



Postcolonial Reading of Joseph Conrad's Lingard Trilogy

Ahad Mehrvand (Corresponding Author),

Associate Professor of English Literature, Department of English Language and Literature, Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University, Tabriz, Iran

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1049-3801>

Email: ahadmeh@yahoo.com

Shiva Talebi Ashtiyani,

MA in English Literature, Department of English Language and Literature, Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University, Tabriz, Iran

Email: ta.shiva93@gmail.com

Abstract

Conrad's acclaimed works from his middle period have been thoroughly studied from several perspectives including postcolonialism whereas the novels from his early period were overlooked due to their so-called "uneven" quality. The most notable works among Conrad's early novels are his Lingard Trilogy - three of his early novels which are based on the recurring presence of the Captain Tom Lingard, the protagonist, and the relationship between Westerners and non-Westerners in a contact zone where both cultures meet. A postcolonial study of these novels can reveal Conrad's attempt to change the binary logic of his time which put the West in a position of power. Postcolonial elements in this trilogy can be studied by using Homi Bhabha's theories of stereotype, ambivalence, mimicry, hybridity, and othering to substantiate our claim that in Lingard Trilogy, Conrad's discourse was anti-racist and against the imperial logic of the nineteenth century, since he tried to change it in the Trilogy.

Keywords: Hybridity, Ambivalence, Mimicry, Stereotyping, Othering, Lingard Trilogy

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: Friday, May 1, 2020

Accepted: Friday, May 29, 2020

Published: Tuesday, June 16, 2020

Available Online: Tuesday, June 9, 2020

DOI: [10.22049/jalda.2020.26069.1173](https://doi.org/10.22049/jalda.2020.26069.1173)

Online ISSN: 2383-2460; Print ISSN: 2383-591x

Introduction

Conrad's style in his stories can reveal a lot about his works for an eager reader. Robert P. McParland (2010, p. 44), for instance, asserts that "because of his unique style, he is often challenging for readers". This challenge increases when one decides to read Conrad's novels from a postcolonial view, since his "attitudes to imperialism and races have always been object of an ever-increasing flow of writing" (Al-Khaiat, 2010, p. 43).

Conrad's notable works, from his middle period, like *Lord Jim* (1900), *Heart of Darkness* (1890), *Nostramo* (1904), and *Under Western Eyes* (1911) have been studied from several perspectives including postcolonialism while the novels from his early period like *Almayer's Folly* (1895), *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896), *The Rescue* (1920), *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* (1897), and *Tales of Unrest* (1898) were neglected to some extent because, as John G. Peters (2008, p. 37) claims, these works "often thought to be more uneven than the works of his middle period," but these early novels "have much to recommend them, and when they were published they were well received by the critics". Among the early works, *The Rescue* is not an easy novel to place in his career, since Conrad started writing this novel in the late 1890s, but it was published in 1920. Hence, it can be categorized as a work from his later period. However, these facts indicate that "the action of the novel occurs chronologically before that of *An Outcast of the Islands*, and it deals extensively with Tom Lingard as a young man" (Peters, 2008, p. 42) exactly like *Almayer's Folly* and *An Outcast of the Islands*. There remains no doubt for Peters (2008) that *The Rescue* can also be one of Conrad's early works (p. 42.).

This article studies three of Conrad's early novels: *Almayer's Folly*, *An Outcast of the Islands*, and *The Rescue*. Like his middle works, Conrad's early works were also relatively significant. In *The Critical Heritage*, for example, Norman Sherry (2005, p. 4.) quotes from *London Mercury* that Conrad's first novel, *Almayer's Folly*, "was an immense and exhilarating surprise to those who cared for good letters", and the reason for this surprise had its roots in its uniqueness and originality. Sherry (2005, p. 7.) further claims that Conrad's second novel, *An Outcast of the Islands*, "was the finest piece of fiction that has been published in 1895." Conrad's *The Rescue* should not be neglected, since as Peters (2008, p. 42.) elucidates, this novel "could be considered part of Conrad's later career or part of his earlier career," and it can show Conrad in both his early and later periods and his changes during those years. Furthermore, in "Conrad's Lingard Trilogy: Empire, Race, and Women in the Malay Novels", Heliéna Krenn (1992, p. 67.), for the first time, suggests that *Almayer's Folly*, *An Outcast of the Islands*, and *The Rescue* can be read as a reverse trilogy to introduce Joseph Conrad as a postcolonial author. This trilogy is called Lingard Trilogy because it is based on the recurring protagonist

Captain Tom Lingard. This protagonist plays an important role in *Almayer's Folly*, *An Outcast of the Islands*, and *The Rescue*.

When *Almayer's Folly* and *An Outcast of the Islands* were published, they have been well received by the critics (Peters, 2008, p. 40.), but since Conrad completed *The Rescue* twenty-three years later, the three novels have mostly been studied separately or along with Conrad's other novels. According to Krenn (1992, p. 67.), studying the three novels as a trilogy reverberates well with postcolonial studies because "seeing these three texts as a trilogy deepens our understanding of Conrad's point that European imperialism, both Dutch and British in Malaysia, was intrusive and disastrous."

The purpose of this study is to read Conrad's Lingard Trilogy in the light of postcolonialism to show, first, how Conrad's anti-colonial views are posed against imperial binary logic, and second, the way Conrad tries to make a contact zone where both sides of these binaries (the powerful and the weaker ones) can be heard. Therefore, one can also hear the voice of women, slaves, and people from the East who did not have a chance to express them. The last purpose of this study is to argue that the claims of Conrad's racism can be refuted with a postcolonial reading of Lingard Trilogy. As such we will use Homi. K. Bhabha's postcolonial theories, since his books like *Nation and Narration* (1990), *The Location of Culture* (1994), and his essays had a great influence on postcolonial criticism. The new terms such as ambivalence, hybridity, and mimicry which were adapted by him into colonial discourse can help us to find the deep meanings of Conrad's Lingard Trilogy.

Contradictory Views About Conrad's Colonialism

There are two contradictory views about colonialism and racism in Conrad's novels or short stories; the first view designates him and his works as racist because "white racism against Africa is such a normal way of thinking that its manifestations go completely unremarked" (Achebe, 1988, p. 6.), and the second view claims Conrad's works are among "the very first postcolonial books" (Vogel, 2012, p. 97.) that could be studied from anti-racist perspectives.

Critics like Chinua Achebe, Edward Said, and Ali Mukhtar Chaudhary were critical of Conrad's alleged racism. In "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*," Achebe (1988, pp. 256-257), for instance, called Conrad "a thoroughgoing racist", criticizing some scholars who had put Conrad's allegedly racist novel among the greatest novels, and wondered why *Heart of Darkness* was ever taught in literature courses. Similarly, Said (1993a) in *Culture and Imperialism* (p. 24) agreed with Achebe on Conrad's image of Africa and its representations, arguing that the politics and aesthetics of Conrad's novel is imperialist, and that "the whole point of what Kurtz and Marlow talk about is in fact imperial mastery, white

European over black Africans, and their ivory, civilization over the primitive dark continent" (1993a, p. 29). In "Two Visions in *Heart of Darkness*", however, Said (1993b, p. 30) responded to Achebe, arguing that *Heart of Darkness* should not be removed from the literary canon, and yet he was similarly critical of Conrad because "[a]s a creature of his time, Conrad could not grant the natives their freedom, despite his severe critique of the imperialism that enslaved them". While Said believed that Conrad was not genuinely racist in his early works, he supported Achebe's idea that Conrad "was a racist who totally dehumanized Africa's native population", and that Achebe's criticism "does not go far enough in emphasizing what in Conrad's early fiction becomes more pronounced and explicit in the later works" (1993b, p. 165). On another note in line with Achebe, Chaudhary (2003) in "Races as a Rhetorical Construct in Joseph Conrad's Fiction" (p. 41) further indicted Conrad for his racism, wondering Conrad should ever be regarded as a "great artist". Chaudhary (2003, p. 41) postulated that Conrad's position as a great writer was questionable, since

racial details found in his work, and often ignored or shrugged off by [many] commentators, make him look like a partisan spirit instead of an objective observer of human situation...The human hierarchy in Conrad is, in descending order in value and worth, the British, the Continental European, and the rest.

However, critics like Harry Sewlall, Ferruh Cigdem Turasan, and Gene M. Moore, belonging to the second view, have attempted to put Conrad's novels in a postcolonial context by offering a real portrayal of the East or even Africa in his works. Sewlall (2004, p. ii), for instance, in *Joseph Conrad: Situating Identity in a Postcolonial Space*, studied race, culture, and identity in Conrad's early novels and short fictions, using Bhabha, Said, and Hall's theories. He focused on identity and the "hypothesis that identities are never fixed but constantly in a stance of performance". In his thesis, Sewlall successfully explores Conrad's novels such as *Almayer's Folly*, *An Outcast of the Islands*, *The Rescue*, and *Lord Jim* from perspectives of postcolonial theory. Capitalizing on Stuart Hall's theory of identity which was somehow "a nationalistic conception of cultural identity" (2004, p. 22) and considering cultural identity as "a matter of becoming as well as being" (2004, p. 23), he used intertextuality to study Conrad's Malayan works because they "constitute a vast fictional panorama in which characters and motifs are replicated and amenable to an intertextual exploration" (2004, p. 24). Sewlall (2004, pp. 215-16) insisted on the importance of studying Conrad's early novels from postcolonial perspectives, and postulated that "the third space" in Conrad's works "offers no definitive answers, no grand narratives of universal truth, but persistently poses the conundrum of what it means to be different from the other/Other, without settling into the convenience of the stereotype". Sewlall (2004, p. 24) concluded that in *Almayer's Folly*,

. . . the trope of miscegenation serves to pit one sex against the other, as well as one race against the other. Through a process of doubling and splitting characters like Almayer and Dain, Mrs. Almayer and Nina, represent figures interacting with one another in a colonizer/colonized paradigm. Nina's rejection of her father's culture emblemizes the anti-imperial gesture characteristic of Conrad's Malayan novels.

Next, he argues that in *An Outcast of the Islands*, the second novel, Conrad (2004) "deconstructs the imperial stereotype of the dominant male vis-a-vis the submissive, native love-interest" (p. 25), suggesting that this novel intertextually extended the issues about race, gender, and cultural identity that were discussed in *Almayer's Folly*. Sewlall finally studied *Lord Jim* and *The Rescue* intertextually, arguing that both of these novels were concerned with the motif of "one of us" in postcolonial contexts. According to Sewlall (2004, p. 25), these two novels also struggled with the issues of "being" and "becoming" in postcolonial contact-zones where "third space" was created and "stereotypes" were changed.

In a similar vein, Ferruh Cigdem Turasan (2013, pp. 3-4) in his thesis entitled 'Othering and Hybridity in Joseph Conrad's *Almayer's Folly*', focused on postcolonial concepts such as otherness, hybridity and Conrad's universal world view, asserting that Conrad was different from other people who wrote in his time, since he could see the human side of the East and could also criticize the heroism of the Europeans by showing the weaknesses of both sides in his works. Both Sewlall and Turasan were against the idea of Conrad's racism or racist treatments in his works.

In his thesis, Turasan (2013, pp. 8-11) defined the concept of "othering" against the idea of philosophical, psychological, and postcolonial approaches, and applied it to *Almayer's Folly*. By using philosophical approach, Turasan (2013, p. 13) relied on the ideas of Hegel, Sartre, Simone de Beauvoire, and Emmanuel Levinas about the relationship between the self and the other in order to put emphasis on these philosophers' shared view that the other was a threat for the self. The second approach that Turasan used was Lacan's psychoanalytic explanation of the "othering". Lacan's idea was somehow like Hegel, Levinas, de Beauvoire, and Sartre. While Lacan's psychoanalysis shared some common themes with philosophies of Hegel, Levinas, de Beauvoire and Sartre, it was different in the sense that for Lacan "language and speech make the relationship between the self and the O/other paradoxical" (Turasan, 2013, p. 13). Language helped the self to exist but prevented them from understanding the other. Finally, Turasan (2013, pp. 8-14) defined othering from a postcolonial perspective by explaining the theories of Said, Spivak, and Bhabha, and making the point that Said's orientalism was at work in the process of othering. Said believed that imperial power regarded the other races as "the slave-like other to the imperial master-like self-thinking that they have all the power to govern and to claim superiority over them" (2013, p.15). As Turasan (2013, p. 15)

mentioned, “Spivak also defined the process of othering as the way in which colonial discourse creates its subjects”. The West became the center of power as it created its subjects, so the subaltern could not speak about his/her ideas. Finally, Turasan (2013, p. 16) studied Bhabha’s definition of otherness, asserting that to Bhabha the concept of otherness was not fixed but ambivalent and in constant movement. In his thesis, after clarifying the concept of othering, Turasan employed the concept of otherness for reading *Almayer’s Folly* and divided the others to three groups: In the first group, “the non-Europeans are othered” (2013, p. 24). For instance, as a person with Dutch origin, Almayer was presented as a European character of the novel who othered the natives around him and believed that they were inferiors. The Dutch officers who visited Almayer had the same opinion, asserting that the Malay people around them were inferiors (Turasan, 2013, pp. 24-27). In the second group, “the Europeans are othered” (Turasan, 2013, p. 34). Mrs. Almayer devalued the Europeans by abusing their speech, and rejecting their culture while Nina rejected her European father and his culture by choosing Dain. Similarly, Abdulla othered and hated white characters. Finally, the “female characters are othered” in the third group (Turasan, 2013, pp. 35-40). Mrs. Almayer and Nina were othered by the male characters of the novel, especially by Almayer and especially Lingard who uprooted first Mrs. Almayer from her native life by adopting her and asking Almayer to marry her, and then Nina by separating her from her mother and taking her to Mrs. Vinck (Turasan, 2013, pp. 42-6). In the last part of his thesis, Turasan employed the concepts of ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity in *Almayer’s Folly* to analyze the characters like Nina, Almayer, and Mrs. Almayer through Bhabha’s theories, concluding that “all of them suffer from ambivalence, which leads to mimicry” and that Nina was the only character who experienced hybridity (Turasan, 2013, p. 77)

Both Sewlall and Turasan ceased to examine postcolonialism and othering in Conrad’s early novels. Like Sewlall and Turasan, Moore (2007, p. 21) in “Slavery and Racism in Joseph Conrad’s Eastern World” focused on postcolonialism in Conrad’s *Almayer’s Folly*, *An outcast of the Islands* and *The Rescue*, calling them “Malay trilogy”. Moore (2007, p. 20) studied racism and slavery in this trilogy to “reveal Conrad’s sympathy for those who, like himself, understood what it meant to be stateless and insecure”. He argued that “the Malay fictions can be read as explorations of interracial relations and the local politics of ethnic survival in a context of colonial myopia and cultural arrogance” (Moore, 2007, p. 22). Furthermore, Moore (2007, p. 25) analyzed slavery in Conrad’s Malay trilogy, suggesting that all characters in this trilogy were somehow connected to slavery because they identified themselves “with slavery: either owning slaves, being slaves, remembering when they used to be slaves or slave-raid or regretting that they have no slaves”. As Moore (2007, p. 26) pointed out, white characters in the novel claimed that they hated slavery because it was immoral, but they all had slaves. At

the same time, Moore (2007, p. 26) postulated Conrad criticized slavery in his Malay fictions which “are populated by fugitives from historical anti-slavery campaigns”. Therefore, since Conrad had a special position between the East and the West, he could notice the issue of refugees and slaves, and could portray them in his works.

While Sewllall’s and Moore’s works are valuable, they have some gaps in their research that we will endeavor to fill in this research. Sewllall (2004, p. 216), for instance, concluded that Conrad’s *Almayer’s Folly*, *An Outcast of the Islands*, *The Rescue*, and *Lord Jim* showed how the others felt in a postcolonial world where stereotypes were not fixed any more. On the other hand, although Sewllall’s conclusion is right, there are three gaps in his study. First, he focused on so many works. Because he had studied the novels intertextually, he had to use many other works of Conrad like *A Personal Record*, *Lord Jim: A Tale*, *Nostramo: A Tale of the Seaboard*, *The Shadow-Line: A Confession*, *Typhoon*, “Falk”, “Amy Foster”, *Tales of Unrest*, “Karain”, “An Outpost of Progress”, *Youth*, and *Heart of Darkness*. Second, Sewllall focused on theories proposed by Bhabha, Said, Hall, and Bakhtin. Focusing on many works and many theories might be confusing in the limited scope of a thesis. Admittedly, the breadth of his study was well covered; however, his study ceased to offer an in-depth analysis of the novels of the Lingard Trilogy. Third, Sewllall wanted to show the importance of Conrad’s early novels but he studied *Lord Jim*, a novel from Conrad’s middle period, too. Moreover, he did not study the three novels we have chosen—*Almayer’s Folly*, *An Outcast of the Islands*, and *The Rescue*—as a trilogy while, as we mentioned before, studying them as a trilogy in the light of postcolonialism can reveal a lot about Conrad’s postcolonially inclined mind. Also, Turasan only studied one of the novels in Lingard Trilogy entitled *Almayer’s Folly*, focusing mainly on the concept of othering from different points of view. In the last part of his thesis, Turasan turned to ambivalence, mimicry and hybridity, yet he only studied these concepts in major characters of the novel, excluding the minor characters whose study could have highlighted their voices as well. At the same time, Moore filled only a gap in the above mentioned works by focusing on Conrad’s mentioned novels as a Malay trilogy. Nevertheless, this scholar’s approach was different from the postcolonial approach from which we will try to study these novels. Lastly, he studied slavery, racism and their history in Conrad’s Malay trilogy without using any specific theories.

Like Sewllall and Moore, we stress that Conrad was not a racist, since he just tried to depict racism and imperialism as they existed, and showed the negative side of them. In his depictions, Conrad allowed readers to hear the voices of slaves, non-whites and women, so his oeuvre can be labeled as postcolonial. Our research is an endeavor to study Conrad’s suggested early fictions as a trilogy, to substantiate our claim that unlike the African natives in *Heart of Darkness*, in Lingard Trilogy, Conrad gave voice to people from the East, letting them talk for themselves.

Although critics of the second group studied Conrad's early works from postcolonial stand point, what remained to be done is to study the three novels as a trilogy by applying a postcolonial theory in order to reveal their hidden meanings and prove that Conrad was against binary and imperial thinking. The first novel from *Lingard Trilogy* which is being studied in the next section is *Almayer's Folly*. Application of Bhabha's theories to this novel can reveal its postcolonial aspects and the way nineteenth century stereotypes in this novel are disrupted by Conrad.

The Disruption of Nineteenth Century Stereotypes in *Almayer's Folly*

In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha (1993, p. 3) claims that his "work has a lot to do with a kind of fluidity, and movement back and forth, not making a claim to any specific or essential way of being". He elucidates that when this fluidity opens a path between the fixed identities or the stereotypes in a society, one can observe hybridity, ambivalence and mimicry in this "in-between space" (Bhabha, 1993, p. 3). He (1993, p. 1) believes that moving away from the binary oppositions of male and female, black and white, or self and the other could change the common stereotypes and result in "cultural difference". He states that this "cultural difference articulates 'in-between space'". Bhabha (1993, p. 2) further asserts that "the representation of difference must not be hastily read as the reflection of pre-given ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition".

As such, this section aims at finding the binary oppositions and stereotypes that could be examined in *Almayer's Folly* and showing their disruption by giving voice and power to the weaker side of the dichotomy. Afterwards, it is possible to study hybridity, ambivalence, and mimicry of characters like Almayer, Mrs. Almayer, Nina, and Taminah, using the path and the "in-between space" which was created by the subversion of the fixed binaries and stereotypes. We claim that what Bhabha refers to as the "fixed tablet of tradition" or stereotypes are changed in *Almayer's Folly* where Conrad tries to move away from the binary oppositions of white/non-white and male/female by creating a zone in an isolated village named Sambir. This "Eastern world", as Robert Hampson (2000, p. 124) in *Cross-Cultural Encounters in Joseph Conrad's Malay Fiction* asserts, was "not homogeneous, but an area of overlapping cultures – Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, Arab, English, Dutch, Chinese, Malay". Sewlall (2004, p. 72) clarifies that it was Pratt who coined the term "contact zone" which can be applied to Sambir in *Almayer's Folly*:

Mary Louise Pratt (1992, p. 6) has coined the term 'contact zone' to refer to this space of colonial encounters, a space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict.

One of the binary oppositions in this novel is White/non-white. The stereotypical association of whites with angels and blacks with evils in *Almayer's Folly* had conditioned Almayer to never see the natives as civilized people even at the times when they were/treated more civilized than him. For instance, when Reshid and his uncle Abdulla "stopped politely to exchange civilities" and proposed Nina for Reshid, Almayer was "burning with the desire of taking Abdulla by the throat" because he could not respect Reshid in his mind, but Almayer was aware of Abdulla's power, so he chose a hypocritical behavior and answered politely and said that "the girl was young" (Conrad, 2014, p. 52). However, Abdulla proposed respectfully, and accepted Almayer's refusal politely without hypocrisy. He also "wished his friend Almayer 'a thousand years', and moved down the steps" (Conrad, 2014, p. 52). Almayer was blind to the positive aspects of the Malays. This fact was also true about his wife because Almayer decided to hate his wife based on his stereotypical views without even trying to know her as an individual. Even at their wedding "while swearing fidelity, he was conducting plans for getting rid of the pretty Malay girl in a more or less distant future" (Conrad, 2014, p. 29). Mrs. Almayer, on the other hand, had a dream of being a white man's companion instead of being a slave. Because of such stereotypical and binary thinking, Almayer assumed that Europeans were great people, yet Conrad questioned the validity of these stereotypes throughout the novel. For instance, when the whites met Almayer, they usually fooled him, did not respect him, and believed that he was a simple-minded person. Even the house he had made for his white companions was called "Almayer's Folly by the unanimous vote of the light-hearted seamen" (Conrad, 2014, p. 42). Mrs. Vink, one of the other white persons in this novel, who acted as Nina's teacher and kept her in her house in Singapore, arguably disrupted the prevalent stereotypes of selfless and angelic whites. She was not good to Nina and sent her away to keep her own daughters under her "maternal wing" (Conrad, 2014, p. 48). We suggest that the above examples can prove that Conrad showed how Almayer fell prey to binary thinking and false stereotypes about the natives in his mind. However, he also presented the Malays as they really were, with their righteousness and sinfulness like any other individuals.

Another stereotype which is changed in this novel is about 'half-caste girls'. By showing and subverting this stereotype, Conrad tries to change the White/Non-white and Male/Female binary oppositions. In the first pages of the novel, when the reader finds out about the success of Lingard in discovering a river, Conrad depicts Lingard in a superior position by placing "old Lingard so much above the common crowd of seagoing adventurers who traded with Hudig in the daytime and drank champagne, gambled, sang noisy songs, and made love to half-caste girls under the broad verandah of the Sunda Hotel at night" (Conrad, 2014, p. 13). Here is the first time the reader sees the word "half-caste girls", and sees them as prostitutes, not as valuable members of their society. Nina's appearance, however, is depicted by

comparing her to white women: "She was tall for a half-cast" (Conrad, 2014, p. 23), so in people's binary thinking a "half-caste girl" was expected to be short and not to carry good features. This false image of the "half-caste girls" was altered in a scene at the end of the novel when Nina appeared at the table, having meal with her father and the white lieutenants who were looking for Dain. For the lieutenant, Nina "was very beautiful and imposing", yet "after all a half-caste girl" (Conrad, 2014, p. 134). Conrad refused to describe this "half-caste girl" as a prostitute or a worthless woman; rather, she was presented as a smart lover who was trying to find her own true place. Generally, some other female characters in the novel also challenged such traditional Male/Female binary oppositions. Although men in this novel often disparaged women like Nina, Mrs. Almayer and Taminah were not depicted as worthless in the novel as men assumed them to be. These women observed well, learned hard and tried to fight back in order to change their destiny according their own will. They were neither creatures who were created for doing "domestic duties", nor women who should be "mixed up in state affairs" (Conrad, 2014, p. 142). They were all, however, active and influential in their world.

The above-mentioned characteristic of Conrad's narrative about women reverberates with the signification of "post" in the term Postcolonialism. According to Bhabha (1993, p. 5), the word "post" in postmodernity, postcoloniality, and postfeminism does not mean "after" or "anti". It, in fact, talks about beyond the "boundaries of a range of other dissonant, even dissident histories and voices" in order to let the voices of minority groups or the weaker side of binary oppositions such as the women or the colonized be heard. Therefore, Conrad's *Almayer's Folly* transcends the mentioned boundaries by giving voice to underprivileged members of the Malays, Arabs, women, slaves, and "half-caste girls". The change of these binaries and stereotypes allows us to see hybridity, ambivalence, and mimicry in the contact zone of the novel.

Narrowing down, Taminah and Ali, two prominent characters of the novel, provides suitable case studies to investigate Conrad's imagination when it comes to black men and women. We take Turasan's study of three other characters of the novel as the starting point to justify our choice of characters and method. In his thesis, Turasan (2013, pp. 70-5) studied ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity in three characters of the novel, namely, Nina, Mrs. Almayer, and Almayer.

There are two gaps in Turasan's study that we will strive to fill in our study. On the one hand, he does not study the issues of tradition, gender and racial binary oppositions which were disrupted by characters as a part of their move towards ambivalence. On the other hand, Turasan only studies ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity in three characters of the novel, namely Almayer, Mrs. Almayer, and Nina. However, we aim at discussing two other characters in the novel, Taminah and Ali, who can also be studied in the light of Bhabha's theories. Studying these characters

is significant, since they play an essential role in the novel and can show that Conrad did not imagine gender in binary terms, which is regularly. We propose that by comparing Ali with Taminah, it gets clear that Conrad presented an active female in contrast to a passive male in order to challenge binary thinking about gender identity.

Taminah, a slave girl who fell in love with Dain, was ignored by Turasan and most critics. However, studying her character can reveal a lot about the colonized people, whose lives were punctured with a turning point, leading them to ambivalence. We claim that this turning point in Taminah's life was represented by Dain's love which, to the best of Tahminah's knowledge, was stolen from her by Nina. As a "half-white girl", Nina sounded like a colonizer to Taminah who arguably experienced ambivalence due to what Bhabha (1993, p. 5) called a "newness that is not part of the continuum of past and present". Conrad (2014, pp. 120-21) depicts Taminah's past life in the following words:

She lived like the tall palms amongst whom she was passing now, seeking the light, desiring the sunshine, fearing the storm, unconscious of either. The slave had no hope, and knew of no change. She knew of no other sky, no other water, no other forest, no other world, no other life. She had no wish, no hope, no love, no fear except of a blow, and no vivid feeling but that of occasional hunger, which was seldom, for Bulangi was rich and rice was plentiful in the solitary house in his clearing. The absence of pain and hunger was her happiness, and when she felt unhappy she was simply tired, more than usual, after the day's labour.

Taminah's life went through a dramatic change as a result of falling in love with Dain. She knew lots of useful secrets about Nina and Dain's love, their hiding place, and their plan for elopement. Her past and present were suddenly mixed. Before Dain's return to Sambir and before noticing his presence alongside Ninain Bulangi's House, Taminah "dropped back into the torpor of her former life and found consolation—even a certain kind of happiness—in the thought that now Nina and Dain were separated, probably forever" (Conrad, 2014, p. 124). So, she was ambivalently going back and forth between her past and present lives even her future was vague and mixed with the events of the present. Sometimes she wished to see Dain dead in order not to share him with any other woman, and sometimes she felt that she wanted to go with him even as a slave along with other women.

Taminah was still a slave girl, but now she was useful for someone like Abdulla because "[s]he was going towards Almayer's house" (Conrad, 2014, p. 118), and she could give Abdulla useful information. When Abdulla asked her about Dain, "the girl's lips quivered and she remained silent for a while, breathing quickly" (Conrad, 2014, p. 119). This silence, as we assert, shows Taminah's hesitation, and this

hesitation in Bhabha's word (1993, p. 14) speaks "between the self and its acts". Thus, it also creates ambivalence. However, overcoming this, she lied to Abdulla about Dain's death and her lie disrupted the binary oppositions of male/ female and peaceful/hostile lies because earlier Babalatchi had made the point for Mrs. Almayer that "a man knows when to fight and when to tell peaceful lies. You would know that if you were not a woman" (Conrad, 2014, p. 165). Taminah successfully told a peaceful lie to Abdulla while she was a woman. She hesitated due to ambivalence, yet she acted correctly.

Taminah's identity was changing because of the ambivalence she experienced after falling in love with Dain, and with the presence of colonizer-minded Nina as a huge threat to her new life and her future identity. She had experienced violence because of living in a society with different races and classes. This violence, according to Bhabha (1993, p. 15), "falls most enduring on the details of life: where you can sit or not; how you can live or not; what you can learn or not; who you can love or not". Because of her class as a slave girl in their society, Taminah was not allowed to love a person belonging to higher classes like Dain, but against this fact she fell in love with him. Due to her racial difference from Nina who could have Dain's love, she hated Nina as a colonizer, yet she also wanted to see her and her difference. For Taminah, as we suggest, mimicry did not lead to hybridity because the first time that Dain disappeared, "her half-formed, savage mind, the slave of her body—as her body was the slave of another's will—forgot the faint and vague image of the ideal that had found its beginning in the physical promptings of her savage nature" (Conrad, 2014, p. 124). So, after Nina and Dain decided to live together, she experienced the same feelings, but we can see the signs that suggested mimicry could happen.

The signs of mimicry could be seen the time when Taminah approached Sambir to go to Almayer's house where "she felt a strong desire to see Nina, but without any clear object" (Conrad, 2014, p. 126). Here the reader can notice that Taminah saw Nina as a white girl and treated her the way a colonized treats a colonizer with both hate and a desire to mimic her acts. This claim was becoming obvious when Conrad revealed his view about Taminah, stating that "She hated her, and feared her and she felt an irresistible impulse pushing her towards Almayer's house to see the white woman's face, to look close at those eyes, to hear again that voice, for the sound of which Dain was ready to risk his liberty, his life even" (Conrad, 2014, p. 126). Taminah became obsessed with the idea of seeing Nina as a colonizer, for when Taminah was very close to her, "she had no courage to see Nina," and "at every burst of louder voices from the courtyard she shivered in the fear of hearing Nina's voice" (Conrad, 2014, p. 128).

Nina successfully could choose her way of life and take control of her decisions while having an ambivalent identity. Unlike Nina, Taminah made a mistake by

remaining fixed. Although her ambivalence never caused complete mimicry or hybridity, she did not stay in her past life to try for victory. She had a voice that Conrad wanted us to hear: The voice of a native slave, with a miserable life, who tried to be brave and change her life for better but could not do it because of the violence she experienced in her life, which made it impossible for her to decide even for the small things in life, and never allowed her to learn like Nina. So when it was possible for her to decide, she ceased to make correct decisions. For instance, Taminah told Almayer about Nina and Dain's escape to stop them and betray Dain.

Unlike Taminah who betrayed her own love, Ali was faithful and trustworthy all along the novel, and submissive to his master, Almayer. While Taminah's past life changed, and she tried to control her own life in some parts of the novel, Ali, as an obedient slave, never had enough courage to change his own destiny. Although Ali and Taminah were both submissive when they were first introduced, Ali was completely trusted by Almayer, even more than his wife or daughter; "The faithful Sumatrese Ali cooked his rice and made his coffee, for he dared not trust anyone else, and least of all his wife" (Conrad, 2014, p. 34). Taminah also was initially submissive:

The girl herself never complained— perhaps from dictates of prudence, but more likely through the strange, resigned apathy of half-savage womankind. From early morning she was to be seen on the paths amongst the houses—by the riverside or on the jetties, the tray of pastry, it was her mission to sell, skillfully balanced on her head. (Conrad, 2014, p. 43)

Taminah experienced ambivalence and tried to be different by making decisions and pretending to have different choices. Before falling in love with Dain and learning many secrets about Nina and Dain, "[t]he slave had no hope, and knew of no change. She knew of no other sky, no other water, no other forest, no other world, no other life. She had no wish, no hope, no love" (Conrad, 2014, p. 120), but now after hearing a lot about Dain, "with her knowledge of the words spoken in the darkness, she held in her hand a life and carried in her breast a great sorrow" (Conrad, 2014, p. 120). However, Ali who was the closest person to the white character of the novel, Almayer, never experienced ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity. In our opinion, by developing these two slave characters with different genders who acted differently, Conrad wanted to disrupt the binary thinking that saw women as passive creatures. From this point of view, Ali remained a passive character throughout his life, since he accepted everything and nothing could change him, yet Taminah became active and underwent changes in her life.

To summarize the postcolonial aspects of the first novel in Lingard Trilogy, we employed Bhabha's ideas in order to show that Conrad was able to disrupt the binary imperial thought and stereotypes in *Almayer's Folly*, and this interruption

created an in-between space in the novel's contact zone where the characters could not have fixed identities. So, by studying the concepts of ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity in Nina, Taminah, Ali, Mrs. Almayer, and Almayer, we suggest that all of them except Ali suffered from ambivalence. Nina, Taminah, and Mrs. Almayer experienced different kinds of mimicry, yet only Nina's mimicry resulted in her hybridity. This study also proved that Conrad's *Almayer's Folly* could be deemed a postcolonial and non-racist work.

The second novel in Lingard Trilogy is *An Outcast of the Islands* whose postcolonial reading is also possible by drawing upon Bhabha's theories. Here we argue that in *An Outcast of the Islands*, Conrad depicted the stereotypes and binary imperial thoughts of the 19th century to open a path for ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity by changing and interrupting these binaries and stereotypes.

Ambivalence, Mimicry, and Hybridity in *An Outcast of the Islands*

In *An Outcast of the Islands*, Conrad shows how the colonizers resorted to gender and racial stereotypes that endorsed the inferiority and weakness of non-whites. He arguably changes these stereotypes and binaries to show that, on the contrary, the apparent weaker sides of these binaries are powerful and superior in reality. According to Bhabha (1993), moving between the stereotypes and binary thinking prevents identities from staying at either end of these binaries, opening up a path that can cause ambivalence, hybridity, and mimicry. Thus, in order to study ambivalence, hybridity, and mimicry, it is necessary to examine the stereotypes and binary thinking that Conrad used in this novel and changed them to open the path.

At the beginning of the novel, Conrad (2001, p. 17) presents Willems as a "successful white man" with "unquestionable superiority" whereas the natives, Willems's wife Joanna, his child, and his brother-in-law are introduced with a series of negative adjectives like "half-caste", "yellow", and "dark-skinned". These adjectives show the racial and gender stereotypes in Willems's mind and the negative stereotypes of the nineteenth century which put faith in ugliness and inferiority of non-white people. In "Postcolonial Theory: Bhabha and Fanon", Anindita Mondal (2014, p. 2968) claims, "[these] stereotypes translate the unfamiliar into coherent terms by seeming to account for the strangeness of other peoples". Shortly after stereotypical portrayal of the whites and the non-whites in the novel, Conrad questions their innate superiority and inferiority, respectively. The reader soon notices that the superior white hero, Willems, turns into a person who abuses the trust of Hudig and is impudent enough to be sure that "nobody would dare to suspect him" (Conrad, 2001, p. 35). Willems still seems powerful, confident, and superior in his own mind, thinking that the natives are fools, but his fears are revealed shortly after he finds out that his wife and others are aware of his embezzlement. When Willems decides to ask his wife to leave the house with him,

he feels “Frightened to face her!” (Conrad, 2001, p. 37). His wife powerfully rejects his proposal to escape, stating “and you think that I am going to starve with you. You are nobody now. You think my mamma and Leonard would let me go away? And with you! With you” (Conrad, 2001, p. 41). So, towards the end of the novel, the reader slowly learns the true power of the natives and Willems’s wife. This reversal of power relations forces him to leave the house and changes his entire life because he loses his power and dignity.

We claim that Conrad skillfully challenges the nineteenth century stereotypes of non-whites as inferior, ugly, and powerless. Conrad first presents Willems as the representative of white men’s stereotypical views toward non-whites, and then dismantles them, for instance, by showing that the natives dare to suspect Willems, and are powerful enough to punish him for his embezzlement: “His wife had turned him out of his own house” (Conrad, 2001, p. 43) and he had to leave that island too. Conrad arguably shows that both non-whites and whites are human beings, naturally dispositional towards both the good and the evil. They both can be superior and inferior. In fact, Conrad challenges the idea of superiority of whites to other races.

Conrad also questions the concept of patriarchy and women’s weakness, subordination, and obedience. As a writer of ambivalence, he shows women’s weaknesses along with their strengths. Susan Jones claims that Conrad “is a sympathetic interpreter of women’s contemporary situation, whose fiction engages in an astute, though largely unrecognized, exploration of female identity” (Hampson, 2009, p. 39). In fact, the “half-caste girl” in *An Outcast of the Islands* can be compared with other “half-caste girls” in *Almayer’s Folly*. In *Almayer’s Folly*, we discussed the stereotypes of “half-caste girls” as ignorant, ugly and worthless, but Almayer’s daughter, Nina, who is a baby in *An Outcast of the Islands*, effectively subverts the image of “half-caste girls” by showing that she is smart, beautiful and powerful in reality. Similarly, Willems does not respect his non-white wife, Joanna, but this “half-caste” woman is the angel who overthrows the stereotypical image of weak “half-caste” women when she single-handedly helps Willems who was stuck on the Islands with Aissa empty-handed and without any hope. According to Linda Dryden (2000) in *Joseph Conrad and the Imperial Romance*, Willems overturns the stereotypical image of reliable and faithful white men. These examples of getting away from the male/female and white/non-white stereotypes in the novel open the path to study ambivalence, mimicry and hybridity as well.

Exploring the disruption of the racial and gender stereotypes that create the “in-betweenness”, we aim at studying the notions of ambivalence, mimicry and hybridity in different characters such as Lakamba, Aissa, and Joanna in Sambar. Lakamba is the first character in the novel who feels ambivalence. Lakamba is a Malay ruler whose ambivalence is created owing to his inability to answer the question “what is a community”? He also feels “unhomeliness” because he is an

exiled man. Aissa also experiences ambivalence due to feeling “newness” and vagueness of past, present, and future. Upon Lingard’s coming after Willems, Aissa says, “when Willems came I was the daughter of a beggar—of a blind man without strength and hope. He spoke to me as if I had been brighter than the sunshine—more delightful than the cool water of the brook by which we met” (Conrad, 2001, p. 260). Therefore, we can see that Aissa is “in-between” the memories of her past and present, also worried about her future with Willems. She communicates with the whites—Lingard and Willems—, and this communication with the people from the other culture makes her feel “newness” in her identity. Joanna is the last character in Sambir who suffers from ambivalence and “unhomeliness”. She is brought to Sambir by Lingard, and she has to live far from her house with Almayer who hates both her and her child. She is “in-between” being a native and a part of her family, or being a white man’s wife. When Joanna chooses to go and look for her husband by the help of Lingard, her father becomes angry at her “for wishing to join her husband” (Conrad, 2001, p. 200). As such, since she feels excluded from her own family due to her wish to live with her white husband again, her identity also becomes ambivalent due to developing the sense of exclusion.

Apart from the examples of ambivalence and its effects on characters like Lakamba, Aissa, and Joanna, we study mimicry since, as Turasan (2013, p. 66) postulated, the “colonial ambivalence results in mimicry”. As Leela Gandhi (1998, p. 149) discusses, “Mimicry is the sly weapon of anticolonial civility, an ambivalent mixture of deference and disobedience”. We assert that Aissa is a character who experiences mimicry and ambivalence due to her communication with white people. As a “half-caste girl”, Nina subconsciously imitates the things that Lingard and Almayer want her to do. Huddart (2006, pp. 39-40) discloses that mimicry at first shows “the colonized adopting and adapting to the colonizer’s culture”, but then since it is “repetition with difference” it becomes a threat for the colonizer. In *An Outcast of the Islands*, Lingard and Almayer encourage Nina to imitate white people’s culture and ignore that of her mother’s. Apparently they are quite successful in their plan because Nina sees herself nothing but a white child, accepting and imitating everything that her father teaches her. But later on as she grows up, the readers can notice that her mimicry soon threatens Almayer as a weapon in Nina’s hand because as a white character, Almayer feels threatened by Nina’s mimicry. When he thinks about her return from Singapore, he becomes worried. He accepts to send her there himself with Lingard to make her white and civilized, but while thinking about her return, “he was also a little afraid of her. What would she think of him? He reckoned the years. A grown woman. A civilized woman, young and hopeful; while he felt old and hopeless, and very much like those savages round him” (Conrad, 2014, p. 35). In short, Almayer is afraid of Nina’s mimicry because he thinks that she may become more civilized and even whiter than him.

After elucidating the concept of mimicry, we will discuss hybridity in *An Outcast of the Islands*. Bhabha (1993, p. 37) maintains that hybridity is “a Third Space of enunciation which makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process”. In “Homi Bhabha, Hybridity and Identity, or Derrida Versus Lacan”, Antony Easthope (1998, p. 145) explains that “Hybridity can have at least three meanings- in terms of biology, ethnicity and culture”. We claim that in *An Outcast of the Islands* only two characters suffer from hybridity: Willem’s son, and Almayer’s daughter, Nina. Both have white fathers and non-white mothers. Thus, using Easthope’s classification we call them biological hybrids. Furthermore, in “Postcolonial Desire: Mimicry, Hegemony, Hybridity,” Dimple Godiwala (2007, p. 75) asserts that “the biological hybrid lives in a state of hybridization of cultures, languages, and indeed, colour”. Neither Easthope nor Godiwala studies extend the term biological hybrids to Conrad’s work. Willem’s son and Nina suffer from this kind of hybridisation because their parents have different cultures, different languages, and different colors. Nina is also a cultural hybrid who tries to imitate her father’s culture and behavior. Lingard and Almayer teach her to be white, but she is living in Sambir, speaking her mother’s language and imbibing her own culture as well. Moreover, she spends a lot of time with Ali who is her father’s slave and is not white, and even for Nina, Ali is somehow like her father because in her view, “Ali knows as much as father. Everything” (Conrad, 2001, p. 205). Therefore, it is obvious that Nina is a cultural hybrid and she is under the influence of both cultures.

In *An Outcast of the Island*, we examined Lakamba, Aissa, and Joanna’s ambivalence, Nina and Willem’s son’s hybridity, and Aissa and Nina’s mimicry. Lakamba, Aissa, and Joanna suffered from ambivalence because of unhomeliness, newness, and inclusion and exclusion, so their identities became in-between, not fixed. Willem’s son and Almayer’s daughter were biological hybrids because they had white fathers and nonwhite mothers, so they experienced two different cultures and languages. Nina suffered from cultural hybridity as well. Her behavior was half like Malays and half like whites. Next, *The Rescue* will be studied as the third and the last novel of Lingard Trilogy. In the following section on *The Rescue*, we intend to show the in-betweenness and moving away from binaries and stereotypes of the strong/the powerless and the self/the other creates ambivalence and hybridity.

Othering in *The Rescue*

Like *Almayer’s Folly* and *An Outcast of the Islands*, as Sewlall (2003, p. 172) states, *The Rescue* shows “how people of different races and cultures meet, clash, and engage with one another on the frontiers of the colonial enterprise”. In this contact zone, one can observe the issues of othering and identity in characters like Shaw, Lingard, Sali, Jaffir, Wassub, Mrs. Travers, and Lingard. “Othering” and identity are

two other concepts that Bahabha (1993, p. 67) connects to ambivalence in *The Location of Cultures*:

In order to understand the productivity of colonial power it is crucial to construct its regime of truth, not to subject its representations to a normalizing judgment. Only then does it become possible to understand the productive ambivalence of the colonial discourse – that ‘otherness’ which is at once an object of desire and derision an articulation of difference contained within the fantasy of origin and identity. What such a reading reveals the boundaries of colonial discourse and it enables a transgression of these limits from the space of that otherness.

According to Turasan (2013), in *Almayer's Folly*, Conrad is an ambivalent writer who does not categorize the process of othering into binary oppositions such as the colonizer/the colonized, the Self/the Other, or the strong/the powerless. Turasan limits his studies on the process of othering to *Almayer's Folly*, however, we suggest that this process can also be extended to *The Rescue* because in this novel, too, the process of othering happens as far as the negative stereotypes and the binary oppositions of the strong/the powerless and the Self/the Other are concerned. Characters like Shaw and Lingard in the novel do not represent only on side of the binaries because they are in constant movement between two sides of the binaries in this novel.

The strong/the powerless stereotype is disrupted by Shaw and Lingard who are supposed to be powerful white men while the non-white characters such as Sali and Jaffir are expected to be weak. Yet, we claim that Conrad disrupts this binary opposition by showing how powerful the natives turn out to be in reality. The natives, for instance, have superior visual acuity over the non-whites in this novel. Moore (2007, p. 23) proposes that “the brown characters in Conrad’s Malay fictions have better eyesight than their white master (like the serang [boatswain] of Lingard’s brig in *The Rescue*, or the Malay serang in ‘The End of the Tether’)”. Thus, in *The Rescue*, in addition to sharpness, Sali’s vision is better than Shaw and Lingard. Jaffir is depicted as a loyal native who has a strong body, since he can swim long distances in order to save his master, Hassim. Like Sali and Jaffir, Wasub is yet another brave and loyal subject to Lingard, showing this when Shaw gives up his hope and decides to leave the ship for the sake of his own family (Conrad, 1999, pp. 91-6). Mrs. Travers is also a woman who is able to disrupt the nineteenth century gender and racial stereotypes that believed in female inferiority and subordination. It is true that Mrs. Travers makes some bad decisions such as forcing Lingard to leave his yacht, hiding the ring from Lingard, and not telling the truth to Lingard till the end of the novel, but since she is an active character in the novel, it can show that not all women are weak and passive.

When Mrs. Travers, for instance, leaves the ship with Lingard to find her husband, Mr. Travers loses his temper upon seeing his wife outside the ship. Mrs. Travers in response says, “You can’t expect me to meditate on it all the time or shut myself up here and mourn the circumstances from morning to night. It would be morbid. Let us go on deck” (Conrad, 1999, p. 127). By this utterance, she resists the common stereotype of women’s passivity and disempowerment. In another part of the novel while talking with Lingard, Mr. Travers shows that she hates to be judged based on the gender stereotypes of her time:

‘And pray don’t look upon me as a conventional “weak woman” person, the delicate lady of your own conception,’ she said, facing Lingard, with her arm extended to the rail. ‘Make that effort please against your own conception of what a woman like me should be. I am perhaps as strong as you are, Captain Lingard. I mean it literally. In my body’. (Conrad, 1999, p. 117)

This moving away from the binary opposition of The Strong/The Powerless makes the mentioned characters ambivalent. Lingard Jorgenson and Mrs. Travers experience ambivalence because of getting away from the binary of The Self/The other. In his thesis, Turasan (2013, p. 18) explains hybridity in postcolonial context by drawing upon Bhabha’s theory, highlighting,

[h]ybridization in this definition is a process in which two different cultures are intertwined to form a third, mixed culture which has the qualities of both cultures. It can be in various forms such as linguistic, cultural, political or racial etc. Hybridity is a conscious activity and can happen in two ways; either the colonial power exploits a country to have economic or political control or the colonial invaders make the native people assimilate to new social patterns.

Based on the above definition and the in-betweenness, Lingard experiences linguistic hybridisation. We assert that Lingard has a hybrid identity due to diversity of languages he can speak, different identities that he had, and his current identity which is not fixed. According to his own claim, Lingard can speak “English, Dutch, and every lingo of the Islands”, yet he has forgotten the language of his own country (Conrad, 1999, p. 52). Similarly, Lingard experiences both linguistic and cultural hybridisation. We believe that Lingard suffers from linguistic hybridisation and has a hybrid character, since he can speak both Malay and English. He can ignore neither his white identity, nor his Malay one. As a result of this hybridity, he can choose his Malay friends over the white newcomers. He is in constant movement between these two identities. Even in his ship he has to give orders “in English and Malay” because his crews speak either language (Conrad, 1999, p. 86).

Mrs. Travers does not know different languages, but she can be a cultural hybrid, which is, to Bhabha, the “interstitial space in-between the designations of identity that opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed identity” (qtd. in Turasan, 2013, p. 72). When Mrs. Travers becomes aware of the life of the natives, especially Immada, a new cultural world opens its door to her. The first time that she meets Immada, Lingard describes her life to Mrs. Travers in these words: “She knows war. Do you know anything about it? And hunger, too, and thirst, and unhappiness; things you have only heard about. She has been as near death as I am to you—and what is all that to any of you here?” (Conrad, 1999, p. 67) Mrs. Travers becomes aware of a new culture and a new world. When she leaves the ship with Lingard to save her husband and d’Alcacer, Lingard asks her to wear the native’s costume. So, we assert that symbols construct a new identity to Mrs. Travers. Lingard persuades her to cover her face, and also her hands while shaking hands with Damen. Mrs. Travers herself talks about the effect of wearing the new costume, stating,

‘I was absurdly self-conscious,’ continued Mrs. Travers in a conversational tone. ‘And it was the effect of these clothes that you made me put on over some of my European—I almost said disguise; because you know in the present more perfect costume I feel curiously at home; and yet I can’t say that these things really fit me. The sleeves of this silk under-jacket are rather tight. My shoulders feel bound, too, and as to the sarong it is scandalously short. According to rule it should have been long enough to fall over my feet. But I like freedom of movement. I have had very little of what I liked in life.’ (Conrad, 1999, p. 138)

Now that ambivalence and hybridity are discussed, it is important to study mimicry in this novel as well. We believe that the only example of mimicry in this novel is found in the way Lingard’s crew dress up. All of them except two imitate the European way of dressing because of their master:

Of the lot, only one or two wore sarongs, the others having submitted—at least at sea—to the indignity of European trousers. Only two sat on the spars. One, a man with a childlike, light yellow face, smiling with fatuous imbecility under the wisps of straight coarse hair dyed a mahogany tint, was the tindal of the crew—a kind of boatswain’s or serang’s mate. The other, sitting beside him on the booms, was a man nearly black, not much bigger than a large ape, and wearing on his wrinkled face that look of comical truculence which is often characteristic of men from the southwestern coast of Sumatra. (Conrad, 1999, p. 12)

Their mimicry cannot be studied by Bhabha’s mimicry which is about envy and hatred, repulsion and attraction of colonized to colonizer’s culture forcing him/her to

imitate, it is an enunciative ambivalence if not merely humiliation. Their mimicry is not a form of mockery and it is not “an ambivalent mixture of deference and disobedience” (Gandhi, 1998, p. 149), but this mimicry shows that colonialism has a huge effect on the colonized life including the way they dress up.

Conclusion

Based on all the above discussions, we conclude that Joseph Conrad’s position in literature as a racist or anti-racist and a post/colonial author had always been controversial. Most anti-colonial arguments had typically focused on his works from his middle or later periods while Conrad’s novels from his early period, especially his Lingard trilogy – *Almayer’s Folly: A Story of an Eastern River*, *An Outcast of the Islands*, and *The Rescue: A Romance of the Shallow*, revealed a lot about his early postcolonial thoughts. Conrad depicted the relationship between Westerners and non-Westerners in a contact zone where both cultures met. Our postcolonial study of the mentioned novels exposed Conrad’s attempt to change/challenge the imperial binary logic of his time, which had put the West in a state of power. Postcolonial elements in this trilogy were studied by using Homi Bhabha’s theories on stereotyping, ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity to prove that Conrad was not a racist. In *Almayer’s Folly*, Conrad arguably used Nina as a strong non-Western woman to question Westerners’ assumptions about both non-Westerners and women. In *An Outcast of the Islands*, unlike the imperial logic, Westerners did not behave better than non-Westerners. Conrad tried to dismantle this binary logic that established the West’s dominance over the East. In *The Rescue*, we proposed that Conrad put the identities of Westerners and non-Westerners in constant movement in the contact zone and disrupted the imperial binary oppositions which tried to show the West as trustworthy and civilized, whereas the East as treacherous and primitive. In this article, we further maintained that Conrad’s three early novels, namely *Almayer’s Folly*, *An Outcast of the Island*, and *The Rescue*, belonged to his early postcolonial works, and tried to fill in a gap in Conrad’s studies by reading these three novels as a trilogy; however, they have been mostly examined separately. By studying Lingard Trilogy under the light of postcolonialism, we conclude that, as an ambivalent writer, Conrad let voices from both sides be heard in order to show that the disempowered should not be judged by imperial stereotypes.

Acknowledgements

The researchers would like to extend their heartfelt and sincere gratitude to Mr. Amin Pourhasan for his final proofreading of the article and for his constructive feedback and suggestions that significantly enhanced the quality of the present article.



Amin Pourhasan has studied English Language and Literature at B.A. and M.A. levels in Tabriz University and Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University, Iran, respectively. He has explored the roots of historical wounds in Bijan Najdi's "A Plant in Quarantine" in a joint paper, constructed a new historicist account of Keats's letters in his M.A. thesis, and delineated the concepts and methods of new historicism for Iranian audience at a national conference in Tehran. His current research interests include English Literature, Literary Theory, Foucault's Discourse Analysis, New Historicism, Existentialism, Post-Colonial Criticism, and Iranian Studies. Also, he is interested in studying Iranian literature and culture in the light of research methods in English literary studies.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

References

- Achebe, C. (1988). An image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of darkness*. In R. Kimbrough (Ed.), *Heart of darkness: An authoritative text backgrounds and sources criticism* (3rd Edition, pp.251-261). New York: W. W. Norton.
- Al-Khaiat, A. (2010). Joseph Conrad: Defender or condemner of Imperialism? *Jordan Journal of Modern Languages and Literature*, 2(1), 43-61.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1993). *The location of culture*. London: Routledge.
- Chaudhary, M. (2003). Races as a rhetorical construct in Joseph Conrad's fiction. *Abhath Al Yarmouk, Literature and Linguistics Series*, 21(2), 41-77.
- Conrad, J. (1999). *The rescue: A romance of the shallows*. The Project Gutenberg.
- Conrad, J. (2001). *An outcast of the islands*. London: The Electric Book Company.
- Conrad, J. (2014). *Almayer's folly: A story of an Eastern river*. Australia: The University of Adelaide.
- Dryden, L. (2000). *Joseph Conrad and the Imperial Romance*. Macmillan Press.
- Easthope, A. (1998). Homi Bhabha, hybridity and identity, or Deridida versus Lacan. *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies (HJEAS)*, 4(1/2), 145-151.
- Gandhi, L. (1998). *Postcolonial theory: A critical introduction*. Allen and Unwin.
- Godiwala, D. (2007). Postcolonial desire: Mimicry, hegemony, hybridity, *Reconstructing Hybridity: Post-colonial studies in Transition*. Eds. Kuortti, Joel and Jopi Nyman. Amsterdam: New York.

- Hampson, R. (2000). *Cross-cultural encounters in Joseph Conrad's Malay fiction*. Antony Rowe Ltd, Chippenham, Wiltshire.
- Hampson, R. (2009). Women travellers in the Malay archipelago and the Malay fiction of Joseph Conrad. *Critical Survey*, 21(1), 39-58.
- Huddart, D. (2006). *Homi K. Bhabha*. London: Routledge.
- Krenn, H. (1992). Conrad's Lingard trilogy: Empire, race, and women in the Malay novels. *The Conradian*, 16(2), 66-89.
- McParland, R. P. (2010). *Bloom's how to write about Joseph Conrad*. United States: Maple Press.
- Mondal, A. (2014). Postcolonial Theory: Bhabha and Fanon". *International Journal of Science and Research*, 3(11), 2965-2968.
- Moore, G. M. (2007). Slavery and racism in Joseph Conrad's Eastern World". *Journal of Modern Literature*, 30(4), 20-38.
- Peters, J. G. (2008). *The Cambridge introduction to Joseph Conrad*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- Pratt, M. L. (1991). Arts of the contact zone. *Profession*, 91, 33-40.
- Said, E. W. (1993a). *Culture and imperialism*. New York: Knopf.
- Said, E. W. (1993b). Two visions in *Heart of darkness culture and imperialism*. New York: Knopf. 22-31.
- Sewlall, H. (2003). The Postcolonial space in Joseph Conrad: A consideration of two early novels, *Journal of Literary Studies*, 19(1), 33-51.
- Sewlall, H. (2004). Joseph Conrad: Situating Identity in a Postcolonial Space. PhD. dissertation, North-West University.
- Sherry, N. (2005). *The critical heritage: Joseph Conrad*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Turasan, F. Ç. (2013). Othering and Hybridity in Joseph Conrad's *Almayer's Folly*. PhD dissertation, Middle East Technical University.
- Vogel, D. (2012). Joseph Conrad in the light of Postcolonialism. *Yearbook of Conrad Studies*, 7, 97-112.

Authors' Biographies



Ahad Mehrvand received his Ph.D. degree in American Literature from Melbourne University, Australia, in 2007. Since then, Mehrvand has joined the Department of English, Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University, Tabriz, Iran, as a Lecturer on American Literature and Postcolonial Cultures and literatures in English. So far, he has had over twenty publications on African American Literature, Iranian Literature, and English literature in domestic and international journals. His current research interests include Postcolonial Studies, American Literature, and World Literature. For instance, he published “Richard Wright’s Personal and Literary Responses to Jim Crowism” in 2018, co-authored “Aristotelian Analysis of Parvin E’tesami’s Poems: ‘The Reliever’, ‘Two Courts’ and ‘Words and Deeds’” in 2017, and published “A Postcolonial Reading of Amiri Baraka’s 21st Century Political Poem on America” in 2016.



Shiva Talebi Ashtiyani was born in Karaj, Iran, in 1993. She received her B.A. and M.A. degrees in English Translation and English Language and Literature from Karaj Azad University, Iran and Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University, Tabriz, Iran, in 2015 and 2018, respectively. Her M.A. thesis is entitled “A Study of Joseph Conrad’s Lingard Trilogy in the Light of Postcolonialism.” This article has been prepared based on her M.A. Thesis.
