In Under Western Eyes, as in Nostromo the theme of isolation, as a consequence of an act of betrayal, is explored most skilfully by Conrad who is invariably interested in the moral aspect of a given situation. Moral isolation implies that what really counts in a man's life cannot be communicated to anybody else. This is a natural sequel to suppressed guilt. For instance, by committing a secret crime, Nostromo cuts himself off from his fellows. This results in his sense of overpowering moral solitude. Similarly, Razumov's betrayal of Haldin cuts him off from the Russian people who suffer both exploitation and oppression under the hegemony of an arbitrary autocracy. The Russia of Under Western Eyes presents the picture of an oppressed society where individual freedom is conspicuous by its absence; there is no legality; there are no institutions where moral corruption is not widespread; "where the noblest aspirations of humanity, the desire of freedom, an ardent patriotism, the love of justice, the sense of pity, and even the fidelity of simple minds are prostituted to the lusts of hate and fear, the inseparable companions of an uneasy despotism". 1 The interdependence of the individual and the community as the one essential condition of civilized existence, basic to Conrad's creed,
implies that the individual should be free to commit himself to his community in the expectation that the community will respect his freedom without which obligation cannot exist. However, under Czarist autocracy, obligation is replaced by coercion, and the integrity of the community is destroyed. The state and the people draw violently apart, people are forced to become either slaves or rebels; the citizens are either orphaned or disinherited by the state. "Whenever two Russians come together", says the narrator of the Russian colony in Geneva, "the shadow of autocracy is with them, tinging their thoughts, their views, their most intimate feelings, their private life, their public utterances - haunting the secret of their silences". The implication is that this shadow arrests the normal growth of whatever it covers. Judgements and thoughts of individuals "tend to cease to be part of daily life, harden into separate entities, and get erected into 'ideals' - that is, become increasingly remote from material realities". However, Razumov's act of betrayal is double-edged; it cannot merely separate him from his fellow Russians, but it also gives him a guilty conscience which will not let him rest. By betraying Haldin, he has snapped the most elemental bond of human fellowship. That is how he becomes a moral wreck.

The epigraph to the novel is a quote from Miss Natalia Haldin's statement. It signifies the Russian revolutionaries' hunger for freedom, signifying both political liberty and
individual freedom. "I would take liberty", declares Miss Haldin, "from any hand as a hungry man would snatch at a piece of bread". This rings like a passionate call for life, a civilized existence where human norms and values subsist. Her remarks relate her to another idealist, Charles Gould in Nostromo and to the Professor in The Secret Agent. As Daleski puts it; "Her remark thus brings to mind the moral nihilism that pervades the societies depicted in both Nostromo and The Secret Agent - and would seem further to imply that a moral opportunism is the distinguishing mark of anyone brought up in the Russia of Under Western Eyes...".

In Under Western Eyes Conrad dwells on the dilemma of a sensitive intellectual caught up in the mire of revolutionary politics. Razumov, as his name suggests, is a man of reason; the name is from the Russian root word 'Razum' which means 'mind, intellect, reason', and is typical of family name forms meaning 'men of mind, intellect, etc.' The suggestion is, that Razumov is not a stock Russian character. He wishes to reason out things for himself. He does not wish to be a part of the revolutionary struggle. He wants to keep himself aloof from the political turmoil. He is not interested in active politics, beyond affirming a vague liberalism. In his aloofness, he is self-contained and has no higher ambition than winning scholarly honours and attain to a high position in the official hierarchy.
Meaningfully, Conrad makes Haldin declare that Razumov is "collected-cool as a cucumber. A regular Englishman. Where did you get your soul from", which clearly suggests that in his mental make-up, Razumov is more like the elderly teacher of languages in Geneva; but above all, he represents the rational as against the typically (Russian) mystical—his solitude underlines it. As an illegitimate son, acknowledged by an anonymous remittance, he has nothing but his reason which he can call his own. "You are a son, a brother, a nephew, a cousin— I do not know what—to no end of people". He tells Haldin, "I am just a man. Here I stand before you. A man with a mind."

Though political conflict is the immediate stuff of the novel, Under Western Eyes is even less of a political novel than Nostromo or The Secret Agent. Conrad is concerned more with the effects of the Russian politics and moral nihilism on the individual psyche. He is concerned more with the spiritual conflict to which Razumov becomes subject. The immediate clue to Razumov's psychology is that he is alone in the world. He has had no family influence to shape his opinions or feelings. He is as lonely in the world "as a man swimming in the deep sea. The word Razumov was the mere label of a solitary individuality. There were no Razumovs belonging to him anywhere. His closest parentage was defined in the statement that he was a Russian". As such, he is concerned exclusively with keeping himself
afloat. Conrad subtly suggests that in Russia the limiting condition of such a concern is not only utter isolation but also complete detachment from the "throes of internal dissensions". The plot of the novel, however, at once makes it clear that in this Russia it is impossible to maintain such detachment. "Slipping into Razumov's rooms after the assassination, Haldin silently demonstrates that one cannot close one's door on dissensions in the street".

The unexpected arrival of Haldin confronts Razumov with a choice between fidelity to an individual and loyalty to the state. This recalls an analogous choice faced by the Captain-narrator once he takes Leggatt aboard, in *The Secret Sharer*. But whereas, the captain in *The Secret Sharer* identifies himself with Leggatt and firmly stands by him, Razumov sunders connection with Haldin and makes common cause with the Russian autocracy and the secret police. Caught between "the moral nihilism of Haldin and that of the State, Razumov succumbs as if to a moral plague, betrays Haldin, and becomes a spy. In the end it is with Verloc, the secret agent, that Razumov has an unexpected affinity".

In the earlier novel under study, *Nostromo*, a 'Man of People', suffers an ironic separation from the public when he is engaged in executing the commission of sailing the silver out of Sulaco to a place of safety. The Commission tries out his rectitude; he is overwhelmed by the egotistic
desire to possess the treasure. Like Jim, he falls into 'to everlasting deep hole'; he is left all alone. Similarly, Decoud who has for long maintained his link with public through his newspaper and other political manoeuvres, inflicts the burden of isolation on himself by consenting to accompany Nostromo on this mission. The sailing at night closes his land relationship, detaches him from the community and lands him in a state of utter solitude.

In case of Ræzumov, however, isolation acts as an inseparable part of his existence. It begins from his birth and does not end till he makes his confession to Haldin's sister, another Russian revolutionist in Geneva. Since he does not know who fathered him, he being the illegitimate son of an archbishop's pretty daughter now dead, and getting "a modest but very sufficient allowance",¹³ from his unidentified father through an obscure Attorney's office, Ræzumov begins experiencing isolation and loneliness as an inescapable burden of life. Since he is an illegitimate child, he has no family affiliations or moorings. This lack of family ties and affection creates physical, social and cultural isolation for him. He reminds us of Flora in Chance who also has no family link and no extraneous influence on her growth. He is beset with a kind of aloofness even at the University where he is studying. He does not mix freely with fellow students. As Conrad puts it, apart from very occasional meeting with the Professor, he
is "not known to have any social relations in the town". He regularly attends the obligatory lectures; otherwise, he lives a particularly solitary life. The awesome picture of his isolated life is intensified when it is disclosed that he is "a man with a mind... who had never heard a word of warm affection or praise in his life...." Razumov's isolation varies from that of many others in that it is inseparably linked with his psychological growth. The fact of his bastardy puts an urge in him for recognition, and he entertains the ambition of rising to a high position in his career one day. At the University, he only wants to be left alone to work out for himself a successful career. As Conrad puts it in the Author's note, "he is an ordinary young man, with a healthy capacity for work and sane ambitions. He has an average conscience. If he is slightly abnormal it is only in his sensitiveness to his position." Denied the strength and wisdom that comes from fellowship, and the sharing it implies, he reacts in a self-centred manner when the crunch comes. Circumstances intervene and change the course of life that Razumov has marked out for himself. These help in revealing both the man and the dilemma in which he finds himself caught.

Razumov's story is the story of an all-encompassing isolation beginning with his birth to his stay in Geneva, like a shadow it impinges on his thoughts, his actions and his relations with individuals. Zabel sums up the situation
This text discusses the character Razumov and compares him to other Conradian heroes. It highlights his solitary nature and his tendency to live by self-law, similar to the heroes of Balzac, Stendhal, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and Melville. The text also touches on Razumov's response to political and mental unrest, his personal identity, and his eventual betrayal, which is seen as driven by self-interest. The immediate response to Haldin's claim is a test of his dormant instincts and ambitions.
by his threatened and resentful egotism, plunges into the web of rationalization that finally persuades him to identify his own interests with the established Russian power".  

Ironically, it is exactly Razumov's isolation that attracts Haldin to him. "It occurred to me that you - you have no one belonging to you - no ties, no one to suffer for it if this came out by some means". Haldin's presumption about Razumov is entirely unsolicited, and places him in what is to become an intolerable situation. In response to Haldin's plea that he go to fetch the peasant Ziemianitch, he can feel nothing but the gravest threat to his own self-interest - "Razumov, of course, felt the safety of his lonely existence to be permanently endangered". His immediate response is motivated by the desire that he himself be minimally implicated, and so it inevitably occurs to Razumov (after finding Ziemianitch hopelessly drunk) that he will be safer if he turns Haldin in than if he aids in his escape. He quickly transforms his personal motive into a political rationale.

"Haldin means disruption", he thought to himself beginning to walk again. "What is he with his indignation, with his talk of bondage - with his talk of God's Justice? All that means disruption. Better that thousands should suffer than that a people should become a disintegrated mass, helpless like dust in the wind. Obscurantism is better than the light of incendiary torches..."
As Gekoski puts it, "Man cannot be free, life cannot cohere, without a structure that binds like with like. Haldin who "means disruption", is a threat to this structure and therefore a threat to the metaphysical safety of everyman". In other words, Razumov builds up for himself an ideal concept of patriotism. And strangely enough, Haldin's appeal to Razumov as a 'brother', designed to cut through his self-imposed isolation, only causes Razumov to think of his country and its people - a society which Haldin threatens to disintegrate; "Have I not got forty million brothers?", to who I owe an unbreakable obligation. From this it becomes clear that Razumov must betray him to the police.

"Betray. A great word. What is betrayal? They talk of a man betraying his country, his friends, his sweetheart. There must be a moral bond first. All a man can betray is his conscience. And how is my conscience engaged here; by what bond of common faith, of common conviction, am I obliged to let that fanatical idiot drag me down with him? On the contrary - every obligation of true courage is the other way."

Conrad's artistic skill here is so sure that he can even afford an undercutting irony while presenting Razumov with the greatest seriousness. When he retraces his steps under the personal urge to protect himself rather than save Haldin, Razumov begins unconsciously to move towards betrayal. The unconscious springs of his thoughts are strikingly suggested when he begins at once to reflect on the necessity
for 'The stick' and 'a stern hand' in his dealing with a man such as Ziemianitch. Since he views the driver as 'a true Russian man' and representative of 'the people', he tacitly aligns himself with the authoritarian forces of autocracy. The suggested implication is that he is guided more by self-interest than by the logic of human fellowship. Little does he realize that his betrayal of Haldin will make his isolation absolutely complete and unbearable. After leaving Ziemianitch, he casts round for ways of saving himself. He even contemplates killing Haldin on his return home, only to reject that course: "The corpse hanging round his neck would be nearly as fatal as the living man".27

Ironically, of course, Razumov's betrayal of Haldin hangs his corpse round his neck as fatally; and like the Ancient Mariner, Razumov carries that corpse with him until it drops from his neck when he confesses. "The literary association here provides a frame for the ensuing drama of guilt and expiation, and also points ahead to the change of perspective required for release".28

Conrad underscores the irony of this betrayal which leads to Razumov's moral isolation. His act of betrayal reduces Razumov's own life to an insubstantial emptiness. Within a month of the betrayal, he recognizes that "his existence (is) a great cold blank, something like the enormous plan of the whole of Russia levelled with snow and fading gradually on all sides into shadows and mists".29
His betrayal of Haldin implies the betrayal of his own conscience. The hollowness of his moral position is indicated by the fact that he disregards the moral bond between Haldin and himself, the bond of fellowship or brotherhood which Haldin asserts in turning to him for help, the bond of their common humanity whose obligations are as strong as those of a 'common faith' or 'common conviction':

That Razumov deliberately walks over 'the place where the breast of the phantom had been lying' brings out the human implications of the betrayal, the willed denial of feeling that it is; just as the fact that he sees Haldin lying 'right across his path', 'right in his way', is expressive of his view of Haldin as an obstacle to his own progress - and so of the base self-centredness of his public concern.

His moral act of cowardice in betraying Haldin intensifies his isolation, for he is haunted by the sights and sounds of Haldin's trusting departure from his rooms at his bidding. A suspicious uneasiness that seems to well up from the depths takes possession of him. It troubles his conscience.

Conrad most artistically records the effect on Razumov's consciousness of Haldin's exit from his rooms. As he listens to "rapid spiral descent of somebody running down the stairs on tiptoe", Razumov hangs over, "breathing the cold raw air tainted by the evil smells of the unclean staircase". Haldin's descent into 'The deep black shaft', with its sounds sinking away 'into the depths' and 'the
tiny flame' disappearing in shadow, becomes for Razumov an image of his descent to death'. And what Razumov breathes into his deepest being is an air which is 'tainted' not so much by 'the evil smells of unclean staircase' as by the corruption of betrayal. Hereafter Razumov's mind will never be addressed. Haldin's phantom will always be before him, always to be walked over. He can be killed but he cannot be dismissed. At first, Razumov tells himself - "This will pass and leave no trace... I am alright"; but towards the end, as he sits with Haldin's mother in Geneva, he realizes phantoms cannot so easily be exorcised. Razumov makes a discovery akin to that of Harry in Elliot's The Family Reunion:

Now I see
I have been wounded in a war of phantoms,
Not by human beings - they have no more power than I. The things I thought were real are shadows; and the real are what I thought were private shadows.  

In fact, the subtly suggestive, symbolic implication is that the phantoms are the hidden aspect of Razumov's character, which keep nibbling at his conscience. It is a basic Conradian feeling. In An Outcast of the Islands, Willems feels something monstrous and depraved forcing its complicity upon him. And in The Duel, General D'Hubert's whole life is endangered by 'these serious phantoms standing in his way'. Similarly, the sudden visitation of Jones, Ricardo and Pedro to Heyst's island of renunciation and
contemplation in *Victory*. "Think what it was to me to see them land in the dusk, fantasies from the sea-apparitions, chimaeras! And they persist. That's the worst of it - they persist. They have no right to be - but they are".\(^{34}\)

This remarkable interpretation by Tony Tanner indicates that life, as Conrad sees it, is "more illogical and absurd than reason could ever comprehend or allow for. Razumov's intelligence is insufficient defence against an unintelligible world".\(^{35}\)

Conrad graphically delineates the psychological states of Razumov's mind. As he walks slower, Razumov imagines Haldin 'pestilential disease' that would take from (him) all that made life worth living - a subtle pest "that would convert earth into a hell".\(^{36}\) His psychic torments reach a climax when he experiences hallucination. On the way back home, he suddenly casts his eyes upwards, sees "the clear sky of the northern winter, decorated with the sumptuous fires of the stars", and receives "an almost physical impression of endless space and of countless millions"\(^{37}\) of the Russians. He sees an image of the snow covering "the endless forest, the frozen rivers, the plains of an immense country, obliterating the landmarks, the accidents of the ground, levelling everything under its uniform whiteness, like a monstrous blank page awaiting the record of an inconceivable history".\(^{38}\) He is roused to a sense that what the immense country needs is "a will strong and
one!".39 Therefore, for him the course of action should be to act as a strong man on the 'monstrous blank page' that is Russia. The hallucination provides him with an emotional as well as ideological ground for the betrayal, for, "under the immense and level snow, the human is blotted out and the individual life made to seem utterly insignificant".40

In this psychological state he goes on "holding a discourse with himself with extraordinary abundance and facility".41 He finds no justification in letting his future, perhaps his "usefulness, ruined by this sanguinary fanatic".42 If he is to suffer, it should be for his "convictions, not for a crime" which his "cool superior reason - rejects".43 And not for a person who means "disruption".44 He considers; "do I want his health? No! I would save him if I could - but no one can do that - he is the withered member which must be cut off. If I must perish through him, let me at least not perish with him, and associated against my will with his sombre folly that understands nothing either of men or things".45 He mutters through his set teeth - "I shall give him up".46 Yet just as his mind arrives at this conclusion, two sledges collide near Razumov and he starts when he hears the cry: "Oh, thou vile wretch!"47 This hoarse yell, let out nearly in his ear, disturbs Razumov. Here, it is worthwhile to recall how Jim, refusing to admit his guilt, nevertheless spins
round when he hears a voice in a crowd yell: "Look at that wretched cur". In both cases, "something deeper than the mind remains ashamed and undeceived; if the conscience is like a worm then it is at this point in Razumov's life that it starts to turn and writhe". The implication is that it is in Razumov's mind rather than in the study of his father, Prince K -, a few minutes later that Haldin is betrayed. As Berthoud insightfully observes, it is Razumov's reaction to the hallucination that dramatizes the full ambiguity of his predicament. On the one hand, he asserts the reality and power of reason; on the other, it is an indirect affirmation of the reality of trust and conscience. "Although, looking back, he can see nothing but his footprints in the snow, he has performed an act of ritualistic sacrilege, the consequences of which are not the less serious for being invisible". In imagining to walk over the phantom figure of Haldin he literally tramples over his own conscience.

An utter mood of loneliness and isolation takes possession of Razumov after he has accomplished what he calls "an act of conscience". A profound melancholy assails Razumov heavily, when he realizes that there is no one "amongst eighty millions of his kith and kin" to whom "he could open himself". Razumov longs desperately for moral support in this hour of true loneliness. True loneliness is not the conventional word, but the naked terror. As
Conrad puts it, "no human being could bear a steady view of moral solitude without going mad". Crushingly aware of his own moral solitude, he seeks moral support from Prince K, his unacknowledged father. The Prince treats him with consideration and takes him to General T - of the Russian Police. Hereafter Razumov experiences the consequences of the betrayal in their myriad forms until he recognizes his tragic error and decides to make amends for it. After he has betrayed Haldin to the police, he returns to his room and suffers from "an atrocious aching numbness with shooting pain in his back and legs.... His mind hovered on the borders of delirium. He heard himself suddenly saying, 'I confess', as a person might do on the rack, 'I am on the rack', he thought". Conrad reinforces a sense of utter loneliness through the use of dream symbology:

Several times that night he woke up shivering from a dream of walking through drifts of snow in a Russia where he was as completely alone as any betrayed autocrat could be; an immense, wintry Russia which, somehow, his view could embrace in all its enormous expanse as if it were a map.

As Tony Tanner suggests, imagination always represents a threat to orderly conduct in Conrad because it causes the mind to slide away from the saving facts of life and indulge in graphic, immobilizing fantasies of terror or glory: "Lord Jim is one 'imaginative beggar', Almayer another, Razumov a third - though his imaginings are more justifiable than
\textit{those of any other Conrad character}. From the moment of sending Haldin down the stairway of betrayal Razumov has been in a state of "posthumous existence".

After he has arranged for Haldin's arrest, his watch stops. This symbolizes the end of the reassuring routine of Razumov's life. More importantly, it signifies the lack of time-dimension for him. "But the betrayal recoils in a way he never anticipated - not in the form of conventional remorse, nor the routine interference of the police, nor even the shaming presumption of his heroism among the students". The new and unexpected threat is the malfunctioning of his dislodged mental faculties. Razumov sinks into a state of passive inertia in which he acquires the dull feeling that life without happiness is impossible. And 'what was happiness?... Looking forward was happiness - that is all - nothing more'. And as external hours, days and weeks pass by, it becomes ever clearer that his internal clock has stopped. The insulated self has ceased to be capable of change. Natalia Haldin says to the narrator: "Time they say can soften every sort of bitterness. But I cannot believe that it has any power over remorse". Razumov's arrested life is a dreadful demonstration of the truth of this belief. From now on, his time will not be the time on the clock. Like Decoud marooned on the island, Razumov by a deep sense of solitude, sinks into a state of nausea.
The light coming through the window seemed strangely cheerless, containing no promise as the light of each new day should for a young man. It was the awakening of a man mortally ill, or of a man ninety years old. He looked at the lamp which had burnt itself out. It stood there, the extinguished beacon of his labours, a cold object of brass and porcelain, amongst the scattered pages... litter of blackened paper - dead matter - without significance or interest.... An incredible dullness, a ditch-water stagnation was sensible to his perceptions as though life had withdrawn itself from all things and even from his own thoughts. 60

Through the use of symbolism, Conrad subtly reinforces Razumov's isolation from the Community as well as estrangement from himself. After the watch slips from Razumov's nervous fingers and breaks, it is the midnight hour. Thereafter, "he passes into another universe, timeless and terrifying". 61 Long afterwards, even when repaired, the watch keeps reminding him of the fatal evening, it's movement seeming never to have progressed beyond it. And when he is ready to atone for the betrayal of Haldin, he - 'The puppet of his past' - sits with the watch before him waiting for midnight to begin his final errand. The entire theme is introduced by the 'mute clock' in the house of General T - where the betrayal takes place, "In murdering Haldin, Razumov also murders time, and the slain dimension cuts him off from the world as much as the slain man". 62

Thus the corruption of the betrayal infects his whole being; he experiences a state of non being. Nonetheless, in trying to recollect himself, he formulates his manifesto.
He can justify to himself and may be to others his act of betrayal. He writes in an unsteady, almost childish hand five lines, one under the other:

History not Theory.
Patriotism not Internationalism.
Evolution not Revolution.
Direction not Destruction.
Unity not Disruption.

The negatives are all that Haldin's ideology suggests, and the positives are all that he wants to stand for, justifying the betrayal. But try hard as he might, he fails to collect himself; bitter torments of deep moral loneliness turn the tide to the anti-clockwise movement. Instead of finding himself free to return to his work after Haldin's capture, Razumov is not only harassed by repeated official inquiries into his relations with Haldin, but brutally deprived of peace by his own conflicts: "was it possible that he no longer belonged to himself?... But why not simply keep on as before? Study. Advance. Work hard as if nothing had happened...." But something had happened; instead of finding, as he had expected, that the values for which he has acted have been reinforced by his behaviour (in taking sides with the police of the Czarist regime), Razumov instead finds: "... everything abandoned him - hope, courage, belief in himself, trust in men. His heart had, as it were, suddenly emptied itself. It was no use struggling on. Rest, work, solitude, and the frankness of intercourse with his kind were alike forbidden to him. Everything was
gone. Left to himself, he feels absolutely sick and guilty. Razumov feels himself interned upon the "rack". This image recurs during the course of his first interview with Councillor Mikulin:

At that moment Razumov beheld his own brain suffering on the rack - a long, pale figure drawn asunder horizontally with terrific force in the darkness of a vault, whose face he failed to see. It was as though he had dreamed for an infinitesimal fraction of time of some dark print of the Inquisition...

After his act of betrayal and the consequent death of Haldin, Razumov is sucked into the service of the Russian Secret Police; he becomes a spy, not unlike Verloc of The Secret Agent. Mikulin sends him to Switzerland where, in a small locality in Geneva, there lives a group of Russian anarchists, men as well as women, and Haldin's sister Natalia among them. Razumov is commissioned to report on them to the authorities at home. "It was to be a dangerous mission to Geneva for obtaining, at a critical moment, absolutely reliable information from a very inaccessible quarter of the inner revolutionary circle."

Through his sheer failure to examine the moral implications of his position, Razumov compromises himself into a situation from which there seems no escape. Having been implicated by Haldin into something he did not want, he now permits Mikulin to do exactly the same thing from the opposite end. He soon realizes that his life is no longer his own;
his isolation is complete. A little later, when he goes to Geneva, he is doubly an exile, physically from his home and his country and spiritually from his fellowmen everywhere.

However, Conrad very skilfully signifies the impending change which Razumov undergoes after becoming a spy. When one is unhinged from normalcy by an unexpected disastrous blow of circumstance (chance or fate), one comes to recognize many facts about oneself, of which one has been totally unaware before. While about to leave Russia for Switzerland he makes a fellow student Kostia steal money from his father in order to provide him with funds. As he records later in his diary: "He was a fool, but not a thief. I made him one. It was necessary. I had to confirm myself in my contempt and hate for what I betrayed. I have suffered from as many vipers in my heart as any social democrat of them all - vanity, ambitions, jealousies, shameful desires, evil passions of envy and revenge". Before he betrays Haldin, Razumov is like a person who is only half conscious of himself and what he is doing. After the act of betrayal and the consequent sense of guilt, he is bound to go on the road to himself. Razumov had never been under any external pressure to betray Haldin. His decision is wholly his own. He reinforces his guilt by not disclosing to the police the significant details of his having gone to Ziemianitch who could have helped Haldin make good his escape. This com-
pounds his moral lapse and confirms his overpowering concern with improving his own future prospects. As the narrator doubts, Razumov's action, like Jim's Jimp, could properly be described as a choice: "Indeed, it could hardly be called a decision. He had simply discovered what he had meant to do all along." In the telling words of Gekoski, "the real subject of Razumov's story is his discovery of his moral failure, and his attempts to atone for it. Razumov, like so many of Conrad's heroes, must learn 'How to be'".

Let it be mentioned here that the predominant tension in *Under Western Eyes*, unlike that of *The Secret Agent*, is not anarchism and fidelity (as many critics make it out to appear), but between political loyalty and the demands of private morality. Conrad is very much concerned with the ethical aspect of action and with an individual's relationship to society; that is, how a man is to uphold his obligations to his fellows. The emphasis in this novel is on the primacy of the human bond which Razumov breaks through his act of betrayal. Tekla and Natalia Haldin can not be defined by their allegiance to any political creed. It is through his association with these two women that Razumov finally achieves redemption, and escapes from his 'rack'. "Tekla is instrumental in providing the necessary confidence and human connection necessary to Razumov's later decision to confess". She is full of hatred for Peter Ivanovitch ("great men are horrible"). She is disillusioned by the
conduct and activities of the revolutionist under the
direction of Peter Ivanovitch. Razumov sees in Tekla's
disillusionment and isolation reflection of his own predica­
ment. During the course of their conversation she confides
in Razumov: "No one talks to me, no one writes to me.
My parents don't even know if I'am alive". Although
nobody knows her name and she tells Razumov to call her
Tekla, thename her deceased lover Andrei had given her.
"He (Andrei) lived in wretchedness and suffering, and died
in misery. That is the lot of all us Russians, nameless
Russians". Similarly, Razumov requests her to call him
Kirylo. What is significant to note here is that both
these solitaries - Tekla and Razumov - establish their
personal identity. Tekla should call him Kirylo, especially
when they are conversing together in private. For the first
time, Razumov's notion that 'life is a public thing' is
directly challenged, as he makes a tentative step towards
establishing a personal relationship based on those values
of domestic tradition for which he had envied Victor Haldin.

This relationship with Tekla is symbolically suggestive
of Razumov's breaking out of his state of isolation and be on
the road to redemption. In the absence of vital human
relationship Razumov begins to maintain a diary which the
narrator describes as "the piticul resource of a young man
who had near him no trusted intimacy, no natural affection
to turn to". But, more importantly, it is a Razumov
himself calls a "mental and psychological self-confession". The record which was not meant for anybody's eyes but his own, is the end result of a dire need for self-commission which is more in nature of confession:

Mr. Razumov looked at it, I suppose, as a man looks at himself in a mirror, with wonder, perhaps with anguish, with anger or despair. Yes, as a threatened man may look fearfully at his own face in the glass, formulating to himself reassuring excuses for his appearance marked by the taint of some insidious hereditary disease.

Thus we may regard his diary writing as the one means by which he "relaxes his repressive hold on his secret sharer, the shadow... that informed his dreams, and which he quickly dispels when it otherwise rises into his conscious mind". Also, the diary in which he registers his self-confession enables him to achieve composure and self-possession; the suggestive implication is that he will reconcile himself to the public world outside his room.

The person who sparks Razumov's confession to the outside world is of course Natalia who seems to him "the most disturbing of Haldin's reincarnations". She seems a living personification of her brother's faith and freedom - almost an incarnation of the liberty Razumov has betrayed. He finds her as Haldin had described her to be one of the 'unstained, lofty, and solitary existences'. She has treated Razumov with all the trustfulness of her attention
to him. Her extraordinary attraction makes her the most
dangerous of temptations. On the one hand, it offers him
the golden chance of making a proposal to her which he knows
she will accept; on the other, her faith in him intensifies
his guilt to an untolerable level. For a man like himself -
"a Czarist agent responsible for her brothers death" 81 -
to make his wife would be the "unpardonable sin of stealing
a soul". 82 He records it in his diary:

"Perhaps no one will believe the baseness of such
an intention to be possible. It's certain that,
when we parted that morning, I gloated over it.
I brooded upon the best way. The old man you
introduced me to insisted on walking with me. I
don't know who he is. He talked of you, of your
lonely, helpless state, and every word of that
friend of yours was egging me on to the unpardon-
able sin of stealing a soul. Could he have been
the devil himself in the shape of an old English
man? Natalia Victorovna, I was possessed!
...." 83

Thus his confession enables him to realize the futility of life
based on falsehood. He knows, she is a hopelessly in
his power as her brother had been, but he cannot bring
himself to repeat his crime. As her intense love for him
makes Razumov's possession of her distinct possibility, so
his instinctive overpowering love for her places her finally
out of his reach. In their last confrontatation, witnessed
by the helpless narrator, the only form of Razumov's
declaration of love can take is to point finger of accusation
against his own breast. "By this gesture, Razumov loses her
for ever, but he has flung open the window of his cell and
can at last breathe freely". Perhaps, this is Conrad's way of suggesting that love is the one sure means of escape from the terrifying guilt-ridden loneliness and isolation.

Love as an energizing principle proves redemptive. It is through the agency of Natalia's love for him that he arrives at consciousness that he can no longer be 'a living, acting, speaking lie', and he makes his confession. It is his deep love for Natalia which has freed him from the blindness of anger and hate - "the truth shining in you drew the truth out of me". His last entry is addressed to Natalia: "After all it is they (the revolutionaries) and not I who have the right on their side: - theirs is the strength of invisible powers". However, his confession does not simply any change of his political conviction. Having refused to commit the same crime twice, he will not give up his intellectual independence a second time. But now he recognizes the consequences. "I am independent - and therefore perdition is my lot", he declares.

In Conrad, love is one of the sentiments that releases man from the suffocation of self-love and the emptiness of non-involvement. It is by no means the only means: friendship, duty, honour, patriotism, even a diffusedly warm-hearted generosity, feelings intricately dissected in the other novels, have a similar humanizing effect. Love
"forces Razumov to examine himself as he is, free from the obscuring effects of vanity and loneliness. It does not separate man from self, but humanizes the relationship between them, and by so doing redeems him from ignorance and betrayal. He cannot live with himself alone...."

Razumov's realization of his act of betrayal is enhanced by his only meeting with Haldin's mother, "that figure of sorrow", whose "white face... weak, distinct voice... troubled him like some strange discovery". Though Ziemianitch is no more, Sophia and Natalia do not know the truth, and he thinks "The phantom of Haldin had been indeed walked over", a mother consumed with grief has such a forceful effect on him, because the strange discovery he makes is of something he has never known before - the power of a mother's love. "It is in that enduring love, he suddenly realizes, that Haldin - though walked over and dead - 'continues to exist'...; and this realization brings with it the bitter reflection that it is he himself who is 'given up to destruction', that it is he - in his unmitigated isolation - who will be utterly destroyed". After this meeting, when Natalia chances upon him, he faces up to his new knowledge, gives in to an overwhelming need to shake off the corpse from his neck and break out of his isolation. He accomplishes this by choosing to make his public confession to the revolutionists, going to them - like Jim to Doramin -
to own responsibility for what he has done and court physical retribution. "But, unlike Jim, he does not abandon himself to despair - he is 'not in despair' despite his anguish - and his spirit remains firm within him". He is deafened by Necator, a sham revolutionist who is a double agent. His deafness recalls his 'deafness' to Haldin's appeals for help. This is nemesis. Thereafter, because of his deafness, he is crippled by a tram car in the street. However, his physical disabilities notwithstanding, he has gained liberation from the "prison of lies". He is now able to assert his renewed trust in the community of others: "To-day ... I made myself free from falsehood, from remorse...." Though it is, after all, no more than a miserable existence, "it confronts us with the austere bleakness of Conrad's vision.

.. of a redeemed Razumov - or a Monygham - as the only sort of triumph to be wrested ashore from an engulfing darkness of the spirit". The confession certainly underlines the self-knowledge that Razumov has attained and emphasizes the moral and spiritual communion, that he establishes with others. Certainly in Under Western Eyes, Conrad has brought accumulated wisdom to bear on his most complex character.
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