

DETECTING KUNSTLERROMAN IN CONRAD'S *THE SECRET AGENT*: A SELF-REFLEXIVE TYPE

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Abstract: “Detecting Kunstlerroman in Conrad’s *The Secret Agent: A Self-reflexive Type*” argues that Joseph Conrad’s *The Secret Agent: A Simple Tale* (1907) is a double-voiced, double-genred, co-dependent text. The novel’s detective story voice both *supports*, and is dependent on, the Kunstlerroman voice. The novel’s voice supports the *mise-en-abyme* Kunstlerroman genre in that it, as a detective story, alerts the reader to the literary clues and hints to authorial self-reflexivity that are not overtly apparent in the text and hardly at all apparent in the story. The paper goes to some length to show that in its compliance with detective story conventions, with foregrounding its own method of detection, Conrad’s novel belongs to a self-reflexive genre. Nonetheless, the detective story depends on the Kunstlerroman to show both genres in its two facing mirrors. The Kunstlerroman—through the self-assertive interpolation of a first-person narrator in a third-person narrative—highlights the self-reflexive nature of the detective story. In so doing the paper claims that, though reciprocal, the Kunstlerroman declares its own authority. The two voices are, paradoxically, mutually dependent and independent.

The paper substantiates this rather obscure reciprocity claim by citing what it considers to be the analogous “Prefaces” to the Conrad / Ford Madox Ford 1924 epistolary novella collaboration, *The Nature of a Crime* (1909). While these prefaces contribute a plausible analogy between the novel and the novella, the paper also relies on Edward Said’s remarks on Conrad’s letters to add credence to the claim that *The Secret Agent* belongs to the Kunstlerroman- as well as to the detective story genre.

Narratologists Linda Hutcheon as well as Susana Onega and Jose A.G. Landa provide scholarship on both genres, and Eric Meyer’s essay on *The Nature of a Crime* proves invaluable.

Keywords: double agents, collaboration, dichotomy, genres transgression, narcissism

...I really think that ‘The Secret Agent’ is a perfectly genuine piece of work. Even the purely artistic purpose, that of applying an ironic method to a subject of that kind, was formulated with deliberation and in the earnest belief that ironic treatment alone would enable me to say all I felt I would have to say in scorn as well as in pity.

Conrad’s 1920 “Author’s Note” (xxxiii) to *The Secret Agent*, 1907

In entitling his pseudo-detective story with the mirror-image *The Secret Agent: A Simple Tale* (*TSA:AST*), Joseph Conrad drops a clue to the novel’s narcissistic na-

ture. The novel is not simply narcissistic, it is, to use Linda Hutcheon's term for the detective story genre, "covertly" so (31). It is covertly narcissistic not simply because of Hutcheon's characterization of the genre; it is covertly narcissistic also because it disguises another embedded narcissistic genre: the *Kunstlerroman*. In Conrad's detective story a planned crime is unrealized, but an unplanned event undermines it. Both within the plot (by some characters, though differently by others) and by the reader, none of whom know whodunit, this unplanned event mistakenly self-reflects on the camouflaged planner. It backfires. In its misidentification, the story borders on the criminal; it transgresses. The very nature of the crime itself is covert: metonymically, a person substitutes mistakenly for a thing or an idea. In the embedded *Kunstlerroman* genre, Conrad—with his five enigmatic first-person "I" confessions (Conrad 12)—overtly intrudes on his third-person narrator; he transgresses. Yet he provokes, or "frames" the reader-detective to investigate the covert first person "private eye" role of this intruder. A simple tale turns out, ironically and covertly, to be a complex one.

While Conrad's detective-story 'version', or genre, clearly proposes an intended crime, what crime, we might well ask, is proposed in mistaking a private eye for a self-reflexive private "I"? This paper will argue that the interpolation of a first-person voice in a third-person narrative, the incorporation of the double-agency function of detective story narrator and of *Kunstlerroman*, constitutes a literary crime or transgression. Transgression also occurs in the detective story 'version' in that Verloc (Sherlock) is a double agent: as Verloc, he enjoys the confidence of both Vladimir and the revolutionaries: as Sherlock, he unwittingly muddles the incriminating evidence.¹ Transgression embedded within transgression abounds.

Although the title of Conrad's novel hints at the notion of self-reflexivity, of mirror image, the novel itself suggests that this self-reflexivity entails metafiction rather than *Kunstlerroman*, entails the work rather than the author. Nonetheless, this paper claims that the text functions as double agent—detective story- and *Kunstlerroman* genre—and finds evidence for that claim in the 1924 Prefaces written by Conrad and Ford Madox Ford, respectively, to their collaborative novella: *The Nature of a Crime* (1909). Of equal importance, if less easily accessible, are the clues and hints to *Kunstlerroman* that Conrad hides in his detective story. Guided initially by the more forthright 1924 Prefaces to the novella, but later by a semiotic reading of embedded-, or indeed co-habiting, narcissism, my paper will further explore the complex relationship between the self-reflexive detective story² and the *mise-en-abyme* *Kunstlerroman* genres in Conrad's *The Secret Agent*. This exploration will be supported mainly by the scholarship of Hutcheon, Edward Said, Eric Meyer, and Philippe Lejeune.

¹ My "A Thoughtful Reading Guide to *The Secret Agent: A Semiotic Text*" shows that the victim of the event is not what/whom the planner targeted; is not whom the police think he is; nor is he whom the reader believes him to be. "Yearbook of Conrad Studies" (Poland), 2015.

² In his "Foreword" to Philippe Lejeune's *On Autobiography*, Paul John Eakin notes "that the structure of a narrative, usually neglected by most autobiographers, could serve as a primary mode of self-representation" (xii).

Before investigating the relationship between the two genres in Conrad novel a word is in order about the notion of narrative embeddedness, or *mise-en-abyme*.³ The term "*mise-en-abyme*" "gets its name from a heraldic device that [André] Gide no doubt discovered in 1891" (Lucien Dallenbach 8). The device—a shield—may contain *en abyme*, in its centre, an image, "*a miniature replica of itself*" (*ibid.*). The importance to this paper of Gide's use of the term as a miniature is that Conrad's overt first-person self-reflexive intrusive voice constitutes a miniature indication of the narcissistic theme of the novel as a whole. It is synecdochic. Self-reflexivity does occur throughout *The Secret Agent*, but, as we shall see, occurs, not in the author's "I" voice, but in the disguise of other voices mimicked *en abyme* by the third-person narrator. Self-reflexivity is also detectable through analogy with the collaborative voices in *The Nature of a Crime*. Although narratologists Susanna Onega and José A.G. Landa note that "Robert Alter sees a difference between self-conscious novels and those which contain self-conscious moments" (31), this paper argues that the first-person intrusion is not only a self-conscious moment but, occurring as it does at the beginning of the novel, acts as a clue to the novel's narcissism theme, a theme which Conrad presents in various guises and voices. It is a momentous moment. Onega and Landa would, I believe, consider Conrad's novel as a whole to be self-reflexive:

...The self-conscious or reflexive novel must be informed by a consistent effort: self-consciousness must be central to its structure and purpose. The term 'reflexivity' calls our attention both to mirror structures (doubling, analogies, frames, *mise-en-abyme*) and to thought, consciousness, reflection, awareness accompanying action. Indeed, metafiction is reflexive fiction in the sense not only that mirror images are found in it, but also that these mirrorings and reflexive structures are used as a mediation on the nature of fiction. (*ibid.*)

Hutcheon would agree. She notes that "*mise-en-abyme* often contains a critique of the text itself" (55). To these observations we could add that Conrad's reveals itself as double agent.

In addition to the early occurrence in the novel of the "I" voice, the notion of self-referential mirroring is foregrounded there: "Mr. Vladimir studied in the mirror the fleshy profile, the gross bulk, of the man behind him. And at the same time he had the advantage of seeing his own face, clean-shaven and round, rosy about the gills ... with the thin sensitive lips formed exactly for the utterance of those delicate witticisms ..." (Conrad 20-21). Having been forewarned that mirroring by any other name is going to play an important role in this novel, we might be alert to other clues that point to the same theme. The term "mirroring", or *mise-en-abyme*, is often substituted by the terms "frame", "embedded", or "Chinese Box", or sometimes by the term "staircasing," (Jeremy Hawthorn, 128). Perhaps because it is more ambiguous, Conrad prefers the latter. Although access to the Verloc bedrooms is gained by climbing stairs, the kitchen is accessed by taking steps: "Alexander Ossipon ... strolled away into the kitchen (down two steps)..." (Conrad 38); "Winnie ... walked out of

³ Genette comments that "The famous *structure en abyme* ... is obviously an extreme form of this relationship of analogy, pushed to the limits of identity" (Onega and Landa 182).

the parlour into the kitchen (down two steps)...” 127; “... she went (down two steps) into the kitchen” (158); “[Verloc], glaring in from the height of two steps...” (195); “Mr. Verloc, stepping slowly down two steps...” (196); “‘Upstairs?’... induced her to nod at him slightly (from the height of two steps)...” (206). Staircasing and the narrative device of metalepses, of transitional levels of narrative, are not unrelated to each other. Metalepsis “introduces into one situation...the knowledge of another situation” (Onega and Landa 182). Conrad’s kitchen steps covertly provide knowledge—they hint—they, like “any other form of transit... [are] always transgressive” (ibid.). But this paper side-steps its main argument. Let us, then, return to the topic of genre.

THE DETECTIVE STORY

Re: Revolutionary writing

... I have no doubt, however, that there have been moments during the writing of the book when I was an extreme revolutionist, I won't say more convinced than [revolutionary refugees in New York] but certainly cherishing a more concentrated purpose than any of them had ever done in the whole course of his life. I don't say this to boast. I was simply attending to my business. In the matter of all my books I have always attended to my business. I have attended to it with complete self-surrender.

“Author’s Note” (xxxix)

Distinct from Onega and Landa’s use of terms, Hutcheon’s claims that the detective story genre differs from other covertly narcissistic narrative; not all covert narcissistic narrative is self-conscious. Being covert, Hutcheon points out, this type of narrative covers up its self-awareness. The detective story genre, alternatively, is self-conscious. Since the detective story entails “the written plot and the plot to kill ... [it] is itself a very self-conscious [form]” (31). It is self-conscious because “in fact, the reader of a murder mystery comes to *expect* the presence of a detective-story writer within the story itself, be it in Agatha Christie...or Dorothy Sayers” (ibid.). In *The Secret Agent* the detective story writer appears, as we have seen, in the guise of a first-person “I” voice. Conrad’s detective story is self-conscious because of the presence of the writer (though absent from the story itself) within the narrative voice: “...I should say..., I am not sure For all I know I shouldn’t be surprised. What I want to affirm...” (Conrad 12). Both the detective story narrator and the first-person “I” are self-conscious, the one covertly—the other overtly so.

The progressive five-step sequence in which the first-person voice declares its self-consciousness would endorse Hutcheon’s preference for the term “narcissism” over “metafiction”. For Hutcheon, “narcissism” is “fiction that includes within itself a commentary on its own narrative or linguistic identity” (1). *The Secret Agent* includes within itself commentary on co-existing identity: that of the *Kunstlerroman* “I”, of artistic ability’s journey from doubt, through growing confidence, to affirma-

tive assurance.⁴ In the novel Conrad not infrequently expresses this lack of self-confidence in a voice impersonating his own. His third-person narrator is not always confident of what a character or event signifies.⁵ Edward Said finds this doubting aspect of authorship in Conrad's letters. Writing about the eight published volumes of Conrad's letters, Said finds that the letters "fall naturally into groups that correspond to stages in Conrad's developing sense of himself as a man and as a writer. ... In addition [Said writes] I was able to discover recorded in his letters ... the creation of a public personality that was to camouflage his deeper and more problematic difficulties with himself and with his work" (Said vii). Claiming that Conrad "felt that he had more control over the shorter forms than over the novel" (viii), Said holds that "the origin of this notion is to be found in his uncertainty about himself" (ibid.). Yet, Said finds that because of Conrad's struggle with himself he is at times "too adjectival" and that this failure is the "true theme of his fiction" (ibid. 4). Conrad's theme, like "any autobiographical document (and a letter is certainly that) is not only a chronicle of states of mind, but also an attempt to render the individual energy of one's life" (ibid.). Despite, or because of, this struggle, Conrad was "an eminently self-aware, responsible, and serious artist" (ibid. ix). He is, paradoxically, also not-infrequently self-confident. In the novel his "public" substitute often speaks not only in an authorial voice but also in that of a ventriloquist's control of his puppets' ideolects.⁶ *The Secret Agent's* complexity attests to both these interpretations of Conrad developing artistry, of his uncertainty and of his mastery of impersonated voice.

Being a self-aware, responsible, and serious artist, Conrad intrudes his "I" voice in a deliberate transgression, if not in a crime. Writing about the Conrad/Ford collaborative *The Nature of a Crime*, Eric Meyer points out Jacques Derrida's position on reading and writing as being "transgressive acts that disrupt and destabilize the meaning of the symbolic order they posit" (Meyer 499). Citing the "violence of the letter" (*Grammatology* 101) and speaking of the "nature of textuality itself", Meyer concludes that "[t]o read and write in the *radical* sense is thus to commit a kind of *crime*" (500). (Conrad would say "in the *revolutionary*-" rather than "in the *radical* sense"). Transgression, however, should not be confused with simple lawlessness but involves following the Derridian "hidden thread" and "the hidden medium of differences from which textuality is constituted" (ibid.). The effect of following such a method of reading and writing⁷ is to uncover "the nature of a text [as] the nature of a crime" (ibid.). This paper attempts to uncover the self-conscious nature of crypto-autobiography⁸ text in both the detective story- and the Kunstlerroman genres in Conrad's novel.

⁴ Noting that in autobiography "[t]he elasticity of the 'I' has its limits" (44), Lejeune remarks that "Proposing a fictitious narrator's account of himself could thus correspond either to a triumphant narcissism that humorously proclaims his identity or to the anxieties of a paranoid who seeks to rebuild it" (45). In Conrad, these alternatives are not mutually exclusive.

⁵ For a sample of such uncertainty see Appendix A.

⁶ Instances of such authorial and ventriloquist voices are itemized in Appendices B and C respectively.

⁷ For Conrad's foregrounding of writing and authorship in *The Secret Agent* see Appendix D.

⁸ Writing about autobiography and embedded "ghostwriter of a ghostwriter" (194) Lejeune notes that, "One could be tempted to define the genre as a 'heterobiography in the first person' which would be

THE KUNSTLERROMAN

Insofar as writing is a solitary practice, it is difficult to observe and scarcely needs to explain its operations. [Hence] the atmosphere of mystery that surrounds it, and the archeological care that is put into reconstructing the different phases of the production of the texts by piously reassembling the traces that remain of it or by going to question writers in order to know how they work.

Philippe Lejeune, *On Autobiography*, 188

Two years after *The Secret Agent* was published Conrad and F. M. Hueffer (later known by his Anglicized name, Ford Madox Ford, just as Konrad became known as Conrad) collaborated on the epistolary novella *The Nature of a Crime* (1909). Years later, in 1924, Conrad and Ford each wrote a “Preface” to this work, and comments on their collaboration may add some weight to my claim that *The Secret Agent* is a double-voiced self-conscious text. In his 1924 Preface (Conrad and Ford, 5-7), Conrad remarks that “... the most fantastic thing of all, as it seems to me, is that we two, who had so often discussed soberly the limits and the methods of literary composition, should have believed, for a moment, that a piece of work in the nature of an analytical confession ... could have been developed and achieved in collaboration” (6). This passage is interesting not because it wonders at collaborative meetings of the mind between Conrad and Ford—though it can analogise the use of the two “voices”, first- and third person voices, in *The Secret Agent*—but because the novella is, like *The Secret Agent*, a self-conscious piece of work in the nature of an analytical artistic confession: an analytical *Kunstlerroman*.

The novella itself evokes Conrad’s novel in several other ways. Its epistolary structure demonstrates heteroglossia. Furthermore, Ford says in his 1924 Preface (*ibid.* 8-13), it is possible that “...in the end we even wrote *to* read aloud the one to the other: for it strikes me very forcibly that the *Nature of a Crime* is for the most part

a case exactly the inverse of that of ‘autobiography in the third person.’ One who pretends to be two; two who pretend to be only one. But symmetry established in this way is deceiving: the pretense does not have the same function in the two cases, and especially is not situated on the same level.”

Footnote 10: “In autobiography in the third person, the narrator seems to speak of himself as if he were someone else, or as if he were speaking about someone else; the reader must remain aware of this game for the text to keep its meaning. In collaborative autobiography, the writer speaks of the model as if he were he, by constructing his role as autodiegetic narrator; the reader must forget this game for the text to keep its meaning” (*ibid.* 264-65).

In “The Heterobiography of Joseph K. Conrad”, Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan writes: “The concept of ‘heterobiography’... revolves on the experience of liminality in more than one way. When a fictional text is scanned for autobiographical traces, the distinction between the ontological status of the historical subject who has authored the work and that of the fictional characters ‘within’ the work is usually honoured. The former is perceived as related to the latter through echoes and reflections: ... textual representation of ‘real’ psychological states of mind, relationships, and dilemmas ...

The first swerve offered by the term ‘heterobiography’ is a Derridian concept of ‘a text without edges’, a probing of the jurisdiction of frames and borderlines, where the ‘supposed end and beginning of a work, the unity of a corpus, the title, the margins, the signatures, the referential reference outside the frame’ are no longer hermetically sealed off from each other.” *The Strange Short Fiction of Joseph Conrad’s Writing, Culture, and Subjectivity* (11).

prose meant for recitation, or of that type" (11). That type of prose is audible in *The Secret Agent*'s authorial and other voices (Appendices B, C). In his further reflections on collaboration, Ford comments on his observing Conrad's attitude, when the two of them worked together at a table, each with pen in hand (ibid. 8) and that "as often as not, by a real telepathy ... [he grew] aware of ... Conrad's posture resembling that of "a prisoner on the rack determined to conceal an agony" (ibid.). This observation reminds us of Jameson's "prison house of language" as well as of, in *The Secret Agent*, report-writer Verloc's-, and autobiography / biography writer Michaelis' (Conrad 14, 99, 247) having spent time in prison (17, 34). That Michaelis survives and Verloc does not suggests that the progression of artistic confessional Kunstlerroman outlives third-person report-writing.

While neither Preface states specifically which passages are attributable to which writer, Ford does note that he had "supplied almost all the descriptive passages of the really collaborative parts—and such soften sentiment as was called for" (Conrad and Ford 13). In "A Note on *Romance*", however, the anonymous writer quotes Conrad's ascriptions of passages: "First Part, yours; Second Part, mainly yours, with a little by me on points of seamanship and suchlike small matters; Third Part, about 60 percent, mine with important touches by you; Fourth Part, mine, with here and there an important sentence by you; Fifth Part practically all yours...with perhaps half a dozen lines by me..." (ibid. 105). Ford, on the other hand, fears that "attributing sentence one to writer A and sentence two to B, [would] maul at least one of our memories. With the nature of *those* crimes one is only too well acquainted" (ibid. 10). In attributing Authorial- and Free Indirect Speech, this paper is, indeed, guilty of such crime; but is this mimicry attributable to the third-person- or first-person imposter? Conrad's dichotomy leaves us in doubt. By citing the collaborative nature of the novella, this paper attempts to establish an analogy between the novella and the collaborative imposters in *The Secret Agent*. Authorial collaboration is not the only double agency that this paper addresses. Conrad's novel, itself, contains two double natures: authorial collaboration and genre collaboration.

The Secret Agent's genre collaboration—detective story and Kunstlerroman—is confirmed by their both belonging to a self-reflexive genre. Eric Meyer, critiquing the novella's self-reflexivity, reads it in relation to Jacques Derrida's "Plato's Pharmacy" essay in *Disseminations*:

If, as Derrida and certain more extreme poststructuralists claim, a text—any text—is necessarily self-referential rather than mimetic, and language a system of signs pointing more toward themselves than, transparently, to a world outside, then it would be merely tautological to claim that any given text is metatextual, more a self-conscious construct than a 'realistic' narrative of events in a 'real' world. Yet while accepting that essential tenet, one might add that if all texts are metatextual, some texts are *more* metatextual than others. In which case one might contend that the collaborative Ford/Conrad novella, *The Nature of a Crime*, is one of those more metatextual texts. (Meyer 501)⁹

⁹"...*The Nature of a Crime* is a short novel that poses as a criminological document ... The economy of narrative is thematized as a (symbolic) extortion from the fund of meaning that underwrites the text and conceived by the narrator as a 'game' of 'gambling' (81).

Meyer's critique concludes that the novella eludes "all efforts to fix its meaning" (503). Undoubtedly, the same can be said of *The Secret Agent*. What this paper is trying to show is how the nature of Conrad's novel is illuminated by Conrad's and Ford's respective "Prefaces" to their collaborative novella. In the novel, not only does collaboration exist between the two genres but collaboration also exists between two kinds of voices, between double agents. Neither work is intra- nor intertextually discrete.

The bipartite strategy of two kinds of voices is further hinted at in the above-mentioned character Michaelis who, the third-person narrator says, is writing an "Autobiography" (Conrad 99) but who, the Professor says, is writing a biography (ibid. 247). The distinction between the two kinds of life story writing is not evident in the novel. This paper, nonetheless, in referencing Said's characterization of Conrad as someone insecure about himself as a man and as a writer, draws a parallel with two kinds of life story. These two kinds—first-person autobiography and third-person biography—are not, Lejeune notes, necessarily distinct from each other. Writing about self-written and ghost-written autobiography, Lejeune points out that the ghost-written 'autobiographical collaboration' is a 'scandal' not because of its inauthenticity but because it "suddenly get the people who write [ghostwriters] to see their practice as in a distorting mirror.... The imitation reveals the secret of fabrication and functioning of the 'natural' product" (Lejeune 186). Holding that a ghostwritten autobiography must, of necessity, offer a plurality of points of view (190), Lejeune defines such heterogeneity as "intermediate texts between autobiography and biography" (ibid.); such texts are "both auto- and heterobiographical" (ibid.). The ghostwriter of these texts, if he wants to dignify his work, must "imagine himself occupying...that of the novelist. Instead of playing on distance, he must count on identification" (ibid.). Still writing about ghostwriters, Lejeune posits that readers will simply recognize in this kind of collaboration "a new genre" (191). And writing

... By masquerading as the (supposed) confessions of an embezzler, gambler, and would-be adulterer couched as love-letters to his secret (platonic) lover, the novella thus investigates the nature of the crime of the text, linking fiction and detection in the central hermeneutic act of disclosure ... (ibid. 501).

The novella is thus staged as an act of crime and confession that is ultimately a scene of reading and writing ... (ibid. 502).

The Nature of a Crime is thus a fictive construct that stages writing as a self-reflexive textual act that is persistently doubled by the reading that undoes it ... (ibid. 503).

Exploiting the possibilities for self-reflexivity inherent in the fictive situation, Ford and Conrad frequently create recursive structures that foreground inscription and deciphering. The novella thus utilizes its (feigned) fictional format to interrogate (in the manner of detective fiction) its status as *text*, which is linked in the economy of narrative to the *crime* of its title, and postulates interpretive disclosure as a manner of criminological detection on the part of the reader, an act of judicial hermeneutics that is repeatedly thwarted and deferred even in the revelation of its long-withheld 'secret'. ... *The Nature of a Crime* is a novel about *writing*, is a text about the nature of textuality, and its deepest secret is its insight into the act of inscription as one of violence tenuously deferred ... The nature of the text, then, is ambivalent and finally undecidable, defying our attempts to finalize the plot, refusing the closure of a definite ending, and eluding all efforts to fix its meaning (ibid.).

And so Ford and Conrad, criminals both, manage to foist their crime on an unsuspecting public under the guise of a criminological document, even as they are caught in the act of their mutual crime" (ibid. 506).

about a model [the person who is the subject of the autobiography] who takes over the writing task from the ghostwriter and who thereby becomes the ghostwriter of a ghostwriter, constructs—in place of giving answers to the interviewer's questions—a self-portrait (ibid.). Conrad's self-portrait of an artist, however, is “framed”.

Identity in Conrad's *The Secret Agent* constitutes an ever-present Allusive Signature Theme which its doubting author plays with through a complex irony method. Identifying not only as narrator and as writer but also as a progressing, transgressing, character inhabiting his own text, Conrad, through double-agency, revolutionizes the self-conscious novel and creates a ‘heterogenre’ reciprocity between the private eye and the I.

The autobiographical form gives each person the opportunity to believe that he is a complete and responsible subject. But it suffices to be two people within the same “I” for doubt to arise, and for the perspective to be inverted. We are perhaps, as complete subjects, only characters in a novel without an author (Lejeune 192).

APPENDIX A

Seem

But when he went out he seemed to experience a great difficulty... (6).
 As that circumstance seemed perfectly indifferent to Mr. Verloc... (7).
 Stevie did not seem to derive any personal gratification from what he had done (8).
 In the doorway Stevie, calmed, seemed sunk in hebetude (41).
 The little man seemed already to have considered that point of view... (60).
 Thus he spoke... while his mind seemed already to be weighting the consequences (99).
 ...seemed to menace his whole person with collapse (102).
 ...the Assistant Commissioner...seemed to lose some more of his identity (122).
 ...a task of some importance seemed to prove that this world of ours is not... (124).
 The cabman...seemed struck by some misty recollection... (136).
 Mr. Verloc seemed to be taking kindly to Stevie's companionship (153).
 He seemed to like the boy (154).
 He seemed rather eager, in a bewildered sort of way (155).
 ...seemed to lack the quality of perfect childlike trustfulness (155).
 Mr. Verloc seemed to have gone asleep (158).
 ...he seemed in his slow enunciation to be taking pains with it (162).
 And he shook his head a little sadly, it seemed (162).
 Mr. Verloc seemed scared and bewildered beyond measure (163).
 Some stalwart constable, who did not seem particularly impressed by the duty... (175).
 After this profound observation the experienced Toodles seemed to reflect (176).
 ...did not seem to refuse it a certain amount of competency (179).
 ...man's thoughts seemed to have wandered far away, perhaps to the question... (182).
 But her hands seemed glued fast (192).
 So at least it seemed now to Mr. Verloc (193).
 ...it seemed concentrated upon some point beyond Mr. Verloc's person (197).
 Mr. Verloc did not seem so much asleep now as lying down with a bent head (233).

Perhaps

In her heart of hearts she was not perhaps displeased (7).
 ...perhaps this was just as well (7).
 ...with a sort of inert fanaticism, or perhaps rather with a fanatical inertness (7).
 ...he would have perhaps winked to himself if there had not been... (11).
 ...to admit that the great change would perhaps come in the upheaval... (41).
 Perhaps he was not able (44).
 ...in ignorance of what perhaps it would be very material for him to know (65).
 ...revolutionaries are perhaps doing no more but seeking... (68).
 ...or perhaps of appeased conscience (68).
 ...impervious to sentiment, to logic, to terror too perhaps (68).
 ...it was perhaps in the one exceptional circumstance of his marriage—(97).
 Mr. Verloc would perhaps brook not being beholden to his brother-in-law (128).

The driver... took no notice...Perhaps he had not heard (129).
...perhaps merely from disgust with carriage exercise, desisted (138).
...and perhaps for that very reason his thoughts lacked clearness and precision (140).
...a form which was not perhaps unnatural in the wife of Mr. Verloc (142).
...anything very distinct about them but perhaps their boots (144).

A distinction between Genette's narrating focus and character focus is not always readily apparent in some of these passages. In some passages the narrator *does* see into the character's doubting thoughts, but in others it is the narrator himself who is uncertain.

See "Epistemological Uncertainty" (72-86) in Jakob Lothe's *Conrad's Narrative Method*.

APPENDIX B

Authorial Aphorisms

(The passages marked with an asterisk are not necessarily in the narrator's voice. Conversely, those in the narrator's sociolect may express the sentiments of a character with a different sociolect or of that character's idiolect. For useful commentary on this "voice" see Werner Senn's *Conrad's Narrative Voice* (24, 177)).

For history is made with tools, not with ideas; and everything is changed by economic conditions—art, philosophy, love, virtue—truth itself! (41).

For obviously one does not revolt against the advantages and opportunities of that state... (44).

It's like your horse suddenly falling dead under you in the midst of an uninhabited... (46-7).

Such moments come to all men whose ambition aims at a direct grasp upon humanity... (69).

True wisdom, which is not certain of anything in this world of contradictions, would have... (70-71).

A department is to those it employs a complex personality with ideas and even fads of its own (75-6).

...as loyal servants will do in the consciousness of their fidelity and with the sense of the value of their loyal exertion (85).

No man engaged in a work he does not like can preserve many saving illusions about himself. The distaste, the absence of glamour, extend from the occupation of the personality. It is only when our appointed activities seem by lucky accident to obey the particular earnestness of our temperament that we can taste the comfort of complete self-deception (93).

...that satisfactory sense of superiority the members of the police force get from the unofficial but intimate side of their intercourse with the criminal classes, by which the vanity of power is soothed, and the vulgar love of domination over our fellow creatures is flattered as worthily as it deserves (101).

Girls frequently get sacrificed to the welfare of the boys (132).

This is a sort of economy having all the appearance and some of the advantages of prudence. Obviously it may be good for one not to know too much. And such a view accords very well with constitutional indolence (139).

...with the indolence which is so often the secret of good nature (147).

...death, whose catastrophic character cannot be argued away by sophisticated reasoning or persuasive eloquence (188).*

Stevie dead was a much greater nuisance than ever he had been alive (188).*

Curiosity being one of the forms of self-revelation, a systematically incurious person remains always partly mysterious (194-95).

It is universally understood that, as if it were nothing more substantial than vapour floating in the sky, every emotion of a woman is bound to end in a shower (197).

No system of conjugal relations is perfect (201).

A man somewhat over forty may be excusably thrown into considerable disorder by the prospect of losing his employment... (203).

For to exaggerate with judgment one must begin by measuring with nicety (204).

But as often happens to peaceful men in domestic tiffs... (210).

...the poor expedients devised by a mediocre mankind for preserving an imperfect society from the dangers of moral and physical corruption, both secret too of their kind (211).

...an expression seldom observed by competent persons under the conditions of leisure and security demanded for thorough analysis, but whose meaning could not be mistaken at a glance (213).

Hazard has such accuracies (214).

Comrade Ossipon assumed correctly that no woman was capable of wholly disbelieving such a statement (223).

And, as often happens in the lament of poor humanity, rich in suffering but indigent in words, the truth—the very cry of truth—was found in a worn and artificial shape picked up somewhere among the phrases of sham sentiment (243).

APPENDIX C

Free Indirect Speech (FIS)

This fellow! (23).¹⁰

She spared presently a glance away from her *dishing up*... (31).

He a pessimist! Preposterous! (36).

...the secret of fate discovered in the material side of life...passion—(37).

...changed by economic conditions-art, philosophy, love, virtue-truth itself! (41)

Jolly lucky for Yundt that she had persisted in *coming up time after time*... (43).

A 'bus... (43, 143).

Loafing was all very well for these fellows...and had women to fall back on... (44).

Then why not go now? (44).

He had to *come in there* with a dry mouth (53).

Very damaging, too! (71).

He had no doubt that *everything needful* had been done (83).

And these were the routine steps, too, that would be taken as a matter of course... (83).

Not a very substantial authority indeed... (84).

Many other conventions easier to set aside, alas! failed to obtain her recognition... (86).

As if anybody were afraid! (102).

What was the matter now? Was it possible to treat a man so? (128).

...the hypothesis of Stevie being a drunken young nipper (131).

¹⁰ The italicized words, though spoken by the narrator, are those of a character.

APPENDIX D**Penmanship**

'I have here some of your reports,' ... and pressing the tip of his forefinger on the papers with force.... Mr. Verloc, who had recognized his own handwriting very well (14).

His wit consisted in discovering droll connections between incongruous ideas; and when talking in that strain he sat well forward on his seat, with his left hand raised, as if exhibiting his funny demonstrations between the thumb and forefinger, while his round and clean-shaven face wore an expression of merry perplexity (16-17).

On repeating this last word Mr. Vladimir laid a long white forefinger on the edge of the desk (19).

And suddenly it dawned upon him that all this was an elaborate joke (28).... Sitting well forward, his white hand upraised, he seemed to hold delicately between his thumb and forefinger the subtlety of his suggestion (29).

Stevie...got up from the kitchen table, carrying off his drawing to bed with him.... The sheet of paper covered with circles dropped out of his fingers (40).

...His instinct of a successful man had taught him long ago that, as a general rule, a reputation is built on manner as much as on achievement. And he felt that his manner when confronted with the telegram had not been impressive....exposing himself thereby to the unanswerable retort of a finger-tip laid forcibly on the telegram which the Assistant Commissioner, after reading it aloud, had flung on the desk (71).

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