, but it becomes the focus of hatred among the workers, engineers and managers. The San Tomé mine, upon which the economy of the country depends, reaches a phase of order and stability after a quick change. The silver of the mine has affected badly the entire life in Costaguana. It has brought it to the extent of disintegration. Howe remarks: "the entire economy rests upon an extractive industry controlled from abroad—such a country can reach neither stability nor democracy." Conrad denigrates the capitalists who are working against the poor and the miserable. He exposes the hollowness of the revolutionaries and the leaders in Costaguana who can neither satisfy the needs of the poor nor their national sentiments. Revolutions follow each other and the citizens are exposed to their dangers. They are involved in class struggle which victimizes many of them. Conrad visualizes the situation in Costaguana as similar to the rise of Bonapartism.

Costaguana is a country which has been racked by turmoil and civil strife. The epigraph to the novel, "so foul a sky clears not without a storm" has a significant
bearing on the atmosphere of the novel and it seems to be the very secret of its meaning. The natural atmosphere of Costaguana has been vitiated by commercial interests as represented by the San Tomé mine managed by Anglo-American capitalists. In the second chapter of the novel Conrad presents the history of Costaguana politics:

The political atmosphere of the Republic was generally stormy in these days. The fugitive patriots of the defeated party had the knack of turning up again on the coast with half a steamer's load of small arms and ammunition. Such resourcefulness Captain Mitchell considered as perfectly wonderful in view of their utter destitution at the time of flight. He had observed that 'they never seemed to have enough change about them to pay for their passage ticket out of the country'. And he could speak with knowledge; for on a memorable occasion he had been called upon to save the life of a dictator, together with the lives of few Sulaco officials - the political chief, the director of the customs, and the head of police - belonging to an overturned government. Poor Senor Ribiera (such was the dictator's name) had come pelting eighty miles over mountain tracks after the lost battle of Socorro, in the hope of outdistancing the fatal news - which, of course, he could not manage to do on a lame mule. The animal, moreover, expired under him at the end of the Alameda, where the military band plays sometimes in the evenings between the revolutions. 'Sir', Captain Mitchell would pursue with portentous gravity, 'the ill-timed end of that mule attracted attention to the unfortunate rider. His features were recognized by several deserters from the Dictatorial army amongst the rascally mob already engaged in smashing the windows of the Intendencia.'

The political atmosphere becomes stormy and the country suffers owing to political upheavals in quick succession. The revolution occurs, the situation is clear but again violence continues. Revolutions follow each other and each

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revolution brings in a new dictator. The Republic passes through a phase of violence, class struggle and civil war. The dictatorship of Guzman Bento puts an end to the period of civil war. Bento rules the country with a heavy hand. Many people are put to death. Dr. Monygham and Don José Avellanos, the father of Antonia, are savagely tortured. Throughout Bento's reign the San Tome' mine is run successfully by an English Company. Suddenly, Bento dies of a stroke. After his death the native workers revolt against their British masters and murder them. As a result, the mine falls into disuse. The father of Charles Gould is forced by the then Costaguanian Government to accept the mine for management. At this time Charles is fourteen years old studying in England. Mr. Gould writes many letters to his son complaining about the mine and advising his son not to come back to Costaguana to claim the mine. When Charles is twenty years old, his father dies. Charles marries Emilia, and after paying a visit to the American financier, Holroyd, he disobeys the will of his father and regenerates the mine.

Holroyd visits Sulaco to inspect the mine. His visit comes about one year of the Goulds' marriage. Also, Sir John visits Sulaco to celebrate the coming of the railway. During this period, the mine's influence has been used to bring Ribiera to power. Ribiera becomes the President-Dictator. The mine is now functioning with the aid of foreign capital and the exertions of Nostromo. But this does not last long. Ribiera is defeated by Montero's revolution.
General Montero declares that the national honour has been sold to foreigners. He calls for revenge. He topples Ribiera who runs away. Fighting continues for a year before the riot starts at Sulaco. General Barrios departs with his troops for Cayta. The Ribierists have been defeated. Now Charles thinks of a safe place to keep the silver of the mine. He keeps it in the Custom House and later on it is entrusted to Nostromo and Decoud to carry it away into the darkness. They keep it on the Great Isabel because of the collision which happened between their boat and Sotillo's. Sotillo is on his way to join the Monterists. General Montero becomes the supreme ruler of Costaguana. This revolution has brought Pedrito and Montero to power. They try to capture the mine but Charles threatens to blow up the mine if they try to take it by force. Don Pépé is entrusted by Charles with the task of blowing up the mine.

After the riot Sulaco remains cut off for a whole fortnight. At this time Nostromo returns after hiding the silver. Charles supports the pro-Blanco forces to separate Sulaco from Costaguana because he feels that the mine will flourish quickly. Thus, Nostromo is sent to Cayta by Dr. Monygham to call back Barrios and his troops. Eventually, Nostromo and Barrios return [back] Barrios defeats the Monterists. The pro-Ribiera Blanco party wins the battle. The victorious revolution leads to the separation of Sulaco from the rest of Costaguana as suggested by Martin Decoud.

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However that is not the end of suffering for the Castaguanian people. Trouble, violence and anarchy are brewing at the San Tome' mine. The engineers and workers are preparing for demonstrations and strikes. It is clear that there is no end to the struggle in Costaguana. It continues to be in a state of confusion. "After one Montero there would be another, the lawlessness of a populace of all colours and races, barbarism, irremediable tyranny... in connexion with the everlasting troubles of this unhappy country it was hopelessly besmirched: it had been the cry of dark barbarism, the cloak of lawlessness, of crimes, of rapacity, of simple thieving."\textsuperscript{20} Mrs. Gould has accompanied her husband to the province in search of labour. She has seen how the natives are suffering in Costaguana. They are living a painful life due to political outrages:

In all these households she could hear stories of political outrage: friends relatives, ruined, imprisoned, killed in the battles of senseless civil wars, barbarously executed in ferocious proscriptions, as though the government of the country had been a struggle of lust between bands of absurd devils let loose upon the land with sabres and uniforms and grandiloquent phrases. And on all the lips she found a weary desire for peace, the dread of officialdom with its nightmarish parody of administration without law, without security, and without justice.\textsuperscript{21}

\textit{Nostrono} has a larger vision of history than any other novel. It artistically imitates man's impulse to social order and natural phenomena. The first story in the novel is historical, dealing with the Costaguana past, the events of
the Montero rebellion, and the separation of the Republic of Sulaco from the rest of the country. It is argued that Conrad is able, through his imaginative story, to convince us to accept the fictional world of Costaguana as factual. The imaginative recreation of history becomes real. It is more real than the history of actual countries and actual worlds. The imaginary history is a purely imaginary account of events and a purely imaginary account of the activities of imaginary characters. We feel that the events are true. We do not feel they are fanciful or unconvincing. The narrative of events is convincing. The characters have been created to act and to live. History, for Conrad, is the story of the individual man, who finds himself pitted against the forces of ruthless violence and disorder unleashed by the unethical politics, who wants to realize his place and dignity in this world. Thus, history is the story of man's unsuccessful attempts to cope with his disturbed society. The individual man tries, in the name of security, to replace one political system by another equally imperfect political system.

After the fall of Bolivar and the ascendancy of Guzman Bento to power, the individual man faces a state of violence full of ferocious and summary executions. This regime degenerates into rapacious anarchy which destroys the production of the country. Perhaps, Conrad wants to say that revolutions do not present ready made solutions to the complicated situation. They only bring terror and murder
because usually their leaders have no broad vision. Even Avellanos does not escape the tyranny of Bento. "Guzman had ruled the country with the sombre imbecility of political fanaticism. The power of Supreme Government had become in his dull mind an object of strange worship, as if it were some sort of cruel deity." 22

The dictator Guzman Bento dies, and as a result there is a leadership vacuum in the country. At this time foreign capital pours into Costaguana's economy. First, it comes in the form of prospecting industry owned and managed by Charles Gould, an Englishman financed by the American investor Holroyd. Secondly, it comes in the form of infrastructure, such as railways and communications. Capitalism claims to transform the social jungle into a garden, but as it is seen in Costaguana, it really becomes a desert. Progress may be seen under capitalism, but it is over-charged. The telegraph poles in the town of Sulaco are made by Conrad an image of progress.

The sparse row of telegraph poles strode obliquely clear of the town, bearing a single, almost invisible wire far into the great campo-like a slender, vibrating feeler of that progress waiting outside for a moment of peace to enter and twine itself about the weary heart of the land. 23

Conrad feels that capitalism may claim to liberate humanity, but in fact, it diverts human energies from the cultivation of the social virtues to materialistic ends. Conrad gives us a clear picture of how capitalism brings the
natives under its domination. Under the domination of capitalism, all sympathetic, moral and reflective powers of human beings are undermined. The personal and social relationships lose their human quality.

Conrad exposes the economic motives of imperialism in Nostromo. He gives a full account of the capacity of imperialism inflicted on the natives. Nostromo is a vehement denunciation of the imperial practices generated out of economic ambitions in Latin America and especially in Costaguana. With a master stroke of irony, Conrad records Pedro Montero's aspirations:

In that attitude, he declared suddenly that the highest expression of democracy was Caesarism; the imperial rule based upon the direct popular vote. Caesarism was conservative. It was strong. It recognized the legitimate needs of democracy which requires orders, titles, and distinctions. They would be showered upon deserving men. Caesarism was peace. It was progressive. It secured the prosperity of a country.²⁴

Conrad is sceptical of progress in Costaguana. He is disillusioned with imperialism which he sees as ruthless exploitation. He rejects the idea of material interests associated with imperialism because such progress gives a severe blow to the cherished human and spiritual values in society. Conrad is also sceptical of those who try to get aid from foreign capitalists to transform their country into an economically powerful country. They have persuaded themselves that social progress is possible through the
establishment of capitalist enterprises in Costaguana. But social progress, leashed to faith in capitalist enterprises, is inhuman. It is without any rectitude, continuity or force. The foreign capitalists exploit the natives mercilessly. In *Nostrono*, Conrad condemns the foreign capitalists, the liberals and the socialists as barbarians. The Blancos are not condemned. They are described as decent, but they are indolent. "Capitalists may claim to liberate humanity, but in fact, as the forces they encourage develop, human energy is diverted from the cultivation of the social virtues; sympathetic, moral, and reflective faculties atrophy, and personal and social relations lose their human quality." On the pretext of establishing democracy and freedom, the finance capital of America continues exploiting Latin America and involving the natives in a state of violence and lawlessness. The natives are dehumanized and humiliated. They long for a stable state devoid of capitalist intrigues.

Conrad delineates the natives in *Nostrono* as helpless people who are incapable of resisting the violence in their society. The natives are passive living under permanent suffering and they are condemned to poverty and starvation. They "are inherently incapable of acting rationally." The Latin Americans are subject to unending poverty, misery and hopelessness inflicted on them not only by foreign capitalists but also by the local Creoles who condemn the people to poverty by supporting the prevailing economic
system. Don José Avellanos sees poverty and oppression around him and declares: "Poor Costaguana! Before, it was everything for the padres, nothing for the people; and now it is everything for these great políticos in Stá Marta, for Negroes and thieves." As a liberal humanist, Conrad concerns himself with the fate and destiny of the Latin Americans who find that their feelings and interests are disregarded by the foreign capitalist elements or the local Creols who control the political scenario. Mrs. Gould through her journey with her husband all over the province has seen the "people, suffering and mute, waiting for the future in a pathetic immobility of patience." The natives are incapable of fighting social injustice. They cannot displace their rulers, and as a result they stoically bear the burden of socio-economic oppression. The Creole oligarchs and the United State's economic control of Latin America have enslaved the natives. It is observed that the local Caesars are indolent and careless. Conrad reveals that the lower classes are living in a mental darkness unconscious of the dark future waiting for them. The natives stand in danger of the primary evil of industrialism.

_Nostromo_ confronts much more directly the reality of social interaction. It provides a sweeping study of social classes and changing class relations. Conrad evokes the community in all its social range and historical depth. The focus of _Nostromo_ is the people and their representative
Nostromo. The individual is exposed to all kinds of foreign pressure and influence. The individual citizens, by and large, live in a sort of stupor. The unionists party of Guzman Bento is opposed to the aristocratic Blancos of the federalist party. Federalism of this kind expresses the desire of the aristocrats to be free from the supremacy of central government. Class conflicts prevail in the novel. It is a fight between the rich and the poor. Even Nostromo decides to fight the rich with their own weapons when he discovers that he has been badly exploited. He cries, "you fine people are all alike. All dangerous. All betrayers of the poor who are your dogs."

29 There is misery, degradation and pathetic aspiration in the Republic. The people are portrayed as living a primitive life. Conrad, the humanist, tries to attract our attention to the misery of the Latin Americans who suffer under the yoke of economic imperialism. Juliet McLauchlan says:

With sympathy and compassion Conrad gives picture upon picture of their suffering, poverty and hopelessness, with details of ways in which their individual feelings and interests are disregarded and scorned by those who control events. This is important for it is not Conrad's lack of concern or compassion which is reflected in the presentation, but the cruel indifference of 'material interests' and of all those to whom the people do not count as individuals. 30

In the initial stages, Nostromo identifies himself most fully and wholeheartedly with the larger interests of the community. In this sense he may be considered an altruist. He becomes an egoist because he is tempted by the silver

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which makes him completely absorbed in his own designs to turn rich. By strange methods, individualism here leads to social action, but subsequently, his social integration comes to a stop on account of his personal preoccupation. The tragic vision of the novel develops on account of ironic relationships of the communal identity and the total alienation of Nostromo from social concerns.

The natives stagger under the weight of the political developments and the political upheavals on the Costaguanian scene. "Conrad is concerned with a savage portrayal of the forces which exploit and victimise, and which thus keep people in such grinding conditions that they remain in their backwardness."\(^{31}\)

The wealthiest region of Costaguana, Sulaco, has been opened to large scale foreign investment. The Anglo-American finance capital has exploited the country mercilessly. The society as a whole is corrupted by modern capitalism. Conrad brilliantly suggests that a discontented class of urban proletariat has arisen in Sulaco. The foreign investors have robbed the country ruthlessly. Material interests in Sulaco have the ability to corrupt both the society and the inhabitants. Many parallels have been drawn by many critics between the fictional history of Costaguana as it is narrated in *Nostromo* and the actual political events which happened in Cuba, Paraguay and the African Congo. Conrad is capable of portraying the active political forces which are working
actively in our modern life. Daiches praises Conrad's astonishing political insight in treating the socio-political events and their impact on his characters. Daiches writes:

...the uncanny perceptiveness with which Conrad traces the impact on the behaviour and attitude of his characters of the political and economic forces inevitably set in motion when a backward state suddenly finds itself possessed of independence and in the orbit of the Western industrial world.32

Conrad portrays faithfully the political situation in the Republic. He comes to a conclusion that political change is incapable of bringing about good life, justice and human happiness. Conrad's belief that politics cannot redeem the human condition is absolutely correct in Nostromo. Sulaco's future improves but very little and temporarily. Sulaco changes but the people do not change. The Goulds' marriage reaches a hopeless end. Charles Gould's devotion to the mine dehumanizes him. Decoud cannot tolerate loneliness and solitude; he commits suicide. Nostromo is completely wrong when he thinks that he can love his fiancée Linda and lust for Giselle. "Nostromo is a rich and profound examination of human life because it shows this interinvolvement of the individual and the group."33 All the inhabitants are the victims of finance capitalism. Mostly wronged and victimized among them are the poor and the ignorant. One government is almost as useless as another. "[H]istory escapes man's intentions and his will."34 Conrad shows in Nostromo how the
individual man's will plays a big role in determining the future of society.

Costaguana staggers under a mental and moral darkness. Darkness prevails in the whole country. The lower classes suffer from mental darkness by failing to understand the motives of their leaders and by sitting idle watching the confused and troubled situation, unable to take any preventive measures to stop violence and victimization in their society. The leaders in their turn suffer from a moral darkness. The inhabitants do not count for them as human beings. They care for their own interests and benefits and ignore the natives. Darkness is oppressive literally and metaphorically. Sulaco streets are often dark. The characters move in darkness with few gleams of light. Darkness is an image of ignorance, evil and death. Darkness is associated with corruption and moral blindness. It is argued that tiny gleams of light are incapable of dispelling the darkness.

Nostromo, the protagonist, is an Italian who has been appointed to work as the foreman of the lightermen at the port. He is referred to as the Capataz de Cargadores. 'Nostromo' is an Italian word which means 'our man'. He is the man of the people. By claiming to be a man of the people, he differentiates himself from the fine aristocratic persons like Gould, Decoud and Avellanos. As Conrad views him:

Nostromo does not aspire to be a leader in a personal game. He does not want to raise himself above the mass. He is content to feel himself a
power-within the people... He is a man with the weight of countless generations behind him and no parentage to boast of... Like the people... in his improvidence and generosity, in his lavishness with his gifts, in his manly vanity, in the obscure sense of his greatness, and in his faithful devotion with something despairing as well as desperate in its impulses, he is a Man of the People, their very own unenvious force, disdaining to lead but ruling from within... Antonia the Aristocrat and Nostromo the Man of the People are the Artisans of the New Era, the true creators of the New State; he by his legendary daring feat...

Nostromo is very careful about his public image. He prefers death to his public image being tarnished. He is incorruptible. He wants the people to speak well about him. He is very human and moral at the beginning but later on he is corrupted by silver. He works out of vanity and egoism. He has won the confidence of the people and the confidence of his masters. Decoud gives us a valuable description of his personality: "He is more naive than shrewd, more masterful than crafty, more generous with his personality than the people who make use of him are with their money."³⁶ The Capataz de Cargadores is regarded as invaluable and indispensable. He is very useful for his master Captain Mitchell. He builds up his prestige at the port and in the town. He renders some valuable services to the cause of the Blanco party in Sulaco. He has rescued the overthrown President Ribiera from the mob. Nostromo appears in all the incidents as an organiser and administrator. Nostromo is capable of subduing and dispersing the mob and the riots because of the awe in which he has always been held by most
people in the town. Captain Mitchell feels that without Nostromo "Ribiera would have been a dead man. This Nostromo, Sir, a man absolutely above reproach became the terror of all the thieves in the town."^37 Captain Mitchell opines that Nostromo is the only man to be trusted. But it seems that Mitchell is not completely correct in judging the character of Nostromo who at the end of the novel becomes corrupted by silver. Captain Mitchell evaluates Nostromo as such: "He carried all our lives in his pocket. Devotion, courage, fidelity, intelligence were not enough. Of course, he was perfectly fearless and incorruptible. But a man was wanted that would know how to succeed. He was that man."^38

Towards the end of the novel Nostromo's vanity is wounded. He becomes conscious of his class when he is exploited. He has finally seen the truth of Giorgio's words when he said: "Kings, ministers, aristocrats, the rich in general, kept the people in poverty and subjection; they kept them as they kept dogs, to fight and hunt for their service."^39 As he becomes conscious of his own class, he becomes aware of the workers' condition who work with him. He becomes overpowered by a feeling of unreality and futility. Nostromo feels that he is betrayed by his masters whom he has served for a long time. He feels the pinch of poverty and privation.

Nostromo feels that others have taken advantage of his fidelity. He becomes both betrayer and betrayed. Instead of
becoming a revolutionary he becomes a capitalist. In the garb of leading the secret societies which try with Antonia and Father Corbelán to form a new revolution to unify Costaguana and Sulaco, Nostromo tries to amass enough wealth to leave the country with Giselle. Nostromo possesses the silver he has been entrusted with in order to save it from the Monterists. He feels that Giselle's love will free him from his guilt. He tries to support the revolution by his stolen silver. "Nostromo's corruption by silver, which is, in part, a complex symbol of 'material interests', evokes the moral danger of taking on the values of the propertied classes that yawns before revolutionary movements." 40 Nostromo is the story of Nostromo who is corrupted by silver. It is the story of anyone of us who may be corrupted by silver.

Morally speaking, by stealing the silver Nostromo has committed a blunder for which he has paid dearly. Many years after the novel's publication in 1918 Conrad writes to Edmund Gosse:

But Nostromo is not a thief. He is a strong man succumbing to a temptation of which mere greed is the smallest possible ingredient...In the very hour of death he is reluctant to disclose his secret to Mrs. Gould. Perhaps it is only then that Nostromo secures that recognition of his character for which he had been thirsting all his life, when Mrs. Gould, the perfectly sympathetic woman is obscurely moved to refuse the confession (which she sees it costs him so much to make). 41

Teresa Viola the wife of the Garibaldino Giorgio Viola lavishes all her maternal love for her desired son because
she is under the spell of his reputation. But later on she affirms that Nostromo "thinks of nobody but himself." The Violas take Nostromo as a son, hoping he will protect them from the riots. Teresa feels that Nostromo is conscienceless. However, he has not forgotten his friends, the Violas, while he is fighting a mob. He comes with a group of Italians to see them.

Nostromo refuses to get Teresa a priest while she is on her deathbed. She has given him a lot of maternal love but he is not faithful. It seems that a conflict between human values and his duties as a servant of the people has overwhelmed his heart. He has refused the religious faith by choosing silver over Teresa. Nevertheless, Nostromo feels remorse at what he has done. Nostromo has a superstitious fear of Teresa's prophecy which she has made on her deathbed. She says: "They have been paying you with words. Yours folly shall betray you into poverty, misery, starvation. The very leperos shall laugh at you - the great Capataz." Nostromo believes that Teresa's prophecy is a curse on him. It has made him a slave of the silver. He saves the silver at the cost of Teresa's peace of mind. His abandonment of Teresa prefigures his abandonment of Decoud on the Great Isabel.

Nostromo staggers under the burden of his guilt. He suffers from a spiritual and moral collapse. The prophecy of Teresa comes true. He turns to the silver entrusted to his care. He goes in his isolation from the people. Nostromo
suffers from an ironic separation from the people with whom he has had his dealing all his life. His regal life isolates him from any genuine relation with the masses who admire him. Nostramo inflicts the burden of isolation on himself by consenting to save the silver and later on by stealing it. The sailing at night closes his relationship with his land, literally detaches him from the public, and spiritually throws him into utter loneliness. He is insulated in having to act by stealth alone. His loneliness, like Razumov's, becomes unbearable. In Razumov, isolation acts as an inseparable part of his existence. It takes a psychological turn in addition to the accompanying physical isolation. It begins from his birth and continues till he wins over the pangs of isolation. Nostramo gets isolated after the theft of the silver and continues to be so up to his death. He feels a sense of betrayal. Conrad accounts for this:

The magnificent Capataz de Cargadores, deprived of certain simple realities, such as the admiration of women, the adulation of men, the admired publicity of his life, was ready to feel the burden of sacrilegious guilt descend upon his shoulders.44

Nostramo is the victim of his vanity as much as he is the victim of the riches. The moment of his consciousness proves to be fatal. It does not prove to be a radical point of departure. He falls a prey to the lure of silver. Nostramo rationalizes his theft of silver by explaining it to himself: "The rich lived on wealth stolen from the

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people, but he had taken from the rich nothing—nothing that was not lost to them already by their folly and their betrayal. For he had been betrayed—he said—he deceived, tempted."45 When Nostromo gets the treasure, he becomes estranged from all classes and men. Nostromo has never been ideologically committed to any social or political action of a revolutionary character. His lust for silver proves self-destructive. He has betrayed the soul of Teresa and later on he has betrayed Decoud. He has betrayed all of them by stealing the national treasure. The 'incorruptible' has been corrupted and isolated by silver. Nothing in the world can redeem him, not even his famous ride to Cayta which yields good and fruitful results.

Nostromo dies unable to make a confession regarding the whereabouts of the stolen silver. His death is both physical and moral. His confession may have redeemed him as Razumov in *Under Western Eyes* is redeemed. He has failed to reconcile his public and private values and here lies the secret of his fall. Nostromo is dominated by the conflict between appearance and reality. He "continued his appearance of serving public ends while in reality he was acting for private gain, with a scheme of almost total self-seeking."46 Previously Nostromo has served the poor, the workers and the rich. He has been human. He has found self-satisfaction in serving others. He has become a well-known and outstanding figure in the society. He has later on changed his moral and human values and by doing this he has lost self-satisfaction.
He has been feeling guilty and lonely. Consequently, he has come to his inevitable end. He has collapsed physically and morally.

As Nostromo has been seduced by the spell of silver, Charles Gould, also, is seduced by the lure of silver and is obsessed by it. Charles has inherited the mine from his father. His father wrote to him when he was abroad not to come back to Costaguana for claiming any property belonging to his father. Gould returns back to the mine. He is determined to go on with his work in the mine. In spite of the fact that Gould is obsessed by the Gould Concession and by the development of his 'material interests', he has retained something of his humanitarian vision:

...it was Don Pepe who called the gorge the Paradise of snakes. No doubt we have disturbed a great many. But remember, my dear, that... It is no longer a Paradise of snakes. We have brought mankind into it, and we cannot turn our backs upon them to go and begin a new life elsewhere. 47

Gould is an idealist. He thinks of working the mine and amassing silver. He also thinks that silver will be of great benefit to the inhabitants of Sulaco and Costaguana. Gould is a typical believer in capitalism and in the rationale of imperialism. He symbolizes the philosophy of capitalism in the novel. In the hope of using the mine to improve the conditions of the native population, Gould supports the regime of Ribiera. He even has evolved what he considers to
be a human scheme for the mine's operation, and moral ideas for the economical production of the mine. He tells his wife:

What is wanted here is law, good faith, order, security. Anyone can declaim about these things, but I pin my faith to material interests. Only let the material interests once get a firm footing, and they are bound to impose the conditions on which alone they can continue to exist. That's how your money-making is justified here in the face of lawlessness and disorder. It is justified because the security which it demands must be shared with an oppressed people. A better justice will come afterwards. 48

Gould hopes to bring peace and security to Costaguana. He is optimistic of putting an end to riots, civil war, class struggle and violence in society. He offers his justification of material interests. He rationalizes the use of material interests for helping the greatest good of the people of Costaguana, and for advancing a new era of peace and prosperity. He tries to make a success out of the mine, but the mine becomes the cause of a moral disaster.

To regenerate the mine Charles seeks the help of an American financier from San Francisco. "To implement his plan of disobedience, Charles has recourse to another 'father', Holroyd, without whose advice and money Charles would be powerless. Holroyd represents capital in the abstract - the growth of 'material interests' which will eventually choke out everything human and good..." 49 Holroyd is seen by Mrs. Gould to be preaching the religion of silver and iron. Charles advocates the cause of Holroyd on the
pretext that Holroyd will die one day, but silver and material interests will continue to serve the oppressed people. Holroyd is very proud of his country. He believes that America will one day become the most important economic and commercial power in the world:

Time itself has got to wait on the greatest country in the whole of God's universe. We shall be giving the word for everything: industry, trade, law, journalism, art, politics and religion... We shall run the world's business whether the world likes it or not. The world can't help it - and neither can we, I guess.'50.

Gould is an idealist who images himself to be an emissary of light in the darkness of Costaguana. However, Conrad treats Gould ironically when Gould feels that he is an idealist with a difference. Gould "cannot act or exist without idealizing every simple feeling, desire, or achievement. He could not believe his own motives if he did not make them first a part of some fairy tale. The earth is not quite good enough for him."51

Charles does not try to put an end to the corruption prevalent in Costaguana. On the contrary he uses corruption to bribe the politicians to strengthen his political position and to secure the work of the mine. "The Gould Concession had to fight for life with such weapons as could be found at once in the mire of corruption that was so universal as to almost lose its significance."52 Charles has chosen the corrupt way. The regeneration of the mine demands that he act
in opposition to his principles. He has undergone a moral change but he has retained his prestige and his public image. Antonia addresses him saying:

It is your character that is the inexhaustible treasure which may save us all yet; your character, Carlos not your wealth. I entreat you to give this man your word that you will accept any arrangement my uncle may make with their chief. One word. He will want no more.\textsuperscript{53}

Charles claims to be a Costaguanero, but it seems that he is not able to understand the needs of the Costaguaneros. He is a third generation Costaguanero, whose grand-father fought with Bolivar, and whose uncle served as President of the Sulacan province. He is educated in England. He forgets his origin and the land on which he has been born. He is not interested in the people's well-being. Charles loses his balance of mind, and also forgets his duty to his wife. He is short sighted in good and in love. Mrs. Gould "saw clearly the San Tomé mine possessing, consuming, burning up the life of the last of the Costaguana Goulds: mastering the energetic spirit of the son as it had mastered the lamentable weakness of the father."\textsuperscript{54} His wife feels loneliness. She suffers from acute lack of communication. "Charles Gould, though gaining untold treasure, loses real treasures of love and peace of mind... he loses the spiritual riches which his marriage promised."\textsuperscript{55} Charles Gould has devoted all his time to the development of the San Tomé mine. A wife expected some attention from her husband, but Charles has given all his
attention to the mine, with the result that Mrs. Gould's life has been deprived of that happiness which usually comes from the affection shown by a husband to his wife. He always keeps silent and refuses to discuss things with her. "Charles Gould's fits of abstraction depicted the energetic concentration of a will haunted by a fixed idea. A man haunted by a fixed idea is insane. He is dangerous even if that idea is an idea of justice."\textsuperscript{56} Dr. Monygham feels that Charles, by developing material interests, has ruined his wife's life and endangered his life. The doctor considers that Charles is "hopelessly infected with the madness of revolutions."\textsuperscript{57} Charles's madness proves self-destructive. He has lost his inner dignity which comes from self-respect. His gradual corruption results in a real diminution of what he is. A man who proves useless for his wife will not prove useful for others. The centre of his affections has been blocked. Charles Gould has been dehumanized. He has failed to bring any kind of justice to the people.

The mine has involved Charles in his political activities. He has been compelled to support the Ribierist Blanco Party. He sees that he has been mistaken in supporting Ribiera who has not offered the country anything. He comes to realize the truth that he is an adventurer in Sulaco:

\textit{After All, with his English parentage and English upbringing, he perceived that he was an adventurer in Costaguana, the descendant of adventurers enlisted in a foreign legion, of men who had}
sought fortune in a revolutionary war, who had planned revolutions... For all the uprightness of his character, he had something of an adventurer's easy morality which takes count of personal risk in the ethical appraising of his action. He was prepared, if need be, to blow up the whole San Tome mountain sky high out of the territory of the Republic. 58

Gould has rejected the world including his wife. He has rejected Sulaco and its people. He has ignored the same people who marched in Sulaco and saved him from the hands of the occupying forces who wanted to shoot him. He has failed to prove his morality. It seems that "behind Charles Gould's facade of moral rectitude lies the soul of a pirate." 59 It is true that the mine has brought some peace and prosperity to the land but it is only for a short time. When the mine is at the top of its success, the poor are not better than before. Their suffering is still the same. The dock workers still live in huts. The common people are still drafted in the army by force. Charles fails to see how the mine is hated and feared. He fails to acknowledge the horror within himself. He is as hollow as Kurtz in Heart of Darkness. Gould is a colonizer like Kurtz. In the name of bringing light to the dark region, the so-called civilizers like Kurtz victimize the people in the poor countries, rob them of their natural wealth, humiliate them and spread the reign of immoral and inhuman suffering and violence. Gould, Sir John and Holroyd belong to the class of Kurtz. They are the organisers of exploitation. They have the mind that creates and plans. They exploit the natives, the poor and the simple—
hearted people. On the other hand, the natives, Mrs. Gould and Nostromo belong to the class of the ordinary man. They are classed with Verloc in *The Secret Agent*.

The inhumanity of Charles Gould is juxtaposed to the humanity and morality of his wife Emilia. Charles has come under the spell of the mine and material interests. Mrs. Gould is admired and loved. Her treasures are immaterial. She is mostly admired by Dr. Monygham. They both care for the people simply because they are people. Dr. Monygham adores her because she is human, because she feels pity for those who suffer in the world.

"She thinks of that girl," he said to himself; "she thinks of the Viola children; she thinks of me; of the wounded; of the miners; she always thinks of everybody who is poor and miserable! But what will she do if Charles gets the worst of it in this infernal scrimmage those confounded Avellanos have drawn him into? No one seems to be thinking of her." 60

Mrs. Gould is a woman who is concerned for people. That is why she is loved by the people. She cares for the safety of her husband who has refused to communicate with her. She loves Gould and it is her love for him which prevents her from breaking free from him. Mrs. Gould finds her husband to be indifferent to her basic needs. She feels that Gould's absorption in the mine prevents him from seeing his deficiency as a husband. The jewels she wears indicate the contrast between the glittering appearance of her position and the reality she lives in. She knows that her husband is
devoted to a different ideal and lives in a different world, the world of the mine and the world of material interests. Their life is completely emptied of human warmth and affection. They have no children and this indicates the sterility of their life.

Mrs. Gould has come to know Sulaco's hospitality. She has been able to appreciate the great worth of the people. Don Pépe, the old Costaguana Major, has conferred upon Mrs. Gould the name of the 'never-tired Senora'. He has told her that Costaguana has previously been exploited by the priests and now it is being exploited by the politicians. Mrs. Gould has seen how the people are "suffering and mute, waiting for the future in a pathetic immobility of patience." 61

Mrs. Gould is a sympathetic woman. Benevolence is one of her characteristics. She is neither selfish nor egoist. She thinks of the welfare of all classes of the people who find themselves confronted with social injustice. She is "the kindest, most gracious woman the sun ever shone up." 62 She cares for everybody, thinks of the suffering people and the downtrodden. Unfortunately, nobody seems to be thinking of her. She finds some consolation in doing social beneficial work. She directs her attention towards charitable work. Mrs. Gould is no doubt a saint. As a suffering woman, she is sensitive, humane and gracious. She is completely different from her inhuman husband:
Probably [Charles] thinks of nothing apart from his mine; of his "Imperium in Imperio". As to Mrs. Gould, she thinks of her schools, of her hospitals, of the mothers with the young babies, of every sick old man in the three villages. If you were to turn your head now you would see her extracting a report from that sinister doctor in a check shirt - what's his name? Mongvham or else catechizing Don Pépé or perhaps listening to Padre Roman.63

Mrs. Gould is referred to as the agent of moral insight in the novel. "She is most of all concerned with humanity, and with those values that are spiritual rather than material. Whereas Mitchell provides us with a sort of basic unimaginative morality, Emilia is the positive spiritual power behind the whole novel."64

Mrs. Gould fails in her efforts to prevent her husband from playing an important role in the public affairs of the country and from getting involved in political activities. She finds that for him the mine is a fetish and that the fetish has grown into a very dangerous and intolerable weight. She feels depressed when Dr. Mongvham tells her that the Gould Concession would one day lead to much resentment in the country and might become the cause of considerable bloodshed. She no longer considers that material interests possess the primary function of serving and relieving the poor and the oppressed. Cooper writes:

...it is she who realises the sort of personal destruction which progress- in this particular instance the railway- means. Her attitude is here symbolised by the way in which she is instrumental in preserving the Casa Viola from imminent but needless demolition. Similarly, her painting of
the Paradise of Snakes in its original state when man has been already catered for there, symbolises her sorrow at the destruction of the natural environment for the sake of this material progress. 65

Mrs. Gould knows that the mine will drag Charles to disaster. She feels frustrated for not being able to hold him back from the mine. She knows that her husband is incorrigible in his service of the mine and the material interests on which he has pinned his faith. She, therefore, holds material interests responsible for having rendered her life desolate by depriving her of her husband's love. All positions in the absence of a harmonious conjugal partnership become meaningless and useless. She tries to rescue him from his involvement. Her "mission is to save him from the effects of that cold and overmastering passion, which she dreads more than if it were an infatuation for another woman." 66 She has been hurt in the most sensitive place of her soul. She looks for justice in this world. Despite her sufferings she survives. Her survival is ensured by "two things: The fact that she stands for the spiritual value of a thing rather than the material, and, a development of this, her concern for personal relationships." 67 She resembles Mrs. Ramsay in Virginia Woolf's To the Light House. Mrs. Ramsay is the source of love and affection who gives everybody around her care and attention. She arranges marriages for the boys and girls around her and takes care of them. It is true that Mrs. Gould resembles Mrs. Ramsay in her feminine way of giving others love and affection.
Mrs. Gould feels that the exploitation of the poor countries by foreigners due to material interests has proved to be destructive. The neo-colonizers who are operating in Costaguana must be more responsive to the problems of the present and the needs of the future. She thinks that a just society cannot be formed under conditions of economic imperialism. In her eyes, the silver for which the exploiters are competing is a curse, and material interests are evil. She refuses to hear the secret about the whereabouts of the silver from Nostromo at his deathbed because she feels that this treasure makes everybody miserable.

An immense desolation, the dread of her own continued life, descended upon the first lady of Sulaco. With a prophetic vision she saw herself surviving alone the degradation of her young ideal of life, of love, of work—all alone in the Treasure House of the world. The profound, blind, suffering expression of a painful dream settled on her face with its closed eyes. In the indistinct voice of an unlucky sleeper, lying passive in the grip of a merciless nightmare, she stammered out aimlessly the words: "Material interest."^{68}

Mrs. Gould is the victim of material interests. Her husband's love for her has been swallowed up by his material preoccupations.

Since the novel is a study of revolutions and counter-revolutions, it is profitable to analyse Decoud's character who "overcomes his dilettantism by placing himself at the centre of a social revolution; he provides it with its ideology of provincial separatism."^{69} Also, since the novel

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studies the relationship between personal and social motives, between egoism and the urge for community, it will be profitable to study the character of Decoud as a parallel to Nostromo. In the words of Fleishman:

Decoud, like Nostromo, gives directions to a whole society but resists the assimilation of his precarious identity in the community, to his ultimate downfall. Decoud and Nostromo are the sacrifices that revolutions exact in order to succeed; they are the leaders, like those described by the narrator of Under Western Eyes, who begin revolutions but do not survive to guide them.70

Decoud is the voice of sceptical intelligence in the novel. He becomes involved in politics only as a way of courting Antonia. We are introduced to Decoud as a "talented young man, supposed to be moving in the higher spheres of Society. As a matter of fact, he was an idle boulevardier, in touch with some smart journalists."71 Decoud has been born in Costaguana but had been brought up in Paris. "He imagined himself, Parisian to the tips of his fingers. But far from being that he was in danger of remaining a sort of nondescript dilettante all his life."72 He starts editing the Porvenir through which he is able to voice the rights of his countrymen. He has been a sceptic who never talks seriously.

Decoud regards himself as a practical man. He is like Lord Jim who achieves his recovery by involving himself in the political and social life of the native community. Decoud involves himself in the politics of Costaguana. He suggests the separation of Sulaco from Costaguana. His suggestion
comes true after his death. "'Separation of course', declared Martin. 'Yes'; separation of the whole Occidental Province from the rest of the unquiet body. But my true idea, the only one I care for, is not to be separated from Antonia'."73 He makes sarcastical comments on the ambitions of Costaguanian politicians. He takes a detached view of other people. He is the voice of truth in the novel, "the voice of sceptical intelligence, with 'no faith in anything except the truth of his own sensations'."74

Decoud is not a patriot, and he has admitted this. He is a native of Costaguana because he was born there. But he has offered his services to the Blanco party. He has arranged for a large consignment of rifles to be used by the pro-Blanco soldiers against the rebellious Monterist troops. In his newspaper he has propagated the cause of the Blanco party policies and has opposed General Montero by describing him as a monstrous beast. Decoud evaluates himself: "I am no patriot."75 He also evaluates Charles Gould as a self-deluded idealist and evaluates Nostromo as "incorruptible by his enormous vanity, that finest form of egoism which can take on the aspect of every virtue."76 Decoud lacks both idealism and patriotism. He helps Sulaco to develop into a community. He is motivated to act politically for the sake of his love for Antonia. Whatever the motive for separation is, it must be admitted that Decoud's plan has proved a success. It has united many forces in society to establish Sulaco. These
forces are the proletarians represented by the mine workers; the peasantry led by Hernandez, and the military forces led by General Barrios.

Decoud has strengthened his ties with his motherland. He has advocated the cause of Sulaco’s future and the democratic revolution in the interests of the community. It is Decoud's separation that results in his isolation on Great Isabel and his suicide. The removal of the silver takes him far away from the community where he is left alone. So far he has been maintaining link with the public through his newspaper and other political responsibilities. But Decoud now inflicts the burden of isolation on himself by consenting to escort the treasure. The sailing at night puts an end to his relationships, detaches him from the public. He finds himself on the verge of despair. His self is separated from others. It has lost its identity. As Fleishman views it, "in the absence of social connection, the self's only link is to nature, but it is an empty nature and a hollow link." Decoud commits suicide because he is not able to manage his life alone. Individuality is an illusion, a necessary illusion which must be accompanied by reality.

Decoud has no real belief or faith. He, in his solitude, externalizes his emptiness, so passions rather than principles govern him. Ultimately unable to tolerate the solitude of the island he decides to commit suicide:
The young apostle of separation had died striving for his idea by an ever-lamented accident. But the truth was that he died from solitude... The brilliant Costaguanero of the boulevards had died from solitude and want of faith in himself and others.  

Decoud is a victim of the silver. He is also "a victim of the disillusioned weariness which is the retribution meted out to intellectual audacity."  

Conrad describes Nostromo as the "victim of the disenchanted vanity which is the reward of audacious action."  

Decoud is treated ironically by Conrad and with a good degree of contempt. He is selfish and immoral. Decoud dies and leaves Antonia alone. He is remembered as the author of Sulaco's independence and the father of its development into a community.

Dr. Monygham is one of the victim's of Guzman Bento. He has been tortured severely by Bento's interrogator, Father Beron. He is regarded as an eccentric character who has a "misanthropic mistrust of mankind."  

He has betrayed his fellows by confessing and telling lies. This has been done because of the severe torture he has been subjected to. He has betrayed some of his best friends. After his release after the death of Bento he has felt ashamed of confession. This has prevented him from looking anybody in the face. Most of the Europeans living in Sulaco have not liked him because of his betrayal. Dr. Monygham has neither reputation nor self-respect, but "his selfless devotion to Mrs. Gould affects his regeneration by giving him the strength to behave in such a way that he regains his self-respect."  

His devotion brings
light in his dark life. But Conrad makes us feel sympathy for the deformed doctor who feels himself isolated from other members of society. Even Conrad defends him by saying that the doctor's contempt for his friends is not callousness, but it is the lack of it:

People believed him scornful and soured. The truth of his nature consisted in his capacity for passion and in the sensitiveness of his temperament. What he lacked was the polished callousness of men of the world, the callousness from which springs an easy tolerance for oneself and others; the tolerance wide as poles asunder from true sympathy and human compassion. This want of callousness accounted for his sardonic turn of mind and his biting speeches.83

Dr. Monygham has been a real witness to the history of Costaguana with its revolutions and counter-revolutions. He is an experienced man in Costaguana who feels that the mine holds a potential danger for its owner. He predicts that there can be no peace and no rest in the development of material interests. He is frank in expressing his opinion about the Gould Concession in spite of his knowledge that Mrs. Gould will resent it. He tells Mrs. Gould that the mine will "weigh as heavily, and provoke resentment, bloodshed, and vengeance, because the men have grown different."84

The doctor is concerned with the well being of the people. He is devoted to Mrs. Gould. He is her medical pastor. He deceives Sotillo, who has begun a search for the silver, by telling him that the silver was lying somewhere in the sea and not on the land. His object in giving false information
about silver is to keep Sotillo far from Sulaco. The doctor remains human. He tries to save others from suffering since he has suffered as much as any human being may suffer. He feels that "there are people in danger whose little finger is worth more than you and I and all the Ribierists together." He even saves the whole province of Sulaco from the hands of the Monterists by sending Nostromo to Cayta to call Barrios and his forces. Dr. Monygham is a man capable of taking bold initiatives. General Barrios arrives and defeats the enemy forces. The people of Sulaco are saved from the hands of the Monterist forces led by Sotillo. He remains loyal to the mine and this is because in his heart he has identified the mine with Mrs. Gould. He was anxious to save the San Tomé mine from annihilation. He would be nothing without it. It was his interest. The doctor possesses the moral treasure of the love of Mrs. Gould. This brings him happiness. His treasure of love is contrasted to Nostromo's illegal treasure of silver which brought him moral corruption.

Despite his inner suffering, Dr. Monygham remains an idealist. He is characterized by a simple and important moral outlook. His actions are motivated by love. He is considered to be a moral agent in the novel. He is redeemed and rehabilitated. F.R. Leavis views his character as such:

Of all the characters the one nearest to self-sufficiency is Dr. Monygham, the disliked and distrusted, and he, for all his sardonic scepticism about human nature, does hold to an ideal. His scepticism is based on self-contempt, for his ideal (he is, in fact, a stronger and
quite unequivocal Lord Jim) is one he has offended against; it is an exacting ideal of conduct. He offers a major contrast with Nostromo too, since his success in the desperate venture that saves the situation and rehabilitates him...depends upon his having no reputation except for 'unsoundness' and a shady past, and his being ready to be ill-spoken of and ill-thought of.

The doctor has tried to change his evil image among the people. He has become very human in his behaviour and has started caring about the welfare of the inhabitants. He represents in the novel what is positive in humanity. He is present at the death of Nostromo because, he is the human being who cares for other human beings. Jefferson Hunter regards him as "the most intelligent moralist of the book."

Mitchell is the first character mentioned in the novel. He is "the O.S.N.'s superintendent in Sulaco for the whole Costaguana section of the service was very proud of his Company's standing." He has praised Nostromo for his bravery in suppressing riots, and in saving the President-Dictator Ribiera from the mob.

Captain Mitchell is very optimistic after the establishment of Sulaco as an independent state. He feels that Sulaco would be a state free from violence, riots and class struggle. This indicates that he lacks imagination and fails to predict the future. He is blind to the significance of events around him. He is human, honest and kind. It is argued that he is not corrupted by the mine or by the material interests, but his unquestionable acceptance of the
progress of material interests in Costaguana is a blunder. He also fails to judge the real character of Nostromo who is corrupted by silver. Juliet McLauchlan opines that Mitchell "is corrupt because his judgement is corrupt."\textsuperscript{90} He is a good man who believes in what he is doing. He has unlimited self-respect," for all his pomposity, in social intercourse, Captain Mitchell could meet the realities of his life in a resolute and ready spirit."\textsuperscript{91} He tells a part of the history of Costaguana, but he does not understand what he says. He is courageous and this is proved clearly through his captivity by Sotillo's soldiers. He has refused to confess the secret of the whereabouts of the silver. He is seen by Daiches as "Captain MacWhirr in Typhoon, his courage is bound up with his lack of imagination, even his lack of understanding."\textsuperscript{92}

Captain Mitchell is a supporter of the Blanco party. He has helped in rescuing Ribiera from the mob, and he has supervised the loading of the lighter with silver to save it from the hands of the Monterists. He also superintends the embarkation of Barrios' troops who are to sail to Cayta. He is much concerned with the future of Sulaco. He "is proud to have taken part in the stirring events which led to the foundation of the Occidental Republic... he depicts the riot as glamorous, exciting episode, full of heroic deeds..."\textsuperscript{93}

Conrad has drawn Captain Mitchell skilfully. He is useful for Conrad to give comments on characters and incidents. Mitchell has introduced Nostromo to us. He is seen
by F.R. Leavis as "sane and stable to the point of stupidity." His stupidity and lack of imagination is seen in his praising Nostromo who later on turns into a corrupt man.

Conrad wants to sound a warning in Nostromo that capitalism and imperialism cannot bring stability in a society, and if they do it would be only for a short time. After the separation of Sulaco, people are hopeful to get prosperity and happy life, but their dream has not been fulfilled. The communist party had organised its classes; and the workers and the refugees from Costaguana are enlisted to revolt against the capitalist exploiters. Father Corbelán and Antonia are conspiring with Nostromo and the natives to reunify Costaguana with Sulaco. Hernandez, the ex-bandit offers himself as a leader to the people in order to liberate the country from the capitalist exploiters and to "raise the country with the new cry of wealth for the people." The agitators feel that feudal relations still prevail, the entire economy depends on industry controlled from abroad. They feel that this country cannot reach stability or democracy. The events in Nostromo are interpreted by some critics from a Marxist point of view, implying the concept of history as study in revolutionary process. The history of Costaguana has witnessed the change from feudalism to capitalism and from capitalism to class struggle and then the establishment of a socialistic order. However, Conrad is not a Marxist idealogue and this prevents us from looking upon
history as a class struggle. His objective appears to be more in the nature of presenting the process of corruption generated by the overemphasis of material interests.

As a humanist, Conrad sounds a warning in Nostromo that revolutions alone cannot bring in a social change or justice to the inhabitants. The inhabitants are insulated and victimized by the rapid revolutionary changes. Costaguana has been in a state of perpetual revolution, which signifies meaningless struggle to him. "One government is almost as futile as another; therefore, governmental changes bring no relief and are no real or permanent solution... No doubt, the revolution has brought financial prosperity to the state but this has been at a high cost of individual suffering." Revolutions cannot bring a permanent peace. It is only humanistic and moral values that can bring about stability and justice. In Nostromo "the revolutionary changes are almost cyclical: from Separatism to Federation, to Separatism, to the suggestion of Federation at the end."  

Although Conrad is not committed to any particular general attitude to politics, he has expressed by images and symbols his indignation against exploitation and subjugation of the people by the imperialists and the neo-colonizers. Conrad is true to his historical and political views. He has opposed the American policies in the Spanish American war, and later on in Panama. In Nostromo, Conrad exposes the state of modern politics in Africa, Asia and in Latin America. It
is irrational and inhuman politics which pays little attention to the human values. In the novel, Conrad deals "with a socio-political process which he did not put in theoretical or abstract form, but which has been observed so often and so widely that its reality cannot now be contested.""98 He reveals, in Nostromo, the policies and partisan roles which dominate man's persistent attempts to govern other men. The political history is shown as assuming a cyclical pattern in which revolutions occur repeatedly. History in Nostromo is not only an account of events, it is also the story of the people who are forced to confront the forces of exploitation and the conditions of their existence. It is argued that the individual loses his authentic self in the cold forms of inhumanity brought in by materialism.

Conrad exposes the role of new imperialism in Latin America. The new imperialists are the same whether it is Kurtz, Gould or Holroyd; they all look the same and they have the same designs. In Nostromo, Conrad also reveals the real identity of Holroyd. He is like Kurtz who belongs to all Europe. Holroyd's "parentage was German and Scotch and English, with remote strains of Danish and French blood, giving him the temperament of a puritan and insatiable imagination of conquest.""99 He is a capitalist exploiter of the national wealth of Costaguana for which he has nothing but contempt. He is guided by the profit motive. Holroyd is not committed to any political ideology or any moral principle.
Conrad by implication and through irony, has expressed his indignation against finance capitalism, revolutions, class struggle and material interests. On behalf of the humble and the exploited, he has denounced vehemently imperialism and colonialism operating in Costaguana. If Conrad is committed to any creed, it is one of humanism.

In *Nostromo*, Conrad emerges as a moralist-humanist who is much concerned with the moral aspects of the complex inter-relations between the oppressed individual and the society under economic exploitation. The silver has corrupted many characters. Conrad is much concerned with the evil side of the mine and its influence on the people. The people in *Nostromo* are a part of a social situation which, try as they might, they cannot change or modify.

Ironically and tragically, the silver of the mine corrupts each character in the novel in a different way. The spirit of materialism has corrupted or defeated even those of exemplary goodness. Perhaps, this is the way Conrad wants to warn us that this age is the age of materialism. Even the honest Nostromo is corrupted by silver. He throws aside his religious faith and moral values for the sake of silver. Politicians, generals, clergymen and common men are corrupted by material interests. The people have thrown their morality and humanity aside in the mad pursuit of material interests. It seems that Conrad wants to warn us that "there is no happy ending by which we can find relief from the world of harsh
reality. For materialism is the reality of our age....None can escape. Partial exemption only can be found by the guiding principles arising from spiritual values. Only from these can we derive any hope at all."¹⁰⁰ Life in Costaguana becomes hell. The honest and upright man like Nostromo is converted into an animal — slave of the San Tomé mine. That is the beginning of his downfall. As a result he also degenerates in the matters of sex. He is engaged to Linda, but loves Giselle. Ultimately, he is killed because of that. The story of Nostromo is thus the story of an honest man Nostromo who degenerates to an inhuman level because of the temptations of the silver-treasure.