DWELLINGS AND DWELLERS IN JOSEPH CONRAD'S FICTION

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Abstract: The present study presents and analyses the 'Dwelling' trope as it appears in Conrad's fiction as ports, cities and buildings. It approaches it ecocritically, to show how dwellings are a second nature of humans, both created by them and creating them. Conrad's cities and buildings are animate and agentic, foreshadowing the view of material ecocriticism.

Keywords: dwelling, ports, cities, ecocriticism, heterotopia

1.Introduction

In his *Ecocriticism* (2008), Greg Garrard specifies that 'Dwelling' is not a transient state; rather, it implies the long-term imbrication of humans in a landscape of memory, ancestry and death, of ritual, life and work (Garrard 108). It includes material relationships between man and nature as strategies of survival.The very terms "ecology" and "ecocriticism" include the root *oikos* (Gr. house, household), signifying second nature used by humans for dwelling.

The present analysis of the trope of 'Dwelling' as it is featured in Conrad's fiction deals with its material aspects such as European, Asian, African and heterotopic ports and inland cities. Habitable spaces are either interior spaces, liminal spaces in buildings or exterior habitable spaces.Interior spaces are: buildings on land, homes on water (boat houses, lacustrian dwellings, hulks), shared transitionally habitable spaces on land, shared transitionally habitable spaces on ships, heterotopias of deviation, transitional uninhabited spaces.

2. Urban spaces: cities and ports

Conrad's cities are generally ports: London, Marseilles, Sankt Petersburg, Asian ports (Malaysian harbours, Bangkok, Singapore), African harbours and the Latin American heterotopian Sulaco. The inland metropoles in his fiction are Brussels and Geneva. With the exception of London, Conrad's cities are generally briefly defined by a few key features.

Considering Conrad's fiction as a whole formed of a number of fictional pieces and memoirs, London is depicted in different hypostases in various works as a collage of several cities. The kaleidoscopic images of the great city present throughout Conrad's fiction make of it a complex many-faceted world, a chameleonic place mirroring and determining the themes of the human stories, illustrating Samuel Johnson dictum: "When a man tires of London , he is tired of

life, for there is in London all that life can afford." (Johnson, qtd. Boswell, 1791 n.p.)

The Nigger of the 'Narcissus' evokes London's past. The sailors part on a bright morning at the historical heart of the city. The sun of mediaeval London gives them a halo, sanctifying their solidarity by the light flood cleansing the stones of their dark memories:

> The sunshine of heaven fell like a gift of grace on the mud of the earth, on the remembering and mute stones, on the greed, selfishness, on the anxious faces of forgetful men. And to the right of the group the stained front of the Mint, cleansed by the flood of light, stood out for a moment dazzling and white like a marble palace in a fairy tale. The crew of the *Narcissus* drifted out of sight. I never saw them again. The sea took some, the steamers took others, the graveyards of the earth will account for the rest. . .Good-bye, brothers! You were a good crowd.(*NN* 172)

Conrad dislikes steamers to such an extent that he assimilates them with death by water and burial places. This final paragraph is a declaration of love made to a special crew. The ephemereal brotherhood separated forever is ennobled with a special grace by the vibrating animism of "the remembering stones," the photographic agentic storied matter. We can apply to Conrad's scene Jeffrey Cohen's belief that stone is a "protean substance. Stone moves. Stone desires. Stone creates," (Cohen 57) producing anthropo-discentered texts like this cityscape.

In contrast with past nobility, Conrad's industrial present described in *The Mirror of the Sea* is emblematic for the ugliness of London's outskirts and the pollution of the Thames estuary by petroleum discharges, cement factories and smoke. Conrad warns about the hazard of "dangerous cargoes." The tanks evoke the repelling savagery of "a village of Central Africa imitated in iron." (*MS* 55) The smoking cement works stain the beauty of sunsets. (56) Victorian industry sites disregard environment destruction. The claustrophobic river, "so fair above . . . flows oppressed . . . overburdened with craft . . .overshadowed by walls, "(56) abused by traffic, suffocated by buildings. Conrad's anti-industrialist memoir is also a condemnation of the lack of city-planning. London 's berth area recalls a jungle growing in disorder,with dendromorphic buildings springing up from the mud as from seeds, their height competing with and illogically hiding the ship masts in docks instead of letting them be next to the river bank. Dark and mud evoke Dickens's cityscapes in Conrad's favourite novel *Bleak House*. Contrasting with the nonsense and dirt of the docks, the beauty of the pteromorphic ships suggests a prisoner "flock of swans" muttering, impatient to fly away (58) while men try to bind them "to the enslaved earth."(61) The shadows of hideous industrial architecture fall on their decks "with showers of soot," pollution overwhelms men and ships, even heaven "in its soiled aspect" mirrors "the

sordidness of the earth below." (59) Conrad suggests that this facet of London is summed up as lack of logic and enslavement.

In similar imagery, in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus*,' Conrad insists on the 'Pollution' trope presenting elements in opposition: land as "infamy and filth" vs. sea as "incorruptible." (*NN* 19) The *Narcissus* is born in the smoke and clamour of a factory hell, which, however, creates sailing ships deserving the title of works of art. Conrad compares the brig viewed from below to "a pyramid, gliding all shining and white" at sea, (19) while its entomomorphic tug is described shifting angle, in bird's eye, returning to the "gloom of the land" like a beetle afraid of light. (12) Industrialism as a source of pollution in the Thames estuary is condemned in the scene of the *Narcissus* coming back to the sordid berth, carrying an oxymoronic cargo of "perfumes and dirt," only to be besieged by men and cease to live, turning into an lifeless thing in docks.

In *The Secret Agent* London looks gloomy - a city of dubious boarding-houses, pornography shops, anarchism, embassies, police, in a collusion of social roles:"a monstrous town more populous than some continents . . .a cruel devourer of the world's light" (*SA* Author's Note) adding pollution to wet weather and dark, producing disgust, depression and claustrophobia: "He advanced at once into an immensity of greasy slime and damp plaster interspersed with lamps, and enveloped, oppressed, penetrated, choked, and suffocated by the blackness of a wet London night, which is composed of soot and drops of water." (126)

> Mr. Verloc, a cosmopolitan enough not to be deceived by London's topographical mysteries, . . . made diagonally for the number 10. This belonged to an opposing carriage gate in a high, clean wall between two houses, of which one rationally enough bore the number 9 and the other was numbered 37. . . Mr. Verloc did not trouble his head about it, his mission in life being the protection of the social mechanism.(22)

Material pollution is symbolic of spiritual pollution of London of the novel, they corroborate to become oppressive, suffocating. The shop is in a street "where the sun never shone" and newsboys never come. (*SA* 168) Hugh Epstein views Conrad's atmosphere of Brett Street as rendering "extreme states of isolation and alienation" (1993:178). I note that when the sun rarely shines in the novel, it is "a peculiarly London sun - against which nothing could be said except that it looked bloodshot,"(19) diffractively foretelling murder. As if opposing anarchists and annihilating them, the storied matter triggers events. Like in a classical tragedy, most of the climactic events happen in a few hours, when all the members of the Verloc family die in urban hostile sites, close to one another, observing the unity of place and time. The Observatory is the scene of a carnage in the morning.The morgue is the place of the discovery of the clue of the coat-label a few hours later. The shop is the scene of the talk about the carnage and of the prompt

revenge by murder on the same evening.The dark street in front is the place of the confession of the murder within minutes after it.The port is the place of the murderess's boarding before midnight. The Channel is the place of her drowning before dawn. London's illogical city-planning exasperates Conrad, becoming the target of his absurd humour and irony of Verloc's anarchist "social mechanism protection" role.

Another facet of London, the spatious and sonorous city above, exists in the last chapters of *Lord Jim*, where the "privileged man" is on the top floor of a multi-storeyed building, having from the transitional space of his window like "the lantern of a lighthouse" a panoramic view of London's roofs and towers. In a aquamorphic vibrant image of a waved shoal glistening in the dusk rain, dwelling imitates a seascape and becomes a resonant musical instrument of the booming tower clock overcoming the "unceasing mutter" below.

> The slopes of the roofs glistened, the dark broken ridge succeeded each other without end like sombre, crested waves, and from the depths of the town under his feet ascended a confused and unceasing mutter. The spires of churches, numerous, scattered haphazard, uprose like beacons on a maze of shoal without a channel; the driving rain mingled with the falling dusk of a winter evening; and the booming of a big clock of a tower striking the hour, rolled past in voluminous, austere bursts of sound, with a shrill vibrating cry at the core. (*LJ* 254)

Dwellings mirror nature: the impression created by this roof cityscape in the driving rain is that of watching a channel from a lighthouse. In entanglement, the rain (nature), the spires above (second nature) and the town beneath (humans) vibrate in an animistic shrill cry under the austerity of the booms of a bell clock (time). The London of the roofs is a musical sea.

In opposition, the London below on the crowded Strand, appears at the end of "Karain," where two friends meet in front of a weapon shop: Jeremy Hawthorn finds it significant that weaponry attracts "the gaze of the European" as an expression of colonialism. (Hawthorn *Language and Fictional Self-Consciousness* 1979:16) The Strand is a hostile swarm with countless eyes, expressionless faces and agitated limbs: "innumerable eyes stared straight in front, feet moved hurriedly, blank faces flowed, arms swung." (*K* 21) The mix of auditive, visual and dynamic images suggests speedy multiplicity and dangerous overcrowding inducing agoraphobic panic:

> The whole length of the street, deep as long as narrow like a corridor, was full of a. . .ceaseless stir. Our ears were filled by a. . .shuffle and beat of rapid foodsteps and by. . . a rumour vast, faint, pulsating, as of panting breaths, of beating hearts, of gasping

voices . . .It is there; it pants, it runs, it rolls; it is strong and alive; it would smash you if you didn't look out. (21)

The traffic with "monstrous and gaudy" red, yellow and green omnibuses adds garish colours to vacarm. The zoomorphic Strand is so terribly animated that Jackson dreads being killed by it and he prefers Karain's Eastern ghost tale. In "Conrad's Absurdist Techniques"(1979) Cedric Watts remarks Conrad's irony of opposing two evils: the "monstrous town" and the "familiar Victorian colonialist view of the exotic races." (Watts 1979: 22). I discover here another reader's trap of ambivalent Conrad, equally critical of the West and the East cultures. In contrast with complex chameleonic London, Marseilles of *An Arrow of Gold* is an heterotopia obtained by an adventure romance collage of love stories, arm smuggling, sailing, political plots, against the background of an art collection and an artist's villa. The novel announces its theme as a heterotopia of illusion by the starting scene of a carnival, anticipating costumes and dummies as iterative motifs throughout it, transforming Rita the sitter into a masque heroine.

The huge difference in size and technology between the European metropoles and the colony towns is another urban ecocriticism theme in Conrad. Dilapidated African harbours look rather like entrances to the circles of the Inferno. The Stations on the Congo are prey to decay, in the vicinity of dying blacks, elephants massacre and lethal surf demanding its tribute of drowned soldiers, illustrating the dominant theme of death in *Heart of Darkness*.

The variegated population of Conrad's colourful small Malaysian colonial harbours includes English, Dutch, Portuguese, Malays and Arabs, a population announcing Empire. The rich Europeans - Van Wyk (*ET*), Stein (*LJ*) have luxurious villas and gardens. Other colonists' ambitious homes are considered 'folly' by their fellow citizens, as in Almayer's case (*AF*). In Malabar, India, there is a shabby law court, where people of various races and social status have access, alongside with a yellow "wretched cur," the cause of the misunderstanding causing Marlow and Jim's meeting. (*LJ* 58) In "Youth," Marlow's first contact with the East is under the exclusively osmotic charm of trans-corporeal perfumes in the dark, under agentive nature's spell, without sound, motion or visual image: "A puff of wind. . . laden with strange odours of blossoms, of aromatic wood, comes out of the still night - the first sigh of the East on my face. . . There was not a light, not a stir, not a sound. The mysterious East faced me, perfumed like a flower" (*Y* 14).

The sunlight of the next morning finds the burned sailors sleeping in life boats, quietly watched by the other, turning the white subject into the object of perception:

> The whole length of the jetty was full of people. I saw brown, bronze, yellow faces, the black eyes, the glitter, the colour of an Eastern crowd. And all these beings stared

> without a murmur, without a sigh, without a movement.They stared down at the boats , at the sleeping men who at night had come to them from the sea.Nothing moved.The fronds of palms stood still against the sky . . .All the East is contained in. . .that moment when I opened my young eyes on it.(14-15)

Both the people and the foliage stand still, looking at the whites in osmotic immobility, silence and curiosity of people and nature, storied matter changing angles of alterity. To Conrad, the fascination of the East is summed up in the glitter and colour of that moment of stillness and quiet. The oriental city-port of Bangkok is a mixing of vegetation and ancient civilization.In *The Shadow-Line*, Conrad describes it as a fantastic heterotopia of bamboo buildings and gilt palaces clinging on the banks of a river. The vegetal houses without nails grow out of water like aquatic plants, a part of primary as much as of secondary nature, a civilization which he admires because it has never been conquered by the Europeans: "the Oriental capital which had as yet suffered no white conqueror," (*SL* 19) a mesh woven

> of bamboo, of mats, of leaves, of a vegetable-matter style of architecture. . . in those miles of human habitations there was not probably half a dozen pounds of nails. . .nests of an aquatic race, clung to the low shores. Others seemed to grow out of the water; others again floated . . . King's Palace, temples. . .almost palpable, which seemed to enter one's breast with the breath of one's nostrils and soak into one's limbs through every pore of one's skin. (19)

The porous dwellings of an amphibious race half float, liquefied and evaporated, aspired by spectators, the architectural vestiges enter humans' bodies anemomorphically and zoomorphically, working a transcorporeal magic on lookers.

Conrad's one imaginative tour de force heterotopic port is Sulaco (*N*).In "The Modernization of Sulaco,"(1993) Jacques Berthoud compares Spanish urban history with the description of the town noting that, as a typical Hispano-American locality, Sulaco represents "the seal of absolutist monarchy stamped on foreign soil," in its "rectilinear geometry. . .placing Sulaco in an entirely unnatural relation with the country that surrounded it," (Berthoud 147) which increases the gap between the conquerors and nature. In "Conrad's Heterotopic Fiction: Composite Maps, Superimposed Sites, and Impossible Spaces"(2005), Robert Hampson remarks that in *Nostromo*, Conrad presents Empire, which is going to dominate the twentieth century. Both in his essay "Travel" (*Last Essays* 1926) and in *Nostromo*, Conrad anticipates modern globalization, he notes that the "perfected civilization which obliterates the individuality of old towns under the stereotyped conveniences of modern life had not intruded yet" in Sulaco. (*N* 96)

However, at the end of the novel, simultaneously with the imperialist victory of "material interests," there emerge Marxist "secret societies amongst immigrants and natives" like the photographer present at Nostromo's death, embodying the Counter-Empire, (*N* 511) speaking on behalf of the are Sulacans who think that the new economic order is a threat to the local civilization. Conrad's very heterotopic "collaging of heterogeneous sites" is "a form of resistance" as "thinking against the grain." (Hampson 134) For centuries, cattle raising has been producing hides in excess enabling the Sulacans to export them, and consequently grazing may have caused the desertification of centre of the country. In cinematic zooming, as Edward Crankshaw notes in *Joseph Conrad: Some Aspects of the Art of the Novel* (1936:181-85), the description, focusing on the drought of the plain between the steep mountains whose rains are stolen by the sea, approaches the harbour of Sulaco from above. I read both the drought and the "vast grove of orange-trees" (*N* 20) as speaking of human efforts to adapt exotic crops to drought, in order to change the course of nature according to human designs. Like Serenella Iovino's "porous cities," ("The Bodies of Naples"2014) Conrad's inland cities tell stories diffractively: they become characters, part of the cast. In *Heart of Darkness*, Brussels is a "sepulchral city" announcing death: "The historical outlook. . .that barbarity inevitably ceases with the advent of more developed societies, that darkness is gradually replaced by light-is a reprehensible lie," (Meckier "The Truth about Marlow" 73). Actually, it is dark that replaces light at the end of the novella. I find Conrad's Brussels to be resumed to "a narrow and deserted street. . . innumerable windows with venetian blinds, a dead silence, grass sprouting between the stones, imposing carriage archways " (*HD* 14) evoking the secrecy of a cemetery alley, with the omnipresence of grass, a symbol of rot.The venetian blinds hide inner secrets or are the eyelids of the buildings closed to the outside, the archways lead to enigmas bewildering Marlow, the silence and the grass between stones telltale of unstepped streets, every detail ominously suggests burials.

According to Paul Kirschner's "Making You See Geneva"(1988), in *Under Western Eyes*, Conrad starts the story in Sankt Petersburg, but he does not know it from direct experience, therefore he presents only the interior of the buildings (Razumov's room, Prince of K-'s palace) and moves the action to Geneva, which he knows at first hand. (Kirschner 1988:248) I find that, although the language teacher should be proud of his Swiss city, his opinion is similar to Razumov's: they both contemptuously consider Geneva to be a city "comely without grace and hospitable without sympathy,"(*Under Western Eyes* 141) the architectural expression of its dwellers' fake values: phony hospitality and social security, ironically summed up by Conrad as "the very perfection of mediocrity attained after centuries of fame and culture," (73) business faking hospitality.

Thus, in a far from eulogical view of civilization as distancing from nature, regress under the mask of progress, European inland cities are denounced as places of death or mediocrity.

3. Habitable spaces

In the light of social ecology, material creations are second nature (Garrard 28). Reading it in this light, Conrad's fiction is rich in descriptions of private and shared interior spaces in urban, rural and ship dwellings, which, in material ecocritical Barad's 'entanglement' and Pickering's 'mangle' compressing a densely layered reality, mirror and reciprocally influence their dwellers.

According to Benita Parry's *Conrad and Imperialism* (1983), although Stein is introduced as humane, his theories lead Marlow to seeing him as "a shadow prowling amongst the graves of butterflies," (*Lord Jim* 163) ranged in glass catacombs occupying "a crystalline void," silent and cold like a crypt. (Parry 22) Yet, I view Stein's house and exquisite botanical garden as a collector's magical space, a heterotopia of consolation for his mourning. At candle light, the magician and his guest walking through the dark rooms are reflected by the pellucid furniture, waxed floors and mirrors reflecting other mirrors, both horizontal, vertical and curved, a specular mesh of multiplied images reflecting light, as illusively approachable as beauty or truth:

> We passed through empty dark rooms, escorted by gleams from the lights Stein carried. They glided along the waxed floors, sweeping here and there over the polished surface of the table, leaped upon the fragmentary curve of a piece of furniture, or flashed perpendicularly in and out of distant mirrors" (*LJ* 165).

I read this passage, as well as the descriptions of Stein's insectariums and of his garden with prisoner fowls as ominous of the scene at the end of the novel of Stein's "immense reception-room, uninhabited and uninhabitable," which has become through Jewel's presence "the cold abode of despair," identified with frost, ice and wind: the waxed floor mirroring her and the crystal chandelier evoke ice, and the wind entering through the window makes the room chilly in all seasons. The girl in wide sleeves has become a mute immobile prisoner "shaped in snow," a white butterfly or a clipped-winged bird, caught in a collection of dead specimens in a frozen space (261), mourning for a lost specimen sent to a deathly trial. Stein collections compensate for private loss, his insectariums are "catacombs " in "a burial vault" and his exquisite garden is a prison. To collect animal and human specimens he has either to kill butterflies or to maim and imprison birds or humans. He ends up as a tragic failure designer of destinies, catacombs and jails.

In Conrad's fiction, storied matter foreshadows future destinies: in *Nostromo*, Charles Gould addresses his marriage proposal to Emilia in her aunt's ruined Italian *palazzo*, in front of a broken marble vase, symbolic of an unlucky union grounded on his father's death. The "heavy marble vase ornamented and cracked from top to bottom"(*N* 63) is ominous of the Goulds' marriage as outer social success and inner barrenness. Orphan Emilia lives in "an ancient and ruinous palace, whose big empty halls downstairs sheltered under their painted ceilings the harvests, the fowls, and even the cattle, together with the whole family of the tenant farmer" (*N* 62). In "The Limits of Irony,"(1986) Martin Price sees the Goulds' hope expressed in the painted ceiling of a palace, "which yields to cattle and fowls exquisite decorated spaces which have become useless." (Price 5) I see the cohabitation of a lady, servants and cattle in a work of art as an anti-deep ecology irony, a status of extreme decay of human formerly luxurious artefacts such as ripped damask panels and "a gilt armchair with a broken back" having become the shelter of cattle. Whereas the ruined furniture and wall decorations speak of present distress, the ceiling fresco evokes the glory of the past and future, the palazzo announcing the story of the Goulds' cyclical rise and fall.

Houses porously match their owners. Whereas imperialism is indifferent to the old Hispanic architecture, the only person who appreciates this art being Mrs. Gould, her perception of her traditional house as "less a possession than an opportunity for life" expresses both fine artistic taste and generosity to the other. (*N* 150) Emilia Gould's empathetic sensitivity makes her a perfect hostess "highly gifted in the art of . . .delicate shades of self-forgetfulness and in the suggestion of universal comprehension" (*N* 50) for unhappy foreigners. She considers that everyone "must feel homesick," she generously shares her private interior space, keeping "her old Spanish house (one of the finest specimens in Sulaco) open for the dispensation of the small graces of existence." (50) The house is transcorporeally moulded by Emilia's taste for a composite style, a South-American cross-cultural mix of Victorian English, French and Spanish interior design, her reterritorialization of the European style across the ocean, and at the same time an expression of incipient Empire in interior design. Her Victorian drawing room mirrors her keenness on luxurious decorations which she also exhibits in outfits and jewellery. The furniture is animistic: "squat little monsters gorged into bursting with steel springs and horsehair."(55)

In *Heart of Darkness*, the Intended's sumptuous funeral drawing-room with a "tall marble fireplace," a grand black piano like a "polished sombre sarcophagus," "three long windows" like "bedraped columns," (*HD*106) looks like a burial vault for her idealistic prolonged mourning, compensating for Kurtz's abject burial in mud. Contrasting this magnificence with Kurtz's dilapidated earth hut with asymmetrical windows faced by impaled black heads decomposing at the front, I seize the difference between the fiancés as not only one

of social status or mental sanity, but also one between a superior human race and a subhuman race.

In "Sudden Holes in Space and Time: Conrad's Anarchist Poetics in *The Secret Agent*"(2004), Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan sees the Verlocs' household as the replica of a home (Erdinast-Vulcan 2004:214). I consider it the replica of a boarding house because Verloc behaves like a lodger wearing his coat and hat indoors, as if dwelling in a waiting lounge. This boarding house/ shop/ conspirative house/ home is a mixture of a cover business - the pornography shop, visited by secretive men at night, recalling Foucault's heterotopia of illusion of the brothel: the imagery "could only be more suggestive if the shop were a brothel" (Ross 2001:168) and a conspirative meeting place of anarchists. It mirrors Verloc's versatility as a cover businessman, a secret agent of the embassy, an informer of the police and an anarchist. Before her marriage, Winnie's family used to toil in a boarding-house, another transitional place.They have always been employees to the capitalist system. The Verlocs' marital arrangement repeats the boarding business on a reduced scale: "the lodger was Mr. Verloc."(*The Secret Agent* 243) In an ecofeminist light, the home combines boarding servility with pornography stooping, because all the family members sell themseves to the provider capitalist husband. The old mother sacrifices herself lest Stevie be sent to an asylum (a heterotopia of crisis) and she moves to an almshouse (another heterotopia of crisis) from a fragile household where four is a crowd.

Dwellings on water vary from lacustrian houses on poles ("The Lagoon"), boathouses or sailing ships as permanent dwellings ("Falk"), to shared accommodation during voyages ("*Amy Foster", "Falk", The Nigger of the 'Narcissus', "Youth", Heart of Darkness*, "Typhoon", "The End of the Tether" , *Lord Jim, The Shadow Line*, "The Secret Sharer", *Chance)*. Living in the permanent transcorporeal proximity of water leads Conrad's porous characters to identify their normal home with the sea, the lagoon or the river and consider land an exile. Water vicinity brings about lethal diseases ("The Lagoon", *The Heart of Darkness, The Shadow Line*). In "The Lagoon," the lacustrian dwelling on high poles is, despite the lush scenery, a place of death from fever: the heroine dies because the hero has committed a fratricide to win her and is punished by the justice of nature to lose her. In *Heart of Darkness*, the villages on the Congo banks have been abandoned because of the epidemics caused by the river fever, and they look like networks of "paths, paths, paths. . . I passed through several abandoned villages. There's something childish in the ruins of grasswalls." (*HD* 28) The ghosts of former villages present in the river environment are missing referents, enigmas. Retaliating on intrusion,water kills by disease. In *The Shadow-Line*, the entire crew falls prey to fever.

In *The Rescue*, old Jörgenson, a former sailor, lives in a hulk on the beach, which stands for the hope that Lingard will reinstore the rightful sibling princes' reign. When they are killed,

Jörgenson blows the hulk up together with the whole island, burning in a Viking manner on his ship, uniting his home with nature in death by fire.

"Freya of the Seven Isles" tells a story about two dwellings on ships involved in a duel: Heemskirk's steamer and Allen's sailing ship. When the latter is marooned on the rocks, the ploioanthropic heroine identifies herself as the brig's bride to the extent of dying of a broken heart: neither she nor Allen can accept survival without their osmotic brig.

In "Falk," Hermann's "rustic homely" ship awakens "ideas of primitive solidity, like the wooden plough of our forefathers." (*F* 3) The *Diana* of Bremen is an innocent old ship which suggests "domestic order" and country life (3). The shared innocence of the ship and of her owner, perceived as Edenic bliss, becomes grotesque, announcing cannibalism, in the motion of the family's animated laundry, hanging on the poop line, swelling in the wind like rests of invisible bodies after a cannibal's feast, ominous of Falk's confession, suggesting "drowned, mutilated and flattened humanity. Trunks without heads waved at you arms without hands; legs without feet kicked. . .long white garments . . . became for a moment violently distended as by the passage of obese and invisible bodies. (3) Falk's symbiotic appearance recalls a ploioanthropic centaur: "not a man-horse. . .but a man-boat. He lived on his tug board. . . Separated from his boat. . . he seemed incomplete. The tug herself, without his head and torso on the bridge looked mutilated," (7) they are osmotic. He is himself a half-man on a half-boat, matching the half-body laundry hanging on the *Diana's* poop as cannibalistic caricatures. The *Borgmester Dahl,* Falk's derelict luxury cruiser providing exquisite accommodation, was the victim of an oxymoronic absurd irony: "There was a ship - safe, convenient, roomy: a ship with . . . knives, forks . . . glass and china, and a complete cook's galley, pervaded, ruled and possessed by the pitiless spectre of starvation," (31) second nature brought to perfection only to be drastically proved inefficient against basic hunger.

Conrad's shared transitionally habitable spaces on land, inns, are either the expression of reterritorialization or of criminal action against the other. Giorgio Viola's inn, called "Italia Una" is a Little Italy, a reterritorialization of his homeland nationalistic republican spirit under the Garribaldi lithography presiding on the wall, housing Italian immigrants with typical physiognomies, "the aristocracy of the railway," "the Italian stronghold" of alterity, where "no native of Costaguana intruded." (*Nostromo* 40)

In "The Inn of the Two Witches," the forest scenery is the typical background of a horror tale with witches and props such as a canopy bed with a deadly mechanism. The forest track is enthralled by sorcery, ominous of the mysterious evil of the inn, whose animistic building glides up from the ground so unexpectedly that the hero almost stumbles into it "as though it had risen from the ground or had come gliding to meet him.. . . another three steps and he could have touched the wall with his hand." (72) In the inn, "the archbishop's room," a place of torture,

contains a bed whose canopy descends to crush the foreign sailor-guests who are killed and robbed. Nature, the dwelling and the two lethal "harridans" concur in transcorporeal evil to lure, kill and rob the naive travellers. In Conrad's inns, nature is either jingoistic or downright criminal to the other.

Shared transitionally habitable spaces on water are ships accommodating passengers. *The Shadow-Line* description of the out-of-place luxury of the ship's salon can be interpreted in two ways. It includes an ormulu-framed mirror, a sideboard with a marble top, a mahogany table shining "like a dark pool of water," silver-plated lamps and panels in two kinds of wood, oddity signs of the refined taste for luxury of the late jinx captain, a musician, a square peg in a round hole in his position (*SL* 20). If the story is read as horror, the salon, the violin and the missing quinine in the medicine set transcorporeally define his ghost lying on the shadow-line "in latitude 8d 20' north,"(*SL* 45) whose agency causes the epidemic, drastically diminishes the crew's chances of survival, and presumably starts entangled nature's malevolence manifest as windfall, dark and fog stopping the ship and turning the voyage into seventeen days of nightmare for the ecophobic crew surviving by its solidarity. If the story is read as a brief Bildungsroman written by Conrad for his son Borys who was a soldier in the Great War, then the shadow-line trials are designed by agentive nature to be the young captain's journey of initiation, a rite of passage from adolescence to manhood.

In "The Secret Sharer," the captain's private space on the ship, shared for four days with a secret passenger, has the form of the letter L (the sharer Leggatt's initial), allowing for hiding him (Cohen, *Anti-Mimesis*, 193). The narrator "stands as a cartographer of letters," (Casarino *Modernity at Sea* 217) viewing Leggatt as both a nature's legate and a bound prisoner in his interior space.

In "Amy Foster," on Yanko's emigrating journey to America, the ship as a temporary dwelling is perceived from the hold in a bottom-up view by the ignorant Polish farmer as a sailing trap suggesting sacrificial crosses or gallows, warning of death, running between vertical buildings on a river:

> There was a steam machine that went on the water. . .The walls were smooth and black, and there uprose, growing from the roof as it were, bare trees in the shape of crosses, extremely high.That's how it appeared to him then, for he had never seen a ship before. (*A* 5)

Inside the hold, humans are humiliated and distressed by dark and crowding, and their porous bodies suffer from the wind, the river and the sea conniving with the cynical transporters to the collective massacre of the prisoners-travellers.The damp, swaying hull structured like an underwater prison or a catacomb, generates transcorporeal claustrophobic panic, permanent darkness leading to loss of time perception:

> It was very large, very cold, damp and sombre, with places in the manner of wooden boxes where people had to sleep, one above another, and it kept on rocking all ways at once all the time. He crept into one of these boxes. . .People groaned, children cried, water dripped, the lights went out, the walls of the place creaked, and everything was being shaken so that in one's little box one dared not lift one's head. . . all the time a great noise of wind went on outside and heavy blows fell. . . one could not tell whether it was morning or evening. It seemed always to be night in that place. (5)

There are degrees of misery for poor travellers on Conrad's ships. The pilgrims on the *Patna* suffer thirst on the deck, as defenseless victims of hazard under the clear sky in *Lord Jim*. The frightened passengers-prisoners in the dark tomb-like boxes of the hold in "Amy Foster" are still not as hard tried as the coolies of *Typhoon*, locked in the 'tween-deck, chaotically rolling and fighting.

Conrad mentions a few heterotopias of deviation. In his psychologist efforts to decipher Jim, Marlow goes to the hospital (a heterotopia of crisis) to talk to the second engineer, a patient with delirium tremens. Foucault speaks in "Of Other Spaces" about heterotopias of deviation, "places for individuals whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm" (Foucault 25). Such are the prisons where de Barral (*C*), Avellanos and Monygham (*N*) serve their sentences. In *An Outcast of the Islands*, Lingard banishes the thief Willems to isolation up a Borneo river, decreeing: "As far as the rest of the world is concerned, your life is finished." (*OI* 277) In prisons and places of banishment, society and nature collude to ruin the convicts physically and psychically.

Conrad's transitional uninhabited spaces are mostly offices. In *Heart of Darkness*, the company's head quarters suggest an antechamber to hell,"the door of Darkness" guarded by two mourning-dressed knitters of black wool "as for a warm pall" (*HD* 16). Their strange reified

behaviour and the doctor's consultation and *adieu* are for Marlow a puzzle symbolically connecting death with imperialism represented by the coloured imperial map on the wall. (11)

In *Nostromo*, Holroyd's headquarters in the American metropolis of colonized Sulaco is an iron-glass-stone skyscraper without beauty, a reification of employees at a higher, Empire scale, turning them into "insignificant pieces of minor machinery in that eleven-storey-high workshop of great affairs," topped with a zoomorphic spider web wirework: "an enormous pile of iron, glass and blocks of stone. . . cobwebbed aloft." (*N* 78) The image focuses on the supreme importance attached to international communication and imperialist dehumanization expressed by the lack of beauty of the skyscraper significantly covered by a cobweb imprisoning employees, as an entomomorphic prey symbolic of capitalist estrangement from nature and alienation from other humans.

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