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Abstract

The focus of this paper is to explore the differences between the East and the West as described in *Under Western Eyes* by Joseph Conrad. Firstly, the division line and the mindset differences are outlined in order to provide background for the subsequent analysis. Once the background is provided, the novel *Under Western Eyes* is analyzed in contrast with Conrad's own opinions as well as with the theory provided in the first part of the thesis.

Keywords

West, East, *Under Western Eyes*, Joseph Conrad, Russia, Revolution

Název Práce

Zobrazení Východu a Západu v románu "Před očima Západu" Josepha Conrada

Anotace

Cílem této práce je prozkoumat rozdíly mezi východem a západem, které se projevují v knize *Před očima západu* od Josepha Conrada. V první části práce je určena dělící linie mezi východem a západem, a také rozdíly ve smýšlení osob pocházejících z těchto částí světa s cílem poskytnout základní informace nutné pro následnou analýzu. Poté, co jsou rozdíly vyznačeny, je román *Před očima západu* analyzován v kontrastu s Conradovými názory a také určenými rozdíly ve smýšlení a rozdělení východu a západu.

Klíčová Slova

Východ, Západ, *Před očima západu*, Joseph Conrad, Rusko, Revoluce

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Introduction

Under Western Eyes, authored by a Polish-British author Joseph Conrad, proves to be a remarkable literary creation that deals with a range of issues including history, politics, culture and religion. Conrad, born in December 1857, lived during the time of the expansion of the highly successful British Empire, which encapsulated a great deal of colonialist advancements. He had experienced the effects of colonialism as well as democracy, totality and a number of violent conflicts which arose during his life. In 1905, his experiences accumulated into his essay *Autocracy and War*, which was strongly influenced by the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. This war, having been labeled World War Zero by some historians, allowed him to demonstrate his animosity towards totalitarian regimes and Russia in general. In *Autocracy and War*, Conrad speaks of many opinions he later expressed in his novel *Under Western Eyes*, and therefore it is used as the main source for some parts of this thesis.

Under Western Eyes centers around a revolutionist group that strives to combat the Russian government and the manner in which this group is perceived by an outsider mind, an English teacher, who happens to become involved in the story through a friendship with two Russian ladies. It is positioned to be a narrative for Western people and showcasing the desire of Russian minds for freedom and independence. As they face the terrible circumstances of their homeland, the Teacher assumes the role of an observator and comments on his own experiences as well as reflections regarding the hardships of starting a true revolution. Conrad embeds his opinions into the narrative utilizing a multitude of means such as character features and events that take place.

The East/West divide is a widely discussed topic that has been considered problematic for decades. Historians, thinkers and politicians alike continue to speculate over the origins and differences between the two sides of the world as well as the proper division line between the East and the West. The purpose of this thesis is to outline some of the division lines and reasons constructed by different authors in addition to exploring the distinct mindsets of both the East and the West. Furthermore, Joseph Conrad's opinions and the manner in which he projects them into *Under Western Eyes* provide an image of what the typical Westerner thinks of the East/West divide. Although the issues analyzed in this thesis come from the early 20th century, they can still be observed in modern times and their exploration can therefore shed light onto the current relationship between the East and the West.

The method used to examine the topic of the divide is analysis of the novel *Under Western Eyes* as it is the most common method to delve into literary topics. After outlining the separate issues that are later discussed in the thesis and the opinions relating to them, coming from both Conrad and other authors, the issues are compared to the novel and related to the historical, political and religious context of the 19th century, the eras before, and certain realities of the modern times.

The goal of the thesis is to discover the different interpretations of the East/West divide, the reasons behind it forming and the mindsets that have developed as a result of it. Furthermore, the thesis aims to discover whether the discovered facts, which are generally accepted to be stereotypically true, appear in *Under Western Eyes* and whether they appear in a form that aligns with the discoveries. Finally, Conrad's personal opinions, which he expressed fearlessly, are applied to the novel in an attempt to find out whether the issues explored in the novel align with Conrad's personal beliefs regarding Russia, political systems, religion and others.

Firstly, the thesis presents the reader with the exploration of Joseph Conrad's outlook and his stance on the Russian mindset, democracy, oppression and totalitarianism. These perspectives are projected into the entire narrative and their examination is necessary for the purpose of examining both the characters and the events that transpire during the progression of *Under Western Eyes*. Conrad's standpoints are later contrasted with the analysis of *Under Western Eyes*.

Next, the East/West divide is discussed from mostly the geographical and developmental viewpoint as some of the major events which strongly influenced the West only barely happened in the East and, therefore, left the East less economically advanced than the West. In this part of the thesis, religion is discussed as it played a dominant role in the division of the East and the West. The Great Schism, which greatly influenced the religious conflicts between the East and the West is also mentioned, and other events such as the French Revolution and the First Industrial Revolution appear in this chapter. Lastly, individualism and collectivism, as well as democracy and autocracy which are connected to it, are explored in detail as they play a crucial role in the narrative of *Under Western Eyes*.

In addition to the description of the geographical and developmental divide between the West and the East, the differences in their mindsets are discussed. In this part of the thesis, collectivism and individualism is discussed because its influence on the characters of the novel can not be forgotten. Furthermore, as religious ideologies and beliefs affect both the narrative

and the characters and the divide between the East and the West, they are mentioned in this part of the thesis.

Following the theoretical part of the thesis described above is an analysis of *Under Western Eyes*. The main focus of the analysis are the distinctive mindsets of the characters of the story, the intentions behind their actions and their struggle to tear away from the influence of their country. All the representatives of the Eastern and Western mindsets are firstly analyzed separately and later contrasted with each other to uncover the particular ways in which Conrad expresses his opinions.

The analysis of the characters is then supported by the exploration of Anarchism, which is an essential part of the story. Lastly, the entire analysis is contrasted with Joseph Conrad's opinions regarding the topics consulted within *Under Western Eyes* in order to discover the creative means he uses to achieve his intention of sharing his opinions with the world.

Lastly, the goal of the thesis is to point to the distinctions between the East and the West and explore how their relationship evolved. Joseph Conrad, who has repeatedly shared his opinions regarding the East/West divide as well as political systems, is an ideal author though whom this topic can be explored and his novel *Under Western Eyes* provides a wide arrange of characters whose behavior can be analyzed to reach a better understanding of the topic.

1. Joseph Conrad and His Opinions

Authors frequently infuse their work with personal opinions, whether of political nature or otherwise. Joseph Conrad demonstrates this habit, and given the highly political character of his work *Under Western Eyes*, it is appropriate to focus on the exploration of his viewpoints before focusing on the work itself. The focal point of this chapter is primarily Conrad's strong aversion to Russia, a feeling he openly expressed. His essay *Autocracy and War* is particularly acclaimed among scholars as it contains a clear expression of Conrad's animosity for Russia and the underlying reasoning behind it. It is, therefore, the primary source of information used in this chapter.

Firstly, it is appropriate to introduce the primary source of this chapter, the essay *Autocracy and War*, in which Conrad distinctly highlights the impact of both democratic and autocratic leadership on individuals' minds. His essay discusses the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905, which resulted in a loss on the side of Russia and subsequent spread of a considerable amount of propaganda throughout the world. Since Russia was a growing empirical power at the beginning of the 20th century, a loss on the battlefield posed a danger to its doctrine. Therefore, it was attempting to present itself as a dangerous nation that should not be toyed with. Conrad saw past Russia's propaganda, stating the following.

The truth is that Russia of our father, of our childhood, of our middle age-the testamentary Russia of Peter the Great, who imagined that all the nations were delivered into the hand of Tsardom-can do nothing. It can do nothing, because it does not exist. It has vanished forever at last, and as yet there is no new Russia to take place of that ill-omened creation, which, being a fantasy of a madman's brain, could be nothing but a figure out of a nightmare seated upon a monument of fear and oppression.¹

Undoubtedly, Conrad chose his words carefully in order to fight the propaganda and show his dislike for the nation, even using a great Russian leader's name to deliver the message. However, it is important to note that Conrad's hate towards Russia was not born purely from the nation being autocratic, but rather from the goals and the reasons for said autocracy. While autocracies, or societies led by a single leader, are not new or exclusively Russian, Conrad

¹ Joseph Conrad, "Autocracy and War," *The North American Review* 181, no. 584 (1905): 33-55.

outlines a distinction between Russian autocracy and European monarchy. His description of the fundamental differences in the monarchical principle between European and Russian autocracy involves the reason why an autocratic leadership formed in each of the two. He states that in Europe, monarchy was a necessity, a tool serving to unite people and strengthen the nation's self-consciousness, nationality and solidarity. To him, the European monarchy served the purpose of uniting and allowing the nation to move forward towards a more healthy government. In Russia, however, autocracy does not serve any purpose, it has no past and no future. Furthermore, Conrad characterizes Russian autocracy as a regime with no rational origin or root, resulting in a land he calls inhuman in character.² This sense of inhumanity is further explored in the analytical part of this paper and is reflected in the novel through most Russians that appear in the beginning of the story.

Moreover, as Daniel Lees and Janet Leake state in their article, Conrad considered Russia a land with no history and, as an extension, a land with no future.³ Once again, this opinion, which he also mentioned in the aforementioned essay *Autocracy and War*, is reflected in *Under Western Eyes*. It is not the goal of this chapter to delve into detail about the novel itself. However, a brief example of Conrad's idea of Russia's lack of history and therefore its lack of personality is illustrated in one of the main characters, Razumov, whose empty personality is driven by the need to live a fulfilling life which he believes is unattainable in Russia. Additionally, as is typical among writers, Conrad competed against those who presented ideas that differed from his. According to Lees and Janet, these authors were Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, both of which, according to them, had been inserted into the novel. Tolstoy, on one hand, is reflected in the character of Peter Ivanovitch, who is hypocritical and egoistic. Dostoevsky, on the other hand, is, according to the writers, a rival of Conrad and *Under Western Eyes* is a direct response to his novel *Crime and Punishment*.⁴

Carola M. Kaplan agrees with Lees and Leake and further builds on the idea of Conrad responding to *Crime and Punishment* through his novel. In fact, Kaplan goes as far as calling *Under Western Eyes* a direct response to *Crime and Punishment*, stating: "But I would go further to maintain that Conrad, in *Under Western Eyes*, was responding in detail to *Crime and*

²Conrad, "Autocracy and War," 44.

³Carola M. Kaplan, "CONRAD'S NARRATIVE OCCUPATION OF/BY RUSSIA IN 'UNDER WESTERN EYES,'" *Conradiana* 27, no. 2 (1995): 97-114.

⁴Kaplan, "CONRAD'S NARRATIVE OCCUPATION OF/BY RUSSIA IN 'UNDER WESTERN EYES,'" 99.

Punishment and reworking the Dostoevsky text according to his own ideology and artistic method. In *Under Western Eyes*, Conrad deliberately sets out to refute the view of human experience, the depiction of Russian, and the religious beliefs set forth in *Crime and Punishment*.”⁵

Although the primary focus of this paper is not on the relationship between Conrad and Dostoevsky, Kaplan, Lees and Leake’s analyses offer an interesting picture of Conrad’s character. As previously established, Conrad was not afraid to voice his opinions openly to the world. Moreover, his decision to directly respond to another writer’s Russia-related work showcases the extent of his dislike towards the nation. Additionally, it is important to mention the assimilation of his predecessors into the characters in *Under Western Eyes*, specifically the deliberate portrayal of the character of Peter Ivanovitch similarly to how he viewed Tolstoy. Conrad’s insertion of Tolstoy into *Under Western Eyes* appears to subtly express Conrad’s disagreement with the author.

Before further exploring Conrad’s viewpoint on the subjects included in *Under Western Eyes*, his reasons for disliking Russia should also be mentioned. While Conrad presented himself proudly as a British citizen, he was originally from Poland. A single glance at Poland’s history is sufficient enough to recognize the oppression it had faced from the side of Russia. Sylvère Monod comments on Conrad’s attitude towards oppression and other related issues, claiming that “In any case, Conrad did not blindly advocate the exertion of power by the powerful. In the colonial field, for instance, he showed more than once that he disliked oppression and exploitation.”⁶ Considering his animosity towards both autocracy and oppression, it should come as no surprise that Conrad disapproved of Russia. The combination of a form of government he was highly critical of and Russia’s past involvement in the abuse of his home country created an ideal enemy that Conrad could face. Of course, this is not to say that his opinions are baseless and illogical but rather that they should be seen as highly subjective.

Conrad’s hostility does not originate only from his distaste for autocracy and oppression, traits for which Russia is widely recognized even in the contemporary world. In *Autocracy and War*, he provides a multitude of additional arguments illustrating Russia’s unprofitable nature as an ally for both other countries and its own people. When Conrad explores the contrasting

⁵Kaplan, “CONRAD’S NARRATIVE OCCUPATION OF/BY RUSSIA IN ‘UNDER WESTERN EYES,’” 99.

⁶Sylvère Monod, “CONRAD AND EUROPEAN POLITICS,” *Yearbook of Conrad Studies* 1 (2005): 93–104.

attitudes of the Japanese and Russian armies, he speaks of the Russian people as “[...] torn out from a miserable quietude resembling death itself, hurled across space, amazed, without starting point of its own or knowledge of the aim, can feel nothing but the horror-struck consciousness of having mysteriously become the plaything of a black and merciless fate.”⁷ This profound disposition he attributes to Russian people is also reflected in *Under Western Eyes*, offering a more in-depth glimpse into Conrad’s psyche. Notably, he doesn’t appear to experience hatred towards the people of Russia, but rather towards its government, a quality which instills in him a sense of relatability to the reader. Furthermore, Conrad goes as far as to call Russian autocratic leaders slave-owners and claims that the only revolution possible in Russia is a slave uprising.⁸ This sentiment remains true even in current times because historically, it has been true that autocratic leaders often use their own people as expendable servants. For this reason, autocracy is generally considered a less ideal form of government.

Autocracy was not the only form of government that Conrad was not fond of. Although he did not express hatred for any other form of government, he did have reservations regarding democracy. Sylvère Monod summarizes Conrad’s stance with a simple sentence, claiming that “Democracy was to him at best a lesser evil.”⁹ This approach, however, differs from the conventional view of democracy as a system which grants individuals both freedom and a chance to participate in the election of future leaders. To Conrad, democracy served a different purpose. According to Monod, “He seems to distrust democracy because it serves the interests of capitalism and industrialism.”¹⁰ This part of Conrad’s critique adds depth to the general subject of this chapter, offering a side of Conrad that does not only focus on his hatred of Russia and its leaders. Furthermore, his animosity was not only directed at Russia. In *Autocracy and War*, Conrad also comments on Germany, stating that “It is a powerful and voracious organism, full of unscrupulous self-confidence, whose appetite for aggrandizement will only be limited by the power of helping itself to the severed members of its friends and neighbors.”¹¹ According to his statement, Conrad considers Germany a land with a similar approach to its people as Russia, using aggression as a tool to gain control. Even though the animosity he expresses towards Russia appears to be much more extreme, it is essential to also mention his dislike for Germany

⁷Conrad, “Autocracy and War,” 36.

⁸Conrad, “Autocracy and War,” 47.

⁹Monod, “CONRAD AND EUROPEAN POLITICS,” 97.

¹⁰Monod, “CONRAD AND EUROPEAN POLITICS,” 102.

¹¹Conrad, “Autocracy and War,” 49.

in order to avoid misinterpreting his aversion as something personal rather than an opinion based mainly on logic.

Given that the main focus of *Under Western Eyes* does not lie on the negative aspects of Russia, but rather on the contrast between the ideologies of the West and East, it is equally important to explore Conrad's opinions of Europe. Using his essay *Autocracy and War* as the primary source, one can observe that he does not clearly state his opinions on Europe. Instead, Conrad speaks of the differences between Russia and Europe with a clear bias in favor of Europe, whether it be by comparing Russian autocracy and European monarchy or by expressing his distaste for oppression.

In conclusion, Conrad's extensive and profound verbalization of his opinions, intertwined with his reasoning, paints a comprehensive portrait of his ideology regarding the world. Taking into account the depth of his beliefs, it comes as no surprise that he infuses his writings with them, allowing the reader to experience the world through his eyes. The extent of his aversion, which spans beyond Russia, and his involvement in the political discussion of his time, expands Conrad's character further. His engagement in such dialogues showcases his resolution to challenge even a country as controversial as Russia. Furthermore, his reflections regarding both democracy and Germany contribute to the reputability of his person. While the focus on this chapter centers on Conrad's negative worldview, it is imperative to note that his literary work surpasses his subjective opinions. Finally, Conrad possesses not only the ability to properly analyse certain political issues of the world, but also manages to articulate his opinions with clarity.

2. The Definition of East and West

The next task on the path towards analyzing *Under Western Eyes* is defining the East and the West. This chapter focuses on the political ideologies, social situation and geographical distinction between the two.

The first part of the world that this chapter discusses is the West. While geographically, west is located anywhere from Europe to the left of the world map, this paper only examines Eurasia as a continent, disregarding the Americas and other continents. This is because *Under Western Eyes* takes place in Great Britain, Geneva and Russia, examining the personalities of a British person and several Russians.

It is no secret that Europe's history is diverse, therefore, it is a topic several historians argue about, being unsure of what exactly the West is and where to put the border. However, as this paper aims to explain the mentality of the nations and not their geographical location, it is not necessary to consult them and only religion will be used to divide the East and the West. Religion has been an essential part of life everywhere in the world for over two millennia. It has also been a way for people to distinguish between the East and the West. Samuel P. Huntington in *The Clash of Civilizations* explains how the developments in the world influenced the division line between the East and the West, pointing first to the effects of the Cold War. As he states, Christianity was divided into two branches around the year 1500, which sent a clear line down the continent, dividing it into two parts. The Western Christian world and the Eastern Orthodox Christians together with Islam.¹² Moreover, the East is generally considered less advanced and economically developed than the West, causing the rift to become even deeper.

The division line between the East and the West, according to Huntington, runs along the modern boundaries between Finland and Russia as well as between the Baltic states and Russia. It then cuts through Ukraine, Belarus and Romania and lastly along the line separating Croatia and Slovenia from the rest of what was, at the time of Huntington, Yugoslavia.¹³

Religion often creates a rift between civilisations and nations due to its strong influence on individuals' identities. Huntington asserts that this influence causes an 'us' versus 'them' type of mentality within religious groups.¹⁴ Unfortunately, it is some members of religious groups that

¹²Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993): 22–49.

¹³Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" 30.

¹⁴Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" 29.

cause this rift to become deeper as they attempt to force their religion onto others. Two events follow that illustrate this phenomenon of forcing religion onto others. Historically, the Salem Witch Trials present a horrifying example of what people are capable of should their beliefs become too extreme. These gruesome events unfolded in Massachusetts near the end of the 17th century and consisted of witchcraft accusations, some of which resulted in execution. Unfortunately, the Salem Witch Trials were not the only witchcraft related trials that occurred globally, but rather the most recognizable among the population. Witch trials are often rooted in Christian extremism and their existence alone proves how terrible religious fanaticism can get. Furthermore, a modern example, which instills fear in the Western society, is ISIS, short for Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. It is a terrorist group so extreme that it has caused distrust towards Islam on the entire Western side of the world. Although only ISIS exemplifies the creation of a rift between the East and the West, both of the aforementioned events prove that religion can become dangerous if it is taken to the extremes. The religious conflict between the East and the West has been going on for over 1000 years and there are no indications of it ending. Razumov, the main character of *Under Western Eyes*, is Russian. Having temporarily moved to Britain to become a spy for the Russian government, his ideologies and his perception of the Western world provide an insight into the mind of an easterner existing in the Western world and are analyzed in the second part of this paper.

As has been mentioned before, the vast majority of Western civilizations is Christian or Atheist. While Atheism has been becoming more and more common in the past decades, Christianity is still a prominent belief system in the West, which is one of the biggest distinctions between the West and the East. The historical events that have shaped the West have also had a great impact on the current situation in it. The influential events include, for example, Renaissance, French Revolution or industrial revolution, all of which Huntington also mentions, presenting them as major influences on Western civilizations. The aforementioned events will further be examined in order to provide a clearer view of the social situation in the contemporary Western world.

The first movement to be explored is the Renaissance, as it was historically the first impactful period of time which influenced the West Significantly more than the East. The Renaissance was a movement that started in 14th century Italy and lasted all the way to the 17th century as it spread throughout the world. It is characterized by a humanistic revival and great

advancements in all artistic fields as well as by the beginnings of modern science. Moreover, it brought a tremendous amount of freedom and development opportunities to the Western world. The invention of the printing press meant that the spread of information became easier, which allowed modern science to take roots. Humanism, which was a big part of the Renaissance, was a movement focused on humans. Essentially, the core of humanism is the belief that the human race does not need God, or religion in general, in order to reach satisfaction, be it spiritual, emotional or otherwise. Such a revolutionary approach to religion was unheard of until the 14th century, with people involving God and religion in all of their decisions, actions and opinions until that time. Discovering that observing and experiencing life without the involvement of religion was an option provided grounds for a shift in peoples' approach to both science and human potential, consequently granting science the space to develop. The significant impact of Renaissance and humanism on the evolution of Western ideas, mainly its influence on science and the exploration of human potential, is enough to recognize that the amount of development Europe experienced during this time proved a considerable advantage the West had against the East.

Secondly, the French Revolution had a similar impact on the Western population. Its peak year, 1789, resulted in the final destruction of feudalism - another purely Western system - in Europe. The revolution occurred for various reasons, some of which included decrease in mortality and the subsequent increase in population and the desire for independence. Furthermore, enlightenment influenced the French enough to desire liberty. Since feudalism was a prominent system in Europe of the time, people did not have easy access to a self-sufficient, comfortable life. Therefore, they demanded the ability to become landowners, which resulted in the revolution taking place. It is widely known that the revolution was a bloody and violent one, however, the results brought freedom to the common people, ridding Europe of aristocracy and its political power. The French Revolution and the creation of constitutional monarchy inspired other nations to fight for their freedom, which greatly influenced the political situation in Europe. Once again, such a significant change in the system of the West brought great advantages over the East, which, unfortunately, remained mostly totalitarian.

The last significant era was the Industrial Revolution, which brought about massive changes in all aspects of life in the Western world. The Industrial Revolution partially overlapped with the French Revolution, bringing forth enormous developments in technological areas as

well as new innovations and inventions. It started in Great Britain in the 18th century and spread through Europe and the U.S. all the way until the mid-19th century. Unfortunately, it had very little effect on life in the East, but resulted in massive improvements in the West. It is recognized for the newly developed means of production, which first started with advancements in the textile industry. The population no longer required certain skills as the machinery slowly took over and created more job opportunities for people who lacked said skills. Moreover, the gap between the poor and the rich slowly started lessening, allowing the common people to earn a wage to sustain their families. Even though it is true that there was little space for housing as well as lack of proper food and water for everyone, the impact of the revolution needs to be recognized as its effect on society remained to be mostly positive. Some of the most prominent effects on society included new job opportunities, cities built specifically for factory workers and higher wages for the common people.

Lastly, in order to summarize Huntington's idea of the dividing line between the East and the West, a few of his words can be used. Generally, Huntington explains that the aforementioned events only lightly touched and influenced the East while they were extremely shaping for the West. Moreover, he explains that the nations to the East of his division line are generally less economically advanced and less likely to develop political systems that are more stable, such as democracy.¹⁵

These highly influential events, which affected the West more than the East, introduced a new ideology centered around individualism. The introduction of Humanism emphasized individual achievements and capabilities, alongside the vast improvements in living conditions and a more liberal political system. This led to people prioritizing individual accomplishments over collective ones. Kwang-Il Yoon, who discusses political psychology in his article, cites Huntington in relation to collectivism and individualism as well, stating that there are major differences between the Western individualist and the Non-Western collectivist nations. Furthermore, he mentions Triandis, who further elaborates by claiming that after the Cold War, Western nations started shifting towards individualism while the East remained more collectivist.¹⁶ Considering the changes that Europe encountered around this time, it comes as no surprise that Western civilisations became more recognized for their individualism. On one hand,

¹⁵Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" 30,31.

¹⁶Kwang-Il Yoon, "Political Psychology of Individualism and Collectivism," *Journal of International and Area Studies* 21, no. 2 (2014): 45-64.

the aforementioned events which strongly influenced the West encouraged individual approach to life, and on the other hand, the shift to more democratic political systems naturally stimulated individuals' needs. Additionally, a simple and useful explanation of the word individualism is provided in *Individualism, Collectivism and Economic Development* by Richard Ball. He maintains that "In individualist cultures most people's social behavior is largely determined by personal goals that overlap only slightly with the goals of collectives... When a conflict arises between personal and group goals, it is considered acceptable for the individual to place personal goals ahead of collective goals."¹⁷ Logically, such a sentiment proves problematic for totalitarian regimes, supporting the idea that individualism is much more common among democratic and other more liberal political systems. Furthermore, Ball mentions that "economic growth can undermine collectivism,"¹⁸ which promotes Triandis' statement as the Industrial Revolution did, indeed, lead to great economic growth in the West.

In contrast to Western individualism, the East remains mostly collectivist even in current times. Probably the most common example of a collectivist society is Russia, which is also a part of the analysis conducted in the second part of this thesis. Generally, it is known for the people's perception of others as 'comrades,' creating an already mentioned feeling of 'us' versus 'them' when it comes to Russians communicating with other nations and learning of different ways of life. The goal of Russia and other collectivist nations is to create a future as one unit. Ball provides a definition of collectivism, claiming that "By contrast, in collectivist cultures social behavior is determined largely by goals shared with some collective, and if there is a conflict between personal and group goals, it is considered socially desirable to place collective goals ahead of personal goals."¹⁹ The Eastern world does not consider the individual as the most essential unit of society and instead relies on collective effort. This is not to say that all Eastern nations rely on collectivist ideas, but rather that it is more common in the East than it is in the West. Although collectivism is generally considered an ideology of the past and has been mostly abandoned by the Western world, it remains prominent in the East. Russia, however, is not the only nation which is openly showing the world its goal to silence its people. Other nations which can be observed to show collectivist organization to varying degrees are China and North Korea,

¹⁷Richard Ball, "Individualism, Collectivism, and Economic Development," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 573 (2001): 57–84.

¹⁸Ball, "Individualism, Collectivism, and Economic Development," 75.

¹⁹Ball, "Individualism, Collectivism, and Economic Development," 58.

with China being more open to the world, attempting to prove to it that their regime is not as bad as it seems. North Korea, on the other hand, is completely closed off from the outside world. Censorship in both of these countries is on a higher level than Europe has experienced only in small doses, with the aim of the censorship being maintaining order. It is common among these nations to aim to suppress the freedom of expression of their citizens by way of propaganda or police. This fact is emphasized not only in *Under Western Eyes*, but in other similar works that aim to analyze the problem, such as *1984*. In the current times, collectivist ideas are considered obsolete and barbaric by the West. However, they remain the primary system in the East and cannot be disregarded.

Unfortunately, collectivist political systems face uprisings more often than individualist systems. Collectivism restricts individuals in order to build a stronger collective union, which can lead to people calling for more freedom. The result can be both peaceful and violent. Two examples of such uprisings, or revolutions, are the Velvet Revolution which took place in Czechoslovakia in 1989, and the previously mentioned French Revolution. The Velvet Revolution is known as a peaceful transition of power from the communist party through demonstrations. On the other hand, the French Revolution, as mentioned before, was quite violent. It resulted in bloody executions by the guillotine and the destruction of the government, which could be described as Anarchy as the nation lacked any laws, was disordered and chaotic.

Defining Anarchism proves a difficult task. Although most people understand the basic idea of Anarchism, which is a situation in which the government has been taken down by the citizens and the nation is now in a state of lawlessness, the reality is more complicated. John P. Clark proposes that there are several definitions of Anarchism, with most thinkers agreeing on a similar definition, in which Anarchy is a state in which the people opposed or took down the leading force, authority, state or government by force, replacing the system with one that was created by people themselves.²⁰ To further demonstrate the differences in the opinions of thinkers regarding Anarchism, Clark speaks of other definitions, such as that of Daniel Guérin, who says Anarchism opposes society as a whole, or Malatesta, who defines Anarchism as the complete destruction of the domination and exploitation of man by man. The latter of these two opinions is considered the closest to the truth by Clark. Furthermore, a few of the views on the positives of Anarchism include Kropotkin, whose opinion is that it is social order by free agreements

²⁰John P. Clark, "WHAT IS ANARCHISM?" *Nomos* 19 (1978): 3–28.

between various groups, Proudhon, according to whom it is the replacement of government by contract, or, Woodcock's idea that it is a cooperation between free individuals.²¹ Unfortunately, the simplistic idea of Anarchism recognized by the public causes people to view it as an ideology impossible to reach, utopian, or overly optimistic. Although the aim of this thesis is not to provide a perfect definition of Anarchism, it is important to understand that the topic is extremely complicated in order to fully grasp the scope of the operation which takes place in *Under Western Eyes*.

Additionally, Woodcock comments on the reasons for the emergence of Anarchism and paints a rough idea of how widespread it was. He claims that it was a "rebellion on the part of men, particularly in the less developed areas of Europe, who passionately resisted the forces of growing state power and of centralization that accompany industrial society."²² Moreover, he proclaims that it opposes "the totalitarian goal of a uniform world."²³ Assuming that Woodcock spoke of Europe as a continent, his sentiment would apply to both France and Russia, both of which were at least one point totalitarian, as well as to other European countries that faced the problem of totality. Anarchy is an important part of *Under Western Eyes* as the group Razumov is sent to spy on is anarchist with the goal of bringing down the Russian government.

In conclusion, there are several methods which could serve the purpose of identifying the distinction between the East and the West. Some, such as religion, cause other issues which are brought up later on in this thesis, while others are based on the ideologies more common in certain areas of the world. Democratic states tend to prefer allowing the achievements of individuals to overshadow the collective goals. In contrast, totalitarian or tsarist nations aim to unite the people in order to create a new standard of satisfaction for their people. Unfortunately, neither is perfect with the totalitarian nations being more likely to develop resistance groups which aim to disassemble the government in order to create a new one which is more likely to allow self-growth. The explanation of these significant dividers between the East and the West sheds light on the complexities of these two regions, allowing for the reader to better understand the differences between them. Furthermore, it provides background information necessary for the analysis of *Under Western Eyes* as all the aforementioned influencers affected the work strongly.

²¹Clark, "WHAT IS ANARCHISM?"

²²Georg G. Iggers, *The American Historical Review* 68, no. 2 (1963): 413–14.

²³Iggers, *The American Historical Review* 68, 414.

3. The Western and Eastern Mindsets

Before moving to the analysis of *Under Western Eyes*, it is important to focus on one more issue. In the previous chapters, Conrad's opinions were described and the dividing factors of the East and the West defined. This chapter focuses on the ideologies and opinions the two sides have of each other. Several authors observe the East/West divide from varying viewpoints, some of which are used in order to outline the general set of opinions the East and West harbor regarding each other. Furthermore, religion, a dividing factor discussed in the previous chapter is further explored and lastly, the chapter contains a more specific description of Anarchism as well as its influence on different parts of the world.

The East/West divide has been a target of research for decades as the reasons together with the depth of the division pique the interest of many thinkers. Even though Andrzej Korbonski puts the border between the East and the West in a place that does not align perfectly with the one discussed in this thesis, his perception of the reasons behind the divide remains accurate. According to him, the West has been trading with the East the same way developed countries trade with underdeveloped ones, meaning that they buy materials cheaply and sell expensive produced goods in return.²⁴ While it can certainly be true that some Eastern countries are underdeveloped, such as Iraq, others are not. However, Korbonski's observation definitely matches the Western public's perception of the East. Furthermore, totalitarian nations, such as China or Russia, tend to exploit their citizens for cheap labor and internalize their economy as much as possible.

The fact that westerners regard the people of the East as barbaric plays a notable role in the divide. However, this attitude is shared by both Eastern and Western societies, with each group seeing the other as barbaric, or 'them,' and their reasonings behind their standpoints prove to be quite similar. The most obvious reason, which has been a source of disputes for millenia, is religion, which has already been mentioned in this thesis as Huntington uses it to create the division line between the East and the West. The most prominent religion in the West is christianity, which encompasses a wide range of ideologies. The fact remains that the main religion in the West is the Latin Church, the main leader of which is the Pope who reigns from Rome. Originally, it was the main religion in both the East and the West, but eventually, a branch

²⁴Andrzej Korbonski, "East and West Europe: A Continent Divided," *Current History* 60, no. 357 (1971): 257–304.

called the Orthodox Christians separated from the Latin Church and became the main religion of the East while the Latin Church remained prominent in the West and even earned another name, the Western Church. Therefore, the East Christians are currently mostly Orthodox, meaning they believe that the Pope might make mistakes, while the Western Christians believe that the Pope is flawless. The event of the Church splitting is called The Great Schism and was a result of several religious disagreements, which, by itself, is enough for an individual to see the lack of respect these two groups have for each other.

Additionally, Islam remains a significant religion in many Eastern countries, which adds further context to the complexity of this topic. The reputation of Islam has been damaged because the media has a tendency to only cover terrorist and other violent acts performed by ISIS. These acts, which are only carried out by a radical minority, have caused the general public of the West to fear Islam as a religion linked to barbarism and violence. However, Islam is fundamentally a religion based on peace and mutual acceptance, which is unfortunately a side that the Western public rarely experiences. This misinformed understanding of the religion, together with the one-sided and misleading portrayal by the media contributes to the lack of understanding between the East and the West. It could be argued that the West is also perceived as barbaric by the East for similar reasons. Taking Witch Trials into consideration, the West might seem just as dangerous and barbaric as the East. Moreover, other reasons such as the Christian belief that the Pope is flawless might seem barbaric to the East.

Furthermore, the bias that has been driving the East and West divide does not only come from religious context, but also from different ideologies and political opinions of the nations. Amitav Acharya discusses Liberalism and the understanding of human security. They claim that the East, which they define as Asia, represents a completely different understanding of human security than most Western countries. According to Acharya, some Eastern thinkers even assume that the West is attempting to impose its liberal ideologies and political systems onto Eastern nations.²⁵ Considering the ideas of collectivism and individualism mentioned in the previous chapter, one can clearly see the correlation with Liberalism and Illiberalism.

In order to properly understand this relationship between the East and the West, it is necessary to comment on what Liberalism and Illiberalism is. Firstly, liberalism, as Hubert H. Humphrey states, “is based on the assumption that freedom is essential for the full development

²⁵Amitav Acharya, “Human Security: East versus West,” *International Journal* 56, no. 3 (2001): 442–60.

of the human personality and that, therefore, men should be free.”²⁶ He then further builds on this idea, claiming that “In its essence, Liberalism was anti-authoritarian; its one distinctive aim was the liberation of man from traditional restraints.”²⁷ Liberalism is, therefore, focused on the freedom of man, which correlates strongly with the goals of individualism. Moreover, as Humphrey mentions, Liberalism is anti-authoritarian, which further emphasizes its usefulness for the West that is more democratic and provides its people with more space for self-realisation. Liberalism as an ideology is defined in various ways, which makes it subject to scholarly debate in the world. However, for the purposes of this thesis, it is enough to describe Liberalism as an ideology that aims to support individual freedom and, as Duncan Bell maintains, “has become the metacategory of Western political discourse.”²⁸

In contrast with Western Liberalism, the East is more known for its opposite, Illiberalism. Acharya speaks of Illiberalism when discussing the East, claiming that the West shows a tendency to push its liberal ideologies onto the East, which is undesirable to the East.²⁹ Illiberalism, however, is not the opposite of liberalism, but rather a strategy to maintain power. John Shattuck observed a recent government change in Hungary and provided a general idea of what he would consider Illiberalism. He declares that a nationalist gained power through intimidation and manipulation, which in turn resulted in a governmental structure that Shattuck deems a “shell of democracy.”³⁰ The goal of Illiberalism is to convince the rest of the world that the nation is democratic while in reality, power is in the hands of a select few and typically totalitarian practices such as censorship are employed. In modern times, the nations which are generally recognized to operate under such conditions include, for example, Russia and China. These nations tend to limit communication with the outside world under the pretense of protecting their people, leading to the spread of misinformation. Taking into account the fact that the power in these nations is distributed among a chosen few, it comes as no surprise that the East does not want Liberalism to influence its people.

The last important movement that needs to be discussed in detail is Anarchism, which has been briefly defined as an important part of the East/West divide. However, as it plays a

²⁶Hubert H. Humphrey, “Liberalism,” *The American Scholar* 24, no. 4 (1955): 419–33.

²⁷Hubert H. Humphrey, “Liberalism,” *The American Scholar* 24, no. 4 (1955): 419–33.

²⁸Duncan Bell, “What Is Liberalism?” *Political Theory* 42, no. 6 (2014): 682–715.

²⁹Acharya, “Human Security: East versus West,” 449.

³⁰John Shattuck, “THE NEW GLOBAL LANDSCAPE: ILLIBERAL REGIMES AND MOVEMENTS,” *Journal of International Affairs* 71, no. 1.5 (2018): 15–22.

significant role in *Under Western Eyes*, and because it is important in the East/West mindset differences, an elaboration of its effects, origin and meaning will be provided. Woodcock, according to a review by Georg Iggers, talks of Anarchism as a movement which consisted of a rebellion in the less developed parts of Europe, with people resisting the growing state powers and centralisation. He then adds that it is necessary for the survival of human values and the rejection of totalitarian goals to unify the world.³¹ As mentioned in the previous chapter, the basic idea of Anarchism is lawlessness or disorder. Woodcock's statements certainly agree with this core idea. Anarchism aims to disassemble the government, most commonly a totalitarian or collectivist one. Moreover, in his review of several books relating to Anarchism, Iggers declares that they all agree that the beginnings of Anarchism link back to the 19th century.³² Although the history of Anarchism and its beginnings remains a point of discussion among thinkers, several of them seem to agree on this fact. This, in turn, provides a possible reason to why Conrad decided to include Anarchism in *Under Western Eyes*, making it a prominent part of the story. Anarchism influences all parts of the world, excluding none. However, it is more relevant in countries that show totalitarian tendencies such as Russia, as the need to dissolve the existing government appears stronger in these countries.

In conclusion, the East and the West's perception of each other as 'them' proves to be intricately shaped by historical, religious and political factors. They uncover a bias and a misunderstanding among the nations of the East and the West that continue to influence their relationship. On one hand, the religious conflicts that caused The Great Schism and resulted in a division of the Latin Church into two distinct belief systems created a rift that is even mentioned by Huntington as he defines the borders between the East and the West. On the other hand, the existence of ISIS brings upon a distrust towards Islam by those who do not understand the religion and are only influenced by the media. Furthermore, Islam's belief system differs heavily from that of Christianity, which is the most widespread religious system in the West. This already complicated relationship between the East and the West is further harmed by political convictions that are vastly dissimilar, such as Liberalism and Illiberalism. These two viewpoints of politics stand against each other from the start, as one negates the other, and neither the West nor the East is willing to accept the ideology of the other. Lastly, even though all the

³¹Iggers, *The American Historical Review* 68, 413, 414.

³²Iggers, *The American Historical Review* 68, 413,414.

aforementioned issues deepen the divide between the East and the West, there are still certain ideologies shared by the entire world, such as Anarchism, which aims to fight any government there is, disregarding whether it is democratic or totalitarian. As mentioned, Anarchists are more likely to target totalitarian regimes as they have a tendency to restrict people's freedom more than democracy. However, democracy also continues to be the target of Anarchism. Therefore, despite the many differences and disagreements between the East and the West, potential enemies to both remain.

4. The Representation of the East and the West in *Under Western Eyes*

In order to analyze Joseph Conrad's *Under Western Eyes* comprehensively, it is imperative to explore the context and the background of the narrative. This chapter's focus is to set a foundation of the analysis by providing an overview of the story. Firstly, the central plot elements of the narrative are explored with the goal to establish a connection between the characters and the reader as well as to allow the reader to form a deeper empathetic engagement. Furthermore, the chapter delves into the unavoidable meeting of the two main characters, which symbolizes the clash between the Western and the Eastern civilizations. The examination of this meeting serves the purpose of uncovering the differences between the two civilizations and their ideals. Lastly, the personal beliefs and standpoints of Razumov, the Teacher and other characters are investigated in detail as these characters serve as personifications of the East and the West in *Under Western Eyes*. By examining these beliefs, the subsequent analysis of single elements of the novel becomes easily understandable.

Firstly, the story of *Under Western Eyes* begins in Russia, where Kirylo Sidorovitch Razumov, a student at the St. Petersburg University, resides. Razumov, as he is referred to for the majority of the story, is perfectly comfortable living a peaceful life in Russia as he plans to start his academic career. However, through a series of unfortunate events that take place one night, he is stripped of his promising future as a scholar and sent to Geneva to spy on a group of revolutionists. The person who causes Razumov to be sent to Geneva is a fellow student named Victor Victorovitch Haldin, who commits a crime of the highest order for Russia, a murder of the current leader. After the fact, he seeks Razumov, feeling confident that he will receive temporary shelter and help, with the reasoning that Razumov has no family or friends that would suffer should he be incarcerated. He asks Razumov to meet with a man called Ziemianitch who owns a horse carriage and is willing to take Haldin away from Russia. Haldin's final destination is Geneva, where his sister and mother reside. However, Razumov takes a different path and instead talks to the police general and hands Haldin over to the police in order to avoid being mistaken for an accomplice. Unfortunately, as Haldin regarded him as a dear friend in his letters to his family, Razumov becomes the ideal spy for the Russian government, which results in him being sent to Geneva. The details of the narrative will be provided in pieces as the analysis proceeds in order to avoid unnecessary descriptions. However, it is imperative to know the

general reason for Razumov becoming a Russian spy, and to understand that it was not a voluntary decision on his part.

Secondly, After being sent to Geneva, Razumov encounters several people of interest, one of them being the personified version of the Western mind inserted into the story by Conrad. Furthermore, this Western character, an English teacher, is found to be the narrator of the story. The meeting is, for both parties involved, involuntary, as they meet through the sister of Haldin, Natalia. Natalia, a good friend and a student of the Teacher, asks him to stay and speak to Razumov on their first meeting, with the goal to inform Razumov of the bad health of Haldin's mother and ask him to not engage her until they reach an understanding regarding what to tell her. While Natalia shows a great deal of trust towards Razumov, whom she believes to be a great friend of her brother, the Teacher displays distrust from the very beginning of the exchange. In fact, the revolutionist group Razumov is sent to spy on, remarks him as a comrade and a hero who had committed a wonderful act for their cause - the murder of the Russian leader. The contrast between the representatives of the Eastern and Western mindsets shows here for the first time, as the Teacher remains skeptical towards Razumov and does not find him trustworthy. In his recollection of the meeting, he states "Afterwards he glanced backwards and forwards at us both, while the faint commencement of a forced smile, followed by the suspicion of a frown, vanished one after another; I detected them, though neither could have been noticed by a person less intensely bent upon divining him than myself."³³ The Teacher, coming from a land based on completely different values than Razumov, begins to analyze every movement and word Razumov utters, searching for possible deception. Furthermore, he remarks that Razumov must see him as foreign, as he sees Razumov as such. Although it is true that the Teacher remains on guard in front of Razumov, he does not forget to appreciate Razumov's intellect, stating "Upon the whole I was not disappointed."³⁴ Still, the Teacher remains vigilant around Razumov, watching his every movement as they speak.

Unfortunately, Conrad does not describe this meeting from Razumov's point of view. The only examination of his opinion of the Teacher comes from the Teacher himself, who perceives Razumov as slightly alarmed, but unwavering. Deeming Razumov unable to sleep well, he exclaims to himself "I could almost feel on me the weight of his unrefreshed, motionless stare,

³³ Joseph Conrad, *Under Western Eyes* (Independently Published, 2022), 188.

³⁴ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 190.

the stare of a man who lies unwinking in the dark, angrily passive in the toils of his disastrous thoughts.”³⁵ The Teacher’s observations continue in this same manner for the entirety of the conversation. It is obvious that Razumov is on edge, possibly afraid or at least wary of the Teacher. First, the Teacher assumes this to be the cause of his distinctly Western origin. Later on, however, as the truth of Razumov’s intentions in Geneva come to light, the reason for his reserved personality and sleep deprived demeanor becomes known.

This short description of the meeting of Razumov and the Teacher uncovers several distinctly Western/Eastern features. Firstly, the mistrust to each other is quite strongly portrayed in each of the nationalities. For Razumov, it is mainly based on his origins, as the Russians tend to be distrustful of foreigners. For the Teacher, however, it is part of a natural instinct to not immediately put his trust into a person he does not know. Both of these tendencies can be easily attributed to the political systems of each of the countries. As mentioned in the first part of this thesis, Russia is an autocratic country, one that encourages collectivism. Naturally, it is therefore expected of Russians to put trust in each other. There still exist members who doubt Razumov, but their doubts stem from Razumov’s demeanor as he is reserved and quiet after supposedly committing an act the revolutionists consider incredibly brave and dangerous. Additionally, the Teacher, a Westerner coming from Britain, an individualist society, approaches everybody with caution as he does not consider anybody trustworthy until he learns more about them.

Through this meeting between the Teacher and Razumov, Conrad provides the reader with a creative way of contrasting the Eastern and Western mindsets. Although the two characters meet on several other occasions, this aura of distrust and caution remains between them, possibly because Razumov does not know what he can expect from a foreigner. Therefore, he could see a possible enemy in the Teacher as he is of a different land and might not be as easily deceived as the Russians. Moreover, the Teacher is the only outsider present in the story, which gives him great importance because he represents all Conrad’s opinions of the West.

In summary, the story of *Under Western Eyes* proves to be an extensive one with a number of aspects that require being addressed in order. Furthermore, the meeting of the two main characters is of great importance even though it takes place quite late in the novel. Both Razumov and the Teacher are analyzed separately in order to make further distinctions between the West and the East more comprehensible.

³⁵ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 194.

4.1. Razumov

The first character to be explored is Razumov, because the narrative of *Under Western Eyes* starts in Russia, specifically in St. Petersburg. Here, Razumov lives a calm, peaceful life with a specific purpose: to write a prize essay, earn a silver medal and live his life comfortably as a scholar. As the reader later learns, the narrator of this story is the Teacher, whom Razumov meets in Geneva. The recollection of what happened in Russia is, therefore, given by the teacher as he reads the diary that Razumov started keeping on the night he met Haldin. After the assassination of an important statesman, rumors spread around the university. However, Razumov decides to pay no attention to them, because, as the narrator states, “But this rumour was made up of mere whispers, and this was Russia, where it was not always safe, for a student especially, to appear too much interested in certain kinds of whispers.”³⁶ This sentence alone reveals the nature of Russia and the fact that even its citizens are aware of the need to stay silent and to not stand out. The power of autocracy in Russia is known to Russians themselves.

Furthermore, Razumov, being without a family, considers Russia as not only his home, but his only parentage. Therefore, his need to belong as well as his collectivist beliefs are strong and he presents himself as a proud Russian. Although he feels incredibly lonely, he finds peace in knowing that Russia, his home, can give him a life he can feel secure in, as long as he stays out of any kind of trouble, which in Russia is not easy. When he is met with Haldin and learns of his betrayal, he loses all sense of security and becomes incredibly angry, because he knows that his only home, Russia, which is incredibly unfair, will consider him a suspicious character no matter what he does. The reason is that he came in contact with a revolutionist and there is no escaping the suspicions that he faces from the government as a result.

Upon entering his apartment, Razumov finds himself face to face with a stranger, whom he later recognizes as a fellow student, Victor Haldin, who immediately shares with him everything he has done and informs him he is on the run, asking Razumov for help. Upon hearing what Haldin has done, Razumov has one thought, that being that his life is ruined.³⁷ For a Westerner, this is a nonsensical sentiment as logically, the worst that could come out of meeting a wanted man or helping him escape, is prison. In Russia, however, murdering an autocratic leader

³⁶ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 21.

³⁷ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 26.

and being caught results in a series of torture as the authorities attempt to extract information from the murderer and subsequent execution. Razumov, being connected to Haldin in this way, would automatically be put on a watchlist. His response is, therefore, adequate.

Moreover, in asking for Razumov's assistance, Haldin is putting him into more danger than originally. Razumov is asked to deliver a message to Ziemianitch, who should wait for him at a designated spot to drive him away from Russia. Razumov does decide to visit Ziemianitch, but after finding him intoxicated, proceeds to beat him. Additionally, he seeks out the Prince as well as the general and hands Haldin over in an attempt to save his future. Unfortunately, he is still put on a watchlist, resulting in him feeling like life has no purpose. Furthermore, he is haunted by the hate he holds for Haldin and the revolutionists he was associated with. His hate follows him throughout the entire story and even results in him confessing to the revolutionists because even though he hates them, he can not bear to let them think that Ziemianitch was a traitor. Furthermore, not only is he blinded by hate, but also guilt as Ziemianitch had no way of defending himself from the beating, for the reason of being highly intoxicated. This guilt is the reason why Razumov can not stand for the revolutionists to believe Ziemianitch to be a traitor as he was the only person willing to help Victor Haldin escape Russia.

Razumov, however, is not a blind follower of Russia, neither is he a man of revolution, as he declares that "autocracy knows no law." Moreover, he claims that revolutionists do not know any law either.³⁸ It appears that he does not hold any specific political beliefs, but rather feels indifferent towards both autocracy and democracy. As he speaks to the general consulting about Haldin's arrest, he comments on the idea of Liberty while commenting on revolutionists and their unwillingness to change their purpose, stating they are "Fanatical lovers of liberty in general. Liberty with a capital L, Excellency. Liberty that means nothing precise. Liberty in whose name crimes are committed."³⁹ Furthermore, he exclaims "I detest rebels of every kind. I can't help it. It's my nature!"⁴⁰ Considering that Razumov is Conrad's representation of Russia, or the Eastern mindset, it is possible that his exclamation does not only apply to him as an individual, but to all Russians in general. His hate towards revolutionists who aim to change the existing system can be partially attributed to the Teacher's perception of Russia, which is consulted later in this thesis. To summarize, however, the Teacher claims that Russia's autocracy uses fear and hate to

³⁸ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 89.

³⁹ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 61.

⁴⁰ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 61.

its advantage, making it easier to subdue its people. This fear could, possibly, stand behind Razumov's dislike of revolution or anyone who attempts to alter the existing rules. Considering the fact that the mere presence of Haldin in his apartment poses a threat to Razumov's life, it comes as no surprise that he is unwilling to help Haldin and risk his own safety even further.

Once Razumov hands Haldin over, he begins to think deeply about his ruined future. When Haldin was asked why he chose to seek out Razumov, he responded "Confidence."⁴¹ He then further elaborated by stating that Razumov, an intelligent student, seems trustworthy enough. These remarks shared by not only Haldin, but other characters in the story, bring fear into Razumov's mind as he feels not in control of his own life. As he ponders about Ziemianitch and Haldin after handing Haldin in, he envies them, as "The consequences of their actions were always clear and their lives remained their own."⁴² Furthermore, several times after this point in the narrative, characters speaking to Razumov mention 'a man like him' with either very limited or no previous experience with him, prompting him to ask what kind of man they think he is. The usual response relies on his calm demeanor as well as on his quietness. As Razumov does not stand out, he is considered to be a proper Russian by people such as the General, and a man who is hiding his true intentions by those who long for change. In reality, Razumov does not agree with either. He does not wish to be involved in politics or to be a part of any revolution, but rather to live peacefully. Haldin, by entering his apartment, takes his freedom away, and because there is little freedom present in Russia, Razumov remains vengeful for the rest of the novel.

Razumov's fear of autocracy is shown repeatedly as the story develops. Although he hands Haldin over to the authorities, he is automatically suspected as a possible acquaintance of his and therefore is put on a watchlist. The only reason Razumov is not taken away to be questioned is the fact that the Prince guarantees his safety. However, his apartment is searched nonetheless and Razumov starts suffering from night terrors, one of which is the image of the General. He describes the General as "the embodied power of autocracy, grotesque and terrible. He embodied the whole power of autocracy because he was its guardian. He was the incarnate suspicion, the incarnate anger, the incarnate ruthlessness of a political and social regime on its defence."⁴³ Moreover, he mentions that the General has a specific opinion on revolutionists,

⁴¹ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 28.

⁴² Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 90.

⁴³ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 96.

saying “He loathed rebellion by instinct.”⁴⁴ By inserting the General as an autocracy personified into the story, and by making Razumov fear him so much he dreams of him, Conrad creates a near perfect metaphor for life in Russia. Fear, being a constant in the land, ensures that the doctrine is followed, and anybody that decides to go against the system is eliminated in a way that the public knows what happens to traitors. Furthermore, Razumov labels the General as omnipotent, further developing the fear factor involved in autocratic societies.

Additionally, Razumov leads a conversation with councillor Mikulin, who later sends him to Geneva as a spy. As the conversation between Mikulin and Razumov continues, Razumov assumes that he is being suspected of conspiring with Haldin to murder the statesman. To this, he responds by saying “visionaries work everlasting evil on earth. Their Utopias inspire in the mass of mediocre minds a disgust of reality and a contempt for the secular logic of human development.”⁴⁵ Furthermore, he claims several times that he hates Haldin, elaborating on his sentiment by saying that his hate is not based on the act Haldin committed, but rather on the fact that he is a visionary, a revolutionist who does not care for anything or anyone else but his revolution. For this reason, Razumov dislikes all revolutionists he comes into contact with and it is also one of the reasons why he refrains from conversing with others more than is necessary.

Once he arrives in Geneva, Razumov meets with Natalia Haldin, with whom he speaks of Haldin. However, his sour feelings of his life being stolen by Haldin as well as the unexpected warmth of Natalia’s welcome cause him to struggle. Razumov’s hate of Haldin remains strong and even expands towards Natalia, as he considers her to be the embodiment of Haldin’s treachery. As Natalia observes Razumov, she forms an opinion of him being haunted by his own thoughts, unable to rest, and adds that it is typical of a young Russian. The reason for Russian unrest is not too difficult to find, as they are haunted by the fear and possible hate for their political systems, and can not run away from it. Unfortunately, while Natalia Haldin observes the unrest of Razumov, she disregards it as typical for a Russian man. In fact, most of the Russian characters of the story act the same, even noting that Razumov’s silence is admirable and that he must be incredibly proud of his work with Haldin. Furthermore, Natalia regards Razumov’s silence regarding Haldin himself as a positive, later exclaiming to the teacher that “Their friendship must have been the very brotherhood of souls!”⁴⁶ Her exclamation proves that the

⁴⁴ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 96.

⁴⁵ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 105.

⁴⁶ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 183.

Russian revolutionists, and other Russian characters of the story, tend to believe each other more than would be expected in the West, resulting in Razumov being able to conceal his lies although he is consumed by the constant fear of being found out.

Another specific trait of Razumov is his gentlemanly nature. On several occasions, Razumov shows his intellectual, kind side by bowing to people, offering help or other. This, by some, is considered peculiar as none of the other characters besides the Teacher portray such traits. It is not explained in the novel why Conrad gave Razumov this quality, but the fact remains that he charms as well as confuses a multitude of other people. For example, a servant lady called Tekla, who is generally used to being treated badly, becomes enchanted by Razumov's charm as he bows before her and nearly helps her bring tea to the others. This simple exchange, which does not take much time, later results into Razumov not being alone when he is crippled by a tram car as Tekla, who sees him as a wonderful man who is worth her companionship, decides to take care of him as he lives the rest of his life as an invalid.

Lastly, it is imperative to mention Razumov's fate at the end of *Under Western Eyes*. After sending him to Geneva as a spy, the General, together with the prince, planned to provide him with a comfortable career and clear him of any suspicion. It is not made clear whether Razumov knows of these plans or not, but he does not seem to care. His trip to Geneva, to him, has a single purpose, that being revenge on the revolutionists. But after he learns of Ziemianitch's suicide and learns that Ziemianitch is considered the traitor who cause Haldin to die, Razumov is overcome by a sense of guilt even stronger than the guilt of essentially killing Haldin, and shares with the revolutionists, as well as with Haldin's family, the true purpose of his stay in Geneva. As a result, his eardrums are pierced and he is hit by a tram car, resulting in him living the rest of his life as an invalid.

Additionally, Razumov expresses a certain degree of superiority that he feels in regards to the other characters. He speaks of his intelligence on multiple occasions in his diary and also thinks that most of the people are not worth his words, their thought processes not being advanced enough. This proves to be a reason why he becomes less suspicious of the Teacher because when they are put into a position of necessary conversation by Natalia, the Teacher shows a level of intelligence Razumov is generally not used to. As a reaction, he becomes intrigued by the Teacher and converses with him for a longer period of time. This is a major event in the story as Razumov is generally not talkative.

Unfortunately, there is not much more that the reader learns of Razumov. However, other Russian characters in the narrative shed more light onto the Eastern mindset and are discussed in the next section of this thesis.

In summary, Razumov's beliefs and opinions on most issues are not outwardly expressed. He is a bitter person whose main reason for coming into Geneva is revenge as he wishes to destroy the revolutionists as a punishment for destroying his future. He holds distrust for not only the Teacher, but also everyone else, including the autocratic leaders in his home country. His feelings of betrayal combined with immense guilt for ruining several lives result in him confessing everything and becoming a crippled man. It seems that after meeting Haldin in his apartment, Razumov lost his will to live as well as his trust towards his country and his countrymen.

4.2. Other Russian Characters

Although Razumov is the only proper Russian in the story, because the others are either revolutionists or removed from Russia for a considerable amount of time, there are multiple other characters with Russian origin who comment on the Eastern mindset. Most of the characters discussed in this subchapter are revolutionists, but some, such as Natalia Haldin, only want to escape Russia's doctrine. This subchapter aims to discover Conrad's general view of the Eastern mindset by way of these characters.

Firstly, during a conversation with the Teacher, Haldin's mother mentions Natalia's need for knowledge and explains that she wishes her children to experience a better life than she has. She then continues by saying that in Russia, all knowledge is tainted by falsehood and the government changes, or corrupts, the teaching so that it fits its doctrine.⁴⁷ The desire to learn is, in fact, the means through which the Haldins meet the Teacher, as Natalia wishes to learn to read English writers. Furthermore, in a later conversation, Haldin's mother explains to the Teacher that "There is neither peace nor rest in Russia for one but in the grave."⁴⁸ It is quite obvious from their exchanges that Haldin's mother understands life in Russia well and is not disillusioned by the thought of revolution. She, however, desires for her children to have a better life with more freedom, which is why she never dismisses Natalia's hopes and even supports them.

⁴⁷ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 113.

⁴⁸ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 115.

Additionally, Mrs. Haldin mentions the Church in the aforementioned conversation, and considering the impact of religion on the East/West divide, it is only appropriate to mention this account. Mrs. Haldin claims that “With us in Russia the church is so identified with oppression, that it seems almost necessary when one wishes to be free in this life, to give up all hope of a future existence.”⁴⁹ Conrad mentions in *Autocracy and War* his dislike for oppression, which he also connects with Russia as well as other countries with similar autocratic leadership. Furthermore, the mention of the church being so linked to oppression in Russia showcases the extent of oppression present in Russia. Mrs. Haldin’s sentiment of having to give up hope of a future existence if one wishes for a free life in the current times appears to be very painful to her as having to choose between religion and freedom is a difficult task for many believers. There is very little contact with Haldin’s mother as the story progresses, as she is heavily ill. In fact, after this exchange, Mrs. Haldin remains in the background and the only contact between her and the Teacher is through her daughter.

Moreover, Natalia Haldin provides several accounts of her own when speaking of Russia. Firstly, during the aforementioned conversation between the Teacher and Mrs. Haldin, Natalia joins by stating that the Teacher must think the revolution to be some type of conflict of classes, which would, to her, be typical for someone from Europe. Another character, Peter Ivanovitch, later builds on this sentiment, stating that “In Russia we have no classes to combat each other, one holding the power of wealth, and the other mighty with the strength of numbers.”⁵⁰ According to the Russians of *Under Western Eyes*, the distinction that is typical for the West, such as social classes, does not exist. Considering that Russia is an autocratic country, one which is ruled by a specific few, it makes sense that they might not want the people to form classes. That is because social classes may pose a threat to the system, it is a grouping of people rather than one unit which Russia aims to create, and such groups could stand together to oppose the leaders. This is, most likely, why the revolutionists, even though they reside in countries outside of Russia, remain such big targets of the Russian government. Their formation of smaller units poses a threat to the Russian government not only because of their goal, but also because of them creating a smaller unit and recruiting new members. This division of the united Russia, even though it is small, threatens the control of the Russian government over its people.

⁴⁹ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 115.

⁵⁰ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 130.

Natalia Haldin, however, is wanted as a part of the revolutionist group residing in Geneva. The leader of the group, previously mentioned Peter Ivanovitch, visits and tries to persuade her to join the revolutionist group, which he fails to do. During his attempt to recruit Natalia, he mentions the loss of her brother, stating “We Russians have no right to be reserved with each other. In our circumstances it is almost a crime against humanity. The luxury of private grief is not for us.”⁵¹ In this statement, the belief in collectivism and the need for unity that is common in Russia stands out. Collectivism is so strongly ingrained in the Russian mindset that even the revolutionists, who aim to resist the Russian government, accept it as their only reality. They do not seem to accept individualism and privacy as a positive desire, rendering those who long for it suspicious. For them, their comrades receive immediate trust as long as they share the same mindset. Interestingly, even though collectivism is so important for Russians, they do not consider themselves slaves. As Natalia states, there has been too much slavishness in Russia, and therefore it is important not to give in to slavish thoughts.⁵² to a Westerner, even collectivist beliefs such as the necessity to share their thoughts with each other, resembles the minds of slaves who are being oppressed. To the Russians of *Under Western Eyes*, however, that is not the case. Following the doctrine of Russia is slavish to them, as the land is oppressive, but that does not mean they refuse to share their feelings, as they remain comrades nonetheless.

Although Natalia is not a part of the revolution planned by her brother or the group present in Geneva, she shares the revolutionary thoughts of her brother. She maintains that her brother, to her, is the embodiment of the struggle for liberty and freedom. Upon losing her brother after his brave act, she is struggling to keep her faith in the liberation of Russia, which is why she longs to meet Razumov, the only person she believes was close to her brother. Moreover, she and her mother were sent to Geneva to be kept safe from the Russian government while Victor Haldin plans his attack on the statesman. Natalia sees a hero in her brother and notes that to her, he is the embodiment of hope. Her mother does not try to change her mind regarding the hope for revolution as she believes hope is necessary when facing an enemy so strong and fearless as Russia.

Furthermore, one of the revolutionists, a lady who has seen and later experienced the poverty of Russia as has left it in an attempt to search for a better life, explains to Natalia that

⁵¹ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 139.

⁵² Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 145.

there is no need for a supernatural source of evil, because people are capable of evil themselves.⁵³ Most of the other revolutionists share her sentiment, having experienced the worst of Russia's government and the life in Russia. Peter Ivanovitch, the aforementioned leader of the revolutionists, is a person who had been sent to the Siberian wilderness, where the Russian government sends some of its prisoners. He was able to escape and discovered a new faith which led him to become a revolutionist. He harbors deep hate for the government of Russia as it brought him incredible suffering, and wishes to overthrow it. Moreover, Madame de S., the inspiring figure behind Ivanovitch and his ideologies, escaped Russia after becoming a suspect in another assassination which took place years before the plot of Conrad's work. All revolutionists that are explored in *Under Western Eyes* share some type of suffering under the Russian government which prompted them to leave Russia. This includes Razumov, as his departing from Russia was a direct consequence of a meeting with a criminal, resulting in him becoming a suspect of said crime.

Another instance of the fearful nature of Russia that is presented in the novel is Razumov's description of the night of Haldin's visit. In this situation, he states that "The people that are neither seen nor heard are the lucky ones—in Russia."⁵⁴ With this statement, Razumov points at the fact that in order to keep the nation under its rule, the Russian government employs scaring tactics and harsh punishments to anybody who attempts to disobey it. In fact, all his actions are directed by his fear of being noticed by the government and being considered suspicious. He notes that, as a student, he has to be extremely careful about his movements and interests so as to not attract the attention of the government. For this reason, the moment he hears of what Haldin had done, he feels as if the world crumbles around him and sees a simple meeting of the revolutionist as the end of his career as well as making his dream future inaccessible.

Lastly, the revolutionists face a need for a terrible decision. When Razumov confesses to his acts of treachery towards not only Haldin, but towards Haldin's family as well as themselves, he claims that as he confessed, he should not be faced with a punishment. The group, overcome with anger, wishes to punish Razumov, but from a moral perspective, they can not do so. This situation beautifully portrays the moral conflict of wanting to punish a person for the horrible acts he committed and the promise of changing the government. If, at this point in the story, the

⁵³ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 162.

⁵⁴ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 272.

revolutionists decided to kill Razumov for his betrayal, they would be acting similarly to the government they are trying to oppose. Therefore, a discussion ensues, and Razumov is let go. Sadly, one of the revolutionists, who is later discovered to be a spy as well, takes Razumov's punishment into his own hands and punctures his eardrums, stating that it will ensure Razumov never betrays anybody. The fact that Conrad chose another hidden spy to perform this act of punishment shows a great deal of thought and uncovers Conrad's distrust towards Russians in general, as he decides to punish a traitor using another hidden traitor. Furthermore, his choice showcases the necessity of all Russians to constantly be on the lookout for any persons of interest in order to avoid betrayal. Additionally, the collectivist nature of Russians ensures that although they are all one unit, or comrades, causes any kind of insincerity to be met with a strong reaction.

In summary, the revolutionist characters of *Under Western Eyes* shed further light onto the typical Russian mindset. They appear distrustful towards both the government itself and towards the educational system of Russia. The church does not escape the influence of the government either, prompting people to choose between their future and their religion. Furthermore their collectivist ideas are so strongly ingrained in their minds that they build their trust upon them even as they attempt to oppose the government which teaches them said collectivism. They are proudly united in their fight for their beliefs, but refuse to admit any adherence to a slave-like mindset. Moreover, according to the characters, there are no social classes in Russia, making any kind of revolution more difficult to start. All of the characters who reside in Geneva have, in some way, experienced the harsh reality of autocratic leadership, either by being suspected or punished. This shared suffering allows them to build trust for each other, making it more difficult for spies to infiltrate their group. Both the Haldin family and the Russian revolutionists in Geneva share the desire to earn liberty and independence from their home country, and the moment of Razumov's confession creates tension among them as they attempt to navigate making a civilized decision regarding a betrayal which, for Russians, is a terrible act worthy of death. Using the confession as a chance to showcase the characters fighting the urges given to them by their home country, Conrad helps the reader to delve deeper into the thought processes of the Eastern people.

4.3. The Teacher

The last and arguably most significant character of *Under Western Eyes* is the narrator, also referred to as the Teacher in this thesis. He is an Englishman who comes to live in Geneva, who teaches Natalia Haldin to read English authors. However, his significance comes from him being the only Western character in the entire narrative. Furthermore, he is given the diary of Razumov after he is crippled and describes the entire story through his, Western, eyes. In this subchapter, the thoughts and observations of the Teacher are explored and analyzed.

Firstly it is imperative to mention that the Teacher does not involve himself in the happenings of the novel unless it is necessary or he is requested to speak his mind. His feelings and observations only appear in text as he recalls his own experiences together with the recollections written by Razumov. The very start of the narrative is a simple statement typical for a Westerner, claiming “The origin of Mr. Razumov’s record is connected with an event characteristic of modern Russia in the actual fact: the assassination of a prominent statesman.”⁵⁵ The Teacher continues his sentiment by deeming Russia a land of moral corruption with the lack of desire for freedom, justice or pity, a land ruled by fear and hate. The former has already been explored in the previous chapters of this thesis as it is recognized by all characters that appear in the novel. It is, however, worth noting, that even the outsider, or foreigner, as he is perceived by the Russians, understands Russia’s fear inducing tactics. Moreover, as the Teacher reads through Razumov’s record, he mentions that to him, the spirit of Russian autocracy as well as the spirit of Russian revolt, is cynicism.⁵⁶ He repeats this thought more than once throughout the novel and expresses that he can not help but to think of cynicism when he thinks of Russia.

It has been previously mentioned that Natalia Haldin expresses her opinion of the Teacher seeing in the revolutionary actions a class conflict. During his conversation with the Haldin ladies, the Teacher does admit to not quite understanding the conflict or their mindsets and later, in his recollection, comments that in order to understand the Russian mind, or simplicity as he calls it, one must be a Russian themselves. His conclusion as to why it is impossible for Westerners to understand the Eastern mindset is simple: He believes that they detest life while the Western people cherish it. Furthermore, he guesses that both parties exaggerate their feelings regarding life. Additionally, the massive difference between the Eastern

⁵⁵ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 19.

⁵⁶ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 79.

and the Western understanding of the world showcases itself in a short scene. As the Teacher and Natalia speak of the lack of news of what happened to her brother, the Teacher cheerfully exclaims “No news- good news.”⁵⁷ In response to a phrase so typical in the West, Natalia responds “Not in Russia.”⁵⁸ In such a short exchange, Conrad allows the reader to experience both sides of the situation, creating a strong, clear contrast of the opinions of the West and the East. The feeling of safety so well known as expected by most Westerners clashes with the uncertain nature of Russia.

Moreover, the differences between the mostly autocratic East and generally democratic West come into light. Later on during the same exchange with Natalia, the Teacher recalls his realization, claiming “I saw then the shadow of autocracy lying upon Russian lives in their submission or their revolt.”⁵⁹ The implication of this statement is that no matter whether the people remain submissive or attempt to resist the government in any way, they are haunted by the autocracy that rules over their everyday lives. Not only that, but they can not step out of line in any way without causing the government to focus on them, their movements and their connections. To Russians, any step outside of the norm set up by the government results in possible repercussions. However, for the typical Westerner who is used to personal liberty, this is an unimaginable, suffocating act, and the Teacher receives a unique chance to observe in the Russians around him the effects of aristocracy on individuals. Furthermore, He explains in his writing that to Europeans, the idea of a political conspiracy seems childish⁶⁰ while to Russians, it is a reality they have to face. In modern times, it certainly remains true that for most Western people, conspiracies, such as the landing on the moon being a lie, only appear believable to a select few. However, in countries such as China, the disappearance of journalists who dare speak against the government is, realistically, a possible conspiracy of the government. Such a different approach to politics was true even in Conrad’s time and his character of the Teacher beautifully embodies it.

Later on, as the Teacher learns of the unfortunate fate of Haldin in a British newspaper and proceeds to share it with the Haldin ladies, he explains his wish to understand their experience. He appeals to the Western reader, to whom grief is just as well known as to the

⁵⁷ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 120.

⁵⁸ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 120.

⁵⁹ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 121.

⁶⁰ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 122.

average Russian. However, the grief of the Haldin ladies, according to him, is different, as it is connected to terrible associations such as the gallows. Furthermore, he explains that because of this purely Russian connection, he is uncertain whether they perceive his sympathy as baseless.⁶¹ Once again, for a Westerner, the loss of a loved one is an event terrible in itself, but the effect of it differs greatly from one of a Russian experiencing the same loss. The most probable connection is, once again, the security and safety that Western civilisations take for granted. In a democratic society, it is not common to lose a loved one to torture or execution. Very few Western countries practiced such punishments even at the time of Conrad, and even fewer practice it now. Therefore, to the Teacher, it is an experience he can not fully relate to, making him incredibly uncertain about what his appropriate response might be. Furthermore, the Teacher states his embarrassment at his lack of understanding of the gravity of the situation. He attempts to understand the feelings of the Haldin ladies, but fails to properly encompass them as he has never experienced a force of government so strong. The only source which provides Westerners with a distant idea of what it is like to have a loved one tortured and executed are stories from other countries. During the time of Conrad, the closest violent act that would allow a Westerner to feel similar grief is the French Revolution and the executions of prominent figures which happened during it.

Additionally, upon seeing the reaction of the ladies, the Teacher recalls feeling a great deal of respect for them. As they deal with a situation that is incomprehensible to him, one caused by their own government, he can not help but admire their strength.⁶² A Western mind does not have the capability to comprehend the stress that Russians of *Under Western Eyes* face on a daily basis, nor can it understand most of the goals behind their actions. Russians, or Easterners who come from autocratic countries, base all their behaviors on the response they might receive from their governments. The life of fear is a daily occurrence to them and it is the only reality they know. The people of the democratic West base their decisions on their individual desires and goals which to a Russian are not achievable. The Teacher, being aware of this fact, feels a great deal of both admiration and embarrassment over his lack of understanding of the gravity of the situation. He can not begin to comprehend the feeling of having a loved one tortured and executed by the government on the basis of murder.

⁶¹ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 124.

⁶² Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 130.

It has been established that the Teacher lacks the experience required to understand the Russians fully. However, there are other observations he makes that do not relate only to the differences of democracy and autocracy, or the difference between individualism and collectivism. For example, during his first meeting with Peter Ivanovitch, the Teacher can not help but feel as though Ivanovitch has what he perceives as a typical Russian face. In his perception, the Teacher notes that it does not have a single feature that would resemble any character.⁶³ It is unclear whether this perception is purely subjective or whether it is influenced by a Western mindset, but a possible explanation to why a Russian face lacks any form of character is, once again, autocracy. In a nation that is led by fear, it appears to be desirable to not stand out. It has been previously mentioned that generally, Russians try to remain in the shadows. However, in the previous situation, only their actions were taken into consideration. With this remark, the Teacher points out another possible way to remain unseen, that is, lack of distinctive features of appearance.

Fortunately, the Teacher does not only observe the situations he is met with, but, on a few occasions, provides his own insights. One such insight is presented to the reader in a conversation with Natali Haldin, in which he explains his opinion on revolution. From the exchange, it appears that he considers the Russian revolutionists to be naive, seeing the revolution as simpler than it is in reality. There are two sides the reader can look at his opinions from. Firstly, the Western side, experienced through the eyes of the common Western citizen who has gone through revolution or, in the least, comes from a background that is similar to one that has experienced a revolution. The Teacher, speaking of a violent revolution, could be referring to the French Revolution, which has been mentioned in this thesis as one of the major events which mostly affected the West and only lightly touched the East. From the position of a British man, a revolution seems a painful, violent process. Secondly, to a Russian, a person from a nation that only knows oppression, the thought of a revolution appears a liberating, beautiful event that brings the people the freedom they deserve. In other words, it is this situation that, for the first time in the novel, gives the Western man an obvious upper hand in the understanding of a situation.

Another advantage the Teacher has over the Russians is his natural urge to avoid trusting anybody before learning more about them. This has been discussed before, however, it is

⁶³ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 133.

appropriate to be mentioned here. Coming from an individualist society, he feels that it is not desirable to put his trust into everybody. Using this natural wariness, the Teacher attempts to limit the excitement of Natalia Haldin, who sees in Razumov the one dear friend of her brother. The Teacher, however, observes Razumov carefully in order to lessen any damage Razumov could do to the Haldin ladies should he prove not to be trustworthy. Moreover, the Teacher observes more characters, such as Ivanovitch, upon meeting them, and is able to analyze their behavior through the eyes of a Westerner, that is, with a certain amount of skepticism.

In conclusion, the character of the Teacher is generally at a disadvantage in *Under Western Eyes*. However, his lack of involvement allows him to observe the narrative carefully, making it possible for him to notice details that the other characters do not perceive. The other characters, besides the Haldin ladies, recognize him only as an outsider or foreigner who tries to meddle with issues he does not understand. The Teacher never attempts to change their perception, but is fully aware that to the Russians, him being an Englishman is a part of his personality. Moreover, he appears to be facing a conflict of the Eastern and the Western mindset when it comes to both grief and revolution. The former, being tainted by suffering, makes him uncertain of his own feelings, causing him to doubt whether he can properly support the grieving ladies. The latter, on the other hand, gives him an upper hand in the understanding of a true revolution. The Russians, untouched by a real revolution, regard it as a great chance to usurp their freedom. The Teacher, however, understands the real repercussions that come with a revolution and feels as though they are naive and overly confident in regards to the revolution they plan to start. To him, Russians lack personality and individuality, which he considers as one of the most important values as a Westerner.

4.4. Final Observations Regarding the Representation

Although it is imperative to focus the attention of the reader on single elements, it is also appropriate to summarize the topics that have been discussed in the first part of the thesis and apply them to what has been mentioned in this chapter. This way, the relationship of the East and the West of *Under Western Eyes* becomes easier to comprehend.

Firstly, even though it has not been mentioned much in the novel, several of the Russian characters mentioned their faith as well as their feelings of being abandoned by their God.

Furthermore, as Mrs. Haldin states, some Russians feel like they have to choose between their religion and their land if they want a decent life, because the Russian church is corrupted. Religion, however, still plays a major role in the story as the Russians tend to blame the Devil for any betrayals, misunderstandings or unfortunate events that happen as the narrative progresses. Moreover, the Teacher does not mention his religious beliefs in any part of the novel, hinting at religion being less influential to a typical Western citizen.

The Russians' adherence to religion, although not explicitly mentioned by many, influences their decisions. Additionally, their want of revolution and freedom remains the main focus of all their actions, with their goal being to overthrow the Russian government. The means in which they plan to execute the revolution are not discussed, but to the Teacher, it appears childish. The Russians, not having experienced a proper revolution like the West has, tend to idealize it to the point of forgetting the act of starting the revolution itself and only focusing on the outcome they hope for. The Teacher comments on this, feeling as though he is the only person looking at the situation realistically. However, the only person he shares his opinion with is Natalia as she is a dear friend whom the Teacher trusts.

Trust, being another issue in the clash of the East and the West in *Under Western Eyes*, differs greatly for each side. The Teacher, coming from an individualist nation, does not put his trust into anybody but the Haldin ladies, showing clear signs of distrust towards both Razumov and Ivanovitch upon the first meeting. Moreover, he does not want Natalia to get involved with the revolutionists as he does not trust any of them while her only reason not to join them is her dislike of Ivanovitch. During conversations with several of these characters, Natalia tends to trust their words because they are Russians. Additionally, she longs to meet Razumov because, as she mentions to the Teacher, she is in need of meeting a fellow countryman she could put her trust in.⁶⁴ In fact, Natalia puts her trust into Razumov even before she meets him. It is mentioned in the story that Victor Haldin spoke of Razumov in a letter. Natalia, as a Russian and as his sister, puts her trust into the person she believes to be a great friend of her late brother, not waiting to first learn of his intentions or moral standing. The Teacher, being an outsider, not only finds their tendencies for automatic trust peculiar, but also dangerous. Conrad contrasts individualism and collectivism using subtle but to a Westerner easily recognizable means.

⁶⁴ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 187.

Relating to the aforementioned revolutionary thinking is another issue which the Teacher mentions more than once in his recollection. The naive, overconfident thinking of the Russians seems simplistic and underdeveloped to him, which points to the underdevelopment of the East mentioned in the previous part of the thesis. Furthermore, the Teacher, coming from Britain which was, during Conrad's life, a colonialist country, would most likely feel a strengthened sense of superiority over such simple minds as he deems Russians to be.

Another distinction between the West and the East that appears frequently in the novel is the fear and oppression through which the Russian government rules. It plays a major role in a number of decisions made by the Russian characters. Firstly, Razumov lives his life in fear of standing out and once he becomes associated with Haldin, fear pushes him to go and hand Haldin in rather than help him run away. Moreover, the Haldin ladies mention multiple times that fear tactics are often used by the Russian government, and multiple members of the revolutionist group left Russia in fear of being prosecuted for a crime. Crimes against the government are considered the most serious and the criminals who commit them face harsh punishments. The Teacher struggles to understand those fears as to his Western mind, such tactics are unimaginable and absurd. Even at the time of Conrad writing *Under Western Eyes*, democracy was widely spread in the West, making the Teacher's perception of the Russian issues more complex.

Furthermore, guilt plays a major role in the decision making of the Russian characters, particularly when it comes to Razumov. He begins by feeling guilty over beating Ziemianitch and handing Haldin over to the police. Later on, as he infiltrates the revolutionist group, he experiences guilt over lying to them and does everything in his power to avoid lies, choosing to say half-truths whenever he can. Lastly, after he learns of Ziemianitch committing suicide, he is so overcome by guilt that he confesses to the revolutionists, accepting the possibility of being punished for lying. His guilt stems from the strong influence of collectivism on his personality, which makes his betrayal seem more serious than it would to a Westerner. The theme of guilt accompanies Razumov during the entire narrative, making him give up his safety in an attempt to relieve himself of it. However, Razumov is not the only character in *Under Western Eyes* who suffers with guilt, with several other characters implying the same. For example Natalia feels guilty for keeping secrets in front of her mother and Victor Haldin experiences strong feelings of guilt over murdering a person, not caring whether they were tyrannical or not. Guilt appears to be a strong influence on Russian characters and is further amplified by their strong sense of unity.

Lastly, the sense of belonging as well as the need to belong appears to motivate the actions of all the Russian characters while the Teacher does not feel the need to prove himself to anybody. The Teacher, being a friend of Natalia, feels sadness at the end of the novel as his friend leaves for Russia. However, he does not appear to lose his sense of home or sense of belonging as a result. His personal security is not dependent on other people, but rather comes from his individuality. On the other hand, the Russians gather together in groups, looking for a place to belong. Moreover, Razumov, the only non-revolutionist Russian in the story, longs for a family. Not having any family left in Russia, he considers the country as his home until he is taken advantage of by Haldin, resulting in him losing all sense of belonging and, as a result, his desire to live. Razumov, however, is not the only character who loses his personal security during the events of *Under Western Eyes*, with Natalia Haldin walking a similar path. Natalia, after losing her brother, and later on losing her mother, decides to go back to Russia and live her life there as her hopes for a better future get crushed with the loss of her brother and the treachery committed by Razumov.

In conclusion, the characters consistently display the differences in their personalities, ideologies and beliefs throughout the narrative, allowing for the reader to explore several points of view on issues that arise. The Teacher, serving as the only representative of the West, chooses to stay away from the events that take place and observes, using Razumov's diary as a reference in his recollection. *Under Western Eyes* creatively portrays the main differences between the Eastern and the Western mindset according to Conrad, mainly focusing on collectivism/individualism, democracy/autocracy and trust. Furthermore, personal security, or the sense of belonging, plays a major role in the narrative, with guilt helping the reader explore the thought processes of some of the characters in relation to acts they consider immoral.

5. Anarchism

Anarchism has been discussed earlier in this thesis as a crucial part of *Under Western Eyes*. However, although it is mentioned on several occasions, the revolutionist group that is prominent in the story is not anarchist. Rather, they deal with other groups, some of which are Anarchist. The goal of all the groups is the same, that is, overcoming the Russian government. It is their beliefs that differ, but they do not stop them from meeting each other and discussing the methods in which they might be able to complete their objective. This chapter explores the revolutionist groups, mainly the one that is the most prominent in the story, with the intention of recognizing traits which are characteristic for anarchism.

As previously mentioned, Anarchism is, according to Woodcock and other scholars, a rebellion that touched some less developed countries of Europe. However, it is not Europe exclusive and it is present all over the world, with no nation being safe from it. This is especially true for the Russia portrayed in *Under Western Eyes* where the revolution is put into the forefront of the entire narrative. Anarchism, being based on the rejection of governments, presents itself in the Russian revolutionists. Their lives are surrounded by the desire to overthrow the Russian government and they celebrate the death of a single statesman as a great success. Although the revolutionists do not call themselves Anarchists, but Radical Feminists, their goal remains the same. In essence, they aim to take over their government and destroy it in order to bring freedom into Russia and rid their comrades of fear. Moreover, their discussions mostly surround the topic of revolution, but the means to reach it are never specified. To the Western mind of the story, the revolutionists' intentions appear ridiculous as he has heard of what a true revolution entails. Furthermore, the French Revolution, which is a West based historical event, resulted in Anarchism, giving the notion of Anarchy being present in the novel more credibility.

Additionally, even though Anarchism is not limited to any type of government, it is more common among autocratic countries, as discussed in the previous part of this thesis. Therefore, the Russian revolutionists, aiming for a complete change of the political system of Russia, can be defined as Anarchists. Furthermore, their intention is to reject totality by disassembling the government. All of the aforementioned ambitions displayed by the Russian revolutionists, involving not only the Radical Feminists, but also all the other groups present in the novel, align with the goals as well as the means of Anarchism. Moreover, a leader of one of the revolutionist

groups in Geneva identifies his group as Anarchist, further supporting the theory of Anarchism being a prominent part of *Under Western Eyes*.

Interestingly, Victor Haldin is the only person in the novel who takes action against the government. His act is highly valued by the revolutionists in Geneva, but they do not plan any additional action, nor discuss any proceedings that should be taking place in response to the murder of the statesman. Their celebrations result in no further operations and they remain hiding in Geneva. The revolutionist leaders, such as Madame de S-, continue giving speeches about their vision of Russia's future, Peter Ivanovitch writes books concerning his run from Siberia. However, while proudly calling themselves revolutionists with beautiful visions, they do not take any steps towards realizing them.

It remains true that the main theme of *Under Western Eyes* is revolution, or at least the idea of it. The reason for Haldin's act is his desire for revolution and it is also the event that starts Razumov's life as a spy. Razumov is haunted by the idea of revolution and despises the revolutionists for deciding what is right for people and what is not. He perceives revolutionists as self-righteous and selfish. Moreover, Mrs. Haldin does not give the impression of longing for a revolution. Her only desire is for her children to live a better life than she has. Although she is not a believer of the revolution, she supports it in her children because to her, the young generation deserves to have hopes.

One of the preachers for change who does not take action is Madame de S-, the inspiring figure of Peter Ivanovitch. She is known for saving Ivanovitch from the wilderness in Siberia as well as for her fortunes which she uses to fund the revolutionist group. There are no specific examples in the novel that explain her financial involvements in support of the revolution, but she is the owner of Chateau Borel, the main base of the Radical Feminists. However, the chateau is not kept in any way, which serves in favor of the revolutionists, making the citizens of Geneva perceive it as an abandoned private building that has not been occupied in years. Instead, however, the chateau serves the purpose of a base for multiple revolutionist groups which meet with the Radical Feminists to discuss revolution as well as party.

Lastly, the fact that the revolutionist groups stand against the Russian government puts them at a risk so high that they become extremely suspicious around people. Their fellowship remains strong once trust is established, but because of the fear of being infiltrated by spies, they tend to wait before sharing their intentions with new people. This, however, does not apply to

Razumov, who gains trust immediately, presenting himself as a dear friend of Haldin who helped Haldin commit the crime. This prestige allows him to infiltrate the group easily which is also the reason he is chosen as a spy by councillor Mikulin. Several members of the group doubt Razumov, especially since he appears to be quite closed off and reserved, traits atypical for a Russian. Razumov is accepted into their circle with no prior experiences with the members, causing some to become suspicious of him. Generally, the members of the Radical Feminist group as well as the members of other revolutionist groups, appear to be on the lookout for suspicious behavior and remain doubtful of most characters. For this reason, Razumov's position proves to be exceptional and he becomes an invaluable asset of the Russian government which aims to stop any revolution from taking place.

In summary, the spirit of Anarchism proves to be one of the most significant aspects of the narrative of *Under Western Eyes*, even though it is portrayed through a different radical movement. The aim of the revolutionists in the story is to overthrow the existing Russian government, which is autocratic, therefore totalitarian. As mentioned earlier in the thesis, totalitarian regimes are more susceptible to be targeted by Anarchists or any type of revolutionaries as they tend to be oppressive and employ fear tactics to control their citizens. Furthermore, the majority of the revolutionists have experienced the oppressive, totalitarian tendencies of the Russian government. Their first hand encounters with the dark side of their own government cause the revolutionists to long for a change. They are, however, unable to take any action besides recruiting new members. Moreover, new members are kept away from the secrets until they are deemed trustworthy, as they believe there is a high likelihood of a Russian spy infiltrating their ranks. Additionally, Razumov is able to join the group without earning the trust of the revolutionists which backfires on them as he manages to deliver information to councillor Mikulin before his confession takes place.

6. Joseph Conrad's Projection of Opinions into *Under Western Eyes*

Joseph Conrad's opinions have already been discussed and there is no doubt that he inserted them into both the plot and the character of his novel. This chapter's goal is to determine the means which he uses to express these opinions in his writing. Included in the short analysis are Conrad's political opinions as well as his standpoint regarding both Russia and Europe.

Firstly, Conrad claims in *Autocracy and War* that Russia lacks power outside of its own country. Although there are no attempts of Russia to influence other countries in *Under Western Eyes*, the revolutionists in Geneva remain safe from its influence and operate in relative safety. The fact that the Russian authorities do not attempt to forcefully return these people to Russia seems to be a subtle way of hinting at the powerlessness of the nation.

However, the hate that Conrad harbors towards Russia can be observed in multiple parts of the story as well as in the thoughts of the characters. At the beginning of the novel when Razumov still resides in Russia, his thoughts regarding his everyday life provide a rather prominent image of the state of Conrad's mindset. The descriptive language used to detail Razumov's thoughts includes statements which paint Russia as a terrible country ruled by fear. Razumov ensures that he is not outstanding, does not dare to listen to any news that comes in an unofficial form and is extra careful because he is a student. He fears being recognized by the government or being seen near controversial figures. Furthermore, other Russian characters share his view of Russia, such as Natalia who notes to the Teacher that not receiving news in Russia is a sign of misfortune. Additionally, the fear of the Russian government, its actions and its influence on Russian people appears to be omnipresent throughout the entire narrative.

Probably one of the biggest issues Conrad has with Russia is the autocracy. According to him, it is a lawless system which is marked by necessity in Europe, but has no purpose in Russia other than control. In fact, the characters themselves, as discussed before, state that autocracy knows no law. Other claims connected to the perception of autocracy in the novel include the Teacher mentioning the shadow of autocracy looming over the Haldin ladies⁶⁵ or Mrs. Haldin explaining that autocracy corrupted both the church and the education system in Russia.⁶⁶ Additionally, Conrad decided to add a character that, to Razumov, is the embodiment of autocracy, the police general whom Razumov meets on the night he Hands Haldin over. He uses

⁶⁵ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 121.

⁶⁶ Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 113, 115.

strong descriptive language to guide the reader towards understanding the degree of fear and respect Razumov feels towards the General. Overall, Conrad portrays Russian autocracy in a strongly negative light, expressing the animosity he holds towards it on multiple occasions throughout the narrative.

Besides his dislike for Russia and autocracy, Conrad showcases his distaste for oppression, which he also connects with Russia, in *Under Western Eyes*. Firstly, Mrs. Haldin talks about the oppression infiltrating the church of Russia. Secondly, at one point in the story, a few of the characters display a degree of agitation over being called slavish. Simply put, during a discussion between the Teacher and Natalia, she mentions that it is not bad to be led by someone, such as Peter Ivanovitch. However, immediately after stating her opinion, she continues to declare that she is not slavish and Russians are not defined by slavishness. This seems to be a defense mechanism by a civilization that has lived in oppression for as long as it has existed. As mentioned earlier in the thesis, Conrad uses a metaphor in which he claims Russian leaders to be slave-owners, with the only possibility of change being a slave uprising. Considering that he wrote the revolutionist characters to be quite naive and idealistic, the assimilation with slaves appears to be probable.

It could be argued that all the Russian characters of the narrative display inhuman traits. It is certainly true that they appear to be lacking any character to the Teacher, and since Conrad is also a Westerner and the story is written through the eyes of a Westerner, it is possible that to him, Eastern nations seem to be lacking in character, be it physically or mentally.

Furthermore, Conrad expresses that he perceives Russian people as some who have no real reason to fight in *Autocracy and War*. In the essay, he contrasts the differences between the Russians and the Japanese in the Russo-Japanese war, stating that the Japanese have something to fight for while the Russians are thrown into a fight they never asked for. This standpoint seems to be present in the story through Mrs. Haldin, who has lived most of her life in Russia and is therefore quite well accustomed to the typical Russian life. She admits to the Teacher that she never tried to stop her children from hoping for a better future, even though she has already lost her hopes. This aligns with a typical Western mindset of the younger generation being the future of a nation, and Conrad seems to extend it to Russia as well, slightly bridging the gap between the west and the East he creates in his novel. Although the revolutionists have a reason to fight, their desire is not to fight for Russia, but against it, further supporting Conrad's view.

Additionally, Conrad makes his bias in favor of Europe stand out in *Under Western Eyes*. Although there are significantly more representatives of Russia in the story than there are of the West, and even though the Russian characters look down upon the Teacher because he is an outsider, he is still given a superior attitude by Conrad. When it comes to the discussion of revolution, the Teacher is more knowledgeable about the topic than the Russians and considers their ideologies too optimistic. Moreover, he displays more mental maturity than the other characters. There is no real indication of the ages of people other than the Teacher, Madame de S- and Mrs. Haldin to be older than most of the others, but out of all characters, the Teacher seems to be displaying more mental maturity than the others. Furthermore, he is not afraid to doubt the others when he speaks to them while they are reluctant to voice an opinion different from those of the leaders. Conrad managed to portray their mindsets, which are strongly influenced by their collectivist homeland, extremely well.

Lastly, there are two of Conrad's standpoints that are not expressed in *Under Western Eyes*. There is no discussion regarding his dislike for other political systems, such as democracy, and his dislike of exploitation is not mentioned. However, this fact comes as no surprise as there is no real reason for Conrad to insert such information into a story that is created purely to represent an outsider's view on Russian revolutionist proceedings. He may have expressed his animosity towards democracy and exploitation when discussing the topics of oppression and autocracy, but the narrative of *Under Western Eyes* does not give him proper grounds to express them creatively.

In summary, Conrad's viewpoints on political systems and treatment of people appear to be represented in *Under Western Eyes* in quite obvious and creative ways. Firstly, the most prominent feature of Russia that is scattered everywhere throughout the story, being the main driving force for the majority of the action taken by the Russian revolutionists, is autocracy. Nearly every, if not all, character describes their own experience on autocracy as well as the source of their desire to fight against it. Secondly, oppression is brought up on multiple occasions, making the characters easily suspicious around every new figure that enters their vicinity. Their conviction that their government is omnipotent and able to see every proceeding is so strong that they display an overly strong degree of caution. Moreover, Conrad manages to include the importance of religion in every nation into *Under Western Eyes*, supplying the story with extra space for the reader to sympathize with the characters. Additionally, although not all

major opinions regarding political systems of Conrad did not make their way into the narrative, they all influenced his writing, with their effect on the story being quite strong. Finally, Conrad's opinions affect every piece of his narrative, his hate of not only autocracy, but Russia itself, appearing to be scattered throughout the entire novel. As one of his characters mentions, autocracy is omnipotent, and Conrad's writing truly pushes the reader to understand what omnipotence means by inserting these issues in nearly every scene of *Under Western Eyes*. Conrad clearly was not afraid to express his opinions loudly to the world, and his novel is a testament to that fact.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the topic of the East/West divide remains vastly extensive even in modern times. The question of where the line between the two world sides stands proves to be quite complex as there are multiple interpretations of it. The main theory which is used in this thesis is based on religion and claims that the division line between the East and the West formed as a reaction to the dividing of religions, mainly the Great Schism that caused the Latin Church to split into Orthodox Christianity and Western Christianity. Conrad works with this distinction only briefly in mentioning the corrupted church of Russia. However, even though Conrad does not particularly focus on religion being one of the main causes of the division, he does include the 'us' versus 'them' mindset that Huntington claims to have been formed as a result of the split. Conrad implements the mindset by making all Russian characters of the story look down upon the Teacher and suspect him of meddling in things he does not understand. Furthermore, the events which Huntington marks as having influenced the divide are not mentioned, but their significance is implied. The Russian Revolution and the Industrial Revolution, which both affected the West strongly, is the strongest reference the teacher could be using when he speaks of true revolutions being bloody, violent and full of unsuspecting victims.

Another distinction, this time political rather than historical, between the East and the West that has been explored, is collectivism and individualism. These two mindsets strongly influence the decisions and the behavior of the characters present in the story. For the Russians, collectivist urges are ones they tend to encourage, enforcing a unity which they believe to be necessary to fight against the government they oppose. On the other hand, the Teacher, coming from an individualist society, does not quite understand the depth of the trust they hold for each other and instead becomes easily suspicious of any unnatural behavior. This fact also gives him an upper hand when Razumov arrives in Geneva as he is able to notice subtle details regarding Razumov's behavior which he uses to come to the conclusion that Razumov is hiding something. The Russians, however, trust Razumov immediately based on a single letter and do not question his silence, making his betrayal affect them stronger.

The Last political issue discussed in the first part of the thesis is Anarchism, which proves to be quite a distinctive part of the story. It is discussed that Anarchy is not limited to only some nations as it is the desire to dissolve the current government with no care for which type of government it is. However, totalitarian nations are more likely to be targeted, making Russia a

more likely victim of Anarchism. Although the revolutionist group that is discussed in the novel is not defined as Anarchist, but rather as Radical Feminist, their goal remains the same as that of Anarchy. Furthermore, the group meets with other revolutionists, some of which do define themselves as Anarchist. The topic of revolution is one that guides the events of the entire novel and is therefore a crucial part of the analysis.

A recurring topic throughout the entire story of *Under Western Eyes* is personal security, although it is only briefly mentioned in the analysis. All actions are, however, influenced by either the desire for personal security or the ownership of it. To the Russians, personal security is a commodity they can not afford neither in Russia nor outside of it because they are always in danger of being spied on or followed. To the Teacher, however, personal security is a human right that he uses to guide some of his actions. This is best shown on the losses. While for the Russians, losing a defining sense of belonging is a devastating event that leads to them losing all sense of self, to the Teacher, the sense of belonging is not dependent on other people and his personal security is enough to keep him from losing his sense of self.

The method used to explore the novel is analysis, which is first applied to the meeting between the characters representing the East and the East, subsequently to the major characters themselves and lastly to all their interactions. After that, Conrad's opinions are applied to the novel.

Firstly, during the meeting between Razumov and the Teacher, the reader gets the chance to experience how the Western and the Eastern minds react to each other. The Teacher, coming from the West, displays a natural tendency to be suspicious upon meeting Razumov. He notices small behaviors which, as he even mentions in his recollection, are only obvious to his Western Eyes. From this single meaning, he is able to determine that Razumov must be hiding something from the others. On the other hand, Razumov sees the danger that this Western figure poses to him as he is able to conceal his irregular behavior in front of the revolutionists who interpret it as him being lost in thought. However, he is hiding that he is a Russian spy and although he is afraid of anybody finding out, the Teacher poses a major threat to him. Furthermore, he nearly refuses to speak to the Teacher as he thinks that the outsider has no right inserting himself into the events that are taking place.

Secondly, Razumov is explored. Him being the only non-revolutionist Russian character in *Under Western Eyes* makes him into a character with a lot of inner struggles relating to his

beliefs and hopes. He is aware of all the negative aspects of the Russian government, but does not desire any change. His only wish is to live a peaceful, comfortable life away from the suspicion of the government. However, all his thoughts are centered around not wanting to be noticed. His decisions are based on his attempts to not seem suspicious and he lives his life in fear without admitting it, shedding light on the fear-inducing tactics of the Russian government. His collectivist tendencies appear to be affecting him stronger than they affect others as he has no real family or friends, making him see Russia as his family. Therefore, as he loses touch with the peaceful life he had planned for himself, he is overcome with grief over having lost his home and with it his personal security. The moment he deems his life to have ended due to the meeting with Haldin, he loses all desire to continue life and becomes consumed by hate for Haldin and everything he is involved in as he sees him as the destructor of his future. Moreover, after he beats Ziemianitch, he starts feeling immense guilt over beating a defenseless man, and once he learns of Ziemianitch committing suicide, proceeds to become so overcome with guilt that he decides to confess to the revolutionists. Additionally, he considers the revolutionists to be fanatical followers of an ideal and displays anger towards them because they commit such terrible crimes not caring whether the others really wish for a different government. Lastly, due to his life being ruined by a third party with him not having any power over the decision, he feels like his life is not his own, causing his hate for Haldin to become stronger. Razumov is the embodiment of a Russian citizen in Conrad's novel, and most of his characteristics are based on the fear of autocracy he feels on a daily basis. The fear, which Russia uses to control the people, perfectly manages to control Razumov, leading him towards betraying his fellow Russians.

The other Russian characters which appear in *Under Western Eyes* play a major role in displaying Conrad's perception of the East as well. Firstly, the church and its corruption is mentioned, and church is also used when Mrs. Haldin speaks of Russian oppression. Oppression is only mentioned briefly in the novel itself, but it surrounds the entirety of the plot and is as omnipresent as autocracy. The lack of class distinction is another issue that is mentioned and mostly likely relates to the aforementioned oppression as keeping the people united lessens the likelihood of them creating groups such as the Radical Revolutionists. In addition to the class conflict, there is an interesting mention of a topic Conrad speaks of but only briefly mentions in *Under Western Eyes*. At one point in a conversation, there appear disputes regarding following others, which, to the Russian minds, activates a reflex to defend themselves, saying they are not

slaves. This is a topic Conrad mentions in *Autocracy and War*, comparing Russian leaders to slave-owners. Lastly, the collectivist mindsets which they all represent make them very open with each other and very trusting to fellow Russians. However, because of the collectivist urges, the betrayal displayed by Razumov at the end of the novel hits them even harder and causes all the revolutionists to have to fight the urges implanted in them by their homeland. Inside them arises a conflict between the collectivist, autocratic need to punish the traitor by death and the revolutionist mind that wishes to fight the very idea of punishing a traitor by death.

Furthermore, the only Western representative in the narrative, the Teacher, who also turns out to be the narrator of the entire novel, is discussed. As the only representative of the West, his experiences are explored in more detail than the others. The first fact that is imperative to be remembered is his lack of involvement in the events that transpire in the story. He is sure not to step inside the story unless it is necessary or required. However, in his recollection, his personal standpoints come to light immediately. Firstly, he calls Russia a land of moral corruption and cynicism. Secondly, he states that it is a nation ruled by hate and fear, which is confirmed in the analysis of the Russian characters. Moreover, he perceives Russians as simple minded, most likely due to his English origin. The Western perception of Eastern minds as simple is also discussed in the thesis and the Teacher's options align with the findings which state that the West sees the East as simpler. Additionally, the Teacher comments on his view of the Russians by saying that they are haunted by the autocracy of Russia no matter where they go, which seems to be true when taking the analysis into consideration. The conspiracies that are consulted in the novel, such as the Russian fear of being spied on, seems childish to the Teacher as to his Western mind, governments conspiring to silence people or influence the mindsets of them are considered to be nonsensical. The majority of the West does not believe these conspiracies to be likely in democratic states, but agrees that they exist as a possibility in the East. Furthermore, the Teacher admires the strength of the Russians to fight on as it is not so common to fight impossible odds in the West. This, however, does not stop him from seeing their revolutionary ideologies as overly optimistic and idealistic as they do not consider the violence and death that comes with revolution, and the Western people have experienced what a true revolution entails. Lastly, the Teacher displays wariness that is typical for an individualistic mind around every person he is not acquainted with, which is not the case for the Russians as long as they are communicating with another Russian.

In the last part of the thesis, the ideas and facts discussed in *Under Western Eyes* are applied to Joseph Conrad's personal opinions regarding Russia and the East/West divide. His viewpoint on Russia being powerless outside of the influence inside its own country appears only as an implication as all that the Russian government can do to fight the revolutionists in Geneva is to send spies. There are no attempts to retrieve them from Geneva so that they can face a trial in their homeland. Furthermore, the fear that Conrad attributes to Russia and the hate he claims Russia rules with is scattered throughout the narrative and can be observed in nearly every scene. It seems that Conrad harbored extremely strong feelings regarding the hate and fear that Russia uses to control its people. Similarly, his hate of autocracy remains omnipresent in the novel as it haunts all the Russian characters. The autocratic government of Russia is not only the issue that the revolutionists desire to fight, but also the force which brought Razumov and the Haldin ladies to Geneva as well as caused the death of Victor Haldin. Furthermore, most of the revolutionists have experienced Russia's autocracy first hand, making their want to fight it stronger. Besides autocracy, they also experience the pain of oppression, which, once again, Conrad keeps slightly in the background while also bringing the reader to consider it as a major issue of the narrative. Another issue of Conrad is present in the lack of reason to fight for Russia which is presented through Razumov who, even though he was betrayed by revolutionaries, never considers the option to help the Russian government because it deserves it. The reasons for Razumov to become a spy are his loss of personal security and the desire for revenge against the revolutionists. Through Razumov, Conrad shows the reader that Russia gives its people no incentive to fight for it. Lastly, Conrad's obvious bias in favor of Europe shows itself throughout the entire story. The Teacher feels superior to the Russians as he shows in his recollection, observing them almost as study subjects rather than human beings. Although there are situations in which he feels like he is unable to support the Haldin ladies due to his lack of experience with the terrible Russia, most of the time, for example during the revolution conversation, he feels superior in his understanding of the world.

Overall, *Under Western Eyes* provides a wonderful collection of ideologies related to the East/West divide that not only Conrad, but other thinkers and historians agree with. Although there exist certain opinions of Conrad which are not discussed by anybody else mentioned in this thesis, his projection of these opinions into *Under Western Eyes* proves to be done in a detailed, well thought through manner. Conrad repeatedly uses his ingenious skills as a writer to force the

reader to think as well as to sympathize with the characters. In general, the story, written by a Westerner and for Westerners, seems to encompass a wide range of topics in a manner that is engaging even in modern times.

Resumé

Joseph Conrad, známý Polsko-Britský autor, se narodil v roce 1857. Během jeho života napsal množství děl, která se zabývala různými tématy jako je samota, politická problematika, historie nebo svoboda. *Před očima západu* je jedním z těchto děl, které se zabývá vztahem mezi východem a západem. Cílem této práce je prozkoumat definice a důvody rozdělení západu a východu a dále způsoby, jakými se tyto dvě strany vnímají.

První úkol, kterým se práce zabývá, je prozkoumání názorů Josepha Conrada, jelikož má autor tendenci vkládat jeho názory nejen do postav, ale i do příběhu knihy.

Následuje určení hranice mezi východem a západem, pro kterou je použita teorie Samuela Huntingtona, jež dělí euroasijský kontinent na dvě strany podle vývoje náboženství. Podle Huntingtona se rozdělení prohloubilo poté, co došlo ke sporu mezi členy římskokatolické církve, která se následně rozdělila na řeckokatolickou a římskokatolickou církev. Huntington zahrnuje ve svém rozdělení i jiná náboženství, ale ta nejsou pro účely této práce tak důležitá. Huntington, společně s dalšími autory, také poukazuje na události, které ovlivnily západ podstatně více, než východ, například Francouzská revoluce. Tyto a další způsoby rozdělení jsou v práci konzultovány.

Dále se práce zabývá rozdílným vnímáním východních a západních civilizací a jejich názory na sebe. Tyto interakce mezi východem a západem hrají velmi důležitou roli v knize *Před očima západu*, jelikož jsou centrálním problémem zkoumaným v Conradově románu.

Metoda použitá k probádání románu *Před očima západu* je analýza. Obsah knihy je zanalyzován v kontrastu s problematikou, která je zmíněná v první části práce, a s názory autora, jež v díle hrají důležitou roli.

Prvním krokem v analýze knihy je prozkoumání jednotlivých postav, a to především postavy Kírylo Sidorovitche Razumova a anglického učitele, jež je současně i vypravěčem knihy. Tato část poukazuje na rozdílné vnímání postav podle toho, odkud pochází. Ruští revolucionáři žijí ve stínu autokracie, která ovládá Rusko, a ve strachu, který Ruská vláda používá ke kontrole svých občanů. Razumov, kterého navštíví jeho spolužák Victor Haldin, musí přijít na způsob, jak se smířit s tím, že přišel o svoji vysněnou kariéru. V momentě, kdy je spojován s revolucionářem, jež zavraždil důležitou politickou figuru, se pro něj zhroutí svět a on žije nenávistí Haldina a všech revolucionářů, kteří rozhodují o životech jiných aniž bych přemýšleli nad jejich názory. Ostatní Ruské postavy v knize jsou revolucionáři, kteří mají za cíl bojovat s

Ruským vykořisťováním a Ruskou vládou, ale kromě Victora Haldina nepodstupují žádné přípravy k boji za jejich cíle. Hlavní problematika, která se v jejich myšlení a chování projevuje, je útlak Ruské vlády, strach z její moci a kontroly a autokracie, která všechny Ruské postavy pronásleduje.

V porovnání s Ruskými postavami v příběhu je pouze jediný představitel západního myšlení, anglický učitel, který je dobrým přítelem sestry Victora Haldina. Učitel se do děje nezapojuje, pokud to není nutné nebo žádané, a spíše sleduje dění z povzdálí. Aktivity revolucionářů se mu nelíbí a nechce, aby se Natalia, sestra Victora Haldina, ke skupině připojila. Naštěstí pro něj, ani Natalia nemá o připojení zájem. Pro učitele je největším problémem porozumět Ruskému smýšlení, jež považuje za jednoduché. V knize se nachází několik scén, které učitel komentuje jako nesrozumitelné pro člověka západu, jelikož je podle něj západní myšlení příliš komplikované. Na druhou stranu se ale v knize nachází i situace, kde se učitel cítí trapně kvůli svému nedostatku zkušeností. Například když se Natalia a její matka dozví o smrti Victora Haldina, která proběhla po mučivém výslechu popravou, učitel vidí jejich utrpení za nesrovnatelné se vším, co již v životě zažil, jelikož je pro osobu ze západu nepředstavitelné ztratit blízkého mučením a popravou. Učitel má ale výhodu, jelikož pochází z demokraticky založené části světa, a smýšlí tedy pod vlivem individualismu. Díky této výhodě je schopen prohlédnout Razumovu snahu skrýt tajemství a ví, že se mu nedá věřit. Ostatní, Ruské, postavy v příběhu Razumovi automaticky věří, protože si ho spojují s vraždou, kterou spáchal Victor Haldin.

Analýza jednotlivých postav je poté shrnuta tak, aby poukázala na jednotlivé problémy, které se týkají vztahu mezi východem a západem v knize *Před očima západu*. Hlavním problémem, který je v knize zkoumán, je autokracie, její vliv a její způsoby udržení kontroly nad svými občany. Rusko je v knize zahaleno neustálým stínem autokracie a strachem z ní, jelikož i většina revolucionářů, která se v knize nachází, hovoří o svých zkušenostech s Ruskou autokracií. Téměř všichni se stali cílem Ruské vlády a byli stíháni za činy, kterými byli vládou viněni. Strach z nadvlády autokracie a nenávisť, jež provádí každodenní život Rusů, se nejvíce projevuje v myšlenkách Razumova, který v Rusku žije, dokud není poslán do Ženevy jako špión pro Ruskou vládu. I po jeho příjezdu do Ženevy Razumov přemýšlí ve strachu z Ruské vlády.

Kromě zmíněných důležitých témat, která jsou v knize všudypřítomna, se v ní diskutuje i o dalších problémech vztahu mezi západem a východem. Zmíněno je náboženství, utlačování,

vykořisťování a další. Všechna tato témata se v knize nachází v určité míře, ale nejsou tak důležitá, jako už zmíněná autokracie, strach a nenávisť. Dohromady utváří představu toho, jaké je to žít v Rusku, a jak jsou aktivity Ruských postav vnímány osobou zvenčí, občanem západní části světa.

Dalším důležitým aspektem knihy, který se nachází v analýze v této práci, je Anarchismus. Přesto, že kniha pojednává o radikálním feminismu a dalších revolucionářských skupinách, jejich cíl se shoduje s cílem Anarchismu, tedy kompletním rozpadem vlády. Revoluce provází celý příběh *Před očima západu*, a je tedy nedílnou součástí analýzy. Způsoby, jakými se revolucionářské cíle shodují s Anarchismem, jsou v této části analýzy prodiskutovány. V závěru této části práce je vysvětleno, že se ideologie Anarchismu shoduje s cíli radikálního feminismu.

V neposlední řadě je nutno srovnat názory Josepha Conrada s těmi, které se projevují v jako knize *Před očima západu*. Jeho nenávisť vůči autokracii se projevuje v celém ději románu, stejně jako jeho přesvědčení, že aby mohla autokratická společnost fungovat aniž by se zhroutila, musí vládnout strachem a být extrémně tvrdá na svoje občany. Dále se v ději projevuje Conradův pocit, že jsou Ruské a celkově východní společnosti jednoduché a morálně méně vyvinuté, jelikož žijí ve strachu. Utlačování a vykořisťování jsou také důležitou součástí autokratické vlády.

Závěrem, román Josepha Conrada *Před očima západu* znázorňuje nejen jeho vlastní názory týkající se rozdílů v západním a východním myšlení, ale i názory jiných kritiků, kteří se tématem zabývají. Způsob, jakým Conrad píše o vzájemném vnímání postav východních a západních, je velmi autentický i pro moderního občana západu. Conradovým cílem bylo, aby tato kniha sloužila jako příběh pro občany západu, a aby v ní poukázal na problematiku rozdílného smýšlení obou skupin, což se mu více než povedlo. Kniha nejen otevírá čtenářovy oči problematice východu a západu, ale také ho nutí přemýšlet o tom, zda je prodiskutovaná problematika stále relevantní.

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