

Detachment and Endurance in Conrad's *Victory*

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Critical discussions on *Victory* over the years have often focused on detachment as one of its central issues. These discussions range from the negation of Heyst's detachment that accuses him of becoming "detached...from life itself" (Bradbrook 315), through an affirmation that argues that "the tragedy of *Victory* is not that Axel Heyst cannot commit himself, but rather that Axel Heyst cannot preserve his pose of detachment" (Bonney 130), to a neutral view that "Heyst is temperamentally prone both to a solitary detachment and a sympathetic involvement with others, and so it is misleading to conclude that only one of these opposed tendencies is genuine" (Daleski 108).

Conrad himself is partly responsible for the tendency to focus on the issue of detachment, as he introduces the word seven times in just the first three pages of his Author's Note, the first instance is as follows :

The unchanging Man of history is wonderfully adaptable both by his power of endurance and in his capacity for detachment. The fact seems to be that the play of his destiny is too great for his fears and too mysterious for his understanding. (xxxiii-iv)

Conrad goes on to say that detachment is "a fine attitude before the universally irremediable", which is "born from a sense of infinite littleness" (xxxiv). Here words such as "the play of his destiny" and "the universally irremediable" suggest that the issue of detachment in *Victory* is closely connected with Conrad's vision of the universe.

Although questions about "visions of the universe" are so large as necessarily to overwhelm any attempt to get at them satisfactorily, the issue is so essential that it cannot be avoided in studying *Victory*. Bruce Johnson states that some of the quotations from Heyst's father's book, *Storm and Dust*, is "nothing less than Conrad's metaphysics ; the universe is indifferent, offers no sanctions, and if it is to be measured at all must be judged by the standards of its victims" (171), and Torsten Pettersson also claims that *Victory's* world, "as it is described in the novel,

evinces the central characteristics of Conrad's vision," adding that, "What is at issue in *Victory*," however, "is not Conrad's philosophy as such...but the attitude to be taken in the face of this irremediable state of affairs" (176).

Conrad's vision of the universe as it is manifested in *Victory* has been discussed in various religious and philosophical contexts. Bruce Johnson points out the analogy with both the Judeo-Christian myth (168) and Schopenhauer (160), and Erdinast-Vulcan draws an analogy with Nietzsche (175). On the other hand, Peter Caracciolo suggests some analogies with Buddhism by pointing out that "*Victory's* plot and characterization are modelled in some degrees on mythic stereotypes of salvation such as are observable in the Tibetan mystery plays at Himis" (79). In this essay, I should like to examine the significance of what Conrad calls "the capacity for detachment," and "the power of endurance" in *Victory* in the light of his vision of the universe as it is suggested in his letters, with occasional reference to some Buddhist concepts, such as the fundamental Buddhist principle of the Three Signs of Being and the concept of *Abhi-nivesa*, or attachment, which is closely connected with these Signs.

I

To those who are acquainted with Buddhism, Conrad's descriptions of his vision of life and the universe are often reminiscent of the Buddhist vision of life and the universe as it is suggested in the basic principle of the Three Signs of Being : Change, No-I, and Suffering. In a letter to his friend Edward Garnet, dated 23/24 March 1896, Conrad refers to his vision of life in the following words :

If one looks at life in its true aspect then everything loses much of its unpleasant importance and the atmosphere becomes cleared of what are only unimportant mists that drift past in imposing shapes. When once the truth is grasped that one's own personality is only a ridiculous and aimless masquerade of something hopelessly unknown the attainment of serenity is not very far off. Then there remains nothing but the surrender to one's impulses, the fidelity to passing emotions which is perhaps a nearer approach to truth than any other philosophy of life. And why not? If we are "ever becoming—never being" then I would be a fool if I tried to become this thing rather than that ; for I know well that I never will be anything. I would rather grasp the solid satisfaction of my wrong-headedness and shake my fist at the idiotic mystery of Heaven.

(*Letters 1* : 267–8)

In this letter, life is regarded as something “that drifts past” in a state of flux, which corresponds to the view suggested in the first Sign, Change. Personality is seen as something dynamic, rather than static, that is “ever becoming—never being,” which correspond to the second Sign of No-I, based on the view that the immutable law of change is “operating in the universe and consequently also in the individual” (Schloegl 1). Finally the words, “there remains nothing but the surrender to one’s impulses, the fidelity to passing emotions” indicate the impulses and emotions were the most important factors in life for Conrad. This corresponds to the third Sign of Suffering, which implies the existence of the emotions. Buddhism teaches that the first step out of suffering lies in recognizing that it exists. It is easy to dismiss this passage as just Conrad’s railings against the universe, but the ironic tone of the very next line of the passage, “So much for trifles” prevents us from doing so.

Five months later, in his letter to T. Fisher Unwin, his first publisher, dated 22 August 1896, Conrad describes a similar vision of the universe in a less ironic tone :

Our captivity within the incomprehensible logic of accident is the only fact of the universe. From that reality flows deception and inspiration, error and faith, egoism and sacrifice, love and hate. That truth fearlessly faced becomes an austere and trusted friend, a companion of victory or a giver of peace. While our struggles to escape from it—either through drink or philanthropy ; through a theory or through disbelief—make the comedy and the drama of life. To produce a work of art a man must either know or feel that truth—even without knowing it. It must be the basis of every artistic endeavour.

(*Letters 1* : 303)

If Conrad really believed that “to produce a work of art a man must either know or feel that truth, “the same vision of the universe should be reflected in *Victory* even if it was written seventeen years later. The word “accident” presupposes a state of flux in which events occur unexpectedly and without apparent cause. It reminds us of Heyst’s words, “Man on this earth is an unforeseen accident which does not stand close investigation” (196), and his meditation on “a definite vision of the stream, of the fatuously jostling, nodding, spinning figures hurried irresistibly along” (175). The words, “Our captivity within the incomprehensible logic of accident” suggest that man is also subject to change. Heyst, however, looks upon himself as distinct from the rest of the world, as can be inferred from his words addressed to the world, “I

am I and you are a shadow” (350). He believes himself to be capable of staying on the bank of “the flow of life’s stream”, just looking on. He does not realize that, as Tony Tanner points out, “as long as he is, has a body, he cannot renounce participation in the world’s physicality” (Tanner xviii) Finally, in saying “From that reality flows deception and inspiration, error and faith, egoism and sacrifice, love and hate,” Conrad seems to be accepting emotional involvement in life as inevitable, whereas for Heyst, any experience involving emotional reactions is to be avoided · “It was the very essence of his life to be solitary achievement...by a system of restless wandering, by the detachment of an impermanent dweller amongst changing scenes. In this scheme he had perceived the means of passing through life without suffering and almost without a single care in the world - invulnerable because elusive” (90). In this passage, as Daniel R. Schwarz claims, “the words ‘scheme’ and ‘system’ are crucial because they imply the impossibility of organising life on rational grounds” (67). In other words, Heyst is struggling to escape from the reality of the logic of accident through a theory developed by his father. The irony of the situation is, as Suresh Raval indicates, Heyst’s father’s scepticism had its origins in his emotions, “in his anger at the world” (153), and so did Heyst’s acceptance of it, since it originated in his loneliness and pride : “Heyst felt acutely that he was alone on the bank of the stream. In his pride he determined not to enter it” (175–6). He then decides “to drift without ever catching on to anything” (60). However, as John Lester points out, Heyst’s determination to live a detached life “indicates paradoxically, that one has become attached to detachment” (164).

II

The problem of attachment and detachment is obviously a universal problem, capable of various definitions and solutions¹. In Buddhism, the concept of attachment or *shunyata*, in the sense of “catching on”, carries a special significance, especially in connection with the third Sign of Being, Suffering. The concept is based on the Sanskrit word *Abhinnivesa*, translated into English from Sanskrit as “application, intentness, study, affection, devotion ; determination, tenacity or adherence to” (Monier-Williams 1899), or from Pali as “wishing for, tendency towards, inclination, adherence” (Davids and Stede, 1966). It is considered that suffering arises

¹ See, for example, H. M. Daleski’s “Victory and Patterns of Self-division” in Ross C Murfin, ed. *Conrad Revisited , Essays for the Eighties* Alabama The University of Alabama Press, 1985

because of one's attachment to things in the face of changing conditions. In this sense, attachment includes all kinds of attachments—to one's life, to people, things, feelings, and ideas.

Lacking the power of endurance to willingly surrender what one is emotionally attached to prevents a person from being detached in the sense of being able to see things as they are and to act accordingly. In other words, the state of detachment can be attained only as a result of relinquishing all our attachments. When we examine Heyst's life from this point of view, far from being a life of detachment, his life consists of a series of attachments. First, there is what Robert Hampson calls "his contradictory attachment to his father" (248). Having attached himself to his father for three years "at that plastic and impressionable age," when his father dies, Heyst misses him simply "because he had looked at him so long" (175). After his father's death, Heyst attaches himself to his father's memory : "He remembered always his last evening with his father. He remembered the thin features, the great mass of white hair, and the ivory complexion" (174). Not only does he remember the sight of his father on the last evening, but also his injunction "to look on, and never make a sound" (176).

This attachment to his father's memory makes Heyst decide to drift without forming any other attachments. The scheme turns out to be successful for fifteen years while Heyst wanders restlessly detached from everything, "an impermanent dweller amongst changing scenes". However, by the time he comes out East, "some years before these coal-outcrops began to crop up", he has deviated from his "system of restless wandering" and has developed an attachment to the islands of the archipelago. He confesses that he is "enchanted with these islands" (6) in a tone of "fervour" and "rapture" (7). Subsequently, he becomes attached to what he calls "facts." According to Tesman, Heyst has said, "There's nothing worth knowing but facts. Hard facts! Facts alone, Mr Tesman" (7). Among all the nicknames he acquires, "Enchanted Heyst" and "Hard Facts" are the only two that originate in Heyst's own sayings.

These attachments—to the islands and facts—give rise to Heyst's involvement in Morrison's affairs. Morrison attracts Heyst's attention in Delli because he is familiar to Heyst at least by sight. He knows Morrison by sight, because he has contracted his sphere of wandering and has become a local in "a circle with a radius of eight hundred miles drawn round a point in North Borneo" (7). Having become attached to a particular place, Heyst can no longer pass through life without experiencing emotional reactions. When Heyst recognizes Morrison, he is shocked to find "his eyes bloodshot, his voice nearly gone, the brim of his round pith hat shading an unshaven, livid face" (13). Never having observed such an "odious fact," Heyst is unable to test

it, like Ricardo, by his “own experience and prejudices” (157) or to pursue the truth “in the light of his own experience and prejudices” (157). On close examination, his notion of facts turns out to be more like what Jones calls “new impressions,” something associated more with emotions or moods than with intellection. Heyst reacts impulsively, solely out of his desire to escape the sight, and offers to pay the fine to avoid the emotional impact on himself. Later, in a similar situation, Heyst is compelled to consent to travel with Morrison “in order to put an end to the harrowing scene in the cabin” (19), and later still, he is yet again persuaded by Morrison under emotional pressure. He agrees to join the venture of the Tropical Belt Coal Company simply because, “In this...tangle of strong feelings Morrison’s gratitude insisted on Heyst’s partnership in the great discovery” (22). Heyst may have believed that “intelligent observation of facts was the best way of cheating the time which is allotted to us whether we want it or not” (54), and was under the false impression that he was successfully eluding emotional involvement by being detached, but the fact is that as soon as he became trapped in the “magic circle,” he was no longer “the wandering, drifting, unattached Heyst” (32) that he once was. He has, instead, through his involvement with Morrison’s affairs, developed yet another attachment—this time to a human being. Heyst says in retrospect, “I had, in a moment of inadvertence, created for myself a tie. How to define it precisely I don’t know. One gets attached in a way to people one has done something for...” (199)

When the Tropical Belt Coal Company goes bankrupt, Heyst gives up drifting altogether and settles down on Samburan, saying, “I remain in possession here” (27). This attachment to Samburan may have been due, as the narrator suggests, to the presence on the island of what he calls “his few belongings” (32), things left by his father consisting of “a certain quantity of movable objects, such as books, tables, chairs, and pictures” (176) : “it was perhaps their presence there which attached him to the island. He becomes attached to these belongings to the extent that it seems to him that “in his conception of a world not worth touching, and perhaps not substantial enough to grasp, these objects were the only realities” (176). They seem real to him because they awaken in him the memory of his father.

The sight of Lena in the concert-hall proves to be another instance of an “odious fact,” another “new impression,” because at this point Heyst is still obsessed with what he calls the “intelligent observation of facts”: “She had captured Heyst’s awakened faculty of observation; he had the sensation of a new experience. That was because his faculty of observation had never before been captured by any feminine creature in that marked and elusive fashion” (71). He addresses Lena out of impulsive compassion : “It was the same sort of impulse which years ago

had made him cross the sandy street of the abominable town of Delli in the island of Timor and accost Morrison.... It was the same impulse" (71). This impulsive action commits him to further action when Lena responds spontaneously by asking him to do something about the situation. Consequently, Heyst experiences a further emotional reaction, "the awakening of a tenderness indistinct and confused as yet, towards an unknown woman" (82), and finally, surrendering to a new-born passion, decides to take her back with him to Samburan, thus developing yet another attachment. In doing so, he may have believed himself to be taking a rational action, but in fact, as the narrator says, "the use of reason is to justify the obscure desires that move our conduct" (83), and he has simply exposed his emotional vulnerability.

III

It seems that criticism in the past has too often underestimated the role of Lena in *Victory*. Bruce Johnson, for instance, dismisses the idea that Lena has an insight into the world by saying, "Lena, of course, has no view of man's position in the universe" (166). However, from the point of view of the power of endurance, the power of suffering without resistance by relinquishing attachments, Lena, rather than Heyst, demonstrates an example of living in accord with one's idea of the universe.

At the time of their first encounter in the concert hall, the attraction felt by Heyst and Lena to each other is of a similar nature. The first thing that attracts Heyst about Lena is her physical appearance : "On the lap of that dress there lay, unclasped and idle, a pair of small hands, not very white, attached to well-formed arms. The next detail Heyst was led to observe was the arrangement of the hair—two thick brown tresses rolled round and attractively shaped head... She had captured Heyst's awakened faculty of observation ; he had the sensation of a new experience" (70-1). The impact of physical presence is also felt by Lena : "she was astonished almost more by the near presence of the man himself, by this largely bald head, by the white brow, the sunburnt cheeks, the long horizontal moustaches of crinkly bronze hair, by the kindly expression of the man's blue eyes looking into her own" (72-3), and she also awakens to a new sensation : "she had never had a friend before ; and the sensation of this friendliness going out to her was exciting by its novelty alone" (78-9). However, three months after they arrive in Samburan, the character of their reaction to each other seems to begin to diverge.

Of Lena, it is said that "she had admired him from the first ; she had been attracted by his warm voice, his gentle eye, but she had felt him too wonderfully difficult to know" (246). Even

after spending three months with him on Samburan, “Her tone betrayed always a shade of anxiety, as though she were never certain how a conversation with him would end” (186). Instead of trying to control her conversations with him, Lena simply tries to adapt herself to them, thus giving Heyst the impression that “every time she spoke to him she seemed to abandon to him something of herself—something excessively subtle and inexpressible” (188). Even though he remains “not very intelligible” to her, she tries to accept him as he is, simply by trying to develop her endurance : “She said to herself that she must not be irritated because he seemed too self-contained, and as if shut up in a world of his own” (246).

During the long conversation just before the arrival of Jones, Ricardo, and Pedro, Heyst insensitively confides to Lena his regret over his past attachment to Morrison, thus making her become aware of the uncertainty of their relationship, and awakening in her a fear of being abandoned by him. Her fear is intensified when Ricardo later warns her “not to wait for the chuck” (300). Until at last, as she sits confronted by Ricardo in the bungalow, she has a flash of intuition that she has been for Heyst “only a violent and sincere choice of curiosity and pity—a thing that passes” (394). Much as she loves him, she never takes Heyst’s love for granted. This awareness that even Heyst’s love for her is “a thing that passes” typifies Lena’s awareness of life, and consequently her awareness of the universe.

Lena has an intuitive and unconscious understanding of the universe as opposed to Heyst’s intellectual and conscious understanding. Because it is an unconscious understanding, the only way that she can respond to the world is by developing the power of endurance and learning to cope with it almost instinctively, and it is a slow and painful process. For instance, on waking up from her sleep after breakfast following Ricardo’s attack, Lena learns to overcome her feeling by reacting to it physically : “She got up quickly, as if to counteract the awful sinking of her heart by the vigorous use of her limbs” (315). Similarly, when she realizes, from what Heyst tells her, that her struggle with Ricardo has been observed by Wang on the other side of the curtain, she experiences a horror that gives her the insight that she can act freely while recognizing a strong emotion : “Indeed, what she felt was a sort of horror which left her absolutely in the full possession of all her faculties ; more difficult to bear, perhaps, for that reason, but not paralysing to her fortitude (316). Finally, she learns to overcome even a stronger emotional onslaught when Heyst, unaware of what has taken place between Lena and Ricardo, warns her repeatedly of Ricardo’s impending visit :

The girl unexpectedly got up from the chair, swaying her supple figure and stretching

her arms above her head.... She had jumped to her feet to react against the numbness, to discover whether her body would obey her will. It did. She could stand up, and she could move her arms freely. Though no physiologist, she concluded that all that sudden numbness was in her head, not in her limbs. Her fears assuaged, she thanked God for it mentally.... (358–59)

She learns how to differentiate herself from her emotions effectively through the spontaneous action of moving her limbs. This power of endurance to recognize “the naked necessity of facts” (308) subsequently enables her to save Heyst’s life on the following two occasions. When Ricardo tries to probe at Heyst’s treasure, she realizes that “if she as much as hinted by word or sign that there was no such thing on the island, Heyst’s life wouldn’t be worth half an hour’s purchase” (300). She finds that “Words themselves were too difficult to think of—all except the word ‘Yes’. The saving word!” (300). “Yes” in this sense is a word of recognition rather than deception. Finally, what prevents Ricardo from throwing his knife at Heyst as Heyst stumbles defencelessly into the room after Jones has fired a shot over his shoulder is again her endurance to recognize “the naked necessity of facts.” Though determined to take his knife away, in contrast to Heyst, who had “learned to reflect, which is a destructive process, a reckoning of the cost” (91), Lena had “reckoned upon nothing definite ; she had calculated nothing” (394). When Ricardo hitches himself closer, she tells herself, “This had to be” (397), and when he commands her to always call him husband, she says “‘Yes,’...bracing herself for the contest, in whatever shape it was coming” (400).

After securing Ricardo’s knife, she abandons her insight that Heyst’s passion for her is “a thing that passes” and gives into the illusion of her triumph that Heyst would “take her into the sanctuary of his innermost heart—for ever” (407). However, this relapse occurs only when she is dying, and otherwise she displays a strong awareness of the changing conditions of the universe.

IV

By relinquishing her other attachments, Lena succeeds in remaining faithful to her first impulse to attach herself to Heyst and “to give herself up to him” (201). In contrast, Heyst fails to remain faithful to his first impulse towards her because he fails to relinquish a stronger attachment than his attachment to Lena. However, this is not his attachment to his father’s

memory.

Lena's disclosure to him of Schomberg's calumny enrages Heyst because "he had in him a half-unconscious notion that he was above the level of island gossip" (206) The feeling that he has been "tumbled into some filthy hole" (215)arouses his resentment "against life itself" (216), and, as Schwarz indicates, never having learnt "to deal with his own passions" (69), Heyst seeks refuge in his father's book .

Heyst sat down under his father's portrait ; and the abominable calumny crept back into his recollection The taste of it came on his lips, nauseating and corrosive like some kinds of poison He was tempted to spit on the floor, naively, in sheer unsophisticated disgust of the physical sensation. He shook his head, surprised at himself. He was not used to receive his intellectual impressions in that way—reflected in movements of carnal emotion He stirred impatiently in his chair, and raised the book to his eyes with both hands. It was one of his father's. (218)

The "movements of carnal emotion" that Heyst experiences are reminiscent of what Lena experiences when she is warned of Ricardo's impending visit. But, unlike Lena, Heyst fails to differentiate himself from his emotions and, under their influence, seeks "refuge in words and ideas" (Schwarz, 64) from the unpleasant memory of the calumny, and for this reason experiences a momentary intensification of his father's memory :

It seemed to him that he was hearing his father's voice, speaking and ceasing to speak again. Startled at first, he ended by finding a charm in the illusion He abandoned himself to the half-belief that something of his father dwelt yet on earth—a ghostly voice, audible to the ear of his own flesh and blood. (219)

Ironically, at the same time as Lena is learning to face up to reality by getting used to taking action under emotional pressure without reckoning on anything, Heyst is indulging himself in words that allow him to make excuses for not taking action by reckoning on the cost The only time that he obeys an impulse for action is when he goes to look for his revolver in the drawer in response to a "quite novel impression of the dangers of slumber" (256). However, when he finds that the revolver is missing, he relapses into his habit of reflecting and reckoning the cost

Heyst's habit of reflecting is henceforth intensified, and he even begins to reflect aloud in

front of Lena. Words such as “I don’t react with sufficient distinctness,”(316),“I have lived too long within myself,”and “I have refined everything away” (325) are all observations on himself rather than observations on what he used to call “facts.” The shock of hearing about Schomberg’s calumny has revealed a hitherto hidden aspect of Heyst that cannot be explained as the effect of his attachment to his father’s memory. It is to be remembered that when his father died, Heyst had determined not to enter the flow of life “in his pride” (176). Pride is what makes him react so strongly to Schomberg’s calumny : “a half-unconscious notion that he was above the level of island gossip” (206). Again pride prevents him from taking the necessary action to defend himself and Lena against Jones, Ricardo, and Pedro : “ ‘why should I put up with the humiliation of their secret menaces? Do you know what the world would say?’ He emitted a low laugh, which struck her with terror....’ It would say, Lena, that I...have murdered these unoffending ship-wrecked strangers from sheer funk’ ” (301). This fear of wounding his pride, and not his father’s memory, prevents Heyst from entering “the flow of life.” It makes him react so strongly to Schomberg’s calumny that it nullifies his impulse to defend himself and Lena. The mistrust of life born from resentment against life that threatens to wound his pride, even prevents him from uttering the cry of love to Lena on her deathbed, and in the end he takes his own life to defend this pride. Such feeling reveals a strong attachment to self. This is the only truth about himself that Heyst, with all his capacity for detached analysis of himself and the world, fails to arrive at, because he has lacked the power to endure humiliation in this universe where, in his own words, man is no more than “an unforeseen accident which does not stand close investigation” (196).

V

The “capacity for detachment” and the “power of endurance” examined in the light of Conrad’s vision of the universe indicate that neither one nor the other can offer us an ultimate solution to “our captivity within the incomprehensible logic of accident.” Confronted by the necessity to relinquish his most cherished attachment—that to self—Heyst finds that “the play of his destiny is too...mysterious for his understanding” to retain his detachment. At the last moment of her life, the necessity to relinquish her most cherished attachment—her attachment to Heyst—Lena finds that the play of her destiny is “too great for her fears” to face up to her abandonment by Heyst.

Heyst has the capacity for conscious understanding of the universe, but lacks the power of

endurance that enables him to act under emotional stress. Lena, on the other hand, has the power of endurance to act under emotional stress, but lacks the capacity for conscious understanding of the universe. From the point of view of Conrad's vision developed in his letter to T. Fisher Unwin, by fearlessly facing the truth that the incomprehensible logic of accident is the only fact of the universe, Lena makes it "an austere and trusted friend, a companion of victory." Heyst, on the other hand, struggles to escape from it "through a theory" (303). The passage in Conrad's letter does not seem to imply that one attitude is better than the other. However, the overall impression we get from *Victory* is not quite the same. The issue of the capacity for detachment is brought to the fore by the abundance of analytical comments made by the narrator and Heyst, whereas the dramatization of Lena's psychology and action is left unsatisfactory.

One possible reason for this weakness may lie in the novel's narrative technique. As Schwarz points out, the narrator in *Victory* is "a sceptical, gloomy presence" and "the action confirms the narrator's gloom" (71). Not only does he watch Heyst with "sympathetic irony" (Schwarz 71), but he seems to share some of Heyst's and also his father's weaknesses, because he seems to "use the subject matter of his narrative as a buffer between himself and his world" (Bonney 133). This, in its turn, may reflect Conrad's personal tendency for reflection rather than action as an artist: "Heyst's stance of detachment characterizes the artist who inevitably chooses to describe his vision of life rather than to participate in life" (Schwarz 61). At the same time, as Bruce Johnson points out, Conrad believed in participation in life as much as describing a vision of life: "What disturbs Conrad in the philosophy of elder Heyst...is that he uses his knowledge of the truth about man's position in nature to deny life. On the contrary, Conrad himself has in some of his work shown signs that his metaphysical vision is reason enough to encourage the human creation of value..." (166). Such a positive attitude towards life suggests a closer analogy with Buddhism, which assumes that becoming aware that the law operating in the universe is operating within ourselves, "and living in accord with it" by relinquishing attachments, "constitute...awakening, liberation, or enlightenment" (Schloegl 1).

In contrast to Heyst, whose understanding of the universe is rationalistic, Lena's

⁴According to Hajime Nakamura, "Japanese thought did not shape itself in the form of intellectual and systematic theories, rather it was apt to be expressed in the intuitive and emotional style of the arts" (Hajime Nakamura Revised English Translation ed. Philip P. Wiener *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples: India-China-Tibet-Japan* Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1964), thus a Japanese reader with intuitive and emotional tendencies may find Heyst less appealing.

understanding is intuitive and emotional, which may make her less appealing to readers with rationalistic tendencies². However, from the point of view of Buddhism, the significant difference between the two characters is not that Heyst's understanding is based on reason and Lena's on intuition, but that Lena succeeds, for the most part, in "living in accord with" her insight, while Heyst fails. If we cannot escape from "our captivity within the incomprehensible logic of accident," it seems wiser, after all, to make the truth "an austere and trusted friend, a companion of victory" than to struggle to escape from it through rationalization.

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