THE NOVELIST AS GEOGRAPHER
A COMPARISON OF THE NOVELS OF JOSEPH CONRAD AND JULES VERNE

By

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B.A., Cambridge University, 1981

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Programme in Comparative Literature)

We accept this thesis as conforming
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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
August 1987
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Date   Oct. 9th 1987
M.A. THESIS ABSTRACT

The Novelist as Geographer: A Comparison of the Novels of Joseph Conrad and Jules Verne

The works of Joseph Conrad and Jules Verne share a fascination with geography: concern with geographical issues made explicit in their non-fictional works is also implicit in their fiction. Unfortunately, limited knowledge of or interest in geographic theory on the part of the literary critic has made the relation between literature and geography a relatively unpopular focus; to redress the balance, it is necessary to outline briefly some of the ways in which geographical theory may usefully inform the practice of literary criticism. Areas to be introduced include geography and literature as spatial distribution, as spatial perception, as inscription on and description of the environment, as text, as cultural matrix.

The above areas serve as a focus for the comparative analysis of a series of novels by Joseph Conrad and Jules Verne in which three issues are foregrounded: first, the interrelations between concentrated place and surrounding space in the sea-tales The Nigger of the Narcissus and Vingt mille lieues sous les mers; second, the reading and writing of cultural landscape in Heart of Darkness and Voyage au centre de la terre; third, the geopolitics of territory, boundary and landclaim in Lord Jim and L'Ile mystérieuse. In each case,
relevant geographical theory is drawn upon: in the first instance, the phenomenological notions of Yi-Fu Tuan and Edward Relph; in the second, the landscape evaluations of Carl Sauer and Courtice Rose; in the third, the geopolitical and politico-geographical definitions of Glassner, De Blij and Cohen.

The first section (on *The Nigger of the Narcissus* and *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*) explores the spatial notions of topophilia, placelessness and geometricity inherent in the relation between ship and sea. The second section (on *Heart of Darkness* and *Voyage au centre de la terre*) discusses the various connotations of landscape: cultural imprint (re-writing), false perspective (mis-reading), textual sign-system (encoding/decoding), which suggest that landscape can be interpreted as a controlling mechanism of and means of access to the text. The third section (on *Lord Jim* and *L'Ile mystérieuse*) outlines the geographical motifs of the two novels (division, (dis)possession, ascent and descent, etc.) and infers possible motives behind these motifs, relating topographical issues to personal and political ones and paying particular attention to the implications of island environments and communities and to the connections between imperialism, colonialism and narrative strategy.

Finally, the 'literary geography' of Conrad's and Verne's novels is situated in its historical context and related particularly to the late nineteenth-century debate on the
relative merits of positivism and phenomenology. In Verne's work, the doctrine of positivism, which has been constituted in terms of an ideology of science, is only celebrated in so far as its limitations are recognized. In Conrad's work, man's struggle to conquer Nature through a physical and verbal mastery of his environment is reinterpreted as an attempt to overcome his own duality. Conrad's predominantly phenomenological geography of the mind serves as a critique of positivist doctrine, but its fractured topography also suggests that the attempt to substitute 'more traditional views of the social and moral order' (Watt, 163) is, perhaps, little more than a saving illusion.
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INTRODUCTION

The novelist as geographer: Joseph Conrad and Jules Verne

To compare the novels of Joseph Conrad and Jules Verne might seem an unlikely proposition. After all, they are neither immediate contemporaries nor, by any stretch of the imagination, similar stylists. The abiding tendency to consider Conrad's work as 'classical' (in the highbrow sense of the term) and Verne's as 'popular' (in the middle- or lowbrow sense of the term) has also prevented, or at least dissuaded, critics from attempting a comparison of the two writers. I would suggest, however, that an association between Conrad and Verne is by no means unwarranted: first, because there are areas of thematic commonality between their works, notably in their demonstrated fascination with geography; second, because it is possible to consider their novels as variations on a common genre, the adventure novel (roman d'aventure); and third, because both writers are clearly influenced by the dominant ideologies of later nineteenth-century Europe.

Concern with geographical issues made explicit in the non-fictional works of Conrad and Verne is also implicit in their fiction. The titles of Verne's novels, and the subtitles of Conrad's, are often geographically situated. In Verne's case, highlighting of geography in the title of the work announces the ideological programme implemented in the
course of the work. Geography, in this sense, involves both a classification of the natural environment (a subjection to the rigours of science) and a conquest of the natural environment (a subjection to the will of man). In Conrad's case, the secondary position of geography in the sub-title of the work illustrates the subordination of location to action, but also suggests the interdependence of location and action in the work. 'The earth is a stage', writes Conrad in his late essay 'Geography and Some Explorers', 'and though it may be an advantage, even to the right comprehension of the play, to know its exact configuration, it is the drama of human endeavour that will be the thing' (Conrad, LE, 1). The drama of human endeavour corresponds in Conrad's work to a geography of action, on the one hand, and a geography of the mind, on the other. As in Verne's work, geography enacts a combat between man and his natural environment; this combat, however, does not (as it tends to for Verne) amount to a victory and consolidation of man's control over Nature but to a skeptical inquiry into man's ability to control his own desires. The island of Patusan, in Conrad's novel Lord Jim, is 'internally situated' (Conrad, LJ, 240): in registering the lie of the land, geography may also reflect the state of the mind.

It is possible to locate the difference between Conrad's and Verne's literary geographies in the context of late nineteenth-century European thought. Clearly, Verne's programmatic 'geography of conquest' is informed by
contemporary positivist doctrine; equally clearly, Conrad's introspective 'geography of the mind' constitutes a fin-de-siècle challenge to the self-glorifying tendencies of positivist doctrine by conducting a phenomenologically-grounded inquiry into the self which emphasizes instability and fragmentation. Alternatively, it is possible to consider their respective geographies as reflections of or extensions of political doctrine. Verne's delineation of the conquest of Nature can be interpreted in this context as a celebration of imperialist expansionism, although, as I hope to show, it is more closely associated with the imperialist tendencies inherent in bourgeois liberalism; similarly, Conrad's implicit critique of the conquest of Nature can be interpreted as an anti-imperialist gesture, although it is equally possible (and, in my opinion, more accurate) to interpret this apparent anti-imperialism as a disguise which enables Conrad to criticize the means of imperialist conquest whilst tacitly upholding the idea of imperialism.

The extrapolation of epistemological and political theories from the literary geographies of Conrad and Verne can hardly be tenable, however, unless it is based on a prior understanding of the constituent features of those geographies. It is here, I would argue, that specifically geographical theories, that is to say, theories of geographical knowledge developed by professional geographers, may usefully inform the practice of literary criticism.
Unfortunately, although some geographers (notably David Lowenthal and Douglas Pocock)\textsuperscript{1} have acknowledged the usefulness of imaginative literature to their geographical studies, literary critics have shown relatively little interest in geography. To redress the balance, I would like to introduce briefly three areas of geographical inquiry which are relevant to Conrad's and Verne's fiction, namely those of spatiality, landscape and geopolitics.

Geography, first and foremost, is the study of spatial distribution. The distribution of space is not confined to aspects of location and quantification, however; it also depends on the ways in which space is perceived and experienced, the coordinates of what John Pickles has called 'human spatiality' (Pickles, 154). Three aspects of human spatiality which have been commented on by geographers are topophilia, placelessness, and geometricity. Topophilia, according to Yi-Fu Tuan, corresponds 'to an affective bond between people and place or setting' (Tuan, TP, 4) and is demonstrated in Western man's predilection for particular environments (islands, the sea-shore, etc.) which he designates as 'privileged places'.\textsuperscript{2} This, I shall agree, is the status given to the ship in Conrad's \textit{The Nigger of the Narcissus} and Verne's \textit{Vingt mille lieues sous les mers}. On the other hand, the ship's relation to the sea, which in Tuan's terms corresponds to that between concentrated place and surrounding space, also invokes the notion of
placelessness, which, according to Edward Relph: 'describes both an environment without significant places and the underlying attitude which does not acknowledge significance in places' (Relph, PP, 143). In The Nigger of the Narcissus, the interrelation between place, space and placelessness indicates a conflict between the desire to uphold a traditional moral and aesthetic order and the awareness of its fragility. Allistoun and Singleton, privileged in this order, uphold its authority; the under-privileged Wait and Donkin negate it.

Although they are representatives of sub-cultures (Third World, proletarian) which have low ranking in the hierarchy of the Narcissus, neither Wait nor Donkin is a cultural rebel (their main 'cause', after all, is themselves); on the other hand, their disrespect for the appointed authorities emphasizes the insecurity of the hierarchy and its dependence on neo-classical values which are losing ground in the new age.

In Vingt mille lieues sous les mers, the predominant spatial notion is that of mobility. The Nautilus, 'mobilis in mobile', moves through space with a view towards eliminating it: the principle of mobility (the charting of an environment) serves the function of immobilization (the conquest and categorization of an environment). Geography is correspondingly reduced to geometry, and motion confined within (con)figuration.

A second area of geographical inquiry is that of
landscape. Carl Sauer's notions of cultural landscape (as a structure or structures superimposed on the natural environment) and Courtice Rose's consideration of landscape as a textual sign-system subject to complex processes of encoding and decoding are relevant to the novels Heart of Darkness and Voyage au centre de la terre. In Conrad's novel, Marlow's reading of the landscape demonstrates a series of cultural prejudices which are undermined, however, by alternative readings which emerge from between the lines, as it were, of his own reading. In Verne's novel, the landscape is misread rather than read, or rather it is read in ways which are necessarily limited by their ideological premises. The geographical 'centre' (destination) is not reached; by analogy, the textual sign-system does not reveal its origin of significance, because its ideology, which, I shall argue, is ultimately reactionary in the sense of being resistant to although paradoxically attracted by (r)evolution, forbids it. Landscape, like text, is both 'read' and 'written': in the case of Heart of Darkness and Voyage au centre de la terre, however, it is re-read and re-written as a form of preservation, or retention, of the cultural imperative.

My third geographical focus is on the notions of political geography and geopolitics as they pertain to Conrad's novel Lord Jim and Verne's novel L'Ile mystérieuse. Political geography (the interaction between geography and politics) and geopolitics (the coercion of geography by state
politics), chart the use and abuse of land by rival controlling interests. Whilst neither Lord Jim nor L'Ile mystérieuse are, strictly speaking, political novels, they both implement a series of narrative strategies which are implicitly, if not explicitly, political in nature. The staking out of the private, and the administration of the public territories of Jim in Conrad's novel and Cyrus Smith in Verne's are symptomatic of the procedures of imperial/colonial expansion.

It will be evident from this introduction that I am drawing on notions rather than procedures of geography as a point of departure for critical interpretations which, quite obviously, cannot be contained within a strictly 'geographical' framework. 'Space', 'place', 'landscape', 'geopolitics', and, ultimately, 'geography' itself, should therefore be understood primarily, as they have been understood by literary critics such as Gaston Bachelard, as metaphors. It is not merely their fascination with geography (as a physical phenomenon) but also their fictional adaptation of geography (as a metaphorical phenomenon) which brings Conrad and Verne together in a curious partnership.
1. *Narcissus* and *Nautilus*: an inquiry into space and place in Conrad's *The Nigger of the Narcissus* and Verne's *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*.

'Space is more abstract than place' claims the geographer Yi-Fu Tuan: 'what begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value' (Tuan, SP, 6). The distinction is balanced however by the recognition that 'in experience, the meaning of space often merges with that of place ... the ideas of space and place require each other for definition' (Tuan, SP, 6). The interdependence of space and place is stressed by another geographer, Edward Relph: 'space provides the context for places but derives its meaning from particular places' (Relph, PP, 8). This does not mean that space and place cannot be differentiated; as Relph puts it:

> Those aspects of space that we distinguish as places are differentiated because they have attracted and concentrated our intentions, and because of this focusing they are set apart from the surrounding space while remaining a part of it.

(Relph, PP, 28)

The concepts of 'concentrated place' and 'surrounding space' are particularly relevant to two celebrated sea-tales of the late nineteenth century, Joseph Conrad's *The Nigger of the Narcissus* and Jules Verne's *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*. In both works attention is focused on the ship as (to use Relph's phrase) 'a node or centre of special importance
and meaning which [is] distinguished by [its] quality of insideness' (Relph, PP, 21). The ship is, in other words, a concentrated place, both a focal point for the narrative and a locus of authority within the narrative. It is impossible, however, to consider the ship without considering its environment: Conrad's Narcissus and Verne's Nautilus are dependent on and defined by the sea.

The Nigger of the Narcissus is an early exploration of what I shall call Conrad's 'moral topography', that is to say, the spatial representation of a central moral dilemma which, at its simplest level, consists in a perceived discrepancy between fixed standards of conduct and alternative insights which disrupt, erode or compromise those standards. In spatial terms, this discrepancy is located in the tension between closely defined and distributed 'places' and largely indefinite, extraneous 'spaces' which contradict or at least counteract circumscribed definition.

The narrator's initial description of the Narcissus immediately assigns a hierarchy of space to the vessel:

Mr. Baker, chief mate of the ship Narcissus, stepped in one stride out of his lighted cabin into the darkness of the quarterdeck. Above his head, on the break of the poop, the night watchman rang a double stroke.

(Conrad, NN, 15)

Cabin, deck and forecastle are carefully differentiated and given dimensions of height and depth which correspond to the
hierarchy of the crew. Baker, as chief mate, occupies a space which is below the poop (Captain Allistoun's rightful domain) but above the forecastle (the dwelling place of the crew). By describing the Narcissus at night, the narrator is able to exaggerate the difference between the 'lighted cabin' and the 'dark quarterdeck' whilst at the same time reducing the reader's capacity to perceive and identify details of place and physiognomy, so that all that can be seen of the forecastle are the 'silhouettes of moving men' which appear momentarily in the brilliantly lit doorways. From the outset, then, the narrator invites the reader to distinguish between what he says and what he sees (or does not see). The deliberate attention drawn to doors and doorways suggests that the narrative 'fixture' of place is located on a visual 'threshold' of space: a dialectic is consequently set up between the rhetoric of narrative expression which seeks to assert, confirm and preserve a static moral hierarchy and the imagistic language of visual impression which, although it does not necessarily controvert that hierarchy, at least suggests that it is based on appearances which may be deceptive.

In this context the implications of the word 'vision' (which, along with references to 'eyes' and 'sight' recurs throughout the text) are of crucial importance. Although there are many different kinds of vision in The Nigger of the Narcissus, the most fruitful comparison is that between the
pragmatic, 'self-effacing' vision of Allistoun and Singleton and the cynical, 'self-indulgent' vision of Wait and Donkin. The first tends towards idealism and is consonant with the idea of moral control; the second tends towards nihilism and implicitly challenges moral absolutes by emphasizing the egotistic motives behind human behaviour. In spatial terms, the first is a negotiation of space which aims at confirming the existing order of place; the second is an abandonment to space which disrupts order and tends towards placelessness.

Allistoun is the appointed guardian of the existing order; significantly he is described as seldom descending 'from the Olympian heights of his poop. Below him - at his feet, so to speak - common mortals led their busy and insignificant lives' (Conrad, NN, 36). He has pride of place, and, with it, privilege of vision. During the storm which threatens to overturn the Narcissus (a passage to which I will return later), Allistoun is described in these terms: 'Captain Allistoun saw nothing; he seemed with his eyes to hold the ship up with a superhuman concentration of effort' (Conrad, NN, 61). His 'vision' is at once a gesture of supreme self-discipline and an assertion of selfless duty which privileges action over speech and practicality over wasteful self-indulgence. Space, in this case the onrushing space of the sea, must be confronted and tamed, since it cannot be allowed to impinge on and threaten the balance of order.
Singleton, similarly, is described as possessing 'a sharper vision, a clearer knowledge ... he had the uninterested appearance of one who had seen multitudes of ships, had listened many times to voices such as theirs, had already seen all that could happen on the wide seas' (Conrad, NN, 110). For Singleton, then, 'vision' is a confirmation of experience, of the 'already-seen': his eyes, like Allistoun's, 'hold up' the existing order.

Despite the efforts of Allistoun and Singleton, however, the community on board the Narcissus is subjected to severe pressure from without and, particularly, within. The dialectic between place and space, between ship and sea, is necessary for the definition of place and continued affirmation of that definition. The dialectic between place and placelessness, on the other hand, is more disruptive because the notion of placelessness establishes a confrontation with, and tends towards the dissolution of, previously held beliefs and belief-structures.

Wait and Donkin react against their bottom ranking in the hierarchy of the Narcissus by forcing themselves to the centre in defiance of their marginal status. In doing this, they negate the dominant discourse of the narrative which, characterized by its adoption of neo-classical values, sets up oppositions between idealist (largely Platonic) aesthetics and primitive totemism, on one hand, and between 'unspeakable wisdom' (Conrad, NN, 111) and 'filthy loquacity' (Conrad, NN,
88) on the other. In the first instance, Singleton and Allistoun are valued to the detriment of Wait; in the second, they are valued to the detriment of Donkin. The deliberate comparison between 'true' and 'false' idols (Singleton/Wait) and 'true' and 'false' artists (Allistoun/Donkin) is complicated however by the latter's implicit questioning of the distinction between true and false and of the cultural presuppositions on which the distinction is based. In this context, Wait and Donkin are acting representatives of subcultures (Third World, proletariat); it must be said, however, that in denying their subordinate status they promote themselves rather than their culture groups. Wait's narcissism and Donkin's self-disgust (which masquerades as proletarian revolt) are little more than pathetic: on the other hand, their resistance to authority, and cynical awareness of egotism emphasize the fragility of the existing order and the uncertainty of its cultural privileges.

The treatment of Donkin, in particular, illustrates this uncertainty. In one sense, of course, he is wholly contemptible in his 'desire to assert his importance, to break, to crush; to be even with everybody for everything; to tear the veil, unmask, expose, leave no refuge' (Conrad, NN, 125). On the other hand, however, his 'perfidious desire of truthfulness' (Conrad, NN, 15) constitutes a challenge to the outlook of Singleton and Allistoun by illustrating that its informing myths (Classicism, Eurocentrism, patriarchy) can no
longer be considered sacrosanct: indeed, like the ship on which they sail, both men belong in a sense to a dying breed, to a Classically ordered and unified world displaced by new social and economic realities. Psychologically 'placeless' in so far as their identity and the power to assert that identity, depend on a rootless environment, they can also be considered within the larger framework of a cultural placelessness which foresees the end of Empire and suggests fallacies (which can be traced back to a dominant imperialist ideology) underpinning such notions as 'place' and 'dominion'.

The description of the storm which all but sinks the Narcissus illustrates this insecurity by placing it in a physical context:

They [the crew] gripped rails, they had wound ropes'-ends under their arms; they clutched ringbolts, they crawled in heaps where there was foothold; they held on with both arms, they hooked themselves to anything to windward with elbows, with chins, almost with their teeth: and some, unable to crawl away from where they had been flung, felt the sea leap up, striking against their backs as they struggled upwards. Singleton had stuck to the wheel. His hair flew out in the wind; the gale seemed to take its life-long adversary by the beard and shake his old head ... Donkin, caught by one foot in a loop of some rope, hung, head down, below us, and yelled, with his face to the deck: 'Cut! Cut!'.

(Conrad, NN, 57-58. My italics)

The hint of farce underlying the crew's desperate struggle for survival suggests that the narrator's celebration
of human resilience is tempered by his awareness of human weakness. The sea, in this context, is a 'discomposing' element (Conrad, NN, 56): both physical tenacity and mental composure are called for to ward off the threat of death (in the first instance) or insanity (in the second). The narrator's collaboration in this last-ditch defence is demonstrated in a third category, that of textual composition. Thus, at the moment of greatest danger, when a huge wave rushes in to flood the Narcissus, it is described as 'a wall of green glass topped with snow'. The metaphor is incongruous: the threat of discomposition is counteracted by the deliberate artifice of composition. The aesthetics of the novel reveals itself in these moments to be as compulsively defensive as its cultural and moral imperatives.

The use of metaphor is worthy of further consideration. The narrative often employs a metaphorization of space as a means of relating a smaller system (or code of values) to a larger system (or code of values). The most noticeable instances of this transference are the various references to the Narcissus as 'minute world', 'small planet' and 'vision of ideal beauty' (Conrad, NN, 36, 35, 122). The Narcissus, in other words, stands as a metaphor for, or to be more precise, a synecdoche of, an absolute moral order. The relation of place to space is transferred from one of confrontation to one of assimilation, in which even the immensities of space have a place within an all-enveloping cosmos.
Conrad's espousal in *The Nigger of the Narcissus* of what might best be described as a form of pragmatic idealism (a combination of practical vigour and moral rigour) can only be accommodated, however, in a particular environment, that of the sailship, in which the assumption of a 'placeless' existence paradoxically gives the sailor a sense of place and, with it, a sense of moral purpose. The *Narcissus*, in this sense, is an ideal community which operates on the principle of collaborative craftsmanship; to use V.S. Naipaul's expression, it embodies the philosophy of the 'Stylist of the Sea' (Naipaul, 217).

The self-serving machinations of Wait and Donkin, however, demonstrate the limitations of and contradictions within the notion of pragmatic idealism by displacing the hierarchies inscribed onto the *Narcissus* and bringing to the surface the egotism which underlies idealistic conceptions of community and collaboration. The title of *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, (as are many of Conrad's titles) is oxymoronic; by 'belonging' to the *Narcissus*, Wait demonstrates the contradictions embodied in a ship whose very name counteracts its projected idealism.

The challenge posed by Wait and Donkin is both notional and historical; the *Narcissus*, it is suggested, is one of the last of its kind: the sailship, and with it the philosophy of the Stylist of the Sea, is already outdated by the progressive machinery and positivistic outlook of the new Age of
Technology. The individualism of Wait and, particularly, the cynical materialism of Donkin, are suggested as being better suited to (more easily adaptable to) the new age than the pragmatic idealism of Singleton and Allistoun: significantly, the last pages of the novel introduce a new conceptualization of space and place in which moral and aesthetic considerations are replaced by economic ones. Once docked, the ship 'ceases to live': it loses its moral substance, its sense of place, and becomes merely an object to be possessed in the name of a 'sordid earth' (Conrad, NN, 137). Reverence of the ideals of Truth and Beauty, imperilled though they were, is now redefined as a perverse worship of the material in which 'the stained front of the Mist, cleansed by the flood of light, stood out for a moment dazzling and white like a marble palace in a fairy tale' (Conrad, NN, 143). Place has become a concentration of material value, and the space which surrounds it a reservoir of material possibility. With this last configuration we are already moving close to the colonial world of Heart of Darkness.

The interaction between space and place in The Nigger of the Narcissus is a major factor in what might be termed the 'radical ambiguity' of the novel. The tension between expression and impression, between the categorically stated (or designated) and the intuitively perceived, ensures a dynamic, often paradoxical, conception of space, in which the same space may be experienced as topophilia (desire,
affection) or as tophophobia (fear, disaffection). An example is the cabin, refuge for the officers but trap, virtual coffin, for Wait. Similarly, the Narcissus epitomizes both home and exile, 'desired enclosure' and 'desired unrest' (Conrad, NN, 80); the sea as empty space may engender calm and reassurance, but the same empty space, when it is envisaged as 'non-place' (Jameson, 213), becomes confrontational, disconcerting. The continual flux which is set up by these changing or simultaneously different perceptions of space is indicative of a continuum between 'order' and 'chaos' in the novel: 'order' is continually reinstated but also continually challenged and threatened with dissolution. In this context, the final image of the ghost ship is highly appropriate: memory revives a lost order without retrieving a lost substance. The Narcissus is 'replaced', but only in the spatial void:

A shadowy ship manned by a crew of Shades. They pass and make a sign, in a shadowy hail. Haven't we, together and upon the immortal sea, wrung out a meaning from our sinful lives?

(Conrad, NN, 143)

By contrast, the treatment of space in Jules Verne's novel Vingt mille lieues sous les mers does not appear at first sight to be ambiguous. In one sense the Nautilus is the epitome of 'desired enclosure' (Tuan, SP, Ch. 8): not only does it have its crew, providing them with a secure, closeted
environment, it also houses a treasury of artifacts; it is a mobile home, but also a mobile library, a mobile museum. Its quality of 'insideness' (Relph, PP, 21) is reinforced by its absorption of the outside world, an absorption which is also disarmament, dissection, immobilization. The dynamics of space are reduced to the specificity of place: the Nautilus tours the world, encloses it with a view to eliminating it.

Similarly, knowledge of the natural environment is reduced to acquisition of the collector's item. To 'see' in the novel usually means to 'take': the procedure may be one of capture (Nemo's hunt) or classification (Conseil's lists) but in each case the principle is one of self-appropriation. The natural environment is confronted, conquered and defined so as to confirm the supremacy of man. Nemo's project is more radical still, for Nature is robbed of its life, its movement; the natural world is not an arena of discovery and experience but a museum resource. Each new yield, once recognized and classified, is merely added to the existing collection. The obsession with nomenclature is an indication of the desire to immobilize: to name is to fix, to designate place; once named, mobile Nature passes into immobile Natural History. Hence Nemo's motto: 'Mobilis in mobile': confinement (elimination) of motion, absorption of the outside, delight (as Roland Barthes has pointed out) in the finite. If the Narcissus is, to some extent, a mirror of human psychology, the Nautilus is a container of human knowledge.
It is a special kind of knowledge, however, that is contained within the iron walls of the submarine. The knowledge embedded in and embodied by the Nautilus is a form of protection rather than enrichment. Curiosity to know has previously been satiated: the Nautilus is the repository of the already-known, a closely-guarded vault within which the infinite possibilities of space have been reduced to the known quantities of place. The known is included, the knowable excluded.

All this seems far removed from the dialectic of space and place, place and placelessness, in The Nigger of the Narcissus. The Narcissus, at the mercy of the elements, struggles to assert its place and to 'wring out meaning' for the lives of its crew. The Nautilus, on the other hand, has no need for struggle; powering its way through the elements, consolidating rather than discovering 'meaning', it aims at nothing less than a total containment, a total conquest of space. Nemo's circumnavigation of the globe corresponds to a desire for all-embracing, encyclopedic knowledge. The authenticity of this knowledge is less important than its acquisition; if Allistoun can be said to symbolize the Stylist of the Sea, Nemo's most appropriate figural equivalent is the Tourist, the person for whom (as Edward Relph puts it) 'individual and authentic judgement about places is nearly always subsumed to expert or socially accepted opinion [such that] the act and means of tourism become more important than
the places visited' (Relph, PP, 83). Verne's work takes tourism a stage further: the *Voyages extraordinaires* represent an 'imaginary tourism', which, transferred into the exoticism of the adventure novel, allows both reader and writer to enjoy the fruits of travel without experiencing the discomforts of travelling.

Verne is no mere 'armchair geographer', however; indeed, there is an ambiguity built into the mythology of the *Voyages extraordinaires* which renders his treatment of space in some ways surprisingly similar to Conrad's. As Michel Serres has pointed out, Verne's world is a circle of circles, a tour of tours: its predominant spatial pattern is concentric. This concentricity, however, is reversible; the *Nautilus*, self-enclosing, self-protecting organism which, as its (mollusc) name suggests, builds layers around itself to guard its precious interior, is transformed by the end of the novel into self-immolating maelstrom. The space which had been previously reduced to a series of 'places' by a process of enclosure and objectification re-establishes itself by appropriating in turn the 'places' which had defined and constricted it. The *Nautilus*, conqueror of space, is itself conquered by space: openness is restored despite persistent attempts at closure.

Conrad's late essay 'Geography and Some Explorers' opens a further avenue of enquiry. Distinguishing between geometric configuration and geographic action, Conrad claims:
The earth is a stage, and though it may be an advantage, even to the right comprehension of the play, to know its exact configuration, it is the drama of human endeavour that will be the thing.

(Conrad, LE, 1)

The alleged superiority of geography over geometry is borne out in *The Nigger of the Narcissus* in so far as the sea is of less interest for what it represents or contains than as a setting or stage for human activity and experience. In *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*, however, geometry is at least as important if not more important than geography. The narrator's painstaking descriptions of submarine flora and fauna in the novel often borrow from the language of geometry:

Les poissons ... sont protégés par une cuirasse ... tantôt la forme d'un solide quadrangulaire ... je citerai aussi des ostracions quadrangulaires, surmontés sur le dos de quatre gros tubercules ... puis des dromadaires à grosses bosses en forme de cône.

(Verne, VML, 290)

Now, if we are to accept Tuan's argument that 'place is a type of object; places and objects define space, giving it a geometric personality' (Tuan, SP, 17), it follows that the minute attention paid in Verne's novel to objects and their definition is tantamount to a 'geometricization' of space. The geometric concern of the text is a further gesture of control: the relentless charting of space which is found
throughout Verne's work can be likened to a process of geometric coordination, whose result, the map or diagram, represents the triumph of Science (and, in particular, the artifice of Science) over Nature. It is also, in another sense, the apotheosis of Structure; Verne's work, as Barthes and Serres, amongst others, have found, is ideally suited to the enterprises of structuralist criticism. To be sure, Verne's work is a structural rather than a mimetic undertaking: space is defined in terms of the objects which constitute it, not the 'reality' (human, geographical, or otherwise) it might represent. It is, however, the act rather than the result of definition which interests Verne. The questions 'what is space?' and 'what is place?', highly relevant to Conrad, are less appropriate to Verne than the question 'how is space constituted?' and 'how, in this constitution, are places connected?'.

The answer to both of these questions would seem to lie in the structural framework of fiction: by rendering possible that which is impossible, Verne's fiction establishes connections between seemingly disparate poetic spaces. Myth and science interweave; sea-monsters come to life, underwater cities (such as Atlantis) are found and given precise location. The Nautilus itself represents a fusion of man and machine (nameless commander, named craft): the ultimate triumph of Science is registered in the creation of a superior organism - (Nautilus as 'cétacé extraordinaire') (Verne, ML,
25) - which in turn reflects a total objectification of the perceived natural environment and a corresponding victory of its controlling subject. Place, in *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*, is primarily an object among objects: Atlantis (like *Nautilus*) functions less as a symbol than as a point of reference.

To reduce the relation between space and place in the novel to one of self-referential textuality would be however to overlook the ideological implication of Verne's work. In a valuable study of Verne's novel *L'Ile mystérieuse*, Pierre Macherey claims that:

> Jules Verne part d'une idéologie de la science: il en fait une mythologie de la science ... par le passage d'un niveau de la représentation à celui de la figuration, l'idéologie subit une complete modification.

(Macherey, 219)

The 'ideology of science', whose outlines may also be traced in *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*, consists in a willed subjugation of the natural world. Its modification (to use Macherey's term) consists however, in the transference of ideological premise into fictional (mythological) pattern. The geographical and biological features of Nature are channelled into the structured patterns of a discourse which draws attention to its own artificiality. In the process, the 'natural' is rendered artificial and vice versa. The open spaces of Nature (here, the sea) are reduced, connected,
enclosed within the artificial framework of the text. The passage from ideology to mythology is further demonstrated in the process of domestication; Nature is a creative resource: once tamed, it can be tapped for domestic use. The Nautilus 'lives' in the sea, but also off the sea, channelling the creative forces of its environment into its own artificial mechanism. The ideology of bourgeois comfort is transferred to a mythology of 'place' in which 'place' denotes domesticity, order, stability and in which 'space' is rendered amenable if not innocuous (for danger still lurks within the depths of the open sea) but certainly not hostile.

In Conrad's work, on the other hand, Nature is indisputably hostile: the sea is inimical, mindlessly violent. 'Place' is a value to be fought for, a stronghold to protect against marauding 'space'. The security and sustained comfort of 'place' depend on hard work and continued vigilance. In Verne's work, however, the achievement and tenure of 'place' enable a life of leisure in which the overcoming of danger consolidates the power of the myth without apparent reference to the psychology of the individual (Nemo is a figure, not a character) or the moral implications of the action.

The sudden disappearance of the Nautilus at the end of the novel suggests however that Verne's mythology is not as self-sufficient as it seems. Indeed, there is an indication that Nemo, like Wait, has been judged guilty of punishable
behaviour, that there may after all be an external order predetermining a certain code of conduct. In *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, this ethic pertains to what Frederic Jameson has called 'a containment strategy' (Jameson, 221): it ultimately calls into question rather than affirms the validity of its provenance. In *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*, it is left uncertain whether Providence is exclusive or inclusive of Verne's mythology; it is clear, however, that the possibility of an informing moral order seriously undermines the validity of an ideology of science which claims its own absolute power. In Verne's later work, the discrepancy between technological advance and moral insufficiency becomes noticeably wider: in *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*, however, he would already seem to be questioning the premises on which a putative conquest of space is based. In his book *Space and Place: the perspective of experience*, Tuan argues:

> Human beings require both space and place. Human lives are in a dialectical movement between shelter and venture, attachment and freedom. In open space one can become intensely aware of place; and in the solitude of sheltered place the vastness of space beyond acquires a haunting presence.

*(Tuan, SP, 54)*

The dialectical movement between shelter and venture which Tuan describes is a dominant feature of both Conrad's and Verne's work. In *The Nigger of the Narcissus* and *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*, the dialectic is focused on the relation
between ship and sea. The ship's authority and value as differentiated place are undermined in both works, though with far greater depth and range of implication in Conrad's, in which values attributed to place are set in opposition to and undermined by those which are symptomatic of placelessness. 'Place' clearly has a wide range of connotations: in Verne's work, place may be seen as object, as point of reference within the structure of the text, or as stability, the confinement and containment of mobility (mobilis in mobile) or again as domesticity, the control and absorption of an outside environment, the delights of a world placed within one's reach. In Conrad's work, on the other hand, place inquires into its own psychological, moral and aesthetic ramifications. Space becomes not merely that which 'surrounds' place and gives it definition but also that which mirrors placelessness and the indefinite. Place is broken up, torn apart: connecting doors are flung open and walls smashed, the sea looms up like a madman with an axe, the crew plans mutiny, the ship is robbed of 'life' and substance. Cultural presuppositions are unmasked in ways explored in more depth in the later works. Yet, for all their diversity, The Nigger of the Narcissus and Vingt mille lieues sous les mers have more than a coincidental thematic similarity.

In demonstrating the interdependence of space and place, both Conrad and Verne question the validity of an ideology in which the outside world is objectified and consequently
controlled by a self-privileging subject or agency of authority. In Conrad's case, this authority is upheld although it is recognized as insubstantial and, perhaps, illusory; in Verne's, the informing ideology of science is celebrated although it is recognized as limited and, perhaps, contradictory.
2. Readings of the cultural landscape in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Verne's *Voyage au centre de la terre*.

The moral topography of The Nigger of the *Narcissus* (examined in the previous chapter) is adapted in *Heart of Darkness* to the composition and evaluation of a cultural landscape in which the balance between man and his environment is disrupted by the determination to exploit, subjugate and restructure Nature in the name of an imposed, dominant culture. Carl Sauer's distinction between 'natural' and 'cultural' landscapes sheds light on the imperialistic project being undertaken (and critiqued) in Conrad's novel:

The cultural landscape (claims Sauer) is fashioned from a natural landscape by a culture group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape is the result ... with the introduction of a different - that is, an alien - culture, a rejuvenation of the cultural landscape sets in, or a new landscape is superimposed on remnants of an older one.

(Sauer, 343)

The shaping force of an alien culture can be traced in *Heart of Darkness* in the imprints of Western (European) 'civilization' on an environment which it, in its turn, identifies as alien, creating, as Sauer puts it, the superimposition of a new landscape on remnants of an older one. The authority claimed by the imposed culture is challenged, however, by various 'readings' of the cultural
landscape which reflect a tension between the natural environment and the perceptions, inscriptions and transformations of the cultural agent.

Yi-Fu Tuan has reinscribed this tension within an 'axial transformation in word view from cosmos to landscape' (Tuan, TP, 122-3) which, tending towards the semantic convergence of the terms nature, landscape and scenery, has correspondingly demoted Nature as (vertically arranged, transcendental) cosmos to nature as (horizontally aligned, culturally determined) landscape. Combining Sauer's and Tuan's theses, it is possible to chart in Heart of Darkness the abortive attempts of an imposed culture to convert Nature into landscape and, to suppress alternative 'readings' which might call that projected conversion into question. Implicit in this attempt is a deterministic attitude towards the environment which, according to Lewontin, Rose and Kamin, conceives of nature as 'a source of raw materials to be extracted, an alien force to be controlled, tamed and exploited in the interests of the newly dominant class (Lewontin et al., 45). The newly dominant class is identified by Lewontin et al. as the rapidly developing bourgeois society of late nineteenth-century Europe whose conception of science as a path to inevitable progress, bolstered by the discoveries of the Technological Revolution, solicits a confirmation of man's supremacy over his physical environment.

Marsh's work Man and Nature (1864) typifies this
ideology:

Man cannot subsist and rise to the full development of [his] higher properties, unless brute and unconscious nature be effectively combatted and, in a greater degree, vanquished by human art.

(Marsh, 38)

The connection is clear between this extreme form of geographical determinism and the expansionist policies of imperialism, informed by notions of inherent superiority and propelled by a 'civilizing' mission. The landscapes of *Heart of Darkness* imply a relation between topography and personal/cultural identity which is indissociable from the imperialistic discourse which gives it expression and the technological resources which lend it power;¹ for an intended conversion of Nature into landscape activates both the physical conquest of the natural environment and the discursive practices which justify that conquest. Landscape, in this sense, denotes a reinscription of the transcendental signified ('Nature's laws') within the context of a rhetoric of authority ('cultural imperative'). The main figures of this imperative may be identified as the steamboat, literally and figuratively forcing its way into the interior, and, from the 'heart' of the interior, Kurtz's disembodied Voice, which substitutes propagandistic monologue for personal dialogue and constitutes a self-privileging discourse of the other.

The connection of Marlow with these primary cultural
agencies is crucial, for Marlow is the text's inscribed reader; his interpretation of (and navigation through) the landscape brings us into contact with the text but also allows us to infer other 'readings' which comment on and ultimately undermine his own. As Courtice Rose has suggested, there is a correlation between the praxis of geography and the procedure of text interpretation. A landscape can be considered in these terms as a codified text which is encoded by those who act on it and decoded by those who assess it. As text, landscape is both written and read; since reading is itself a form of writing, as much an encoding as a decoding process, the geographer becomes both reader and writer of the landscapes he perceives. The percipient does not merely decipher: he alters what is perceived, imposing on it the weight of his personal and cultural preference. It is clear, then, that Marlow's 'reading' of the landscape is only one of many possible readings; it is our task as readers to read between the lines of Marlow's reading, thereby producing our own revisions and modifications. Marlow's reading, impelled in spite of itself by what Edward Said has called an 'imperialist discourse' is in effect a misreading, or, at least, a partial reading which, in attempting to criticize the very ideology which informs and delimits it, allows us to correspondingly criticize, revise and reinterpret the text in our turn.

Evidence is not hard to find of the 'partiality' (in both
senses) of Marlow's reading. At the Outer Station the negative effects of a conversion from Nature to landscape are delineated:

At last we opened a reach. A rocky cliff appeared, mounds of turned-up earth by the shore, houses on a hill, others with iron roofs, amongst a waste of excavations, or hanging to the declivity. A continuous noise of the rapids above hovered over this scene of inhabited devastation.

(Conrad, HOD, 63)

Nature has been transformed into a wasteland in which the 'carcass' of 'an undersized railway-truck lying there on its back with its wheels in the air' signifies a perverse anthropomorphism, a substitution of decadent (techno-)culture for nature. Similarly, learning the immediate environs of the station, Marlow encounters:

paths, paths everywhere; a stamped-in network of paths spreading over the empty land, through long grass, through burnt grass, through thickets, down and up chilly ravines, up and down stony hills ablaze with hat; and a solitude, a solitude, nobody, not a hut.

(Conrad, HOD, 70)

The mapping out of the land suggests an appropriation of space which, although uninhabited, bears the mark of an absent 'owner'. Nature's laws are subsumed in property law: the emptiness of the land is a fitting symbol of and implicit critique of the wastefulness of indiscriminate imperial expansion.
A closer look at Marlow’s reading of the landscape suggests, however, that what appears to be a critique of an imperialist attitude towards nature is actually inscribed within the rhetoric of an imperialist discourse. Symptomatic of this rhetoric is a suppression of, or at least a failure to account for, alternative modes of expression which might challenge its authority. The most obvious example of this, of course, is Marlow’s inability to understand the languages which render native rites 'unspeakable' and the harlequin’s notes 'unreadable'. Foreign (i.e., non-European) languages are constituted as 'other': Marlow’s Eurocentrism reinforces his monologism. It is worth remembering that Marlow’s tale is rarely interrupted; like Kurtz’s, his is a single voice speaking from the darkness. The similarity between Kurtz’s discourse and Marlow’s is not totally lost on Marlow himself, but it is obvious throughout the text that Marlow is, to some extent, suspending his (self) critical faculties. One example of this is the sudden shift from a critical to a non-critical focus: descending the hill at the Outer Station, Marlow discovers:

> a vast artificial hole somebody had been digging on the slope, the purpose of which I found it impossible to divine. It wasn't a quarry or a sandpit, anyhow. It was just a hole.

(Conrad, HOD, 65)

'Just a hole': yet it is these holes, cracks and gullies
which, interspersed throughout the textual landscape of *Heart of Darkness*, suggest not only that what is not being described (or explained) is worthy of consideration, but that the gaps and absences in the text may be filled by readings which undermine or invalidate the dominant discourse of the narrative.

Two further examples underscore the notion of a 'partial reading' of the landscape which either fails to account for or actively suppresses other 'readings'. In the first, Marlow, up-river, sketches out this impressionistic landscape:

> The high stillness of primeval forest was before my eyes; there were shiny patches on the black creek. The moon had spread over everything a thin layer of silver—over the rank grass, over the mud, upon the wall of matted vegetation standing higher than the wall of a temple, over the great river I would see through a sombre gap glittering, glittering, as it flowed broadly by without a murmur .... (Conrad, HOD, 81)

It seems on first reading as if Nature has decided to close itself off against its percipient by building walls and barriers to protect a mysterious interior. Yet we should not be deceived by Marlow's description; on reflection, the walls are less the product of natural laws than of narrative strategies: it is not so much that Marlow does not see, but that he does not wish to see. 'The inner truth is hidden—luckily, luckily', claims Marlow (Conrad, HOD, 93) but is it really as 'hidden' as he claims? After all, Conrad informs us
in his preface that 'Heart of Darkness ... is experience pushed a little (and only very little) beyond the actual facts of the case' (Conrad, HOD, xxxv). Marlow's use of the indeterminate adjective, specifically, and of the rhetorical devices of literary impressionism, generally, blur the narrative perspective by concealing truths which are not hidden in the nebulous realms of a 'heart of darkness' but at the very surface of the text. One of these truths is that Marlow is not merely a critic of but a participant in the imperialist mission. He is not unaware of this, of course; as he admits self-ironically at one point: 'I also was a part of the great cause of these high and just proceedings' (Conrad, HOD, 65). For the major part of the narrative, however, he diverts our attention from his own complicity by concentrating on a parodic critique of others (Kurtz, the station manager, the harlequin, etc.) and, above all, by willfully limiting and obscuring his narration. His reading of the landscape is a case in point: in the passage quoted above, the 'impenetrability' of the forest is, in one sense, an accurate description of the environment, but, in another sense, an incomplete description which eschews further commentary by framing a landscape and obscuring what lies outside the frame. The frame is flawed, however; the existence of a geographical gap suggests in turn a textual absence which implies that Marlow's immobilization of the environment, on one hand, and his obfuscation of the environment, on the other, are tactics
of an unwarranted narrative preservation. 8

Marlow's description of Kurtz's hut at the Inner Station is more specific:

A long decaying building on the summit was half buried in high grass; the large holes in the peaked roof gaped black from afar ... there was no enclosure or fence of any kind; but there had been one apparently.

(Conrad, HOD, 121)

Here the gaps loom larger, and the protective enclosures/fences have been broken down; the narrator chooses to concentrate, however, on what had once been there: the defining contours of the landscape are reinstated (brought back from the recesses of memory) by the narrative. The acknowledgement and paradoxical encroachment of 'absence' on the 'presence' of the narrative, together with the increasingly blurred outlines of its presentation, are nonetheless indicative of the insecurity of Marlow's narration and imply the need for a controlling mechanism of linguistic intention: landscape provides this 'intentional' construct in such a way that its presentation becomes (despite the negative factors it reveals) a last bastion of defence, a final frontier beyond which the narrative refuses to venture.

The conversion of Nature into landscape assumes the absolute authority of a transcendental signified in the posture of an imperialist rhetoric. Our revision of Marlow's reading of the landscape does not relocate this signified,
however, but rather switches the relationship between signifiers from one code to another, or, more specifically, from an included code to an excluded one. In deciphering what Marlow chooses not to decipher, our own reading effects a transference of ciphers. To illustrate more fully what I mean, I will refer to two further types of cipher which elicit similar kinds of 'readings': the map and the manual.

The map in *Heart of Darkness* is a graphic representation of the cultural landscape: as a product of cultural imposition, it tends to register a narrowly propagandistic, rather than a broadly communicative, intent. For Marlow, retracing the route already set out for him, the map reveals nothing: it registers a transference not from blank space to known (charted) space but from blank space to darkness. '[Africa] had ceased to be a blank space of delightful mystery - a white patch for a boy to dream gloriously over. It had become a place of darkness' (Conrad, HOD, 52). Similarly, the notes to Towson's navigation manual, indecipherable to Marlow, turn out to be written in Russian, a language (verbal code) Marlow cannot understand. The code is not broken: it is merely switched; the manual, like the map, acts as a metaphor for the reading process which involves exchange rather than explanation, renewed encoding rather than decoding. Significantly, the harlequin turns out to have written the notes in Towson's manual (harlequin: man of many identities, switcher/juggler of 'codes').
There is a sense, too, in which our own readings of the landscape, paradigmatic of our readings of the text, are also mis-readings in that, despite our ability to see through Marlow's self-deception, to isolate and explore the absences of his narrative, we are caught in the same web of lies, the same desire to protect the notions of linguistic solidarity on which (our) Western civilization is based. As Ian Watt puts it: 'Marlow enjoins us to defend ourselves in full knowledge of the difficulties to which we have been blinded by the illusions of civilization (Watt, 253). In witnessing the conversion from Nature to landscape, from transcendental signified to cultural signifier, we are invited not only to defend ourselves but to defend the very notion of signification on which Western discourse, and the idea of 'civilization' enshrined in it, depends.  

I would like to develop the argument by comparing Heart of Darkness with Jules Verne's early novel Voyage au centre de la terre. It is striking that neither Marlow in the former nor Lidenbrock in the latter reach the 'centre': indeed, it is precisely their failure to do so which guarantees their safe return and enables the preservation (and reproduction) of their narrative.

The journey to the centre is downward, and also backward (both novels implicitly comment on the contemporary evolutionary theories of Darwin and Spencer) but the paradox holds for both Conrad and Verne that a journey which aspires
to the source never leaves the surface. In *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow's narration conceals rather than reveals by claiming to look towards a mysterious centre whilst blurring the outlines of (disguising) its surface appearance. In *Voyage au centre de la terre*, the narrator's journey does not lead him to any kind of 'deeper' knowledge or understanding but through a succession of incidents which, like the geological strata through which he moves, proceed from one surface to the next.

Lidenbrock, like Marlow, is a 'partial' reader of the landscape: articulate, erudite, he is able to identify and categorize the rock-forms of the volcano but unable to navigate a path through its labyrinthine underground passages. Lidenbrock's explanations are homilies on the already-known, the practised speeches of the dry academician; a typical address is his eulogy of the human skeleton he discovers in the bone-beds:

> J'ai l'honneur de vous présenter un homme de l'époque quaternaire. De grands savants ont nié son existence, d'autres non moins grands l'ont affirmé ... vous pouvez le voir, le toucher. Ce n'est pas un squelette, c'est un corps intact, conservé dans un but uniquement anthropologique!

(Verne, VCT, 310-311)

For Lidenbrock, speech is the demonstration of seemingly incontestible knowledge; it is significant, however, that it is his opposite, the inarticulate, increasingly silent Hans, who is chiefly responsible for guiding the party towards the
centre of the earth. Hans has no need for words: he is able to negotiate his environment because it is familiar to him, but also because he does not distance himself from it (explain it) through the act of verbalization. As in *Heart of Darkness*, there is the suggestion that, although verbal language misleads, misdirects, distorts, it must nonetheless be defended against the twin threats of silence and madness. In a telling passage, Axel explains:

Son [Hans'] mutisme s'augmentait de jour en jour. Je crois même qu'il nous gagnait. Les objets extérieurs ont une action réelle sur le cerveau. Qui s'enferme entre quatre murs finit par perdre la faculté d'associer les idées et les mots. Que de prisonniers cellulaires devenus imbéciles, sinon fous, par le défaut d'exercice des facultés pensantes!

(Verne, VCT, 208)

Speech, for Axel and Lidenbrock, is the tool of reasoned thought; its disuse leads to disorientation and potential madness. As Hans loses the faculty of speech, he changes gradually into Primitive (pre-verbal) Man in a transformation which, following the logic of the narrative, amounts to debasement: 'son masque effrayant est celui d'un homme antédiluvien, contemporain des ichthyosaures et des megatheriums' (Verne, VCT, 284).

Hans' 'regression' is symptomatic of the decreasing power of verbal language to classify, explain and organize experience as the physical/textual journey proceeds towards
its intangible/non-verbal centre. At the deepest level they reach, Lidenbrock and his company find themselves in a subterranean forest in which the variety and intermixture of flora 'était à confondre la raison des classificateurs les plus ingénieux de la botanique terrestre' (Verne, VCT, 317). The procedure of a science of objects which had previously listed its findings securely in a diachronic succession of landscapes, gives way increasingly to a synchronically conceived, dimly intuited phenomenology of the subject in which, as Axel puts it in his dream, 'toute la vie de la terre se résume en moi' (Verne, VCT, 261). The switch from empirical evidence to subjective conjecture is, in another sense, the result of a failure of writing: Saknussemm's runic manuscript is ultimately indecipherable, leading its followers into the heart of the maze, then abandoning them there.

The unreliability of verbal language (manifested in both speech and writing) is complemented by the geographical motif of the unfound centre. Lidenbrock and his company are able to follow Saknussemm's route so far, but no further: they are neither able to attain their objective nor to resolve its 'meaning'. In Heart of Darkness, Marlow pursues a similar journey which takes him to the furthest point of navigation (the Inner Station) but not to the 'centre'. It is worth considering in more detail why the experiences of both Lidenbrock and Marlow are 'inconclusive' (HOD, 51).

In Heart of Darkness, geographical return is consonant
with narrative preservation; it is essential that Marlow returns from his journey, because otherwise no tale can be told. Likewise in *Voyage au centre de la terre*, the safe return of the group is a prerequisite for the telling of the tale, a condition of possibility for the narrative. Saknussemm, it is suggested, may in fact have reached the 'centre', but the price he pays for his achievement is to be branded a heretic, and to have his work suppressed by a culture which, intent on the preservation of its existing value structures, does not wish to hear of origins. The 'truth' at the centre of Verne's novel is suggested as being the descent of man from his civilized present to his barbaric past; in this sense, *Voyage au centre de la terre*, like *Heart of Darkness*, demonstrates an attraction towards Darwin's contemporary thesis but a final recoil from its implication that a return to the origin reverses the process of civilization to reveal the essential bestiality of man. The safe return of the protagonists ensures the (re)production of the narrative and the perpetuation of the dominant but threatened ideology (expressed, in Conrad's novel, in the discourse of imperialism and, in Verne's, in the discourse of scientific rationalism). Thus, although, at a general level, verbal language seems unreliable and, at a specific level, the dominant narrative discourse seems invalid or at least questionable, there is, by the end of both novels, a corroboration of both. In Conrad's case, the figure of
Kurtz's Intended registers a continuation of the will ('intention') of imperialism;\(^{14}\) in Verne's, the last word is given to Lidenbrock, whose influence has now spread to 'toutes les sociétés scientifiques, géographiques et minéralogiques des cinq parties du monde' (Verne, VCT, 372). The retention and validation of the 'protagonist' (Marlow/Lidenbrock) is measured against the exclusion and/or elimination of the 'antagonist' (Kurtz/Saknussemm) whose discoveries might explode the myths of sanity, reason and order on which Western civilization and its signifying practices are founded.

The reading and writing of landscape, I have argued, is one such practice. In recognizing attempted clarification (deciphering) as a form of obfuscation or evasion (Marlow's reading) and attempted objectification as a privileging of the subject (Lidenbrock's reading), our own readings isolate the paradoxical, or even contradictory, aspects of narrative presentation. Focus is therefore shifted from strategies of control or domination in the narrative to the gaps opened up by a discrepancy between supposedly self-evident facts (the 'objective' markers of a landscape) and uncertain suppositions (the subjective claims projected onto a landscape). A case in point is Conrad's use of impressionism: in one sense, impressionistic readings of the landscape enable Marlow to hide from what he claims he cannot see, but actually does not wish to disclose, but in another sense the shifting perceptions of impressionism question the authority of even
Marlow's most explicit readings to suggest that the 'evidence' of our eyes may be no more than the exercise of our volition.\footnote{15}

In *Voyage au centre de la terre*, vision does not appear at first to be consciously or unconsciously obstructed. There is no impressionism or blurred perspective in Verne's novel: landscape is strictly defined, hard-edged, angular. As in *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*, geography conforms to the rules of geometry:

\begin{quote}
Nous marchions sur ces roches pesantes d'un gris foncé que le refroidissement avait moulées en prismes à base hexagone. Au loin se voyaient un grand nombre de cônes aplatis, qui furent jadis autant de bouches ignivomes.
\end{quote}

(Verne, VCT, 129-30)

The landscape reads as a history of form: Nature as timeless cosmogony is reduced to nature as historically-determined composition. Marlow's 'impressionistic' reading and Lidenbrock's 'explicative' reading can both be traced back, however, to an ideology of conquest: the former invokes 'mystery' to distract attention from the material debauchery of imperialist culture; the latter invokes 'science' to justify the conquest of Nature by the intelligence and to disguise the true place of man within the evolutionary process of Nature by placing him above and against it.

In both Conrad's and Verne's novels, the conquest of Nature constitutes a *formative* act of the intelligence to
which the cultural/textual phenomenon of landscape lends its 'shaping force' (Sauer, 343): both novels narrate journeys exploring the patterns and processes of biological, cultural and linguistic formation. Julia Kristeva's general remarks on form are useful here:

The history of human forming is rooted in language as a system of propositions. No forming can transcend its origin-meaning, as it is posited by that predication peculiar to language. If the metaphysical solidarity of 'meaning', 'origin' and 'forming' is thus posited as the limit of any attempt at clarification ... it still seems clear that any spatial representation provided for within a universal language is necessarily subject to teleological reason.

(Kristeva, 280-1)

Yet, in their enquiries into form and formation, neither Heart of Darkness nor Voyage au centre de la terre seem able to vindicate the 'metaphysical solidarity' on which their dominant discourse (in each case manifested as a form of 'propositional' language) is predicated. Let me introduce the problem another way by referring to Wilson Harris' essay 'The Frontier on which Heart of Darkness stands'. Heart of Darkness is a frontier novel, claims Harris, in that 'it stands upon a threshold of capacity to which Conrad pointed though he never attained that capacity himself' (Harris, 135). Overstepping that threshold results in the loss of 'reason' (Kurtz) and, correspondingly, the loss of a propositional language which has been taken to the absurd conclusions of its
rational premises (Kurtz's manifesto).\textsuperscript{16} The motif of the threshold indicates therefore an attempted preservation of form at the frontiers of formlessness which combats the awareness that the solidarity of 'meaning-origin' on which form/formation is predicated may only be a saving illusion.

It is possible in this context to see Conrad's 'heart' and Verne's 'centre' as figures of a non-propositional (non-explicative) discourse. Hence, although they may be implied in the text, they are actually excluded from it. This paradoxically provides both a means and a denial of access: on one hand, it is possible to reach the centre by a 'leap of the imagination', as it were, which can only be sanctioned within the context of fictional narrative (Kurtz's vision in Heart of Darkness, Axel's dream in Voyage au centre de la terre); on the other hand, the implication of a 'mysterious' centre or origin of significance actually denies the reader access to that centre/origin, or at least transfers its potential significance to a plane of discourse which is excluded from the narrative. The centre is heretical, taboo: It must remain figural because were it to materialize or identify itself it would destroy the 'fiction-effect' of the narrative.\textsuperscript{17}

The avoidance of a textual 'centre' turns our attention back to the surface structures of the narrative. The description and inscription of landscape take place at this surface level, yet the strategies adopted (devastation,
obfuscation, classification, etc.) betray an underlying principle of control which posits landscape as not just 'text' but the directed reading of text. Marlow's landscapes are the products of his reading and of his attempted concealment of other readings; we are asked to consider other possibilities, to read for ourselves, although any reading we make is, perhaps, equally fictive, equally (mis)directed.\textsuperscript{18}

In \textit{Voyage au centre de la terre}, reading also implies looking critically at the landscape, probing into the cracks of the stratified narrative. A 'critical' reading of this kind reveals that neither Axel's tale (the elaboration of a day-dream) nor Lidenbrock's commentary (the transformation of natural phenomena into scientific evidence) is to be trusted: they manipulate our response as readers without blinding us to their strategies of directed reading.

It remains to be considered why two writers as disparate as Joseph Conrad and Jules Verne should share an interest in the intangible centre and in the implications of a reading of landscape which restricts itself to surfaces, perpetuating a circularity of narrative without locating a centre of significance. Michel Butor has suggested that the poetics of circularity which underpins Verne's work has a threefold historical basis: in nineteenth-century evolutionary theory, with its interest in the retracing of origins; positivism, with its aspirations towards 'total', all-embracing knowledge; and geographical exploration, with its compulsion towards
manifestations of the superlative: centres, poles, peaks, etc. (Butor, 130-1). Conrad's work is also clearly influenced by these historical phenomena in its celebration of geographical exploration (together with a critique of its commercial backlash), its reaction against positivist doctrine and its skeptical inquiry into evolutionism.

Of the three areas, geography has won the least attention. This is unfortunate, particularly in view of the fact that, as I have suggested, a strong case may be made out for both Conrad and Verne as practitioners of the roman d'aventure, a genre which explicitly uses geographical principles to underpin its fictional practices. *Voyage au centre de la terre* is written in the hey-day of, and *Heart of Darkness* at the tail-end of the Age of Exploration whose underlying geographical principle, the conquest of space, can also be traced in the discoveries of the new technology, the expansionist policies of imperialism, and the deterministic chains of the human sciences.¹⁹ The dominant intellectual development of the nineteenth century, however, according to Michel Foucault, is the emergence of the figure of Man, which gives rise to an analysis of the nature of human knowledge 'qui en déterminait les formes et qui pouvait en même temps lui être manifestée dans ses propres contenus empiriques' (Foucault, 330) and, concurrently, an analysis of the history of human knowledge 'qui pouvait à la fois être donnée au savoir empirique et lui prescrire ses formes' (Foucault, 330).
The geography of *Voyage au centre de la terre* and *Heart of Darkness* mediates between these two analyses: first, by implying that Nature pre-dates/pre-determines the forms of a history of human knowledge by functioning as a non-verbal, 'unconscious' origin of human knowledge (a phenomenology of the subject) and, second, by indicating that, in converting Nature into landscape, man has applied his knowledge to the promotion or expansion of a culture which seeks empirical evidence of its validity (a science of the object). The coexistence of these two tendencies in the work of Conrad and Verne, which also constitutes a tension between them, leads to a questioning not only of the validity of empirical procedures which lay claim to be discovered or uncovered 'truths' but also of the existence of an origin or centre of significance to which such 'truths' might refer for their verification.

This critique may be alternatively located in three areas which pertain to the conversion of Nature into landscape: first, in the physical superimposition of the cultural agent onto the natural environment; second, in the transfer of the linguistic value of the transcendental signified to the level of the cultural signifier; and third, in the epistemological reduction of a 'nature' of human knowledge to an 'archaeology', or cultural history, of human knowledge.

Such conversions implicit in our revised readings of the cultural landscape in *Voyage au centre de la terre* and *Heart of Darkness* reveal an epistemological insecurity at the basis
of each work which expresses itself in the desire to protect, preserve and perpetuate a system of values which is simultaneously considered as, at best, questionable and, at worst, untenable. Similarly, the exclusivity of the cultural imperative which, proceeding from a rationalization of the object produces a radical split between (perceiving/'controlling') subject and (perceived/'controlled') object is redefined as a split within the subject itself: the discourse of the other which might be construed as a privileging of the self (Kurtz, Lidenbrock) is traced back to nothing less than a duplicity of self.20

In this context, our revision of the primary readings of landscape undertaken in the novels enables us to identify 'landscape' as a false, or at least tenuous, textual/cultural construction which, tested for cracks and crevices, reveals the shaky foundations on which it is built. The suggestion of a barbarity underlying the veneer of civilization and of an unconscious, non-verbal chaos underlying the consciously ordered patterns of a language of proposition counters Marsh's contemporary claim that 'man cannot subsist and rise to the full development of [his] higher priorities unless brute and unconscious nature be effectively combatted and, in a greater measure, vanquished by human art' (Marsh, 38) by entertaining the possibility that the brute exists not outside, but inside man. To read the landscape therefore ultimately entails a
recognition of its misconceived authority and, perhaps, of the inevitably misconceived authority of our own readings.
3. Geopolitical motifs and motives in Conrad's *Lord Jim* and Verne's *L'Ile mystérieuse*.

In analyzing the geographical implications of Conrad's and Verne's work, I have so far concentrated on the experiential and aesthetic properties of space. I have suggested throughout, however, that the novelist's treatment of space is underpinned by ideological presuppositions which give rise to a series of specific political strategies. The focus of this chapter is on such links between geography and politics, with particular reference to the novels *Lord Jim* and *L'Ile mystérieuse*.

It is necessary, first of all, to make a distinction between political geography and geopolitics. I shall adopt Glassner and De Blij's definition: 'political geography is the study of the interaction of geographical area and political process' (Glassner, 1) and compare it with their definition of geopolitics, which 'is concerned basically with the application of geographic information and geographic perspectives to the development of a state's foreign policies' (Glassner, 263). The distinction needs to be borne in mind when dealing with the (literary) texts; broadly speaking, however, both political geography and geopolitics are concerned with the use and abuse of land by rival controlling interests.

It becomes clear that when the work of Conrad and Verne is considered in this context, the link between geography and
politics is of some importance. I have already suggested that one possible area of overlap between Conrad's and Verne's work is the interrelation between topography and personality, between the lie of the land and the state of the mind. Experience of environment in *The Nigger of the Narcissus* and *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*, for example, necessarily involves experience of self; geography is a 'drama of human endeavour' (Conrad, *LE*, 1) in which the geographer participates as both actor and spectator, both 'writer' and 'reader' of the landscapes through which he moves. The interplay between narrator and reader, particularly well illustrated in *Heart of Darkness* and *Voyage au centre de la terre*, may be seen as a geographical paradigm in which both operate as geographers negotiating a textual environment.2

In each of the four novels, however, the geographic paradigm has political implications: the attitude towards nature found in Verne's work reflects an ideology of science which, in turn, implies a certain concept of man as social being, whilst in Conrad's work the choice of geographic location and distribution of space within that location suggest a hierarchy of values and a privileging of certain social types (classes).

On first reading *Lord Jim* would seem to be one of Conrad's least 'political' novels. It usually draws critical attention to the complexity of its psychological and narrative patterns: location duly becomes a question of mental spaces
(of Patusan's 'internal situation' (Conrad, LJ, 240)) or of verbal displacements (of fragmented, 'incomplete' narrative). Both approaches, however, reinforce the ironic mode of narration, an irony which, in maximizing the difference between orders of 'appearance' and orders of 'reality', indicates the strong material base which underlies the novel's thematic and structural concerns.

**Lord Jim** is both an adventure novel and a critique (or revision) of the adventure novel: it undermines, then paradoxically reinstates, the Romantic goals it has set itself. Central to the notion of Romance is the figure of the island. 'Tout univers s'enferme dans des courbes; tout univers se concentre en un noyau, en un germe, un centre dynamisé. Et le centre est puissant puisque c'est un centre imaginé' (Bachelard, 148). Similarly, the Romantic vision of the island paradise which finds its most widespread expression in nineteenth century Europe (Stevenson, Ballantyne, Verne, Loti, etc.) heralds an ideal world encapsulated in miniature, an imaginary centre.

For Conrad, however, Patusan is no paradise: it is, rather, the headquarters of an unstable native State which, beneath the Romantic rhetoric of Marlow's descriptions, has a material basis in the movement of goods and the economic/political rivalries of the market society. It is possible, of course, to see Patusan, like the jungle landscapes of **Heart of Darkness**, as a 'country of the mind'
where 'the haggard utilitarian lies of our civilization wither and die, to be replaced by pure exercises of imagination' (Conrad, LJ, 282). On the other hand, it is equally possible to consider it as a vestige of the tottering Empire, the last outpost of a moribund imperialism which is resuscitated by Jim only to re-emphasize the egotism and exploitation underlying its lofty principles and standards of conduct. Patusan is medium for and witness to human exploitation; it is within this framework that the exploitative strategies undertaken within and by the work may be examined.

Lord Jim is typical of Conrad's work in being fraught with paradox and contradiction. Patusan, likewise, contains within it several paradoxical notions; it is both refuge and grave, a possibility of escape and an opportunity to (re)build personal and political power. Patusan's divided communities and rival 'masters' constitute a nexus of power relations in which the geopolitical motif of segregation (demarcation of separate territories) plays a significant role.

The topography of Patusan clearly illustrates its political situation:

There can be seen rising above the level of the forests the summits of two steep hills very close together, and separated by what looks like a deep fissure, the cleavage of some mighty stroke. As a matter of fact, the valley between is nothing but a narrow ravine; the appearance from the settlement is of one irregularly conical hill split in two, and with the two halves leaning slightly apart.

(Conrad, LJ, 220)
The divided territories of Patusan are similar to those on the Patna, where the officers on the controlling bridge are physically separated from, but also politically segregated from, the pilgrims below. There is then both a horizontal axis of separation, best exemplified in Jim's two (parallel) leaps to safety, and a vertical axis which relates the motif of separation to a political syndrome of domination and subjection.

The hills of Patusan, like the bridge of the Patna, are a place of command, housing the rebel forces of first Sherif Ali, then Jim, then Brown, all of whom are pretenders to the 'sovereign power' (Conrad, LJ, 50) of the island. The ability to command depends however on an ability to protect oneself against one's enemies. Brown's men, establishing themselves on the hill, put themselves in a commanding position but also a safe one:

They established themselves on a little knoll about 900 yards from the stockade, which in fact, they commanded from that position... They went to work cutting [trees] down for a breastwork, and were fairly entrenched before dark.

(Conrad, LJ, 359, my italics)

The geographical combination of hill and trench may be compared with the entomological combination of butterfly and beetle. Tony Tanner has drawn an analogy between Stein's collections and Conrad's characters: Cornelius, creeping in the mud, inverts the image of Jim's butterfly-like idealism
(Tanner, 53-67). By focussing on the analogy between topography and politics, however, it is possible to adapt Tanner's thesis to the circumstances in which the characters find themselves, and to suggest a different connotation of Stein's collections. The island is itself a collection of small communities within a circumscribed environment; the notion of collectivity, however, is jeopardized by the rivalries between its communities and, in particular, by the outsider-figures who draw attention to and exacerbate their state of division.

Jim's position within the community is an ambivalent one: in one sense he belongs and contributes to Doramin's encampment, but in another sense his rise to, and retention of, personal power emphasizes his difference from (and exploitation of his difference from) the rest of the community. The title 'Tuan Jim' itself suggests an oxymoronic combination of separate, and perhaps irreconcilable, elements. For Jim's approach to life is, as Marlow suggests, 'a network of paths separated by chasms' (Conrad, LJ, 120): although he achieves the Romantic goals he has set himself, he cannot shake off the memory of his previous cowardice.

Jim's 'doubleness' points to a larger duplicity inscribed within the text: the yoking of Romantic ideals with political (materialistic) expediency. Patusan is a run-down trading post which functions on the exchange of possessions: the support of Doramin and Dain Waris is symbolized in the
exchange of a ring whilst Jim chooses for the woman he loves the name of Jewel. Communication between Patusan and the outside world is less in terms of language than of goods: it is noticeable how little right of speech is given to the natives of Patusan State (their 'leaders', the Rajah and Doramin, remain virtually silent throughout) and how much to the foreign exploiters who come in to take their possessions and, at the limit, their very language, away from them.

Hence, a motif which runs through Lord Jim is that of profiteering: its most blatant proponent is the out-and-out pirate Brown, but there is also a profit-motive behind Jim's opportunism and, more subtly, behind Stein's attempt to transform Nature into his private sanctuary. Implicit in the materialism of Brown, the romantic idealism of Jim and the perfectionist aesthetics of Stein are a series of claims which connect the motives of commercial, ideal and aesthetic profit to the geopolitical motifs of landclaim and annexation. Lord Jim is a novel of claims and claimants at many different levels: the discursive (Marlow's claims to a discourse of the other - '[Dain Waris] was still one of them, while Jim was one of us') (Conrad, LJ, 361), the economic (the tradeclaims of Stein and Company), the emotional (the rival claims of Jim and Cornelius on Jewel), the political (the various pretenders to the sovereign power of Patusan) and the geographical (the landclaims of Jim and Brown). Jim's landclaim is best exemplified in the staking out of his private territory; 'The
Fort' is 'a place of defence ... a deep ditch, an earth wall topped by a palisade, and at the angles guns mounted on platforms to sweep each side of the square' (Conrad, LJ, 340). Yet Jim's stronghold is also his prison: he is 'imprisoned within the very freedom of his power' (Conrad, LJ, 283), claimed by his own territory.

Similarly, Stein, curator of his museum-like home and enchanted garden, is finally as trapped as the beetles and butterflies 'he never fail[s] to annex on his own account' (Conrad, LJ, 206). Stein's house and grounds constitute an artificial island, a sanctuary in which the wilds of Nature have been aestheticized and domesticated:

I wandered out, pursued by distressful thoughts; into the gardens, those famous gardens of Stein, in which you can find every plant and tree of tropical lowlands. I followed the course of the canalized stream, and sat for a long time on a shaded bench near the ornamental pond, where some waterfowl with clipped wings were diving and splashing noisily. The branches of casuarina trees behind me swayed lightly, incessantly, reminding me of the soughing of fir-trees at home.

(Conrad, LJ, 349, my italics)

Yet Stein's annex is ultimately uninhabitable: like the island which nurtures Jim's dreams, it finally closes in and entraps the dreamer. Stein's enchanted (Prosperan) ward, which had turned his grounds, like Marlow's privileged vision of Patusan, into 'a picture created by fancy on a canvas' (Conrad, LJ, 330) turns against its owner, revealing aesthetic
fancy as artistic impotence and petrification (Stein = stone).

Stein's world-weariness and Jim's death finally uphold the Romantic dream whilst confirming its impossibility. On the other hand, the story of both men is underscored by a Jamesonian 'political unconscious' which prefigures the end of Empire and emphasizes the moral bankruptcy of imperialism. As in Heart of Darkness, topographical fissures, gaps and underground spaces indicate the shaky foundations on which the 'stability of earthly institutions' (Conrad, LJ, 387) is established. Thus, the Malay pilgrims on the Patna (referred to as 'cattle', 'reptiles', 'pink toads') (Conrad, LJ, chs. 2-5) who are consigned to a double darkness (enclosure in the hold, death by drowning) function throughout the text as a reminder of a personal conscience which also acts as political unconscious. Similarly, there is something rotten in the state of Patusan. The Rajah Allang's addresses are given on 'a sort of narrow stage erected in a hall like a *ruinous* barn with a *rotten* bamboo floor, through the *cracks* of which you could see twelve or fifteen feet below the heaps of *refuse* and *garbage* of all kinds lying under the house' (Conrad, LJ, 228, my italics). The Patusan Trading Company building, like Kurtz's outpost, is in a state of ruin:

All its fences had *fallen* in a long time ago; the neighbours' buffaloes would pace in the morning across the *open* space, snorting profoundly, without haste; the very jungle was invading it already.

(Conrad, LJ, 298, my italics)
The geography of Patusan and its neighbouring islands: 'dark, crumbling shapes ... in the everlasting sunlit haze like the remnants of a wall breached by the sea' (Conrad, LJ, 242, my italics) enacts the geopolitics of a moribund imperialism. Jim's attempt to find an alternative to the 'vile scramble for loot' (Conrad, LE, 17) is to live out a boy's adventure story which is itself implicitly imperialistic. Behind Jim's Romantic aspirations are motives of political gain which concur with Saul Cohen's definition of (geographic) imperialism as 'rule over indigenous peoples, transforming their ideas, institutions and goods' (Cohen, 204). The attempt at a 'fictional' transformation of Patusan within the terms of an aesthetic creed (Jim's 'immaculate' appearance, Stein's 'enchanted' garden) becomes an actual transformation of Patusan within the terms of a political creed. As in Heart of Darkness, a conscious critique of the observable effects of imperialism disguises a deeper political unconscious in which the discursive practices of imperialism are upheld. Thus, the privileged reader who, like a 'lighthouse-keeper above the sea ... turn[s] to the pages of the story' (Conrad, LJ, 351) may turn back to the consoling fiction of Jim on the bridge of the Patna, 'penetrated by the great certitude of unbounded safety and peace that could be read on the silent aspect of nature' (Conrad, LJ, 17). In these fictional terms, Jim achieves 'greatness', but underlying the 'charms' and 'mysteries' of the Romantic vision, negotiating the backwaters of the text,
are Brown and his men, whose cynical actions effectively dispel the myth of 'a sovereign power enthroned in a fixed standard of conduct' (Conrad, LJ, 50).

If Lord Jim provides us with a critique of the material realities underlying imperialist ideals (whilst paradoxically sustaining the discourse of imperialism), Jules Verne's novel L'Ile mystérieuse concerns itself more with the basis, procedures and consequences of colonization. Unlike Patusan, L'Ile Lincoln is an empty, virgin land which is settled, cultivated and colonized by its American visitors. The development of the novel follows the colonial pattern sketched out by Cohen which involves the 'settlement from another country, generally into empty lands and bringing into these lands the precious culture and organization of the parent society' (Cohen, 204).

Cyrus Smith and his company, cast by a 'providential' storm onto an unknown desert island, immediately claim the island for their own and proceed to transform it in the name of Western ('American') culture. There is no need on L'Ile Lincoln for the political machinations which prevail on Patusan: on the contrary, few obstacles are put in the path of progress and, for much of the novel, neither man nor Nature poses any challenge to the castaways. The gradual domestication of the island is a matter of course: nowhere in evidence is that myth of Nature 'red in tooth and claw' which, as I demonstrated in an earlier chapter, is typical of
contemporary works such as Marsh's *Man and Nature*. Nature aids and abets the inventions of Science; one of the features of the island is its amenability to its inhabitants: natural resources are readily at hand, and the island almost invites the colonization it receives.7

From the outset, however, it is made clear that L'Ile Lincoln is no ordinary island. It is, first of all, 'un resumé de tous les aspects que présente un continent' (Verne, IM, 273), it has sprung from continent, and to continent (the American mainland) it will eventually return. This places the novel within an historical context which, as Pierre Macherey has pointed out, projects its protagonists into an imaginary past, not (as the misleading label of science-fiction might suggest) into an anticipatory future (Macherey, op. cit.). The process of colonization involves catching up with the present through the recuperation of Western history from its humblest origins, a nominal degree zero of 'civilization'.

Within this context, it becomes possible to consider Cyrus Smith's inventions as applications (adaptations) of an age-old wisdom, an initial, rudimentary technology. Like the island which functions as his laboratory, Smith is himself a microcosm: 'un composé de toute la science et de toute l'intelligence humaine' (Verne, IM, 102). As I suggested earlier, Verne populates his novels with *figures*, not characters. Smith is *Scientific Man*, Nature is his experiment. Unlike Conrad, Verne is only superficially
interested in the psychological make-up of his characters: the environment is not a reflection of psychological warfare (as in *Lord Jim*) but a basis for geopolitical strategy.

Geopolitics has been defined as applying geographic information to the development of state policy. I shall argue that this is a particularly relevant paradigm for *L'Ile mystérieuse*, which, beginning with the collection and collation of information about the natural environment, proceeds to use that information to transform the environment into a mini-state which derives its power, and the structures of its power, from the greater United States. The model is sketched out neatly by Pencroff:

> Nous ferons de cette ile une petite Amérique! Nous y bâtirons des villas, nous y établirons des chemins de fer, nous y installerons des télégraphes, et un beau jour, quand elle sera bien transformée, bien aménagée, bien civilisée, nous irons l'offrir au gouvernement de l'Union ...

*(Verne, IM, 139-40)*

The 'adjectival insistency' ascribed to Conrad by Leavis (Leavis, 177) corresponds to Verne's 'verbal insistency'. *L'Ile mystérieuse* buckles under the weight of its verbs: things-done and things-done-to prevail over the things themselves. Here, for example, is a typical verbal chain: 'regarder la situation en face - analyser les chances - se préparer à tout événement - se poser fermes et droits devant l'avenir' *(Verne, IM, 700)*. The phrases are Cyrus Smith's,
but they might equally be the slogans of a political manifesto. The narrative carries out the manifesto to the letter, from initial observation and analysis of L'Ile Lincoln (topographic lay-out, geographic situation, etc.) to considered preparations and precautions (against the cold, against attack) to final, justified pride in achievement.

The verb, however, which encompasses all other verbs, the cornerstone as it were of the manifesto, is transform. The original forms of the island are altered to suit its inhabitants: raw materials are fashioned into clothes, tools and dwellings, wild Nature is reduced to the manageable proportions of the domestic farmyard:

Grâce au savoir de leur chef, grâce à leur propre intelligence, c'étaient de véritables colons, munis d'armes, d'outils, d'instruments qui avaient su transformer à leur profit les animaux, les plantes, et les minéraux de l'île, c'est-à-dire les trois règnes de la Nature!

(Verne, IM, 413)

As the novel develops, the island assumes more and more the trappings of a state: it is named and charted, given a hierarchy of government, an internal network of communications, a headquarters and series of regional 'offices'. The transformation of island into state involves a transportation of policy: the blank spaces of Nature are marked with the imprint of Western ('American') culture.

This would seem at first sight to imply a glorification
of New World myths of progress and democracy, but a closer reading of the novel and, in particular, of its later stages, suggests that the colonial ideals which have been implemented so successfully are, if not undermined, at least called into question. In his political reading of Verne's work, Jean Chesneaux draws attention to what he calls 'la tradition quarante-huitarde' which combines an enthusiasm for the notions of liberty, equality and fraternity with an initial (later increasing) distrust of political and scientific idealism in which the potential for abuse of power is recognized. In *L'Ile mystérieuse*, although man is considered as a superior life-form, dominating his environment and adapting it to his needs, there are limitations to his power, and he in his turn is dominated by forces and 'laws' which are beyond his control. The guardian of these laws is Nemo, who, as in *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*, holds the key to mysteries which, once revealed, destroy both themselves and their discoverer. Nemo is 'le génie de l'île', 'un dieu spécial [avec] pouvoir occulte' (Verne, IM, 800). His is the real locus of authority and, one might also say, of authorship, for Verne's writing, in drawing attention to its imaginative resources, rarely fails to draw attention to its creator. As God-figure and writer-figure, Nemo has it in his power to reverse the motif of transformation which has granted Smith and his colleagues their privileged status. Once the 'mysterious' guardian of the island has revealed himself, he
dies almost immediately (in *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers* he simply disappears) and his death signals the destruction of the island and brings the novel forcibly towards its conclusion.

Nemo's death, and the (resultant) explosion which destroys the island, serve as a warning to the scientific pretensions and political ideals of Smith and his followers. The elements which, carefully harnessed, had sustained Nemo's life and the lives of the men under his care, are finally unleashed: fire confronts water and the consequent explosion, casting out those who believed the island was theirs to colonize and control, simultaneously dispels their illusions of power and reminds them that, as Cyrus Smith puts it:

> Les hommes, si savants qu'ils puissent être, ne pourront jamais changer quoi que ce soit à l'ordre cosmographique établi par Dieu même ...

(Verne, IM, 775-6)

Once this warning has been served, however, the novel is free to end with a paradoxical reinstatement of the values of colonialism, this time transferred to the context of the home (mother) country, of which it is suggested L'Ile Lincoln may once have been a part. Iowa (in the novel), like L'Ile Lincoln before it, is uninhabited: the myth of the 'empty land', the New Territory, is therefore perpetuated. It as if Jules Verne, unwilling to subscribe totally to the dominant myths of his day (the progress of Technology, the civilizing
mission of Colonialism) seems equally unwilling to refute them.

In both Lord Jim and L'Ile mystérieuse, I have suggested that the island is a focal environment for the adoption of prescribed political strategies and for the exercise of power. It remains to consider the crucial role of language in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of these strategies. Language is the most effective of all tools in L'Ile mystérieuse, a novel which specifically concerns itself with the means and methods of production. In Vingt mille lieues sous les mers, lists, diaries and seemingly interminable categories and classifications feature as a means of ordering, objectifying and (ultimately) appropriating the outside world. Similarly, L'Ile mystérieuse abounds in apparently extraneous linguistic detail, such as that contained, for example, in the exhaustive inventories drawn up by the castaways. The written word does not merely describe or document its environment: it claims it, appropriating it in the name of the writer. Thus, the roles of the explorer and inventor Cyrus Smith, and of the journalist Gédeon Spillet, recorder of explorations and inventions, are parallel: both imprint their name on the landscape. The colonization they implement combines human encounter with linguistic imposition, using mapping procedures which enable their proponents to systematize their environment with a view to gaining control over it.
Both the written word, presided over by Spillet, and the spoken word, presided over by Smith, derive from a centre of power which has its nominal headquarters in Granite House, but its source (embodied in a discourse which is elevated to the status of myth) in 'America'. Verne's treatment of America is as exotic as his treatment of the South Pacific island; as in *Le Tour du Monde en 80 Jours*, Verne's most blatantly exotic work, there is no attempt to explore or authenticate alternative cultures, but rather a design to envelop them within a discourse which allows them no possibility of expression.9

Although this implies an aggressively imperialistic stance on Verne's part, it is worth balancing the nationalistic fervour of Nemo's last words "Dieu et Patrie!" (Verne, IM, 819) against the earlier statement that '[il] résumait en lui toutes les haines farouches du vaincu contre le vainqueur' (Verne, IM, 803). The struggle for domination which pervades Verne's work engages rather than precludes sympathy for the nations of the oppressed: Nemo, it bears remembering, is not French but Indian, although one might wish to weigh this implied political liberalism against Nemo's scientific Bonapartism which is caught up in, rather than delivered from, the cycle of conquest and oppression.

The issue of imperialism is more complex and much debated in Conrad's work. A growing number of Third World critics (inspired perhaps by the polemics of Chinua Achebe) have taken
offence at the imperialism of *Heart of Darkness* despite its apparently anti-imperialistic stance.

Now, whilst Conrad's 'Africa', like Verne's 'America', is to some extent a symbolic (although not, as some critics have claimed, a 'universal') environment, it is nonetheless true that both *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim* testify to what Achebe describes as a 'withholding of language' (Achebe, 786) from their respective Native communities. In both novels, however, Conrad's focus is not on the devaluation of Third World culture but on the precariousness of the values which underpin Western culture and, particularly, on the contradictions inherent in the discourse of Western imperialism. In *Lord Jim*, accordingly, verbal language is a weapon which acts both for and against its user. Jim's personal 'empire' is based on the myth of a privileged discourse, but the word which serves him may also turn against him. By going back on his word, Brown destroys Jim by exploding the myth of his cultural/linguistic inviolability.

The link in *Lord Jim* between language and land which allows us to consider Patusan as both linguistic and geographic construct similarly enables an analogy to be drawn between linguistic (discursive) devices and topographic markers. The topographic features of Patusan: the fenced enclosures of its camps, the creek which separates them, the hill which overlooks them - can therefore be considered in linguistic terms as the capacity of language to defend, to
divide and to command. It is in the linguistic/geographic backwaters, however, that Jim finds his ruin; there is an ironic discrepancy between the ultimately inconsequential Romantic outpourings of the narrator and the snide but effective communications of the semi-articulate half-caste Cornelius. Language is most effectively used as an instrument of deception, a means of breaking ties rather than forging them: significantly, it is the same 'language' (and inherent value system) Jim uses to claim his territory and establish his power in Patusan which, turned against him, brings about his destruction.

Although Lord Jim and L'Ile mystérieuse may be placed loosely within the category of the roman d'aventure, their treatment of space is more complex than any simplified treatise on the conquest and domination of an 'alien' environment would allow. Both novels adopt carefully conceived and executed strategies towards the environment in which they are set. Geography and politics intermingle: the land is not merely described, it is acted upon and transformed, above all exploited, by those seeking to consolidate their personal means and their political power. A 'geopolitical' approach to the novels which explores the notion and implications of this exploitation ultimately calls into question the assumptions of imperialism and imperialistic discourse by demonstrating the abuses of its privilege.

In the final reckoning, Patusan and L'Ile Lincoln are not
so much mysterious as demystified islands whose presentation suggests at once the power of the novelist to transform his environment and the reluctance or inability of man to transform himself. Conrad is well aware, and Verne more aware than he is given credit for, that behind the mythology of Empire is the shadow of human weakness and the recognition that, as Victor Kiernan puts it: 'at the zenith of its physical power in the world, Europe was at the nadir of its moral capacity to lead it, or even to reform itself (Kiernan, 29).
Conclusion

The positivistic legacy, the phenomenological debate: Epistemology and geographic thought in the works of Joseph Conrad and Jules Verne.

I have suggested throughout this essay that in the fiction of Conrad and Verne, geographic issues are closely related to aspects of personal and political behaviour. It remains to consider briefly how useful geography may be in analyzing intellectual history, whether a reading of the cultural landscape may inform the contemporary epistemological climate.

As an eclectic discipline, geography is particularly well positioned to witness and register the cross-currents of intellectual exchange. A feature of geographic debate in the latter half of the twentieth century has been the attempt to reconcile or at least re-estimate the relation between a positivistic legacy and a phenomenological conception of geography. This re-estimation has tended to result in a gradual shift of emphasis in geographic studies away from the largely empirical analysis of spatial distribution towards the consideration of forms of spatial behaviour, or, as John Pickles puts it, 'human spatiality' (Pickles, 154). Often, as in the work of Yi-Fu Tuan and Edward Relph, such considerations are (loosely) based on phenomenological premises: 'Geography' claims Relph, 'presupposes our
geographical experiences of the world. In other words, geography has an experiential or phenomenological foundation (Relph, 4). One of the features of the so-called phenomenological approach is its enquiry into the relation between epistemology and geographic thought. According to Paul Claval:

the current popularity of epistemology reflects new concern about the validity of scientific method. Throughout the nineteenth century science produced such satisfactory results that to question its certainties seemed unnecessary. Epistemology adopted an inductive approach: it followed science, describing its methods and indicating the procedures needed to establish facts and justify the preferred interpretation of them; subsequently it drew up a conspectus of the principles gradually established by science ... Nowadays there is an awareness of the philosophical shortcomings in [this] previous attitude: objective knowledge cannot be based on itself ... epistemological thought is no longer intended to be mainly prescriptive ... it is critical, it questions the explicit principles behind the approaches taken.

(Claval, 227-8)

Claval's argument is generalized, but it indicates a debate which is central to the literary geography of Conrad and Verne: the questioning of 'objective knowledge' within the larger context of positivistic thought.

Positivism, often interpreted as a 'scientific' methodology, is better seen as a philosophy, or, in the words of its founder, Auguste Comte, 'a conception of the world and
'What is fundamental', glosses Simon, 'is the assumption that the phenomena of human thought and of social life are continuous with the phenomena of the inorganic and organic world of nature and therefore susceptible of investigation by analogous methods which will yield comparably reliable results' (Simon, 4). The positivist doctrine originally formulated by Comte in the nineteenth century underwent a series of modifications; according to Leszek Kolakowski, it is possible to trace a history of positivist thought in which 'each phase ... is a specific variation of the dominant intellectual style' (Kolakowski, 207). The focus of most versions of positivism is relatively easy to identify, however, in the distrust or, more radically, the outright rejection of the cognitive claims of metaphysics.

It is this radical form of positivism which prevails in the geographic thought of the late nineteenth century. Thus, for the president of the Royal Geographic Society in 1888:

The foundation of all knowledge is the direct observation of facts: by applying thought to the facts thus observed, we seek through a process of classification and comparison for the causes of which the observed phenomena are the results, and the conclusions thus obtained constitute science.

(Gregory, 16)

This Gradgrindian adherence to empirical evidence constitutes, as Kolakowski puts it: 'an attempt to consolidate science as a self-sufficient activity, which exhausts all the possible ways
of approaching the world intellectually' (Kolakowski, 210). The geographic analysis of the environment is therefore reduced to the expression of its empirical properties; geography duly takes its place as one of the 'positive' sciences.

The application of this mode of positivistic thinking to the procedures of scientific method is apparent in the fiction of Jules Verne. The Nautilus, for example, symbolizes the self-sufficient activity of science and relates it to what is seen as the inevitable progress of technology. L'Ile Lincoln, similarly, is the experimental site for technological methods of production which are based on the premises of an all-embracing 'scientism'. The circular pattern of Verne's narratives, and the circles inscribed within those circles, are interpreted by Françoise Gaillard as an attempted resolution of:

une contradiction idéologique surgie en même temps sur le terrain de la philosophie de l'histoire et sur celui des théories scientifiques, contradiction entre le progrès et la décadence, contradiction entre les lois de l'évolutionnisme et celles de la thermodynamique: en un mot, entre l'évolution et l'entropie.

(Gaillard, 279)

The resolution is never more than an attempt, however; as I have indicated, Verne's work subscribes to the dominant ideology whilst remaining critical of its pretensions. Thus, in *Voyage au centre de la terre*, the centre is never found:
the journey is 'completed', but its objective has not been reached. The doctrine of positivism, which has been constituted within the terms of an ideology of science (scientism), is only celebrated in so far as its limitations are recognized. Moreover, it is suggested that the anti-metaphysical bias of positivistic thought prevents it from addressing questions which might undermine or at least problematize its procedures of verification, that is to say, questions of (pre)verbal origin, the psychology of the unconscious, and the existence of God.

By the end of the nineteenth century, such epistemological insecurities have tended to assume the status of crises or irresolvable contradictions. Man's struggle to conquer Nature through a physical and verbal mastery of his environment is reinterpreted as an attempt to overcome his own duality; as Michel Foucault puts it:

'L'homme n'a pas pu se dessiner comme une configuration dans l'épistémé, sans que la pensée découvre en même temps, à la fois en soi et hors de soi, dans ses marges mais aussi bien entrecroisés avec sa propre trame, une part de nuit, une épaisseur apparentement inerte où elle est engagée, un impensé qu'elle contient de bout en bout, mais où aussi bien elle se trouve prise. L'impensé(quel que soit le nom qu'on lui donne) n'est pas logé en l'homme comme une nature recroquevillée ou une histoire qui s'y serait stratifiée, c'est, par rapport à l'homme, L'Autre: l'Autre fraterno et jumeau, né non pas de lui, ni en lui, mais à côté et en même temps, dans une identique nouveauté, dans une dualité sans recours.'

(Foucault, 337)
In one sense, the fractured topography of Conrad's fiction modifies and updates Verne's uncentred topology; in another sense, it constitutes the principle of alienation which had always, at least implicitly, underpinned the procedures of positivist doctrine.² The conversion of Nature into landscape can no longer be considered as a privileging of the cultural agency; on the contrary, it emphasizes the duality (the fractured identity) of the cultural agent. The oppositions inherent in Verne's ideology of science are relocated within an ontology of the subject; the attempt to subsume a (positivistic) 'science of nature' within a (phenomenological) 'science of the spirit', to use Husserl's terms,³ merely underlines the impossibility of 'objective' verification, on one hand, and the uncertainty of 'subjective' enquiry, on the other: the figure of Man, claims Foucault, can therefore be situated at the juncture of empirical and transcendental incidences as a kind of 'doublet empirico-transcendantal' (Foucault, 329).

The positivist-inspired geography of Verne's fiction is adjusted in Conrad's to a phenomenological 'geography of the mind', which serves at once as a critique of positivist doctrine and as a reminder of, citing Ian Watt: 'the dangers in the attempt to make technological and evolutionary optimism a functional substitute for more traditional views of the social and moral order' (Watt, 163). On the other hand, the experience of space and place in Conrad's work suggests that the desire for place which, to a large extent, conforms to
such 'traditional' views, is a consequence of placelessness; that is to say, the notions of social, political, and linguistic unity on which traditional hierarchies of order are predicated are undermined to such a degree by anti-social behaviour, political unrest and linguistic duplicity that their supposition becomes little more than a 'saving illusion' (Conrad, HOD, 159), a consoling fiction.

In summary, the literary geography of Joseph Conrad and Jules Verne provides an outstanding example of the possibility of spatializing (plotting the spatial dimensions of) the human condition. Thus, whilst geography is a 'textual' activity which allows us to investigate the complexities of the reading/writing process, it is also a function of 'human spatiality', which asks us to consider questions of psychological motivation, socio-political strategy and the historical (epistemological) circumstances under which such motivations and strategies operate.

Literary geography is therefore applicable to a wide variety of critical practices. It remains, then, to reiterate its central concerns and the directions it might take towards becoming - if not an acceptable discipline such as, for example, literary history - then at least a more systematic field of inter-disciplinary enquiry. First and foremost, literary geography involves a reconsideration of spatial terms and the assumptions on which they are based (space, place, nature, landscape, etc.). This reconsideration, benefitting from the work of geographical theorists and the wider
historical context of geographic thought, inevitably widens the focus of critical enquiry from aspects of spatial form or spatial representation to questions of spatial perception, experience and transformation. The study of space, in other words, also involves the study of spatial behaviour within the text (as functions of plot, character, etc.) and between text and reader (as functions of narrative strategy, manipulation of response, etc.). Spatial behaviour refers at once to a geography of the mind, in which the relation between topography and personality may be examined, and to a geography of ideas, in which the relation between the novelist and the novel-reader as putative 'geographers' of the text necessarily involves issues of politics and ideology.

Literary geography, therefore, includes in its analysis the variant relations between space and society, space and culture, space and epistemology. It is surely worthy of greater consideration than the practice of literary criticism has so far allowed.
NOTES (Introduction)


4See Eagleton (1976), 34-5.

5See Bachelard's notion of poetic spaces in the introductory chapter of Bachelard (1957).
NOTES (Chapter One)

1 For a detailed presentation of this argument, see Said (1983).

2 Nb. Relph's definition of placelessness which 'describes both an environment without significant places and the underlying attitude which does not acknowledge significance in places' (Relph, 143).

3 See the reference to Conrad's compulsive, 'totalizing' discourse in Said (1986).

4 Naipaul's views on Conrad are succinctly expressed in his essay, 'Conrad's Darkness', Naipaul (1980), 205-228.

5 See particularly Chapter 8 in Tuan (1974); Chapter 2 in Bachelard (1957).

6 See Barthes (1957), 'le goût du navire est toujours joie de s'enfermer parfaitement, de tenir sous sa main le plus grand nombre possible d'objets, de disposer d'un espace absolument fini', (92).

7 A useful comparison can be made between the following: Serres (1974), 11-17; Bachelard (1957) esp. chapter on the phenomenology of roundness; Poulet, (1961) esp. introduction.


9 This development is well traced in Chesneaux (1971) and Evans (1965).
NOTES (Chapter Two)

1For the former connection, see Said (1983); for the latter, see Headrick (1981).

2For a useful essay exploring discursive practices in colonial fiction, see Brahms (1982). Specific to Conrad, see also Bhabha (1983).

3For a succinct statement of Rose's approach, see the essay 'Human Geography as Text Interpretation' in Buttimer, A. and Seamon, D. (eds.) (1980) 123-34.

4See Said (1986): 'Heart of Darkness works so effectively precisely because its politics and aesthetics, so to speak, are imperialist, and that, by the time that Conrad wrote, seemed an attitude that was inevitable and for which there could be no alternative ... there is no use looking for non-imperialist alternatives in a system that has simply eliminated, and made unthinkable, all other alternatives to it' (49).

5See Eco's and Iser's comments on the negotiation of textual absences as an integral part of the reading process in Hillis Miller, J. (ed.) (1971) 1-45, Eco (1979) esp. introduction. See also Eagleton's notion that the critical reader 'speaks the silences' of a text in Eagleton (1976). 'It is in the significant silences of a text, in its gaps and absences, that the presence of ideology can be most positively felt. It is these silences which the critic must make speak. The text is, as it were, ideologically forbidden to say certain things' (34).


7See the semiological approach taken by Jacques Darras in Darras (1982). For a more polemical reading of the 'Signs of Empire', read Raskin (1971).

8See DeMille (1986) 73.

9There is a recognition (and critique) in Heart of Darkness of the map's function as propaganda. For a fascinating essay on this topic, see Quam (1943) or, more recently, Philip Muehrcke's essay on the function of the map in literature (which refers briefly to Heart of Darkness), Muehrcke (1974).

10Nietzsche's attack on the premises of signification is highly relevant to Conrad's work as a whole. For a brief summary of the relevance of Nietzsche to Conrad, see Watt (1980), Chapter 4, section v, c.

12Verne, like Conrad, appears to have been at once attracted to and repelled by the evolutionary theories of his day. For an essay which sheds light on this ambivalence, see Gaillard (1979).


14It is interesting to note the influence of Schopenhauer (e.g. the world as will and idea) and Nietzsche (e.g. the notion of the will to power) on imperialistic notions of geography in the late nineteenth century (see my concluding chapter).


16Cf. Axel's exclamation 'Folie surtout de prétendre attendre le centre du globe!' (Verne, VCT, 130) and, in another of the Voyages extraordinaires, Hatteras' actual lapse into insanity after reaching the pole: Verne (1978) Les Aventures du capitaine hatteras. The issue of madness is taken up in Butor (1960).

17For an explanation of the fiction-effect of Verne's narratives (with specific reference to L'Ile mystérieuse), see Macherey (1966). For Macherey, as for Eagleton, the de-centred text illustrates the limitations of the ideology within which it is written (cf. Eagleton (1976) 75).

18For a useful, if contestable, summary of post-structuralist notions of misreading, see Culler (1982), esp. 3, Readers and Reading.


NOTES (Chapter Three)

1 Cf. Griffith Taylor's definition, 'geopolitics views space from the standpoint of the state', in Taylor (1960) 263.

2 See my Chapter Two.

3 Cf. Conrad's image of the fortress/stronghold/outpost and Charles Fawcett's in Taylor (ed.) (1960). 'Every empire has at its heart a geographical base, a nuclear area ... imperial power is fundamentally dependent on a base of this type - a base at once adequate to the demands on it, secure from hostile invasion, and in control of communication with the areas where the imperial power is to be exerted' (Fawcett, 419).


5 One of the books Jim takes with him everywhere is a complete Shakespeare. It is quite possible to consider Lord Jim within the intertextual framework of romantic tragedy; one avenue of inquiry is the comparison between Conrad's and Shakespeare's dualistic conceptions of personality (butterfly/beetle, angel/beast etc.) in, for example, Hamlet and The Tempest. Patusan (the state) and Patusan (the island) can be seen in this sense as 'pure exercises of [literary] imagination' (Conrad, LJ, 282) and the inhabitants as 'people in a book' (Conrad, LJ, 260).

6 The similarities between the last section of Lord Jim and Heart of Darkness, written contemporaneously, are of course more than coincidental.

7 I am indebted for much of my argument here to Macherey's treatment of L'Ile mysterieuse in Macherey (1966).

8 See Chesneaux (1971).

9 See Verne (1978), Le Tour du monde en 80 jours.

10 See Achebe's notorious essay 'An Image of Africa', which lambasts Heart of Darkness as 'deplorable' and its author as a 'racist', Achebe (1977) 782-794. Although Achebe's reaction is overstated, his article demonstrates the fallacies of 'universalist' criticisms of Heart of Darkness by showing, first, that universality is a Western (Eurocentric) phenomenon and, second, that Conrad does devalue Third World culture by using it as a reverse image of European culture. See also, in this context, Said (1986) 45-64, including the following discussion, particularly Said's refutation of Conor Cruise O'Brien's defence of Heart of Darkness as an anti-imperialistic work.
NOTES (Conclusion)

1See Husserl (1965).

2See Kolakowski (1968) esp. conclusion.

3'The natural sciences give merely the appearance of having brought nature to a point where for itself it is rationally known. For true nature in its proper scientific sense is a product of the spirit that investigates nature, and thus the science of nature presupposes the science of the spirit' (Husserl, 189).
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