

## READING COLONIZATION IN CONRAD'S TRANS-RACIAL LOVE PLOTS

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### ABSTRACT

*The study is about a close look at Conrad's trans-racial romance related to the Victorian period. Trans-racial love between white men and non-white women becomes a popular theme in the early works of Josep Conrad, a famous writer of the late Victorian period. Using a closely technical reading in the three of Conrad's works Lord Jim, Almayer's Folly, and An Outcast of the Island, we can show that such a trans-racial romance is not merely meant for appreciating equivalence. In turn, the trans-racial romance of Conrad's can be understood as the reflection of the Western colonization on the East where the white men take a role as subjects who had dominately explored while the non-white women as objects who are passively being explored.*

**Key words:** *colonization, race, romance plot, subject, object, and dominance*

### 1. Introduction

Trans-racial love between white men and non-white women emerged as an increasingly popular theme in literature during the second half of nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Victorian and early modern writers, such as Charlotte Bronte, H. Rider Haggard and Joseph Conrad, explored the issue of inter-racial relationship between European men and native women from different parts of the world in some of their finest works.

It was interesting that even though interest in the contact between white and non-white had appeared in English literature as early as in the sixteenth century with Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and *Othello*, and continued in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* two centuries later, there was very little reference to the existence or even the possibility of the existence of trans-

racial love. Romantic relationships between Europeans and other races seemed to be considered unimaginable, if not unrepresentable in writings and this remained until the end of eighteenth century.

The impossibility of inter-racial love was actually not at all surprising if we look at the image of non-white people presented in early literature. As very few writers had actually been to the world outside Europe, they were occupied by their own pre-conceived ideas about the inhabitants of the other parts of the worlds.

...in Shakespeare's day that world had been a mysterious place; Othello could tell his travellers' tales of the men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders and, while references to Bermuda in *The*



*Tempest* were up-to-the-minute, they came in a play that was a collection of fairy stories. When Defoe wrote about the world outside Europe for an early eighteenth-century audience, he could take a much more realistic approach ... *Gulliver's Travels* went back to telling fantastic tales, but Swift wrote the book in the same realistic style as Defoe, and took it for granted that his readers would find it quite natural that at the end of the earth men were just the same as in England—petty, trivial, grasping, and generally unpleasant (Lloyd, 1984: 63).

Nevertheless, general portrayals of non-white people in English literature, ranging from Caliban in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Friday in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, and even Tonga in Conan Doyle's *The Sign of Four* reflected the shortcomings and backwardness of the races other than European. The coloured inhabitants of the other world are always depicted as dehumanized, childish, naive, voiceless, and even reduced to the level of animals. Such a depiction, which is what Edward Said later refers to as "orientalism", emphasized the fact that white people always saw themselves as different, superior and better than the rest of the world. Literature, in a sense, played an important role in establishing and maintaining such belief.

Relationships between white and non-white began to be perceived from a different viewpoint after 1735 with the launching of the La Condamine expedition, which was Europe's first major scientific expedition and the publication of Carl Linne's *Systema Naturae*, "a descriptive system to classify all the plants on the earth, known and unknown, according to the characteristic of their reproductive part" (Pratt, 1992: 24), which commences the Western obsession with cataloguing nature into scientific nomenclature. These two marked the beginning of the travel explo-

sion all around the world in the pursuit of either wealth or knowledge and, as a result, it also provoked the flourishing of travel literature.

It was travel writings that eventually became the first literary genre which witnessed the appearance of trans-racial love stories or "sentimental travel writing". Mary Louis Pratt argued in her book *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* that this particular type of travel writing originated from "survival literature", which she further explained as first-person stories of shipwrecks, castaways, mutinies, abandonments, and captivities. Written by European captives and castaways "who lived only by becoming slaves of heathens and infidels" (Pratt, 1992: 86) and often became husbands, wives, or concubines of their captors as well later, survival literature had developed the theme of sex and slavery between Europeans and non-Europeans.

While on the surface it seemed to break the taboo configuration of inter-cultural contact in which Europeans were enslaved by non-Europeans or Europeans adjusted (which here meant lowered) themselves to conform to non-European societies, survival literature was widely accepted because of the temporality of the relationship:

The context of survival literature was "safe" for transgressive plots, since the very existence of a text presupposed the imperially correct outcome: the survivor survived, and sought reintegration into the home society. The tale was always told from the viewpoint of the European who returned (Pratt, 1992: 87).

What is suggested here is that if there were really any inter-racial marriage or sexual relationship between white and non-white, it was always an involuntary one. The Europeans were "forced" to get involved in it. Therefore, separation in the end was the only acceptable solution.



The sentiment towards inter racial relationship changed as sentimental dramatization of trans-racial contact suddenly became popular in the late eighteenth century:

In part through the rise of the abolitionist movement, and in part through the rise of travel literature as a profitable print industry, sentimentality consolidated itself quite suddenly in the 1780s and 1790s as a powerful mode for representing colonial relations and the imperial frontier (Pratt, 1992: 87).

Even though some travel writers still retained the old attitude towards inter-racial romance, particular works such as Françoise Le Vaillant's *Voyages dans L'interieur de l'Afrique* (1790) and John Stedman's *Narrative of a Five Years' Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam* (1796) had already included love stories between the writers and native women, in which now the European travellers acted as the suitor who pursue their desired female objects.

The expansion of existing colonial interests in South Africa, Asia, the West Indies and Canada during Victorian reign provided greater possibility of contact between British people and non-white people from the colonies. The idea of leaving England to go to the colonies became fashionable and so did the idea of having a love affair with a native person. This phenomenon was portrayed, for instance, in Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* (1849), in which Louis Moore proposed to go to North America and live with the Indians and immediately suggested that he was going to marry one of the savages instead of Shirley. Joseph Conrad's most celebrated work, *Heart of Darkness*, presented the enigmatic Kurtz, who left his fiancée, the Intended, back in Europe to come to live in the "blank space" of the globe with native Africans and take a black savage woman as his mistress.

Despite the change of attitude towards trans-racial relationship, the pattern did not seem to alter much since the blooming of survival literature. The trans-racial love which was portrayed in Victorian literature still retained the characteristic of survival literature and sentimental travel writings: it was told by the European voice, it involved a deserted white man and a native woman who is slightly more sophisticated than other natives, either because she is a queen or a mixed-blood or at least Western-educated, it took place in the remote colonial location, and it never lasted, it always broke up in the end either with the death of one of the couple involved or mere separation as the man came back to his civilization.

One of the late Victorian writers who deals a lot with the issue of trans-racial love is Joseph Conrad. The element of exotic romance is strongly present in his early works, especially his Malayan novels. Popular as the writer of "men novels" which always involve a great number of male characters but very limited female figures in his narratives, Conrad surprisingly gives significant space to explore non-white female characters and their relationship with white men in his first two books, *Almayer's Folly* and *An Outcast of the Island*, and later also in *Lord Jim*, the novel which marks the shift of his narrative style into early modernism. These three novels feature isolated white men in a Malayan setting who conduct love affairs with native women. The three novels end tragically with the death of the male characters.

## 2. An Alternative Version of Subjugation

Having analysed the background of the trans-racial love plot and its typical pattern in the Victorian period, I would now look more closely at Conrad's presentation of such a relationship. My focus here is to read his trans-racial romance as the reflection of the colonization of the Eastern world, where white men play the role as the subject who explores while



native women become the object passively waiting to be explored.

This pattern perfectly fits the traditional scheme of the relationship between Europe and the eastern colonies, which is often represented as that of a man and a woman. Manliness is perceived as the natural characteristic of Europe while the unconquered territories in the East are generally correlated with effeminate qualities commonly attributed to women, namely the mysteriousness and “the irrationality and emotional extremes” as Joana de Groot has pointed out in her essay “Sexuality and Subordination” (Stott, 1992). Such a contradiction results in the misleading yet widely-accepted idea that: “the Orient is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, ‘different’; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, ‘normal’” (Said, 1995: 57).

This gender perception greatly shapes the form of relationship between the East and the West. As the superior figures, Europeans have easily transferred their patriarchal control over women into Western domination over the East. Edward Said in his influential book, *Orientalism*, vividly describes the interaction between Europe and the Orient in term of sexual oppression:

A certain freedom of intercourse was always the Westerner's privilege; because his was the stronger culture, he could penetrate, he could wrestle with, he could give shape and meaning to the great Asiatic mystery (1995: 44).

This argument will underline my attempt to read Conrad's trans-racial love plots between white men and native women in his early Malay novels as the representation of the practice of colonization, an analogy where the masculine Western authority asserts his control and domination over the sexualized Other.

Kaspar Almayer, Peter Willems and Jim as the male protagonists in Conrad's works

play the role of Western colonizers while Mrs. Almayer, Aissa and Jewel represent the colonised Orient. Their contact, even though symbolised by marriage or love, is fully marked with power domination and oppression. Concerning the existence of cross-racial love, Mary Lois Pratt has argued that it exists merely as “imaginings in which European supremacy is guaranteed by affective and social bonding” which eventually leads to the “wilful submission of the colonized” (Pratt, 1992: 97). Her statement perfectly applies to Conrad's love plots as they do not necessarily restore the equality between the East and the West but merely offer an alternative version of subjugation while the real nature of the trans-racial relationship itself is still based on the same old belief: “There are Westerners, and there are Orientals. The former dominate; the latter must be dominated.” (Said, 1995: 36).

### **3. Conrad's Heroes: Fake “Unquestionable Superiority”**

Dominance and superiority are the qualities mainly attached to Conrad's male protagonists, either through their own opinion about themselves or the perception of the natives around them or the combination of both. As opposed to his colossal “failure” to fulfil European standard of manliness in the first half of the novel, Jim is able to restore his masculinity and even emerges as the hero in the isolated Patusan. The natives regard Jim as having “supernatural” power after he makes a success of escaping from Rajah Allang's stockade and defeating Sherif Ali and later they make him the ruler of the native community. All along the story, Jim is always portrayed as substantial, distinct and clearly outlined against the wilderness of Patusan. When Marlow sees Jim in his white garments among a number of half-naked “slaves and humble dependants” of Rajah Allang, he immediately comes to the realization of how distinctive Jim is. Marlow even believes that the natives who have never seen



such a “god-like figure” before would evidently think that Jim might have descended from a higher place:

In the midst of these dark-faced men, his stalwart figure in white apparel, the gleaming clusters of his fair hair, seemed to catch all the sunshine that trickled through the cracks in the closed shutters of that dim hall ... He appeared like a creature not only of another kind but of another essence. Had they not seen him come up in a canoe they might have thought he had descended upon them from the clouds (Conrad, 1993: 143).

Young Almayer leaves his home “ready to conquer the world, never doubting that he would” (Conrad, 1992: 5) even though he ends up being isolated in his trading post in Sambir. Believing that he actually belongs to a higher order of race, he is waiting for the day when he would be “ascended” to Amsterdam, “that earthly paradise of his dreams” (Conrad, 1992: 10).

Willems enjoys the admiration and “the awe-struck” respect of his first wife’s dark-skinned relatives, the Da Souza family because of his role as their provider as well as the fact that he is a successful white man who “had done them the honour to marry their daughter, sister, cousin” (Conrad, 1975:13). After he is caught of committing a fraud, which results in his eviction to Sambir as an outcast, Aissa still confirms his “unquestionable superiority” when she refers to him as “the victorious race” because he is “bigger, stronger than any man she had seen before, and altogether different from all those she knew” (Conrad, 1975: 68).

These colonial figures assert their superiority particularly by downgrading the natives around them. Willem treats his first wife, Joanna and the Da Souza family with contempt and disgust as in his eyes they are merely half-caste, “degenerate descendants of Potuguese

conquerors” (Conrad, 1975: 14). Similar to Willem, Almayer clearly shows his racist attitude when he says to the visiting Dutch officers: “It is a great pleasure to see white faces here. I have lived here many years in solitude. The Malays, you understand, are not company for white men; moreover they are not friendly; they do not understand our ways” (Conrad, 1992: 122). Even Jim, the hero of Patusan who appears to be a sympathetic character at first sight, adopts similar racist attitude as Almayer or Willems. Despite Marlow’s reference to his existence in Patusan as “in complete accord with his surroundings –with the life of the forests and with the life of men” (Conrad, 1993; 110), Jim has never regarded the inhabitants of his fishing village as his equals. To Marlow he emphasizes the inability of the Malays to understand the real motif why he hides himself in Patusan:

Is it not strange ... that all these people, all these people who would do anything for me, can never be made to understand? Never! If you disbelieve me I could not call them up. It seems hard, somehow. I am stupid, am I not? What more can I want? If you ask them who is brave – who is true – who is just – who is it they trust with their lives? – they would say, Tuan Jim. And yet they can never know the real, real truth ... (Conrad, 1993:191).

In reality, it is actually easy to answer his rhetorical question: “what more can I want?” What he evidently wants is his fellow Europeans, and not the natives, to point to him as the answer to his crucial self-doubts: “who is brave – who is true – who is just – who is it they trust with their lives?” In his attempt to redeem the sense of his own trustworthiness after the *Patna* tragedy, Jim sticks to his European values and could never regard the trust of the natives as equivalent to the European credit. Patusan is not enough for Jim as what he evi-



dently needs is the remission from his equals not from his inferiors. Therefore, he is never able to recover his lost self-esteem until he willingly decides to surrender his own life to Doramin's hand.

Generally, the colonial figures act as the subject in the contact with native people. They see themselves or are seen as the predominant beings with the power to think, to reason and to act. This automatically locates the natives in the lower hierarchy as objects who always have to submit to the white men's rules. Hunt Hawkins describes such a relationship as follows:

The colonialist does not and cannot enter into community with the natives because they lack freedom and are unable to interact with him as equals; they remain objects upon which he projects his own schemes and fantasies (Hawkins, 1985: 72).

This subject-object pattern remains in the love interaction between white colonial men and native women even though the standard of the heroines have usually been adjusted to a higher level following the pattern of sentimental travel writing a century earlier.

#### **4. Conrad's Heroines: Adjusted and Articulated**

The three female characters in Conrad's novels, Mrs. Almayer, Aissa and Jewel, are obviously not ordinary native women because, in one way or another, they are more sophisticated than other real natives. Aissa, the "tall and graceful" daughter of blind Omar is a mixed blood between Arab and Malay. Jewel is a half-caste who has been properly educated by her half-white mother and brought up in Patusan by her white stepfather, Cornelius. Mrs. Almayer, formerly a pirate chief's daughter, is adopted by the white "Rajah Laut", Tom Lingard and sent to the Samarang convent in

Java to receive Western education and the teaching of Christianity.

This adjustment is apparently necessary to elevate them from their "savage" status even though it is obviously not enough to make them reach the level which is equal to the "civilized" Europeans. Mrs. Almayer is merely "a slave" in Almayer's eyes. To Willems, Aissa easily deteriorates from "a golden statue with living eyes" at first to "a wild creature" and "a damned mongrel" in the end. And in spite of Jim's confession of his love for Jewel: "I love her dearly. More than I could tell" (Conrad, 1993: 190), she is no more than a "possession" for him – an extraordinary gem that he could just abandon and leave without much consideration for her feeling.

While relationship between white men and white women at the end of the nineteenth century is still very much constructed around the subject/object divide as well, it is different from that with the non-white women as the binary opposition of man/woman in trans-racial relationship is complicated with white/black realm. Based on biological difference and religious values, most white women have been subjected to domestication and "submission to men had become an item of religious law" (Levine, 1994: 11) in the European society. Nevertheless, when it comes to the relationship with non-white women, the oppression is further problematized with racial issues as native women inhabit the lowest level in both man/woman and white/black hierarchy. This results in the double oppression of non-white women which is profoundly underlined by Elizabeth V. Spelman in her essay "Gender and Race: The Ampersand Problem in Feminist Thought". Despite Spelman's specific reference to the black women in this particular piece of critical writing, I find that her argument is basically applicable to describe the condition faced by all women of colour:



Women's oppression has been linked to the meanings assigned to having a woman's body by male oppressors. Blacks' oppression has been linked to the meanings assigned to having black body by white oppressors (Spelman, 2001: 84).

Therefore, to have "a woman's body" as well as "a non-white body" almost signifies the element of dehumanisation, if not non-existence at all.

Almayer, who obviously never loves his wife, only agrees to marry her because of the "mountain of gold" that she would later inherit from her foster father and because he thinks it will be "easy enough to dispose of a Malay woman, a slave after all" (Conrad, 1992: 10-11). Mrs. Almayer shares exactly the same subjugation as Joanna, whom Willems marries because he is after her secret father's money, and Jewel's mother, whom Cornelius takes as a wife only so that he could become Stein's agent in Patusan. Passed from the hand of one white man to another, Mrs. Almayer has no power to resist since she is merely perceived as commodity in the Western eyes. Here she becomes, following Padmini Mongia's term, "the medium of exchange" (1998: 162), the object with which power could be exchanged between men but which is powerless in herself. She is even denied the opportunity to voice herself as she refuses to speak in the language of her oppressor. Even though she has been educated in the Dutch convent where "she learned the language very easily" (Conrad, 1992: 23), she never seems to use her new language. Mastering Almayer's language does not necessarily give her the opportunity to communicate with him. A few years after their marriage, she "had soon commenced to treat him with a savage contempt expressed by sulky silence, only occasionally varied by outburst of savage invective" (Conrad, 1992: 23). She eventually returns to "silence" and "occasional

outburst" at the primitive level of communication, which once again stresses the element of otherness and inferiority in her, "the fact that the Oriental lived in a different but thoroughly organized world of his own" (Said, 1995: 40).

Similar to the voiceless Mrs. Almayer, Aissa very seldom expresses herself since her first meeting with Willems in the jungle clearings. It is Willems who continuously tells her the story of his life and speaks "the monotonous song of praise and desire" (Conrad, 1975: 69) to express his feeling while closely watching her features and her every movements. Despite his initial passionate love for Aissa, it is obvious that Willems's treatment of the native girl bears a strong resemblance to the process of taming a wild animal.

Jewel is also presented almost as a mute when Jim first meets her. The bad treatment she has endured from her stepfather, Cornelius has left her "agitated, speechless, clutching her bosom now and then with a stony, desperate face" (Conrad, 1993: 181). All her life, she has confronted Cornelius's abuses "in silence" and "only now and then uttering a word or two that would make the other jump and writhe with the sting" (Conrad, 1993: 180). To this silent figure, Jim puts his own voice as he teaches her "a good bit of English", which results in the similarity in the way they speak "with his own clipping, boyish intonation" (Conrad, 1993: 178). In fact, she sounds so much like Jim that their conversation is "like a self-communion of one being carried in two tones" (Conrad, 1993: 178). Moreover, Marlow curiously notices that not only do they speak alike but gesticulate alike as well:

She lived so completely in his contemplation that she had acquired something of his outward aspect, something that recalled him in her movement, in the way she stretched her arm, turned her head, directed her glances (Conrad, 1993: 177).



Jim has apparently projected himself upon Jewel as he is playing ventriloquism with her and he is fully aware of this particular role when he confesses to Marlow: "You take a different view of your action when you come to understand, when you are *made* to understand every day that your existence is necessary – you see, absolutely necessary – to another person. I am made to feel that." (Conrad, 1993: 190). Therefore, according to Mannoni, Jim's love for Jewel is merely a Pygmalion effect. As quoted in Hawkin's essay, Mannoni has argued that a European man who falls in love with a native woman is, psychologically, the same as Pygmalion: "he can only love his own creation, his own *anima*" (Hawkins, 1985: 75).

The similar ventriloquial pattern also appears in the relationship between East and West. Tracing back Western domination over the Orient which appears as early as in Aeschylus's *The Persians* and *The Bacchae* of Euripides, Edward Said comes to the conclusion:

Europe is powerful and articulate; Asia is defeated and distant . . . It is Europe that articulates the Orient; this articulation is the prerogative, not of a puppet master, but of a genuine creator, whose life-giving power represents, animates, constitutes the otherwise silent and dangerous space beyond familiar boundaries (Said, 1995: 57).

Jewel, standing as the representation of the East, interestingly could never exactly become "white". She might closely resemble all aspects of her colonial ventriloquist, Jim, yet she would always remain an imperfect copy of him. Homi K. Bhabha in his book, *The Location of Culture* refers to such a phenomenon as "mimicry". He argues that mimicry is one of the "most elusive and effective" of colonial strategies to maintain power and domi-

nation over the subjugated race as it emphasizes at the same time both the dependence and the inferiority of the Other. The outcome of this practice is "a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*" (Bhabha, 1994: 85); Jewel is made to speak and move like Jim but could never transform herself to be him.

### 5. Colonizing the Blank and Nameless Space

The significant similarity between Jewel and Mrs. Almayer is the fact that Conrad never tells their real names to the readers. Both of them, in a sense, are nameless before their encounter with their white colonial lovers who provide new names for them. Mrs. Almayer remains anonymous until she marries Almayer, who gives her the title Mrs. Almayer. And through Marlow's story, we learn that it is Jim who re-names his wife with "a word that means precious, in the sense of a precious gem – jewel" (Conrad, 1993: 174). The existence of these women is then represented by their new names throughout the story.

This practice of re-naming closely resembles the European attempt in the eighteenth century to classify the content of the earth according to Linnaean system and re-invent everything with "new written, secular European name" (Pratt, 1992: 31). Pratt argues that such a practice is no less than the attempt of lettered male Europeans to "familiarize ('naturalize') new sites/sights immediately upon contact, by incorporating them into the language of the system" (Pratt, 1992: 31). This is, of course, similar to what Adam has done in the Garden of Eden. He gives names to the livestock (as well as the first woman) then rules over them all. To name something according to European terms means to put it under European knowledge and knowledge means power, as Said has profoundly argued in *Orientalism*:



Knowledge of subject races or orientals is what makes their management easy and profitable; knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge, and so on in an increasingly profitable dialectic of information and control (1995: 36).

There is also a strong resemblance between Jewel and the “blank space” in the map of the world that attracts young Marlow’s curiosity in *Heart of Darkness*. Both of them, in a sense, do not exist until the Europeans “discover” and “map” them. Growing up in Patusan, Jewel becomes the personification of the “blank space” itself as it is believed that “she had seen nothing, she had known nothing, she had no conception of anything” (Conrad, 1993: 192). If presumably nothing exists outside the European frame of thought, Jewel could only come into being after Jim “finds” her, baptizes her with a new name and “fills” her with his own voice and image.

Compared with Jewel and Mrs. Almayer, Aissa perhaps stands as an exception since she does have her own name, even though it sounds very much like “Asia”, the conquered territory. In a sense, her name indeed reflects her existence as the personal embodiment of the mysterious Malayan jungle itself. Willems’s first glimpse of her in the jungle clearing immediately gives him the impression that not only has she emerged from “the serried trees of the forest that stood big and still and straight” but she appears as “the very spirit of that land of mysterious forests” (Conrad, 1975: 64) herself. Concerning the relation between Conrad’s native women and the jungle, Rebecca Stott argues: “In Conrad’s early Malayan tales ... the native women are framed and held by the jungle but are also inseparable from it” (1992: 128). This is exactly how Aissa appears in Willems’s eyes:

Her head lost in the shadow of the broad and graceful leaves that touched her

cheek; while the slender spikes of pale green orchids streamed down from amongst the boughs and mingled with the black hair that framed her face, as if all these plants claimed her for their own (Conrad, 1975: 69).

Aissa provokes Willems’s curiosity to disclose her “enchancing, subduing, beautiful” nature just as the unknown Oriental landscapes “attract” white explorers to decipher their mystery. In this light, the story of Willems and Aissa is no less than the tale of European exploration to the mysterious “blank space” in the East.

## 6. Conclusion

I would state as my conclusion that the nature of trans-racial relationship in Conrad’s works strongly reflects that of the imperial domination. It is undeniable that Conrad has presented his male protagonists, Jim, Almayer and Willems as the superior figures in comparison to the natives, especially their native mistresses. All men act as the colonizers who fully dominate their native partners, who are presented almost as mere “blank spaces” and commodities passively waiting to be exploited.

Such a portrayal of the colonial encounter makes the accusation of the leading post-colonial critic, Chinua Achebe, that Conrad is a writer who “celebrates ... dehumanization” and “depersonalizes a portion of human race” (Achebe, 1998: 117) at least partially correct if we look at Conrad’s representation of his native women. Aissa, Jewel and Mrs. Almayer are all reduced to numb nameless objects whose existence depends entirely on their white counterparts and upon whom the civilized men have projected themselves.

Thus, Conrad’s trans-racial romance fits Pratt’s comment that such a relationship only works as a manipulative way of dominating the natives through “affective and social bonding” Pratt, 1992: 97). It is none other than an alternative version of subjugation.



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