

CHAPTER THREE

CONCLUSION

I believe that many people would agree with the fact that in An Outcast of the Islands, Joseph Conrad presents the readers with clear and detailed descriptions of the setting of place, just as Cedric Watts states that ‘One of the striking features of An Outcast of the Islands is the descriptive richness.’ (Watts xix). However, the argument may still lie in the question of why is it ‘striking’? My analysis in the previous chapter is an alternative point of view towards the argument.

As Conrad depicts the setting of place to create an atmosphere that flows according with the plot-sequences in the novel, I believe that he uses each atmosphere as a foreshadow for the following story and for the end of the story since both finally conveys mostly the same gloomy and dark atmosphere. By doing so, Conrad is able to sustain the elements of suspense and surprise in the novel through the setting descriptions. His goal is not merely to give the readers clear portrayal of the setting of place in a tropical forest, but more as to create the elements of ‘Setting and plot [to] reinforce each other.’ (Kennedy 15).

In An Outcast of the Islands, Conrad tends to describe the setting of place through a monotonous way. Constantly the author presents the descriptions by using the third person omniscient point of view, which makes the narrator's 'knowledge and prerogatives... unlimited.' (Perrine 175), and Conrad usually uses the words 'It is' in the beginning of the setting descriptions and 'sombre' in several descriptions. I believe that the readers will be bored with such monotonous explanations of the setting of place for it feels like re-opening the previous pages repeatedly and read the same portrayal of the setting of place in the novel. However, by using the atmosphere built by the setting of place as a foreshadow for the story Conrad is able to avoid the boredom caused from the monotonous descriptions for the readers because there are some objectives planted in their mind, which are to find out the likelihood of the atmosphere and to try to realize what it is used for.

I assume that by using such technique of creating a foreshadow of the story through the descriptions of the setting of place, Conrad is trying to invite his readers to be more involved with the story. Through the setting descriptions, Conrad wants the readers to build their own expectations towards the following story before they even read it.

The likelihood of the atmospheres created and the connections between the setting of place and the following story will make the readers to be fond of reading both parts. It seems to me that Conrad tries to let the readers guess the following story as well as the end of the story and find out whether their guesses are the same or different from the story told in the novel. It is not a matter of

guessing right or wrong, but more as his way to make the readers more interested in the novel.

As for my own personal experience while reading the novel, I do not instantly find out the purpose that Conrad intends to share with the readers through such use of the setting of place. However, the intense and many descriptions of the setting of place will eventually create questions upon even the inexperienced reader of what is Conrad's intention by doing so. It is not easy to find the answer, yet it is very noticeable that makes it impossible for us not to realize it.