CHAPTER III

THE USES OF MARLOW
CHAPTER III

THE USES OF MARLOW

Conrad created Marlow, for the first time in Youth, where the narrator, whom we find changed from his romantic days of youth to the present pragmatic middle age, "dotes condescendingly and yet sympathetically on his own reminiscences." Youth provides an ample initiation for the study of Conrad's other Marlovian works because most of the themes and devices which Conrad later exploited to a greater degree are found in a minor degree in Youth. The most significant of the devices is the narrator-point of view which provides the author with his most eloquent instrument of narration. Apart from providing a balanced double point of view, Marlow is important and essential to Conrad's themes because of his technical significance.

Conrad's major contribution to the fictional art is his manipulation of point of view, that is, the manner in which the events of the tale are transmitted to the reader, either through the omniscient author or through the first person. An exploration of the four Marlovian works of Conrad enables us to arrive at the significant role that Marlow plays, both technically and thematically. Marlow as the narrator and coordinator of the multiple perspectives in these tales helps
us to gain an idea of the significance of Conrad's contribution to fiction, and especially to the technique of point of view.

I

Marlow was invented for the first time in *Youth* in which he is supposed to be recounting nostalgically his passionate memories of his youth, to a group of companions, all ex-Merchant sea men. *Youth* offers a celebration of the most romantic period of his life, which gives him an opportunity to discover himself, in his voyage of *Judea*, his first journey to the East.

This voyage enables him to draw a symbolic meaning out of it, the voyage being one of "those voyages that seem ordered for the illustration of life, that might stand for a symbol of existence."¹

As Marlow proceeds to unravel his voyage on *Judea*, in spite of the fact that *Judea*’s voyage did not accomplish its aim, it helped the present Marlow recapture that feeling of his youthful energy. Marlow being consciously aware of his present age, links it with the age of *Judea*, at the time of his adventure "She was tired - that old ship. Her youth

¹Joseph Conrad, *Youth: A Narrative*, in *Youth: A Narrative*, *Heart of Darkness*, *The End of the Tether* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1902), p. 4. All further references to *Youth* are from this edition.
was where mine is - where yours is - you fellows who listen to this yarn*. Marlow, tries to recreate his youthful energies in his exclamatory musings:

"O youth! The strength of it, the faith of it, the imagination of it! To me she was not an old rattle trap carting about the world a lot of coal for a freight-to me she was the endeavour, the test, the trial of life. (p.12)

Through the depiction of an experience, which is of a personal kind, Conrad universalizes the theme by having an audience of varied backgrounds, consisting of "the man of finance, the man of accounts, the man of law." (p.42)

The mere sentimentality of the recounting of the experience is lent seriousness by a delicate balancing. There is a juxtaposition of the good natured ironical view of the mature and practical Marlow's philosophical comments and the young and romantic Marlow's exclamations about the strength of youth. Marlow, as the narrator establishes a contrast between the freshness and foolishness of romance and the dull but solid reality.

Conrad lends objectivity to the tale by means of providing multiple perspectives such as 1) young Marlow's original experience and his limited reactions to that experience, 2) the
mature Marlow's perspective on the young Marlow's experience which begins as if it were to be a mature view but becomes gradually less and less detached and ironic. 3) the response of an audience of peers to Marlow's tale, and 4) Conrad's perspective which, "even while acknowledging the legitimacy of how both old Marlow and his younger self deal with experience, emphasises the futility of man's efforts to forestall mutability." 2

Youth is not merely a tale of adventure. As Douglas Hewitt points out, "it is a celebration of a period of life by Marlow and it is placed in relation to implications of his later experience." 3 The glamour and vitality of youth are powerfully conveyed because they have the beauty of danger about them. The best example that illustrates this placing is seen in Marlow's use of the image of the fire at sea which is combined with the imagery of darkness and ignorance of the narrator:

Oh, the glamour of youth! oh, the fire of it, more dazzling than the flames of the burning ship, throwing a magic light on the wide earth, leaping audaciously to the sky, presently to be quenched by time, more cruel, more pitiless, more bitter than the sea - and like the flames


Thus in *Youth* we have Marlow on Marlow, where he is reminiscent of his own past self. As memory searches the past, past and present are brought together. Out of their togetherness arises the tension around which our interest is centred as well as Marlow's own. Marlow is most suitably defined as a sentimental ironist at his first appearance. As W.Y. Tindall says, 'Marlow makes a point of what he calls "the romance of illusions" and the pleasing folly of "the good old time".*4 As early as in *Youth*, Marlow is unwilling to let a thing reveal itself which is evident in his exclamation on the glamour of youth. Marlow is made to play a double role, both as subject and object.

As Marlow finally arrives at the port, the East gleams like an illusion: "The mysterious East faced me, perfumed like a flower, silent like death, dark like a grave" (p.42). This again furnishes double possibilities. It is either that Marlow in his response to its romance, its danger, its beauty assumes an heroic status that the older Marlow has lost, or that the self-confidence of youth depends on folly, and the journey ends in death.

Marlow's presence in *Youth* is fully justified because all through the tale, till it reaches its end, he provides a contrast between his own earlier and older selves. Being himself the protagonist, it enables him to be at once inside and outside the young man's sensitive psyche. The problem, that the tale depicts being simple, *Youth* illustrates merely a shadow of what magnificent dimensions the device of Marlow acquires in his later tales like *Heart of Darkness*, *Lord Jim* and *Chance*.

II

In *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow is introduced by Conrad primarily as a narrator who shares the protagonist's role with Mr. Kurtz. *Heart of Darkness* is the story of Marlow's quest for arriving at the reality of Kurtz. "The most you can hope is some knowledge of yourself," so says Marlow in this tale of impenetrable darkness. The theme, as such is 'sombre'. About this Conrad himself says in the 'Author's Note' to the novel thus: "That sombre theme had to be given a sinister resonance, a tonality of its own, a continued vibration that would hang in the air and dwell on the ear after the last note had been stuck." (p.xxix).

At the very outset of the tale, Marlow's interlocutor gives a description of Marlow's tales, which throws light not only on the narrative method of Marlow but also on its significance for the reader at the end of the tale:

The yarns of seamen have a direct simplicity, the whole meaning of which lies within the shell of a cracked nut. But Marlow was not typical ... and to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that sometimes are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine (p.48).

This hints at the impossibility of our arriving at the meaning of the tale in its totality. Though the narrative may throw some light on Mr.Kurtz, the natives and the wilderness, the ultimate source of its mystery is not going to be revealed finally. The frame-narrator further characterizes Marlow's tale as "inconclusive."

Marlow proves to be immensely useful to Conrad in *Heart of Darkness*. For, in *Heart of Darkness*, it is through Marlow's sensibility

we have the gradual revelation of Kurtz, whom we hardly meet and whose death-bed taciturnity would have rendered the third person impossible. The warped character of Kurtz would .... have turned a revelation of character by any interior
Method into grotesque fantasy, for the whole world viewed through his eyes would have been a place of fantastic abomination, and also, written from his standpoint, there would be no contrast between actuality as perceived by normal eyes and the eyes of insanity.

Marlow's quest for the meaning of his own experience involves a journey, a death and a return. As Marlow says, his journey was significant only because it "seemed somehow to throw a kind of light on everything about me - and into my thoughts" (p.51).

Heart of Darkness depicts "one man's moral and psychological degeneration and of another's spatial and intellectual journey to understand the essentials of the matter." And such a journey is bound to be a difficult one as Marlow himself says, "It was like a weary pilgrimage amongst hints of nightmares" (p.62). Out of this journey and experience Marlow tries to muddle out the meaning of his experience and the journey is presented in such a way as to show the individual engaged in trying to understand what has happened to him.

Conrad's use of Marlow represents a break with the distance, impersonality, and omniscience of third-person


narration. As Marlow says about his own past experience in which he was a participant, and as we see him telling about his experience to his auditors in narrative present, we seem to visualize everything about the experience before our very eyes.

_Heart of Darkness_ opens in the dusky Thames estuary, where Marlow begins his narrative saying, "And this also has been one of the dark places of the earth" (p.3) in the days when the Romans landed and he asks his listeners to imagine what it would have been like for a decent young citizen, if he found himself there:

Land in a swamp, march through the woods, and in some inland post feel the savagery, the utter savagery, had closed round him, - all that mysterious life of the wilderness that stirs in the forest, in the jungles in the hearts of wild men. There's no initiation either into such mysteries. He has to live in the midst of the incomprehensible, which is also detestable. And it has a fascination that goes to work upon him. The fascination of abomination - you know, imagine the growing regrets, the longing to escape, the powerless disgust, the surrender, the hate .... Mini, none of us would feel exactly like this. What saves us is efficiency - the devotion to efficiency. (p.50)

There is a suggestion of hinting, on Marlow's part at the likeness between the decent young citizen and Kurts, and
the Rowan's surrender to savagery in ancient Britain and Kurz's own in Africa, thus preparing the readers for the moral collapse of Mr. Kurz that is to come later in the narrative.

The title itself may be interpreted in two different ways, as James Guettl says. The first interpretation is that "darkness" has a "heart." This wilderness or darkness, the reader discovers under the guidance of Marlow at the centre of which we can find the meaning of the journey. And the second interpretation implies that "the real darkness is in the heart, and that we journey from the known to the unknown. We are led towards an ultimate darkness, a condition of meaninglessness, which negates all civilized values." Marlow declares that while confronting the wilderness, the "truth" of it, one must "meet that truth with his own true stuff - with his own inborn strength. Principles won't do." (p.97) This ideal of Marlow is grounded on keeping himself busy, upon attending to matters of the surface. It is here, that Marlow's uncertain use of the word "reality" comes into picture. Earlier, when trying to repair the battered.

8 James Guettl, The Limits of Metaphor, p. 46-47.
tin-pot steamboat, he tells us:

I don't like work - no man does - but I like what is in the work, - the chance to find yourself. Your own reality - for yourself, not for others - what no other man can ever know.

(p.85)

A little later, describing how the wilderness of the forest regarded the pilgrim with a vengeful aspect, he says his own absorption in the work of keeping the steamboat afloat helped him to avoid the frightening stillness of the forest:

When you have to attend to things of that sort, to the mere incidents of the surface, the reality, ... fades. The inner truth is hidden - luckily, luckily ....
I felt often its mysterious stillness watching me at my monkey-tricks .... (p.93-94)

He assumes work both as a 'self-discovery' and as 'monkey-tricks'. The novel oscillates between these two definitions of 'reality'. At the same time, Marlow does not want to involve himself in work at the cost of inhuman unconcern for the fellow human beings' agonies, as the company's chief accountant does.

Though Marlow says that "it is impossible to convey the life sensation of any given epoch of one's existence - that which makes its truth", (p.82), Marlow is at least able to
create a 'glow', with the help of which we can apprehend his experience to a certain extent. Marlow’s attitude towards the different kinds of darkness he encounters in his journey helps us in achieving this to a certain extent.

The first form of darkness, of course, is embodied in the deep jungles "we were wanderers on a prehistoric earth, on an earth that wore the aspect of an unknown planet ..." (p.95) Another kind of darkness which Marlow confronts, shows that darkness and light often shift places in *Heart of Darkness*. What Marlow alludes to as darkness is the inhuman exploitation of the natives by the so-called European torch-bearers. Their civilized discourses fail to make any impression on the wilderness. Alienating himself from them, Marlow says:

They were colonialists; their administration was merely a squeeze and nothing more, I suspect they were conquerors, and for that you want only brute force - nothing to boast of, when you have it, since your strength is just an accident arising from the weakness of others .... (p.50)

Minor forms of darkness or wilderness could be seen in the material wastage brought in by the pilgrims in the uselessness of their weapons, and in the muddled state of affairs that pervaded everywhere in the three of the stations of the company set forth by the civilizers.
Marlow experiences his darkest moment when he comes across the headman, a cannibal, hungrily looking at the Russian:

We were on deck at the time, and the headman of my wood-cutters, lounging nearby, turned upon (the Russian) his heavy and glittering eyes. I looked around, and I don't know why, but I assure you that never, never before, did this land, this river, this jungle, the very arch of the blazing sky, appear to be so hopeless and so dark, so impenetrable to human thought, so pitiless to human weakness. (p.127)

This takes us back to where Marlow muses on the restraint, that came into play, among the natives even while hunger was taking toll of them:

Why in the name if all the gnawing devils of hunger they didn't go for us - they were thirty to five - and have a good tuck in for once, amazes me now when I think of it .... Something restraining, one of those human secrets that baffle probability, had come into play there. (p.104)

Marlow talks of this inborn restraint of the natives, in the jungles, where no external check is imposed on them or takes care of them, as

Restraint! what possible restraint? ... . It takes a man all his inborn strength to fight
hunger properly ... And these two chaps had no earthly reason for any kind of scruple. (p.105)

This restraint, he contrasts with the lack of any restraint on the part of the European civilisers. Once the civilized European is brought out of the civilized world, where no external check operates on him, the wilderness would claim him as it happened in the case of Mr Kurts.

The journey up the river begins to overwhelm him "Going up that river was like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world." (p.97) Having come across the wilderness imminent in the pilgrims, Marlow feels a kinship with the savages and unlike the pilgrims he feels like going for a 'howl or dance'. Thus it is through this transparent medium provided by Marlow, by being an actual participant in the real journey, that we study the exploitation of the Congo natives. It is through the same medium that we study the degradation of Mr. Kurts.

In his meeting with Mr. Kurts, Marlow is confronted by the heart of impenetrable darkness, the primitive manifestation of evil, and wilderness.

The wilderness had patted him on the head, and, behold, it was like a ball - an ivory ball; it had caressed him, ... and sealed his soul to its own by the inconceivable ceremonies of some devilish initiation ... (p.115)
Marlow was stunned by the sight of the heads of the posts which only showed that:

Mr Kurts lacked restraint in the gratification of his various lusts, that there was something wanting in him - some small matter which, when the pressing need arose, could not be found under his magnificent eloquence. (p.131)

Thus deprived of all outer restraints, and "assaulted by the powers of darkness" and lacking his "own inner strength," Kurts succumbs to the assault because he was "hollow at the core" (p.131). Whether Mr. Kurts was aware of his deficiencies or not, Marlow is certain that the knowledge came to him only at the very end, only through the wilderness.

The wilderness had found him early, and had taken on him a terrible vengeance for the fantastic invasion. I think it had whispered to him things about himself which he did not know, ... and the whisper had proved irresistibly fascinating. It echoed loudly within him because he was hollow at the core ... (p.131)

It is when the Manager mentions the 'unsound methods' of Mr. Kurts, that Marlow is faced with the question of 'a choice of nightmares'. Faced with a choice between the diabolical Kurts and the morbid pilgrims, Marlow chooses to side with Kurts because he prefers a moral collapse to a sub-moral victory. Marlow is able to defend himself against the plottings of the
pilgrims and thus denies any kinship with them. But he is quite incapable of defending himself against Mr Kurtz. He finds something remarkable about Mr Kurtz. That is why when the Manager lumps him together with Mr Kurtz, he himself feels the link. Marlow feels that the horror lies in Kurtz's proud conception of himself as the God.

Marlow affirms his kinship with Mr. Kurtz and to the dark powers by choosing to go after Kurtz, when he discovers that Kurtz had left his cabin and headed for the midnight fires of his adorers. Marlow chooses to go alone because "I was so jealous of sharing with anyone the peculiar blackness of that experience" (p.142). When Marlow goes to pursue him, he finds Mr. Kurtz crawling on all-fours. This scene could be taken as the central incident of *Heart of Darkness*. It is in this scene that Conrad intently reveals the sinister fatality of the environment. The environment is made to work on Marlow himself until his flesh begins to creep. His atavistic shudders at the sound of the reverberating drums prepare us "insidiously and with great subtlety for the dreadful revelation to come." In that way alone could he have conveyed the horror - the contrast between the man he was and the man he is - in a single glance of truth.

10 Edward Crawshaw, p. 134.
When Marlow tries to bring Kurtz back to his cabin, in response to Marlow's warning that he might be "utterly lost", Kurtz says "I had immense plans, ... I was on the threshold of great things" (p.143). Marlow wants to break this spell, the spell of wilderness, which had driven Kurts out to the edge of the forest towards the beat of drums, to the drone of weird incantations. Faced with this situation, Marlow says of Kurtz "He had kicked himself loose of the earth. Confound the man! he had kicked the very earth to pieces." (p.144)

Marlow, in spite of his difficulties in dealing with an enigmatic person like Kurts does not want to dissociate himself with the dying man. He describes his difficulties in dealing with Kurts, which are suggestive of Kurtz's own experience.

If any body had ever struggled with a soul, I am the man ....
No eloquence could have been so withering to one's belief in mankind as his final burst of sincerity. He struggled with himself, (p.144-5)

Marlow feels that in his dealings with Kurts he had confronted death itself. Marlow likens this contest with death to the ultimate wisdom where victory and defeat are no longer meaningful, because the entire arena of this contest is enveloped by a sceptical darkness.

Kurtz is probably saved from a total degradation of the self, by gaining a complete knowledge of everything at the
dying moment, the supreme moment; the moment in which he utters, in a whisper "The horror! The horror!" (p.149) The utterance is a judgement upon the adventures of his soul on this earth in which he emphasises that "the light of civilisation could not penetrate the darkness ... that ... he had been enveloped in the darkness which is at the centre of every man."¹¹

Marlow was the only person who could have come near to penetrating the meaning of Kurts's summing up of his perception of the darkness that pervades the hearts of humanity because as he says he "had peeped over the edge" (p.151) himself. Marlow interprets the meaning of Kurts's stare at the dying moment and makes it intelligible to the reader by saying, "that could not see the flame of the candle, but was enough to penetrate all the hearts that beat in the darkness." (p.151) Marlow remains loyal to Kurts to the end, as he claims, because of Kurts's dying words, which to him was 'an affirmation, a moral victory'.

The final test of Marlow's loyalty comes in his meeting with Kurts's Intended in which he tells a white lie, for "I could not tell her. It would have been too dark - too dark altogether" (p.162)

Marlow conceals from the girl the real nature of Kurz's death which is really "a study of the nature of truth. If he had told the girl the simple facts, he would have acknowledged that the pilgrims in their cynicism had the truth, that goodness and faith were unrealities." Marlow feels obliged to tell this lie, in spite of his dislike for lying, because he knows that women's world is a simple one and that it should not be contaminated with dark truths such as Kurz's death-bed declaration. He feels that only those who have "peeped over the edge" like him can understand it in all its horror.

When Marlow ends this narrative, his audience as well as the readers come to know of the mysterious nature of the universe. It is a vast darkness in that its heart is inscrutable.

Though Marlow, in the end, does not offer a clear and direct answer to life, he makes us share with him the steady penetration into the inscrutable darkness which seems to be life in its totality. He suggests that life is meaningless and chaotic and we seem to agree with him. It is here that Conrad's method of dechronology is invaluable.

By means of his orderly narrative, Marlow guides and leads us through the impenetrable darkness of Africa, through the inexplicable primitivity of the pilgrims, through the

uselessness of their civilised values to make us perceive "the man who denied all but horror," to whose making all Europe has contributed. He makes us visualise the darkness of Africa which is a symbol of the larger darkness, that is in the heart of man.

Conrad's use of Marlow enacts the process whereby the solitary individual discovers a way out into the world of others:

Under cover of Marlow's probing of the meaning of the past, Conrad smuggled in the ancient privilege of the narrator by the backdoor, and surreptitiously reclaimed some of the omniscient author's ancient rights to the direct expression of the wisdom of hindsight.  

Marlow's use as a narrator and as a participant in the action becomes indispensable while dealing with an enigmatic character like Mr Kurts encountered in enigmatic surroundings pervaded by various forms of darkness and wilderness. It is Marlow who interprets the various connotations that the wilderness holds. He makes every thing about Mr Kurts, who is more a nightmarish character than a real entity, convincing by maintaining a steady and firm kinship with him all through


this tale of inscrutable darkness.

III

In Lord Jim, Marlow is re-introduced in the status both of an actor and a narrator. In this novel, Marlow’s role as an actor recedes before his importance and contribution to the novel as the narrator. His chief role as the narrator lies in his gathering of a variety of viewpoints from a number of characters and in providing the reader with these multiple perspectives. Marlow thus enables the reader to make an attempt to understand a peculiar and ‘exquisite’ sensibility such as Jim’s.

Lord Jim gains its significance chiefly because of its unique technique, in which the meaning and thematic significance are seen emerging from a complex use of point of view achieved by means of a juxtaposition of various sorts of evidence and the distortion of its time sequence.

To deal with an ‘exquisite sensibility’ such as Jim’s and his moral ambiguities, an omniscient point of view would be diffuse and lacking in focus. The first person, or I-point of view would not permit a competing subjective view point and also does not admit of multiple dimensions and perspectives.

A strictly dramatic rendering of the action would lose
the potential advantages the narrative resources provide for
the novelist. And hence the use of Marlow becomes an artistic
necessity in the complex probing of Jim’s sensibility and the
elusive and ineffable aspects of his moral problem.

Everybody seems to know the facts of the Patna-episode,
and Marlow gathers a variety of judgements. Neither the reader
nor Marlow is any the better for these judgements. Each angle
confirms only the elusiveness. The method employed finds its
justification in the complexity of the problem even as we,
readers, are aware that the complexity is created by the method.

Without ever having been tested by those events of the
sea that show in the light of day the inner worth of a man and
the fibre of his stuff, Jim becomes the chief-mate of a fine
ship. The two early incidents serve to underline his boyish
enthusiasm for adventure and vague, dreamy ideas about escapes
and rescues. It was on board the AVONDALE, the ship that
rescued the deserters of the PATNA, that Jim becomes partly
stunned by the discovery about himself. We are not told
about the precise nature of that discovery. We have
Marlow’s word that he didn’t try to minimise its importance.
Getting ashore he learns of the miraculous rescue of the
PATNA. Marlow could only wonder what he must have felt but
he tells us, “no doubt he managed to get a fresh foot-hold
very soon.”15 Immediately we get Jim’s regretful exclama-

---

Company, Inc., 1965), p. 59. All further references to
*Lord Jim* are from this edition.
tion "Ah! What a chance missed! My God! What a chance missed!" (p.60). We are told about his "far-away look of fierce yearning after that missed distinction" (p.61). Marlow is neither surprised nor shocked at this. With a warm sympathy that borders on identification, he says:

Ah, he was an imaginative beggar! He would give himself away; he would give himself up. He had no leisure to regret what he had lost, he was no wholly and naturally concerned for what he had failed to obtain... A strange look of beautitude overspread his features, his eyes sparkled in the light of the candle burning between us; he positively smiled! He penetrated to the very heart - to the very heart. It was an ecstatic smile that your faces - or mine either - will never wear, my dear boys. (p.60)

With a few more lines of this kind, Marlow would be regarded as indulging in the vague, and he would soon be suspect as a reliable narrator if he continues to play this vein. Just at this point, Marlow gives an unexpected jolt to Jim "If you had stuck to the ship, you mean" (p.60). Having administered the jolt, as actor, he starts as narrator to give us most vivid and at the same time sympathetic account of Jim's reaction.

He turned upon me, his eyes suddenly amazed and full of pain, with a bewildered, startled, suffering face, as though he had stumbled down from a star. Neither you nor I will ever look
like this on any man. He shuddered profoundly, as if a cold finger-tip had touched his heart.
Last of all he sighed. (p.60)

We have here an admirable instance of the delicate interplay of roles that Marlow is made to assume by Conrad. This interplay is vital to the moral complications of Jim's problem.

Of his act which involves a "breach of faith with the community of mankind," Jim could only say "I had jumped... it seems" (p.76). His pride never allows him to come to terms with his discovery of himself.

One more instance of Marlow's complex probing:

"I was so lost, you know. It was the sort of thing one does not expect to happen to one. It was not like a fight, for instance."

"It was not," I admitted. He appeared changed as if he had suddenly matured.
"One couldn't be sure," he muttered.
"Ah! you were not sure," I said, and was pleased by the sound of a faint sigh that passed between us like the flight of a bird in the night.

"Well, I wasn't," he said courageously. "It was like that wretched story they made up. It was not a lie - but it was not truth all the same. It was something.... One knows a downright lie. There was not the thickness of a sheet of paper between the right and wrong of this affair." (p.87)
Having needled thus far, Marlow comes out with the brutal question. "How much more did you want?" Which we are told, he spoke, mercifully, so low that Jim fails to catch. Marlow manages it in such a way that we, as readers, catch its brutality and the narrative distance that it keeps from Jim. Marlow seems to wield the needle as well as hammer at one and the same time when the roles of actor and narrator merge, on many other occasions in the novel.

Another device that Conrad employs to deal with 'exquisite sensibility' such as Jim's is the 'inversive technique' or dechronology, and quite successfully, through the precious assistance of Marlow. If we re-arrange the major incidents of the first-part of *Lord Jim* in a chronological order, the events would run about as follows: 1) the voyage of the *Patna*; 2) the passage over the derelict; 3) Jim's act of cowardice or deserting the ship; 4) the court of inquiry; 5) Jim's isolation and sense of defeat; 6) Marlow's interference in Jim's destiny and; 7) Jim's wanderings and experiences as water-clerk. Contrary to this order, Conrad begins at Episode 7, with a brief sketch of Jim as water-clerk. Then comes Episode 1 and part of Episode 2 excepting the information about what happened when the *Patna* struck the derelict. Then comes Episode 4, the court of inquiry, with Jim disgraced and then the detailed account from Jim himself of his fatal and ineffable desertion of the ship.
"Conrad breaks off his narrative at a crisis, and delays an important and exceedingly interesting episode until we have already gained a general idea of its outcome and tragic effect." This kind of dechronology results in creating a kind of suspense, that has much to do with the character in question rather than with the outcome of a certain deed or action. The suspense is intensified further through Marlow's complex pro­bings into the affair. As a result, the question which bothers is, 'What is it that is fatally wrong with this man?' and 'How does it happen?' Because of our interest in the personality of Jim and his relation with the events, we follow the story's winding movements. Conrad relates Jim to the events that take place by making Jim pour out his story into the sympathetic ears of Marlow, at a time when the reader is well-prepared to receive the delicate information. Through these vivid weavings and cross-weavings of the narratives, Jim's exquisite character stands in its wholeness before the reader's mind. This is made possible through the sympathetic amplification of Marlow, of a number of connotations and associations and incidents.

This kind of distortion of time-sequence is inevitable when one is dealing with a person like Jim, where no factual explanation could be made sensible.

In the court, "they demanded facts from (Jim), as if facts could explain anything." (p.27) By so saying, Marlow directs us to look for what is inside Jim's case, for its "fundamental why." It is precisely for this reason that the complex manipulation of point of view and distortion of time-sequence are justified. And also for the same reason Marlow forces himself to gather opinions on the Patna-episode from a variety of angles. There is, above all, Marlow's own probing into the nature of his quest. Firstly, it is because "He was one of us."

Marlow out of his own exploration, arrives at a simple but profoundly disturbing answer:

Why I longed to go grubbing into the deplorable details of an occurrence which after all, concerned me no more than as a member of an obscure body of men held together by a community of inglorious toil and by fidelity to a certain standard of conduct, I can't explain. ... Was it for my own sake that I wished to find some shadow of an excuse for that young fellow whom I had never seen before ... I was, and no mistake, looking for a miracle. (p.40-41)

While Marlow hopes to find something out of this exploration, Captain Brierly holds a silent enquiry with himself even as he sits in judgement over Jim and takes the secret of that silent enquiry into his watery grave. The identification with Jim proves fatal in this case.
In contrast to Brierly, we have the French lieutenant who does not identify himself with Jim in any way. The French lieutenant's unconscious heroism is the heroism that Jim had made a conscious ideal; and his witness measures Jim's failure by the painful difference of fact.

One truth the more ought not to make life impossible ... But the honour - the honour, monsieur! ... the honour ... that is real - that is! And what life may be worth when ... when the honour is gone - ah ca; par example - I can offer no opinion. I can offer no opinion - because - monsieur - I know nothing of it. (p.98)

Then there is Chester and his angles:

Takes it to heart? ... Then he is no good.
What's all the to-do about? A bit of ass's skin.
That never yet made a man. You must see things exactly as they are - if you don't, you may just as well give in at once. You will never do anything in this world. Look at me. I made it a practice never to take anything to heart. (p.105-106)

For Chester, Jim is "One of us" in a sense that disgusts Marlow. Marlow's moral sensitivity is seen in his disgust of Chester's appraisal of the situation. But still the question in what sense Jim is one of us remains.

Stein, too identifies himself with Jim in his romantic idealism:
Yes! very funny this terrible thing is, A man that is born falls into a dream like a man who falls into the sea. If he tries to climb out into the air as inexperienced people endeavour to do, he drowns - nicht wahr? ... No! I tell you! The way is to the destructive element submit yourself, and with the exertions of your hands and feet in the water make the deep, deep sea keep you up.

(p.136)

In what seems to be the end of the first part, Marlow is not definite about his knowledge and understanding of Jim:

"The less I understood the more I was bound to him in the name of that doubt which is the inseparable part of our knowledge" (p.140-144) "I only knew he was one of us. And what business had he to be romantic?" (p.142) The difference between Marlow and Jim could be seen in the awful daring of his surrender to the destructive element. He cannot help being a romantic.

Marlow is conscious of his role as the narrator as is evident in instances such as:

He existed for me, and after all it is only through me that he exists for you. I've led him out by the hand, I have paraded him before you. Were my common place fears unjust? ...

You may be able to tell better, since the proverb has it that the onlookers see most of the game.

Jim did not go out, not at all; on the contrary he came on wonderfully, came on straight as a die and in excellent form, which showed that he could stay as well as spurt. (p.142)
In Patusan Jim gets what he wanted; a clean slate and an opportunity to climb out. He succeeds. But the satisfaction that it provides is only superficial. He is painfully aware of the fact that even as he is worshipped in Patusan, he is despised and hated in the world outside.

This brings us to the final act of Jim, the final opportunity, that Eastern bride who had come to his side veiled. While bidding farewell to Marlow in Patusan, Jim says,

"I shall be faithful, .... I shall be faithful."  
(p.206)

"Tell them ... No-nothing."  
(p.207)

He was white from head to foot, and remained persistently visible with the stronghold of the night at his back, the sea at his feet, the opportunity by his side - still veiled. What do you say?

Was it still veiled? I don't know. For me that white figure in the stillness of coast and see seemed to stand at the heart of a vast enigma.  
(p.208)

Hereafter, it is the privileged listener who gets Marlow's written account of the 'last episode' that had come to Jim. Marlow wonders whether this was perhaps that supreme opportunity, that last and satisfying test for which he had always suspected Jim to be waiting, before he could frame a message to the impeccable world.
Earlier Jim said: No ... Nothing. Now there is only the language of facts, which Marlow admits, are so often more enigmatic than the craftiest arrangement of words.

In his confrontation with Brown, Jim does not get unnerved. It is not the question of failure of nerve. Jim identifies himself with Brown to the point of saying that "Men act sometimes badly without being much worse than others." (p.243)

He gives Brown a clean slate and a chance to climb out. Paradoxically this is an act of faith to those in the world outside where he is held to be not good enough.

The consequences of allowing Brown to let go, have safe passage prove disastrous. Jim comes to an awareness that, while an impulsive 'jump' had brought in his retreat from one world, his own deed has, now, brought in the collapse of his other world. He feels that the dark powers should not be allowed to rob his peace again and again. He makes up his mind to confront the disaster in the only way he knows it could be confronted.

"Fight! says Jewel.
"There was nothing to fight for. He was going to prove his power in another way and conquer the fatal destiny itself." (p.251-252)

Jim chooses not to act. But it is an active choice when fidelity to self, fidelity to one's society, fidelity to
what Marlow calls a "fixed standard of conduct" come into conflict. How does one resolve the conflict without under-valuing one or the other? Herein lies the paradoxical faithfulness of Jim which appears to be treachery to Doremin and his people. Every choice seems to demand its own price. And Jim's choice involved the cost of his life. In the proud and unflinching glance he maintained at the end when he rushed to accept death, we wonder, still, whether he manages to see the face of that Eastern bride who had come veiled to his side.

We cannot think of Jim's problem without the multiple perspectives which Marlow provides for us even as he provides them for himself. There is little doubt that Marlow proves to be tremendously useful to Conrad here. By maintaining a delicate balance between identification and detachment, Marlow is able to contain and structure in a narrative the problematic Jim even as he shows the perilous nature of the destructive element in which Jim immerses himself.

From a thematic angle, Marlow provides a moral alternative, though less glorious, thus serving to mediate and cushion the shock of Jim's tragedy.

He arrives testing his own ideals and beliefs, and fascinated by Jim to the point of identification. Yet he goes beyond him by grounding his experience in a narrative. He comes to
see the awesome possibilities of 'the destructive element' and his sanity is all the more fortified for its encounter with Jim. That is to say Marlow's sanity is sanity because of Jim, and not in spite of Jim. It is as though Marlow earned his sanity by creatively embodying Jim's tragic vision.

IV

It is in Chance that Marlow is immensely useful to Conrad in his complex manipulation of point of view. Conrad has undertaken here a spiritual revelation of extreme subtlety as the theme. The subject, as such is the spiritual rescue of Flora from the forces of darkness, from simple elimination by the evil in the world which almost suffocates and taints her consciousness. Marlow evolves a skilled craftsman out of Chance in which he infuses a number of half-hinted and vanishing glimpses of men and incidents combined with his own comments, reflections and perception in his narrative which is largely centred round Flora de Barral's destiny. As Douglas Hewitt points out, throughout the novel, "he compares, philosophizes, muses .... He is the commentator and his comments are clearly intended to be those of the readers."17 Given his potentialities as a commentator, philosopher and a reader of human psychologies, Marlow is bound to be an indispensable tool to

Conrad in his present endeavour to deal with a theme that is more interesting psychologically than in other ways.

Unlike in other Marlovian tales, where Marlow is more concerned with his own self, with the effect of certain experiences on his own psyche and imagination, in Chance, we find in him a "detached curiosity concerned with what he calls none of his business." Thus we find a shift of emphasis from what he makes of a ready-made problem to what he actually creates, which is clearly evident in the complex structure of the narrative, which he creates by sheer imagination blended with perspectives gathered from different points of view. In Chance, the point of view is an extremely complicated affair, in which Marlow stands at his best for Conrad's unique zig zag method of tale within tale, and teller upon teller. Very often we find Conrad telling us what Marlow tells him of what Powell had told him of what Franklin had told him of what the ship-keeper had told him of Flora, and sometimes what Marlow saying what Mrs Fyne said, where quotation marks prove utterly incapable of keeping pace with the narrators. The method is extremely circuitous and confusing in spite of which Marlow fascinates us through his wanderings and moralizings that we do not find in the Non-Marlovian tales of Conrad.

Henry James is all praise for the method employed by Conrad in Chance, which according to him is an extraordinary exhibition of method that is unprecedented. Conrad achieves this by setting up a reciter, a definite responsible intervening first-person singular, who is in possession of unlimited sources of informations, who immediately proceeds to set up another, which might repeat the process of setting up another reciter till the gap between the original reciter and the situation or the subject of his pursuit is bridged. In Chance, the omniscience, or the frame narrator, who though anonymous is active all through introduces Marlow's omniscience in flow from the very first page. Of Marlow's omniscience, Henry James says, "Marlow's own is a prolonged hovering flight of the subjective over the outstretched ground of the case exposed ... the upper aeroplane causes another ... to depend from it and that one still another." Conrad's insistence on his commitment to the 'how' of the matters rather than to the 'why', makes him pursue oblique and inversive technique which results in 'bodying forth some "inner truth" of his creator's personality.'


The inversive technique employed by Conrad in *Chance* acquires its magnificent dimensions, along with complex manipulation of point of view. Except within the individual accounts, there is a complete absence of chronological order. The novel has a complex of seven distinct narratives put forth by seven narrators. The action of the novel is concerned with the depiction of an intricate psychological study of two sensitive and exquisite natures brought together by a chain of circumstances, who employ devious methods to achieve happiness including certain strange sacrifices by each of them. A convincing unfolding of such a theme necessitates the unveiling of the secrets of their mental personalities and idiosyncrasies. It is through the help of Marlow, who contrives a suitable method, that Conrad makes the story to come to us. In *Chance*, Marlow plays a significant role not only as a narrator but more so as an inquisitive, patient, gentle and reflective participant in the action of the story.

At the outset, we come across Powell's story of a "lady who must not be disturbed."\(^{21}\) The circumstance awakens or stimulates Marlow's mind into action. He connects it with other facts in his experience and starts unwinding the story him-

self, with brief and occasional interruptions from the anonymous "I" narrator. As Marlow asks an explanation that sets off the circumstances, the answer follows which again leads to another question and to another answer and so on. The story moves inevitably backwards chronologically with each narrator such as Fyne, Mrs Fyne, Flore, Powell, Franklin etc. contributing that part with which he or she is acquainted, recounting to his or her own confidante from his or her own point of view. Powell, after disappearing from the novel in page 29, does not make his reappearance until the stage when Marlow comes to know of his frequent disappearances into the narrow tidal creeks on the Essex shore.

If the major incidents of the first part of the novel "The Damsel," are arranged chronologically, the sequence may be given as: the de Barral case (which in turn, includes the childhood of Flore, the fraudulent collapse of "thrift," de Barral's emergence as an international Swindler, the governess's abandonment of Flore), the entry of the Fynes into the life of Flore and their taking over the charge of Flore initially, de Barral's cousin's arrival and his taking away of Flore to his loveless home, Flore's running away from the cousin's house to the Fynes, similar returns of Flore to the Fynes from a German family and some others not withholding her employments with any of them, Flore's meeting with Marlow at the quarry.
during one of her returns to the Fynes, her running away with Captain Anthony, Mrs. Fyne's brother, leading to Marlow's inquiry into the details about Captain Anthony's and Flora's earlier lives from the Fynes, and finally, the simultaneous meetings of Mr. Fyne with Anthony in the East-End Hotel, and the meeting of Marlow with Flora on the pavement outside the East-End Hotel with which the first-part comes to a close.

But the novel seldom follows this narrative order. Marlow starts his narrative with his chance-meeting of Flora at the quarry, which, chronologically viewed, is one of the culminating events of Part I. It is also one of the most significant events contributing to sustain the narrative interest. This trivial incident, that accident of Marlow walking by the quarry at the moment when Flora had determined to end her life there, as Edward Crankshaw points out, "is made to serve half a dozen purposes." It gives Marlow his so-called intimacy with the Fynes; it answers his early-morning presence outside the East-End Hotel; it furnishes sufficient acquaintance with Flora to take advantage of that chance-meeting; it helps Conrad to provide the reader with a sharp impression of Flora as a person; it gives Marlow his opportunity to give the readers the girl's nature as understood by an intelligent and

perceptive outsider like Marlow; it brings into the novel, in a subtle manner, a hint of what a great and crucial role 'chance' is to play in the book; and finally, it provides the episode of the dog, which, later during the pavement conversation between Flora and Marlow, comes to play the role of bridging the gap between the past and the present. Marlow could not have started his narrative at a more powerful scene, given Conrad's tendency to begin "with an almost final incident, tracing the precedent circumstances, and then returning to a strong climactic point before the end. His principle of arrangement regards the significance rather than the sequence of events."\(^2\) The scene gives Conrad the full opportunity to get his character "in with a strong impression, and then work backwards and forwards over his past ..."\(^3\) as Ford Maddox Ford says. This is in line with Conrad's dislike for the animal curiosity as to what happens in the end, which he erases by telling us at the beginning itself. Thus beginning his narrative at this incident which is potential enough to provoke the curiosity of the readers, Marlow starts to unravel the causes, influences, happenings which brought Flora to the quarry for


suicide. Then he proceeds to give us details about Flora's early life at the point where it is most revealing because of Fyne's mysterious attitude of indirect hints. The episode of captain Anthony's courtship is appropriately introduced through the person of Mrs. Fyne, as an explanation of her annoyance at Flora's actions. Later, Flora furnishes the same story herself, which is nearer to truth. Thus the general truth comes through a community of views. The inversions are of the kind characteristic of the story-within-a-story. We get most of the details about Flora's life through the "I" narrator through Marlow through Mrs Fyne through Flora, and in some instances through the "I" narrator through Marlow through Mr Fyne through Mrs Fyne through Flora (and some through Mrs de Barral). We get the information about the proceedings that take place on board Ferndale, through the "I" narrator through Marlow through Powell.

Interrupting these channels of information now and then, Conrad allows the readers to witness directly some of the disputes between the anonymous "I" narrator and Marlow. This furnishes us with Marlow's direct comments on young Powell whom he regards as an entirely reliable witness but a naive one. This ultimately calls forth the necessity of some imaginative person's comments, a person who is better acquainted with human nature, qualities which we find in Marlow. By
means of this complex inversive method, the novel achieves "an amazing three-dimensional life-likeness of characters and episodes which have received the benefit of so many successive treatments." 25

Only one incident, the attempted poisoning of Captain Anthony and de Barral's death resulting from it, comes to us in a straightforward fashion. The scene as such verges on melodrama. Conrad's emphasis on motives and forces behind the action rather than on the action itself redeems the scene from a seeming, melodramatic character. It is this scene which serves its best to illustrate the function and interest of Marlow. Out of such melodramatic stuff as poison, treachery, suicide, Marlow has successfully engineered the reconciliation of two tortured lives. He thus reveals to us, without having witnessed it, not only the external details, but also the innermost and subtle meaning of such a scene which verges on psychoanalysis.

Having never seen Captain Anthony, Marlow is able to interpret and expose the life-essence of Anthony to us with penetrating power. We never seem to question Marlow's potentialities to give us details about the psychology and the

inner dilemmas of his most complicated characters because Marlow disarms us by saying, "I don't pretend I understand him. The views he let me have of himself were like those gleams through the shifting rents in a thick fog—bits of vivid and vanishing details" (Lord Jim, p. 56.) earlier in Lord Jim. It is through these vivid and vanishing gleams that Marlow arrives at a perfect understanding of the psychological character of persons. Marlow's summing up of Flora's father, in Chance, describes his method of psychological analysis.

"You seem to have studied the man," I observed—'Studied', repeated Marlow thoughtfully, 'no, not studied. I had no opportunities. You know that I saw him only on that one occasion I told you of. But it may be that a glimpse, and no more, is the proper way of seeing an individuality ... If one has a taste for that sort of thing, the nearest starting point becomes a coign of vantage, and then by a series of logically deducted verisimilarities, one arrives at the truth'.

(Chance, p. 61)

From a single glimpse of the financier, Marlow is able to make a study of him, "the feelings of a man whose imagination wakes up at the very moment he is about to enter the tomb."

(pp 63-64)

In Chance, Marlow is faced with a difficult task of
interpretation and reconstruction of certain incidents. This necessity arises in certain scenes regarding which he has no direct access to a detailed information, as it happens in the scene between Flora's inhuman governess and her young boy­friend, and in the first-meeting of Captain Anthony and Flora. Whenever he is faced with such instances, Marlow conjures up the whole scenes from echoes of words heard in the past with his own imagination and asides such as "you understand I am piecing here bits of disconnected statements", "Don't you think that I hit on the psychology of the situation?", "what they said to each other in private, we can imagine" and so on. The limitation of his knowledge and the process of reconstruction he engineers makes his knowledge more convincing.

Thus we find Chance, the complete novel, assuming its form gradually before our very eyes. That is why the action seems to be more the working out the 'form' for the novel rather than the gradual unfolding of the theme.

The beginning itself, the casual meeting of Marlow with young Powell which leads to Powell's story of the strange chance that made him Captain Anthony's second-mate, is best illustrative of the characteristic feature of Marlow's narratives. The use of coincidence and association pervades the creative process of Marlow's art.
Though Marlow's wanderings of mind, and his musings seem aimless outwardly, it is these things that lead us to the mystery of the novel, that is Flora, the key-note of which is struck masterfully in his unfolding of the quarry-incident. His swift intuition of Flora from her clouded brow, her pained mouth, her vague, fixed glance, unfolds not only the motive of Marlow's tale, the sympathetic curiosity that follows Flora's story till the end, but also the theme of Flora, the victim of chance.

As the action proceeds swiftly from this point, it leads to the disappearance of Flora and her intended marriage with Captain Anthony. Then in the latter four chapters, the action comes to a halt with Marlow's curious gathering of bits of information from the Fynes, on the basis of which he furnishes and re-creates the sympathetic account of Flora's past.

Another significant feature of Marlow's narrative method is that his tales often "transcend the reality of speech." He casts off the mere physical possibility. In spite of the fact that he is actually absent at most of the scenes about which he gives a detailed picture, we re-live, along with him, those scenes about which he could actually have heard nothing. Thus Marlow's power rests not on his

26 Frances Wentworth Cutler, p. 32.
appeal to sense or reason but on the response of our awakened imaginations to his own. His imaginative inferences are so logically deduced that they never seem improbable. His "logically deduced verisimilitudes" actually make us share the inner reality of character.

Marlow's talk with Flora on a London pavement provides us with the reasons for the "innocent suffering and unexpressed menace" of Flora's sea-blue eyes. During his talk, Marlow feels as if "a tentative, uncertain intimacy was springing up between him and Flora" (Chance, p. 150). Since they had dealt with death, he felt "a sort of bond between us" (p. 151). Marlow has an impressive capacity to identify himself sympathetically with the character he comes face to face with in the course of the action of the tale. Being a captain himself, and a bachelor, he can easily sympathize with the difficulties of Captain Anthony, who finds himself lonely and bored at his sister's house. He sympathizes with Captain Anthony's attraction to Flora which he does through revealing his own responses to Flora. He observes that her lips 'seemed warm with the rich blood of life and passion' (p. 148). It is this tendency of Marlow to identify himself with his character, whenever the situation demands, that makes us also the sharers of the inner reality of the characters. Marlow's longing for sea-life is evident in his identification with Captain Anthony. He says he
is a confirmed enemy of life on shore - a perfect terror to a simple man, what with the fads and proprieties and the ceremonies and affectations. He hated all that. He was n't fit for it. There was no rest and peace and security but on the sea. (p.159)

These lines give us a view of Captain Anthony as a hermit withdrawn from a wicked world, which seems to suggest that he is never going to make the best with people attached to the land.

About Flora's letter to Mrs Fyne, Marlow remarks:

What a sell these confessions are. What a horrible sell! You seek sympathy, and you get in the most evanescent sense of relief - if you get that much. For a confession, whatever it may be, stirs the secret depths of the hearer's character. Often depths that he himself is but dimly aware of. (p.153).

He thus makes us move towards an exploration of the innermost feelings, both of the characters as well as our own.

Flora, then, marries and takes up her voyage on board Ferndale along with Captain Anthony. We follow Flora, through the kind eyes of Powell who plays the role of deus ex machina.

Marlow excels in his re-telling of young Powell's story. Very dexterously does he recount Powell's vivid
memory and his surprise at the strange atmosphere of the ship. He reproduces the vivid details given by Powell about the peculiar cabin arrangements on board *Ferndale* which are, as Douglas Hewitt says, symbolic of "the deep misunderstanding between Anthony and his wife." The abnormality thus poses a constant threat to the ship's company due to a lack of easy access to the captain in times of danger to the ship. In this, we can very well note, an innerstate-abnormality resulting in an external threat.

Marlow's role as a reliable narrator is also evident in his shrewd and exact recounting of the first-hand description of the persons on board *Ferndale* by Powell:

Of Franklin, he says:

The mate who, on account of his peculiar build could not turn his head quite freely, twisted his thick trunk slightly, and ran his black eyes in the corners towards the steward. (p.202)

Of the haggard expression on the face of Captain Anthony, Marlow says:

Powell tells me that looking then at the strong face to which that haggard expression was returning, ... (p.225)

---

Of the sinister Old de Barrel, he says

gliding away with his walk which Mr Powell
described to me as being as level and wary as
his voice. He walked as if he were carrying a
glass full of water on his head. (p.277-278)

Marlow is equally subtle in conveying to us Powell's own
accounts of the silence of Flora, and the mystery of her
father.

Marlow interpolates with impressive certainty his own
re-creation of the earlier scenes such as Flora's first visit
to the ship, her wedding day, her father's release from prison-
all of which reveal to us the impossible existence of those two
tortured beings, ignorant of each other's love. Thus he leads
us to the climax, in which Powell's chance-discovery turns the
long and mute agony of Flora and Anthony into a sea-encircled
peace that registers a victory over chance, at last. As if
summing up the magnificent role that 'chance' has played all
through the novel, Marlow finally says, "the science of life
consists in seizing every chance that presents itself." (p.321).

Thus through Marlow we arrive at the inner truth, that
appeared elusive, obscure, half-submerged in the silent and
still waters of mystery. Only through such a teller can we be
drawn into participation in the mystery of these sea-tales.
Marlow quickens us to the mystery of forgotten lives by making
us share our doubts with his own.
Harlow, having been a sea-man, liked sea-life and embraced it for the inestimable advantages of solitude and silence. He had the habit of pursuing general ideas in a peculiar manner, between "jest and earnest" (p.17). It is the solitude of sea-life that has moulded his philosophy of pity and of mirth. The anonymous "I" of Chance observes.

The men of the sea understand each other very well in their view of earthly things, for simplicity is a good counsellor and isolation not a bad educator. A turn of mind composed of innocence and scepticism is common to them all, with the addition of an unexpected insight into motives, as of disinterested lookers-on at a game. (p.24)

It is this disinterestedness that enables Marlow to identify and detach himself from the characters at one and the same time.

According to Marlow, every episode, every climax, is finally psychic. The voyage of Ferndale, to him, is the voyage into the souls of Flore and Anthony. Just before the breathless climax scene of Chance, he says, "Each situation, created either by folly or wisdom, has its psychological moment .... I believe that just then the tension of the false situation was at its highest." (p.307) Thus by the time the climax of Chance comes to an end, our journey into the souls of Flore and Anthony comes to a close, with the final word on them remaining with us. Thus Marlow's method makes us not only spectators to the
tale, but also sharers in the creation. Finally the authority for the verdict rests with us.

Marlow's method of narration in *Youth, Heart of Darkness, Lord Jim* and *Chance* could be interpreted as the "process of artistic creation"28 because in these works, Marlow as the narrator, performs acts of creation as he goes on to construct the stories of Kurts, Jim and Flora, and relates them to a group of audience, of mixed backgrounds. Marlow, by unfolding his own experiences in his tales, seeks to give their very existence and reality the truth which is disclosed in a moment of illusion. He is at once engaged in giving a compact form and a life-like reality to his tales. Conrad could not have unravelled the mysteries of Kurts, Jim, Flora and Captain Anthony, given their enigmatic psychologies and sensibilities, without the help and assistance of Marlow.