

**Secrets Between Selves and The Exchange of Desires:
Mirror-Stage Politics and Self-Reflecting Wishes within Conrad's
"The Secret Sharer" and *Under Western Eyes***

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Introduction

In this essay, I seek to create an intellectual bridge between the epistemological abstractions that plague writers and thinkers in regards to Self-Realization, along with other aspects of the larger, more conceptual field of “Selfhood,” and the conveyances of these conceptual notions within specific literary works of the author Joseph Conrad. The grounds upon which this investigation creates its basis are taken from different philosophical discourses regarding the subjects such as Self-Realization, Self-Awareness, and also the contrary Loss of the Self. In conjunction with the philosophical justification and close readings of my primary sources, my research is heavily based in 20th century Psychoanalytic theories, especially those of Jacques Lacan, and these concepts are used to create a cohesive analysis between the close, literary reading of Conrad’s work and the theoretical assumptions of other source materials. When establishing a relatable bond between the numerous ideas surrounding not only the idea of The Self but also its figurative and literal analogs within Conrad’s stories, the abstract boundaries dividing what is rationally ascertained from the texts and what is merely philosophical conjecture disappear, and this is the area in which significant academic assertions can be made about both the idea of The Self and its application to Conrad’s works.

Around the end of 1909, as Conrad was attempting to finish his novel *Under Western Eyes*, which he was “struggling desperately to finish,” he wrote one of his most well-known and republished short stories, “The Secret Sharer,” with “exceptional speed and pleasure” (Watt 127). He then continued on to finish *Under Western Eyes* afterward, and this conjunction of writing both works simultaneously helps to create an initial interpretative stance from which both works can be taken and analyzed under a singular thought. This stance, in relation to these two specific works, is based on the manner in which Conrad imparts a psychologically-driven

narrative and his methods of creating a conflict of self within his protagonists by placing them in close proximity to characters that seem to reflect the protagonists both in the empirical and also in the abstract. This is an occurrence found in both “The Secret Sharer” and also *Under Western Eyes*, and the rationale behind placing them together in a single analytic setting is centered on examining the connections between the two works, which include the congruent timeline in which they were written, the intrinsic dilemma of Selfhood within both, and the deeper creation of what Albert Guerard calls “introspective concerns” (27).

Such concerns run parallel to the Lacanian theorems in that Conrad’s stories, more specifically *Under Western Eyes* and “The Secret Sharer,” often serve as explications of Psychoanalytic Selfhood in the face of one’s doubled image, which presents not only the service of constituting an awareness of self but also, in bringing together a fragmented being, essentially many differentials of a singular self, the moment of recognition in a doubling image forges a swap of desire between the subject and the recognizable *imago* (to use Lacan’s term), as he states in his seminar, “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function: “It is this moment [of recognition] that decisively tips the whole of human knowledge into being mediated by the other’s [the reflected self’s] desire, constitutes its objects in an abstract equivalence due to competition...” (Lacan 79). This critical shift in desire surfaces within the two major relationships presented within these texts, that between the Captain and Leggatt in “The Secret Sharer” and, also, that between Razumov and Victor Haldin in *Under Western Eyes*. The moment within these works when the relationships take on Lacanian meaning displays the abstract congruence of both an ontological summation between selves and an ostensible transference of desire; the amalgam of these two largely conceptual theories in the framework of

Conrad's narrative sequences help support his overall conveyance of a deep journey into the human psyche.

The underlying epistemological and psychological ideologies in Conrad's stories, especially those which are dealt with in this examination, quite often demonstrate the lens through which Conrad viewed the Human Experience. His narrative methodology, his specific strategies in forming characters, and also the fictional plots around which his ideas are expressed all summate into a diegetic culmination that, more often than not, exemplifies the way in which Conrad saw the narrative of his own life. In his autobiographical work, *A Personal Record*, Conrad writes, "what is a novel if not a conviction of our fellow-men's existence strong enough to take upon itself a form of imagined life clearer than reality" (15). And Conrad scholar John Peters states in his analysis of this quote that "By looking to the other – by acknowledging the other's existence and experience – Conrad's characters can, in part, escape solipsism" (136). In essence, when looking at Conrad's idea to how the novel constructs a plane of existence "clearer than reality" and Peters' assertion that, through his acknowledgement of "the other," Conrad allows his subjects to "escape solipsism," it can be stated that the subjective reality created by a solipsistic existence is torn down as the subject comes to realize the "other," which, in relation to Lacan's idea, stems from the recognition of the reflective self. In this indirect way, Conrad's theory of conveying a multi-faceted, deeply subjective narrative reality actually allows the character therein to withdraw from their own individualized reality through the self-awareness created between mirrored characters. When taking into account the Captain's protection of his shadowy reflection of self, Leggatt, in "The Secret Sharer" or Razumov's nebulous connection with Haldin in *Under Western Eyes*, the continued use dual identities and coexistences stand as a major aspect of Conrad's authorship during that time period, and the texts examined here are

presented as examinations of the abstract ideologies surrounding man's apprehension of his own existence, whether through a concrete medium of meeting a replica of oneself or through the more abstract guise of self-reflection.

Conrad and the Mirror Stage

It was like beholding one's own weird acquaintance in a looking glass; my own well known mysterious disturbing sensations reflected in Your personality which is as near the inner *me* as anything not absolutely myself can be. (May 8, 1905, emphasis is Conrad's)

These words, written by Joseph Conrad in a letter to his friend and contemporary, John Galsworthy, very clearly state Conrad's understanding of a duality of the self, and more relatively, his placement of this concept into the metaphor of a mirror's reflection. The second portion of this quote, in which Conrad brings to mind that such a reflection can be as close to the intrinsic self as one can ever be, proposes that a self-awareness and comprehension of self can be found in a mirrored image. The scenario Conrad establishes with this quote, and within the works to be examined, is, in essence, a moment of cognition, during which the person who witnesses their reflective self is placed in the avenue of literal and figurative self-awareness. This moment, interpreted as a step from unawareness to a position of being more aware, can be taken as a "stage" in the development of the reality of the Self, in a much larger sense. Jacques Lacan explains a scenario similar to what Conrad is stating as he proposes his "Mirror Stage" theory in the mid-20th century:

It suffices to understand the mirror stage in this context *as an identification* in the full sense analysis gives to the term: namely, the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image—an image that is seemingly predestined to have an effect at this phase, as witnessed by the use in analytic theory of antiquity’s term, “imago.” (Lacan 76, emphasis is Lacan’s)

What Lacan writes as “the transformation” equates itself to the sentiment that Conrad conveys in finding acquaintanceship within the reflection, which, while acting as something outside of him, is also nothing more than doubled image of him, bringing to mind two *different* beings, the subject and the imaginary reflective image, both acting as pieces in the singular system of self-reflection. The moment Conrad is conveying is Lacan’s “phase” (though Lacan attribute this theory to adolescents, the realm of continuous revelation advocated within the Mirror-Stage terminology seemingly knows no bounds), and, from the point of recognition, evidenced here by Conrad’s “beholding” and Lacan’s subject “assum[ing] an image,” the awareness that is concluded within the self takes many shapes and purposes, which play out as Lacan’s abstract use of different imagos and Conrad’s creation of this same scenario within different diegetic sequencing. The measure to which Lacan’s theories about attaining self-awareness through a mirrored existence can be attributed to Conrad’s work is found within the contextual doubling of characters that Conrad implements within his narratives, and this authorial method pervades the text of *Under Western Eyes* in the relationship between Haldin and Razumov and even more overtly within “The Secret Sharer” as the unnamed Captain comes in contact with an actual reflection of himself in the form of Leggatt, who plays a doppelganger role to the Captain.

Secrets Between Two Pieces of the Same Self

As is stated above, “The Secret Sharer” was written quickly in the midst of Conrad’s tortuous writing of *Under Western Eyes*, and critics have speculated that the context within which this story was written played a significant role in its thematic conveyances. Joseph Dobrinsky comments that to truly understand the narrative at hand, the story “should be related to the circumstances in which it was conceived in the autumn of the year 1909, a period of climactic self-doubt for this ever-anguished man and author” (53). In his famous introduction to “The Secret Sharer,” Conrad scholar Albert J. Guerard states that the story is “as direct and frightening as any very personal diary” (8). In this, Guerard, who keeps Conrad’s intent in mind throughout the rest of his introduction, is saying that the obscure psychological nature of this specific narrative is built around the intellectual and emotional dilemmas that Conrad himself was experiencing at that time. The psychological backdrop that this particular story is constructed against is significant in that it reflects Conrad’s appeal to the readers’ (and his own) emotional and psychological states, while still presenting narratives that “suggest long vistas of experience beyond themselves” (Guerard, “Introduction” 8). It is through these more abstract canals of thought and experience that Conrad truly manifests his conceptual ideologies regarding existence and the conscious nature of the Self.

Within the first pages of “The Secret Sharer,” Conrad frames his descriptions around shadowy and vague imagery such that the scene from the Captain’s point of view is obscured as “incomprehensible,” “imperceptible,” and, ultimately, “lost to [his] sight” (SS 81). The impressionistic depiction of the scenario draws the reader into a shadowy world of fuzzy

outlines, wrongly interpreted objects, and darkened perceptions. The hazy backdrop serves as a stark contrast to the revealing nature of the Captain's forthcoming relationship with Leggatt. Before the Captain even sees Leggatt and notices the similarities in their respective features, he makes numerous telling comments on an eerie connection that they already seem to share as he states, "The self-possession of that man had somehow induced a corresponding state in myself," and also "I could tell that he was young...A mysterious communication was established already between us...I was young too" (SS 87). This initial response by the Captain comes with no hindrance or forethought, and he fundamentally recognizes his identification with Leggatt without any psychological or societal deterrent, what Josiane Paccaud terms as a "way of denying his own divisiveness" (90). The Captain's lacking inhibitors here lends itself back to the aforementioned Lacan quote, in which we equate Leggatt to "the image" that is "predestined" to hold such significance over the subject, so even in the case of the Captain making a decisive effort to find something other than himself within Leggatt, it lies outside the realm of possibilities established in Lacan's terminology.

As the tale continues, the Captain's connective identity with Leggatt takes on an even more significant role in this specific instance of Mirror-Stage realization and effectual doppelganger scenario, it becomes apparent that the ability by the Captain to disengage himself from his obligation to the associative bond to Leggatt (essentially, himself) diminishes. Lacan asserts this is an unalterable trend in the formation of self-awareness as he states, "in the movement that leads man to an ever more adequate consciousness of himself, his freedom becomes bound up with the development of his servitude" ("Presentation on Psychological Causality" 148). Guerard also comments on the psychological, self-motivating creation of what

Lacan deems “servitude,” in his introduction to the story as he analyzes the conceptual significance of Leggatt’s appearance and the Captain’s response:

And we find then that the purely adventurous story of rescue and escape has become a psychological and symbolic story of *self*-exploration, *self*-recognition, and *self*-mastery. We find that Leggatt, however real his physical presence, is also the Captain’s ghostly “double” or twin. What does this unreflective and immediate sympathy for a “double” mean but sympathy for *one’s second, irrational self*? The Captain hides and protects Leggatt because he vaguely realizes—for the first time in his life—that he too might have stumbled into such a crime. (11, emphases are mine)

Guerard’s claim reflects Lacan’s theory in that the Captain’s connection to Leggatt, as a measure of self-consciousness, constitutes a moral binding (Lacan’s “servitude”) in which the Captain takes on a self-reflective piece of Leggatt’s guilt. By this, the meaning of Leggatt’s crime, in essence, also becomes the crime of the Captain as they come together “in identical attitudes” (SS 95). To examine Guerard’s assertion even further in regard to the nature of the crime and its subsequent guilt, Royal Gettmann and Bruce Harkness write that “what happened, furthermore, was not a crime that could be adjusted by laws and juries and indemnities but an inward problem in morals, which required the utmost in self-scrutiny and complete personal responsibility” (126). The dualism of consciousness comes together here as the Captain, through identification with Leggatt, takes upon himself the full weight (criminal, guilty, etc.) of his other self. The aggregate self created between the two forms, each with their own inner conscience, is conclusively ruled by Leggatt, the fugitive, for “the fugitive, one may surmise, is the Other we

harbor within” and “in Lacanian terms, the symbolized imaginary [Leggatt, serving as the Other] will triumph over the alienating imaginary [the Captain, as subject]” (Paccaud 95; 90). Coming together in Leggatt’s criminality, these men, both in the literal and the abstract, become two parts of a single secret, hence the story’s name, yet because the basis of their accumulation stems, at least in a Lacanian reading, from Leggatt’s existence, the true secret the very existence of a guilty, “second self,” which is a variation of the numerous titles Conrad considered for the story, also including “The Secret Self” and “The Other Self” (Watt 128).

The manner by which Conrad conveys the physical resemblance between the Captain and Leggatt, though imparted as a purely literal aspect of the story also holds Lacanian implications in the abstract, and his descriptive storytelling of their resemblance provides examples for a Lacanian critical implementation. The initial descriptive language surrounding Leggatt characterize him as “complete but for the head. A headless corpse,” which brings to mind one of Conrad’s commonplace diegetic mechanisms, coined Delayed Decoding, in which the initial perception of an object is not what it actually is, and it also conveys the idea that Leggatt is a metaphorical fragmented piece of something else, something larger than himself (SS 86). In this case, that broken piece is reconstructed as the mystery is decoded pages later when the Captain considers his own reflection in Leggatt’s face, “The shadowy dark head, like mine, seemed to nod imperceptibly above the ghostly grey of my sleeping suit. It was, in the night, as though I had been faced by my own reflection in the depths of a sombre and immense mirror” (SS 88). The reflection of the captain here, completed with his own visage upon Leggatt’s previously headless body may be viewed as his subconscious mechanism for hiding the dual nature of his identity (Paccaud 90). A vision of a constructed being, formed from fragmented existences like this reflection is mentioned in Lacan as he asserts that during the *I* formation within the Mirror

Stage, “we find fortified structures constructed, the metaphors for which arise spontaneously, as if deriving from the subject’s very symptoms” (“Mirror Stage” 79). In the specific interaction between these two characters, it should be noted that as Lacan states that such structures of the self “arise spontaneously, as if deriving from the subject’s very symptoms,” Leggatt’s introduction into the narrative is described by the Captain-narrator as “this being appearing as if he had risen from the bottom of the sea” (“Mirror Stage” 79; *SS* 86). The apparent surfacing of both Lacan’s formative structure of self-consciousness and Conrad’s character who serves as the integral piece to the Captain’s self-awareness derives from somewhere unknown or below, and when the two are placed together in this specific narrative, is analogous to the surfacing of the unconscious other.

Critic Douglas Brown states that this recognition of the unconscious within “The Secret Sharer” is a purposeful attempt by Conrad to create a tale of hubris, whose purpose is to “shatter the unconscious arrogance of [its] protagonist” (31). Brown’s comment also ties into the primary discovery of Leggatt by the Captain in that the preceding scene, that which opens the story, is told by the Captain with a sense of arrogance as he regards the beautiful night upon the deck of his ship:

I rejoiced in the great scrutiny of the sea as compared with the unrest of the land, in my choice of that untempted life presenting no disquieting problems, invested with an elementary moral beauty by the absolute straightforwardness of its appeal and the singleness of its purpose. (*SS* 85)

The feeling of superiority that the captain holds within himself here is continued even after he sees an impression of what is discovered to be Leggatt, for the Captain “puts his head over the rail” and ostensibly *looks down* to gaze upon the form that is Leggatt. Paccaud describes the significance of this over-the-rail witnessing as the Captain viewing the unconscious other from above, to be equated with “a position of mastery” (159). Returning to Brown’s comment, the Captain at this moment in the story is still acting as one full of hubris, looking down upon the figure who lingers in the unconscious sections of the minds, and not fully aware of the shocking scenario he is about to be thrown into. He is about to be trapped in a predicament of his own cognition. This reflects Brown’s assertion that the tale is merely the unconscious arrogance of the Captain deteriorating and also it plays into Lacan’s own statement on the resulting craze that the Mirror Stage causes. He states that “The inertia characteristic of the *I* formations can thus be understood as providing the broadest definition of neurosis, just as the subject’s capture by his situation give us the most general formulation of madness” (“Mirror Stage” 80).

As the Captain’s hubristic walls are broken down by his own self-recognition and his psychological status becomes ever more maddening, there is a strangely schizophrenic presence within his relation to Leggatt, and this necessity to appease his own consciousness on two fronts is another point made by Lacan as he commented heavily on the “imaginary servitude,” which, essentially, equates itself to the desire (or perhaps even the obligation) to pacify the unconscious (imaginary) desires of the other (“Mirror Stage” 80). In this story, the Captain accomplishes this mollification as he serves to hide Leggatt from danger, even becoming so connected with him, as his other self, that he assumes Leggatt’s thoughts and feelings as his own. While listening to Archbold, the captain of the *Sephora*, who is searching for Leggatt, speak about his own plight, the narrating Captain reveals to the audience that “I wanted my double to hear every word” and a

page later “I should have sympathized with [Archbold] if I had been able to detach my mental vision from the unsuspected sharer of my cabin as though he were my second self” (SS 99-100). These inner monologues evidence both the Captain’s awareness of Leggatt as a now-pervading force upon his mind and the desire by him, as the subject within the Mirror Stage relationship, to act out his reflective imago’s desires, which in this instant for Leggatt is the attainment of any audible knowledge regarding his potential discovery. Archbold subsequently states in regard to Leggatt, “You see, he wasn’t exactly the sort of man for the chief mate of a ship like the *Sephora*,” to which the Captain intrinsically narrates “I had become so connected in thoughts and impressions with the secret sharer of my cabin that I felt as if I personally were being to understand that I too was not the sort of man that would have done for the chief mate of a ship like the *Sephora*” (101). The connection still digs even deeper at that point as the Captain falls back on the nature of his reflective, unconscious self as a reactionary signifier to his interlocutor’s suggestions. This is a continuation of the aforementioned notion that Leggatt’s desires and existence overtake those of the Captain’s, stimulating the dualism and splitting of the Captain’s consciousness in a downward spiral into madness. It becomes apparent that as Leggatt, serving as one piece of this Captain’s newly-apportioned self, progressively becomes more powerful as the symbolized imagery in contrast to the, ever-diminishing in existential significance and now-alienated, Captain, he is depicted as the cognitively sapient piece, relative to the Captain. This is evidence as the Captain becomes increasingly paranoid about his shipmates finding Leggatt, and ultimately exposing the inner self which he hides, only to find Leggatt complete resolute in his secrecy, as the unconscious usually is, with “no agitation in his whisper;” in fact, “whoever was being driven distracted it was not he. He was sane” (SS 110). In

this, the Captain is ostensibly driven to the point of delirium because of his overwhelming sense of self that is propagated by the interactions with Leggatt.

The complete overturn of the Captain's self in place of Leggatt's existence continues throughout the story, and though there is an obvious maddening sense of paranoia being supplanted within the Captain as his bond with his other self grows stronger, the relationship is still, by Lacanian standards, an act of self-awareness. As the Captain finds himself even more tied to Leggatt as a measurement of himself, he thinks, "I was not wholly alone with my command; for there was that stranger in my cabin. Or rather I was not completely and wholly with her. *Part of me was absent*" (SS 106, emphasis is mine). The cognition of the Captain's self, as an aggregate sum of his "pre-Leggatt" form together with Leggatt, becomes radically "unsure of himself" outside of his partnered existence, in which he can understand himself more fully (Meyer 23). Another aspect of the reflective selfhood and self-awareness that Lacan speaks about and is also present within the narrative of "The Secret Sharer" in the way in which the alienated subject's newly-formed self-consciousness is perpetually encroached upon by the society surrounding him. As stated before, the Captain fundamentally drives himself mad trying to keep his other self a secret from the rest of the ship, and Lacan asserts that the short period during this "paranoiac alienation" which during the "time at which the specular *I* turns into the social *I*" in relation to this narrative, draws from the small moments that the Captain believes that Leggatt is (or almost is) discovered, and he openly narrates that "I think I had come creeping quietly as near insanity as any man who has not actually gone over the border" ("Mirror Stage" 79; SS 109-110). It could be stated that, in the creation of self-consciousness and more awareness of self, the Captain does not quite reach that plane of total insanity because the overpowering influence of Leggatt, whose desires seem to be controlling the situation, so the more aware that the Captain

becomes of himself as a collective being, created from the surfacing of the unconscious other, then the larger degree of control that Leggatt has. The only aspect that runs contrary to the normal trend of this specific Mirror Stage relationship is within the realm of the surrounding society, which returns the argument back to the Captain's paranoiac nature in regard to keeping Leggatt from being known to the rest of the ship, equal to keeping his inner or unconscious self in the boundaries of the Mirror Stage dynamics and not allowing them to fall prey to the desires of what Lacan calls the "Social Dialectic" ("Mirror Stage" 77). Leggatt states early in the story that, on his former ship, before he was symbolically brought to the conscious surface, "they locked [him] in every night," which appears as a metaphysical deterrence of him reaching the surface of desires, which are initially his but also become the Captain's too (92). The efforts by the Captain to keep Leggatt a secret display the surreptitious layering that he imposes over his own desires and evidence of subconscious ideologies, all in an effort to face the variances in his unconscious desires without letting anyone else know about them.

The thematic significance of "The Secret Sharer" endures as an explosive, psychological explication in a very concise manner, and the eerie shadowiness of the setting and story carries on as a great example of specifically a "creation of Conrad's imagination" (Gettmann and Harkness 126). The narrative implications are deeply psychoanalytic, and even though Lacanian theory was not conceived until almost half of a century after the writing of this particular story, the homage paid by Conrad to numerous epistemological and early conceptual psychoanalytic theories of his time period are definitely present, which leads critics to "focus their discussion on Conrad's presentation of Leggatt as the Captain's hidden self, his alter ego" (Gettmann and Harkness 127). The interpretative stance could come from a Freudian, Jungian, or numerous other deeply ontological, psychoanalytic, or philosophical ideologies, and the Lacanian view is

helpful in decisively placing the Captain's development in a sort of abstract timeline of terms like "recognition" and "symbolized" versus "alienated," all of which provide a reflective backdrop upon which the story, as a diegetic piece, can be reflected off the ideas and conceptual systems of Lacan's assertions. The psychologically driving aspects of the tale provide themes not only of psychoanalytic proportion, but also create a position of philosophical questioning around the degree to which one becomes self-aware in the moment of mirrored recognition, and it seems that Conrad, through his conveyance of the Captain's relationship with his other self, Leggatt, plays right into the formulation of one's own identity off of that which is the reflected imago, which is continually shifting through the desires of the unconscious self who overtakes the conscious mind in the moment of a cogitative reflection in the mirror, or in existence.

Betraying The Desires of the Other

Two years after the completion of "The Secret Sharer," Conrad finally finished the work that he had been struggling deeply with during that period, which was the 1911 novel *Under Western Eyes*, and this work also contains heavy thematic agencies that are appropriated to Conrad's viewing of the human psychological experience and also can be viewed through the lens of Lacanian ideologies. This book takes on many of Conrad's own psychological bearings, and the context of the novel's creation also falls within the "period of climatic self-doubt" (Dobrinsky 53). These factors play into the novel on both the purely narrative basis and the more abstract realms of philosophical and psychological questioning. The latter elements here can be interpreted from numerous different aspects of this book, but the most significant piece of this particular story that is to be examined here comes from the mystical connective threads that tie Razumov, who can be taken as the book's protagonist, and the anarchist

revolutionary, Victor Haldin, who sets events in motion that serve to substantially change the entirety of the narrative. The relationship between Razumov and Haldin does not play into the Lacanian reading as overtly as the relationship between Leggatt and the Captain, but there are still certainly similarities between the application of psychological and ontological questions within *Under Western Eyes* and “The Secret Sharer.”

The connection between these two men as a measurement of what has previously been termed as “self-consciousness” and “self-awareness” lies in the beginning of the novel as Haldin places the totality of his confidence in Razumov to help him escape after his completion of a political assassination, only to have Razumov betray him to the Russian authorities. The significant aspect of psychoanalytic interplay between these two characters is embedded within this early betrayal of Haldin, which calls into question the manner in which the narrative is imparted through the terms “‘confidence’ vs. ‘betrayal’” as they are laid out in Conrad’s universe between these two characters (Paccaud 65). Razumov initially feels betrayed by Haldin because Haldin unwittingly places Razumov in great danger by creating any association with him at all, so Haldin plays the role as the first betrayer by seemingly betraying Razumov, as his confidant, to a world of information and association that he truly wants no part of. In this scene depicting their first interactions, Haldin is continually referred to as the “other,” just as Leggatt was in “The Secret Sharer,” and this associative term (which can certainly be taken as an intentional usage, considering Conrad’s mindset and timeline between the two works) create the same atmospheric power struggle between selves as was examined earlier. Here, in confiding his illegal deeds to Razumov, Haldin serves as the betraying fugitive other, whose desires are subsequently set to overcome the desires of the alienated subject.

As Razumov is thrown into the realm of Haldin's illegal and obscured desires, he loses his own identity in place of Haldin's, for Razumov "locates himself in a society by disciplines of work" who believed in the institutions and sought out his own desire in the metonymic form of a silver medal (Cox 107). Razumov realizes this loss of his own desires, and essentially the identity that he has metaphysically constructed for himself within his own mind, when he understands the associative implications of Haldin's appearance and revelations. Here Razumov internally sees "himself shut up in a fortress, worried, badgered, perhaps ill-used. He saw himself deported by an administrative order, his life broken, ruined, and robbed of all hope" (*UWE* 62). The implication of Haldin's pervasion upon Razumov's life, which translates back to the exchange of desires as Razumov no longer interprets his future in the same way because of the psychological and literal associations he hold with Haldin's desires, is metonymically driven by Razumov's obsession with his sought after silver medal, and critic Anthony Fothergill comments on this symbolic issue as he writes that "the prospect of the silver medal had functioned as a metonym for a successful academic life, so it proleptic loss demands a revised narrative" (41). This falls under the Lacanian idea that the alienated subject "becomes bound up with the development of his servitude" to the interpreted imago, and Razumov's exchange of life narratives from future academic success, which is his ultimate desire, to being caught up in anarchist sects and deed, something that certainly is not his desire and is solely imparted upon him by Haldin, show the dichotomy between the two selves. As the narrative continues, Razumov takes many efforts to try and squash this overwhelming degree to which Haldin's desire impose upon his existence, and this returns back to the issue of betrayal between Razumov and Haldin, or, more specifically, the issue of betrayal between the desires of two entities of self, who move around each other, only meeting in the symbolic realms of Selfhood.

The symbolism of Razumov's betrayal of Haldin is the point when "in J. Lacan's terms, Razumov has achieved his 'symbolic castration,'" an action which serves to bring Razumov out from under the depths of Haldin's influence that places Razumov in alienation, so, in effect, Razumov believes he is breaking from the symbolic relationship with Haldin, in which his life was to be fulfilled with the desires of Haldin, the other (Paccaud "Meaning" 72). His psychological breaking comes with his own inner dialogue on the nature of Betrayal, as an abstract concept:

Betray. A great word. What is Betrayal? They talk of a man betraying his country, his friend, his sweetheart. There must be a moral bond first. All a man can betray is his conscience. And how is my conscience engaged here; by what bond of common faith, of common conviction, am I obliged to let that fanatical idiot drag me down with him? On the contrary—every obligation of true courage is the other way. (*UWE* 74)

The interesting point about this instance of Razumov's philosophizing and essential decision to betray Haldin comes directly after he witnesses a phantasmagoric vision of Haldin in the street. Conrad writes that Razumov's "thought, concentrated intensely on the figure left lying on the bed had culminated in this extraordinary illusion of the sight" (*UWE* 74). The connection, and extremely short distance relative to the narrative, between this vision and Razumov's resolution to betray Haldin is psychoanalytically important to the created-then-broken connection between the two men. Lacan brings the ideas of chimerical visions and apparitions into theories on the formation of the complete self:

[The complete being] is also replete with the correspondence that unite the *I* with the statue onto which man projects himself, the phantoms that dominate him, and the automaton with which the world of his own making tends to achieve fruition in an ambiguous relation. (“Mirror Stage” 76-77)

As Lacan points out, the creation of the *I* within the context of an alienated subject and a reflective being of the other, there is an abundance of such dominating visions and phantoms upon which the subject find a reflective projection of himself, and this parallels Razumov’s vision of Haldin stretched in front of him in the street just as he was earlier in the apartment (the specific descriptions of Haldin’s posture whilst lying on Razumov’s bed is also important, and shall be examined shortly). So the question becomes, if Razumov and Haldin have come together in consciousness as a formative, functioning, and singular *I*, as is evidenced through the Lacanian explication of visions, how can Razumov settle on betraying Haldin, which enacts his psychoanalytic castration, serving to end his role as the alienated subject in the dualistic consciousness partnered by he and Haldin? The answer to this is that when Razumov betrays Haldin, both literally by giving him up to the police and also psychoanalytically by attempting to end the ontological connection between them, he establishes another self through the misunderstanding of the fellow anarchists, and it is within this novel identity that Razumov is still consciously connected to Victor Haldin. Cox writes that it does not matter what measure Razumov takes to break from this existential burden that has been thrust upon him by Haldin because, in the fictional nature specific to the societal and governmental establishments created by Conrad in *Under Western Eyes*, it was apparent that “from the moment Haldin invades [Razumov’s] room he is given an identity not under his own control,” and even after Razumov

betrays Haldin, the anarchists misread the situation and “take for granted he is a revolutionary” so that no matter what course he desires to take, Razumov “is no longer his own man” (109).

The unbroken ties between the two men are reasserted as Razumov returns to his room after informing the police when and where to capture Haldin. Here he finds Haldin “lying on his back as before” and internalizes that “this body seemed to have less substance than its own phantom walked over by Razumov in the street white with snow. It was more alarming in its shadowy, persistent reality than the distinct but vanishing illusion” (*UWE* 88). The parallels between the Haldin of pre-betrayer (pre-psychoanalytic breakage) Razumov’s existence and the one before him now are so similar that it is apparent nothing has really changed in the physical or metaphysical realms their relationship. Even after Haldin leaves to fall in the trap that Razumov has helped to set-up for him, the very thought of Haldin pervades Razumov’s mind to the point of paranoiac craze, similar to that which the Captain experiences in his relationship with Leggatt, once again ingraining the relationships in these texts with further Lacanian theory (“Mirror Stage” 80, above). Another formulation of the incessant attachment between Razumov and Haldin is conveyed a day later, after Haldin is supposedly already captured, which *should* stand in the mind of Razumov as the final action in the symbolic breakage between them. At this moment, Razumov lays down, just as Haldin had been “on his back...his hands under his head and stared upward,” and “after a moment he thought, ‘I am lying here like that man’” (*UWE* 98). Acting himself just as Haldin acted the evening before, Razumov creates a parallelism in the physical ties between them by metaphysically manifesting the thoughts and deeds of the other, proving then, and as is shown throughout the rest of the novel, that Victor Haldin still serves as the other, who stands as the overpowering force in their congruent consciousness and whose desires run continue to pave path upon which Razumov exists.

Conclusion

Within these specific texts of Conrad's, the psycho-centric symbolism and ultimate, cognitive determinism in lieu of the characters' connective consciousnesses serve as motivating factors behind both the narrative bases for these stories and also the much more abstract thematic implementation exercised by Conrad relative to his own psychological musings. It has been stated that characters like Haldin and Leggatt "represent the forces of irrationality and absurdity which so often in Conrad surge up from unexpected depths to confound the man of imagination" (Cox 108). I believe this position holds true with these narratives, especially when interpretatively placed in relation to a deeply cerebral reading based around theories of the unconscious mind.

The conscientious nature of Conrad's depictions of these two different relationships, in which, the doubling, both on physical and mental levels, of characters' selves are implemented, depicts numerous ideologies of the human psychological and existential experience; thus the explication of such narrative strategies with the assistance of Lacanian subtexts and also Conrad criticism helps to provide a justification for the constitution of Selfhood, in its many different forms and figures, that Conrad displays. Within the confines of these stories and the relative theoretical extensions, the understanding of Conrad's doubling effect as a measurement (though one much larger than the other) of Self-Realization can be interpreted, and also by delving within the further momentary arrestment and dissection of the self on two fronts with two different metaphysical agendas that Conrad establishes, the transference of neurotic activities like feelings of guilt, desires, and motivations for actions are apparent. These interpretative stances from which Conrad's large-scale illumination of the human psyche can be derived formulate

predominantly within the contexts of his characters' relationships, and it is within the interactions of such characters that Conrad's impetus to showcase the dynamics of mankind's psychological cognizance in order to truly find a meaning behind both the existence of our own psychoanalytic selves and the abstraction (or even mere existence) of another self, who, when serving as a reflection of ourselves, gives meaning to our desires and existence as a whole.

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