Mystic Journey – Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Willa Cather's *Death Comes for the Archbishop*

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PREFACE

In journey to the interior Margaret Atwood recaptures the challenges of journeys. To quote,

> Mostly that travel is not the easy going
> from point to point, a dotted
> line on a map, location
> plotted on a square surface
> but that I move surrounded by a tangle
> of branches, a net of air and alternate
> light and dark, at all times;
> that there are no destinations
> apart from this.

Focusing on the hardships, challenges, and discouragements of the journey the poem also underlines the journey of the heart. This echoes the experiences of Marlow of Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness is a story of a man's adventure, through danger, mystery, suspense, escape, exotic background, plots and intrigues and unexpected attack. Marlow's journey is an obstacle course and the obstacles are not only physical. But also emotional and spiritual. Heart of Darkness and Bishop Latour and Vaillant of Willa Cather's Death of the Arch Bishop.

Heart of Darkness is an artistic projection of Conrad's journey to Congo. For continent is a

journey within a journey. Marlow's Journey through darkness is a journey into the psyche of the natives, the white men, Kurtz, and his own self. Each incident and character and their move represents an aspect or a stage of Marlow's penetration into the mystery of the human heart. The journey to Congo is finally not a journey into the darkness but of illumination. The adventures of Marlow explore the human heart. In fact it is a journey to the psyche.

In this active and bewildering age, when we have difficulty in the finding our road to our spiritual destination .Willa Cather's Death of the Arch Bishop proves to be a handbook. From revolution to resolution, from resolution to realization, and from realization to redemption, the road of faith stretches into the future for the priests Bishop Latour and Vaillant who boldly explore its possibilities. They see its promises become actualities, and experience the redemptive power of God that lifts them from sordid depression and frustration into a career of peace and great accomplishment.

The road to the wilderness takes him through the ominous desert to new status where he is better prepared to face the challenges of life and better fitted to do the will of God who has called him to his service. Nevertheless,

notwithstanding his forebodings and fears, he sets out on this trip because he is sure that it is God's purpose for him. Trusting in God he moves forward. Whether he experiences immediate acclaim and success or repeated interruptions and protracted disappointments he makes God as the only sure guide for life. He is responsible for faithful adherence to the calling of God for the fulfillment of the task which he assigns.

INTRODUCTION

Robert Ballard opines “to me life is a great adventure. A series of journeys within journeys, circles within circles. And like all great journeys, they begin with a dream.” (42) In Joseph Conrad’s Heart of darkness Marlow’s journey is not just the journey to the continent but is to the psyche of Kurtz, the natives, the white men and of course his own. /Finally the journey on the Congo is a journey not into darkness but of illumination.

Marlow’s outer journey into Africa symbolizes the mystery of the human heart. In the midst of such experiences reality fades and the inner truth is hidden. The mind of man is capable of anything because all is in it including both the past and the future. He remarks that a man must meet the truth that is his own savage nature which is within his own self.

Each incident and character represents a stage of Marlow’s penetration into the mystery of man’s capacity for evil. Instinctively he knows that even this seemingly peaceful river leads ‘into the heart of an immense darkness’. Heart of darkness opens with an elaborate preamble. Marlow’s venture into the African jungle can be compared to the ocean voyages he has

accomplished. The virgin forest bears a resemblance to the sea. The voyage on the immortal sea can be seen as taking place under the gaze of eternity. The journey into the jungle is also a descent into man's history, a return to his primordial origins. The darkness into which Marlow ventures has a heart which can be found within his own.

As Marlow penetrates more and more deeply into the wilderness his feelings towards it undergo a substantial change. The sight and sound of savage dancing so much a part of its primeval setting, awakens in him the sense of his remote kinship with that wild and passionate uproar. "The reaches opened before us and close behind, as if the forest had stepped leisurely across the water to bar the way for our return. We penetrated deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness" (95)

Conrad sees human beings constantly betrayed by their selfishness. He aims to artistically portray man's wretchedness and helplessness. He brings to the English novel a fine objectivity; His close observation of men and life, especially men under adverse conditions, men in the grip of elemental fear are graphically portrayed. He has observed the process of mental

and moral decay and regeneration foiled by inner weakness and betrayed by self- delusion.

The journey into the jungle is also a descent into man's history, a return to his primordial origins. The darkness into which Marlow ventures has a heart which can be found within his own.

Joseph Conrad is recognized as one of the founding fathers of modernism and one of the greatest novelists to have written in the English language. His life and works are full of fascination his exceptional personality dedicated to his art. He was born on December 3, 1857, in the southern polish Ukraine.

Conrad's father was esteemed and was the translator of Shakespeare as well as a poet and a man of letters in Poland. His mother was born of a gentle, well- born family and was blessed with a keen mind but frail health. He was five when his father was arrested for allegedly taking part in revolutionary plots against the Russians and was exiled to northern Russia. He and his mother went with him. His mother died from the hardships of prison life three years later.

Conrad's father sent him back to his maternal uncle for his education. When his father died, he was eleven years old, but the emotional bond between him and his father was so strong that a deep melancholy settled within the young boy. Much of his writings as an adult is marked by a melancholy strain. After a good education in Cracow, Poland he undertook a trip through Italy and Switzerland. Finally he chose the sea as his vocation.

From the age of seventeen and for the next twenty years, he sailed almost continually. Most of his novels and short stories have the sea as a background for the action and as a symbolic parallel for their hero's inner turbulence. There is very little old- fashioned romantic interest in his novels, he had even tried to commit suicide.

It was at the age of twenty one he learnt English. In 1886, Conrad's first short story "The Black Mate" was written and this was unsuccessful. However the next three years, in order to fill empty, boring hours while he was at sea, he began his first novel, Almayer's Folly. In addition, he continued writing dairies and journals when he transferred on to a Congo River Steamer the following year, making notes that would eventually became the basis for one of his masterpieces, Heart of Darkness. It was first

serialized in Black wood's Magazine; it appeared soon as a single volume and Conrad then turned his attention to Lord Jim.

Some of his other novels are Nostromo, Typhoon, The Secret Agent, Under Western Eyes, Victory, and Chance. Conrad spent some time in Poland with his wife and sons during the First World War. Back in England, his entire body of work appeared in 1920 and immediately afterward, he was offered a Knighthood by the British government. He suffered a heart attack in August 1924, and was buried at Canterbury.

Other works are In the Nigger of the Narcissus (1897) the story has several levels of meaning. Nostromo (1904) according to Conrad is about a sailor who was supposed to have stolen single- handed a whole lighterful of silver. Under Western Eyes (1911) focuses on the theme of isolation; Chance (1913) is a remarkable novel. Victory (1915) the encounter of protagonist and the villains of this novel resemble a struggle between the spiritual powers of the universe;

The Shadow-Line (1917) is an autobiography in a war time story. The Arrow of Gold (1919) has an important autobiographical basis. The Rover (1921) is Conrad's last novel, like and Suspense, it is a historical novel set in

the Napoleonic period. Suspense (1925) remained unfinished at Conrad's death.

Willa Sibert Cather, Nebraska's most noted novelist, was born in l873 in Virginia. At the age of ten, she moved with her family to Webster county, Nebraska, and lived on a farm there for two years before moving into the town of red cloud. Many of Cather's acquaintances and red cloud area scenes can be recognized in her writings. Cather was graduated from the University of Nebraska in l895. Even as the student of the university, she was a drama critic for the Lincoln journal.

Willa worked for Home Monthly and the Daily Leader in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and later taught English and Latin at Allegheny, Pennsylvania. She moved to New York and became the leading magazine editor of her day while serving as managing editor of McClure's magazine from 1906 to 1912. Cather continued her education and received a doctorate of letters at the university of Nebraska in 1917. She also received honorary degrees from the University of Michigan, the University of California, and from Columbia, Yale, and Princeton.

Cather wrote poetry, short stories, essays, and novels, winning many awards including the

gold medal of the national institute of arts and letters. In 1922 she won the Pulitzer Prize for her novel, One of Ours. Her novel, A Lost Lady, was made into a silent movie in 1925; and once again other well-known Cather novels include My Antonia. O Pioneers, Death Comes for the Archbishop, And The Professor's House. Cather died on April 24, 1947.

Willa Cather's Death comes for the Arch Bishop is both a journey toward self-understanding and 'an epic adventure of religious devotion'. Ultimately it is a journey towards eternity. "In an epic Journey after you have dream that dream you begin to prepare yourself to pursue that dream (Balkarduz) In this novel Willa Cather emphasizes that religion is the best thing that life has to offer. It is the chronicle of two French priests, Bishop Latour and Joseph Vaillant, who are assigned to set up an apostolic vicariate in the territory of New Mexico, a work that could be accomplished only by long, arduous travels and devotion to their commitment.

The novel concerns the attempts of a Catholic bishop and a priest to establish a diocese in New Mexico Territory. The novel deals with the struggles of Father Latour and his beloved friend Joseph Vaillant to nurture and

build a faith among the primitive people of the Southwest at the time when New Mexico was taken over from the Old Mexico. Bishop Jean Marie Latour, who travels alone from Cincinnati to New Mexico to take charge of the newly established diocese of New Mexico, which has only just become a territory of the United States. He is later assisted by his childhood friend Father Joseph Vaillant. At the time of his departure, Cincinnati is the end of the railway line west, so Latour must travel by river boat to the Gulf of Mexico, and thence overland to New Mexico, a journey which takes an entire year. He spends the rest of his life establishing the Roman Catholic church in New Mexico, where he dies in old age.

Based on the life of Father Lamy, first Archbishop of New Mexico, Willa cather has created Father Latour. He is sensitive individual caught in an alien world, and she focuses on "the daily life of such a man in a crude frontier society" as he sets out into an uncharted country. From the life of Joseph Machebeuf, she has mainly captured the mood and the spirit of the Father "in which they accepted the accidents and hardships of a desert country, the joyful! Energy that kept them going" (Lewis 139).

Father Jean Latour is introverted but an intellectual. He is loved and admired for his quiet courage and for his courtesy. His vicar, Father Joseph Valliant, is practical, companionable, unswerving in his faith in God's providence and is devoted in his mission. They have cultivated minds, large vision, and a noble purpose. Knowing pain and terror, they decide to leave their native France for missionary work in the New World!

In the words of Farrand who describes the challenges of Latour, "Latour, like the hero of the Roman epic, finds himself shipwrecked on the coast "of a dark continent" (DCA 18), wandering in a land which was much like the sea itself. Across the level, he could distinguish low brown shapes, like earth works, lying at the base of wrinkled green mountains with bare tops, wave-like mountains, resembling billows beaten up from a flat sea by a heavy gale... (DCA19).

The archbishop thus nurtures the distinct cultural communities in his diocese at the same time nurturing the spiritual community of the church. Bishop Latour is able to transform human beings into living saints. His accomplishment is not only represented only by the cathedral which he builds, but also by the

lives he rescues, the lives that enrich his own. Though his death is the end of the life on earth, it is much less an end than a beginning. He is on a pilgrimage whose end is death and life.

CHAPTER II

JOURNEY TO THE PSYCHE

The episode of voyage upriver in Heart of Darkness is the greatest descriptive passage in English. This novel proves to be one of the best novels of Conrad's writings. Like any artist, Conrad has used his own experience to provide him the material for his novels. He himself is fully aware of the implications of the relationship between reality and fiction. His basic theme is morality. Working in the same vein of illusory versus the real, Conrad in Heart of Darkness, turns to his own travels in the Belgian Congo and writes what has since become a classic novella in which greed, selfishness, and materialism replace all ethical values. As a study in human degradation and wretchedness Heart of Darkness demonstrates the terrible consequences of the loss of a responsible heart which can be in an individual.

Conrad is the most ingenious experimenter of his time, the one who brings the greatest variety of technical procedures to bear upon the problem of the novelist. As an exile from nation, he writes in his third language, lonely lives on ships or in outposts or of exiles in London. Family history and personal

experience have made his mistrust political idealists. His writing is torn between a proud sense of honour and a sardonic sense of irony. With an air of strangeness and tension is he has a way of making a psychological mystery of each case. In veils of metaphysical speculation thoroughly deals with all the haunted jungles of the mind.

Atmosphere is as important feature in a Conrad novel. He is able to recapture an exotic atmosphere with its sinister enchantment as a symbol of moral evil. Conrad effectively conveys the sickening sense of evil that lurks in the dark places of the world. His characters have been actuated by the common passions of humanity and their stature is heroic.

Heart of Darkness is a long short story or novella based on Conrad's trip up the Congo in 1890 to become a river pilot for the Belgians, who ran the trade on the river. Marlow, Captain the Director of Companies, the Lawyer and the Accountant, undertake a journey with the oncoming darkness, with the sinking sun, with its glow changed to a dull red, spreading its gloom.

> "A change came over the waters and the serenity became less brilliant but more

> profound. The old river in its broad reach rested unruffled at the decline of day, after ages of good service done to the race that peopled its banks, spread out in the tranquil dignity of a waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth" (46 & 47).

Marlow looks at the venerable stream in august light of abiding memories'. The tidal current runs to and fro in its unceasing service carrying the memories of men and ships that it has taken to the rest of home or to the battles. The sea has served all the men of whom the nation is so proud. It has borne the ships and the men like hunter for gold or pursuers of sword, messengers of the might within the land bearers of a spark from the sacred fire. The Thames River has greatness in it that enters into the mystery of the earth. The river has all within itself like the dreams of men, the seed of commonwealths, the germs of empires: "What greatness had not floated on the ebb of that river into the mystery of an unknown earth ... the dreams of men, the seed of Commonwealths, the germs of empires"

As he 'follows the sea 'with reverence and affection the great spirit of the past is evoked upon the lower reaches of Thames. "Flames

glided in the river, small green flames, red flames, white Flames, pursuing overtaking, joining, crossing each other- then separating slowly or hastily. The traffic of the great city went On in the deepening night upon the sleepless river"

During the course of his journey. There is an eddy in the mass of human bodies, and the woman with helmeted head and cheeks rush out to the very brink of the stream. The entire wild mob takes up the shout in a roaring chorus of articulated rapid, breathless utterance. Marlow feels that he is alone. Inactivity, isolation, and the monotony of the coastline depress him. Everyday the coast looks the same, as though the steamer not moved; but they pass various places wherever trading places.

The idleness of a passenger', 'the isolation amongst all the men with whom has no point of contact, the oily and languid sea', 'the uniform somberness of the coast' seem to keep him away from 'the truth of things. "The voice of the surf heard now and then was a positive pleasure, like the speech of a brother. It was something natural that had its reason that had a meaning. Now and then a boat from the shore gave one a momentary contact with reality."

Marlow feels as though he is taking a journey to the centre of the earth. In thirty days the ship reaches the mouth of the big river, the Congo. Since his work would be farther upstream, he takes passage on a small seagoing steamer commanded by a Swedish captain who befriends him and confides to him his low opinion of the colonizing agencies in the region.

Reaching the outer station, a rocky hill crowned with the buildings of the ivory company with three barrack like structures he is introduced to Africa and the ivory enterprise, he is shocked by the hideous sight; he hesitates, turns his back until the chain gang is out of sight, and then he walks towards the grove. He sees some of the waste materials like drainage pipes which are broken, corroded machinery. He feels disturbed.

On reaching the groove of trees he finds himself within the 'gloomy circle of inferno'. This incident makes him to realize the cruelty practiced on the black workers because of the whites' mad and greedy rush for ivory. Added to this he is grieved to witness man's inhumanity to man. The sight of the poverty stricken blacks suffering makes him feels uneasy.

Marlow goes to work to the inner station. It is the only way for him to hold on to the redeeming facts of life. During his whole sojourn in the Congo, he meets only single case of integrity in work that of the Chief Accountant of the lower station whose meticulous book keeping together with his stunning sartorial correctness, strikes him, in the context of the general demoralization as evidence of real 'backbone'. In such a situation it is obviously impossible for Marlow to suggest that fidelity to the task in hands is any sort of justification.

In his relationship with the inscrutable Manager of Central Station Marlow is brought into contact with moral cynicism. In his encounter with Kurtz he is confronted with the phenomenon of idealistic self- deception. "Kurtz seems to be a passionate and eloquent defender of the policy which holds against the more pragmatic views of the Manager, that every station should be "a centre of trade of course, but also for humanizing improving, instructing".

In complete contrast to the Manger, Kurtz seems to be the very embodiment of that civilization which the African wilderness has so comprehensively annihilated. Marlow says that, "All Europe contributed to the making of Mr. Kurtz".

The experience in the inner station are recapitulated in the following lines:

> Still, one must look about sometimes; and then I saw this station, these men strolling aimlessly about in the sunshine of yard. I asked myself sometimes what it all meant. They wandered here and there with their absurd long staves in their hands, like a lot of faithless pilgrims bewitched inside a rotten fence. The word 'ivory' rang in the air, was whispered, was sighed. You would think they were praying to it. A taint of imbecile rapacity blew through it all, like a whiff from some corpse. By Jove I 'never seen anything so unreal in my life. And outside, the silent wilderness surrounding this cleared speck on the earth struck me as something great and invincible, like evil or truth, waiting patiently for the passing away of this fantastic invasion.

Besides snags in the river and dense jungle, he is forced to keep his eye open for cannibals and the machinations of various company agents.The following words highlight the prevailing sinister atmosphere.

The moon had risen. Black figures strolled about listlessly, pouring water on the glow, whence proceeded a sound of hissing; steam ascended in the moonlight, the beaten nigger groaned somewhere. 'What a row the brute makes' said the indefatigable man with the moustaches, appearing near us. Serve him right. Transgression-punishment- bang. Pitiless, pitiless. That's the only way. This will prevent all conflagrations for the future. I was just telling the manager... he noticed my companion, and became crestfallen all at once. 'not in bed yet,' he said, with a kind of servile heartiness; it's so natural. He vanished.

And again,

I went on the river side and the other followed me. I heard a scathing murmur at my ear, 'heap of muffs- go to'... the pilgrims could be seen in knots gesticulating,discussing. Several had still their staves in their hands. I verily believe they took these sticks to bed with them. Beyond the fence the forest stood up spectrally in the moonlight, and through the faint sounds of the

> lamentable courtyard, the silence of the land went home to one's very heart- its mystery, its greatness, the amazing reality of its concealed life.

The book 'An Inquiry into some Points of Seamanship' makes him to forget the jungle and the pilgrims in a delicious sensation of having come upon something unmistakably real. He assures that reading off is like tearing himself away from the shelter of an old and solid friendship. He observes that 'no man is safe from trouble in this world'. His only intention is to reach Mr. Kurtz's station and meet him. As the boat still crawls he conveys that to keep the eyes so long on one thing was too much for human patience.

Two more days bring the steamer to an estimated eight miles below Kurtz's station. As advised by the manager that navigation is dangerous, they wait until morning. For Marlow every living plant seems turned to stone. He still sits apart from the men on the Nellie's deck and for a time, no one moves. Then the owner of the sailboat remarks, "We have lost the first of the ebb".

At the station "two women one fat and the other slim, sat on straw- bottomed chairs,

knitting black wool in the company's outer station. Both were knitting feverishly with skeins of black wool." He feels uneasy by the glance made by the two women. There he sees a map which has many colours in it. The red colour denotes Britain and the work motif; yellow, the colour of old ivory is symbolic of the Kurtzian corruption in the' heart of darkness', the dead centre of the jungle symbolically proves to be the mysterious darkness in the heart of man.

Marlow feels that the two women are guarding the door of darkness, knitting black wool as for a warm pall, one introducing continuously to the unknown, the other scrutinizing the cheery and foolish faces with unconcerned old eyes. The black wool gains an ominous meaning in that while their work symbolizes sin and death, they are 'guarding the door of darkness' of the company offices, the company that built itself on the exploitation and destruction of the black man.

Visiting Africa has been his childhood ambition. With a passion for maps, for a long time he would intently look at south America or Africa or Australia and lose himself in all the glories of exploration. Marlow exploited his aunt's enthusiastic interest in adventure and gets an appointment as the skipper of a river

steam boat owned by an ivory company which has lost one of their captains in a scuffle with the natives. He quickly readied himself and on confirmation he crosses the channel and presents himself. To Marlow the city is like that of a whited sepulchre.

Departing from his aunt Marlow is ready to leave. For a brief moment, he has a feeling of panic. He wonders whether his aunt has recommended him, as a kind of 'emissary of light', who would travel from this sepulchral city to the Dark Continent, bringing the light and goodness to civilization. He travels in a French steamer. The edge of a colossal jungle is so dark-green as to be almost black fringed with white surf.

Waiting for the river to set right the steam boat makes him restless. He opines, I don't like work- no man does- but I like what is in the work, the chance to find yourself. Your own reality for yourself, not for others- what no other man can ever know. They can only see the mere show, and never can tell what it really means (85).

Marlow's reflection of the past is note worthy. He is in confusion to find the channel. To him past comes in the form of an unrest and

noisy dream which is remembered in the midst of the realities of the strange world which is surrounded by plants, water and silence. But the stillness in the life did not resemble the peace. To quote,

> There were moments when one's past came back to one, as it will sometimes when you have not a moment to spare to yourself; but it came in the shape of an unrestful and noisy dream, remembered with wonder amongst the overwhelming realitiesof this strange world of plants, and water, and silence. And this stillness of life did not in least resemble a peace. It was the stillness of an implacable force brooding over an inscrutable intention. I looked at you with a vengeful aspect (93).

The sky, the land, the river and the jungle appear to Marlow so hopeless, dark and pitiless to human weakness: "I looked around and I don't know why, but I assure you that never, never before, did this land, this river, this jungle, the very arch of this blazing sky, appear to me so hopeless and so, so impenetrable to human thought, so pitiless to human weakness" (127).

Kurtz is the company agent at the Inner station, a colonialist intellectual corrupted by

the pursuit of ivory and of power; he is worshipped in 'Unspeakable rites', involving human sacrifice. Marlow, Conrad's narrator unfolds his tale to three men in a yawl at the mouth of the Thames. Kutz is not able to conquer the potential for evil with himself. Marlow learns through Kurtz's experience that a man is defined by his work. In fact Kurtz's work has created a jungle hell which destroys him.

The expectance of ten days at the station is like an eternity for Marlow. It is at this time he hears about Mr. Kurtz. According to the accountant: Mr. Kurtz was a first class agent. He is a very remarkable person. Mr. Kurtz was at present in charge of a trading post, a very important one, in the true ivory- country, at the very bottom of there.

The accountant evinces a keen interest in Marlow who desires to see and converse with Kurtz. Perhaps Marlow senses a unity of ideal and purpose between himself and Kurtz. His identification with him progresses from his first knowledge to his final disillusionment. All is unreal for Marlow. The philanthropic pretence of the whole concern, their government and their show of work, their avariciousness, backbiting, intriguing and plotting shock Marlow. The superciliousness, of the brick maker makes him

realize that his head has nothing in it except that wretched steam boat business.

Marlow notices on a panel the painting of Kurtz. It is a small sketch in oils with a somber background 'representing a woman, draped and blindfolded, carrying a lighted torch'. The movement of the woman was stately and the effect of the torch- light on the face was sinister. The oil painting of Kurtz might symbolize the blind and stupid ivory company, personified by the manager of the central station, fraudulently letting people believe that besides ivory he is taking out of the jungle, he is at the same time bringing light and progress to the jungle.

The painting is significant for another reason too. Its existence proves that Kurtz knows and understands clearly the nature of the company, as well as his own relation to it. He understands his own inability to carry out his fine ideals. He knows what he is doing when he plunges into the darkness of pagan rituals and allows himself to be worshipped as a god.

The brick maker of the central station says that Kurtz is a prodigy, an emissary of pity, science and progress and this invokes Marlow's interest to see Kurtz. The conversation between the manager and his uncle helps Marlow to know

more about Kurtz. The conflict between Kurtz and the manager is revealed. Most important of all a real advance in Marlow's identification with Kurtz occurs when he overhears the story of Kurtz's decision to go back to his inner station when almost within sight of the central station. Conrad is Marlow, drawn towards is a Kurtz, symbol of his being drawn towards inner 'heart of darkness'.

Marlow's interest towards Kurtz grows into an obsession. Looking up from the dead helmsman, his first remark is that Kurtz must be dead. As he tugs madly to loosen his shoes, he realizes that disappointment has struck him like a physical blow, since he would never hear Kurtz whom he has always imagined as a gifted orator.

Wild disappointment comes over him for not being able to see or hear Kurtz that resemble the same quality of extravagant and howling sorrows that he has been heard earlier in the cries of the savage in the bush. He exclaims, " I couldn't have felt more of lonely desolation somehow, had I been robbed of a belief or had missed my destiny in life . . . (114). Hearing too many voices and too many sordid, savage noises, he remains silent for a long time.

Commenting on Kurtz's physical appearance he remarks, "The wilderness had patted him on the head, and, behold, it was like a ball- an ivory ball; it had caressed him, and- lo- he had withered; it had taken him, loved him, got into his veins, consumed his flesh and sealed his soul to its own by the inconceivable ceremonies of some devilish initiation" (115).

The passage clearly depicts how Kurtz is very much inspired by ivory that is he has surrendered himself completely for the sake of the ivory business. He has collected a great quantity of ivory, heaps of it, stacks of it. His old mud shanty bursting with it, and when loaded onboard the steamer, the ivory fills steamers hold, and piles of it have to be stacked on the deck, where Kurtz gloats over it. He has stripped himself of all the cultural values he took so ostentatiously into Africa.

Kurtz is keen to possess everything but unknowingly darkness had also possessed him and he has taken a high seat amongst the devils of the land. It is the Russian who informs Marlow more about Kurtz. Kurtz has had his education partly in England. His mother is half- English and his father half- French. All Europe has contributed to the making of his character. He has written a report for the society for the

"Suppression of Savage Customs". The seventeen pages of eloquence, magnificent, persuasive, and beautiful writing without any practical hints- is post scripted by an unsteady scrawl, 'Exterminate all brutes'. Marlow observes that Kurtz ignores his ambition to exterminate the brutes and presides at certain midnight dances ending with unspeakable rites.

Kurtz's report on the "Suppression of savage customs" begins with the argument that, "We whites, from the point of development we had arrived at must necessarily appear to them (savages) in the nature of supernatural beings- we approach them with the might as of a deity and so on and so on and so on. By the simple exercise of our will we can exert a power for good practically unbounded." Marlow remarks that from this point "he soared and took me with him". It gave him the notion of an exotic immensity ruled by an august benevolence. It made him to tingle with enthusiasm.

To him Kurtz is not a common ordinary man. He has the power to charm or frighten primitive people into compliance with his slightest wish and to exalt himself to the position of a deity among them. The pilgrims are scared of him, but he had one devoted friend, and who is neither primitive nor selfish.

As Marlow's boat approaches the Inner station, he hears a cry, from the shore- a cry, a very loud cry, as of infinite desolation; when he comes very close to the station Marlow blows the steam whistle. He takes the wheel listening to the pilgrims, who have predicted that Kurtz, must, by now, be dead and his station burnt. Finally they spot out the inner station. They are greeted by a white man. He gathers that he is a Russian the son of an arch priest, who has ventured into the jungle alone with as much idea of what might happen to him as a baby. He wanders the river for two years and is devoted to Kurtz.

Marlow marvels at the strange Russian whose existence is beyond reason. The glamour of youth envelopes his particoloured rags, his destitution, his loneliness, and the essential desolation of his futile wanderings. For months, even years, this man's life hasn't been worth a day's wage and yet he is gallantly and thoughtlessly alive. The Russian urges Marlow to take Kurtz away, "quick- quick- I tell you".

Marlow contemplates the mystery of the Russian young man because he is so utterly selfless; he wants nothing from the wilderness but breathing space. He judges that the young man's acceptance of and devotion to Kurtz is

one of the most important- but certainly the most dangerous- things that had happened to him.

The Russian declares that Kurtz has 'enlarged' his mind and explains that the natives are simple people who mean no harm; they do not want Kurtz to leave. He advises Marlow to keep enough steam in his boiler so that he could blow the whistle if necessary noise would do more good than rifles. Kurtz in fact has "raided the country" for his ivory. But the people in the village adore him. "You can't judge Mr. Kurtz as you would an ordinary man" exclaimed the Russian.

On close observation, to his rude shock, he finds that the ornamental knobs which decorate Kurtz's fence are dried heads of blacks. So far he has never dreamed of anything beneath Kurtz's legendary "magnificent eloquence". In the words of Marlow,

> I think the knowledge came to him at last only at the very last. But the wilderness had found him out early, and had taken on him a terrible vengeance for the fantastic invasion. I think it had whispered to him things about himself which he did not know, things of which he had no conception till he took counsel

> with this great solitude- and the whisper had proved irresistibly fascinating (131).

He realizes that the wilderness had whispered things to Kurtz and that the whisper has proved irresistibly fascinating.

The Russian perturbed by Marlow's words, explains that no one dares to remove the dried black heads. They are symbols and Mr. Kurtz's word is the law. His ascendance is "extraordinary". He narrates how the native chiefs crawl in Kurtz presence. This revelation struck Marlow as being even more intolerable than the sight of native heads drying on heads belonged to 'rebels' and he tried with sincere emotion to defend Kurtz. This kind of life he said tries a man;

Kurtz has been shamefully abandoned: there hadn't been 'a drop of medicine or a mouthful of invalid food' at the station for months. "Suddenly round the corner of the house a group of men appeared as though they had come up from the ground. They waded waistdeep in the grass, in a compact body, bearing an improvised stretcher in their midst. Instantly, in the emptiness of the landscape, a cry arose whose shrillness pierced the still air

like a sharp arrow flying straight to the very heart of the land" (133).

Kurtz's unspeakable rites and secrets concern human sacrifice and his consuming portion of the sacrificial victim. These sacrifices have been established in the interest of perpetuating his position as a man- god. Here Marvin Mudrick's the brief description of the situation in the Congo is quoted as follows:

> The people of Congo believed, as we have seen that if their pontiff the chitome were to die a natural death the world would perish and the earth which he alone sustained by his
> power and merit would immediately be annihilated. Accordinglywhen he fell ill and seemed likely to die the man who was
> destined to be his successor entered the pontiff's house witha rope or a club and strangled or clubbed him to death (46).

Marlow finally discovers that this man of ideals has given himself totally to the fascination of the abomination. He has made himself into a god to be worshipped by the wild natives of the heart of darkness. He has even participated in rites too obscene or disgusting Marlow to

describe. He does mention the human heads imputed on stakes looking into Kurtz's house. He had taken a high seat among the devils of the land.

Kurtz is at this time sharply aware of two things. The native's helpless dependency on him and the methods he has employed to maintain his ascendancy. It is ironic but true that both the wish of the natives and Kurtz that his domination should continue.

Though he watches Kurtz's gestures through his field glasses, Marlow is not able to hear his voice. The men who are bearing the stretcher suddenly stop as though paralyzed and Kurtz sits up. He realizes that Kurtz's name means 'short' in German": he feels that the name is appropriate: 'well the name is as true as everything else in his life- and death'. He looks like "an animated image of death carved out of old ivory & had been shaking its hand, with menaces at a motionless crowd of men made of dark and glittering bronze".

Kurtz opens his mouth, and it appears as if he wants to swallow air, the earth and all the people on it. Marlow hears a strong, deep voice. Then the stretcher bearers again take up their burden. As the sick man lies down, and

the crowd of savages vanish into the immense jungle as though it has breathed them out and breathed them in again.

The pilgrims walking behind the stretcher carry Kurtz's fire arms and he is carried aboard the steamer and is laid on a couch in one of the small cabins. Kurtz looks into Marlow's face and says forcefully, 'I am glad'. These first words from Kurtz astonishes him; it is. "A voice, a voice, it was grave, profound, vibrating, while the man did not seem capable of a whisper".

With the warriors who appear on the river bank, and there appears a beautiful black woman whose face has" a tragic and fierce aspect of wild sorrow" (136). The Russian growls and the pilgrims murmur. In the opinion of the Russian, the woman is a mischief- maker,

> It seemed to me I had never breathed an atmosphere so vile, and I turned mentally to Kurtz for relief- positively for relief. Nevertheless I think Kurtz is a remarkable man. I said with emphasis. He started, dropped on me a cold heavy glance, said very quietly, he was and turned his back on me. My hour of favour was over; I found myself lumped along with Kurtz as a partisan of

> methods for which the time was not ripe: I was unsound, but it was something to have at least a choice of nightmares (138).

After midnight, Marlow wakes up sensing danger. He sees a big fire up at the corner of Kurtz's house, where an armed guard watches over the ivory. Another fire deep within the forest, marks the spot where Kurtz "adorers were keeping their uneasy vigil". He glances into the room where Kurtz is. A light is burning, but Kurtz is gone. He has escaped and left the steamer.

Marlow realizes that Kurtz has disappeared because he has gone to the acting of another midnight ritual. There is news that Kurtz is mortally ill. Marlow's moral shock then comes from the realization that Kurtz is being forced into the rites. He overtakes Kurtz who exclaims,

> Go away hide yourself. . . . it was very awful. I glanced back We were within thirty yards from the nearest fire. A black figure stood up, strode on long black arms, across the glow.
> It had horns, antelope horns. I think on its head . . . one gets some times such a flash of inspiration you know. I did say

> the right thing. “I had immense plans, he muttered irresolutely. And now for this stupid scoundrel (57).

Although one of his fellow white men sleeps in a deck chair not three feet away, Marlow does not awaken him. He goes out alone to deal with Kurtz. He is destined, however, never to betray Kurtz, to be forever loyal to the nightmare of his choice. “I don’t know why I was so jealous of sharing with anyone of the peculiar blackness of that experience” (142).

On the bank, he picks up Kurtz’s trail through the wet grass. Kurtz is crawling on all fours. He also feels that he would never get back to the steamer. The beats of the drum like the beats of his heart please him at its calm regularity. “and I remember I confounded the beat of the drum with the beating of my heart and was pleased at its calm regularity” (142).

Marlow is sure that he could overtake him and soon he does. Kurtz hears him coming and rises up like a vapour exhaled by the earth. He has cut him off thirty yards from the fire. Then he realizes suddenly what would happen if Kurtz begins shouting. He threatens and pleads, but he soon realizes that it would not be easy to get Kurtz back on board the steamer. Kurtz has

looked over the edge and has seen the inconceivable mystery of a soul that knows no restraint, no faith, no fear, yet is struggling blindly with itself.

The next day, with Kurtz on board, Marlow heads his steamer down river and again among the crowd of blacks that assemble, there is a magnificent black woman. To avoid trouble, he pulls the cord of his whistle and its screech scatters most of the natives. The beautiful black girl, however, does not flinch. She stretches her bare arms toward the steamer which is bearing Kurtz away. The crowd on deck and the white men onboard start firing.

The steamer returns down the river twice as fast as it had come up. Marlow looks at Kurtz who is unconscious and sees him as a man sated with “primitive emotions”- sated with “lying fame”. One day Kurtz gives a packet of papers and a photograph into Marlow. He has little time to give him. He is forced to work continually in order to keep the tin pot steamer going.

One evening Marlow finds Kurtz conscious. With deep and heavy emotion, Kurtz says, “I am lying here in the dark waiting for death” (149). Marlow notices a change come over the dying man’s features with a look of pride,

terror and intense despair. Kurtz cries out in a whisper, “The horror, The horror”. To quote,

> I saw on that ivory face the expression of somber pride, of ruthless power, of cavern terror- of an intense and hopeless despair. Did he live his life again in every detail of desire, temptation, and surrender during that supreme moment of complete knowledge? He cried in a whisper at some image, at some vision- he cried out twice, a cry that was no more than a breath ‘The horror, The horror’ (149).

Marlow’s insight responds to the electrifying movement of Kurtz’s death. He cries out in a whisper at some vision that is no more than a breath “the horror, the horror”. Marlow blows out the candle and returns to his place in the mess room across the table from the manager. The manager lifts his head to give Marlow a questioning glance, and then leans back serenely, with a smug smile on his face. Suddenly the manager’s boy appears at the door and announces “in a tone of scathing contempt, Mistah Kurtz- he dead “(150).

Marlow feels some affinity and loyalty to Kurtz and finally tells a lie to the lady who

cherishes Kurtz's memory. He hands over the papers to her. The girl suffers no ordinary grief. A conversation follows during which Marlow answers her eager questions with hesitation. Finally he admits that he has heard Kurtz's last words. She demands to hear them. Marlow tells her that just before Kurtz died, he uttered her name. The girl felt happy, Marlow looks at her and is appalled at his lie. He thinks that he could not have told her the truth:' it would have been too dark too dark altogether'. The next day, the pilgrims bury him in a muddy hole by the river. Marlow is then left alone with only the remaining papers, which he feels that he had to take to Kurtz's Intended. He believes that his memory of Kurtz is no different than the memories of other men.

The journey into the jungle is also a descent into man's history, a return to his primordial origins. The dead centre of the jungle symbolically proves to be the mysterious darkness in the heart of man. In the midst of the jungle he finds himself within the 'gloomy circle of Inferno'. He also witnesses the inhumanity to man.

To Marlow the European city is like a white sepulchre. According to him the river leads him into the heart of immense darkness. The

first important thing that his journey reveals to him is that what made in sense in Europe no longer makes sense in Africa. One of the essential differences between Marlow and his fellow Europeans in Africa is that he can recognize the unreality of the notions that have been arbitrarily imported into the country. Journey up Congo as Conrad describes it is something in the nature of a psychic voyage into the innermost recess of the mind.

K.K. Ruthven says that Europe is presented persistently as a place of death, a "white sepulchre", which is by implication a museum of dead values. Africa on the other hand is an alien world a place at once horrific and vital evoking complex responses in European minds. "Its landscape is hostile and Wordsworthian, with dense vegetation like a rioting invasion of soundless life, a rolling wave of plants, piled up, crested ready to . . . sweep every little man of us out of his little existence" (79).

Marlow holds on to his European values even when in the very heart of darkness, in his refusal to look into Kurtz's depravity is quite true to his own image of himself. He has indeed 'peeped over the edge' and the dramatic situation

for him at the end is that he remains fixed in the middle.

The first important thing that Marlow's journey reveals to him is that what made sense in Europe no longer makes sense in Africa. One of the essential differences between Marlow and his fellow Europeans in Africa is that he can recognize the unreality of the notions that have been arbitrarily imported into the country, whereas they cannot or will not.

As Lionel Trilling has pointed out, "this marks one of Conrad's more striking originalities. Most of Conrad's contemporaries would have been moved by the primitive only as an idyll in the tradition of Rousseau, Marlow responds to it precisely because of its sheer savagery" (6).

Marlow is still, and it is at this time that he goes through a period of half- conscious struggling with death. He does not die, of course; instead, he finds himself back in the European city where the company headquarters are located: "However, as you see, I did not go to join Kurtz there and then. I did not. I remained to dream the nightmare out to the end, and to show my loyalty to Kurtz once more. My destiny. Droll thing life is that mysterious arrangement of merciless arrangement of merciless logic for

a futile purpose. The most you can hope from it is some knowledge of yourself- that comes too late- a crop of inextinguishable regrets. I have wrestled with death" (150).

Quest in Heart of Darkness is the most apparent feature in the structure of the action. Marlow, as the central figure, is like a knight seeking the grail. His many references to the unknown and secret places of the earth, the farthest point of navigation in the Dark Continent, his sudden realization that he is not going to the centre of a continent but to the centre of the earth highlight the various phases of the journey. The river, the jungle, the sunken steamship, and the torturous forest paths are all appropriate obstacles.

At the central station he is given a routine task of going up the river to retrieve a sick company agent. Little by little, Marlow learns about Kurtz. As Marlow's interest in him increases, so do the hazards that separate him from Kurtz. Finally, near the end Marlow comes to realize that Kurtz is the "object" of his quest. Marlow desires to hear Kurtz's voice. He knows that Kurtz has collected, battered, swindled or stolen more ivory than all the other agents together. He realizes that he is keen to possess everything but unknowingly darkness had also

possessed him and he has taken a high seat among the devils of the land. He claims that Kurtz is hollow by virtue of his lack of moral identity. He is a living incarnation of everything Marlow claims to hate. Kurtz who wants to become a God becomes a devil.

Kurtz has stripped himself of all the cultural values which has taken ostentatiously into Africa. But he has not thereby regained reality possessed by his primitive ancestors. Instead, he has “taken a high seat among the devils of the land”. Marlow realizes that Kurtz is hollow by virtue of his lack of moral identity.

Kurtz surrenders his European heritage, exploits the natives by making them think him a god and abandons the moral values in which he has been educated by participating in certain unspecified but unspeakable rites. On the journey back down the Congo Kurtz dies and on his death bed cries enigmatically,” the horror, the horror”.

Finally in the death bed, Kurtz utters the word ‘horror’. There are two things that said confidently said about it. The first is that it records some sort of ultimate truth is morally abhorrent. His last cry should have been “ a word of careless contempt”, says Marlow, a fact of

supreme importance to him, for it proves that Kurtz has felt the need in the face of what he has at last recognized as darkness, for an alternate reality.

Kurtz's last cry is like that of Faustus, is the cry of man who can only learn what his soul is worth as he discovers that it is irretrievably lost or of one who can only affirm moral value as he perceives that it cannot exist. If Marlow is the moral hero then Kurtz is the tragic hero. Kurtz's vision of horror is not replaced by pity, but it is in some sense exorcised by it.

It is a challenging experience traveling through the jungle. Sailing up Congo is like traveling back to the earliest beginnings. During night time Marlow and other members in the boat hear the drum beats in the jungle. The jungle is also present reminder of his own prehistory. As Marlow penetrates more and more deeply into the wilderness his feelings towards it undergo a substantial change.

The sight and sound of savage dancing so much a part of its primeval setting, awakens in him the sense of his remote kinship with that wild and passionate uproar. "The reaches opened before us and close behind, as if the forest had stepped leisurely across the water to bar the way

for our return. We penetrated deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness" (95)

During his conversation with the Russian, Marlow realizes that there is a multitude of people hidden in the bush. Marlow feels that he is like a wanderer on the pre- historic earth on an unknown planet. His response to the frenzied howling in the jungle reveals his own 'dark truth'. According to him the black people who howl and leap in the jungle are not inhuman. He stresses the connection between himself – the civilized man and those howling savages on shore:" what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity like yours- the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar" (96).

Marlow's response to the noise of the savage people reveals that he is conscious of his own wild and savage potential: "Ugly, yes it was ugly enough; but if you were man enough you would admit to your self that there was in you just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise" (96).

Disturbed by the howling tumult in the bush. He senses that the noise sounds more sorrowful than warlike: "unexpected wild and violent as they had been, they had given me an

irresistible impression of sorrow. When the fog clears, Marlow is able to steer the steamer in close to the bank, where the water is deepest.

Arrows begin to fly thick and fast over the steamer, and the black helmsman steers such a crooked course that Marlow reproves him. Then the native drop the tiller and grabs a rifle. The next moment he feels fatally injured by a shafted spear. The helmsman falls at Marlow's feet and his blood fills Marlow's Shoes.

The sunrise reveals a thick, heavy fog all around them. Resuming the journey: "A complaining clamour, modulated in savage discords, filled our ears". The sheer unexpectedness of it made my hair stir under my cap. I don't know how it struck the others to me it seemed as though the mist itself had screamed, so suddenly, and apparently from all sides at once, did this tumultuous and mournful uproar arise".

The loud cry might suggest the sad, mournful mystery of the invaded human heart. The terrified pilgrims rush for their guns while the black crew, however grinned as they haul the anchor chain up. The headman exclaims 'catch him. Give him to us'. He explains that the

cannibals are hungry; they want to eat those noisemakers.

Marlow though at first repels then realizes that the cannibals are hungry. The voyage has almost lasted two months, and he remembers that the crew has not eaten any food except the rations brought on board and a quantity of hippo meat that has soon rotted is thrown overboard. He recalls that the savages occasionally gnaw on some dirty, lavender- colored lumps wrapped in leaves.

"I saw in their possession was a few lumps of some stuff like half- cooked dough, of a dirty lavender colour; they kept wrapped in leaves, and now and then swallowed a piece of, but so small that it seemed done more for the looks of the thing than for any serious purpose of sustenance". The hippo-meat which the cannibals bring with them makes the mystery of the wilderness stink in Marlow's nostrils. The reproving and mocking voices that interrupt him are proof of how little the materialistic listeners comprehend his spiritual quest.

Marlow comes to know that each crewman's wages amount to three nine- inch lengths of brass wire per week with which the men would buy food at the villages; they pass,

but they are unable to do so because the manager does not find it convenient to stop. He is certain that the crew must be starving. The cannibals show a curious restraint.

Through out the story Conrad provides the reader with a sense of pity for the exploited natives. Kurtz is untouched by this; lying on the coach he stares through the open shutter. In contrast to Marlow, the pilgrims do not seek the enlightenment to be gained from a spiritual journey. Their goal is ivory;" the vilest scramble for loot". The word ivory would ring in the air for a while . . . into the silence . . . Their ignobility and avarice are in ironic contrast to the noble restraint of Marlow.

Marlow's journey is not just the journey to the continent but is to the psyche of Kurtz, the natives, the white men and of course his own. The journey on the Congo is finally a journey not into darkness but of illumination, for every detail is to lay out for the mind, the psychical condition, and the human qualities that one must meet in order to achieve the ultimate degradation. The adventure of Marlow explores the human heart.

Marlow's outer journey into Africa symbolizes the mystery of the human heart. In

the midst of such experiences, reality fades and the inner truth is hidden. The presence of the mysterious stillness watching him is felt. The mind of man is capable of anything because all is in it including both the past and the future. He remarks that a man must meet the truth that is his own savage nature which is within his own self. As for him, he is able to hear and also admits that he has a voice for good or evil. He confesses that his own self's voice cannot be silenced.

Morton D.Zabel, remarks that the crisis in every one of Conrad's novels arrives when by accident, decision, or error a man finds himself abruptly committed to his destiny. The recognition occurs through a series of steps: isolation of the character from society; his recognition of his situation in a hostile world; and then, once self- knowledge is attained, his way of either solving or succumbing to his problem.

In Heart of Darkness, the protagonist's journey is a means of gaining self- knowledge. As Marlow reflects, the journey to Congo proves to be a turning point in his life. The following lines highlight the significance of his journey to self:

> Yet to understand the effect of it on me you ought to know how I got out there, what I saw, how I went up that river to the place where I first met the poor chap. It was the farthest point of navigation and the culminating point of my experience. It seemed somehow to throw a kind of light on everything about me and into my thoughts. It was somber enough, too and pitiful- not extraordinary in any way- not very clear. And yet it seemed to throw a kind of light (51).

Marlow says that the battered twisted, ruined tin-pot steam boat has given him a chance to come out a bit to find out what he could do. But whereas he doesn't like the work that no man does, but he likes what is in the work which paves the way to find one's self, his own reality what no other man can ever know. He exclaims, "I don't like work – no man does - but I like what is in the work, the chance to find yourself, Your own reality for yourse, not for others – what no other man can ever know. They can only see the mere show, and never can tell what it really means". (85)

CHAPTER III

JOURNEY TO LIFE

"Death comes for the Arch Bishop" opens in 1848 in Rome, where the cardinals and a missionary bishop from America are discussing the situation of the Catholic Church in America. The missionary describes that the neglected New Mexico is in need of a young, strong, devoted priest to take charge and bring order to the region. Father Jean Marie Latour, a thirty five year old Priest currently serving in Ontario, Canada is deputed.

In 1851, Latour is making on his way across the New Mexican Terrain, he is exhausted, thirsty, and lost, but stops to pray before a tree in the shape of a cross. Soon he finds water. He is lead by a Mexican girl to a nearby town. He performs long – overdue marriage and baptisms and continues on his way. From Durango he returns to Santa Fe in Mexico where he obtains proof of his church authority.

As the apostolic vicar of New Mexico when he arrives along with his lifelong friend Father Joseph Valliant, they are dismissed. Now, with proof from the bishop in Durango, Latour is

prepared to assume authority. Arriving in Santa Fe, Latour discovers that in his absence the ugly yet lovable Vaillant has not only won the trust of the people, but has arranged for the previous priest to return to Mexico.

This country had been evangelized in fifteen hundred, by the Franciscan Fathers, but neglected for nearly three hundred years and still survives. The old mission churches are in ruins. The few priests are without guidance or discipline and lead an ungodly life. According to the Cardinal, this place needs a "young man, of strong constitution, full of zeal, and above all, intelligent. He will have to deal with savagery and ignorance, with dissolute priests and political intrigue. He must be a man to whom order is necessary, as dear as life. (DCA 8) Bishop makes his way through an unknown territory against the physical world.

The novel opens with Bishop Latour making a lonely journey of three thousand miles roundtrip through a trackless desert to Durango, Mexico. When he arrives at Santa Fe, the Mexican priest in his new diocese refuses to recognize his authority, thus necessitating the long trek to Old Mexico. During this journey, he orients himself spiritually by a symbol, a juniper shaped in the form of a cross.

> "When he opened his eyes again, his glance immediately fell upon one juniper which differed in shape from the others. It was not a thick-growing cone, but a naked, twisted trunk, perhaps the feet high, and at the top it parted into two lateral, flat-lying branches, with a little crest of green in the center, just above the cleavage. Living vegetation could not present more faithfully the form of the cross. The traveler dismounted, drew from his pocket a much worn book and baring his head, knelt at the foot of the cruciform tree. (DCA 19)

Cather describes the quest for the inviolate place, the place that reconciles the literal landscape and the sacred place of memory. God is always the creator of that interior space, but Latour and Vaillant find a reflection of that place in the glory of God's creation. As Dutch theologian Henri Nouwen describes

> The Lord is at the center of all things and yet in such a quiet, unobtrusive, elusive way, He lives with us, even physically, but not in the same physical way that other elements are present to us. ... God in Christ are really here, and yet his physical presence is not characterized by the same limitations of space and time that we now know. (76)

To the Bishop, the juniper tree which reminds him of his religious faith, also gives a clear revelation of the sacred in a natural object. “The universe to him”, is not opaque and meaningless, but transparent to ultimate reality. His simple actions are charged with power and meaning because they not only spring from him but also have reference to the sacred model. His actions contradict rational calculations. He dismounts before the tree, bares his head, and kneels, further exposing himself and his mare to the murderous desert sun. Yet “when he rose he looked refreshed” (DCA 19).

After his devotion at the foot of the cruciform tree, he suffers excruciatingly from thirst. Remembering Christ, “I thirst!” he “empowered by long training, the young priest blotted himself out of his own consciousness and meditated upon the anguish on his Lord. The passion of Jesus became for him the only reality; the need of his own body was but a part of that conception” (DCA 20).

The heroic undertaking of the journey of the missionaries reveals cheerful acceptance of the physical hardships and the joyful conduct of the missionary labors. Father Latour comes upon an isolated village, a tiny oasis nourished by a subterranean stream in the midst of

desolation. The settlement is inhabited by pious Mexicans who have not had a priest in their midst for generations. They regard the appearance of Bishop Latour as miraculous, “the Blessed Virgin must have led the Bishop from his path and brought him here to baptize the children and to sanctify the marriages” (DCA 26). During the course of this journey Bishop Latour does not fail in his service as a priest.

Father Valliant during his journey to Albuquerque stops at a large ranch owned by Leijon. He performs the sacraments of marriage and baptism for his workers.Bishop Latour returns from Mexico with his credentials to find a warm welcome in Sante Fe, where his vicar, Father Vaillant has already endeared to the people. They are on their way to Mora, following a tortuous, lonely trail on their white mules. They cannot complete their journey in one day and seek shelter for the night in an isolated cabin, which is occupied by the degenerate Buck Scales and his battered wife. They sense something evil about Buck Scales.

Scales leaves the cabin and orders his terrified wife to follow. She turns back momentarily and signals to the two priests that their lives are in danger. Being warned by his meek Mexican wife Magdalena Valdez that Scales

will kill them, they leave in haste and make it to Mora. She says that Scales have killed four other travelers and all three of their children. They are anxious about the life of the woman who saves them.

The next morning, she escapes and reaches to Mora safely. Her name is Magdalena Valdez. He is captured, jailed, and later hanged. Latour's Friend Carson, a well-known scout, takes Magdalena to his home, where his wife can take care of her. She later goes to help a small group of nuns and starts a school for girls.

The visit of the priest to this barren mesa is a challenging experience. Father Gallegos, the priest of Acoma never visits a place because it is too remote and too difficult to reach. The Mesa has been identified with the Rock which is stark, grim and enduring". Here, Cather's hero has lost the first mystical exaltation, the sense of a final and absolute freedom of a communion with space and solitude in a world above the world" (Geismar 192).

Determined to know his dioscose better, Latour enlists a young Indian guide, Jacinto, to take him to the surrounding Indian Missionaries. In Albuquerque, he finds that the scandalous rumours about the Priest , Father Gallegos, are

true. He decides that Gallegos must be replaced. Latour and Jacinto continue their journey, visiting small missions, where his performs sacraments and holds mass. Along the way, he visits various missions and pueblos, learning more about the people and their past.

Vaillant replaces Father Gallegos in Albuquerque. When vaillant does not return from a long journey it is informed that he has black measles. Latour and Jacinto set out once. Due to the terrible, snow – storm, that they encounter, they are lead by Jacinto to a secrete, Indian cave. Jacinto entreats Latour never to mention this place to anyone. To his surprise finds that this cave is significant to Jacinto's people's snake workship. The men sleep safely through the night and continue their trip. Latour is delighted to find Vaillant recovered.

From Europe and its great past, Latour comes to "a country, which had no written histories"(DCA 152). He reflects on its appearance. "This mesa plain has an appearance of great antiquity and incompleteness; as if, with all the materials for world-making assembled, the Creator has desisted, gone away and left everything on the point of being brought together, on the eve of being arranged into

mountain, plain, plateau. The country was still waiting to be made into a landscape" (DCA 95)

Latour's mission in Acoma becomes redemptive since he brings, by slow degrees, discipline, beauty and order. Bishop Latour passes echanted mesa, an isolated flat-topped hill with steep sides, which once had a village on it.

> "The rock of Acoma had never been taken by a foe but once, - by Spaniards in armour. It was very different from a mountain fastness; more lonely, more stark and grim, more appealing to the imagination. The rock, when one came to think of it, was the utmost expression of human need; even mere feeling yearned for it; it was the highest comparison of loyalty in love and friendship. Christ Himself had used that comparison for the disciple to whom He gave the keys of His Church. And the Hebrews of the Old Testament,, always being carried captive into foreign lands, -their rock was an idea of God, the only thing their conquerors could not take from them. (DCA 98)

Like a fossil form of life through all centuries, the Indians who inhibit the Acoma mesa seem to have unchanged. When officiating on the enchanted mesa of Acoma, he finds it very hard to go through the ceremony of the mass.

> Before him, on the grey floor, in the grey light, a group of bright shawls and blankets, some fifty or sixty silent faxes; above and behind them the gray walls. He felt as if he were celebrating mass at the bottom of the sea for antediluvian creatures, for types of life so old, so hardened, so shut within their shells that the sacrifice on Calvary could hardly reach back so far. Those shell-like backs behind him might be saved by baptism and divine grace, as undeveloped infants are, but hardly through any experience of their own, he thought. When he blessed them and sent them away it was with a sense of inadequacy and spiritual defeat. (DC A 100)

After saying the mass for the Acomas, he retires to a rock in the desert and homesickness condenses into a meditation on being out of his own epoch, and back in his stone age. He begins to long for the comfort of his own tradition.

> He watched the sun go down; watched the desert become dark, the shadows creep upward. Abroad in the plain the scattered mesa tops, red with the afterglow, one by one lost their light, like candles going out. He was on a naked rock in the desert, in the stone age, a prey to homesickness for his own kind, his own epoch, for European man and his glorious history of desire and dreams. Through all the centuries that his own part of the world had been changing like the sky at a break, this people had been fixed, increasing neither in numbers nor desires, rock-turtles on their rock. Something reptilian he felt here, something that had endured by immobility, a kind of life out of reach, like the crustaceans in their armour. (DCA 103)

Bishop Latour takes refuge from a storm in an ancient, secret cave reserved for Indian ceremonies. In Acoma, Latour and his Pecos guide Jacinto seek refuge in a huge stone cavern where, according to Indian legend, children had been sacrificed in a ceremonial cave. The cave offers him safety from the storm and probably saves his life. He seems to sense that he is in the presence of some nameless and formless

horror. This is the horror Cather includes of the world of powers of darkness, which taunt the believer, tempting him to abandon faith. This is symbolized by the unseen snake. In the cave, he hears nature's physical music.

"Father Latour lay with his ear to this crack for a long while, despite the cold that arose from it. He told himself he was listening to one of the oldest voices of the earth. What he heard was the sound of a great under-ground river, flowing through a resounding cavern. The water was far, far below, perhaps as deep as the foot of the mountain, a flood moving in utter blackness under ribs of antediluvian rock. It was not a rushing noise, but the sound of a great flood moving with majesty and power." (DCA 130)

Despite the fact that the cave offers him safety from the storm and probably saves his life, the bishop feels an extreme distaste for it. He seems to sense that he is in the presence of some nameless and formless horror, something too abysmal to be articulated but graphically symbolized in the unseen snake and in the sound of the underground river flowing through cavern far beneath the cave.

During the night he tries to get another glimpse of the aperture which holds his attention

but there his guide Jacinto was “standing on some invisible foothold, his arms outstretched against the rock, his body flattened against it, his ear over that patch of fresh mud, listening; listening with super sensual ear, it seemed, and he pocked to be supported against the rock by the intensity of his solicitude” (DCA P131-132).

The cave is a place sacred to the Pecos tribe’s rituals, which is another reason for Latour’s discomfort- he is outside his parish, so to speak. Jacinto tells him the cave is used by his people, which suggests that somewhere in the underground cavern is the snake holy to his tribe. In the cave it is Jacinto, not the priest, who tends the altar and sacred flame. Jacinto’s religion is the new world and the European traditions represented by Latour seem youthful in comparison.

The cave is a labyrinth of holes, throat like passages, mouths, and caverns, suggesting that the French priest seems to be at the opposite end of his catholic church and its idea of heaven. Latour is at the root of things, the base. The cave is the site where many of the novel’s apparent oppositions are conflated. It also becomes a site where in the new world of America reveals its significantly ancient roots.

"He found himself in a lofty cavern, shaped somewhat like a Gothic chapel outline,- the only light within was that which came through the narrow aperture between the stone lips." (Pg.127)

As we move ,act of the cave, histories appears before us like the striation in the mesas: the river flows under ribs of antediluvian rock, and from this antediluvian space we move up and out, into the tender morning outside the cave's mouth, The morning landscape that greets the two men when they emerge from the cave is a gleaming white world , covered with virgin snow a new world, a blank .The virgin snow appears to appears to cancel out ancient systems belief: the Europeans virgin obliterates the stone lips of Jacinto's cave. The branches outside the cave are laden with soft, rose colored clouds of virgin snow, an almost paradisiacal image: the pearly gates to the New World.

"The next morning they crawled out through the stone lips, and dropped into a gleaming white world. The snow-clad mountains were red in the rising sun. The Bishop stood looking down over ridge after ridge of wintry fir trees with the tender morning breaking over them, all their branches laden with soft, rose colored clouds of virgin snow."

The intermingling of water and serpent sound has strong religious overtones. Though their dreadful worship of chaos supported the people of Acoma in the past, they have failed to grow beyond it, and it is symbolically draining the life force away from them. Latour encounters a daemonic power. He hears the spirit's utterance. That powerful, transfixing voice stays with him and helps him recognize the need to build his cathedral. Through Jacinto and his time in his cave, Latour finds a way to understand passion, yearning, fruitfulness, and worship.

Latour's time in the cave is similar to descent into the underworld, and he does return with a boon for himself and for his people. Cather's parable of Jacinto's cave is a way to understand the need to accommodate the demands of a culture and worship system transcendence does not emerge from a vacuum but rather from a long continuum of human effort exercised upon a very real and complex world" (Schneider 60).

Though he feels horror at the Indians' ceremonial cave, he respects their customs, which is similar to veneration in his own religion. He respects the Indians' cultural uniqueness and appreciates the similarities between his own

perspective and their customs. Bishop realizes that he cannot hope to triumph by force over a world augmented by superstition, evil, and ignorance. A long continuum of human effort is exercised upon a very real and complex world". It implies the regeneration and conquest of the world by consecrating it.

In Taos, their next destination, they meet the notorious Father Martinez, who has a reputation of being selfish, materialistic, tyrannical, and cruel. Latour also meets Trinidad a young monk who is lazy, dull, and gluttnous. Both Martinez and Trinidad are rebillious. There is a debate over the authority of the church in new Mexico, Martinez claims that it is in the new world and that Rome has no relevance or power. Martinez threatens that if dismissed he will take his numerous loyal followers and start his own church.

After his return from Rome, Latour brings back new missionary priests. One, Father Taladrid, replaces Martinez, although Martinez retains minor duties. After awhile Martinez and his longtime, crony Father Lucero start their own church. They have a rocky past, but they are equally irreverent toward the church.

Latour desires to bring harmony and order to the Acoma and Pecos Indians from the slovenly condition of Padre Martinez's household in Taos. Padre Martinez, the native priest belongs to an age flawless personal power and is completely unwilling to surrender his power. He senses that he is "really impotent, left over from the past" (DCA 141). The oral reprobate Martinez is excommunicated and his parish, the last-holdout under the old dispensation is brought under Bishop's control.

To his great credit, Latour brings order and discipline to the diocese, suspends the dissolute clergy and to reward those who have been faithful to the office. He returns to Virgin snow, where he wishes to build his Cathedral. "As he cherished this wish and meditated upon it, he came to feel that such a building might be a continuation of himself and his purpose, a physical body full of his aspirations after he had passed from the scene" (DCA 195).

Latour sends Vaillant to deliver letters of excommunication to Martinez and Lucero, and Martinez dies shortly thereafter. Lucero's health declines, and when he kills a burglar in his house he never recovers from the trauma. Vaillant, Lucero in his death bed gives details of a hidden hoard of twenty thousand dollars. Building a

Cathedral is Latour's vision He gains the support of the wealthy Don Antonio Olivares and his young wife Isabella. He plays a significant role in the restoration of Isabella's property after the death of her husband.

After a journey and a long illness, Vaillant recovers in Santa Fe, Although Latour invites Vaillant to extend his stay, Vaillant is anxious. He expresses his keen desire to get back to his people. Latour undertakes a journey to visit Eusabio, an important man in the Navajo Community who has lost his son. When Jacinto is sent to request Vaillant to visit Santa Fe, Eusabio accompanies Latour back home. The two men enjoy traveling together and find that they have much in common.

Latour decides to procure a stone for the catherdral from a nearby mountain side with Vaillant in Santa. Vaillant prepares for his mission to Colorado and the parting from Latour is bitter sweet. Latour fears he may not see his dear friend again, but he encourages him in his calling.

Over the years, Vaillant returns to New Mexico to visit and to see Latour made Arch bishop. His travels and work in Colorado are arduous and demanding, but he is dedicated and

persevering. Bishop's original diocese is expanded to include the vast territories to the south acquired by the United States in the Gadsden Purchase. It is the territory for which the bishop is responsible and the space is to be consecrated by the creative work on it. The bishop goes through a crisis of faith, a dark night of the soul. Latour is lost spiritually rather than physically. He believes himself alien.

St. John of the cross known as mystics mystic defines 'Dark Night of the Soul1 along with 'Dark Night of the Senses' as follows: 'The two nights are successive degrees of contemplation of God and both involve severe purgations by which the soul is prepared for God. They are called 'Nights' because God deprives the soul of the use of the ordinary ways of attaining Him which had formerly been satisfactory and at the same time blinded as it were by the new light of infused contemplation1 (Pick 130).

The Dark Night of the Soul 'designates the sum total of all its trials and sufferings which precede the spiritual marriage. 'The Nights involve great aridity desolation and trial for their purpose is to detach the soul from all that stands between it and its union with God" (Pick 130).

This experience is very painful to Bishop Latour. In this night God assails the soul in order to renew and divinize it. He feels that he is completely forsaken by God and all human beings and enters most deeply into an agonizing realization of his own wretchedness. He feels that he is completely annihilated and lives in an anguish that anticipates the sufferings of purgatory, very often not only unable to pray but even to perform his normal duties.

The kind of suffering is said to be of a more painful ordeal. According to St. John of the cross, suffering is a way of union with God. “Life begins with feelings of joy and devotion, but if a man is to progress in it he must be purified by what Walter Hilton calls the Dark Night” (Graef 209).

Describing the act of God in preparing souls for the dark night St. John of the cross remarks that “He divests the faculties, affections and senses spiritual and sensory, interior and exterior. He leaves the intellect in darkness, the will in aridity, the memory in emptiness” (Gish 75). “The greater the height to which God intends to lead the mystic, the longer and the more painful this purification, which lasts for several years normally. But all its sufferings will

be forgotten when God finally leads the soul to the joys of mystical union" (Graef 247).

"His prayers were empty words and bring him no refreshment. His soul has become a barren field. He had nothing within himself to give to his priests or his people. His work seemed superficial, a house built upon the sands. His great diocese was still a heathen country. The Indians traveled their old road of fear and darkness, battling with evil omens and ancient shadows. The Mexicans were children who played with their religion." (DCA 211)

Father Latour gets out of bed, goes to the church to pray. In the doorway he finds the old enslaved Mexican woman Sada weeping bitterly. Her clothes are in rags.

The encounter with Sada stresses sight, highlighting the importance of the visual over the verbal. The courtyard between Latour's house and the church is covered with snow, an etching in black and silver. The court was with snow, and the shadows of walls and buildings stood out sharply in the faint light. This snow is different from the blizzard that obliterated to trial and trial and forced Latour into the stone-lipped cave.

Here in his own Churchyard, unlike in the cave scene, no voices terrify him. There is almost no sound at all except for Sada's confession and prayers. The whole scene emphasizes the way light plays over surfaces: from the silhouette of the church tower against moonlit clouds and shadows on the snow to Latour's candle shining on Sada's dark brown peon face and the red spark of the sanctuary lamp in the pitch dark of the pitch dark of the church. "The church was utterly black except for the red spark of the sanctuary lamp before the high latar." (Pg.213)

Even Sada's prayer expresses them visually. Latour is moved by the belief he sees on her face when she tells him it has been nineteen years since she has seen the holy things of the altar. He had never seen such pure goodness shine out of the human's countenance. When he lets Sada into the church, to the Lady Chapel, he sees "the working of Sada's face the beautiful tremors that passed over it and tears of ecstasy." Both Sada and Latour experience the thrill, Sada by seeing the Lady Chapel, Latour by seeing Sada's belief.

The visible power of Sada's ecstasy allows Latour to share her emotion: "He was able to feel, kneeling beside her, the preciousness of

the things of the altar, he received the miracle in her heart into his own, saw through her eyes. Earlier Latour had said miracles rest upon our perceptions being made finer, so that for a moment our eyes can see and our ears can hear what is there about us always. Ironically, the miracle Latour experience with Sada involves him seeing through her eyes rather then his own.

She becomes the site of a miracle: What he sees in Sada helps him, to gather up what might otherwise pass unregarded. This gathering up of sensation leads Latour to a moment of fullness of being at one with what is outside himself: This is a marked contrast to his feeling at the beginning of the chapter. He joins with Sada and feels his inner peace merge with the peace of the external world.

Latour comforts Sada by giving her not warm words but a “little silver medal, with a figure of the virgin”(p.218)-something to look at. He thinks this a good gift for Sada for one who cannot read or think-the image, the physical form of Love. He offers her not language but an image, something which her soul can adore.

The final paragraph of this section shifts from Latour alone, locking his church, to the moon alone in the arched “blue vault” of the

heavens and then back to Latour, looking at Sada's footsteps in the snow. He has his church, the moon has hers, the blue vault of the heavens although what he may briefly sense but does not understand is that the Lady Chapel, the moon, and the cave are all connected.

The Bishop takes her to the church and they pray together. Despite her miserable condition the old woman has never lost her faith. Bishop hears her confessions and takes the furlined cloak and gives it to her. He assures of his prayer for her. His gift, the figure of the Virgin on a medal to Sada is an unsophisticated, but similarly precious symbol of love. After his encounter with Sada, he experiences a moment of perfect peace: 'The peace without seemed all one with the peace in his own soul"(DCA 219). His efforts to bring both his religion and his cultural traditions to a new land, culminate in his building of a cathedral.

Bishop defends his ambition by insisting that "the Cathedral is not for us...we build for the future"(DCA 244). Vaillant does not fully comprehend Latour's burning desire and reminds the bishop of the worldliness of such a wish, "when everything about us is so poor"(DCA 241). But the Bishop replies that he is building for the people of the future. Her understand the

worldliness of his desire for such a unique, impressive cathedral, but he senses God's approval of this desire: "I could hardly have hoped that God would gratify my personal taste, my vanity, if you will, in this way"(DCA 245).

In that building, the art of civilization merges gracefully with the soil of Western landscape, just as Jean Latour's spirit had done. It speaks with reassuring directness, expressing the ideals of the people and offering the security of common values. "The large work of art and religion merge in the Bishop's Cathedral, which is the Capstone of his career and his legacy to his diocese" (Elide 66).

Latour's inclusive aesthetic vision enables him to apprehend profundity behind simplicity. It is great sacrifices Latour when he is forced to relinguish Father Vaillant for Colorado missions. He has recalled him from Tuscon because he wants his companionship, but he to his vicar the need for a priest at camp Denver. "He seemed to know, as if it had been revealed to him, that this was a final break; that their lives would part here, and that they would never work together again" (DCA 252).

At this point he confesses his motives for recalling Vaillant: "I sent for you because felt

the need for your companionship. I used my authority as a Bishop to gratify my personal wish. That was selfish, if you will, but natural enough. We are countrymen, and are bound by early memories" (DCA 253).

However, back in his study, he successfully transforms his loneliness into something positive: "It was just this solitariness of love in which a priest's life could be like his Master's. It was not solitude of atrophy, of negation, but of perpetual flowering" (DCA 256)

Father Vaillant takes up a task to go to Colorado. Energetic and warm, "he added a glow to whatever kind of human society he was dropped into". (DCA 228) His paradoxical nature accounts for his adaptability. He is faced with the society that is modern in its tradition and in its scramble after material wealth.

Drawn all over the country, the gold seekers are without homes, families or spiritual guidance. Their relationship to the earth is not sacramental, but exploitive, because they are cut from the sacred and their living conditions are dehumanized. He is forced to contend with the confusions of life brought by the discovery of gold in Colorado, where wandering prospectors and their followers crowd into the

mountains, pollute the water and succumb to fever.

Father Vaillant's task of restoring an awareness of the sacred to the alienated world is truly a heroic one. His personality gives new life to Christianity in the Southwest. "Perhaps it pleased Him to grace the beginning of a new era and a vast new diocese by a fine personality" (DCA 254). He is the true contemplative, who reconciles thought and action, and finds the love of God throughout his life. As Warner remarks, Willa Cather particularly admired, the idealized self-discipline of, interchangeably, the artist and the saint. It is for her a total dedication of being, a conscientious withdrawal from worldly pleasures and benefits into the heaven-haven of a liberating spirituality. (Berthoff 256-257)

Through Vaillant's labor and Latour's sensitive interpretation, the bell which they install becomes the living sound of a rich history taking hold in the remote of Santafe. Latour's and Vaillant's separation is a natural one and the two friends are still bound by early memories "that feeling of personal loneliness was gone, and a sense of loss was replaced by a sense of restoration" (DCA 257).

Vaillant plants faith and establishes rapport with people. They feel free to place a confidence in his love, and their trust accounts for his apostolic success. He is warmer, active and popular. Latour is proud of his friend and praises his humility and his work. His work depends upon Latour, who is responsible for his coming to the New World and directs his missionary work, including Colorado. Later, he becomes the bishop of Denver. The novel "is primarily a tribute to the transforming power of the disciplined intelligence of a Latour illuminated by his faith, assisted by the driving energy of that friend of his soul, Joseph Vaillant. They are in effect one complete personality, since each exists completely in the other by virtue of their common. inspiration and culture" (Connolly 84). The enormous bell tolls the beginning of a new catheral order in New Mexico.

In his old age, Latour spends his retired life in home outside Santa Fe. He enlightens new priests and educate them on language and customs. A young man named Bernard Decrot comes to assist Latour. In 1888 caught in a Janaury rainstorm he falls ill. He sends word to the new Archbioshop in Santa Fe that he would like to return there to die. Although Ducrot dismisses the idea that the man could die of a cold, Latour has made up his mind.

Near the end of his life, Latour looks on "the Cathedral that had taken Father Vaillant's place in his life after that remarkable man went away" (DCA 271). However, back in his study, he successfully transforms his loneliness into something positive: "It was just this solitariness of love in which a priest's life could be like his Master's. It was not solitude of atrophy, of negation, but of perpetual flowering" (DCA 256).

The Archbishop, nearing death feels that his life has been a success " to fulfill the dreams of one's youth; that is the best that can happen to a man. No worldly success can take the place of that" (DCA 261). The Church is renewed and he asserts, "I shall die of having lived" (DCA 269)As a young priest, and he has lived by a dream and has seen a dream fulfilled.

"The next morning Father Latour wakened with a grateful sense of nearness to his Cathedral - which would also be his tomb. He felt safe under its shadow; like a boat come back to harbour, lying under its own sea-wall. He was in his old study; the Sisters had sent a little iron bed from the school for him, and their finest linen and blankets. He felt a great content at being here, where he had comes as a young man and where he had done his work. (DCA 274)

Much against the wishes of relatives who hope that he would spend his last years with them, he chooses to live in New Mexico rather than return to France precisely to inhale the tonic excitement in the air of the Southwest.. The brazing airy current whispers a message of stimulating power. Latour is spiritually lifted whenever he sees the acacia trees that awaken "pleasant memories, recalling a garden in the south of France where he used to visit young cousins" (DCA 85). In the landscape of American Southwest, he is suddenly transported back to the geography of childhood.

As Latour prepares to accept death when it comes, he observes also that there was no longer any perspective in his memories.

> "He remembered his winters with his cousins on the Mediterranean when he was a little boy, his student days in the Holy City, as clearly as he remembered the arrival of M.Molny and the building of his cathedral. He was soon to have done with calendared time, and it already ceased to count for him. He sat in the middle of his own consciousness; none of his former states of mind were lost or outgrown. They were all within reach of his hand, and all comprehensible.(DCA 290)

The archbishop's journey into death is interwoven with his memory of the story. In his last days Latour recalls memories of his years in new Mexico. He remembers legends, people and Vaillant, who have already passed away. As he grows weaker, he sleeps more and eats less. Here the author mentions that the death that comes for the archbishop is a diligence-a carriage. His struggle has at last come to an end successfully. Very soon, he is laid before the altar in his cathedral. At Latour's death, Cather once again highlights his respect for the cultural distinctiveness of his people by enumerating the various communities who mourn for his loss.

Like ancient hero, Father Latour is not alone in this unknown land but is accompanied by a faithful friend, Father Joseph Vaillant, " his boyhood friend, who had made this long pilgrimage with him and shared his dangers"(DCA 20).

He remembers how he had helped his young friend Joseph Vaillant to take a courageous decision that was to take him away from home and family and begin his missionary life.

In the final scene, the two figures in the story are both aspects of the archbishop himself:

> He was trying to give consolation to a young man who was being torn in two before his eyes by the desire to go and the necessity to stay. He was trying to forge a new Will in that devout and exhausted priest; and the time was short, for the diligence for Paris was already rumbling down the mountain gorge (DCA 299).

CONCLUSION

Conrad & Cather provide a vivid description of the journey between the landscapes of past and present that human beings perform within their own consciousness.

Latour remembers of all these conflicts and moments as death comes for him. His brave exclamation to his friend Joseph can stand as a controlling refrain to the novel. As the diligence rumbles down the road, Latour make his final plea " 'AHons!' said Jean lightly, 'invitation du voyage!'" (DCA 285).

Latour is ushering in a new age, a new beginning, and a new creation. Divine power creates life. Art and religion are joined and it is both a creative act to build a cathedral, motivated by worldly ambition, but at the same time it is religious act of piety growing out of faith.

The journey upon which Latour embarks has overtones of both an epic quest and redemptive mission. His piety is that of an Aeneas, who unlike Achilles or Odysseus, was destined to find a new civilization. Like Aeneas, Latour is haunted by memories of his homeland and childhood, and the refinements of a highly developed culture. He is sustained by an unshakable faith in the protection and the guidance of God.

Conrad's major creative phase rests on a continuous and consistent effort of thought. He conceives of his own art in terms of insight and vision. The main stream of Conrad's scholarship has stressed his power and profundity at the expense of his intelligibility and control.

The intellectually conceived symbolic pattern of Heart of Darkness constitutes so much a plotted action as an organization, an arrangement of intellectual analysis in concrete terms. In this analytical arrangement Kurtz and

Marlow are two halves of the single persona who penetrates and understands ultimate evil. Characterization is subordinated to a generalized speculative analysis of an idea about man. It is sure that the idea is embodied in people, in action but the symbolic structure moves the stress from character to theory from plotted action to an experience and an insight.

Conrad's oriental style is one of the features for which he is most admired.

Heart of Darkness is a parable with moral, psychological, and spiritual aspects. Like Conrad's ideas, his method is too complex. The most obvious of them lies in the organization of the stories themselves. He is a citizen of the world.

Cather's landscape itself represents relation to God. In her fiction, identity is often connected with landscape. She saw "the land as symbolizing the reality and a yearning for the unknown, the ultimate, and the transcendent" (Schneider 62). She mixes the drama of the land with the drama of the worship.

Cather is able to recreate pioneer times in New Mexico. Bemice Slote points out that "from the beginning Willa Cather joined art and

religion, not only in the allegorical kingdom of art but in her primary belief that man's creation shares in some divine power" (Slote 43).

Latour and Valliant both establish a strong spirit of kinship with their people by respecting the traditions of the distinct communities within their diocese. They attempt to unite these groups spiritually in the broader community to the Church while keeping in mind that each still needs to retain its cultural uniqueness.

Bishop's cathedral built in the Old World style, brings to the New World, the artistic traditions of the past. Archbishop calmly says goodbye to the past is confident that "the future would take care of itself'(DCA 289). Cather offers in Death Comes for the Archbishop offers a new view of success, a view that seems at odds with a worldly success that is measured by material gain. Vaillant's reflects that the dreams of one's youth are unworldly or of higher value than mere worldly success.

For the heroes of Death Comes for the Archbishop, the priests dedicate to a community of souls, the road to self-fulfillment is the same road that leads to spiritual community and the pursuit of the ideal. While creating the

community, they fulfill their need for group as well as their desire for success. They accomplish the dreams of their youth. Despite the hardships, both men endure, and they establish a happy balance between self-needs and others' needs.

Cather finds in religion the lifelong commitment to vindicate imaginative thought in a world threatened by materialism. Unlike human love, divine love has its source in Gods love and is divinely infused into the individual. Because it "has its prototype in the Agape manifested by God . . . it must be spontaneous and unmotivated, uncalculating, unlimited, and unconditional"; it is "the love which loves despite even the repulsiveness of its object" (Susanne 164)

Both priests find fulfillment by immersing themselves in the communities that they serve. They also attain a stature and fame that mark them as unique personalities, thus placing them above those communities. Bishop Latour is able to transform human beings into living saints. His work of art is not only represented only by the cathedral, but also by the lives he rescues, the lives that enrich his own. Though his death is the end of the life on earth, it is much less an end than a beginning. He is on a pilgrimage whose end is death and life.

In this novel, movements of conflicts are constantly juxtaposed with periods of peaceful reflection. Cather in her portrayal of Bishop Latour offers both saint and hero. One of the Cardinals in the prologue tells his companions that the missionary who can succeed in the new territory, must "have a sense of proportion and rational adjustment" (DCA 9). It is this sense that allows the two French missionaries to adapt and to succeed. Bishop Latour devotes his life to serve the church and the people in rural Mexico and finally succeeds in his mission of bringing faith, in God and restores order to human life.

Latour's mission becomes a redemptive one, to bring into existence, by slow degrees, discipline, beauty and order to the world of chaos. He assimilates the past, and reorders a fragmented world. Cather comes to term with her world and in a spiritual sense from her coming home with Death Comes for the Archbishop and it "was the most unalloyed pleasure of her life" (Woodress 225).

Cather creates an image of history free from the complication of modern life. The abiding faith and missionary zeal of Archbishop Lamy and his vicar leave permanent imprint on the

history of the Southwest. The Archbishop finds personal completion in religion.

The Death Comes for the Archbishop is about Archbishop Latour's courage and steadfastness, his gentleness and his worldly success. His death in exile is a triumph in which physical space and the sacred place are reconciled within the self through prayer. It is a "novel of conquest, conquest alike of a new land and of the souls of men" (Edel 14).

Their lives concur with the views of Robert Ballard. "In an epic journey after you have a dream, you begin to prepare yourself to pursue that dream." (42)

Fredrick Tabor Cooper praises Cather and assers that her strength is her characterization.

She has created a group of rel persons; she takes us into their homes and makes us share in their joys and sorrows, with a quickening sympathy such as we give to our friends in the real world. And that is a gift that is perhaps quite as rare as a genius for plot-building. (323)

Their interests are as wide as the world and his outlook is in that sense universal. The

novels of Joseph Conrad and Willa Cather are of universal value and most relevant to modern times. It is an undeniable fact that they would challenge consideration is the best of audience and claims a memorable place in the realm of literature.

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