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**Architectures of the invisible hand: envisioning capital in Joseph
Conrad's Singapore**

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Architectures of the invisible hand: envisioning capital in Joseph Conrad's Singapore

In recent years, critical attention has shifted away from the subject of Conrad's imperial politics and towards his representation of late nineteenth-century global capitalism, which extends panoramically from the business houses of London, Brussels and San Francisco to commodity frontiers as diverse as Malay tobacco plantations, African ivory lands and Latin American silver mines. This paper explores Conrad's engagement with capitalism and its representability within his portrait of late nineteenth-century Singapore in the wake of a financial crisis. Drawing on Susan Buck-Morss's 'Envisioning Capital', as well as Fredric Jameson's essay on architecture and finance, 'The Brick and the Balloon', the paper reads Conrad's proto-postmodern urban landscape and porous, ethereal architecture as evidence of the visual and representational difficulties generated within a major colonial 'laboratory' of liberal economics. Yet, by shifting in focus from the city to its outlying plantations, Conrad is seen to confront abstract capital with territory, ether with matter, and free-market narratives of the 'invisible hand' with the absent cause of racialized and indentured plantation labour.

Keywords: Joseph Conrad; invisible hand; Singapore; aesthetics of the economy; architecture; modernism

Joseph Conrad's invisible hand: intellectual genealogies

In her study of the 'worlds' of Joseph Conrad, Maya Jasanoff describes the Polish merchant marine as an observer of migration, mobility and multinational capitalism, whose fiction offers a remarkably broad picture of the oceanic circuits of commodity exchange transforming the globe in the late nineteenth century.¹ Notably, Conrad's vision of the world of global trade presents readers with a network of entangled commercial interests and imperatives, shaped by collaborative as well as competitive actors and diverse administrative models which, in Conrad's words, govern 'the fates of men who come out here with a hundred different projects, for hundreds of different reasons'.² While this non-systematic vision of empire intersects with emerging

scholarship within the ‘new imperial history’, it has also changed the landscape of Conradian criticism, suggesting that what was previously understood as the author’s failure to be ‘sufficiently critical of imperialism’ is less a symptom of his complicity, as Stephen Ross puts it, ‘than a consequence of his grander, more oblique, and less articulate concern with what we might now call incipient globalization’.³

Attentive to the new social, economic and technological landscapes of global capitalism in a period marked by volatile and unregulated speculative financial activity, Conrad’s work registers the seismic experiential effects of the new temporalities of compression and crisis that the period engendered. As this paper will show, one way in which this context manifests itself is through a set of abstract, invisible and uncontrollable forces which often appear from ‘elsewhere’ and exert their influence on the local and the familiar, exceeding any singular intention and confounding all efforts at systematic comprehension. In this way, Conrad’s modernist dramatization of visual and representational crisis can be seen to respond to the new forms of abstraction central to the operations of global capital. Equally, however, his historical depiction of the unevenness entrenched by territorializing and violent imperial ‘scrambles’ in regions from the Congo to a fictionalised Columbia avoids the more problematic assumptions of a ‘flat world’ prevalent within globalization discourse. In fact, this historicity offers an important rejoinder to current debates over economic liberalism, reminding us, in Simon During’s words, that ‘even in a liberal society devoted to free trade, enterprises and markets, the law — and the sovereign state — comes first’.⁴ Today, there seems no better writer for examining the powerful discourses of circulation, flow and sovereignty that continue to influence cultural and political imaginaries of global capital.

Within this context, the following paper focuses on the ‘invisible hand’ as a conceptual and formal device for exploring the landscapes, lived experiences and discursive contradictions of finance capitalism. The term ‘invisible hand’ emerges several times in Conrad, and, as with Adam Smith, the notion haunts much of his work.⁵ The events of *Lord Jim* (1900), for example, appear overdetermined by an invisible agent of causality: the protagonist rises slowly ‘as if a steady hand from above had been pulling him out of the chair by his hair’, while the hopes and aspirations of the ship’s Muslim passengers are ‘held by an invisible hand on the brink of annihilation’ (echoing the language in ‘*Narcissus*’, where it was ‘as if an invisible hand had given the ship an angry shake’).⁶ In *Almayer’s Folly* (1895), an unknowable force acts on the novel’s protagonist, who ‘felt as if an invisible hand was gripping his throat’ and who ‘seemed to free his throat from the grip of an invisible hand’.⁷ At the beginning of *Typhoon* (1902), similarly, the force driving the British sea captain out to the edges of empire is described as ‘an immense, potent, and invisible hand thrust into the ant-heap of the earth, laying hold of shoulders, knocking heads together, and setting the unconscious faces of the multitude towards inconceivable goals’.⁸ As Ross Forman points out, the spectre of Adam Smith invoked here is ‘made concrete’ by the chaotic and uncontrollable event of the typhoon itself, which aligns ‘the movements of empire with the divine forces that similarly shift individuals and populations in inscrutable ways’.⁹ Commenting on Conrad’s invisible hand in *Lord Jim*, Raymond Williams views the term as an indicator of the arbitrary and incomprehensible forces of a material and social universe, which borrows the language of natural theology to emphasise the absence of individual human cause or control.¹⁰

It is worth noting here that the specific economic context with which the term ‘invisible hand’ is associated is by no means absent from Conrad’s work. A number of

Conradian disasters are linked explicitly to the uncontrollable machinations of the market: the events of the Singapore story ‘The End of the Tether’ (1902), for example, are sparked by the initial failure of the Travancore and Deccan Banking Corporation – described as an incomprehensible disaster that ‘[shook] the East like an earthquake’, its ‘rumble of rumours’ heard from Shanghai – while, in *Chance* (1912), the protagonist’s decline begins when financial assets disappear ‘as a building vanishes in an earthquake – here one moment and gone the next with only an ill-omened, slight, preliminary rumble’.¹¹ The weather analogy in *Typhoon*, moreover, suggests not only a violent and unpredictable natural universe but also a turbulent economic system: the storm generates a crisis in the ascription of value when it causes a group of Chinese migrant workers to lose individual possession of their capital, resulting in a bizarre moment in which the years of indentured labour that have congealed into precious metals (the ‘small hoard of silver dollars, toiled for in coal lighters... grubbed out of earth, sweated out in mines, on railway lines, in deadly jungle, under heavy burdens’, 13) are suddenly divested of their meaning. Read as an analogy for an economic crisis, *Typhoon*’s explicit invocation of the invisible hand can be seen to align Conrad’s non-systematic vision of empire with the fluid meanings, values and abstractions of capital itself, which, arrested and transformed in a moment of crisis, defy the limits of representation and comprehension.

Conrad’s own turbulent finances and foreign speculative losses in the 1890s and 1900s lend support to this connection between the forces of the natural environment and the ‘second nature’ of the market.¹² Moreover, the fact that scholars have outlined Conrad’s historical engagement with the volatile financial context of the period — employing definitions including ‘absentee capitalism’ and ‘privatized colonialism’ — further supports a reading of the invisible hand motif as an allusion to chaotic market

forces.¹³ While Conrad clearly engages with the economic discourses of the period, his fiction can also be seen to echo the critiques of the free market that were growing during the period of his writing career. In *Typhoon*, for example, the abstract and seemingly natural forces of agency propelling the narrative forwards, which are alluded to as an ‘invisible hand’ in the opening, exceed any singular intention or regulatory body; yet, notably, the narrative ends when the ship captain re-allocates the capital among the workers, attempting to curb the invisible hand’s destructive excesses through a process of orderly, planned redistribution. In such scenes, we see an anticipation of the critique of British liberal economics put forward by J. M. Keynes in ‘The End of Laissez-Faire’ (1924). For Keynes, the late nineteenth century witnessed a departure from a ‘positive’ laissez-faire, which positioned the market as a force capable of reconciling free will and social stability through the ontological status of the ‘natural law’, in favour of a more ‘negative’ laissez-faire that directed its energies against natural or acquired monopolies.¹⁴ Significantly, Keynes’s attack on the ‘lethargic monster’ of the free market was explicitly also a stance against social Darwinism — with its suggestion that ‘free competition had built man’ — and although Conrad’s colonial fiction pre-dates this, the same dual critique of social Darwinism and free trade can be found in one of his favourite writers: Alfred Russel Wallace. An unorthodox naturalist, Wallace anticipated the theory of evolution and natural selection while rejecting social Darwinism and libertarianism in favour of socialism and land nationalization. Writing in the late 1880s and 90s, Wallace described laissez-faire economic theory as ‘effete and useless’, having led to a ‘quagmire of commercial depression’, ‘unhealthy competition, poverty and discontent’.¹⁵ Like Conrad, Wallace’s thought was significantly shaped by his experience of the Malay Archipelago, where, despite the application of British free-trade ideology to what was largely a monopolistic

economic system reliant on opium and debt, the colonial state's failure to allow for permanent wealth to be accrued in the territory worked, in Wallace's words, to prevent 'true civilization'.¹⁶ In the wake of a series of riots and demonstrations protesting the lack rather than abundance of state regulation in the 1880s and 90s, Singapore in particular was a space in which the fault lines of British free-market ideology were visibly exposed, a place where talk of 'self-governing markets' clashed with the reality of private estates and plantation economies run on indentured labour. While Conrad's account is less outwardly critical, his image of the city mirrors that of Wallace insofar as it reveals a preoccupation with chaotic, predatory and paranormal 'unseen forces' portending destructive outcomes. As this paper will suggest, Singapore for Conrad became a key site for the development of a nuanced and critical approach to causality and narrative agency, one that also allows him to engage historically with the discursive contradictions at the very core of British liberalism.

'Not territory, but trade': colonial architects of the free market

By the time Conrad arrived in Singapore in 1883, the city had become a British Straits Settlement Crown Colony and a thriving entrepôt in the trade flows linking Britain and China.¹⁷ A 'free port' with levied tariffs and no taxation, which specialized in financial services as well as the transfer of cargo and the storage of goods, Singapore was envisioned as a laboratory for laissez-faire economics and an extension of Britain's 'sphere of influence' in the region. In the mind of its so-called founder, Sir Stamford Raffles, the city was to be one of the least 'expensive and troublesome' colonies in British possession, whose object, he wrote in a letter of 1819, was 'not territory, but trade'.¹⁸ As Han Mui Ling notes, Singapore was from its inception imagined as a

commercial hub and marketplace which would be governed by ‘Adam Smith’s invisible hand’, and whose colonial government would permit ‘natural regulation to operate’ by refusing to impede market forces.¹⁹ This idea of urban development driven by inexorable market mechanisms continued to influence early twentieth-century colonial administrators such as Maurice Collis, for whom Raffles had ‘opened the door’: ‘So powerful were the dynamic forces, which [he] unleashed, that, had Raffles lived, he could have done little more than watch it grow at its own astonishing pace... a new Asia to be born, the Asia of the modern world’.²⁰

Yet the contradictions underlying the city’s economic narratives of foundation were clearly visible at street level. Not only was the British military and naval presence a reminder of the sanctioned force necessary to preserve economic liberty, but it also underscored the extent to which British foreign policy, with its vast navy, strict taxation, central banking and watertight legal system, was itself far from ‘laissez-faire’. Singapore’s development as a free port was bound to the control and ownership of nearby plantations, mines and botanical experimental stations for resources and pharmaceuticals, and the city’s colonial development was by all accounts centred around ‘territory’ as much as ‘trade’. In addition to opium, one of the most valuable trades in the city was in Chinese immigrants, or *sinkeh* as they were known, who were bonded to their employer upon arrival. Engaged as indentured labourers in plantations or mines and as logistical workers within the informal urban economy, these migrants were placed in a paradoxical position – at once crucial but also external to the colonial metropolis’s identity as a bastion of ‘free’ trade.

The resulting tension between free-market urban fantasies and their reliance on a hierarchized yet invisible labour force is explored in Conrad’s Singapore story, ‘The End of the Tether’ (1902).²¹ Written shortly after *Lord Jim*, the story dramatizes the

visual and financial decline of the ageing Captain Whalley, who, having lost his savings in a bank crash and under increasing pressure to provide for his daughter in Melbourne, resolves to sell his last remaining asset, *The Fair Maid*. Subsequently, the ship's solid, bourgeois interiors dissolve into the ethereal, dreamlike and bewildering terrains of urban Singapore, where Whalley finds himself disoriented, and as the narrative continues, the world becomes shadowy and indistinct in a more literal sense due to the deterioration of Whalley's eyesight. By the time he is caught up in an insurance scam and drowns with the ship to which he is contracted, Whalley is completely blind. The narrative's delayed decoding invites the reader to connect his crisis of vision to his early urban flânerie, linking his physical blindness to his initial cognitive failure to 'see' beyond the contradictions of the colonial city around him.

From the outset, these contradictions are woven into the urban fabric of Conrad's Singapore through the striking visual disparity between the city's 'native' and European enclaves. Singapore in Conrad's story is a jungle of tangled vegetation and 'riotous life', but also, when observed from the harbour front, a place of 'unconfined spaciousness', grand avenues lined with tall trees, canalized creeks with granite shores, artificial rows of factories and power houses, and the solid infrastructures of legal courts, insurance companies, banks and libraries. As Whalley walks across the city's uneven terrain, he anticipates the colonial 'world of compartments' divided by Frantz Fanon into the 'settler's town' of stone, steel, and bright lighting, and the 'native' town 'without spaciousness', starved 'of coal, of light'.²² However, as the narrative goes on, the boundaries separating the two compartments become porous and unstable, eroding the distinction between light and darkness. The gas lamps lining the European avenue cast a phantasmagorical haze over the city, their 'globes of white porcelain' resembling 'a barbarous decoration of ostriches' eggs' (146; 162). Imagining garish symbols rather

than pillars of civic order, Conrad renders the European town of ‘stone and steel’ curiously superficial, insubstantial and ornamental. Similarly, the ‘queer white monument’ of the Consolidated Docks Company is shown to have replaced the solid ‘public work’ of the wooden pier, while the monumental St Andrew’s Cathedral offers nothing but illusionary promises, as a ‘closed Gothic portal to the light and glory of the west’ (149; 151). The Government House, pictured as ‘a many-windowed, arcaded palace upon a hill laid out in roads and gardens’, is a location for dinner parties rather than the workings of state (152). Everywhere the spectral architecture replaces ‘solid’ public works with a dazzling mirage of modernity that takes on sinister and surreal qualities. The white obelisk of the telegraph cable stands ‘like a pale ghost on the beach before the dark spread of uneven roofs’, and Whalley observes an ‘army of shadows’ waiting to ‘advance upon the open spaces of the world’ (160-1).

Critics of the story have discussed the city’s descent into nightmarish abstraction in a number of ways. On the one hand, the tendency has been to view the process as a subjectivist experiment in urban modernism that dramatizes a crisis in the realist apprehension of the universe; on the other, it has been viewed as a social commentary on the colonial city’s fate under increasingly abstract, shadowy and impersonal commercial forces.²³ Tellingly, Whalley finds the city disorienting because he is no longer familiar with the men running the corporations and banks; he is unable to make use of the new cable technologies by which the companies operate; and there is no longer ‘an arm-chair and a welcome in the private office, with a bit of business ready to be put in the way of an old friend’ (136). Singapore is a city in which local firms have become regional: the name ‘Gardner, Patteson & Co.’ is now displayed on the warehouses of ‘more than one Eastern port... [yet] there was no longer a Gardner or a Patteson in the firm’ (136). In this faceless and competitive climate, Whalley’s

trajectory mirrors that of the city itself: both have left behind an era of adventurous, individualist and pioneering trade to enter a new age of monopolistic capitalism, in which only the largest, most powerful shipping firms thrive ('once organised, [these] took the biggest slices out of the cake' and prowled 'like a lot of sharks in the water', 157). In this context, Conrad's depiction of Singapore as spectral and 'unreal' captures a sense of its colonization by market forces. Hence, as Douglas Kerr suggests, the city's morphing into a 'surreal world', a 'necropolis' and 'ghost of itself', reveals its sinister afterlife: 'industrializing and corporate', 'lifeless and purely automatic', and 'entirely a matter of show'.²⁴ Singapore, Kerr writes, 'has lost touch with the virile individualism of its own myths of foundation' to become a place of 'aimless circulation, where no useful work is done, and where fortunes can be made and lost randomly, on the luck of a Manila lottery ticket or the equally arbitrary collapse of a bank' (40-1). The transformation of the city into a lifeless plane of circulation means that it operates entirely by way of invisible mechanisms or laws: indeed, the port's Master Attendant, Captain Elliott, insists that the '[p]lace runs itself... Nothing can stop it now' (151).

Yet, far from leading to the kind of order or harmony anticipated by the city's early administrators, these uncontrollable forces have shaken the very ground 'like an earthquake'. The lives of the characters are shaped in destructive ways by stock market crashes, currency fluctuations, flows of local and foreign credit, insurance stipulations, debt, and addictions to races and lotteries — from the initial crash of the Travancore and Deccan Banking Corporation to the final insurance scam that claims Whalley's life. Singapore literally runs on debt and credit: the sailors are apparently likely 'to owe money to the Chinamen in Denham Road for the clothes on their backs', while a third of the wages in the port go directly to the lottery ('It was a mania') (158-9). Whether indebted, contractually obliged, scheming for a prosperous future, hoping for a lucky

speculation or waiting for the right opportunity to ‘get on’, each of the characters is subject to the uncontrollable and depersonalized operations of the money market. And in this mysterious financial universe, modern forms of superstition prevail: Whalley believes in the ‘magic power in the round figure’ of his bank draft, while Massy devotes himself with religious fervour to uncovering the secret formula of the lottery numbers (145). It is, in the end, the magic power of insurance — an industry that profits from the possibility of an event rather than its actual occurrence in space and time — that transforms the solid matter of the ship into the abstract figures of its ‘floating policy’. Far from a solid, modern outpost of progress, Singapore has become a space subjected to the rumours and fluctuations of seemingly supernatural forces.

The consequence is that Conrad’s city can be seen to anticipate an urban poetics of the ephemeral, the nebular and the ‘unreal’, of the kind associated by Fredric Jameson with the cultural logic of finance capital. For Jameson, the integration of disparate areas of the globe into speculative financial markets works to lift or ‘dis-embed’ social practices from the immediacies of their local setting, appearing to remove them from ‘the capacity of any agency to control’.²⁵ The results ‘flatten’ and ‘hollow out’ urban space: Jameson draws on the interwar construction of the Rockefeller Centre as emblematic of an architectural shift from ‘brick’ to ‘balloon’, the latter of which is defined by an insubstantiality, spaciousness and impermanence that is viewed as the ‘aesthetic equivalent’ to finance capital’s expectations of value, abstractions of debt and credit, liquid assets from ground rent and non-productive or ‘fictional’ sources of wealth (43). Jameson traces this aesthetic back to the spectacular glass and iron architectures of late nineteenth-century financial centres, moving from Tafuri’s description of the first skyscraper, built in Chicago in 1885, to the eclectic play of styles on display in the ‘new enclaves’ of postmodern financial cities (notably, he ends his essay in modern-day

Hong Kong, 38-9). Jameson views such financial landscapes as a ‘formal overtone’ of capital’s ‘colonization of the future’ and its ‘structural reorganization of time itself into a kind of futures market’ (44). The glassy, transitory aesthetic of the ‘balloon’ in this context expresses a kind of ‘planned obsolescence’ that foregoes ‘any aura of permanence’ (43-4). Here, Jameson draws on Simmel, for whom this process is already on display in the halls of the Berlin Trade Exhibition, whose ‘lack of solidity’ affirms the ‘regime of free competition’.²⁶ Walter Benjamin, likewise, writing on the glass and iron architectures of the nineteenth-century financial metropolis, identifies a sense of ‘porosity and transparency’ that has ‘put an end to dwelling’.²⁷

The landscape of Singapore in the 1880s was of course entirely different. Accounts of the ‘handsome public buildings’, Gothic cathedrals and neo-classical buildings juxtaposed with mosques and Hindu temples, Chinese bazaars, Malay cottages and slums — and the modern street lighting and telegraph cables weaving between them — bring to life a bizarre cacophony of periods and styles.²⁸ Nevertheless, such representations of the city’s hybridity dovetail with those of more recent architectural historians who identify a proto-postmodernism in the British colonial city. Peter Scriver, for example, argues that what we think of as the postmodern ‘world cities’ that emerged in the 1980s and 90s – defined by the flattening or comingling of cultures and styles – in fact have their pre-history in the architectural landscapes of colonial cities, noting the ‘intriguing similarities between the architectural artifice of the British Empire in its late-nineteenth-century heyday, and the contrived depthlessness that characterized much of the so-called “postmodern” neo-historicist architecture of the global marketplace, a century later’.²⁹ In this way, the importation of styles and materials in contemporary centres of finance or casino cultures, with their neo-classical

restorations and decontextualized replicas of global landmarks, can be seen to replicate the hybrid architecture of colonial urban enclaves.

Indeed, it might be argued that the very beginning of Jameson's symbolic demise of 'brick' within the enclaves of global finance is anticipated in Conrad's literary modernism. Although there were no towering skyscrapers in Singapore in the 1880s, Conrad's explicit staging of the 'crisis of solidity' in 'The End of the Tether' offers a prescient anticipation of this modern 'balloon' aesthetic. The landscape is visibly hollowed out from the beginning: the many-windowed, arcaded palace; the overflowing arcades of nondescript merchandise; the grand spectacle of the cathedral; the glassy orbs lighting the avenues; the pale, ghostlike telegraph and liquid pathways of the cable trams – each evoke a nebulous city of glittering, reflective surfaces, dis-embedded from the solidity of its setting by the intangible operations of a global marketplace. The architecture described by Conrad also anticipates the transitory buildings evoked by Benjamin and Simmel. The seafront hotel, for example, based on the Hotel de l'Europe, is a 'straggling building of bricks, as airy as a bird-cage', through which tourists (and their capital) 'flit' as 'impermanent presences, like relays of migratory shades condemned to speed headlong round the earth without leaving a trace' (142). The windows of the Singaporean hospital in *Lord Jim* are similarly 'always flung wide open' with the suggestion of 'endless dreams', while the residents talk 'everlastingly of turns of luck' in their future-oriented world, 'a crazy maze of plans, hopes, dangers'.³⁰ In *Almayer's Folly*, the protagonist's daughter feels that whether she is looking at the muddy riverbank of Borneo or the cathedral on the Singapore promenade, she sees only 'the uncertain dollar in all its multifarious and vanishing shapes'.³¹ Perhaps Jameson's idea of the disappearance of 'brick' within spaces colonized by capital appears most literally in *Heart of Darkness*, when Marlow

encounters an agent entrusted with the ‘making of bricks’ and discovers that ‘there wasn’t a fragment of brick anywhere in the station’.³² Beneath the agent’s unreal ‘show of work’ with fictitious bricks lies the much more ‘real feeling’ of the abstract percentages made from the ivory trade. In such moments, Conrad documents the strange un-reality of a colonial economic landscape in which the ‘work’ of metropolitan bureaucrats consists of simply tallying up the abstract figures of commissions rolling in from labour and resources elsewhere.

Visual crisis and the ‘landscape of things’

Not only do Conrad’s colonial landscapes anticipate a Jamesonian aesthetics of the market and its ‘colonization of the future’, but they also foreground a modernist theme of visual crisis, which, in ‘The End of the Tether’, is literalized through the protagonist’s onset of blindness. In her essay ‘Envisioning Capital’, Susan Buck-Morss explicitly links the condition of blindness to the idea of the market’s ‘invisible hand’. Buck-Morss begins by noting how the narrative of the invisible hand worked to substitute the market for the will of God and the assumptions of natural theology, which saw God’s hand at work in the natural world.³³ For Smith, she shows, the ‘natural laws’ of market forces balance out the dynamics of production and consumption, guiding ‘things-in-circulation’ through the multiplying effect of a procedure (447). Such commodities are produced efficiently due to the division of labour: Smith gives the example of the pin factory as a system in which each individual plays his limited role, and in doing so unknowingly contributes to the common good, being ‘led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention’ (450). For Buck-Morss, this is a narrative without a subject: Smith departs from his contemporaries insofar as he fails to invoke a unique position – whether of God or King or Reason –

from which to view the social body. Instead, the invisible hand provides a solution to the uniquely *aesthetic* problem posed by capitalism's relations of interdependency, one which transforms the mutual influence of individuals into what Marx refers to as a kind of 'social power standing above them' and 'power independent of them'.³⁴

In order for this self-generating and self-regulating market to function, every individual must act out of self-interest, and it is this that confines each to the narrow perimeters of their sphere of economic activity. Smith admits to the potentially stunting effects of this division, as Buck-Morss shows, conceding that as each individual becomes either a performer of repetitive tasks or an expert in his specific field, his 'attention comes naturally to be directed towards some one very simple object' (448). He maintains, however, that these limits are necessary in order for the social body to prosper as a whole, arguing that what the labourer loses in his narrow and repetitive work he gains through the tangible benefits of the commodities around him, from woollen coats to beer and 'that beautiful and happy invention' – the glass window (449). For Smith, the wealth of objects enables the impoverished producer to be at the same time a 'well-clad' consumer. He thus measures the success of the market by way of the material evidence of the 'fertile' process of exchange: the 'astounding multiplication of objects produced for sale', as Buck-Morss shows (447). As she suggests in her reading, these objects construct a social body 'composed of things, a web of commodities circulating in an exchange that connects people who do not see or know each other' (450). As a 'natural' order, the market 'counts precisely on the destabilizing surplus of a desire blind to the whole and ignorant of its effects', reducing subjects to 'self-interested monads' caught in the narrow orbit of an economic universe. Limiting the visual horizon to a 'landscape of things', the market produces a condition of blindness; indeed, for Buck-Morss, 'blindness is the state of proper action' (452).

Buck-Morss draws on Hegel in her view of the Smithian marketplace as a volatile and uncontrollable force that exceeds all moral limits: ‘invisible except in its commodity effects, insensate to human passions, impervious to human will, the thing-body of ‘civilized’ society grows, theoretically, without limits’ (452). For Hegel, she shows, modern civil society is produced by a historically specific form of economic interdependence that is described as ‘accidental’ and ‘blind’, ‘a monstrous system of mutual dependency... which, in its motion, moves about blindly and elementarily, and like a wild animal, needs a steady and harsh taming and control’ (458). It is the State and its laws that fulfil the ‘taming’ function for Hegel, providing an oppositional power that protects subjects from the wilderness of the economic system. Without the State’s ability to oversee and regulate the ‘blind monster’ of the economy, Hegel suggests, the subject ‘takes blows as from an invisible hand’ (459). This implies that where the state is unable to redistribute and regulate the effects of the market, subjects are more vulnerable – leading to the obvious point that extractive and administrative non-settler colonies operated primarily to open up domestic space to the global economy rather than to fulfil a regulatory or redistributive function. Yet, significantly, both Hegel and Smith ignore the form of interdependency specific to the colonial situation: for Smith, the abundance of ‘objects of comfort’ is the litmus test that separates ‘civilized and thriving nations’ from ‘savage’ ones, while, for Hegel, colonial spaces such as Africa are wildernesses due to the absence of a modern state structure (450).

Contrastingly, however, Conrad’s portrait of the colonial city attests to the vulnerability, volatility and visual crises experienced within a region unprotected from these ‘blows from the invisible hand’. Indeed, this conceptualization of blindness as an economic condition allows for a productive reading of ‘The End of the Tether’, even if blindness is not limited to a metaphor in the text. Whalley’s blindness is alluded to in

the story's first sentence (when he observes a 'dazzling vapour of light that blinded the eye', 129) and is shortly afterwards connected to his failure to predict the crash of the Travancore and Deccan Banking Corporation. The story is notably suffused with the imagery of wheels and mechanisms, which suggests an abstract and overdetermining force, while a predatory 'army of shadows' waits to advance upon both 'the open spaces of the world' and Whalley's body: 'In the spaces between the lamps his burly figure passed less distinct' and he appeared 'to have given up to a hungry spectre something of his truth and dignity in order to live' (160; 163). The suggestion that Whalley is pursued by a spectre after signing over his rights as a wage labourer on the *Sofala* echoes Marx's description of capital as vampiric. Indeed, the threat of 'liquidation' in the story is connected to the contractual obligation that stipulates Whalley's good health, leading him to identify his own 'solid carcass' as a source of capital and a future investment (and again echoing Marx's description of the body as a 'carcass of time'). Despite his desire to avoid becoming 'less than nothing', the stock market crash and insurance scam bring about the liquidation of both his assets and body. Even the degeneration of Whalley's eyesight – which is described in grand, metaphysical terms as part of the inscrutable will of an indifferent universe – is as much the result of market forces as natural ones, due to the fact that a visit to the doctor would invalidate his contract. Just like his body, the colossal solidity of the ship is eventually rendered worthless and liquidated because of the abstract value of its 'floating policy'. As all solid objects melt into air, the story shows how the actions of invisible economic forces inhibit any possibility of clear vision or defensive action.

Whalley's blindness is also linked to his inability to navigate what Buck-Morss calls the 'landscape of things', in which the relationship between producers is obscured by a limiting vision of objects-in-circulation. When Whalley visits a nearby tobacco

planter in the second half of 'The End of the Tether', Conrad shows how a Smithian marketplace of 'things-in-circulation' is essential to his faith in the order and harmony of the colonial economic system. The tobacco planter, van Wyk, spends his days filing his nails, drinking tea, looking through papers, playing the piano and hosting drinking parties, and occasionally watching the 'coolies' outside as they work on his estate. Conrad catalogues his numerous imported commodities: the silk socks, patent leather shoes, silken jackets and eau-de-Cologne; the cottage piano, walnut étagère, ivory utensils, little terrier and profusion of skin rugs; and the variety of different national magazines displayed on his coffee table (209). Everything in van Wyk's plantation is imported, from the soda he drinks to the very ground his house stands on: 'It was a fact that the very gravel for his paths had been imported by the *Sofala*' (210). Dazzled by the setting, Whalley gazes at the cigar in his hand as incontrovertible evidence that progress is on its way: 'A good cigar was better than a knock on the head – the sort of welcome he would have found on this river forty or fifty years ago' (214-5). For Whalley, the cigar works to iron out the antagonisms between colonial producers in the tobacco plantation, serving as immediate evidence that the 'world had progressed... in decency, in justice, in order' (214).

Nevertheless, the planter van Wyk challenges Whalley's vision of the 'orderly peaceable' and 'prosperous' towns established by the colonizer, by suggesting that – although life is pleasant for the select few – the 'river had not gained much by the change' (214). Unlike Singapore and its historical trajectory from planting to planning, van Wyk's 'tropically suburban-looking little settlement' off the coast of Singapore in Batu Beru reveals the direct processes of accumulation-by-dispossession upon which the city's prosperity has depended.³⁵ Notably, the site carries suggestions of the destructive side-effects spilling over from the colonial port's development: as Whalley's

ship approaches the coastline, we see a ‘submerged level of broken waste and refuse left over from the building of the coast nearby, projecting its dangerous spurs’ (185).

Furthermore, the site of the plantation is haunted by threats of resistance: although van Wyk does little but paperwork, he has ‘managed to keep an almost military discipline amongst the coolies of the estate [that] he had dragged into the light of day out of the tangle and shadows of the jungle’, yet this orderliness comes under threat when van Wyk fears that the islanders have been damaging his neat lawns (209). Here, the footprints of others with claims to the island foreshadow an unstable future for the Europeans and their imported lifestyles.

If Whalley’s blindness speaks to his failed attempts to navigate this complex economic landscape, he stands in contrast to those characters for whom blindness has appeared to pay off. The prosperous Captain Elliott, for example, is an ‘autocratic’ official, who, when Whalley muses that ‘the earth is big’, looks around at the quiet Esplanade around him and remarks that there ‘[d]oesn’t seem to be so much room on it’ (159). Elliott’s field of vision is comically myopic and limited to his immediate surroundings, evoking what Max Weber called the ‘specialist without soul’ and the narrow-minded, bureaucratic ‘cog’, who clings to a post and strives for a greater one.³⁶ The same narrowness of vision and desperate striving to ‘get on’ can be observed in the villains of ‘The End of the Tether’ – the perpetually scheming mate, Sterne, and the opportunistic and conspiratorial engineer, Massy. As such, the forms of blindness in the story are by no means limited to the merely physical. In fact it is Massy and his particular form of blindness that leads to the story’s tragic conclusion. A paranoid and deranged bookkeeper for whom facts and figures reign supreme, Massy displays a characteristically Conradian form of tunnel vision shaped by his experience of the ‘urban jungle’. Having survived on Singapore’s credit economy and a lucky win on the

Manila lottery, he continues to fantasize about ‘walking about the streets of Hull (he knew their gutters well as a boy) with his pockets full of sovereigns’ (201). As the boilers of his ship begin to fail, Massy realizes that the value of the insurance money is worth more than the iron substance on which he stands. Using scrap iron found in a room with iron walls, an iron roof and iron-plated floor (described as a ‘capharnaum of forgotten things’, 238), he decides to sink the *Sofala* by using the scrap metal to render the ship’s compass ‘untrue’ and crash into the rocks. In suggesting that blindness and navigational failure *literally* pay off for the short-sighted Massy, the final shipwreck attests to the total dominance of abstract value over matter and the physical destructiveness of blind market logic.

In a certain sense, the room with iron walls and floors can be read as an instantiation of the Weberian ‘iron cage’, a space in which subjects are conditioned by the capitalist ethos, obliged to prosper and privilege ‘order’ above all else, and instructed to pay their debts on time and present themselves as industrious and trustworthy (all traits that Whalley continually identifies in himself).³⁷ By staging his blindness and death, then, the story symbolically enacts the process by which the destructive forces of the invisible hand overwhelm Weber’s bourgeois self-made man. Indeed, if characters such as Massy and Elliott appear as ‘cogs’ or ‘specialists without soul’, Whalley resembles the ‘solitary economic man’ epitomized for Weber by Robinson Crusoe, whose pioneering spirit is overtaken in the nineteenth century by big business, state privileges and monopolies. In staging Crusoe’s burial at sea, Conrad formally inverts the colonial adventure story and its sense of narrative purpose, arresting the protagonist’s trajectory through his ‘unnatural’ death. Essentially, then, the text connects the theme of blindness to the historical effects of uncontrollable and incomprehensible market activities that have exceeded any original intention. Formally,

Conrad draws on this sense of absent agency to construct an antiheroic and anti-developmental modernist story, whose uncontrollable forces of causality subvert the developmental progression of city, protagonist and text alike.

City, territory, plantation

While the motif of blindness speaks to Conrad's vision of the effects of market forces, his fiction can also be read in such a way as to critically illuminate the fallacies of the invisible hand narrative within a colonial setting. 'The End of the Tether' reveals the extent to which Singapore's attribution of causality to abstract mechanisms — even when detached from the idea of 'orderly growth' — depends fundamentally on a racialized mode of seeing. Whiteness and blindness are repeatedly linked throughout the text: the blind Whalley is white from head to toe (from his 'untanned' face, 'silvery' hair, 'snowy' eyebrows and beard like a 'silver breastplate' to his 'linen always of immaculate whiteness'), while van Wyk and Sterne are so '[g]host-like in their white clothes they could not distinguish each other's features' (228). The white-haired Captain Elliott is myopically focused on the task of removing 'white wreckage' from the Sailor's Home — working men unwilling to give up their relative privilege in the colonies who are viewed as 'less' white than their superiors — while Massy '*calls* himself a white man... but if so, it's just skin deep and no more' (155). At the bottom of this hierarchal system of whiteness are the non-white coolies and lascars. The Malay Serang employed by Whalley to take over as his eyesight fails is 'slight and shrunken like a withered brown leaf blown by a chance wind under [Whalley's] mighty shadow' (167). Other non-white figures in Conrad's Asian fiction disappear and vanish 'out of existence' in 'a process of evaporation', 'ghostlike in their detachment and silence' and 'less substantial than the stuff dreams are made of'.³⁸ The fact that it is a Malay Serang

who ends up taking the place of Whalley's eyes adds significantly to the economic dimension of the blindness trope, revealing the necessity of invisible and undervalued non-white labour within a racially hierarchized economy.

Not only is Whalley's blindness suggestive of the systemic colonial repression of an 'invisible' workforce, then, but it also implies that colonial narratives of the region gain legitimacy only by removing local agency from the picture. Whalley's memory of the 'discovery' of Whalley Island, in this context, is telling:

On that dangerous coral formation the celebrated clipper had hung stranded for three days, her captain and crew throwing her cargo overboard with one hand and with the other, as it were, keeping off her a flotilla of savage war-canoes. At that time neither the island nor the reef had any official existence. (131)

Malays here are bracketed off and reduced to background noise — a flotilla of savage war-canoes surrounding a reef that, prior to Her Majesty's survey, did not officially exist. Whatever claims to the land this floating population may have had are dismissed in the face of what Whalley regards as the divinely sanctioned 'superior knowledge' of colonial powers. Yet this sense of superiority is undermined when the ghostlike Malay Serang takes the place of Whalley's eyes; indeed, the Serang's vision is superior *because* it is mediated by local knowledge: 'A pilot sees better than a stranger, because his local knowledge, like a sharper vision, completes the shapes of things hurriedly glimpsed... He recognises because he already knows' (188). In this way, 'The End of Tether' connects the problem of blindness explicitly to the decontextualized modes of seeing necessary to the region's colonization.

We might note how the limits of the colonial field of vision are self-consciously registered through Conrad's modernism. Just as the colonial narratives of Singapore that attribute urban development to the invisible forces of market mechanisms render absent

those labouring bodies just beyond the city's visual frame, so Conrad's urban impressionism gestures towards its own spatial and narrative limits. Conrad's language in 'The End of the Tether' invites closer examination of the traces of violence and trauma written into the landscape, whose coastline, for example, displays a 'ragged opening, as if torn by the flight of a cannon-ball' (193). Descriptions of the jungle carry traces of histories pre-dating the island's 'official existence': rocks appear in 'pyramidal heaps like fallen ruins' and 'rocks resembling ruins', towers and spires are 'reflected together upside down in the unwrinkled water, like carved toys of ebony disposed on the silvered plate-glass of a mirror' (183; 185). These images of ruins beyond the city's borders offer a reverse-view of the region's development, evoking the remnants of an ancient city 'forgotten by time itself' (182). This carries suggestions of the region's neglected yet much longer urban history, as well as the processes of reverse-development that British trade set in motion in places just along the coastline from new colonial ports. Fusing city and jungle, Conrad's anachronistic images of ruins on the urban periphery might be viewed as part of a modernist technique of urban representation, one that gestures towards the absent histories, spaces and subjects lying beyond the immediate visual horizon.

While invisible urban histories are subtly evoked in Conrad's story of colonial blindness, it is worth noting how 'The End of the Tether' confronts the urban abstraction and liquidity of the narrative's first half with the decidedly 'solid' ground of the second section, as it moves from the ethereal city of Singapore to the nearby tobacco plantation and eventually on to the settler city. In the final scene, Whalley's daughter, the landlady of a boarding house in Australia, opens the letter that will notify her of the insurance payout from her father's death. In this way, the narrative arc follows the movement of capital – from the opening scene in which Whalley emerges from the

Singapore Post Office with a bank slip in hand, to the final scene in which his liquid capital hits the solid ground of colonial Melbourne. In other words, it follows the money from the volatile and violent capitalist enterprises of the Malay Archipelago — with its ‘airy’ and porous buildings, through which capital and people ‘flit’ — to the notably solid, ‘drab’ and ‘stale-aired’ architecture of investable real estate in the settler city. In fact, Conrad frequently imagines the capital acquired through extracting commodities from plantations and mines (or, in Whalley’s case, the logistics of moving them) as life-blood flowing to the metropolitan centres: in *Lord Jim*, for example, traders ‘left their bones bleaching on distant shores so that wealth might flow to the living at home’.³⁹ Even Singapore’s bureaucratic architect, Captain Elliott, looks forward to ‘[building] himself a little house in the country — in Surrey — to end his days in’, revealing that his future is not invested in the colonial city (154). In tracing the complex networks of dependence linking spaces as diverse as Singapore, Batu Beru, Melbourne and Surrey, Conrad’s story offers a more relational and global urban history that opens up connections to the locations from which value is extracted and transferred, complicating the colonial image of the city’s self-driven development by invisible mechanisms.

To conclude with one final, resonant example of the invisible hand narrative in Conrad’s work, we see how the ‘grip of an invisible hand’ is felt several times by the protagonist of *Almayer’s Folly*; yet this is juxtaposed with the invisible force that Almayer fails to observe, but which is noticed by the narrator – who describes how ‘the tops of the banana plantation, visible above the bushes, swayed and shook under the touch of invisible hands gathering the fruit’.⁴⁰ In such moments, Conrad confronts the ‘invisible hand’ of the urban marketplace with the ‘invisible hands’ of racialized plantation workers. Perhaps here the relevance of his writing lies not only in its ability to capture a sense of the invisible forces acting on subjects within a vast and intangible

global marketplace, but also in its attention to the deficiencies of colonial vision and the racialized modes of seeing with which this marketplace has been historically imagined and justified.

¹ Maya Jasanoff, *The Dawn Watch: Joseph Conrad in a Global World* (London: William Collins, 2017).

² Joseph Conrad, 'The Planter of Malata', *Within the Tides*, ed. by Alexandre Fachard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 18-19.

³ Stephen Ross, *Conrad and Empire* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004), 5-7. This is especially prominent in *Nostramo* (1904).

⁴ Simon During, 'Was Conrad a Neoliberal?', 'Risking the Future: Durham University Conference Proceedings, July 2016, https://www.academia.edu/27233148/Was_Conrad_a_neoliberal_.Are_we_2016_, [date accessed: 10 February 2017].

⁵ The term 'invisible hand' appears only three times in Adam Smith, in 'History of Astronomy' (c. 1750), *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) and *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). For an analysis of the trope in nineteenth-century literature see Eleanor Courtemanche, *The 'Invisible Hand' and British Fiction, 1818-1860: Adam Smith, Political Economy, and the Genre of Realism* (New York: Palgrave, 2011).

⁶ Joseph Conrad, *Lord Jim: A Tale*, ed. by J. H. Stape and Ernest Sullivan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 78; 67; Joseph Conrad, *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* (New York: Doubleday, 1949), 124.

⁷ Joseph Conrad, *Almayer's Folly: A Story of an Eastern River*, ed. by Floyd Eddleman and David Higdon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 95; 108.

⁸ Joseph Conrad, *Typhoon*, in *Three Sea Stories*, ed. by Keith Carabine (Ware: Wordsworth Classics, 1998), 12.

⁹ Ross G. Forman, 'Coolie Cargoes: Emigrant Ships and the Burden of Representation in Joseph Conrad's *Typhoon* and James Dalziel's "Dead Reckoning"', *English Literature in Transition* 47.4 (2004), 398-428 (411).

¹⁰ Raymond Williams, *The English Novel From Dickens To Lawrence* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1970), 141. Citing Hannah Arendt, Edward Said uses similar language to describe how individuals are driven by empire's 'anonymous forces', *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993), 27.

¹¹ Joseph Conrad, 'The End of the Tether' in *Youth, Heart of Darkness, the End of the Tether*, ed. by Owen Knowles (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 154; 159; Joseph Conrad, *Chance: A Tale in Two Parts*, ed. by Martin Ray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 72.

¹² Robert Hampson usefully documents Conrad's turbulent finances, failed investments, bankruptcy and debt while also sketching out the financial context of the period in *Conrad's Secrets* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012), 17-8.

¹³ See Regina Martin, 'Absentee Capitalism and the Politics of Conrad's Imperial Novels', *PMLA* 130.3 (2015), 584-98; and Stephen Donovan, 'Figures, Facts, Theories: Conrad and Chartered Company Imperialism', *The Conradian* 24.2 (1999), 31-60.

¹⁴ John Maynard Keynes, 'The End of Laissez-Faire' (London: Hogarth Press, 1926).

¹⁵ Cited in William Coleman, 'The Strange 'Laissez-Faire' of Alfred Russel Wallace', in *Darwinism and Evolutionary Economics*, ed. by John Laurent and John Nightingale (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2001), 36-49 (39-40). Unlike Darwin, Wallace read and quoted Malthus, Smith, Ricardo and Mill.

¹⁶ Alfred Russel Wallace, *The Malay Archipelago*, vol. 1 (London: Macmillan, 1869), 150. See also Amy Houston, 'Conrad and Alfred Russel Wallace', in *Conrad: Intertexts and Appropriations*, ed. by Gene M. Moore, Owen Knowles and J. H. Stape (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997).

¹⁷ Conrad stayed in Singapore from March-April 1883, September-October 1885 and July 1887-January 1888. For details see Normal Sherry, *Conrad's Eastern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966).

¹⁸ Sir Stamford Raffles, Letter to Addenbrooke, 10 June 1819, in *Memoir of the Life and Public Services of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles* (London: James Duncan, 1835), 18-19. Raffles secured agreement with local leaders to establish a commercial enclave for East India Company factories in the territory, which had a historic existence long before he arrived on the scene, see Ernest Chew, 'The Foundation of a British Settlement', in *A History of Singapore*, ed. by Ernest Chew and Edwin Lee (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991), 36-40 (38).

¹⁹ Han Mui Ling, 'From Travelogues to Guidebooks: Imagining Colonial Singapore, 1819-1940', *Sojourn* 18.2 (2003), 257-78 (261).

²⁰ Cited in Han, 'Travelogues', 262.

²¹ The city also features in *Almayer's Folly* (1895), *Lord Jim* (1899), 'The Planter of Malata' (1914), 'Because of the Dollars' (1915) and *The Shadow-Line* (1917).

²² Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. by Constance Farrington (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1965), 30.

²³ See for example J. H. Stape, 'Conrad's "Unreal City": Singapore in "The End of the Tether"', in *Conrad's Cities*, ed. by Gene Moore (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1992), 85-96; Douglas Kerr, 'Conrad and the "Three Ages of Man"', *The*

Conradian 23.2 (1998), 27-44; Andrew Francis, *Culture and Commerce in Conrad's Asian Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 147.

²⁴ Kerr, 'Conrad and the "Three Ages of Man"', 41.

²⁵ Fredric Jameson, 'The Brick and the Balloon: Architecture, Idealism, and Land Speculation', *New Left Review* 228 (1998), 25-47. Jameson also claims that the 'destructive elements of capitalism' in the colonies do not arise from the conscious planning of businessmen but arise 'impersonally' from the 'penetration of a money economy and the consequent need to re-organize local institutions on a cash basis', *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Routledge, 2002), 216.

²⁶ Georg Simmel, 'The Berlin Trade Exhibition', *Theory Culture Society* 8 (1991), 119-123 (121-2).

²⁷ Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999), 221.

²⁸ Wallace, *The Malay Archipelago*, 16.

²⁹ Peter Scriver, 'Stones and Texts: On the Historiography of Architecture and Colonial India', in *Colonial Modernities: Building, Dwelling and Architecture in British India and Ceylon*, ed. by Peter Scriver and Vikramaditya Prakash (London: Routledge, 2007), 27-50 (43-4).

³⁰ Conrad, *Lord Jim*, 15-16.

³¹ Conrad, *Almayer's Folly*, 34-5.

³² Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, in *Youth, Heart of Darkness, the End of the Tether*, 66.

³³ Susan Buck-Morss, 'Envisioning Capital: Political Economy on Display', *Critical Inquiry* 21.2 (1995), 434-67.

³⁴ Cited in Theodor Adorno, 'Reconciliation Under Duress', in Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch et al., *Aesthetics and Politics* (London: Verso, 2007), 151-77 (155).

³⁵ Robert Home notes how the activities of private planters eventually gave rise to the concept of a regulatory role for the state, *Of Planting and Planning: The Making of British Colonial Cities* (Oxford: Routledge, 2013), 2.

³⁶ Max Weber, 'Protestant Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism' [1905], *Weber: Selected Essays in Translation*, ed. by W. G. Runciman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 138-73 (171).

³⁷ Weber, 'Protestant Asceticism', 150; 170. Literally translated, the *stahlhartes Gehäuse* is a 'shell' or 'light cloak', 'as hard as steel', 'which can be thrown aside at any moment' (170). The cage can be imagined not only as a space that constrains thought, vision and action, but as what Buck-Morss calls a 'commodity decoy'. Intriguingly, both Masy and Whalley, like numerous other Conradian characters, wear the scraps of iron in their clothing as a kind of 'iron shell'. Examples include jackets lined with coins (*The Rover*); iron hands ('Because of the Dollars'); coins sewn into clothing ('Karain'); and the 'barbarous ornaments' of jewellery and iron chains (*Heart of Darkness*).

³⁸ Joseph Conrad, *Victory: An Island Tale* (New York: The Modern Library, 1932), 178; 'Well Done!', *Notes on Life and Letters*, ed. by J. H. Stape (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 144; *The Shadow-Line*, in *Three Sea Stories*, ed. by Keith Carabine (Ware: Wordsworth Classics, 1998), 191.

³⁹ Conrad, *Lord Jim*, 172.

⁴⁰ Joseph Conrad, *Almayer's Folly*, 90.