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MALINOWSKI'S NOVELS

By

Edward John Noel Roberts

A THESIS

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

MASTER OF ARTS IN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

2000

ABSTRACT
MALINOWSKI'S NOVELS

By

Edward John Noel Roberts

The post-modern attitude towards ethnography can be summarized by anthropologist James Clifford's words: "the historical predicament of ethnography, [is] the fact that it is always caught up in the invention of, not the representation, of cultures" (Clifford & Marcus 2). This conclusion about ethnography is well taken and not in question. However, a close examination of the way in which Clifford reaches this conclusion, reveals a problematic method. This thesis explains that the way he arrives at the conclusion potentially undermines the conclusion. While not disagreeing with Clifford's use of narratology as a means of examining ethnography, this thesis shows how he uses a reading of the narrative structures of Conrad's Heart of Darkness tautologically to fashion an argument to save the reputation of Bronislaw Malinowski as the father of modern anthropology. It shows that the ultimate implication of Clifford's choice of Conrad and his work as a means for saving Malinowski, is an advocacy for an older notion of anthropology intimately connected with the maintenance of colonial conditions. Such a formulation of ethnographic practices does not fall in line with Clifford's general revisionary stance in relation to ethnography. The thesis then explores other readings of novelistic narrative structures, to offer alternative means for reaching Clifford's conclusion about ethnography that maintain the method of using the study of narrative, and to reaffirm the importance of literary analysis for examining ethnography.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Scott Michaelson, Jyotsna Singh, and Alfred Goodson for forming my committee, and Peyina Lin for all her criticism, advice, and support.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Before 1967 the representative value of ethnography was not generally disputed, and Bronislaw Malinowski was recognized as its creator. In 1967, after the publication of his fieldwork diaries (A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term¹), Malinowski's reputation as the father of modern anthropology was shattered. The diaries presented Malinowski in a way that undermined the authoritative professional identity his anthropological monographs evinced. By treating ethnographic work as narratives, post-modern anthropologist James Clifford has attempted to save Malinowski's reputation as the father of modern anthropology. Clifford fashions an argument to save Malinowski by showing the irony inherent in multiple narrative levels, as exemplified in Joseph Conrad's novella Heart of Darkness². However, Clifford's use of Conrad's narrative strategies is tautological, as they are presented in such a way as to fit in with Clifford's preconceived notions of ethnography. Furthermore, the actual choice of Conrad has implications that potentially undermine Clifford's arguments for the revision of Western ethnographic practices.

Chapter 2 explains the importance of Bronislaw Malinowski to the foundation of modern anthropology, and makes it clear why the anthropologist James Clifford should attempt to save Malinowski's reputation. Bronislaw Malinowski is intimately associated with the foundation of modern anthropological practices, so the process of saving him is

¹ Malinowski, Bronislaw. A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term. Trans. Norbert Guterman. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989

analogous to the process of saving modern anthropological method. The chapter also outlines the notion of *ethnographic subjectivity* that Clifford uses in making his argument for the salvation of Malinowski.

Chapter 3 fully explores the argument that Clifford makes for the salvation of Malinowski's reputation. In this chapter I ask why Clifford chooses to use the narrative strategies of Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness to fashion a model of ethnographic subjectivity that redeems Malinowski. This choice is partly based on the fact that Malinowski read this novella during the time covered by his fieldwork diaries, but is over-specific in that Malinowski read a huge amount of other literature at this time. I demonstrate how Clifford's use of Conrad in his argument is tautological, and explore the full implications of the specific choice of the Polish novelist, Conrad. I present Clifford's choice of Conrad as weakly based on biographical coincidence, and conjecture, while suggesting that this choice can potentially undermine Clifford's position as a post-colonial critic of Western ethnographic practices.

Chapter 4 thinks about what kind of models can be drawn from a consideration of two other novels that Malinowski read during the time covered by his fieldwork diaries (Dumas' The Count of Monte Cristo, and Kipling's Kim³). The chapter maintains the primacy of literature that Clifford's work in general advocates, and provides alternative literary paradigms for the *new ethnographic subjectivity*. The readings take into account the novels' narrative strategies, their construction of the notion of identity, and use of irony. My intention is to suggest the importance of literary models for examining identity

² Conrad, Joseph. Youth and two other stories. New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1927

³ Dumas, Alexandre. The Count of Monte Cristo. New York: Collier & son, 1910; Kipling, Rudyard. Kim. New York: Bantam, 1983.

formation, and writing strategies within and for ethnography, and to reinforce the necessity of the question asked in Chapter 2 – why does Clifford choose to use Conrad?

Chapter 5 summarizes the problems and implications of James Clifford's argument for the salvation of Bronislaw Malinowski. I reemphasize the importance of the use of narratology in examinations of ethnographic practices, but draw the conclusion that care must be taken in the choice of whose narrative strategies are used to exemplify this important use of literature. The conclusion that Clifford's choice of Conrad both overlooks other possibilities, and re-institutes the colonial conditions that are often Clifford's subject of critique, clearly attests to the care required when choosing a literary model for the examination of ethnographic practices.

CHAPTER 2

MALINOWSKI, CLIFFORD, & ETHNOGRAPHIC SUBJECTIVITY

This chapter explains the importance of Bronislaw Malinowski for anthropology, the conclusions that can be drawn from the controversial publication of his fieldwork diaries, and the reason why James Clifford has attempted to save his reputation. I also chart the course of James Clifford's work and thought, and outline the notion of *ethnographic subjectivity* that Clifford employs as part of his argument for the salvation of Malinowski's reputation.

Bronislaw Malinowski

Bronislaw Malinowski was one of the “inventors and popularizers of the ethnographic culture idea” (Clifford, Predicament 93): his fieldwork diaries have become “a kind of founding charter for the twentieth-century discipline of anthropology” (95), and he is considered “as mythic culture hero of anthropological method” (Stocking, “The Ethnographer's Magic” 71). As “the first to make anthropology an observational science, to pitch his camp in a native village, and to be a participant-observer” (Powdermaker 36), Malinowski is not only considered “as one of the founding fathers of social anthropology, [but also] as the creator of modern fieldwork” (Wayne i). His name is intimately associated with the birth of professional anthropology.

In 1967 Malinowski's widow published the diaries that he wrote during the time of his fieldwork in Melanesia between 1914 and 1918. This text was juxtaposed with Malinowski's professional presentations of the work that he conducted at the same time¹, and the conclusion that his authoritative professional identity was a fiction was inevitably drawn. Another conclusion that can be drawn from even a cursory reading of Malinowski's fieldwork diaries is that he was a prolific reader: they record that during his sojourns in Melanesia he read, amongst others, Charlotte Bronte, Conan-Doyle, Conrad, Cooper, Dumas, Goldsmith, Hardy, Kipling, Racine, Thackeray, and Wells².

James Clifford

James Clifford is one of "the most respected of American anthropologists"³, with "an established reputation as a social historian of colonial relationships... and a specialized knowledge of ethnographic writings"⁴. He has been attempting since the mid-1980s to rethink difference, notions of identity and subjectivity through critical reading of ethnographic practices within the discipline of Western anthropology. Geertz has written that Clifford "provides a new perspective on the study of culture" (Harvard University

¹ Argonauts of the western Pacific; an account of native enterprise and adventure in the archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1922; The sexual life of savages in north-western Melanesia; an ethnographic account of courtship, marriage and family life among the natives of Trobriand Islands, British New Guinea. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929; Coral gardens and their magic; a study of the methods of tilling the soil and of agricultural rites in the Trobriand Islands. New York: American Book Co., 1935.

² For a bibliography of the works Malinowski recorded reading in his fieldwork diaries see Appendices A, B, & C.

³ Abley, Mark. "Wherever we roam." Rev. of Routes by James Clifford. Times Literary Supplement. July 25th 1997: 5

⁴ Lienhardt, Godfrey. Rev. of The Predicament of Culture by James Clifford. Times Literary Supplement January 19-25 1990: 68

Press Classics – <http://www.hup.harvard.edu>). Clifford's work⁵ describes a 19th century evolutionary notion of culture under critique by the emergence of a new ethnographic subjectivity in the early 20th century. Clifford in turn critiques the non-ironic work produced by this subjectivity in the institutionalized study of culture, and envisages ethnography premised on a rethinking or posited removal of the notion of difference.

In his best-selling 1988 book, The Predicament of Culture, Clifford devotes the third chapter, "On Ethnographic Self-Fashioning: Conrad and Malinowski"⁶, to an examination of two Polish exiles: novelist Joseph Conrad, and anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski. This chapter outlines the birth of "a new 'ethnographic subjectivity'" (93), with the founding of modern ethnographic practices. Clifford presents the structure of the narrative in Conrad's 1899 novella, Heart of Darkness, as a paradigm⁷ for this subjectivity, and describes Malinowski's struggle for professional identity within this paradigm. By drawing this model from Conrad's narrative strategies Clifford makes an

⁵ Clifford, James. Person and myth : Maurice Leenhardt in the Melanesian world. Berkeley : University of California Press, 1982; Clifford, James and George E. Marcus eds. Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986; Clifford, James. The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988; Clifford, James. Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.

⁶ The chapter's title is a reference to Stephen Greenblatt's Renaissance Self-Fashioning (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), and offers a hint as to Clifford's method: he is importing "a modern critical approach to his material" (94). *Modern* seems an appropriate adjective here in two ways. First, the moment (the transition from the 19th - 20th century) with which Clifford is concerned is often thought of as a moment of high modernism; and second, Clifford seems to adopt the very ethnographic subjectivity that is the object of his consideration.

⁷ Clifford's choice of using a literary paradigm may be explained by the primacy he gives to literary figures and fiction in his work. In his introduction to Writing Culture, he writes: "Ethnographic writing can properly be called fictions in the sense of "something made or fashioned," ... it is important to preserve the meaning not merely of making, but also of making up, of inventing things not actually real... Ethnography is moving into areas long occupied by sociology, the novel, or avant-garde cultural critique, rediscovering otherness and difference within the cultures of the West" (Clifford & Marcus 6 & 23). Fiction is central to his notion of an ethnography that rethinks difference: the subjectivities produced in such texts are "constructed

argument that attempts to save the reputation of Malinowski and the emergent institutionalized study of culture. The argument equates the relationship between the multiple narrative levels in Conrad's novella with the relationship between the multiple narratives of Malinowski's various works.

Clifford recognizes the importance of literature to Malinowski in his diary: he calls the "escapist universes, the novels he can never resist" (Predicament 103) "Malinowski's novels" (109), suggesting that "in much of [Malinowski's] own writing he was reminiscent of Zola" (96). He points out "[t]he literary problem of authorial point of view, the Jamesian requirement that every novel reflect a 'controlling intelligence,'" which the diarist experienced, and states that Malinowski can be "like Flaubert's God, omnipresent in the text" (104).

By examining Malinowski's work (which is a presentation of the institutionalization of fieldwork that demonstrates the primacy of literature to that activity⁸) Clifford draws a connection between the birth of anthropology and literature. It is therefore understandable why he chooses to use a literary paradigm to consider the *new ethnographic subjectivity*. Given that Clifford prioritizes literature, it is difficult to understand why he focuses on Conrad's narrative strategies at the cost of omitting any

domains of truth, serious fictions" (10), and he offers "redemptive models of textualization" (12) in the place of questionable ethnographic practices.

⁸ The impression Malinowski gives in his diaries is that reading was a means of escapism ("only a few days of it and I was escaping from it to the company of Thackeray's London snobs" [16]), of passing time ("Wasted all day Saturday 17 and Sunday 18 waiting for Savill, and reading Vanity Fair" [26]), and of controlling his emotional responses to life in the field ("Tried to drown my despair by reading stories" [40]). Clifford recognizes the reading as escapism, Powdermaker also sees his "trashy novels" as a response to his "need for escapes" (Powdermaker, "Further Reflections..." 347), and Hsu suggests that "[t]he other escape route for [him] was Western literature and music" (Hsu 519). Geertz sees *Malinowski's novels* as a hindrance to his work (Geertz, "Under the Mosquito Net" 12), and Payne opposes the *trashy novels* to "science" (Payne 430).

examination of the literary corpus found in Malinowski's diary. The next chapter asks why he specifies Conrad and his work as a paradigm for ethnographic subjectivity. If it is to salvage Malinowski, then what is the purpose of that salvation, and, what are the implications of his specification of Conrad?

Ethnographic Subjectivity

The model that James Clifford draws from Joseph Conrad's narrative strategies in Heart of Darkness is a model of the *new ethnographic subjectivity* that was emerging with the advent of the twentieth-century. What does Clifford mean by *ethnographic subjectivity*?

Clifford states that this subjectivity treats cultures as plural, discrete entities to be represented, and as sets of symbols for interpretation, as opposed to the nineteenth-century notion of culture as "a single evolutionary process" (Clifford, Predicament 92). It considers professional ethnographic work as "intensive dwelling" (Clifford, Routes 2) amongst people, which brings them "into a historical or ethnographic space that has been defined by the Western imagination" (Clifford, Predicament 5). Greenblatt's words identify "an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process" (Greenblatt 2) as an important part of this subjectivity. Clifford suggests that this subjectivity claims to be in quest of the universal in the local, but is inescapably "in culture while looking at culture" (Clifford, Predicament 93).

This state undermines any claim to impartiality of representation: "the historical predicament of ethnography, [is] the fact that it is always caught up in the invention of,

not the representation, of cultures” (Clifford & Marcus 2). This state also gives rise to the recognition of culture as “a collective fiction” (Clifford, Predicament 106). Being culturally located while looking at culture inevitably renders culture *per se* highly visible; each culture is “a system of meaning among others, the ethnographic self can no longer take root in unmediated identity” (106). In other words, as soon as one writes about culture it becomes self-undermining in that the recognition that all cultures are fictional renders one’s own cultural ground visibly so and thereby undermines any representative authority that one might attempt to construct for oneself.

Being in culture while looking at culture, specifically in the context of Western ethnographic practices, inevitably means that any claim to representation is an act of merging: that which is represented is merged into “the prevailing narratives of Western identity”⁹ (Clifford, Predicament 7). It is in this sense that ethnography is an invention of cultures – a culture is translated into terms not its own. Clifford argues that ethnographic subjectivity in the institutionalized study of culture brings about an entrance into the world of modernity for any people or culture it defines, which renders their difference forever in the past: difference remains only in a “feeling of lost authenticity” (4).

Clifford chooses to examine Conrad and Malinowski because they are “two powerful articulations of this subjectivity” (Predicament 95). However, I argue in the following chapter that he makes a tautological reading of Conrad’s life and Heart of Darkness to fashion a narrative model that fits in with his notion of an *ethnographic subjectivity* that can salvage Malinowski’s reputation.

⁹ Clifford lists the following terms as representative of these definitive narratives: “‘tribe,’ ‘culture,’ ‘identity,’ ‘assimilation,’ ‘ethnicity,’ ‘politics,’ and ‘community’” (Predicament 8)].

CHAPTER 3

WHY CONRAD?

This chapter asks why, besides Malinowski's wish to be the Conrad of anthropology¹ (which in itself is no validation for setting up a Conradian paradigm), Clifford specifies Conrad and his work as a paradigm for the *new ethnographic subjectivity*². As a persistent advocate of the importance of literature in the study of ethnography, there must be a reason for Clifford to overlook the rest of *Malinowski's novels*. This chapter also shows how Clifford tautologically crafts his presentation of Conrad to make him into the perfect model for the *new ethnographic subjectivity*, which becomes the basis of his argument for the salvation of Malinowski. It summarizes his reading of Heart of Darkness, and maps out the implications for the *new ethnographic subjectivity* of the paradigm's reliance on a certain narrative dishonesty, in the sense that it is based on a lie. In this chapter I also examine Clifford's problematic use of Conrad: his argument relies on biographical coincidences (e.g., Conrad and Malinowski were displaced Poles), and psychological conjecture (e.g., that being Polish gave Conrad and Malinowski a shared cultural outlook). I also draw attention to Clifford's dubious

¹ In a letter to B.Z. Seligman, quoted in: Firth, Raymond William. Man and culture; an evaluation of the work of Bronislaw Malinowski. London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1957: 6. Clifford writes that "[a]nthropology is still waiting for its Conrad" (96), but later suggests that "Malinowski's Children" (Geertz, Works and Lives 73), the "recent experimentalists [Rabinow, Dwyer, and Crapanzano] are filling that role" (Clifford, Predicament 113). One is led to ask what it would mean to be the Joseph Conrad of anthropology?

² This question is especially important since Clifford's handling of the two Poles is an implicit critique of the subjectivity evinced by one of the founding father's of anthropology, and thereby also a critique of the emergent twentieth-century anthropology intimately associated the Polish anthropologist.

invocation of the culture/anarchy dialectic, and of the inside and outside of Victorian bourgeois society. The implications of these invocations are very serious for Clifford's claim to be a post-colonial critic. Lastly, I suggest how Clifford's use of irony as a criterion for periodization in historical and literary studies fails.

Why Conrad?

It is important to understand why Clifford chooses to use Conrad to write a saving fiction for Malinowski³. The multiplicity of narrative levels in Heart of Darkness that enables ironic representation serves Clifford as an allegory for the act of salvation through a narrative lie, and therefore it becomes a means for describing the ethnographic subjectivity that Malinowski evinced in monographs such as Argonauts of the western Pacific. However, these are not justifications for the use of Conrad, these are examples of how Clifford actually uses him – how can he justify his use of the novelist beyond pseudo-psychology and biographical coincidence with Malinowski? Clifford makes the explicit claim that his “task here is neither psychological nor biographical” (Predicament

³ It is also important to ask why he wishes to salvage Malinowski. As discussed above he is one of the founders of anthropology, but with the publication of his diary in 1967 his reputation, and therefore ethnography itself, came under scrutiny. As Geertz wrote: “for a discipline which regards itself as nothing if not broad-minded, it is most unpleasant to discover that its archetypal fieldworker. Rather than being a man of catholic sympathies and deep generosity... was instead a crabbed. Self-preoccupied, hypochondriacal narcissist, whose fellow-feeling for the people he lived with was limited in the extreme” (Geertz, “Under the Mosquito Net” 12). Similarly, Hsu suggested that “Malinowski's sense of racial and cultural superiority over the natives in his field came through loud and clear” (Hsu 518). However, if Clifford can justify this *new ethnographic subjectivity*, then he can counter the suggestion that the diary is shattering “for anthropology's image of itself” (Geertz, “Under the Mosquito Net” 12) in the sense that it undermines both Malinowski and his texts that are at the birth of the modern discipline. Thence he has a basis for arguing that anthropology is not “in crisis” (Clifford, Routes 8).

104), but when at times the basis for his argument is biographical and psychological analysis one has to question to what extent his use of Conrad is justified.

Biographical Coincidence

In terms of biographical coincidence, Clifford discusses Conrad's "journey up the Congo... [and] a complex decade of choice, the 1890s," and then identifies "Malinowski's parallel experience" (Predicament 97) of fieldwork in the Trobriand islands from 1914-1918. These biographical details are important in their relation to writing: Almayer's Folly⁴, Heart of Darkness, Argonauts of the Western Pacific, and A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term, were all produced in part as a result of these experiences. However, similar experiences could be identified from the life stories of other writers and anthropologists: Clifford's work in general is concerned with anthropologists as writers, and their writing tends to be about their experiences in the field. So the parallel is not especially or extraordinarily enlightening, and it certainly does not justify the sole use of Conrad for Clifford's fashioning of a model of ethnographic subjectivity for the salvation of Malinowski.

The fact that Malinowski and Conrad shared the same nationality, and were alive and working in the same epoch is no justification for using the novelist's narrative strategies to create a model of ethnographic subjectivity. This is especially so given the priority Clifford gives to fiction, writing, and reading: indeed this is how he tries to use Conrad. However, he continues to supply his reader with more biographically coincidental similarities between the two men, perhaps under the mistaken assumption that by providing as many similarities as possible the reader will be convinced that his use of Conrad is justified.

Clifford begins to consider the linguistic similarities between the two Poles: “In comparing the experiences of Malinowski and Conrad, one is struck by their linguistic over-determination. In each case three languages are at work, producing constant translation and interference” (Predicament 101). He lists Polish, French, and English as the languages that Conrad was using around the time of his Congo voyage, and Polish, English and Kiriwinian as those employed by Malinowski during the time covered by his Diary. Ultimately the point that Clifford makes about this linguistic over-determination is that the two writers were caught up in “complex, contradictory, subjective situations articulated at the levels of language, desire, and cultural affiliation” (102). The point is well taken, but it is still not a convincing justification for using Conrad since it remains at the level of biographical similarity.

At no point does Clifford justify his use of Conrad, and so his argument feels tentative and spurious at times. An example is when en route to the point about Conrad and Malinowski’s location in complex linguistic situations, Clifford draws a “tentative structure” (Predicament 102) for the three languages in which each writer was working. He identifies a mother tongue, a language associated with career and marriage, and lastly a language relating to the erotic and violence. From this structure he draws a striking parallel between the Poles, and yet then suggests that “[t]his is surely too neat” (102). There are two points to be made here: firstly, that the tentativeness and doubt surrounding such a point reflect the problematically unjustified use of Conrad, and secondly, the overt concern with language suggests that Clifford’s analysis is perhaps as linguistically over-determined as he suggests Conrad and Malinowski’s earlier experiences were.

⁴ Conrad, Joseph. Almayer's folly: a story of an eastern river. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1895

Clifford's analysis is linguistically-based to the extent that one of his earliest premises is of the intimate connection between the *new ethnographic subjectivity* and "a new conception of language – or better, languages – seen as discrete systems of signs" (Predicament 94-5). The connection is that emergent conceptions of language and the new subjectivity under his consideration both maintain an ironic stance in relation to the possibility of unmediated representation. Language is important when considering ethnographic subjectivity in that it is one vehicle for ethnographic representation. However, Clifford's argument becomes linguistically over-determined at the point where the coincidental parallel is drawn between Conrad and Malinowski's language patterns. Not only is it a linguistically over-determined, and coincidental point, but it is in no way a justification for Clifford's sole use of Conrad. That the two Poles were working within different and learned languages is true, and important to the argument that a new ethnographic subjectivity is aware of "different domains of truth" (Predicament 99), but the extent to which Clifford works with such tentative biographical particularities is unjustifiable.

A Specific Reading

Clifford's real justification for using Conrad, and specifically Heart of Darkness is the kind of narrative strategies and the ironic tone of representation adopted in the novella. These reasons are more justifiable than the biographical coincidences discussed above for the use of Conrad, but Clifford indulges in a secondary narrowing process in his consideration of Heart of Darkness: he wishes to direct his readers towards a very specific reading of the novella. Clifford recognizes the parallel that other commentators

have drawn between Malinowski in his diary and Conrad's character Kurtz in Heart of Darkness⁵, but he disapproves. He writes that both texts

... appear to portray the crisis for identity – a struggle at the limits of Western civilization against the threat of moral dissolution. Indeed this struggle, and the need for personal restraint, is a commonplace of colonial literature. Thus the parallel is not particularly revealing, beyond showing life (the Diary) imitating “literature” (Heart of Darkness).

(Clifford, Predicament 98)

It is true that Malinowski holds Conrad in high regard in his diary, as when he talks about, “The subtle spirit of Conrad” (Malinowski, Diary 27), or compares him to Kipling: “In the evening I read Kipling. A fine artist (naturally not if compared to Conrad) and a very admirable fellow” (41). However, this admiration alone is no necessary reason for Clifford to use the novelist to construct a paradigm of ethnographic subjectivity as a means of saving Malinowski. Within his diary there are other writers that Malinowski held in high regard (e.g., Rudyard Kipling), and as such it is equally justifiable to employ them in models of ethnographic subjectivity that might redeem Malinowski. This approach leads one to ask whether Malinowski could be saved through a formulation of ethnographic subjectivity drawn from a reading of Kipling, especially in that his work represents a body of (“commonplace”) colonial literature?

⁵ See for example: Leach, Edmund. “Malinowskiana: On Reading a Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term: Or the Self-Mutilation of Professor Hsu. RAIN 36 (1980): 2-3 Stocking, George W. “Empathy and Antipathy in the Heart of Darkness: An Essay Review of Malinowski's Field Diaries.” Rev. of A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term. Journal of the History of the Behavioural Sciences 4.2 (1968): 189-94; Thornton, Robert J. “‘Imagine Yourself Set Down...’: Mach, Frazer, Conrad, Malinowski, and the Role of Imagination in Ethnography.” Anthropology Today 1 (1985): 7-14. Leach argues that Malinowski's quotation of Kurtz's famous “Exterminate all the brutes” (Conrad, Heart 118; Malinowski, Diary 69), is a “private ironic joke” about his own “moral desolation and defeated egoism” (3). Stocking writes that “Malinowski felt in himself something of the psychology of Mistah Kurtz... [though] he was far from being Kurtz” (190). Thornton's argument is that Malinowski's quotation “indicates an ironic sense of identity with Kurtz, the white man whom the ‘darkness’ of Africa had unhinged” (12).

Clifford's rhetoric in the third chapter of Predicament makes it clear that whatever fiction he does bring into his argument should be read in a particular way that precludes others. He recognizes that Conrad's novella and Malinowski's diary portray common themes of colonial literature, but what he finds a more revealing, indeed "a more profound, subversive theme" (99) is related to writing: fiction as salvation. Clifford fobs off other readings of Heart of Darkness and the diary in favor of his consideration of the intimate connection between writing, identity, and subjectivity. These readings might have taken into account other related fictions of colonial literature (e.g., Kipling's Kim) and offered alternative literary models for describing the *new ethnographic subjectivity*. If Clifford is "a historical critic of anthropology" (Clifford, Routes 8), who takes the notion of fiction in relation to ethnography seriously, then ought it not to be important that he take into account the emergent possibilities for rethinking ethnography and difference offered by setting up figures other than Conrad as paradigmatic for ethnographic subjectivity?

An example of a literary paradigm that offers an emergent possibility for rethinking notions of identity-formation as a narrative strategy within ethnography can be drawn from Dumas' The Count of Monte Cristo. This mid-nineteenth-century novel exemplifies the notions of trans-localism, fully endowed with the spirit of the invention of identity, that Clifford advocates in Routes. It is clear in the novel, in that it is central to the dynamic of its plot, that identity is not conceived of as essential; rather, it is constituted by dislocation, and fluidity. This potential paradigm for identity as it relates to writing and ethnographic practices is examined further in Chapter 4.

Clifford chooses not to pursue a delineation of ethnographic subjectivity through the frame offered by colonial literature, because he has a very specific reason for using Conrad as the basis of his proposed model of ethnographic subjectivity. This reason is related to writing – Conrad’s Heart of Darkness presents a sufficiently complicated and representationally ironic narrative structure formed around a plot whose dynamic is a lie, to testify to the difficulties of the possibility of writing from within one culture about another culture.

Cultural Distance and the Culture/Anarchy Dialectic

Clifford pursues his biographical approach when he writes that Conrad and Malinowski were both Poles “condemned by historical contingency to a cosmopolitan European identity,” and speculates that as such they might have shared “a peculiarly Polish cultural distance” (Predicament 98). It is true that both men were members of a nation that had been a fictional construct since the 18th century, but to claim that as such they shared cultural distance is interpretive, conjectural, and ultimately fallacious: again, this is no justification for the selection of Conrad.

Clifford also says that the two Poles were of aristocratic status, and suggests that “[t]his viewpoint outside bourgeois society... is perhaps a peculiarly advantageous “ethnographic” position” (Predicament 98). At this moment Clifford implicitly invokes the culture in the Culture and Anarchy⁶ dialectic delineated by Mathew Arnold, relating it to *bourgeois society*, in order to argue that a position outside it would allow for the ironic stance essential for ethnographic representation. However, the statement must be examined, as its invocation of this dialectic, this “historical predicament of late Victorian

⁶ Arnold, Mathew. Culture and Anarchy (New York: Macmillan, 1892)

high colonial society” (106), is problematic, and its ultimate implication is that the ideal ethnographer has to be a Polish aristocrat.

Mathew Arnold’s title is an indication of the prevailing Victorian attitude towards the study of culture: there is either civilization or chaos, and no room for relativism. As such, the suggestion that Conrad and Malinowski share a position exterior to this predicament has three further implications. Firstly, it is an absolute critique of it, in that their external location suggests its lack of totality. Secondly, it is an artificial, because inadequately explicated, means of helping Clifford formulate his description of an ideal ethnographic subjectivity. Thirdly, it is his means for arguing for ethno-relativism as opposed to essentialism.

However, Clifford’s use of the culture/anarchy dialectic is parodic in that it invokes Malinowski’s work as culture resisting anarchy, but simultaneously undermines it by placing him and his Polish counterpart, with their shared viewpoint outside bourgeois society, outside the dialectic all together. Clifford’s argument relies quite heavily on Malinowski’s maintenance of this dialectic: he, just like Conrad’s Marlow, uses work as a means of resistance to dissolution (anarchy) at the periphery of Western civilization (culture). Clifford presents Malinowski’s work implicitly located within the absolutism of the culture/anarchy dialectic and his cultural viewpoint completely outside it. What does this mean for Clifford’s argument? It shows that he practices the constitution of different domains of truth in his own work that discusses the very same process of constitution: he is indeed writing a carefully crafted *saving fiction* for Malinowski.

The work that Clifford is discussing is the work of the writer. He suggests that writing plays a dual role for Malinowski and Marlow. The reading of writing is a distraction: it detracts from Malinowski's fieldwork, and the repair of Marlow's steamer. However, it also exemplifies a type of salvation: in that it points towards a medium that contains the possibility of "a coherent subjectivity," and suggests "a viable path beyond fragmentation, not for the charmed reader but for the hard-working, constructive writer" (Predicament 109). Clifford argues that Malinowski rescued a coherent sense of professional identity "from the disintegration and depression... tied, like Conrad's, to the process of writing" (107). He suggests that *Malinowski's novels* offered him a glimpse of the possibility for coherent subjectivity and identity attained through writing, and as such writing became the domain for the ethnographer's own quest for coherence. Such a statement is conjectural, and the model of ethnographic identity that it implies is limited and fixed, as will be suggested by the model of identity drawn from a reading of Dumas' Edmond Dantès in the next chapter. This reading suggests that coherence does not have to imply a fixed identity; rather, it implies a level of control over the appearance of one's identity (whether constituted by stasis or displacement) to others.

Returning to Clifford's placement of Malinowski outside the culture/anarchy dialectic because of his aristocracy and nationality, one is tempted to ask, then, where is the ethnographer to be found? Is he inside the culture/anarchy dialectic, outside bourgeois society, or in both locations at different moments? The ultimate implication of Clifford's statement is that the ideal ethnographer is a Polish aristocrat.

This conclusion is dangerous for Clifford's general post-colonial agenda in that it implies that *the new ethnographic subjectivity* may be ideally found amongst colonized

peoples. Clifford evokes the Poland of Conrad and Malinowski as “a nation that had since the eighteenth century existed only as a fiction” (Predicament 98). Poland had been a part of Russia since 1772, but it still *existed* for the Polish people in their “romantic nationalism” (Wood 75). If one associates Clifford’s placement of the two Poles outside bourgeois society with their lack of cultural ground as Poles (they were a people colonized by Russia), then the conclusion that the *new ethnographic subjectivity* is associated with colonized people undermines the larger post-colonial agenda of Clifford’s work, as this subjectivity would rely on the maintenance of colonial conditions.

The implication that a Polish aristocrat would make the ideal ethnographer also puts Clifford’s advocacy of emergent post-colonial possibilities for Western ethnographic practices in a precarious position. Such an implication is in line with the earliest notion of the anthropologist as the ultimate outsider who had been “previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures” (Pratt 7) from his subject of study. Conrad and Malinowski are examples of ultimate outsiders at three levels: they were in exile from their colonized land, as aristocrats in Poland they were originally outside bourgeois society, and their cultural stance is an outsider’s stance in that it is related to this fictional nation. An analogy can be drawn between these figures and an earlier outsider – the European explorer, who was the precursor to colonial conditions, that Pratt calls the “‘seeing-man’... whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess” (7). Again, it might be seen as problematic that Clifford’s argument portrays the *new ethnographic subjectivity* so intimately associated with the maintenance of colonial conditions.

Conrad as Strategy

At such problematic moments when Conrad is presented as an analogous figure to Malinowski, Clifford's strategic use of the novelist is revealed. For Clifford, Conrad is a writer whose ironic narrative technique and cultural constitution allow him to be presented in a way that provides a model for the *new ethnographic subjectivity*. However, Clifford's argument feels somewhat tautological: setting out with a model of ethnographic subjectivity in mind, he proceeds to craft his presentation of Joseph Conrad's life and work in such a way as to make him the perfect model for that subjectivity. Once Conrad represents the perfect model of Clifford's *ethnographic subjectivity*, his use of the novelist as a means for redeeming Malinowski is justified. It is in this sense that Clifford has written a *saving fiction* of Malinowski: the salvation relies on an apparently deliberately tautological argument. However, another implication of using Conrad, as discussed above, is an advocacy for the maintenance of colonial conditions as a prerequisite for ethnographic practices. Such an implication might actually undermine Clifford's post-colonial politics.

Ethnographic Subjectivity and the Lie

Before suggesting that Clifford's post-colonial stance is undermined by his employment of Conrad's narrative strategies in his model of *ethnographic subjectivity*, it is only fair to examine his reading of Heart of Darkness in more detail. The reading emphasizes the irony fashioned in the novella's narrative structures, that provides "a vision of the constructed nature of culture and language" (Clifford, Predicament 95).

Clifford also points out the theme of the struggle between the order of Western civilization, and the threat of moral ruin on its periphery that the novella shares with the diary. However, the reading also relies on a plot-based situation: “the famous ‘lie’... Marlow’s refusal to tell Kurtz’s Intended his last words” (99). Clifford argues that Conrad’s “ironic position with respect to representational truth... [is]only implicit in Malinowski’s writing” (100), so the novelist is a step beyond the anthropologist in that he makes the act of lying thematic. One is tempted to infer that Clifford is hinting that the act of lying is symptomatic of Malinowski’s writing. However, what Clifford says explicitly is that just as Marlow’s lie to Kurtz’s Intended maintains her illusions so Malinowski’s Argonauts is his “all-too-believable account... [his] saving fiction” (Predicament 99).

Clifford’s reading of Heart of Darkness is made for the purpose of saving Malinowski’s reputation that was certainly damaged by the juxtaposition of his different Trobriand writings: his diary, and his monographs. Why is it important for Clifford to effect this salvation? Malinowski had a “field experience that had set the standard for scientific cultural description” (Predicament 97), and his writing forms “a kind of charter myth for the 20th century discipline of anthropology” (95). Malinowski is intimately associated with modern anthropological method: if he is scrutinized, then anthropology itself is scrutinized; it is therefore in Clifford’s interest, as an anthropologist, to redeem Malinowski as the father of the discipline. Clifford attempts this redemption through an argument that presents the manner in which Conrad’s narrative structures incorporate Marlow’s lie, as a literary model of *ethnographic subjectivity*. This model is an example

of a saving fiction. Clifford equates the *saving fiction* with ethnographic writing, and he thus fashions a means for the salvation of Malinowski as ethnographer.

Clifford's presentation attains a certain authority in that it is crafted to exemplify that for which it argues. Just as Marlow's lie to Kurtz's Intended and Malinowski's Argonauts are saving fictions, so indeed is that which he writes. It is important, though, to recognize that besides the tautological use of Conrad, Clifford's salvation of Malinowski has other definite limits: the Polish anthropologist never adopted as ironic an attitude towards representation as did Conrad, or indeed as does Clifford himself. The crux of Clifford's reading of Conrad's work is that, "Heart of Darkness [is] an allegory of writing and grappling with language and culture in their emergent twentieth-century definitions" (fn. 96) "centrally about writing, about telling the truth in its most alienated, nondialogical form" (fn.100). The implication is that a similar allegory is to be found in his own writing, and to a lesser extent in Malinowski's different Trobriand writings. The extent is less in Malinowski's work, because of his lesser sense of irony; and this is the very reason he needs salvation.

Clifford argues that Marlow's lie, as a "saving lie" (Predicament 99), constitutes domains of truth differentiated by cultural location and gender. Conrad's narrative shows Marlow freely repeating Kurtz's last words ("The horror! The horror!" [Conrad 149]) to a group of listeners on the yawl, but not doing the same for Kurtz's Intended ("I was on the point of crying at her, 'Don't you hear them?' ... 'The horror! The horror!' ... 'The last word he pronounced was – your name'" [161])⁷. This constitution of different

⁷ When drawing such an example of apparently different domains of truth in Marlow's narrative one must also be aware that Conrad's tale at times brings to the fore the indirect, mediatory, and representational predicament of narrative. Conrad hints at this predicament through Marlow's asides on the credibility of narrative ("...if we may believe what we read..." [49]), and the use of

domains of truth within Conrad's narrative strategies is an essential part of Clifford's formulation of a paradigm of *ethnographic subjectivity* through Heart of Darkness. However, lying, which is effectively the same thing as constituting different domains of truth, is not the only element in the ethnographic subjectivity delineated by Clifford – it is only in combination with an element of irony that it becomes integral to his model of the *new ethnographic subjectivity*.

Clifford argues that any success Marlow has in communicating is within a very limited context: these limitations are represented by the generic occupations of his group of listeners ("The Director of Companies... The Lawyer ... [and] The Accountant" [Conrad, Heart 46]). "He tells limited stories" (Clifford, Predicament 99). It is without irony that Marlow makes it clear that they are limited, i.e., he establishes different truths to maintain an illusion, but his belief in "an idea at the back of it" (Conrad, Heart 51) does not change, and in Marlow's opinion this persistence of the idea is its redemption. At this moment, one is tempted to draw a parallel between Marlow and Malinowski in that they both create different truths without irony: Marlow in his double narration of the voyage up the Congo, and Malinowski in the different narratives of his fieldwork.

Clifford explicitly names *irony* as the greatest textual difference between Malinowski and Conrad's work (Clifford, Predicament 100). It is this difference that is a central qualification of his model of *ethnographic subjectivity*, and which also makes an implicit judgment on the subjectivity evinced by Malinowski. Clifford writes, "The author of Argonauts devotes himself to constructing realistic cultural fictions, whereas Conrad, though similarly committed, represents the activity as a contextually limited

meta-fictional references ("The approach to this Kurtz... was beset by as many dangers as though he had been an enchanted princess sleeping in a fabulous castle" [106]).

practice of storytelling” (100). Effectively, Clifford recognizes one more narrative level in Conrad’s work than he observes in Malinowski’s monographs – it is this narrative level that produces the irony that is prerequisite for Clifford. Conrad wrote the narrative of “the narrator, one of those on board the ‘Nelly’” (Miller 35); “the ‘I’ of the story simply listens to a story told by someone else” (Said 92), i.e., a third level of narrative – Marlow’s yarn. Marlow’s lie to Kurtz’s Intended is central to the tale, and is presented ironically in that Conrad writes about someone listening to another man telling of how he has used a lie as salvation. One implication of Clifford’s argument is that Malinowski’s technique is the lie as salvation without the irony afforded by “multiplying narrators and points of view” (Miller 19). A second implication is that Clifford is suggesting that Malinowski’s diary makes up the ironic extra level of narrative, if it is read according to Clifford’s model of ethnographic subjectivity.

Clifford writes that, “Heart of Darkness offers, then, a paradigm of ethnographic subjectivity” (Predicament 99). It is the relationship between Conrad’s narrative structures and the lie in the plot of Heart of Darkness, which makes up Clifford’s Conradian paradigm. This relationship is the juxtaposition of Marlow’s “different domains of truth” (99) by means of a second narrative voice around Marlow:

This second narrator’s story is not itself undermined or limited. It represents, I propose, the ethnographic standpoint, a subjective position and a historical site of narrative authority that truthfully juxtaposes different truths... The second narrator salvages, compares, and (ironically) believes [Marlow’s] staged truths. This is the achieved perspective of the serious interpreter of cultures, of local, partial knowledge. The voice of Conrad’s “outermost” narrator is a stabilizing voice whose words are not meant to be mistrusted.

(Clifford, Predicament 99)

Clifford’s advocacy of a *new ethnographic subjectivity* premised on a carefully fashioned ironic self-reflexivity is well taken. However, Marlow’s lie plays an important

role for Clifford, in the sense that it is the lie that brings about salvation, and as such it remains troubling. Clifford's argument about Marlow's lie justifies the structure of the relationship between the different domains of truth constituted by Malinowski's Trobriand diary and monographs. Clifford recognizes that this was the only solution that the Polish anthropologist could find in the field to his struggle for a "functionalism [that] strove for a kind of unified personality" (Predicament 104) at a moment when the concept of culture was shifting in meaning. However, even with this qualification and that offered by an ironic tone, this promotion of narrative dishonesty for creating coherent ethnography and professional identity, in conjunction with Clifford's tautological use of Conrad, and the full implications of his invocation of the culture/anarchy dialectic, renders this literary paradigm spurious. However, I do not want to suggest that the use of all literary paradigms is spurious; rather that Clifford's strategic use of a Conradian model is ill-chosen. The next chapter offers examples of literary models for *ethnographic subjectivity* that do not share the problems of Clifford's Conradian paradigm.

CHAPTER 4

MALINOWSKI'S NOVELS – THE ALTERNATIVES

As discussed in Chapter 2, one of the conclusions that can be drawn from a reading of Malinowski's fieldwork diaries is that he was a prolific reader. This chapter works from that fact, and from the premise that literary analysis provides a useful means for examining ethnography. I have drawn models for thinking about identity formation, representation, and irony in ethnographic practices from two of the novels that Malinowski recorded reading during the time covered by his fieldwork diaries. This chapter is an implicit further critique of Clifford's strategic and problematic specification of Conrad. Clifford is "a historical critic of anthropology" (Clifford, Routes 8), who takes the notion of fiction in relation to ethnography seriously. As such, ought he not to take into account the emergent possibilities for rethinking ethnography and difference offered by setting up figures other than Conrad in paradigms of *ethnographic subjectivity*?

James Clifford's use of Conrad's Heart of Darkness can be explained as an example of advocacy for the use of literary analysis in interrogating ethnography. However, Clifford's justification for his choice of Conrad remains incomplete. The choice seems to have been made on the strength of three things: Malinowski's having read Conrad during his fieldwork, Malinowski's affinity for the novelist, and biographical coincidence between these two Poles. The literary models for examining ethnography that I draw from the work of Dumas, and Kipling in this chapter can be justified in three ways. Firstly, these works were read by Malinowski during his

fieldwork; secondly, he reacted to them in his fieldwork diaries; and thirdly, an examination of them maintains the importance of literature for providing a method for interrogating ethnography. That models can be drawn from other of *Malinowski's novels* is an implicit critique of Clifford's strategic use of Conrad.

However, this chapter is an affirmation of the method of using literary analysis in thinking about ethnographic practices. The examination of some of *Malinowski's novels* for the purpose of fashioning models concerned with identity formation, the possibilities of representational truth, and the use of irony for thinking about ethnography supports Clifford's "view of human location as constituted as much by displacement as by stasis" (Clifford, Routes 2). These novels share with ethnography the theme of cultural contact, and the models drawn from them have implications for ethnographic identity and practices, as they demonstrate that "[t]he performance of culture involves processes of identification and antagonism that cannot be fully contained, that overflow national and transnational structures" (Routes 9).

Alexandre Dumas

Malinowski's comments on Dumas are rather ambivalent. It is apparent that once started, he could not leave off from reading his novels, and yet despite this fanatic reading, he passes harsh judgments on the novels both in terms of their genre, and their characters. In his entry for January 16th 1915, Malinowski writes:

... Thursday I began to read Bragelonne¹, and I read it literally without interruption, until Wednesday or Tuesday night. Dumas, say what you will has a certain fascination. In the end he held me in his grip, though he doubtless has

¹ Dumas, Alexandre. The Vicomte de Bragelonne. NY: Collier, 1910

enormous shortcomings.... And the reconstruction of the past is carried out disgracefully. Aramis comes out a perfect ass, makes no sense at all. I would start reading the moment I got up, I didn't stop while I was eating, and I kept on till midnight... I read, read, and kept on reading without letup as though I were reading myself to death. Resolved that after finishing this trash I wouldn't touch another book in NG.

(Malinowski, Diary 62-63)

On the whole Malinowski reckons Dumas' work as trashy: in a similar vein to his comments on The Vicomte de Bragelonne are his brief remarks on The Count of Monte Cristo:

I read Monte Cristo without stopping. On the way to Pt. Glasgow, did not feel too well – I read the novel... bogged down with the trashy novel... kept reading in the boat... In general, overpowering numbness. But after finishing Monte Cristo, fairly good work... I accomplished a great deal, wrote and collected information efficiently.

(Malinowski, Diary 34-37)

Plot

Before arguing how a consideration of Monte Cristo adds to an argument for the use of literature in thinking about ethnography, or drawing any model for describing ethnographic subjectivity from it, a brief plot synopsis is required.

The novel begins in 1810, and the Count of Monte Cristo is initially introduced as Edmond Dantès: he is a young French sailor from Marseilles, who recently became captain of his ship, after the death of the previous captain. On his return to port he is to be married to Mercedes (a Catalan woman), however Danglars, the ship's supercargo, has other plans. He knows that en route Edmond stopped at the island of Elba to perform the last wishes of the late captain. Elba is where Napoleon was in exile in 1815. What Danglars did not know was that Edmond delivered a letter to Napoleon, and was given one to take to some Bonapartists in Paris. A Catalan fisherman, Fernand, is also in love with Mercedes, and on the return of Edmond he feels spurned. Fernand complains to

Danglars and Caderousse (a tailor) of his plight, and the former sees an opportunity of helping himself: he also feels aggrieved that the younger Edmond has been made captain in his place. They write a letter incriminating Edmond as a Bonapartiste and give it to the authorities. Edmond is arrested on his wedding night by the procureur du roi, Villefort. He examines the letter destined for the Bonapartistes in Paris, and discovers that it is addressed to his father. Because he fears that this letter might be ruinous for his political ambitions, Villefort destroys it, and puts Edmond in prison without a trace.

In prison, Edmond meets the Abbé Faria, who is thought mad by everyone: every year he offers an incremental sum of money to the inspector of prisons in return for his freedom; the money is to be found on the isle of Monte Cristo with a huge horde of treasure. Edmond learns a great deal from this man, who, when he eventually dies, becomes Edmond's means of escape from the prison, as he takes the place of the corpse when it is to be removed. With the help of the Abbé's powerful reasoning, Edmond figured out how, and by whom, he was set up: from this moment, vengeance becomes his goal in life.

Many years later and in possession of the vast treasures that Faria assured him he would find on Monte Cristo, Edmond returns to Marseilles: he learns that Mercedes married Fernand, and that Caderousse had let his father die of hunger. The novel traces the history of Edmond's revenge on Danglars, Caderousse, Fernand, and Villefort. This vengeance is carried out by means of a strict incognito: Edmond assumes the title and persona of the Count of Monte Cristo. None of the subjects of his revenge know the Count of Monte Cristo's other identity, until their last moments of life or sanity. Edmond adopts different personae besides the Count – the English Lord Wilmore, and the Italian

Abbé Busoni – in order to perform his revenge. At no point do any of those upon whom he is taking revenge think that these three are one and the same, i.e., Edmond.

Narrative Structure

The Count of Monte Cristo is written for the large part in a third person narrative. At points, it is very clear that this third person narrator is omniscient. Dumas' use of the free indirect style allows of comments such as: "...Monte Cristo, unwilling by prolonging his stay to destroy the advantages he hoped to obtain, made a farewell bow and parted" (Dumas 1: 551); and "...the result had surpassed his utmost expectations" (Dumas 1: 616). Such comments show that the narrator has privileged access to the thoughts of the characters, and in these specific examples to the thoughts of Edmond.

However, besides the third person narrative, there are some overtly authorial first person interventions, which are generally indirectly addressed to the reader. Throughout the novel chapters begin with such addresses as: "Many of my readers may be able to recollect..." (1: 45), "Valentine, whom we have in the rapid march of our narrative presented to our readers without formally introducing her..." (1: 601), and "We must explain this visit, which, although expected by Monte Cristo, is unexpected to our readers" (2: 421).

This multiplicity of narrative stances suggests to the reader, even before considering any elements of the novel's plot, how different domains of knowledge, if not *truth* (as Clifford might say), exist. Taking into account the plot, there are the characters who have their own domains of knowledge; the third person narrator has privileged knowledge of the novel's characters, and is able to juxtapose different facts ironically;

and the first person narrator has all this knowledge, and the knowledge that he is in the process of writing a narrative for readers, who constitute a fourth domain of knowledge.

In terms of narrative structure, then, and despite the absence of Conrad's elaborate framing technique, The Count of Monte Cristo is not dissimilar to Heart of Darkness. Conrad's novella and Dumas' novel both ironically draw attention to the status of narrative as representation by means of first person narrators. This ironic view of representation is reinforced throughout the 1200 pages of Dumas' novel which include: meta-fictional references (both to specific works and to genres), explicit comments on the transformative power of forms of representation other than narrative (e.g., painting), comical examples of tendentious and blatantly partial narratives, and more generally a pervasive sense of relativism. These different elements add up to imply to the reader that the narrative they are reading is a constructed, partial account that suggests that this is the predicament of all narratives. The narrative foregrounds its own status as narrative: this is its irony. This is an important point to draw into any consideration of ethnographic subjectivity – ethnographic narrative, just like any other narrative, can only ever be partial.

Meta-Fiction

In terms of the meta-fiction that pervades Dumas' novel, the most outstanding example is the huge number of references to the Arabian Nights. In telling Edmond about the provenance of the treasure on Monte Cristo, the Abbé Faria says that it "had remained unpossessed like the treasures of 'The Arabian Nights,' which slept in the bosom of the earth under the eyes of a genie" (1: 176-77). At different points in the novel, Edmond takes upon himself the alias *Sinbad the Sailor*: for example, when the young Parisian

Franz d'Epainay visits the isle of Monte Cristo, Edmond says, "I am generally called 'Sinbad the Sailor'" (1: 313), and Franz replies, "as I only require his wonderful lamp to make me precisely like Aladdin, ... I see no reason why I should not be called Aladdin" (1: 313). Dumas' invocation of this 19th century collection of ancient tales has three effects: it emphasizes the fairy tale quality of Edmond's good fortune, it draws attention to the fairy tale quality of the narrative that tells of his fortune, and it suggests the ease with which identities (e.g., Sinbad and Aladdin) may be assumed or discarded, meaning that identity cannot be conceived of in a fixed way let alone coherently represented.

There are other specific works and writers to which references are made in the novel. Franz comments before visiting Monte Cristo that he, "thought... pirates only existed in the romances of Cooper and Capt. Marryat" (1: 301). In a comment that hints at the notion of fatality found in the story of Œdipus, the narrator mentions "the penetration of Œdipus or the Sphinx" (1: 473). Similarly, Shakespeare's Hamlet (2: 614), and MacBeth (2: 249 & 310) are both invoked to add to the conspiratorial overtones in the novel.

Beyond these specific references, there are more general meta-fictional references to genres of writing. They effectively draw attention to the status of Dumas' narrative as an interpretive presentation, and only one kind of representation amongst many possible others.

One such possibility is poetry. The Count of Monte Cristo suggests that a story he heard "might furnish material for a most touching and pathetic poem" (2: 44), and later Albert de Morcerf (the son of Mercedes and Fernand) is astonished at the name of

Edmond's young Greek ward: "Are there, then, really women who bear the name of Haydée anywhere but in Byron's poems?" (2: 258).

Another two possible forms of representation that are invoked are the romance and the novel. Monte Cristo, in feeding a story to Cavalcanti (a man he has installed in an aristocratic position as an impostor) tells him, "Your history is quite a romance, and the world, which delights in romances contained in two covers of yellow paper, strangely mistrusts those which are bound in living parchment..." (2: 46-47). Again, when he meets with Mercedes far into the novel, and frustrated by the influence she still has over him, Edmond says that, "Like benefactors in romance, I should have left you without seeing you again" (2: 592). Although Edmond embodies and proclaims the most evidently ironic attitude towards representation, there are others: for example, in discussing the unknown whereabouts of their bastard child, Villefort asks Mme. Danglars, "Do I know? ... and do you believe that, if I knew, I would relate to you all its trials and all its adventures as would a dramatist or a novel writer?" (2: 158). Dumas presents Villefort with an awareness of the indirect relationship between narrative and life, and in doing so the novelist puts his own narrative in a rather ironic light.

The novel invokes the genre of drama the most frequently in meta-fictional references. The omniscient narrator describes the scene at the Count of Monte Cristo's country house where the reader is aware an attempted assassination has taken place: "...a black cloud, charged with electricity, gave to these vapors the appearance and solemnity of a dramatic episode" (1: 487). This kind of technique has been called the *pathetic fallacy*: a writer manipulates environmental description to reflect either the tone of the events taking place, or the attitude or emotions of a character. Dumas' use of the

technique is so overt that it has an ironic effect. Another example of the invocation of drama to render a narrative ironic, this time at the level of the plot itself, is when Haydée is recounting to Albert the story of her father's demise. The Count has ordered her not to reveal the name of the French soldier who betrayed her father: it was Fernand (Albert's father). During her relation Albert comments, "[i]t is very strange... to hear such words proceed from the mouth of any one but an actress on the stage..." (2: 264). Indeed, Haydée is acting, not on a stage, but to the extent that her narrative becomes loaded with a dramatic irony: she, the Count, and the reader all know what Albert does not; in this way Dumas' narrative is highly ironic as it shows the partiality of narrative. A third example of a reference to drama that ironically draws attention to Dumas' narrative machinations is when Beauchamp, a young Parisian journalist and friend of Albert, exclaims at the downfall of Villefort: "...let them now say that drama is unnatural!" (2: 581). The implication of his comment is that drama is generally considered stylized and unrealistic, however having witnessed the extraordinary events that brought about the procureur du roi's demise, he feels that drama and life are not perhaps so far removed as popular opinion would have it. The comment is not as ironic in the world of the novel as it is at the level of Dumas' narrative where it is highly ironic. Dumas presents a man relying on what the reader knows to be a fashioned story as proof for a comment that implies that drama and life are not dissimilar.

The ironic light in which meta-fictional references place any narrative's claims to representative truth is instructive for ethnography. Such references make it clear that the relationship between a narrative and that which it seeks to represent is ultimately indirect.

This element in Dumas' writing offers a model for recognizing the limitations of ethnography's representative power.

Representation

Besides meta-fictional references, Dumas' narrative includes more direct commentary on both the ultimately transformative power of representation, and also on the limits of representative power. This commentary reemphasizes a model of ethnographic subjectivity that maintains an ironic self-reflexive attitude about its power to represent.

In a passage describing Albert's collection of artwork, the narrator talks about an artist "who makes his flowers more beautiful than flowers, [and] his suns more brilliant than the sun" (1: 470). Dumas' use of the comparative in this context suggests the falsifying potential of representation: a painter can represent in a manner that renders the representation unrealistic, in that it is transformative of that which it depicts. At other moments the implication of the narrative is that pictorial representation can be adequate to the task of not transforming that which it depicts. The narrator suggests when describing Albert and Mercedes, that, "[t]he artist who could have depicted the expression of these two beautiful countenances would certainly have made of them a beautiful picture" (2: 414). However, at other times the narrator views representation and interpretation as flawed and limited, as when one of Edmond's smiles is described as, "one of those smiles that a painter could never represent or a physiologist analyze" (1: 476). At such a moment, it is implicit that a perfect form of representation or of interpretation is an impossibility. The presence of such a comment in Dumas' narrative is another indication of his ironic attitude towards the construction of narrative: he

foregrounds his act of writing and thereby suggests the inevitability of imperfect representation. It is this kind of stance that a model for ethnographic practices drawn from Dumas would propound.

Tendentiousness

At times in the novel there are examples, which can be quite comical, of tendentious narratives. What I mean by tendentious narrative, is that kind of narrative in which one can recognize an ulterior motive; for example, a case for the defense in a court of law is a tendentious narrative in that it is obviously for the purpose of disproving the charges against the accused. When Dumas presents his reader with such a narrative it can be seen as an implicit comment on the partiality of narrative *per se*: he makes it so clear, both through his omniscient narrator and the attitudes of certain of his characters, that what is being discussed is being discussed for a very specific reason. A paradigm of ethnographic subjectivity drawn from Dumas, sees clearly that all narratives can be conceived of as tendentious.

The best example of tendentious narrative in the novel is when the Count of Monte Cristo is trying to persuade Villefort to dine at his country house. This is the house where Villefort thought he had buried alive his and Mme. Danglars' bastard son many years earlier. The episode is loaded with dramatic irony: the reader shares Edmond's knowledge that the child was rescued, and so is able to comprehend just how loaded his comments are to Villefort. Edmond warns him, "...if you fail to come I shall think – for how do I know to the contrary? – that this house... must have some gloomy tradition or dreadful legend connected with it" (2: 92). It is comical and ironic that the Count should suggest that he would be forced to think of such a thing were Villefort simply to fail to

attend a dinner party. The Count does manage to assemble his dinner guests at his country residence, which he has purposely decorated in rather gloomy fashion. One of the young Parisian guests is affected by his surroundings to the point of saying, "...if the house had not belonged to the father-in-law of the procureur du roi one might have thought it some accursed place where a horrible crime had been committed" (2:116). Of course, the Count does nothing to refute such a suggestion. "It is singular, baron, but the same idea came across me the first time I entered it..." (2: 116). This sets the tone for the rest of the evening during the course of which Mme. Villefort quizzes Mme. Danglars, "... are you courageous enough to sit down upon the very seat perhaps upon which the crime was committed?" (2: 118). This episode is suggestive of the ease with which an interested narrative can be perpetuated and instigated: a point of which a model for ethnography has to be aware. In its comical irony Dumas emphasizes how contrived a narrative, all narrative, can be. The novelist's technique again implies that the possibility of an impartial representation is ultimately elusive.

At a later point in the novel the omniscient third person narrator comments on a very similar process in describing Danglars listening to his daughter: "...engaged as he was, like every man burdened with thoughts of the past, in seeking the thread of his own ideas in those of the speaker" (2: 446). The process delineated in this sentence is almost the opposite of the idea of the tendentious narrative outlined above: it is tendentious listening. Danglars does not really listen to his daughter, rather he tailors what he hears to suit his own predilection (which is to treat his daughter as a bargaining chip in his business transactions). This statement also makes an implicit comment on representation: it is a two way process; there is representation and then reception/interpretation of the

representation. No matter how one tries to make a representation, there is always the strong likelihood that it may not be taken as one would have wished. Dumas pinpoints another problem for ethnographic narrative.

Relativism

A strict sense of relativism is maintained in the novel, both in the attitudes and actions demonstrated by some of its characters, and in commentary made by the third person narrator. Twice in the novel do the words, “everything is relative” (1: 226 & 565), proceed from Edmond’s mouth, however, it is apparent that this is an attitude at which he has arrived. During Edmond’s 14-year imprisonment he is placed in solitary confinement, and the omniscient narrator says:

Often, before his captivity, Dantès ’ mind had revolted at the idea of those assemblages of prisoners, composed of thieves, vagabonds, and murderers. He now wished to be among them, in order to see some other face besides that of his jailer; he sighed for the galleys, with their infamous costume, their chain and the brand on the shoulder. The galley slaves breathed the fresh air of heaven and saw each other. They were happy. He besought the jailer one day to let him have a companion, were it even the mad abbé.

(1: 121)

The narrator describes how Edmond’s attitude towards people dubbed as criminal has changed as he himself has experienced a deprivation of liberty. In his extreme isolation he reaches a point where his former revolt at criminals, their infamous dress, and their branding becomes a wish for contact with them; he stops judging them once he experiences the treatment of criminals from the point of view of the criminal. It may be assumed that before this experience, Edmond’s attitude, and indeed perhaps the prevalent attitude in the France depicted in the novel, would have been similar to the one exemplified by Villefort. In the opening pages of the novel he discusses Marseilles, saying that there are “continual and fatal duels among the higher classes of persons, and

assassinations in the lower” (1: 54). The implicit attitude displayed by Villefort in such a comment is that despite the fatal results of both duels and assassinations, because they are judged by different class standards, the former is more acceptable. This attitude is in opposition to a relativistic position which would understand that whether one is more acceptable than the other does not matter given they both result in death, and serve as a reminder of the vulnerability of life and man’s mortality. This relativistic position throws class pretensions into an ironic light, and might suggest, in a model of ethnographic subjectivity, the artificial nature of ethnocentrism.

The attitude of relativism at which Edmond arrives is demonstrable by a comment he makes to Mme. De Villefort and by remarks he makes in the closing letter of the novel. In a discussion of toxicology with Mme. De Villefort (which is tendentious as Edmond knows she is conspiring against her own family), he tells her that, “in medicine use is made of the most violent poisons, which become, according as they are made use of, most salutary remedies” (1: 615). Edmond can see that two things can be the same, but simultaneously known by different names according to their circumstances. A chemical can be a medicine or a poison depending on whether it is in the hands of a surgeon or a murderer; a murder is an illegal killing whether it is performed by an assassin or in a duel (despite what Villefort might suggest to the contrary). That an attitude of relativism is one of the themes of the novel is emphasized by Edmond’s epistolary remarks in its closing pages: “There is neither happiness nor misery in the world; there is only the comparison of one state with another, nothing more” (2: 648). He has experienced 14 years of imprisonment, and a subsequent lifetime of riches; his most enriching contact was with the Abbé Faria in his dungeon, and the majority of his contact

after his escape was subordinate to his ultimate quest for vengeance. At which point in this life was he more happy, and at which point more miserable? The attitude of relativism expounded in the novel would probably lead Edmond to suggest that it is impossible to say: he has come to understand that happiness and misery mean very different things in different circumstances; both terms require partial judgment at specific moments. Moments can be compared, but not according to any ultimate criteria, rather the criteria themselves become the point of comparison. This conclusion would be important for the Dumasian model of ethnographic subjectivity: it implies the impossibility of any claim to complete ethnographic empathy.

It is evident from the meta-fictional references, the direct commentary on pictorial representation, the examples of tendentious narratives, and the attitude of relativism propounded in the novel that Dumas has a very ironic view of the possibility of impartiality of representation, and specifically narrative. In a very different way from Conrad, Dumas might serve Clifford as a literary means for fashioning a model of ethnographic subjectivity for the salvation of Malinowski. The advantage of using Dumas is that it does not have the undermining effects that I have shown the choice of Conrad has for Clifford's broader post-colonial politics. The use of Dumas also throws another problematic light on Clifford's arguments: it is important for Clifford that Conrad's narrative strategies are *modern* in the sense that they are ironic. Clifford seems to perceive irony as an indicator of the modernity of a narrative. Dumas' 1844 novel is an ironic presentation of representation, which is as ironic in its stance in relation to narrative and the possibility of representational truth as Conrad's work half a century

later. Even a simple reading of Dumas shows that using irony as a means of identifying a narrative as *modern* is mistaken.

Identity

A model of ethnographic subjectivity must take into account more than just narrative strategies – it must give an account of identity formation within narrative. A consideration of Monte Cristo complicates a model of ethnographic subjectivity in that the novel's exploration of identity formation is suggestive of the invention and performance of identities that cross national and class boundaries. This type of trans-localism, and cultural performance is very much Clifford's concern in Routes. Clifford's account of Conrad and Malinowski is quite biographically based: it considers the parallel trajectories of two Poles attempting to gain the status of professional writers in English; its consideration of identity is more concerned with the authorial identity, and the patterns of colonial identity implicit in narrative strategies. A consideration of Dumas' treatment of identity relocates that consideration of identity in a paradigm of ethnographic subjectivity at the basic level of narrative and plot. The reading of Dumas offered here reinforces the notion of identity as a narrative strategy. With the recognition that identity, as a narrative strategy, is contextually pliable, Clifford's argument in Routes, that human identity is constituted as much by displacement as by stasis, is certainly reinforced (provided one may conflate *human identity* with the identity of a character constructed in narrative).

I take cultural performance to be the presenting of oneself according to the prevalent criteria of judgment in a particular society. I take trans-localism to be the ability to perform culturally in plural locations; thus becoming another argument for identity

constituted as much by displacement as by stasis. The Count of Monte Cristo serves as a good example of this type of trans-localism and of an identity constituted by displacement. Dumas' eponymous hero recognizes different cultural domains of knowledge, custom, dress, and language: he adjusts his identity (in the sense of controlling how he is perceived by others) according to his recognition of the cultural domain in which he finds himself at any one moment. He could be looked on as a figure analogous to the ethnographer: he reconstitutes his identity contextually, but always does so with irony, in that it is always subordinate to an ulterior motive (in Edmond's case it is revenge, and in the ethnographer's it is science).

It is ironic that Edmond attains the ability to reconstitute his identity contextually by being removed from society: it is an initial experience of dislocation with transformative affects. He spends fourteen years in prison in the Château D'Îf: his only contact is with his jailer, and the influential Abbé Faria. The priest educates the rude sailor Edmond in languages, philosophy, chemistry, and jurisprudence. This education is carried to the point where after Edmond's escape "he could not recognize himself" (1: 207) either physically or attitudinally. Although this seems an absolute transformation, Edmond's means of transformation becomes greater once he visits Monte Cristo and obtains the treasure that Faria had assured him was hidden there: "he had now the means of adopting any disguise he thought proper" (1: 232).

Although it is important to be careful about the confusion of identity with appearance, the majority of the novel's characters do not exercise such care: they associate identity with appearance, provenance, and class. In other words they recognize the cultural constitution of identity, but feel it to be singular and precisely locatable. A

discussion between Mercedes and Albert about the Count exemplifies this conflate association:

“...do you think the count is really what he appears to be?”

“What does he appear to be?”

“Why, you have just said – a man of high distinction.”

“But what is your opinion, Albert?”

“I must say that I have not come to any decided opinion respecting him, but I think him a Maltese.”

“I do not ask you of his origin, but what he is.”

“Ah, what he is; that is quite another thing. I have seen so many remarkable things of him, that if you would have me really say what I think, I shall reply that I really do look upon him as one of Byron’s heroes...”

(1: 479-80)

If asking what a person is, is the same as asking what their identity is, then Albert’s responses to his mother’s questions demonstrate his attitude that identity is singular, fixable, and may be associated with class, provenance, appearance, and literary figures. Albert uses his own means of understanding to arrive at an approximation of the Count’s identity, but it is unsatisfactory to his mother. She is the only character who sees through Edmond’s layers of disguise, thereby showing her knowledge of the impossibility of the fixity of identity: she sees that Edmond’s cultural performance of identity is contextually variable. However, unlike Mercedes, other characters make the same kinds of conflation as Albert does when guessing who or what is the Count of Monte Cristo. Franz and Albert’s landlord in Rome and Mme. Danglars recognize him respectively, by class and nationality, as, “A very great nobleman, but whether Maltese or Sicilian I cannot exactly say” (1: 378), and “the shah of Persia, traveling *incog*.” (2: 12). The attitude that conflates a singularly locatable identity with appearance and provenance is made clear by Dumas’ use of the free indirect style, as the narrator describes Franz’s attitude: “Franz was forced to confess that costume has much to do with the physical

superiority we accord to certain nations” (1: 406). Throughout the novel this kind of conflation takes place: it is therefore important to be aware of it in arguments about identity as narrative strategy in Monte Cristo.

With unlimited financial means of adopting whatever disguise he chooses, Edmond proceeds to do so. The dynamic for the plot is Edmond’s quest for revenge, so his adoption of disguises is to prevent his identification as Edmond Dantès, thereby enabling him to complete this quest. However, in more general terms money is a context for the assumption of an identity – being within a profession is another context. Edmond’s immense fortune is his means of adopting different identities, and his vendetta is the reason; Malinowski’s location within the nascent discipline of social anthropology is his means of adopting different identities, and his desire for a coherent professional identity is his reason; and Conrad’s position as a writer in England is his means of adopting a different identity, his desire for success as an English writer is his rationale.

In Dumas’ novel, then, identity and appearance are conflated, and Edmond plays on this pervasive predicament in order to carry out his revenge. The model of identity to be drawn from his character is contingent “conjunctural, not essential” (Clifford, Predicament 11): he adopts different outward appearances, different languages and attitudes according to the company in which he finds himself, however this trans-local and fluid identity is always subordinate to his quest for revenge. If identity is considered as cultural performance, as Clifford sees it, then it is always subordinate to another contextual cultural narrative; thus identity is always a partial performance, and never fixed. In the particular example of Edmond Dantès, identity overflows borders of knowledge, nations, supposed nationalities, and transnational structures, but this

overflowing is subordinate to his vengeance. Edmond might provide a model for the subjectivity of the ethnographer with a fluid identity that is subordinate to an ulterior motive.

Edmond adopts three different identities of any importance²: the Count of Monte Cristo, the Italian Abbé Busoni, and the English Lord Wilmore. Each identity serves him a different purpose, and so is used for different people, but the eponymous identity is pervasive.

Lord Wilmore

Once escaped from captivity, Edmond falls in with smugglers until he lays his hands on the treasure bequeathed him by Faria, which enables him to return to Marseilles. Despite his lengthy absence, he is unwilling to present himself there as Edmond Dantès: he is known to have broken out of prison. Instead he “coolly presented an English passport” (1: 232). In his hometown he continues to use this English identity when, for example he comes on behalf of a Roman bank to rescue the fortunes of his benevolent former employer, the ship-owner Morel:

...a man about 30 or 32, dressed in a bright blue frock coat, nankeen trousers, and a white waistcoat, having the appearance and accent of an Englishman, presented himself before the mayor of Marseilles... walking with that step peculiar to the sons of Great Britain... with the coolness of his nation...

(1: 266-67)

Edmond adopts the dress, speech, gait, and cool of an Englishman with as much ease as when he pulled out the English passport. In this guise, he purchases Morel's debts, and furnishes him with a new vessel to replace those he has lost during his waning fortunes. It is known by those whom he favors that he is an Englishman, but he uses the

² At some points in the novel he also disguises himself: he sports a costume in the Roman carnival, and assumes the alias of *Sinbad*.

alias “Sinbad the Sailor” (1: 584) when performing his benevolent actions. However, it is not just these actions that he performs: he also performs an identity as an Englishman. This performance is a strategy to avoid discovery, and suggests Edmond’s recognition that identity is relative to its context and presentation.

Much later the Count prevents his discovery by complicating the relationship between his different identities: he ironically makes them candidly comment on one another. He meets with the family of the late Morel, and hears from them the story of the benevolent actions of an Englishman that he himself performed. He asks Julie Morel:

“...was he not about my height, perhaps a little taller, his chin imprisoned, to use the word, in a high cravat; his coat closely buttoned up, and constantly taking out his pencil?”

“Oh, do you then know him?” cried Julie, whose eyes sparkled with joy.

“No,” returned Monte Cristo. “I only guessed. I knew a Lord Wilmore, who was constantly doing actions of this kind.”

“Without revealing himself”

“He was an eccentric being, and did not believe in the existence of gratitude.”

(1: 584)

Edmond’s strategy here is complete obfuscation: he removes any suspicion that Wilmore is the same man as Monte Cristo, let alone that they are both Edmond, by showing that they know each other. This strategy of the presentation of plural identities is successful. After the dinner party at the Count’s country home, Villefort begins to have suspicions about the Count because he seems to know about his former affair with Mme. Danglars. The procureur resolves within a week to “ascertain who this M. de Monte Cristo is, whence he comes, [and] where he goes” (2: 160). However, owing to Edmond’s successful tactic of obfuscation and plural performances of identity, Villefort only manages to discover that the Count “is an intimate acquaintance of Lord Wilmore, a rich foreigner... he is also known to the Abbé Busoni, a Sicilian priest” (2: 166). With this in

mind, Villefort interviews these two gentlemen: he visits Wilmore second, who tells him that Monte Cristo is his long-time enemy, and generally misleads the procureur. Having exhausted this line of questioning, Villefort leaves and there follows a moment where Edmond's identity is almost palpably fluid:

Lord Wilmore, having heard the door close after him, returned to his bedroom, where with one hand he pulled off his light hair, his red whiskers, his false jaw and his wound, to resume his own black hair, the dark complexion and the pearly teeth of the Count of Monte Cristo.

(2: 176)

The description of the physical removal of layers of disguise suggests the assumption of a singular relationship between identity and appearance, and the ease with which it can be transformed. The description also accords with the general pattern of disguises in the plot: Edmond assumes different identities to enact his revenge, and it is only once this goal is assured that he peels off the layers of his identities to give the final blow of remembrance to the subjects of his vengeance. Identity for Edmond is a contingent strategy (Lord Wilmore is an example of its strategic use), just as identity was a strategy for Malinowski as he struggled for a coherent sense of his nascent professionalism.

Abbé Busoni

Before Edmond adopts this English disguise he assumes the identity of an Italian priest: the Abbé Busoni, "dressed in black and wearing a three-cornered hat" (1: 240). Edmond assumes this identity primarily to deal with Caderousse, and to gain access to those places where a priest performs his duties, e.g., a deathbed. The fluidity of identity is apparent again when the Count reacts to Caderousse, attempting to rob his Parisian residence, by assuming his Italian identity:

Meanwhile Monte Cristo had rapidly taken off his great-coat, and shirt, and one might distinguish by the glimmering through the open panel that he wore one of those pliant tunics of steel mail... This tunic soon disappeared under a long cassock, as did his hair under a priest's wig; the three-cornered hat over this effectually transformed the count into an abbé.

(2: 336)

That this tunic remains beneath whatever identity he assumes suggests that beneath each one there is a shared fear of discovery. Clothing is thus very important for identity in the novel: the Count recognizes that people associate certain characteristics, indeed identity itself with external signs such as clothes, and as such he is able to hide his fear of discovery, which can be equated with his fear of not completing his revenge. Just as Wilmore's nationality, and thence his characteristic coolness, were divined from his clothing and his gait, so do the Abbé's clothes signify his priesthood and the duties associated therewith.

Recognizing people's association of clothing with identity, the Abbé, "an Italian priest, of serious demeanor and calm and firm tone, hired for his use the house adjoining the hotel of M. de Villefort" (2: 444), at a time when his household is plagued by a poisoner. As a priest, Edmond succeeds in gaining access to this home to pray, and perform last rites. Villefort's father, Noirtier (the Bonapartiste for whom the letter that incriminated Edmond was bound), lives with his son. Once he has gained access to this house Edmond is able to carry out a communication with this old man, which is important for his revenge. Noirtier killed Franz's father; Villefort has arranged for Franz to marry his daughter, Valentine; it is a political marriage demonstrating good will between former Bonapartistes and royalists. When the Abbé Busoni enters Villefort's house this arrangement is destroyed. Noirtier is already averse to this marriage (he knows Valentine loves another) so at the priest's suggestion he willingly tells Franz that he

killed his father; Franz subsequently breaks off his engagement. Villefort is a precise, work-obsessed character: the destruction of his carefully laid plans is the important first part of Edmond's revenge; once again the subordination of a fluid identity to the goal of vengeance can be observed.

The second part of Edmond's vengeance on Villefort is his indirect revelation to him that it is Mme. De Villefort who has been poisoning members of their family. Indeed, a third part of his revenge is that he has already been an indirect cause of these deaths: he very deliberately and tendentiously held an extended discussion of toxicology with Villefort's wife (1: 600-616). However, the ultimate part of Edmond's revenge on Villefort is when he enables him to discover that it is his wife who is the poisoner. With this revelation, the procureur asks her implicitly to do away with herself so that he should not have to bring her to justice; she does so, but also takes the life of their son, Edward. Ironically, the Abbé is oblivious to these deaths, so that when Villefort enters he tells him that he has paid his debt and that henceforth he will pray for God to forgive him. "[S]urely that is not the voice of the Abbé Busoni," exclaims Villefort, and "the abbé threw off his false tonsure, shook his head and his hair, no longer confined, fell in black masses around his manly face" (2: 587). Villefort recognizes the Count (a second layer of disguise) but Edmond tells him to think further back, before eventually revealing: "I am Edmond Dantès!" (588). Villefort is not especially surprised – rather he takes Edmond to show him the bodies of his wife and son, and to show him that his revenge has gone too far.

It is the fluidity of identity that is in part the means to Edmond's revenge, but it is evident that that goal is not fully in his control, given that there are contingencies, like

other people, involved. In a Dumasian model of ethnographic subjectivity the fluidity of identity is a means to the goal of a certain knowledge, but Monte Cristo reminds one that even that goal is not fully controllable.

Count of Monte Cristo

It is very ironic, given the fluidity with which Edmond switches his identity that throughout the novel the Count of Monte Cristo is continually described as ‘singular.’ The husband of Julie Morel (1: 586), the Countess G—— (2: 9), Villefort (2: 94), and Albert (2: 291) all describe him thus at different moments. The concern with the Count’s origins and nationality has already been discussed above, but he remains an “enigma” (1: 410). This is, of course, Edmond’s aim – he wishes to control his identity, and certainly how those around him see him, just until the time when it is expedient for him and his goal of revenge, to reveal the Marseillaise sailor beneath the layers of his disguise.

The depth of his disguise is suggested by his huge knowledge of the world: the narrator comments that “everything was familiar to him” (1: 469) as he peruses the contents of Albert’s salon. It is also apparent in the arrogant boasts of the Count to Villefort:

My kingdom is bounded only by the world, for I am neither an Italian, nor a Frenchman, nor a Hindoo [sic], nor an American, nor a Spaniard – I am a cosmopolite... I adopt all customs, speak all languages. You believe me to be a Frenchman... Ali... believes me to be an Arab; Bertuccio... takes me for a Roman; Haydée... thinks me a Greek. You may, therefore, comprehend, that being of no country, asking no protection from any government, acknowledging no man as my brother, not one of the scruples that arrest the powerful, or the obstacles that paralyzed the weak, paralyze or arrest me.

(1: 567)

Not only has Edmond cultivated a fluidity of identity, but as the Count he has cultivated a deliberately indeterminate identity: for him it serves as a justification for his

lack of affiliation to any particular moral code – just like Machiavelli's Prince he can act in the name of expedience. People see him in their own ways, but Edmond is indifferent so long as his quest for revenge is not hindered. He is seen as a "pretended count" (1: 536), "the greatest hero of the day" (1: 560) in Paris, "by no means a highly bred gentleman" (1: 663), and "an arrogant braggadocio or a supernatural being" (2:391) by different characters. However, he is completely indifferent to this: he sees himself in a very different light, as an agent of Providence carrying out justice – it is only once he is completing his revenge on Danglars that his self-perception comes to light:

"I am he whom you sold and dishonored – I am he whose betrothed you prostituted – I am he upon whom you trampled that you might raise yourself to fortune – I am he whose father you condemned to die of hunger – I am he whom you also condemned to starvation, and who yet forgives you, because he hopes to be forgiven – I am Edmond Dantès!"

(2: 635)

This is the means Edmond has of completing his revenge: he ruins the lives of those who ruined his own by assuming different identities, and only reveals himself as Edmond at the moment before they die or go mad. During the sojourn of Franz and Albert in Rome, the Count takes them to see a public execution, and during the proceedings makes a comment that describes this process of revelation: "on the steps of the scaffold death tears off the mask that has been worn through life, and the real visage is disclosed" (1: 398). It seems as though Edmond is talking about the mask worn by the condemned man, and yet it is a perfect description of his final act of revenge. However, Edmond is not in complete control of his plural performance of identities, as towards the completion of his revenge he sees his initial identity as corrupted: "too much gold and splendor are now reflected by the mirror in which Monte Cristo seeks to behold Dantès" (2: 604). The identity of the Marseillaise sailor belongs to another context.

Despite Edmond's performances of identities across different contexts, one character is able to recognize him incognito: Mercedes. The first instance is when the Count attends a ball at the Morcerf's house, and Mercedes offers him fruit to eat, which he refuses – it being an Arabian custom that once he has eaten under her roof then they become eternal friends. At his refusal Mercedes, with tears in her eyes, asks the loaded question that reaches back through the passage of time: “we are friends, are we not?” (2: 186). Edmond is quite taken aback, “pale as death, the blood rushed to his heart, and then, again rising, dyed his cheeks with crimson” (186), but only temporarily; his reply seems as trivial as the question was loaded, and maintains the façade of his performance. Mercedes has recognized the Count from the moment she first met him in Paris, but it is not until her son is due to fight him in a duel that she calls him by the name by which she first knew him: “Edmond, you will not kill my son?” (2: 393). Up until this point the Count has remained unflappable, but after this he begins to have his doubts:

this edifice which I have been so long preparing... is to be crumbled by a single touch... this self... who had appeared so worthless in the dungeons of the Chateau d'If, and whom I had succeeded in making so great, will be but a lump of clay tomorrow... it is not existence, then, that I regret, but the ruin of our projects... Providence is now opposed to them

(2: 400)

Edmond associates the self that he has fashioned, i.e., the Count, with existence – identity for him is clearly a crafting process – but he does not regret the recognition of that self as a façade so much as the potential threat that it might pose for his revenge. Such an attitude demonstrates how Dumas' narrative portrays a notion of identity as contingent and conjunctural. His hero's identity crosses national and transnational structures as it becomes a strategy subordinate to another narrative – revenge. Unlike Clifford's analysis of Malinowski and Conrad, this notion of identity comes at the level

of plot as opposed to historically located analysis. This is one of the reasons that I argue for the importance of literature in considerations of identity formation and writing strategies when fashioning a paradigm for ethnographic subjectivity. Dumas' plot presents a character from whom an analogy may be drawn to the figure of the ethnographer: his identity is culturally contextual, and ultimately subordinate to a larger goal, but he will only reveal the original identity by which he was known at the point when his success is assured.

Rudyard Kipling

Rudyard Kipling's 1901 novel Kim is another literary text that can provide a model for examining identity formation in ethnographic subjectivity. Malinowski's response to it is brief, but informative as to its effects on him:

Main interests in life: Kipling, occasionally strong yearning for Mother - really, if I could keep in communication with mother I would not mind anything... The last time I took arsenic... about 12 days ago. Too long an interruption! Throughout that time I was strongly under spell of *Kim* - a very interesting novel, gives a great deal of information about India.

(Malinowski, Diary 41)

The tale is set in colonial India, and as such the model that it provides has to be drawn carefully so as not to repeat the undermining process that Clifford's choice of Conrad has for his post-colonial politics. Colonial India "with all castes and peoples" (Kipling 25) is the setting, and the novel's protagonist is an English child: the model to be drawn from the reading of this text will inevitably, then, be concerned with identity formation in an area of cultural contact – the domain of ethnography. Again, before

embarking on an examination of a paradigm of ethnographic identity, a brief plot summary is required.

Plot

Kim is short for Kimball O'Hara. He is the orphan son of an Irish soldier, who is living in Lahore, and growing up amongst Indians. Early in the story, he meets a Tibetan holy man, or lama, who is wandering about the country on his quest for "the River of the Arrow" (Kipling 9), and enlightenment. Kim is taken with the idea of this quest, and wishes to get out of Lahore, and so he takes it upon himself to go with the holy man as his disciple, or chela. However, before leaving the city, Kim applies to Mahbub Ali, a horse-dealer from Afghanistan, for some money. The dealer gives him some money, but also assigns him the task of delivering a letter to an Englishman in Umballa. He gives Kim this task as he is a part of the Indian secret service; and so it is that from this moment Kim becomes embroiled in "the Great Game" (132) of espionage in India. During the tale, because of his involvement in both the lama's quest and the Great Game, Kim is presented in various cultural contexts, as he spends time with different classes of both English, and Indians. It is this shifting class and cultural terrain, of "new people and new sights at every stride – castes he knew and castes that were altogether out of his experience" (Kipling 55), that is the reason for the fluid identity that Kim assumes in the novel.

Racial Stereotyping

The novel presents a certain level of racial stereotyping. It is found in authorial comments such as: "Kim could lie like an Oriental" (Kipling 21), "the huckster instinct of the east" (120), "the European lust for flesh-meat" (175), and "the humour of the

situation tickled the Irish and the Oriental in his soul” (224). Ironical racial stereotyping is also found in Kipling’s presentation of attitudes, as when for example a Sikh soldier says to Kim, “Let thy hair grow long and talk Punjabi... That is all that makes a Sikh” (29), and when he describes the attitude of an English Protestant father: “Bennett looked at him with the triple-ringed uninterest of the creed that lumps nine-tenths of the world under the title ‘heathen’” (79). Despite the novel’s racial stereotyping, which often feels more ironic than not, the narrative explores the notion of identity in a cross-cultural contact in some depth. The eponymous hero as the son of a British soldier brought up in India is the means for this exploration.

Identity

At times Kipling’s hero explicitly contemplates his own identity:

“No; I am Kim. This is the great world, and I am only Kim. Who is Kim?” He considered his own identity, a thing he had never done before, till his head swam. He was one insignificant person in all this roaring whirl of India...

(Kipling 106)

These moments are also a means for Kipling to explore the notion of identity more explicitly:

A very few white people, but many Asiatics, can throw themselves into a mazement as it were by repeating their own names over and over again to themselves, letting the mind go free upon speculation as to what is called personal identity.

(Kipling 167)

Later in the tale, after a run-in with a Frenchman and a Russian involved in “the Great Game,” Kim attempts to throw himself into ‘a mazement’ through the contemplation of his identity: “‘I am Kim. I am Kim. And what is Kim?’ His soul repeated it again and again” (255). It is evident that Kim is very confused about his identity, and is concerned to resolve this confusion through an intense contemplation of

who and what he is. Whence does this confusion arise? Kim is treated in different ways by different groups of people who use different sets of criteria for judging how they should treat him.

Whiteness

Kim is white, but has been brought up in India – not in high colonial society, but by an opium-smoking “half-caste woman” (1). However, Kipling’s narrative, which employs the free indirect style at times, makes the attitude clear that Kim’s whiteness is a determining factor in how others form their notions of his identity. However, Kim’s confusion surrounding his identity arises because of his own feelings of Indian-ness and attachment to India, being in tension with his perceived whiteness.

His whiteness persists as a pervasive underlying fact in Kipling’s narrative:

...Kim was English. Though he was burned black as any native; though he spoke the vernacular by preference, and his mother-tongue in a clipped uncertain sing-song; though he consorted on terms of perfect equality with the small boys of the bazaar; Kim was white – a poor white of the very poorest.

(Kipling 1)

Indeed, the persistence of Kim’s can be analogized with the leather amulet hung around his neck. When his father died, his will, his clearance papers, and Kim’s birth certificate were all that comprised his estate. Kim’s foster-mother takes this estate and sews them up “into a leather amulet-case which she strung around Kim’s neck” (Kipling 2). All that Kim inherits from his father is a putative record of his identity, and the only link that Kim has with this identity is the leather tying it around his neck. Given the context in which Kim grows up it can be argued that Kim’s whiteness is an artificial construct, in that there are only external signs which give any indication of it. His foster-mother, still grieving the death of his father, “insisted with tears that he should wear

European clothes” (3), while the Catholic Father Victor suggests to Kim of the school to which he is sent that: “They’ll make a man o’ you, O’Hara... a white man” (105). And Kipling uses the free-indirect style again to suggest Kim’s tactical use of his whiteness when he is first taken in by the British military: “if the Sahibs were to be impressed, he would do his best to impress them. He too was a white man” (86).

Kim is white, but his whiteness seems more often than not to be an act – an act of attaching identity to himself, just like the act of tying an amulet around his neck. The clothes he is forced to wear and the education he is to receive mark him as a white man, but to some extent he does not need to be marked as such given that when he needs to, he can act as the white man. This ability is called upon when Kim is in the company of white men such as the British military. Kim’s whiteness is an important, and determining factor in the way others perceive him. In contrast, Kim recognizes the artificiality of the assumption that a certain kind of identity may be associated with the physical fact of whiteness, to the extent that he can use this very whiteness strategically. Kipling’s narrative presents a hero whose identity is actually contextually variable. It is this kind of narrative contextual identity that can provide a model for ethnographic identity: it is not the constitution of different domains of truth, rather it is the double cultural occupation of the same space simultaneously.

White, but not White

Although Kim is white, in that he is English and that other whites accord him the treatment of a white because he gives external signs of whiteness, he is at the same time *not white*. In a sense, he disproves the axiom proposed by one of the agents of the Indian secret service: Hurree tells Kim, “you cannot occupy two places in space simultaneously”

(Kipling 226). Kim occupies two different kinds of place in India at the same time. The first is the white space, in which others perceive the color of his skin and behave towards him according to their notions of how color can be a determinant of behavior. The second space is the non-white space, in which Kim's behavior, language, and perception of himself testify to the fact that he does not judge himself by his color.

However, Kim's appearance is enough for people to attach an assumed and perceived identity to him. That appearance is sufficient for such a judgment is the case because of the prevailing white attitude that Kipling sums up in Lurgan's game. Lurgan, who is an agent of the Indian secret service, trains Kim for his work in the Great Game in the art of using his memory, and teaches him to make judgments about men on the most cursory evidence. Every evening Kim, and Lurgan's other student, a young Hindu boy, are expected, "to give a detailed account of all that they had seen and heard [in Lurgan's shop during the day] – their view of each man's character as shown in his face, talk, and manner, and their notions of his real errand" (143). The prevailing means of judging identity in the India that Kipling portrays is appearance. In such a context, it seems inevitable that Kipling's narrative should present its protagonist as clearly in a double occupation of his cultural space in India.

A good example of his double occupation of the same space is the episode with a street-sweeper just after Kim is taken in by the British military. He leaves the barracks and hails a sweeper in the street in order to fetch him a letter-writer. Because Kim has all the appearances of a white man, the sweeper first treats him as a Sahib, by replying to his request "with a piece of unnecessary insolence, in the natural belief that the European boy could not follow." Kim replies sharply, "thankful for the chance to abuse somebody

in the tongue he knew best” (90). The sweeper then describes Kim to the letter-writer as “a white boy... who is not a white boy” (90). Kim occupies the same space one way in appearance, and another way in behavior – thus, he ends up being judged in two different ways by two different groups of people. One can draw a model for an ethnographic subjectivity in the field from Kipling’s portrayal of Kim’s double cultural occupation. Perhaps this model is rendered stronger by the fact that Kim is an English boy in India: although the identity around his neck identifies him with a colonizing country, his behavior does not place his identity within that particular paradigm of cultural superiority.

Kim’s behavior throughout the novel testifies to this conclusion, as he is constantly “forgetful that he [is] a Sahib” (110) in the way he acts towards the lama. Although he is English, there is nothing English about him – he has been brought up in India, with little contact with the whites he “learned to avoid” (2) at an early age. Kipling describes the difference between the English youth in India and their brothers in England: “they would no more have bathed in the English channel in an English August than their brothers across the world would have lain still while a leopard sniffed at their palanquin” (111). Kim’s criteria for reacting to his world are noticeably different from most white boys, as Kipling comments on his nighttime sleeping arrangements: “a bed among brickbats and ballast-refuse, between overcrowded horses and unwashed Baltis, would not appeal to most white boys; but Kim was utterly happy” (123).

It is only non-whites, or whites who have lived in India for any length of time who can see beyond the external markers of Kim’s whiteness, and recognize that appearance as separable from any opinions that can be drawn about the boy’s identity.

The lama sees that although Kim is a “Sahib and the son of a Sahib... no white man knows the land and the customs of the land as [he] knowest” (82). He sees where Kim’s sympathies lie, despite his appearance and inherited identity. Similarly, Mahbub the Afghan horse-dealer sees him as a singular being: “I have met many men, women, and boys, and not a few Sahibs. I have never in all my days met such an imp as thou art” (130). Kipling’s description of Lurgan, a white man who has lived in India for a long time, serves as an equally apt description of the boy: “He was a Sahib in that he wore Sahib’s clothes; the accent of his Urdu, the intonation of his English, showed that he was anything but a Sahib” (136).

It is sufficiently clear that Kim is a white man in appearance, but his behavior, language, and attitude evince anything but whiteness.

Kim

Kipling’s presentation of Kim is as a hybrid figure. Although he is not racially mixed, Kim is a cultural crossbreed whose subjectivity offers a model for ethnography. As suggested above, his identity is contextually fluid: he does not constitute different domains of truth as James Clifford suggests that Conrad’s Marlow does in Heart of Darkness, rather Kim can occupy the same context in two ways – as he is perceived, and as he behaves.

Although seen as a white man, Kim becomes the lama’s “chela” (14), or disciple, which is the vocation of “a casteless Hindu” (61), and he thinks “in Hindustanee” (34). He has no pretensions associated with his perceived whiteness, and at the same time he has no qualms about transgression in the Indian caste system. Kim’s whiteness, his Englishness only becomes really apparent for himself when he makes the decision that it

is expedient for him to use that whiteness. For example, after wandering the roads of India for a time, he has to make a conscious decision to “be a Sahib again for a while” (133), when returning to school.

Kim’s nickname sums up the kind of figure that Kipling presents, and it also suggests the characteristics of the model of ethnographic identity to be drawn from the novel: Mahbub dubs him the “Friend of all the Earth” (115). Kim is an ironic figure to begin with in that he is the product of colonial conditions: his ability to occupy the same space in two different ways simultaneously also suggests that Kipling’s narrative itself is imbued with irony. He presents a figure whom by nationality, and inherited familiar identity is English and white, yet Kim’s language, thought, behavior, and personal feelings of identity suggest otherwise. His Englishness, his whiteness, are inescapable as they are always attached to him, but their artificiality becomes apparent through Kipling’s portrayal of a boy who uses his identity strategically, and takes advantage of how others perceive him, not for the purpose of perpetuating colonial conditions, but actually to undermine them.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

I have maintained throughout, and in support of James Clifford's notion of ethnography as texts, that the use of narratological literary analysis as a method for fashioning models for considering ethnographic practices is justifiable, since ethnography is a form of narrative amongst others. It is not at this level that I have suggested there is fault with Clifford's method, rather I have argued that Clifford misuses this method through a careless choice. This careless choice is of using the narrative strategies of Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness as a means for crafting a model of ethnographic subjectivity that is a *saving fiction* for the reputation of Bronislaw Malinowski as the founding father of modern anthropology. I have argued that Clifford's use of Conrad is tautological, and weakly based on biographical coincidence. Conrad's narrative strategies are presented in such a way as to fit in with Clifford's preconceived model of ethnographic subjectivity. This preconceived formulation is Clifford's means of effecting the salvation of Malinowski's reputation that was undermined to some extent by the posthumous publication of his fieldwork diaries.

I have also suggested that Clifford's choice of using Conrad for his saving fiction, actually undermines both his post-colonial politics, and undermines his attempt at salvation. The full implication of his choice of Conrad is that the ideal ethnographer is either a Polish aristocrat. Another conclusion to be drawn from Clifford's problematic invocation of the culture/anarchy dialectic in his model of ethnographic subjectivity, is

that the ideal ethnographer has to be an ultimate outsider. With either of these figures in his model of ethnographic subjectivity, Clifford's argument ultimately not only leads to the advocacy of the maintenance of colonial conditions as a prerequisite for his model of ethnographic subjectivity, but also argues for the reinstitution of the oldest notion of the anthropologist intimately associated with colonial conditions. Clifford's use of Conrad and the culture/anarchy dialectic potentially undermine his post-colonial politics, and his revisionary stance in relation to Western ethnographic practices.

Having critiqued Clifford's specific literary means for creating a model for ethnographic subjectivity, I have reaffirmed his method by drawing two other methods of looking at this subjectivity from two of the novels that Malinowski read during the time of his fieldwork. My method has been to treat novels as narratives from which one can draw models for ethnographic practices .

My reading of Dumas' The Count of Monte Cristo provides a model for thinking about both ethnographic writing and identity formation. It examined in depth the possibilities for different kinds of representative irony, and the notion of identity as narrative strategy for ethnography. My consideration of Rudyard Kipling's Kim suggests a way of thinking about ethnographic culture: as an area of cultural contact, which the ethnographer must occupy doubly, both in appearance and behavior. Identity, for the ethnographer in the paradigms drawn from both these novel, becomes a narrative and contextual strategy. This model of identity seems a more appropriate paradigm drawn from literature for thinking about ethnographic identity in a post-colonial context, than James Clifford's strategic invocation of Joseph Conrad which implicitly advocates the maintenance of colonial conditions, in spite of Clifford's post-colonial politics.

My intention in this thesis has been to suggest the importance of literary models for examining identity formation, and writing strategies within and for ethnography. The most important conclusion I have reached is that care must be taken in the choice of whose narrative strategies are used to pursue this literary method for examining ethnography. The conclusion that Clifford's choice of Conrad both overlooks other possibilities, and re-institutes the colonial conditions that are often Clifford's subject of critique, clearly attests to the care required when choosing a literary model for the examination of ethnographic practices.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
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APPENDIX B

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07/18/1918)**

Cadoresse.

Captain Calamity.

The Englishman.

The Golden Legend

Half-Caste.

Lettres des Femmes.

Memorial for Fallen Soldiers.

Poker's Thumb.

R & B

Revolt Against the Fates.

Shares and Stocks.

APPENDIX C
AUTHORS REFERENCED BY BRONISLAW MALINOWSKI'S DIARY
(09/20/1914-07/18/1918)

Alvan, Sigismund.
Angell, Norman.
Barbey d'Aurevilly, Jules.
Candler, Edmund.
Cassidy.
Chalmers, James.
Chateaubriand.
Diver, Maud.
Dostoevsky, Fyodor.
Ely.
Foote.
Haggard, Rider H.
Henry, O.
Hugo, Victor.
Hope, Laurence (Adela F.C. Nicolson)
Jacobs.
Karr, Alphonse.
Lawes, Rev. W.G.
Machiavelli, Niccolo.
Maupassant, Guy de.
Newton.
Meredith.
Pöch.

Renan.

Shakespeare, William.

Shaw.

Stead, William Thomas.

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