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JOSEPH CONRAD'S NOSTROMO: AN INVESTIGATION
OF SETTLED CONVICTIONS

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The subject of this thesis is "Joseph Conrad's Nostromo: An Investigation of Settled Convictions." The study is devoted to Conrad's idea that inability to live up to one's settled convictions, the convictions which cause a person to surrender to the incorrigible and ironical necessity of the 'idea,' causes an irreversible dehumanization. In his Introduction to the Modern Library Edition of Nostromo (1951), Robert Penn Warren analyzes the various levels of character in the Conradian scheme and then illustrates Conrad's idea that to surrender to the 'idea' is the only fate and triumph that man has. Conversely, the thesis shows that inability to stand by one's idea (settled conviction) causes an irreversible dehumanization.

The thesis is arranged into four chapters with an introduction. The introduction explains some of Conrad's beliefs as he reveals them in the works. Chapter One is devoted to the novel as a whole and to what the representative critics, including Conrad himself, say about the novel. The first critic considered is Conrad himself. His attitude toward the book and his reaction to public opinion about the book are considered. The second group of the critics includes Robert Penn Warren and Albert Guerard. The two of them agree with Conrad on why man should live up to the idea (settled conviction) which he has set up for himself. However, they do not see how irreversible dehumanization might come if the character fails to keep his conviction.

The third group of the critics include Joseph Warren Beach, Gustave Morf, R. L. Megroz and F. R. Leavis. In my opinion, they fail to see what Conrad's characters call their settled convictions. They are looking for "ideal" purpose. I deviate from their point of view by illustrating that whatever one believes in doing is his "ideal" purpose and that setting standards for others to live by is absolutely contrary to Conrad's view of life.

The Second Chapter is devoted to explaining the settled convictions of the major five characters. This is done within the context of the novel. The aspirations of the characters to live up to their convictions are treated in this chapter. The Third Chapter explains the result of certain characters abilities to stand up to the ordeals of their convictions. It also explains the result of certain characters' inability to adhere to their convictions.

The last chapter is a form of conclusion. The thesis illustrates that once a person establishes a conviction, he should stay by that conviction. If he repudiates his conviction, the consequence would be that of irreversible dehumanization--the total sum of loss of conscience or a complete annihilation.

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JOSEPH CONRAD'S NOSTROMO: AN INVESTIGATION
OF SETTLED CONVICTIONS

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of English

Morehead State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Samuel Ade. Adewoye

May, 1973

Accepted by the faculty of the School of Humanities,
Morehead State University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master of Arts degree.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am especially indebted to Dr. Rose Orlich of the Department of English, Morehead State University, for her able direction of this thesis.

I further express my appreciation to Dr. Charles Pelfrey and Dr. Ruth Barnes, also of the Department of English, Morehead State University, for reading the manuscript and making valuable suggestions for its improvement. My appreciation also goes to Linda Stapleton who typed this thesis.

Samuel Ade. Adewoye

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INTRODUCTION

Among the various novels of Joseph Conrad, Nostramo, because it includes so many of Conrad's central ideas, can be appropriately singled out as the subject of this study. The purpose of the study is to investigate Conrad's idea that inability to live up to one's settled convictions, the convictions which cause a person to surrender to the incorrigible and ironical necessity of the "idea" causes an irreversible dehumanization.

Fame in any phase of life is never achieved on the platform of gold. From time immemorial man has been struggling to be popularly known in any endeavor that he attempts. Is this struggle an outgrowth of ambitions? I think it is. This ambitious struggle preoccupied Joseph Conrad in his artistic creations as evidenced by his statement:

I think that all ambitions are lawful except those which climb upward on the miseries or credulities of mankind. All intellectual and artistic ambitions are permissible, up to and even beyond the limit of prudent sanity. They can hurt no one.¹

Joseph Conrad's artistic ambition made him a renowned literary man. During the past two decades after the publication of Nostramo (1904), Conrad's popularity has shone more than that of any other English writer. Many of his other works, Lord Jim, The Secret Agent, Heart of Darkness, Nigger of the Narcissus have all been receiving more academic explorations from scholars. Surprisingly, scholars seem to be dancing

¹Joseph Conrad, A Personal Record (New York: Garden City, 1923), p. XXII.

away from Nostramo when Nostramo beckons to them. Why? Is it because of the lengthy and complex analyses of the novel? Probably Morton Dauwen Zabel is correct when he says, "But it is Nostramo that remains the distinct test case for critics. For the present writer [Zabel], the reading of it has been a matter of years."² Nostramo, according to Zabel and many other scholars, is extremely difficult because of its "dramatic inpenetrability."

Notwithstanding Zabel's criticism of the book, other critics like Albert J. Guerard, Robert Penn Warren and F.R. Leavis see Nostramo as the best novel among Conrad's novels. In the same light Walter Allen admires Nostramo more than any of Conrad's other novels. Allen declares, "Of the novels, Nostramo is undoubtedly the finest; a good case could be made out for considering it the greatest novel in English of this century."³ Allen concludes his epitomized treatment of the novel by saying, "the remarkable effects of depth and recession obtained (in Nostramo) are a result of its organization, and adequate analysis of which would be impossible in the space of anything less than an extended essay."⁴

Probably Conrad is the best judge of his own work. Therefore, I personally believe that better understanding concerning his works can be gained from what he himself says about Nostramo:

²Morton Dauwen Zabel, Introduction to The Portable Conrad (New York: The Viking Press, 1947), pp. 42-43.

³Walter Allen, The English Novel: A Short Critical History (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1955), p. 370.

⁴Ibid., p. 374.

Nostramo is my best book; it is more Conrad than anything I have written. . . that is, in the sense that it embarks on my greatest imaginative adventure, and involves the severest struggle. No work cost me so much and, achieved, gave me such satisfaction. I stand by Nostramo, out of the frailty of flesh, hoping it may last for a while for a memorial.⁵

In his Preface to The Secret Agent Conrad again refers to Nostramo as an intensive creative effort on what he supposes will always remain his largest canvas; he suggest that Nostramo serves as an unreserved attempt to unveil for a moment his profounder intimacies of the sea and the formative influence of nearly half his life time.⁶

Conrad's reputation reached its peak in Nostramo. Nostramo embodies the result of his capacity for vision more fully and more magnificently than any of his other novels. It really does what few other works of art can claim to do; because it deals with political upheavals, Nostramo affords us the possibility of seeing the twentieth-century world, however chaotic and disturbed it may be as a meaningful and intelligible whole. Conrad suggested in it values of life but purposed only that men would "see."

There are many artistic qualities that contribute to Conrad's popularity in the literary world. One quality that outshines the other qualities is his unwillingness to define his philosophy toward artistic work. This quality is evidenced in one of his letters to F. N. Doubleday in which he declares:

⁵In "Joseph Conrad: A Reminiscence," The Living Age, vol. 328. (January-March, 1926), 312.

⁶In "Conrad's Preface to His Work," The Secret Agent (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1937), p. 105.

I think that an author who tries to explain is exposing himself to a very great risk--the risk of confessing himself a failure. For a work of art should speak for itself. Yet much could be said on the other side; for it is also clear that a work of art is not a logical demonstration carrying its intention on the face.⁷

True to his artistic intention, Conrad does not deviate from his unwillingness to define his artistic philosophy.

Conrad refrains from defining or setting any artistic philosophy because he realizes that even twin brothers do not hold the same opinion; how could then the whole world hold the same opinion, have the same problem, uphold the same light of joy? It is because of this realization that he clearly states in a letter to Edward Noble:

Everyone must walk in the light of his own heart's gospel. No man's light is good to any of his fellows. That's my creed from beginning to end. That is my view of life--a view that rejects all formulas, dogmas, and principles of other people's making. These are a web of illusions. We are too varied. Another man's truth is only a dismal lie to me.⁸

It is with this artistic view in mind that Conrad writes Nostromo. Nostromo is essentially a multicentric work of art which could be symbolized by a complex graphic design, a number of superimposed polygons each representing the pattern of human relationships as experienced by one participant in the action. Conrad weaves the action of the participants in such a way that their attitudes together amount to a complex interpretation of the events in the novel.

⁷Jean Aubry, Joseph Conrad Life and Letters Vol. 11 (New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1927), 344.

⁸Ibid. Vol. 1, 184.

He does not have a fixed point of view from which any beholder might self-assuredly evaluate and interpret the events. The reader then sees that in his best work (Nostromo), Conrad forces him (the reader) to invest his own time and effort. Deliberately, Conrad did not articulate his vision. A careful reader then is able to single out his own value of life from what Conrad suggested. Conrad did suggest values of life because he realized that man is surrounded by hostile forces in the universe; thus, man must create and play well an appropriate role in order to win a victory over the hostile forces. Eventually by choosing his own value of life from the raw values that Conrad suggested, man might create the appropriate role.

In Nostromo Conrad portrays how the individuals create their own action. The gallery of characters that he uses consists of people who entertained a common characteristic--adherence plus a conviction. The artist, too, (Conrad) commits himself to the value, the beauty of his artistic intention. Conrad clearly refers to his intention in Nostromo in the remark: "My reasons were not moral but artistic."⁹

In Nostromo, there are many related themes. One of the themes which receives the fullest attention there as elsewhere in Conrad is that of isolation. On a personal basis it is reflected in the lives of all the main characters, the Capataz, Decoud, Gould, his wife and Dr. Monygham. Of course, it is symbolically represented in the remoteness of the Occidental Province, as seen in the opening section of the novel. Politically it is manifested in the withdrawal of the province from the Republic of Constaguana and the city of "Death to Foreigners" which accompanied the civil upheavals of the country.

⁹Joseph Conrad, Conrad's Prefaces to His Novels, with an Introduction by Edward Garnett (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1937), p. 60.

The theme of imperialism is seen in Nostramo, though the theme of imperialism is stronger in "Heart of Darkness", where it is represented primarily as being the result of capitalistic expansion.

The theme of personal failure emerges in Nostramo. This type of failure is magnified in the life of Dr. Monygham. Unlike Lord Jim, Monygham survives not only the test, which almost completely destroys his ability to trust himself, but also the experience in which his rehabilitation is made complete. It is not Dr. Monygham alone who experiences personal failure; some other main characters experience personal failure, the failure which is the parent of their being dehumanized.

The theme of desire for success is treated in Nostramo. Gould initially and the engineer-in-chief are both personal successes, and the new republic is a political success. For instance, from the beginning, it is emphasized that Gould's interest in making the mine "a serious and moral success" is not based on any desire for great personal wealth. The image of his father's debacle is too clear in his mind for that as he points out to his wife "Never! After all his misery I simply could not have touched it for the money alone."¹⁰ Gould possesses in abundance the shrewdness which is so lacking in Nostramo--he inspires the confidence of his financial backers; he deals effectively with the government and has the loyalty of almost all who work for him. His dehumanization comes in when he deviates from his conviction of the desirability of improving the human lot.

But the theme of desire for success in the chief engineer is represented with considerably less irony than in Gould; that is the reason why Tillyard emphasized the point that Gould is "the only one main character who appears

¹⁰Joseph Conrad, Nostramo (New York: The Modern Library Edition, 1951), p. 81. All subsequent references are made to this edition unless otherwise noted.

to succeed."¹¹ Of course his success is due partly to his adaptability and partly to his self-confidence, which he expresses to Monygham when Monygham insists that if a man is sure only of himself, he is sure of nothing.

As one sees personal success in Nostromo, one also sees political success. Captain Mitchell's commentary is almost uniformly ironic in Nostromo. He gives his view of the matter as he tells his "distinguished visitor" about a conversation between Nostromo and Antonia, after the death of Decoud. "Miss Avellanos burst into tears only when he told her how Decoud had happened to say that his plan would be a glorious success-- and that's no doubt, sir, that it is. It is a success." (p. 517).

The theme of "activity" and "job-sense" also appears in Nostromo. It is evident that the individual character creates his own identity only by means of what he does. On one plane the action is both productive and creative, and on another plane the action is only productive.

Because of these interwoven themes in Nostromo one should not be surprised at Irving Howe when he says, "Nostromo is one of the few Conrad novels against which it cannot be charged that its moral theme unfolds in an exotic vacuum at too great a distance from familiar life."¹² Furthermore, in Nostromo the personal identity of a given character is only the starting point--society and politics are shown in relation not to one point of view but to several, and this fact leads to a more comprehensive view of society as well as a better understanding of each character.

¹¹E. M. W. Tillyard, The Epic Strain in the English Novel (London: Chatto and Windus, 1958), p. 118.

¹²Irving Howe, Politics and the Novel (New York: Meridian Books, 1957), p. 100.

What I have tried to do is to treat what (to carve a term) is the "mother" of the enumerated themes. I have treated "settled convictions" as the "mother" that gives birth to the themes of isolation, imperialism, personal failure, desire for success, activity and job involvement. I have also tried to illustrate that because of a character's settled convictions he tries to set a standard to live by for himself.

In his introduction to the Modern Library editions of Nostromo (1951), Robert Penn Warren analyzes the various levels of character in the Conradian scheme and then illustrates Conrad's idea that to surrender to the incorrigible and ironical necessity of the "idea" is the only fate and triumph that man has. What Warren means is that the most meaningful element in a man's life is the idea that in his own mind justifies his actions.

But conversely, I have tried to illustrate that inability to live by one's idea (settled conviction) causes an irreversible dehumanization. Warren only illustrates that it is meaningful for man to have an idea, but I have taken another view to illustrate that inability to live up to that idea makes man lose his individuality and to some extent his basic humanity.

The thesis is arranged into four chapters with an introduction. The introduction treats of what constitutes Conrad's artistic popularity, how he regards Nostromo as his best novel, what the opinions of some representative critics toward the book are and what are the related themes.

The first chapter is devoted to the novel as a whole and the detail of what some representative critics, including Conrad himself, say about the book.

The first critic considered is Conrad himself. His attitude toward the book and his reaction toward public opinion about the book are considered. This consideration is essential to the study because it shows how Conrad clings to his settled conviction concerning artistic creation despite

the hostile public opinion on Nostramo. Thus I suggest Conrad expected his characters in Nostramo to live up to the convictions which they have built up for themselves.

The second group of the critics considered include Robert Penn Warren and Albert Guerard. The two of them agree with Conrad on the reasons why man should have an idea (settled conviction). They, including Conrad, realize that the most meaningful thing that a man should have is an idea of his own.

The third group of the critics considered include Joseph Warren Beach, Gustave Morf, R. L. Megroz and F. R. Leavis. These critics, I feel, fail to see what Conrad characters call their settled convictions. They are all looking for "ideal" purpose. I have somewhat deviated from their point of view of looking for "ideal" purpose in a character. I have done this by illustrating that whatever one believes in doing is his "ideal" purpose and that setting standards for others to live by is absolutely contrary to Conrad's view of life because Conrad believed that other people's opinions when borrowed and completely followed are destructive to another man's selfhood.

The second chapter is devoted to explaining the settled convictions of the characters. The aspirations of the characters to live up to their convictions are treated. The explanation of the convictions of the characters, and their aspirations to live up to their convictions are treated only within the content of the novel. What the characters do and how they do it to establish their convictions are treated; quotations from the text are used to buttress the points.

The third chapter explains the result of different characters' abilities to keep to their settled convictions and also the result of their inability to keep to their convictions. This chapter also illustrates how the characters are content by adhering to their conviction, how the characters become

irreversibly dehumanized, and how the observers become disappointed in them for deviating from their settled convictions.

The fourth chapter is in the form of a conclusion. The conclusion confirms Conrad's view that irreversible dehumanization occurs when man does not observe certain core ideas. The conclusion is formed from the portion of the thesis illustrated in the other chapters.

I did not anywhere summarize the entire plot of the book; neither did I recapitulate the whole story of Costaguana. I only gave such information as was pertinent to the discussion.

The limitations of this study come from Conrad himself. Conrad permits the idea that what is good for one man is not good for the others. Therefore, while I have regarded this study as being exhaustive, another investigator might regard it as being a miniature study of the book. As long as Conrad permits different interpretations of his work, any investigator who regards this study as a miniature one should feel free for another interpretation.

CHAPTER I

NOSTROMO AND THE REPRESENTATIVE CRITIC

Probably the most objective criticism of Nostromo emanated from Conrad himself. In A Personal Record, while recollecting the composition of Nostromo, he said that critics refer to Nostromo "sometimes in conjunction with the word 'astonishing'."¹ However, Conrad was not in any way prepared to argue with the critics. Instead of arguing with the critics he made up his mind to continue the composition of the book. To support the idea that Conrad did not argue with the critics, probably his response to the critics' criticism concerning Nostromo should be considered. He said, "I have no opinion on this discrepancy [criticism]. It's the sort of difference that can never be settled."²

Conrad's artistic intention (conviction) was deeply rooted in his mind. Thus despite the hostile criticism he said of Nostromo, "All I know is that for twenty months neglecting the common joys of life that fall to the lot of the humblest on this earth, I had like the prophet of old 'wrestled with the Lord' for my creation, (of Nostromo)."³ I think Conrad was saying that no matter what time and trouble the composition of Nostromo cost him, he would continue to compose it.

¹Conrad, A Personal Record, p. 98.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

None of Conrad's other novels took as much of his time as Nostromo. Conrad himself was fully aware of this. Thus while writing to Edward Garnett from his Pent Farm in May, 1903, he referred to the composition of Nostromo as:

I am here fixed to slave and groan for months. Harpers got the book (Nostromo) of which not a quarter yet is written. I am indeed appalled at myself when I think what rotten contemptible bosh it must and shall be. By Jove I am too tired and with a heart worn too threadbare to be honest.⁴

Perhaps Conrad's objectivity in evaluating Nostromo is clearer in the foregoing and following quotations. While writing to Edward Garnett again from his Pent Farm in March, 1904, and explaining his inability to keep in touch with Edward, Conrad attributed the inability to the time consuming composition of Nostromo. He wrote:

I tried to write (and finish) an imbecile sort of story in that time. It is very imbecile but it isn't finished yet. If I did better work, more of it (on Nostromo) and a little easier you will see me often enough. As it is I am shy of inflicting myself upon my friends. I go about oppressed, severely irritated against work, never free from it, never satisfied with it. Not a man of profit or pleasure for his friends.⁵ [sic]

Conrad's objectivity might be deduced from two words used pejoratively in the foregoing quotations. The words "bosh" and "imbecile" suggest that Conrad regarded the tale in Nostromo as a rignarole. But despite this realization, his artistic intention prodded him to continue its composition.

⁴Edward Garnett, ed; Letters from Joseph Conrad 1895-1924 (Indianapolis: The Bodd's-Merrill Company, 1928), p. 187.

⁵Garnett. Letters from Joseph Conrad 1895-1924, p. 188.

The very Conrad who described the composition of Nostrromo as being "bosh" and "imbecile", suddenly and triumphantly regarded the completion of the novel as the greatest achievement that he had ever had. Thus to celebrate the completion of Nostrromo, at least verbally, in September in 1904, while writing to Edward Garrett again, Conrad remarked, "I drop you these lines to say that Nostrromo is finished; and a fact upon which my friends may congratulate me as upon a recovery from a dangerous illness."⁶ Conrad's artistic convictions which armed him to endure both the expected and the unexpected in the composition of Nostrromo made him in the long run regard the book as the rock upon which he would build his artistic creation. It is no wonder then that he referred to Nostrromo as "an intensive creative effort on what I suppose will always remain my largest canvas."⁷

The depression that Conrad experienced upon completing Nostrromo was heightened not only by the greater effort and amount of time that he used to write the book, but by his feelings of insecurity about its reception by the public. We are not surprised then to hear Conrad expressing these views:

.... No work cost me so much and, achieved, gave me such satisfaction. I stand by Nostrromo, out of the frailty of flesh, hoping it may last awhile for a memorial. And yet it did not succeed with the public. They will not have my poor Nostrromo. They prefer Lord Jim.⁸

But because Conrad realized the destructive rather than constructive tendency of much public opinion, he was never downcast at criticism to the

⁶Ibid., p. 190.

⁷"Conrad's Preface to His Works" The Secret Agent, p. 105.

⁸Conrad, "A Reminiscence", The Living Age, p. 312.

point of giving up his artistic intention. Thus while making a rejoinder to Dr. Ernst Bendz's criticism⁹ in the form of a personal friendly letter Conrad expressed his point by saying, "Thank you very much for the copy of the pamphlet on myself and my work. I need not tell you that I have perused it with great attention and no small appreciation."¹⁰ One would naturally expect Conrad to write a hot rejoinder to Dr. Bendz but he only wrote a personal and simple reply.

Dr. Bendz's criticism of Nostromo centers around his notion that there is no really leading character in the book, "no hero in fact in the sense of a personage kept continually in the foreground."¹¹ But Conrad made it clear to Dr. Bendz that the fact that he had leading heroes in almost all others of his work did not mean that every one of his works was bound to have a leading hero. Thus in the same letter of response to Dr. Bendz, Conrad continued to say:

I will take the liberty to point out that Nostromo has never been intended for the hero of the Tale of the Seaboard. Silver is the pivot of the moral and material events affecting the lives of everybody in the tale. That this was my deliberate purpose there can be no doubt.¹²

Like Dr. Bendz Richard Curle, in his Joseph Conrad: A Study, expressed his objection toward Nostromo. Curle even though he likes the contents

⁹ Joseph Conrad by Ernst Bendz. A Pamphlet in English Published by the Swedish Professor Bendz in Goteborg.

¹⁰ Aubry, Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters, II, p. 295.

¹¹ Ernst Bendz, Joseph Conrad: An Appreciation (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1933), p. 64.

¹² Aubry, Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters, II, p. 296.

in Nostromo, is critical of the title when he says:

What could be better than Chance, Youth, "Tomorrow"? What could be worse than Lord Jim or Nostromo? Nostromo is particularly bad. That this most unattractive title should never cover this most extraordinary book is a real subject for ironical laughter. Nostromo--why, it conveys less than nothing! A thrilling title should have been devised for this thrilling and beautiful romance.¹³

In fact what Curle is about is that he wants the title to be as fascinating as the contents of the book, because Curle himself appreciates the richness of Nostromo when he later says:

For, indeed the more I study Conrad the more convinced I am that Nostromo is by far his greatest achievement. To read this book with understanding is to reach the highest pinnacle of Conrad's art--not perhaps the most perfect, but the highest, the most dazzling.¹⁴

A larger percentage of the reading public rebuts Conrad's Nostromo. But about a decade after its publication (1904) the book began to receive a positive approval of the public. A friend of Conrad, an early supporter of the book, Arnold Bennett, privately wrote to Conrad:

I read "Higuerota" again not long since. I always think of that book as "Higuerota", the said mountain being the principal personage in the story. When I first read it I thought it the finest novel of this generation (bar none), and I am still thinking so. It is majestic and orbicular and just peerless, and there is no more to be said. It is the Higerota among novels.¹⁵

Letters of encouragement continued to drop into Conrad's box. Thus his artistic conviction continued to grow; thus he hoped for the best. When writing to Edward Garnett again from Someries Luton on November 15, 1908, he asked and also informed him about the news concerning Nostromo:

¹³Richard Curle, Joseph Conrad: A Study (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1914) p. 217.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Jean-Aubry ed; Twenty Letters to Joseph Conrad (London: The First Edition Club, 1926). Bennett's letter is dated November 22, 1912, p. 295.

Do you see the editor as of yore? He seems very busy. The E-R¹⁶ looks noble and I hear from all sides that the first No [the no here refers to the refusal of Nostromo by the public] has gone off very well, remarkably so. Is that a fact? I will like to know.¹⁷

Conrad was then becoming happier at realizing that apart from the few friends, The English Review Magazine was also making a desperate effort to popularize Nostromo. Conrad continued the same letter by informing Edward Garnett how Nostromo had received appreciation in Chile. He wrote, "Tarver who is now in Chile writes me that Nostromo has met with no end of appreciation on the seaboard where the scene is laid and from the people in the know."¹⁸

The sudden approval of the novel by the public was the oil helping the burning of Conrad's artistic convictions. Conrad was never disappointed at the earlier disapproval of Nostromo because before Nostromo many of his other books had been rebutted. For instance in November of 1900, when the last installment of Lord Jim appeared in Blackwood Magazine, Conrad wrote to Edward Garnett:

I've been satanically ambitious, but there is nothing of a devil in me, worse luck. The Outcast is a heap of sand, and The Nigger a splash of water, Jim a lump of clay. A stone I suppose will be my next gift to impatient mankind--before I get drowned in mud to which even my Supreme Struggles won't give a simulacrum of life.¹⁹

I am convinced that the stone that Conrad suggests in the foregoing quotation is Nostromo. Thus with his philosophy that if it burns, rains, thunders, he will write, Conrad positively reacted to the hostile public opinions toward Nostromo. There is no known indication that Conrad regretted

¹⁶The English Review Magazine.

¹⁷Conrad, Letters from Joseph Conrad, p. 216.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Jean-Aubry, Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters, vol. I, p. 299.

his composition of Nostramo. Because Nostramo is the longest book that Conrad wrote, because it is the only book where Conrad has a group of people with a common concern, Nostramo then is the best work of Conrad's in which one can see what Conrad believed would happen to a group of people or to a person who fails to observe certain core ideas.

While Conrad saw Nostramo objectively, there are some critics who see eye-to-eye with Conrad particularly in the way he presented his characters. Among many other critics who support Conrad's idea that the most meaningful thing that a man should have is his own idea were Robert Penn Warren and Albert Guerard.

To me, Robert Penn Warren appears to be the best critic who does the greatest justice to Nostramo. In his introduction to the Modern Library Edition (1951), Warren illustrates various levels of characters in Nostramo who demonstrate Conrad's idea that man must have an idea of his own to live by if he wants to escape from the net in which he is decoyed. And considering the plight, though wearily, with determination of the major characters in Nostramo, we see that Warren bears with Conrad's characters in Nostramo. It is with empathy that Warren refers to the characters in Nostramo:

.... Man as a natural creature is not born to swim in the dream with gills and fins, but if he submits in his own imperfect "natural" way he can learn to swim and keep himself up, however painfully, in the destructive element. To surrender to the incorrigible and ironical necessity of the "idea", that is man's fate and his only triumph.²⁰

²⁰ Introduction to the Modern Library Edition (New York, 1951), p. XXII-XXIII.

The word "conviction" could be aptly substituted for "idea" in the foregoing quotation. Warren realizes that to have their own convictions the characters had to undergo many inconveniences but like Conrad, Warren is primarily concerned with courage, self sacrifice and the determination of the characters to establish their convictions.

While many other critics describe Conrad as an artist writing out of temperament, Warren defends him. He defends him by making the statement "We must sometimes force ourselves to remember that the act of creation is not simply a projection of temperament but a criticism and purging of temperament."²¹ Warren's final complete evaluation of Nostromo is "one of the few mastering visions of our historical movement and our human lot."²²

Warren's phrase "our human lot" suggests probably that Warren himself realizes as did Conrad that the world is too large for man but through courage, determination and loyalty (all enveloped by conviction), man can survive. However, like Conrad, Warren does not blame the characters for deviating from their convictions; rather he sees them as the characters whose courage, loyalty and obedience are weak, and, consequently, they fall by the wayside in the human race.

Warren is not left unsupported in supporting Conrad's Nostromo. In his book Conrad the Novelist, Albert Guerard declares "Nostromo is without question Conrad's greatest achievement."²³ Among many other things Guerard affirms that Nostromo is a meditation on motivation. To me, motivation as

²¹Ibid. p. XXVI.

²²Ibid. p. XXXIX.

²³Albert J. Guerard, Conrad the Novelist (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 178.

used by Guerard can be the only way to plant and nurse one's settled convictions. The motivation of each of the characters is understood to be pushing them to have convictions of their own. For instance, Nostromo's motivation is that of wanting to establish a "good name" while that of Charles Gould is of struggling for human happiness. Once their different motivations become established, the motivations are transformed into convictions. It is conviction that haunts every character in Nostromo.

Guerard goes further by saying that Conrad's importunity upon man's necessity to justify himself by the idea (conviction) is merely an observation about human nature...that self-justification always accompanies action of any kind. The action itself may be good, bad or indifferent, but it requires the support of some "idea"--conviction. Guerard expresses this idea of conviction-action in support of what Gould maintains:

Action is consolatory. It is the enemy of thought and the friend of flattering illusions. Only in the conduct of our action can we find a sense of mastery over the fates.²⁴

What Guerard is saying I think, is that to have a conviction is not enough, but man must act upon his conviction.

We see that there is no character in Nostromo who has a conviction who does not act to justify his conviction in one form or the other.

Both Warren and Guerard see with Conrad why it is necessary for man to have a conviction and also why man should act in one form or the other to enliven his conviction because an individual can only create his own identity by means of certain convinced action.

²⁴Conrad, Nostromo, p. 72.

Joseph Warren Beach does not concern himself with the doings of Conrad's characters in Nostramo. He is primarily concerned with the composition of the book. Warren thinks that Conrad failed in Nostramo in his ideal (conviction) of making people see. Beach thinks that the book lacks a central character upon whom the interest should be concentrated and that it also lacks a single detached narrator "to direct the exploration of the wilderness."²⁵ Beach expresses the view that "the result is that only the most resolute lovers of Conrad can push their way through the tangled underbrush of the well-nigh pathless forest."²⁶

Beach hostilely goes further by describing the composition of Nostramo as the deformation of the novel. Because Conrad spent much time in composing the novel, and because the novel does not have a single narrator, Beach thinks that Conrad has failed in his conviction of making people see through the power of the word. In talking about the book Beach declares, "with nothing like a real center of interest any where in the book, and with no Marlow to keep things in their places, nothing but Superhuman Powers would have enabled him to realize his idea [convictions] of making us see."²⁷ Beach himself is looking for a hero; he forgets that Conrad was not dogmatic about having a single hero in everyone of his books.

²⁵Joseph Warren Beach, The Twentieth Century Novel: Studies in Technique (New York: Appleton-Century-Croft, Inc., 1932), pp. 364-365.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid.

If Beach had not failed to see, he would have noticed that Conrad used a group of people with a common concern. What Conrad did that Beach failed to realize was to put his characters in the same concern and see how each one of them would react to the concern. Beach failed to realize that it is very dramatic to see how the individuals will react to a common commitment in a group rather than acting on an individual basis. Furthermore, Beach failed to realize that Conrad did not want to create a situation in which a character will say, "If I were there or if I were the person, I would not have done that." Conrad had put the group in the common concern and expected everyone of them to prove his worth. The symbolic meaning which Beach failed to see in Nostromo was that by involving his characters in the same concern, Conrad was saying that everybody is decoyed in the same world but in different environments that prove individuality.

If Beach had understood Conrad's artistic method in a deeper sense there would have been no reason for him to argue that Superhuman Powers would be employed by Conrad before he could make people see and probably feel what he was attempting to say in Nostromo. Conrad did not have any dogmatic formula in writing his works. He only wanted his reader to draw out what he thought would be of value to him, and therefore there can be many meanings to his work. This understanding is justified by Conrad's letter to Barrett Clark:

A work of art is seldom limited to one exclusive meaning and not necessarily tending to a definite conclusion. And this for the reason that the nearer it approaches art, the more it acquires a symbolic character...all the great creations of literature have been symbolic, and in that way have gained in complexity, in power, in depth, and in beauty.²⁸

²⁸ Aubry, Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters Vol. II. p. 205.

If Beach is expecting that until he sees with his own physical two eyes what Conrad is saying, he is then looking for the dead among the living; this I think, is an unattainable quest. What Conrad wanted his reader to use in order to see and feel what he was saying, was nothing but imagination--which is defined as "the ability to understand and appreciate imaginative creations of others."²⁹

Nostromo does not go scot free from the hands of psychoanalytic critics. Gustave Morf has something to say in his The Polish Heritage of Joseph Conrad. Because of Morf's interest in the psychology which underlies the book, Morf is primarily concerned with relating everything in the book to Conrad's past. Morf goes to extreme lengths in making his point which he does by trying to demonstrate that Martin Decoud is purely and simply a representation of Conrad himself--he even refers to the character as "Decoud-Conrad." Giorgio Viola he connects with Conrad's father and all of the political strife is seen as imaginative treatment of Poland's struggle against oppression.

While we admire Morf's psychoanalysis of Nostromo, we can also see that Morf fails to realize that there is a marked difference between Conrad and Decoud. Conrad lived up to his settled convictions concerning artistic creation, whereas Decoud failed to live up to his own settled convictions. At the same time, it is a serious mistake to assume that a novelist identifies himself completely with one character, most especially when that novelist is as skillful a story teller as Joseph Conrad; the likening of Conrad to Decoud is an absurdity.

The absurdity of the likening of Conrad to Decoud lies not in the insistence upon the fact of Conrad's undoubted identification with Decoud

²⁹ Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, 2nd ed., 1970.

but rather in Morf's completely ignoring Conrad's identification with other characters as well, particularly when we consider that there are many characters in Nostromo. I then tend to think that Morf singles out Decoud as the hero of the book. A great error, indeed!

Conrad's sympathy is weightier and wider than Morf sees it. There can be no doubt that Conrad also feels with Charles Gould, Emilia Gould, Doctor Monygham, and Nostromo as much (even though probably in different degrees) as with Decoud. Does this sympathy make them all Conrad? I completely disagree with Morf's idea of "personality-identification" in absoluteness.

I would have unquestionably agreed with Morf if he had said that Conrad and Decoud are alike in setting up a standard for themselves and that they are different in the sense that one falls by the wayside in standing by his conviction that he should live up to the standard he sets for himself while the other does not. The reason why Decoud fails to live up to his conviction does not appeal to Morf; instead he is looking for Conrad in Decoud.

Why Conrad used the method that he used in writing Nostromo is not a question that R. L. Megroz wants to concern himself with; instead he just declares:

The total effect of Nostromo is achieved by Conrad's fairy-tale quality of fantasy allied to an exceptional amount of realistic detail. The crowded fullness of the area covered is achieved by combining his mirror-inside-mirror method with numerous shorter excursions from side to side of the main route to glimpse a multitude of diverse minor characters. Nostromo falls short of perfection not by its plot arrangement but by secondary short comings through which the enormous difficulty of controlling so much strange and rich materials is felt by the reader as a drag upon the unfolding of the author's vision.³⁰

³⁰R. L. Megroz, Joseph Conrad's Mind and Method (London: Faber and Faber, 1931), p. 211.

In finalizing his judgement of the book Mègroz says, "If the prophetic poet in him (Conrad) had gained a slightly greater control of Nostrromo, which exhausted him by its prodigious wealth of realistic characters and scenes, this work would probably be the greatest novel ever written, even taking into account Tolstoy's War and Peace and whichever novel one chooses to regard as Dostoievsky's greatest."³¹

Mègroz seems to fall in the same category with Beach. Like Beach, Mègroz wants a straightforward story. He forgets that if a straightforward story is told, the type of suspense, feeling, seeing and hearing that Conrad wants to evoke from his reading audience may not be realized as he wanted it. At the same time, Mègroz forgets completely to understand that Conrad is dealing with human characters whose actions are unpredictable. To expect a straightforward story is then to expect a perfectly straightforward human action. This is really hard to achieve because the world is too large for man, and this largeness involves unpredictability of human action.

Another thing that Mègroz fails to realize is that in Nostrromo, as explained before, Conrad does not deal with a single hero or one narrator but rather with a group of people who are prodded by a common concern but who have different reactions toward the common concern. It is therefore not easy to have a straight graph of action in a situation like that. The same reason which makes Mègroz fail to realize why Conrad employed the method he employed makes him fail to see why Conrad employed minor characters. Mègroz thinks that heroic people are the only great people in the world. If Mègroz would realize that both the poor and the rich, the heroic and the unheroic make up the population of the world, probably he would then understand what Conrad was doing in Nostrromo.

³¹Ibid., p. 151.

In his The Great Tradition, F. R. Leavis completely passes a judgement without considering Conrad's philosophy of life. He forgets that Conrad allows the idea that whatever one finds joy in doing is his own "ideal" purpose. Leavis wants to set a standard for Conrad's characters to live by. Thus by passing a judgement on Nostromo, Leavis says, "Nostromo, picturesque, indispensable to his patrons and a popular hero, has no ideal purpose. He lives for reputation, 'to be well spoken of.'"³² I am yet to see the reason why Leavis argues that Nostromo has no "ideal" purpose. I think that Leavis fails to see that as long as Nostromo stuck to his conviction of establishing a good name, he did not regret his purpose in life. He found happiness, which is the value that Conrad advocated.

Leavis also goes further by saying that Decoud has no ideal purpose. While describing Decoud, he says:

Martin Decoud, intellectual and 'dilettante in life,' Nostromo's companion in that marvellously rendered night of the Gulf (it is one of the most vivid pieces of sensuous evocation in literature), also has no ideal purpose. The voice of sceptical intelligence, with no faith in anything except the truth of his own sensations, he enjoys conscious advantage.³³

If Leavis had realized that to trust in another man's truth was contrary to Conrad's view of life, he would not have described Decoud as faithless. I wonder whether Leavis realized that to believe in another man's truth absolutely is to cause trouble for oneself.

Decoud believes that the only way to maintain his conviction and thereby be happy is to believe in his own very personal doings and not to have absolute belief in the world that will praise today and denounce tomorrow. Leavis's

³²F. R. Leavis The Great Tradition (London: Chatto and Windus, 1960), p. 192.

³³Ibid.

argument should have received popular support from Conrad's philosophy, if he had accused Conrad's characters of not being loyal, obedient and courageous enough to live up to their own convictions. But by looking for an "ideal" purpose Leavis is setting a standard for Conrad's characters, and by doing this he is deviating from Conrad's view of life.

In fact Conrad gave an objective evaluation of his Nostromo, and some representative critics also gave the evaluation of the book; what the reader should let ring in his heart about Conrad's Nostromo should be what Conrad said finally concerning the composition of the book in A Personal Record:

... I have come to suspect that the aim of creation cannot be ethical at all. I would fondly believe that its object is purely spectacular; a spectacle for awe, love, adoration, or hate, if you like, but in this view—and in this view alone—never for despair! Those visitors delicious and poignant, are moral ends in themselves. The rest is our affair—and the unwearied self forgetful attention to every phase of the living universe reflected in our consciousness may be our appropriate task on this earth.³⁴

Because Conrad said much about the composition of Nostromo and because many critics also say much about the book, there is then every justification to use the complex and comprehensive book as the book that treats human conviction among Conrad's novels.

³⁴ Conrad, A Personal Record, p. 92.

CHAPTER II

THE SETTLED CONVICTIONS OF THE CHARACTERS

Perhaps the meaning of Nostromo can be seen most clearly by focussing on five characters: Charles Gould, Martin Decoud, Nostromo, Mrs. Gould and Dr. Monygham. Through their life experiences each establishes an idea (conviction), to which each is initially faithful. Because of their initial adherence to their convictions, we may say that their convictions are deeply rooted in them.

True to their convictions, these characters practice what they believe is good for them. They all have the same commitment of adhering to their convictions, but their convictions are directed toward different values of life.

Nostromo, the titular hero, is by far the most complex character in the novel. His admirable qualities are numerous. He is very intelligent, hard working, a good leader of men and he is a man of decisive action. He does not fear anything. With the town's people he is a gallant and heroic person. He is loved by women but feared and admired by men. Nostromo's conviction in life is the all-importance of gaining and keeping a good reputation. To him an action is only worthwhile if it will earn him stature in the eyes of other people. There are many writers like Wilson Follett, who describe Nostromo's chief quality as nothing but egotism. Follett says of Nostromo:

And most fascinating of all the figures that slink or stalk through those six hundred pages, there was "Nostromo himself, Captain Gian Battista Fidanza the 'incorruptible'--a stalking figure, chief of the navigation company's longshoremen, whose

colossal naive egotism resisted every great crisis...."¹

I believe that it is wrong of any writer to describe what Nostromo calls his conviction, as egotism. We should not mind the various writers' derogatory evaluation of Nostromo's conviction because subsequent evidences in the novel show that Nostromo does some things which are not motivated by self-centeredness but simply for the sake of a certain group of people. For example, it is not primarily for the sake of egotism that he undertakes the risky adventure of saving the silver but with the hope of helping the Goulds whose interest in the silver by the time that Nostromo undertakes the adventure is beyond our expectation. Perhaps the following statement may testify to the fact that Nostromo does not undertake the adventure for his own sole motive.

"But if your worship can find any other man ready and fit for such business [of carrying away the silver] I will stand back. I am not exactly tired of my life, though I am so poor that I can carry all I have with myself on my horse's back."²

It is later realized that Nostromo does not stand back, but he does what the people ask him to do. If he is egotistic, as the critics say he is, he would not have undertaken the risk of saving the silver that he is enlisted to save.

Nostromo's conviction of gaining and keeping a good reputation is so great that it keeps him both honest and poor when every other person involved is getting rich. At this stage one may be tempted to describe

¹Wilson Follett, Joseph Conrad: A Short Study (New York: Doubleday Page & Company, 1915), p. 61.

²Conrad, Nostromo, p. 287.

Nostromo as an ardent Christian who believes in the doctrine that "a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold."³ This description, I am sure, fitted Nostromo when he was the man of his own conviction. Follett notes that, too, when he said, "So long as men cannot get along without him [Nostromo], so long as he can shine in men's eyes, he cares for no pay."⁴

Almost everybody in Sulaco knows Nostromo for his reputation. While Conrad was describing Signora Teresa's opinion of Nostromo, he said:

She seemed to think that Nostromo's presence in the house would have made it perfectly safe. So far, she too was under the spell of that reputation the Capataz de Cargadores had made for himself by the water-side along the railway-line with the English and with the populace of Sulaco.⁵

Because Nostromo is simple, the rich Europeans use him for their economic motives. But his simplicity coupled with his initial incorruptibility is really the product of his settled conviction. His conviction of the desirability of being well thought of and spoken of is really what makes the Capataz incorruptible at this time when he is loyal to that conviction. As long as people admire him and praise him, Nostromo is at the top of the world. As long as people do not rob him of his conviction, Nostromo is happy. He is happy in keeping his reputation; thus he is loyal, dutiful and courageous toward the activities that help him to keep his reputation before the people. It should not surprise us to read the following statement, nor should it surprise us to hear of Nostromo's action:

³ Proverbs, 22:1.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Conrad, Nostromo, p. 21.

"Here was a man, Decoud reflected, that seemed as though he would have preferred to die rather than deface the perfect form of his egoism [conviction]." That egoism, his need of being needed, takes the place of every virtue.... He will let a dancing girl of the town cut off the silver button of his coat when its pockets are emptiest for the applause of his inferiors. He will risk his life for days of the open sea in a small boat loaded with treasure, or in a solitary four-hundred-mile ride across the mountains to bring the patriot army to the rescue, in order to make debtors of those whom he does not love.⁶

Consequently, Nostromo is able to create his own identity in the midst of other people. His identity is so great that there is no passing moment when Nostromo is not spoken of, whether by his crew or the people of Sulaco.

The people realize that Nostromo is establishing a conviction. They encourage him the more. Even though Nostromo's conviction is deeply rooted within him, the people's approval of his conviction keeps him going. The people's approval of Nostromo's conviction could be understood through his popularity among them. While talking about the part that Nostromo will play in saving the silver, Decoud makes us realize how the part makes Nostromo popular. He says:

"The incorruptible Capataz de Cargadores is the man for that work; and I, the man with passion but without a mission go with him to return.... The only thing he seems to care for, as far as I have been able to discover, is to be well spoken of. An ambition [conviction] fit for noble souls, but also a profitable one for an exceptionally intelligent scoundrel. Yes, his very words 'to be well spoken of. Si, Senor.'"⁷

Decoud continues the praise of Nostromo by saying "exceptional individualities always interest me because they are true to the general formula expressing the moral state of humanity."⁸

⁶Follett, Joseph Conrad: A Short Study, pp. 61-62.

⁷Conrad, Nostromo, pp. 272-273.

⁸Ibid.

By referring to "general formula" in the last paragraph, I think Decoud is referring to convictions. Of course we will see that it is the very conviction that Nostromo is true to when he undertakes the risk of saving the silver. We can say that Decoud serves as the mouthpiece of the people of Sulaco in praising Nostromo, and because of his praise we may not question Nostromo's popularity among the people by this time.

Nostromo is so concerned with his conviction of establishing good reputation among the people that he does not resist undertaking any risk at any time. And he is always proud of his taking risks in order to preserve his conviction. In telling Dr. Monygham about his risky adventure to save the silver, Nostromo says:

"You see that, Señor Doctor? I shall float along with a spell upon my life till I meet somewhere the north-bound steamer of the company, and then indeed they will talk about the Capataz of the Sulaco Cargadores from one end of America to the other."⁹

What Nostromo is saying is that as long as people continue to speak well of him, he will continue to keep the torch of his good name alight even in the face of any peril.

Furthermore, Nostromo realizes that his conviction is immortal. He realizes that as long as he is able to set up a good name which is the result of conviction, the good name will continue to live even when he, too, is dead. Thus he says that it is because of his reputation that the people entrust the safety of the silver into his hands. In this situation we can see how Conrad used pity-evoking words to describe Nostromo's feelings:

⁹Ibid., p. 287.

And yet, the day before yesterday, we have been fighting to save it [silver] from the mob, and tonight I am sent out with it into this darkness where there is no wind to get away with as if it were the last lot of silver on earth to get bread for the hungry with. Ha! Ha! Well, I am going to make it the most famous and desperate affair of my life--wind or no wind. It shall be talked about when the little children are grown up and the grown men are old.¹⁰

Nostromo's loyalty, obedience and courage to his conviction prepare him to sacrifice personal enjoyment for the safety of the silver. He is ready to sacrifice the enjoyment, because he realizes that by saving the silver his reputation will know no bounds. In telling Decoud about the plan for the safety of the silver, Nostromo reveals that he is ready even to surrender his life for the safety of the silver instead of letting it pass into the hands of the stranger.

It is evident that Nostromo realizes that the people have completely trusted him in every aspect of life in Sulaco. Thus he is very satisfied with and proud of his achievement in Sulaco. He believes that his reputation has got such a firm root among the people that they enlist him to save bars of San Tomé silver. Guerard explained, "At that crucial hour in the revolution Nostromo [leader of the 'people' who will undertake any mission for the sake of prestige] is enlisted to save the bars of San Tomé silver."¹¹ But it is with pride and satisfaction that Nostromo says, "Since it was the good pleasures of the Caballeros to send me off on such an errand, they will learn I am just the man they take me for."¹²

¹⁰Ibid., p. 293-294.

¹¹Guerard, Conrad the Novelist, p. 176.

¹²Conrad, Nostromo, p. 196.

Nostromo's statement "They shall learn I am just the man that they take me for," might mean that he is saying that he is prepared to use even the last breath in him in order to please the people. He realizes that by pleasing the people in doing what they want, the people will continue to speak well of him. We may then conclude that by this time Nostromo himself is in the fullest awareness of the idea that conviction alone without action will not help. Thus, by this time the conviction has seriously stirred him to act in order to keep his reputation among the people.

At this point, it might be tempting to say that either Nostromo is too dogmatic or he lacks advice from the people and that is why he is highly convinced of his action. Nostromo is advised but because his conviction is very meaningful to his existence he is firm within his conviction. There is an occasion when the sick Mrs. Giorgio warns Nostromo against what she considers a vain reputation:

"They have turned your head with praises; they have been paying you with words. Your folly shall betray you into poverty, misery, starvation. The very leperos shall laugh at you--the great Capataz."¹³

In response Nostromo simply denies being an insignificant youth any longer. Nostromo is beginning to assert himself as a man who can act upon his very own conviction. We can say that Nostromo tells Mrs. Giorgio that she should not try to mingle his opinion with hers. Nostromo maintains that he wants to do things according to his convictions.

We can see that as long as Nostromo keeps within the framework of his conviction he does not have any cause to regret what he considers his perfect existence. Even at a time when the silver is believed to have sunk, when

¹³Ibid., p. 284.

Don Carlos asks Nostromo what he (Carlos) can do to help him materially. Nostromo replies that he does not need any material help because his wealth is embodied in reputation and not in silver. Probably we can understand the reply better in Nostromo's very own words when he says, "My name is known from one end of Sulaco to the other, what more can you do for me?"¹⁴

Charles Gould is another character who firmly initially establishes a conviction of his own. His conviction is the necessity of engagement in an activity that will lead to the happiness of other people. Like most Englishmen, Gould thinks of himself as a completely practical person. He realizes that the only thing he can do to let his conviction have a good footing is to operate a silver mine. Because of his conviction, and because he realizes the success of the mine will be the success of his conviction, he will not let anything stand between himself and the successful operation of the mine.

A review of the history of the San Tomé silver mine will explain Gould's establishment of conviction better. Gould's father had been made to accept the San Tomé silver mine in payment of forced loans that he made to the government. Everybody then was actually convinced that the mine was worthless, and as a final blow the contract required "that the concession-holder should pay at once to the government five years' royalties on the estimated output of the mine."¹⁵ Before long the concession had really ruined elder Gould. As a warning, he wrote his son (who was then in England) entreating him not to return to Costaguana or to claim any part of his legacy there. The father's entreaty is of no use because "by the time he is twenty Charles Gould had in his turn, fallen under the spell of the San Tomé mine."¹⁶

¹⁴Ibid., p. 546.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 589.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 64.

Charles Gould set out to make the mine a great success not with any particular idea of achieving great personal wealth; he is convinced that the mine should be made a serious and moral success in the light of making other people happy.

There is no doubt for a large part of the novel, that Charles Gould is on the right course, and because of his conviction he provides the only real stability that forms the temporary happiness that the country has ever had. We can probably understand the way his conviction helps him to embark on a good program by considering the wording of his manifesto:

"What is wanted here is law, good faith, order, security. Anyone can declaim about these things, but I pin my faith to material interests. Only let the material interests once get a firm footing, and they are bound to impose the conditions on which only they can continue to exist. That's how your money-making is justified here in the face of lawlessness and disorder. It is justified because the security which it demands must be shared with an oppressed people. A better justice will come afterward."¹⁷

In the foregoing view of Charles Gould, we should not be deluded by his statement that he pins his faith on material interests. By expressing this idea, Gould does not mean that he is completely interested in material interests for the sole purpose of appropriating the profits from the mine to himself. I think that what he is saying is that his interest is the happiness of the people; therefore, as long as the people are interested in the wealth coming out of the mine, he will struggle as much as possible to establish the mine on a successful basis. Briefly, Gould is saying that he pins his interest in whatever will be a source of happiness to the people.

It may be wrong to say that Charles Gould disobeys his father. Gould believes that his father did not operate the mine in a proper way, and therefore the failure of his father came as a result of the mismanagement of the mine. Furthermore, Charles thinks that the mismanagement of the mine came

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 92-93.

as a result of the father's lack of a technical training. But because Charles Gould has become a mining engineer with the youthful dynamic aspirations in him, his own ambitions (convictions) are to master the mine and thereby better the condition of the poor masses in Sulaco. Conrad remarked Gould's dynamic action:

By the time he was twenty Charles Gould had, in turn, fallen under the spell of the San Tomé mine. But it was another form of enchantment, [different from his father's] more suitable to his youth, into whose magic formula there entered hope, vigor, and self-confidence, instead of weary indignation and despair. Left after he was twenty to his own guidance (except for the severe injunction not to return to Castaguana), he had pursued his studies in Belgium and France with the idea of qualifying for a mining engineer.... Mines had acquired for him a dramatic interest. He studied their peculiarities from a personal point of view, too, as we would study the varied characters of men.¹⁸

Moreover, Charles Gould thinks that the father's lack of managerial ability also accounts for the failure of the mine. He says of his father, "I think sometimes that poor father takes a wrong view of that San Tomé business."¹⁹ Conrad continued Charles Gould's opinion about his father's failure by saying:

Charles feared that Mr. Gould, senior, was wasting his strength and making himself ill by his effort to get rid of the concession. "I fancy that this is not the kind of handling it requires," he mused aloud, as if to himself.²⁰

Consequently Charles starts to transform the failure of his father into a success for the period that he is loyal, obedient, and courageous to his conviction. Everybody knows of Gould's success; thus while describing Gould's success to Sir John, the chief engineer remarks:

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 64-65.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 66.

²⁰Ibid.

"His [Gould's] practical ownership of the San Tomé silver mine gives him a special position. He seems to have the ear of every Provincial authority apparently, and as I said, he can wind all the hidalgos of the province round his little fingers."²¹

Despite his father's objection to his son's inheritance of the mine and despite the series of bloody revolutions, Gould is able to achieve his conviction of the need for making people happy. Charles is renowned for his achievement; if he had listened to his father's warning, he would not have been able to create his very own identity through his conviction. Charles then should have fallen short of Conrad's expectation that one could only create his own identity by acting upon his conviction.

There is no evidence in the contents of the book to illustrate that Gould broods over his convinced action as long as he operates within the framework of his conviction. The narrator tells us about Gould at this time: "He [Gould] felt that the worthiness of life was bound up with success. There was no going back."²² From the beginning of his conviction and up to this time, Gould realizes that for life to be meaningful one must live for a conviction because the conviction will eventually give a motive force and radical attitude that will give life meaning, direction and coherence, and thereby permit one to maintain his humanity.

Decoud, another man of conviction, had been described by F. R. Leavis²³ as a person with the voice of sceptical intelligence who had no faith in anything but his own doings. His conviction is that only the one loved can be trusted. It is therefore the love of the girl, Antonia, that dominates

²¹Ibid., p. 46.

²²Ibid., p. 94.

²³Leavis, The Great Tradition, p. 192.

every part that he plays in the novel. Conrad described Decoud, "The dilettante in life imagined himself to derive an artistic pleasure from watching the picturesque extreme of wrong-headedness into which an honest, almost-sacred conviction may drive a man."²⁴

At the same time that Decoud trusts Antonia, he also realizes that the conviction must not only be verbal but active before it can be meaningful to him and to the observers. The way that Decoud acts his conviction is not to believe any other character except Antonia whom he loves. Thus the only person that he believes and thinks of is Antonia. Perhaps Decoud's words about Antonia might enlighten us better about his depth of love and trust in her when he expresses his desire toward her:

"There is nothing I would not do for the sake of Antonia. There is nothing I am not prepared to undertake. There is no risk I am not ready to run."²⁵

We see that every bit of evidence shows that the political role that Decoud plays is based on his love for Antonia. Frederick Karl noted Decoud's conviction and he expressed it as follows:

The mine, as he [Decoud] knows, is a farce. Yet because of Antonia he finds himself committed to something he can only scorn. Mocking the idealists and contemptuous of the realists, Decoud must still admit that his action [conviction] like those of others, are also "clothed in the fair robes of an idea"--love for Antonia Avellanos.²⁶

At one time too when Decoud and Mrs. Gould are talking about the separation of the Occidental Province from the rest of the nation, Mrs. Gould asks from Gould whether his idea is for separation; true to his conviction, Decoud replies:

²⁴Conrad, Nostromo, p. 221.

²⁵Ibid., p. 236.

²⁶Frederick R. Karl, A Reader's Guide to Joseph Conrad (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1960), p. 160.

"Separation of course, Yes; Separation of the whole Occidental Province from the rest of the unquiet body. But my true idea [conviction], the only one I care for, is not to be separated from Antonia."²⁷

After he finishes these statements, Mrs. Gould asks him whether that is all he cares for, and he replies again, "Absolutely. I am not deceiving myself about my motives [conviction]."²⁸

At the same time, in an ironical form, Decoud confesses his conviction to Antonia, because while proclaiming his motivated patriotic doctrine to Antonia, he declares:

"We occidentals," said Martin Decoud, using the usual terms the provincials of Sulaco applied to themselves, "have always been distinct and separated.... We have the greatest riches, the greatest fertility, the purest blood in our great family, the most laborious population. The occidental province should stand alone. The early federalism was not bad for us. Then came this union which Don Henrique resisted. It opened the road to tyranny; and ever since the rest of Costaguana hangs like a millstone round our necks. The occidental territory is large enough to man any man's country. Look at the mountains! Nature itself seems to cry to us 'separate!'"²⁹

The irony here which is unknown to Antonia is that Decoud realizes that it is only the separation of the occidental province that can help him to perfect his love in Antonia and thereby marry her. We can see that Decoud is kept in Costaguana only by his love for Antonia; he engaged in political activity solely to win her affection.

Furthermore, that Decoud plays any political role for the sake of Antonia can be understood from his remarks when he and Nostromo are enlisted to save the silver:

²⁷Conrad, Nostromo, p. 238.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 203-204.

"The incorruptible Capataz de Cargadores is the man for that work; and I, the man with a passion, but without a mission, I go with him to return to play my part in the farce to the end, and if successful to receive my reward, which no one but Antonia can give me."³⁰

Because Decoud loves no one but Antonia, he thinks that even if his journey with Nostromo is successful toward saving the silver, nobody can give him any reward except Antonia, because it is she alone that he believes and it is he whom she believes, too.

Frederick Karl said, "Decoud after admitting his devotion [conviction] to Antonia cannot believe seriously even his own being."³¹ What Karl seemed to be saying is that Decoud's conviction toward loving Antonia is so great that he can hardly believe in himself. Therefore, we can safely say that Decoud does all he can do to keep his conviction of loving Antonia. For the entire period that Decoud stays by his conviction, he experiences joy and even regards himself as the happiest of all men, "Is it, perhaps, because I am the only man with a definite idea in his head...?"³² I think it a mistake to describe Decoud as a man without any ideal purpose. Surely, the happiest and most honest man is the one who believes in his own doings and who does not stand in the way of another man's progress. Of course that is what Conrad suggested.

One may be misled to think that because Decoud acts as if everything outside the range of his thoughts and feelings is unworthy of serious recognition, he then does not cooperate. He does, in fact, cooperate with the situation and other characters in the novel. As long as human cooperation

³⁰Ibid., p. 272.

³¹Karl, A Reader's Guide to Joseph Conrad, Nostromo, p. 161.

³²Ibid., p. 255.

does not rob him of his conviction, he does all he can to support Conrad's idea of human solidarity. In fact, Osborn Andreas realizes this when he said, "Decoud and Monygham are the two most meaningful characters in the novel, and in their disparate destinies are to be found the hidden core of Conrad's feeling about the necessity of the group-tie for individual."³³ If Decoud had not cooperated, he would not have followed Nostromo on that venture that eventually took his (Decoud's) life. What I am really saying is this: Decoud sticks to his conviction and also cooperates with other characters. And as far as Conrad's idea of human solidarity and being true to self are concerned, Decoud is a true Conradian character. But why and how he deviates from his conviction is a point for clarification in Chapter Three.

Mrs. Emily Gould has been described as a kind and generous woman. She is kind to her social inferiors as well as her equals. Her conviction is that she should try as much as it is within her power to alleviate any human problem both physically, socially and psychologically among the people of Sulaco. Karl remarked of her conviction:

While Gould and his cohorts deal with the solidarity of the mine and its various compensations, she Mrs. Gould is concerned with human problems, with feelings that perforce run counter to the mine.³⁴

We therefore can say that Mrs. Gould is the only one among the major characters who has human feelings and who is willing to accept herself as such.

³³Osborn Andreas, Joseph Conrad: A Study in Non-Conformity (London: Vision Press Limited, 1959), p. 95.

³⁴Karl, A Reader's Guide to Joseph Conrad, p. 157.

Furthermore, Conrad made it clear that when Mr. Gould is thinking of his grand design in the mine, Mrs. Gould is primarily concerned with social amenities for the suffering masses. What she has in mind is that the poor condition of the suffering masses should be improved. Decoud notes Mrs. Gould's effort to improve the people's condition when he addresses her:

"Think also of your hospitals, of your schools, of your ailing mothers and feeble old men, of all that population which you and your husband have brought into the rocky gorge of San Tomé. Are you not responsible to your conscience for all those people...?"³⁵

While talking to Sir John concerning what her husband and she want for the people of Sulaco, Mrs. Gould says:

"My husband wanted the railway," Mrs. Gould said to Sir John in the general murmur of resumed conversations. "All this brings nearer the sort of future we desire for the country, which has waited for it in sorrow long enough, God knows. But I will confess that the other day, during my afternoon drive when I suddenly saw an Indian boy ride out of a wood with the red flag of a surveying party in his hand, I felt something of a shock. The future means change--an utter change...."³⁶

Mrs. Gould realizes that for life to be meaningful and for dehumanization not to attend one's way, one should keep to his conviction. She also realizes that keeping to one's conviction alone is not enough, but the continued activation of the conviction is a must. It is on the basis of her realizing this that she says, "For life to be large and full, it must contain the care of the past and of the future in every passing moment of the present. Our daily work must be done to the glory of the dead and for the good of those who come after."³⁷

³⁵Conrad, Nostramo, pp. 240-241.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 132-133.

³⁷Ibid., p. 582.

That one's conviction should not prod him to help only the living, but both the dead and the living, is evidenced by what Mrs. Gould says in the last paragraph. In fact, some of Mrs. Gould's reflections sound very much like what Conrad said in such places as the Preface to The Nigger of the Narcissus, particularly when she expresses the thought that their "daily work must be done to the glory of the dead and for the good of those who come after." Her idea here seems almost to be a specific example of the solidarity "which binds together all humanity...the dead to the living and the living to the unborn."³⁸ Mrs. Gould realizes that if one does not use his knowledge and understanding to adhere to his conviction, one will lose his humanity. We are going to see in Chapter Three of this study how her conviction of the need of helping humanity through knowledge and understanding makes her one of the two characters who do not completely lose their individuality.

Describing Dr. Monygham, Lee Whitehead said, "Dr. Monygham's fear of life, his ideal conception of his disgrace, had kept him aloof, but he too, is committed, the ironic reversal of commitment in his case bringing him closer to the human community again."³⁹ Conrad's narrator, too, described Dr. Monygham:

³⁸Conrad, Preface to The Nigger of the Narcissus, p. xii.

³⁹Lee M. Whitehead, "Nostromo: The Tragic "Idea", Nineteenth Century Fiction, XXIII (1969), 463.

People believe him scornful and soured. The truth of his nature consisted in his capacity for passion and in the sensitiveness of his temperament. What he lacked was the polished callousness of men of the world, the callousness from which springs an easy tolerance for oneself and others; the tolerance wide as poles asunder from true sympathy and human compassion--this want of callousness accounted for his sardonic turn of mind and his biting speeches.⁴⁰

The descriptions of Dr. Monygham by Whitehead and Conrad's narrator are very apt for this time of Dr. Monygham's life, but they are not apt for his earlier life. He was a dynamic medical officer, "There could be no doubt of his intelligence.... It was known that many years before, when quite young, he had been made by Guzman Bento chief medical officer of the army."⁴¹ But it is the bitter experience that changes him to something else. Andreas said of Dr. Monygham's condition in his later life:

"Having many years ago been forced by a political tyrant to confess under torture to deeds he had never committed and to implicate others who were innocent, Dr. Monygham has ever since been ashamed as well as embittered and cynical."⁴²

"Afterwards his story was not so clear,"⁴³ the narrator declared concerning Dr. Monygham's case. We can then argue that everything hanging around his torture is just a reasonable guess. It is alleged that he had betrayed his former colleagues in an abortive conspiracy and then lived with the shame of that treason. The shame has spoiled his life both physically and psychologically. Because of this terrible experience, he has lost all faith in himself and all human beings as a whole in political affairs.

⁴⁰Conrad, Nostromo, p. 581.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 345.

⁴²Andreas, Joseph Conrad: A Short Study in Non-Conformity, p. 95.

⁴³Conrad, Nostromo, p. 345.

Dr. Monygham's conviction then is that he should stay out of the political affairs of Sulaco. This conviction comes as a result of the bitter experience he has had in political affairs in the past. But there is no separation between political affairs and the silver mine in Sulaco; thus we can see that Dr. Monygham does not take active part in the silver mine. He stands out of the mine because his past experience shows him that if he is involved again in the mine which is the political center of activity in Sulaco, he is going to be completely dehumanized. The doctor knows that to take part in political affairs of the mine is nothing but an investment in material interests, and he knows at the same time that such ventures are the quickest way of losing one's humanity. It is the realization of this dehumanizing element in political affairs stemming from material interest that makes Dr. Monygham express this opinion to Mrs. Gould:

"No!" interrupted the doctor. "There is no peace and rest in the development of material interests. They have their law and their justice. But it is founded on expedience and is inhuman; it is without rectitude, without the continuity and the force that can be found only in a moral principle. Mrs. Gould, the time approaches when all that Gould concession stands for shall weigh as heavily upon the people as the barbarism, cruelty and misrule of a few years back."⁴⁴

Dr. Monygham realizes the dual adverse effects of political interests which give birth to material interests. First, as explained before, they dehumanized and second, any achievement attained is not a lasting one. Karl noted this when he said:

When Gould dies, as Dr. Monygham realizes, all semblance of moral principle, no matter how righteous and short-sighted it is, will die with him and anarchy will once more disrupt Sulaco.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 571.

⁴⁵ Karl, A Reader's Guide to Joseph Conrad, p. 165.

In a better sense, we can see that Dr. Monygham is saying that political interests with a sustained moral principle contain the seed of their own destruction. To quote Karl again:

In its psychological and political connotations the mine [clothed with political activities] suggests at least two sides of Conrad's belief in moral principle; it demonstrates that sustained moral principle can work for awhile toward bettering man while also containing, paradoxically, the seeds of its own destruction.⁴⁶

It is because Dr. Monygham realizes the temporariness of the success of the political interests and their everlasting dehumanization, that he is convinced he should stay aloof from political interests.

Because Dr. Monygham establishes his conviction, and because he acts faithfully and courageously upon his conviction, his role in life is to be a happy spectator of political life and not a participant in it. Consequently, his past bitter experience is transformed to happiness. And because of his conviction he is able to be loyal to humanity as a whole. "There was a great fund of loyalty in Dr. Monygham's nature,"⁴⁷ the narrator declares. I am sure if he had not established a conviction and acted on it, he would have been brooding over his former bitter experience throughout his entire life.

If we trace the ways and manners in which those five characters establish their common concern-convictions we will notice one common element which they all have. They all want to do things that they think fit according to their own belief without unnecessarily borrowing other people's opinions. It might be a misunderstanding of their conviction if we rapidly

⁴⁶Karl, A Reader's Guide to Joseph Conrad, p. 166.

⁴⁷Conrad, Nostramo, p. 418.

conclude that there is nothing that others learn from them and that they do not learn from others. They influence others and others influence them, too. But the only quality that helps them all to uphold the strengths of their convictions is that they only cooperate when necessary, but they never blindly concur with anything that will efface the glory of their conviction.

I personally believe that it is because of these characters clinging to that initial idea of "Wheresoever it leads me, I will follow" that the reading audience is led to praise the courage, loyalty, sacrifice and obedience of the characters to their conviction.

CHAPTER III

THE RESULTS OF THE CHARACTERS' ABILITY TO KEEP TO THEIR SETTLED CONVICTIONS AND ALSO THE RESULTS OF THE CHARACTERS' INABILITY TO KEEP TO THEIR CONVICTIONS

Up to a certain point, the five major characters considered in Chapter Two aspire as much as humanly possible to live within the framework of their settled convictions. Many and varied problems come to them. Their reactions toward these problems initially seem to suggest that they practice the biblical doctrine that "no man, having put his hand to the plough, and, looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God,"¹ the plough, in this instance, being the conviction. They all act in such a way that we can say that their settled convictions are their Kingdom of Salvation in a complex world. Their common understanding up to this point is their realization that the fate of each man is determined not by the power of external forces but by individual commitment to a conviction. They also realize that man has a choice in his commitment to a conviction, either a choice that can help him to keep his selfhood or one that can dehumanize him. Because everyone of the five characters considered in Chapter Two makes a right choice to keep to his conviction up to a point, none of them loses his humanity up to that point.

I believe that Conrad wanted his characters to be the admirers and doers of what John Stuart Mill emphasized in his essay "Of the Liberty of Thought and Discussion." Mill said, "If we were never to act on our own opinions, because those opinions may be wrong we should leave all our interests uncared for, all our duties unperformed."²

¹Luke 9: 626.

²Charles W. Eliot ed., The Harvard Classics: John Stuart Mill, Thomas Carlyle, XXV (New York: P. F. Collier & Son Corporation, 1937), p. 213.

What Mill was saying is that even if our action is wrong, we should not entertain any fear in acting according to our settled convictions. In the case of the five characters considered, they all act with the full conviction that what they do is true for the guidance of their conduct. It is because of their being faithful to their convictions that the reader praises them initially.

But because this world is too large for man and because man's action in the world in which he is decoyed is unpredictable, three of the five characters previously discussed fail to continue to live up to their settled convictions. These characters are: Charles Gould, Martin Decoud and Nostromo. By the time that these three characters start to repudiate their conviction, they forget that it is by maintaining one's already established settled conviction that he can maintain his humanity within himself and also in the eyes of the observers.

Furthermore, most likely these characters completely forget what Conrad was always emphasizing. What Conrad emphasized which they forget could be clearly seen in what Mill said in his essay, "On Individuality as One of the Elements of Wellbeing." Mill said, "A people it appears, may be progressive for a certain length of time and then stop. When does it stop? When it ceases to possess individuality."³ In a sense Mill was saying that once a person adheres to his very own idea of things, he is happy and satisfied but once he deviates from his original idea (conviction) of things, he will lose feeling for others, for himself and at the same time it may be hard for him to embark on anything in life again which can make life meaningful to him. When one becomes a victim of deviating from his conviction, because of the effects

³Ibid., p. 266.

of this deviation, we can say that the person is irreversibly dehumanized because he cannot go back to repair the wrong and he has also lost the hope of any better future.

How does Charles Gould deviate from his conviction and what are the consequences of his deviation? These are the questions to be considered.

Charles Gould has been praised up to this point for transforming his father's failure to a grand success most especially in making the mine as a rockbed for the happiness of the people of Sulaco. His identity as "King of Sulaco" is established more firmly than ever at the end of the novel, and yet his estrangement from the other characters in the story, including his wife, is almost complete. The isolation stems from his excessive idealism (conviction). The thing that he idealizes is productive, but the ideal pressed as it is beyond all reasonable limit, is impersonal and asocial. This alienation from the other characters is not the result of any breach of faith, as such, but there is more than one indication in the novel that when Gould "pins his faith to material interest"⁴ he is putting it in the wrong place because his faith (conviction) is originally in human interest--seeking for the happiness of man.

Originally Gould pins his faith upon material interest as a means toward helping humanity, but now that he is regarding material interest as an end in itself, he begins to lose his humanity very rapidly.

We also see that Charles Gould's exhaustion with dealing with the political necessities that surround the mine has led to his withdrawing from the world of his wife. A former loyal person in the pursuit of human happiness has been blindly corrupted by the mine. In describing his former adherence to his conviction and the sudden deviation from the settled conviction, the narrator says:

⁴Conrad, Nostromo, p. 92.

His taciturnity, assumed with a purpose, had prevented him from tampering openly with his thoughts, but the Gould concession had corrupted his judgement.... The mine had corrupted his judgement by making him sick of bribing and intriguing merely to have his work left alone from day to day.⁵

If Gould had realized that to bribe and intrigue the government is to encourage the perpetuation of the unhappiness of the masses, he would probably have understood that he was rapidly losing his conviction of keeping the suffering masses happy. Thus the man of a settled conviction is absorbed by his interest in the mine and not in the man, and he falls a prey to "that subtle conjugal infidelity through which his wife [and humanity] were no longer the sole mistress [and conviction] of his thoughts."⁶

Gould's problem might have been a lack of flexibility. If he had been flexible enough, he would perhaps have known how he could operate the mine without being effaced of his conviction. Perhaps Tillyard was correct in this regard when he described Gould as the tragic hero who lacked flexibility. Tillyard suggested that what the story indicates about Gould is "not that his idealist experiment with the mine was a mistake, doomed from the beginning, but that it involved a greater risk which only a consummate self-knowledge and adaptability could be safe from."⁷

By self-knowledge, I think Tillyard meant conviction. Of course, when Gould possessed the conviction, he was known as a successful person. Now that the self-knowledge (conviction) is gone, he becomes a failure to himself-and in the eyes of those who previously admired and praised him. He is a failure

⁵Ibid., p. 406.

⁶Ibid., p. 407.

⁷E. M. W. Tillyard, The Epic Strain in The English Novel (Fair Lawn, New Jersey: Essential Books, Inc., 1958), pp. 5-6.

because his interest in the mine by the time that he deviates from his original interest in the happiness of the people is totally opposed to his conviction. The people hate him for this. He too does not have any human feeling again. There is no hope of his going back to his conviction and there is no hope of a happy future. He is only attached to the mine, the attachment which makes him lose all human feeling. The narrator describes the public opinion toward Gould at the time that the interest of the mine has displaced that of human interest:

To him [Gould] as to all of us, the compromise with his conscience appeared uglier than ever in the light of failure...⁸ the Gould concession had insidiously corrupted his judgement.

Because Gould has deviated from his conviction, because this deviation makes him lose feelings for himself and others, because he is not prepared to return to his conviction, and because there is no better hope for the future in his attachment to the mine, he is therefore irreversibly dehumanized.

Mrs. Gould realizes when and how her husband begins losing his individuality. We can assume that her awareness of her husband's losing of individuality begins when she contemplates her husband:

Charles Gould's fits of abstraction depicted the energetic concentration of a will haunted by a fixed idea [conviction]. A man haunted by a fixed idea is insane. He is dangerous even if that idea is an idea of justice; for may he not bring the heaven down pitilessly upon a loved head.⁹

What Conrad was persistently saying--that because the world is too large for man, man should wisely and courageously face his problem so as to maintain his

⁸Conrad, Nostramo, pp. 1105-1106.

⁹Ibid., p. 1122.

selfhood is revealed in the foregoing quotation. What Conrad said in the foregoing quotation is that men are victimized not only by a mistaken conviction but by a right conviction mistakenly operated. From what happens to Gould then, we may conclude that the surest and quickest way to lose one's humanity is to run away from one's previously noble way of heeding one's conviction.

Thus it is clear that because Charles Gould cannot pass the ordeal of this complex world, his original struggle to show himself approved unto his conviction is dead. The death of this struggle makes the observers change their original praise to dispraise.

Our interest then emerges in the way that Conrad finally presented Charles Gould. Since to Conrad truth was something elusive, he did not make any authorially derogatory comments by blaming Gould for deviating from his original conviction. He only presented Gould by describing his final action precisely so that the reader gets the same impression as the character.

In his estimation of how Nostromo deviates from his conviction, Whitehead described what surprised him and the reader:

He gives up his position as Capataz de Cargadores and even reverts to his real name, Fianza: "The Capataz is undone, destroyed. There is no more Capataz" (436). In the eyes of the world he is still successful but he has a guilty secret now; [he] left Decoud ten days to commit suicide.¹⁰

We can say that Nostromo's decision is arrived at painfully, and when it finally emerges, it is the result of many forces, including the conversation with Mrs. Viola, the advice of Dr. Monygham and his own torturous self-examination as he discovers the possibility of keeping the hidden treasure for himself.

¹⁰ Whitehead, "Nostromo: The Tragic "idea", Nineteenth Century Fiction, p. 469.

When Nostromo makes up his mind to keep the hidden treasure for himself, one wonders why he should forget his conviction that "a good name is better than gold and riches." However, if one realizes how Nostromo discovers how he has been exploited by the rich people of Sulaco, one's wonder will vaporize immediately.

The rest of Nostromo's career is determined by that great decision, and there is a great deal of pathos in the words that he speaks as he is dying. He says, "I die betrayed—betrayed—."¹¹ But he does not say by whom or by what he is betrayed. Unfortunately, Nostromo fails to realize that by deviating from his original conviction, he has undoubtedly betrayed himself.

There is one point when Nostromo rationalizes his deviation from his conviction. The narrator tells us:

What he [Nostromo] had heard Giorgio Viola say once was very true. Kings, ministers, aristocrats, the rich in general kept the people in poverty and subjection; they kept them as they kept dogs to fight and hunt for their service.¹²

The dehumanizing pattern of Nostromo is deeply rooted in the fact that the Capataz "sees" to a certain extent but does not see clearly; he sees that "his fidelity has been taken advantage of,"¹³ but he is unable to see that in the complex political structure in which he exists, the exploitation of the rich on the poor happens as an inevitable matter, but one should use his conviction with courage and loyalty so that the exploitation of the rich might not rob him of his conviction.

¹¹Conrad, Nostromo, p. 623.

¹²Ibid., p. 463.

¹³Ibid., pp. 466-467.

If, on the other hand, Nostromo had realized that it is the same world that praises today that will denounce the next day, he would have stayed with his conviction of upholding the good reputation, but because he thought that he was being exploited, he renounced honesty for dishonesty. Of course Captain Mitchell could not classify Nostromo's exploitation either as a "history" or as "a mistake," and he concluded by calling it a fatality, "A fatality, if ever there was one . . . and to my mind he has never been the same man since."¹⁴ Nostromo drops the name he had been known by for so long; day by day he becomes more painfully aware of the fatal hold which the treasure has upon him.

Before this time we have been made aware that Nostromo's passionate desire to be "well thought of" is what makes him incorruptible, but now the sudden discovery that he is "nothing to anyone" is what corrupts him and causes the disintegration of his personality. He is not able to maintain the continuance of that interest, which, whether accepted or rejected by the people, would have restored to him his individuality. Nostromo cannot preceive any image of himself except in the admiring eyes of other people, and when this is no longer possible, he and his image are lost.

If Nostromo had realized that honesty is always triumphant over dishonesty and that a good conscience is better than the determination to "grow rich slowly"¹⁵ dishonestly, he should have continued to act according to his former conviction. But instead of living on his material poverty, rich only in reputation, Nostromo prefers to be rich by impure means. The

¹⁴Ibid., p. 145.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 562.

narrator comments, "Nostromo had been growing rich very slowly. It was the effect of his prudence."¹⁶ By the time that he is growing rich impurely, Nostromo can no longer rely on his reputation which has served as the basis of his conviction. It is at this point, after he had deviated from his original conviction, that the silver takes hold of him. Nostromo realizes this too when he says:

"There is something in a treasure that fastens upon a man's mind. He will pray and blaspheme and still persevere, and will curse the day he ever heard of it, and will let his hour come upon him unaware. He will see it everytime he closes his eyes. He will never forget it till he is dead--and even then--Doctor, did you ever hear of the miserable gringos on Azuera that cannot die? Hã! Hã! Sailors like myself. There is no getting away from a treasure that once fastens upon your mind."¹⁷

The foregoing statements clearly show how Nostromo repudiates his former conviction of the desirability of gaining and keeping a good reputation for material interests. It is this material interest that finally irreversibly dehumanizes him.

Even though Nostromo continues to transcend his own past achievement and saves the Occidental Province in his great ride to Cayta, his thoughts remain with the silver. Of course, when he realizes that with the death of Decoud, he is the only person who knows that the silver had not been sunk in the lighter, he, after protracted deliberations, decides not to disclose its whereabouts but to use it to enrich himself. But at this time of his crucial decision, the San Tomé mine appears to him hateful and immense, lording it by its vast wealth over the valour, the toil, the fidelity of the

¹⁶Ibid., p. 584.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 515-516.

poor, over the war and peace and over the labours of the town, the sea and even the campo. From the moment that Nostromo made his decision he is completely corrupted:

A transgression, a crime, entering a man's existence, eats it up like a malignant growth, consumes it like a fever. Nostromo had lost peace, conviction; the genuineness of all qualities was destroyed. He felt it himself, and often cursed the silver of San Tomé. His courage, his magnificence, his leisure, his work, everything was real. He clung to it with a more tenacious metal grip. But he hated the feel of the ingots. Sometimes, after putting away a couple of them in his cabin...the fruit of a secret night expedition to the Great Isabel, he would look fixedly at his fingers, as if surprised they had left no stain on his skin.¹⁸

We are not surprised to see that retribution comes to Nostromo in the end. When he is dying, shot in error by his devoted admirer, Old Viola, he tells Mrs. Gould with a symbolic truth, "The silver has killed me."¹⁹ We see that consequently Nostromo's inability to continue with his original conviction causes his death. Because of his past admired activities, we would expect Nostromo to die the type of death that everyone will lament, but because he deviates from his conviction and dies dishonorably, not many people of his former admirers weep over his death. It is not surprising to note that it is only "the pale photographer" an enterprising young communist, who stands by the wounded Nostromo. The narrator describes Nostromo's piteous condition in these words:

There was no one with the wounded man but the pale photographer, small frail, bloodthirsty, the hate of capitalists perched on a high stool near the head of the bed with his knees up and his

¹⁸Ibid., p. 585.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 624.

chin in his hands. He had been fetched by a comrade [only one] working late on the wharf, and heard from a negro belonging to a lancha that Captain Fidanza had been brought ashore mortally wounded.²⁰

Nostromo's dehumanization does not end with the loss of individuality but it goes as far as the taking of his life. This happens to him because he is not finally loyal, dutiful and courageous to his settled conviction. Karl remarked, "By reducing to nonsense Nostromo's one fixed idea [conviction], his reputation and by forcing Decoud into action completely contrary to his temperament and design, the silver has turned everything finally to its own ship [and killed him]."21

Decoud who has transformed passion into duty suddenly becomes dehumanized irreversibly because he refrains from his conviction of loving and trusting the patriotic Antonia. Decoud himself says, "It is [conviction] like madness. It must be because it's self-destructive."²² Conrad said of Decoud, "It [conviction] seemed to him that every conviction, as soon as it became effective, turned into that form of dementia gods sent upon those they wish to destroy."²³ Ironically it is not Decoud's sticking to his conviction that dehumanizes him, as he had thought, but it is his running away from conviction that dehumanizes him. How is Decoud dehumanized? He is dehumanized because he does not achieve his goal of loving and trusting Antonia to the end of his life; he does not have feelings for other people; he does not have positive feeling for his own existence again. He finally finds himself not fit to live again and consequently after a long deliberation, he commits suicide.

²⁰Ibid., p. 627.

²¹Karl, A Reader's Guide to Joseph Conrad, p. 162.

²²Conrad, Nostromo, p. 221.

²³Ibid.

Evidence shows that life had lost meaning to Decoud. For example, Antonia, who before Decoud had deviated from his conviction, had been a source of joy, hope and achievement to him, suddenly has no more meaning before his imagination. Conrad's narrator describes Decoud's condition by this time with heart-touching words:

Both his intelligence and his passion [for Antonia in particular] were swallowed up easily in this unbroken solitude of waiting without faith. Sleeplessness had robbed his will of all energy, for he had not slept seven hours in the seven days. His sadness was the sadness of a sceptical mind. He beheld the universe as a succession of incomprehensible images.... He no longer dared to think of Antonia. She had not survived. But if she survived he could not face her. And all exertion seemed senseless.²⁴

Because there is a temporary test of conviction, Decoud cannot continue with the activation of his original conviction of loving Antonia until death parts them,

When Decoud loves and trusts Antonia, the world is very meaningful to him. He does everything with gusto. But because he is robbed of his conviction, "He beheld the universe as a succession of incomprehensible images."²⁵ And before the time that Decoud loses his conviction, he makes us believe that he cannot part with Antonia, "I cannot part with Antonia...."²⁶ But because he cannot continue with his promise of loving, trusting and not parting from Antonia, Decoud is ready to part from his Antonia. The narrator tells us about Decoud at this crucial moment of his life:

²⁴Ibid., p. 557.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., p. 238.

On the tenth day, after a night spent without even dozing off once (it had occurred to him that Antonia could not possibly have ever loved a being so impalpable as himself), the solitude appeared like a great void, and the silence of the gulf like a tense, thin cord to which he hung, suspended by both hands, without fear, without surprise, without any sort of emotion whatever. Only towards the evening, in the comparative relief of coolness he began to wish that his cord would snap. He imagined it snapping with a report as of a pistol--a sharp, full crack. And that would be the end of him. He contemplated that eventuality with pleasure, because he dreaded the sleepless nights in which the silence, remaining unbroken in the shape of a cord to which he hung with both hands, vibrated with senseless phrases, always the same but utterly incomprehensible, about Nostromo, Antonia, Barrios, and proclamation mingled into an ironical and senseless buzzing.²⁷

The foregoing quotation shows how Decoud is no more thinking of Antonia but rather planning a suicide. Finally Conrad described Decoud's final end:

The stiffness of the fingers relaxed and the lover of Antonia Avellanos rolled overboard without having heard the cord of silence snap aloud in the solitude of the placid gulf, whose glittering surface remained untroubled by the fall of his body.²⁸

The foregoing evidence of Decoud's repudiation of his conviction illustrates that Decoud is a man who makes a vow to keep to his conviction but because of a temporary test of courage, loyalty and obedience on his conviction cannot keep to his vow of adhering to the conviction. But it is those who, despite its ordeal, keep to their convictions who may eventually enjoy the true mysteriousness of the world and then escape irreversible dehumanization. Decoud does not escape irreversible dehumanization because he does not cling loyally, faithfully and courageously to his conviction to the end.

Conrad did not blame Decoud for deviating from his conviction. He only makes authorial statements by saying:

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 557-558.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 560.

In our activity alone do we find the sustaining illusion of an independent existence as against the whole scheme of things of which we form a helpless part. Decoud lost all belief in the reality of his action past and to come.... The vague consciousness of a misdirected life [conviction] given up to impulse whose memory left a bitter taste in his mouth was the first moral sentiment of his manhood.... Both his intelligence and his passion were swallowed up easily in the great unbroken solitude of waiting without faith.²⁹

Conrad was saying that the lasting happiness of man may lie in his adhering to his conviction and by adhering to one's conviction he will finally have an independent existence.

Mrs. Gould, too, is on the verge of being dehumanized. At the time when she adhered to her conviction, she distrusted material interest and its progress. But eventually she follows her husband in attaching spiritual value to the mine. She, at this time of her temptation of being absorbed by material interest, starts to place herself above humanity. The value of the original personal relations that she adores then seem to be the values of an isolation rather than social and political relationship. Conrad noted Mrs. Gould's position at this time of her temptation:

With a measured swish of her long train, flashing with jewels and the shimmer of silk, her delicate head bowed as if under the weight of a mass of fair hair, in which the silver threads were lost, the "first lady of Sulaco," as Captain Mitchell used to describe her, moved along the lighted corridor, wealthy beyond great dreams of wealth, considered, loved, respected, honored and as solitary as any human being had ever been perhaps on the earth.³⁰

We see clearly that Mrs. Gould who, before the time that she is about to be

²⁹Ibid., pp. 556-557.

³⁰Ibid., p. 619.

absorbed by material interests, had been a social light in Sulaco, is at this point a person who does not have much to do with other human beings. Even her charities seem to be a source of arrogance to her rather than a source of being generous to the needs of other people. The narrator describes Mrs. Gould's condition at this time that she is absorbed by the material interest:

An immense desolation, the dread of her own continued life, descended upon the first lady of Sulaco. With a prophetic vision she saw herself surviving along the degradation of her young ideal life [conviction], of love of work--all one in the Treasure House of the world. The profound, blind, suffering expression of a painful dream settled on her face with its closed eyes. In the indistinct voice of an unlucky sleeper, lying passive in the toils of merciless nightmare, she stammered out aimlessly the words: "Material interest."³¹

The only thing that saves Mrs. Gould is that she has an immediate vision to repudiate the material interest. If she had not had this vision, she would have lost her conviction. But an interesting question concerning why Mrs. Gould is absorbed by material interests could be asked. The answer is simple. There are many alluring things in the world which can captivate human beings; once man is captivated, there is every possibility that he can repudiate his original conviction. I believe Conrad himself realized this, and that was why he suggested that man should use courage and loyalty in order to be able to cope with any problem that may take away his humanity. Bruce McCullough noted what Conrad meant and he said:

The world as seen by Conrad is a place of unending contention between the forces of dissolution and the idea of brotherhood, between that which makes for disenchantment and that which instills courage and hope. In such a world, in which the powers of disruption prove the need for order and stability only moral

³¹Conrad, Nostramo, p. 583.

values [conviction] can be counted upon to the last. Duty, loyalty and courage [these are products of convictions] are virtues necessary to man if he is not to suffer defeat from the sources in league against him.³²

Having become aware of her temporary deviation from her conviction, Mrs. Gould boldly and publicly renounces the material interests that cause her temporary deviation. The narrator describes Mrs. Gould's reaction at this time toward the silver:

"Oh no! No!" exclaimed Mrs. Gould in a low voice. "Isn't it lost and done with? Isn't there enough treasure without it to make everybody in the world miserable?"³³

Because Mrs. Gould withdraws from the material interests that can dehumanize her, we may say that she is the most genuinely sympathetic and understanding character of all the characters. She is perhaps the only character in the book whose comments are not obviously ironic in the context of the work as a whole. She is the only one for whom the scornful Dr. Monygham has any affection, the only one to whom the dying Nostromo will willingly tell his secret. Karl noted Mrs. Gould's role when he said:

Mrs. Gould's role as comforter affects even Nostromo. When he wants to divulge his deception, it is she whom he wants; the ever-sympathetic woman, "cloaked and monastically hooded over her evening costume," assumes a priestly role in the confessional, and like a priest maintains the secrecy of her oath. When the dying Nostromo says that the silver has killed him, she recognized that it has as well killed her, and her note of compassion takes the form of a similar confession: "I too, have hated the idea of that silver from the bottom of my heart." Then she adds about the lost silver: "No one misses it now. Let it be lost forever."³⁴

³² Bruse McCullough, Representative English Novelists: DeFore to Conrad (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1946), p. 340.

³³ Ibid., p. 621.

³⁴ Karl, A Readers's Guide to Joseph Conrad, pp. 163-164.

In fact the importance of Mrs. Gould's role is seen in the fact that she too is corrupted by the silver mine in the way of deviating from her convictions, but she achieves the vision which makes it possible to denounce the logic of material interests. On the night when Nostromo is to take the silver out of Sulaco, Decoud comes to tell Mrs. Gould about the news of a Ribierist defeat in the interior and the possibility of rioting in Sulaco itself. He persuades her not to tell her husband because, if he knew, he might decide to leave the silver where it is, and that does not tally with Decoud's plan. She complies, but later "She remembers with an exaggerated horror that for the first time and last time of her life she has concealed the truth from her husband about that very silver. She had been corrupted by her fears at that time and she had never forgiven herself."³⁵ And of course, moments later when Nostromo pleads with her to listen to his secret, she refuses.

In the introduction to this study we referred to a remark of Robert Penn Warren's that we should reconsider:

The man who has been saved may reach the moment of fulfilment when he can spontaneously meet the demands of fidelity, but his spontaneity must have been earned, and only by the fact of its having been earned, it is, at least significant.³⁶

In the scene between Mrs. Gould and Decoud, referred to in the last paragraph, we see that Mrs. Gould responds with spontaneity. The spontaneity with which she responds has been earned through her own bitter experience, the emptiness caused by the wall of silver bricks, erected by the silent work of the evil

³⁵ Conrad, Nostromo, p. 621.

³⁶ Warren, Introduction to the Modern Library Edition of Nostromo. pp. xvii - xviii.

spirit between her and her husband. And again, her refusal to listen to Nostromo's last secret concerning the silver is motivated not by idealism, not skepticism, nor by simple faith, but by her knowledge and understanding.

We realize that it is the same knowledge and understanding finally that Mrs. Gould uses to set her conviction of the desirability of improving the human lot against the dehumanizing power of the silver. If she had listened to Nostromo's last secret, the secret would have continued to haunt her and would finally have killed her as it did kill Nostromo.

Because Dr. Monygham learned from bitter experience, forms his conviction and stays by it, he is not dehumanized. He stays away from active political affairs. He becomes a true figure who sees other politicians and understands their pretensions. His conviction becomes a great source of happiness to him and this happiness, as opposed to his bitter political experience before he made his conviction, lasts him till the end of his life. Conrad described the doctor's conviction at the time that he had stayed away from political affairs for the remaining part of his life:

...and Dr. Monygham had grown older, with his head steel-gray and the unchanged expression of his face, living on the inexhaustible treasure of his devotion [conviction] drawn upon in the secret of his heart like a stone of unlawful wealth;³⁷

We can now see how Charles Gould, Decoud and Nostromo are irreversibly dehumanized simply because they establish convictions, but they cannot stand up to the ordeals of their convictions. Unlike Nostromo and Decoud who end their own lives, Gould's story is never really concluded; Gould is simply "left to his mine" from which there is no escape as both the text and "Author's Note" make clear. But Dr. Monygham feels vindicated because he is able to

³⁷ Conrad, Nostromo, p. 563.

keep to his conviction. At the same time, Mrs. Gould, too, is able to maintain her humanity as is Dr. Monygham.

We are now able to see that the fate of each man is determined in Conrad's Nostromo not by the power of external forces which are essentially the same for the characters considered, but by individual conviction. To the individual who repudiates his conviction, nothing in the universe matters one way or the other. Perhaps the most succinct statement of the foregoing view is made by the narrator of The Nigger of the Narcissus when he describes the breed of men to which Singleton belongs, "the everlasting children of the mysterious sea":

"They are gone now...and it does not matter. The sea and the earth are unfaithful to their children: a truth, a faith, a generation of men goes--and is forgotten, and it does not matter! Except, perhaps, to the few of those who believed the truth, confessed the faith...or loved the men."³⁸

Because Conrad realized that the world is too large for man and there are many mysteries that can rob man of his conviction, he did not condemn the action of any of the characters who failed to keep to their conviction to the end. He only exposed the readers to the activities of the different characters in the ways and manners in which they aspired to establish their convictions and showed how some of them could not keep to their conviction. In fact the appeal of Conrad as an artist was described as follows in the Preface to The Nigger of the Narcissus:

....He speaks to our capacity for delight and wonder, to the sense of mystery surrounding our lives; to our sense of pity, and beauty of pain; to the latent feeling of fellowship with all creation--and to the subtle but invincible conviction of

³⁸Conrad, The Nigger of the Narcissus, pp. 29-30.

solidarity that knits together the loneliness of innumerable hearts.³⁹

The foregoing quotation will surely make us see what Conrad did with the characters considered. As the quotation explains, Conrad's purpose in Nostromo and in any other of his works, is to make the readers "see" and "feel"; he succeeded.

Furthermore, perhaps what Tillyard says about Nostromo might make the activities of the characters considered in the novel more meaningful to us:

Thus, though there is much in Nostromo that is frightening and on the face of it pessimistic, the next effect of its politics and its moral is strangely exhilarating. It makes you want to share in life not less but more vigorously; and that is just what most modern fiction fails to do. It thus corresponds to the wishes of a great body of people today; it echoes and confirms the hopes of those who wish to have reasons for living vigorously in a world that threatens to baffle them at every turn. Thus Nostromo fulfils the choric task that belongs properly to the epic.⁴⁰

What Tillyard was saying is that Nostromo is more or less a picture of our modern life in "miniature," and therefore as we have many parallel situations in modern life, we can, perhaps, clearly understand why the different characters do what they do in Nostromo.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Tillyard, The Epic Strain in the English Novel, p. 166.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

In Conrad's Nostromo there are five major characters involved in a common concern, who establish convictions, although they hold different values of life. They are Charles Gould, Mrs. Gould, Nostromo, Decoud and Dr. Monygham. Conrad approved of their convictions. But Conrad had a fear. His fear was that unless these characters were loyal, obedient, courageous and dutiful to their convictions, they would not be able to stand up to the ordeal which the retention of their convictions would demand.

What the writer in this study has done is to examine how those five characters establish their convictions, what their convictions are, what are the results of their keeping to the framework of the conviction and also what is the result of those characters who eventually repudiate their settled convictions.

The five characters considered make the readers aware of the reason why Conrad had the fear that unless these characters were loyal, obedient, courageous and dutiful to their convictions, they would not be able to stand up to the ordeal which the retention of their convictions would demand. In Chapter Two of this study we see how Gould establishes his own conviction of the necessity to make people comfortable and happy. He thinks that the only way that he can achieve his aim is to find a measure of economic security for the people. This type of economic security is finally found in the Gould concession in the silver mine of San Tomé. In Chapter Two of this study Gould's interest is seen to be the progress of the mine not as a source of economic profit to him but as a source of what serves as the basis for the comfort and happiness of the people of Sulaco. Because

the Gould concession is successful and because people realize that Gould's purpose and action justify his conviction, he is regarded as the King of Sulaco. Life is meaningful to him and he does not have any cause to regret his conviction.

Mrs. Gould is almost in the same pursuit with her husband. In Chapter Two of this study again, we see how she works hand-in-hand with her husband to see that necessary changes are brought to Sulaco. Her action is that of bringing a social light into Sulaco. Her charities which, among many other things, include hospitals and schools, are signs of her generosity to the people of Sulaco. She is even described as "kindness personified." Because Mrs. Gould establishes a conviction and because she stays by the conviction, she maintains her dignity and respect. She has good feelings for others and everything she does makes life meaningful to her.

Nostromo, the titular hero, makes his own conviction too. His conviction is the desirability of gaining and keeping a good name. Everything that he does, as described in Chapter Two of this study, is directed toward that purpose of gaining and keeping a good name. Nostromo was advised against what some writers, like Follett, describe as vanity, but he does not listen to any advice that is contrary to his conviction. Nostromo's position at the time that he sticks to his conviction is that he is ready to sacrifice anything for the glory and exaltation of the conviction. Every discussion in Chapter Two of this study shows that Nostromo does not have any cause to regret his conviction.

In the same chapter we see both Decoud and Dr. Monygham who also establish their own convictions. Decoud's conviction is that of loving and trusting the patriotic Antonia. He does not love and trust anybody else except Antonia. Everything that Decoud does, including his political activities, is directed and controlled by his love for Antonia. Evidences show

that he is happy and satisfied when he works within the framework of his conviction. It is his happiness that stirs him on several occasions to declare that there is nothing that he cannot do for the sake of Antonia. We in fact see that for the time that he is true to his conviction, Decoud does everything for the sake of Antonia with composure.

Dr. Monygham's conviction is brought about as a direct result of his bitter experience in politics. Because he had been punished for the political offence which he thought he had not committed, he decides not to have any active part in politics again. He is faithful, sincere and courageous to the ordeal of his conviction. Evidences show that he sees meaning in life when he has a conviction, more than when he did not have a conviction.

As explained in the activities of these five characters, they all aspire to do anything for the sake of their convictions. In fact there are some unexpected problems that come their ways while sticking to their convictions, but because they try to make use of their courage, loyalty, dutifulness, and obedience, they are able to surmount the unexpected problems. It is because of their courage, loyalty, obedience and dutifulness that the reader is led to praise these characters.

What the writer has done in Chapter Three of this study is to trace how three of the five characters considered in Chapter Two repudiate their conviction and what the consequences of their repudiation are. Also, the writer considers the two characters who are able to stick to their convictions to the end and the consequences of their ability to stick to their convictions.

Charles Gould, whom we see in Chapter Two of this study struggling for the happiness and comfort of the people, suddenly changes his interest in the happiness of the people to the interest in the mine. The mine has

absorbed him. He cannot think of his conviction again. His interest in the happiness of the people is replaced by that of the interest in the mine. The human law that he has used to aid struggle toward human betterment is replaced by economic law. He has lost feelings for the people, including his own wife. The people are disappointed in him because of his being absorbed by material interest. Life apparently has no meaning for him. His wife does not understand his doings again. Unfortunately Gould cannot go back to repair the wrong in his conviction. There is no hope for a better future. He is attached to the dehumanizing effects of the mine from which he cannot escape.

Therefore, because Gould has deviated from his conviction, because the deviation has consequently led to his loss of human feelings for himself, his wife, and his previous admirers, and because he cannot repair the wrong in his conviction, and because there is no hope of his detaching himself from the dehumanizing mine, Gould is irreversibly dehumanized.

Nostromo also repudiates his conviction; this repudiation consequently leads to his irreversible dehumanization. Nostromo whom we see in Chapter Two of this study as one who values a good name repudiates the good name for illegal material riches. He thinks that the rich people have been exploiting him; he cannot see that the exploitation of the rich people of the poor people is something that is inevitable in the political world. Thus Nostromo fails to use his courage and loyalty to uphold the light of his conviction. Thus he repudiates his conviction of gaining and keeping a good name. His former admirers hate him for this repudiation. He also becomes a night worker, going to the mine in the night. The life seems to trouble him. Life has no meaning for him again. He knows the meaninglessness of life at the time that he repudiates his conviction but he cannot atone for it. The only possible way that opens to him is to continue to be rich illegally and

with a troubled conscience. There is no hope of regaining the lost reputation and admiration. His being mistakenly killed is just a relief for him.

Therefore, because Nostromo runs away from his conviction, because the repudiation of the conviction leads to his loss of conscience, because there is no way for atonement and because he is killed, Nostromo is irreversibly dehumanized.

Decoud who promises everything to keep his conviction of loving Antonia in Chapter Two of this study is seen in Chapter Three of the study as a person who repudiates his conviction. The people are taken aback at his repudiation of the conviction. Decoud thinks that his former conviction has been a mistake and that the future does not have a better hope for him. He thinks that Antonia cannot love him again and that he too cannot love and trust anybody again. To continue to live seems to him nothing but an empty and bitter gesture. Thus the only solution to him is to commit suicide. Finally, after a long deliberation he throws himself into the water.

Therefore, because Decoud regards his past life under his conviction as a failure, because he does not foresee any brighter future, and because he kills himself, he is irreversibly dehumanized.

Mrs. Gould and Dr. Monygham are the only two characters out of the five characters considered in this study who are able to stick to their convictions to the end. Of course, Mrs. Gould was about to be captivated by material interests but she immediately has the vision to repudiate the dehumanizing effects of the material interests. Therefore, because she withdraws from the attraction of the material interests, and because she clings to her conviction, the people praise her and see her as a contrast to her husband who has been totally captivated by the material interests.

Mrs. Gould continues with her love and interest of the people; her continued charities testify to her continued human feelings. Consequently life has more meaning to her than it has ever had before. She maintains her humanity.

Dr. Monygham regains his self-respect among the people. He becomes a kind of truth figure, for he sees and understands the pretensions of the other characters. Because he is able to understand the pretensions of the people and because he regains the lost respect, life has more meaning to him. At the same time he has the hope of understanding the doings of other people at large. Thus his humanity is maintained because of his ability to live within the framework of his conviction.

While Conrad did not make it a mandate, he repeatedly suggested that once a person establishes a conviction, it is good for him to live up to the fullness of the conviction; if one fails to live up to the conviction, the consequence might be that of irreversible dehumanization--the total sum of loss of conscience or a complete annihilation. It is this type of dehumanization that Nostromo and Decoud experience, while Charles Gould, though not annihilated physically, is consciously annihilated. On the other hand, Mrs. Gould and Nostromo, who are able to use their courage, loyalty, obedience and dutifulness to surmount the ordeal of their conviction, finally maintain their humanity. For life to be more meaningful, for one to maintain his humanity, Conrad believed that once a person made up his mind on a way of doing something, he should try as much as possible to live by that idea.

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