

**“That Legacy of a Boatful of Pirates”  
—Conspiracy in Joseph Conrad’s *Almayer’s  
Folly* and *An Outcast of the Islands***

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**Abstract**

This paper discusses pirate conspiracy as the nexus between text and context in Joseph Conrad’s Malay novels. It argues that the narrative of *An Outcast of the Islands*, which establishes itself as the prequel to *Almayer’s Folly*, points to an under-represented past—the suppression of piracy. It demonstrates that the legacy of this “beginning” contributes to the conspiracy which propels the narrative events. This paper shows that the “originary impetus” of the pirates suggests a “textual” impetus to return to the beginning, and that the local conspiracy of the pirate is compatible with regional sentiment across Borneo in reaction to the suppression of piracy. This paper calls for attention on conspiracy in Conrad who witnessed an epoch when conspiracy was a powerful strategy for colonial resistance.

**Key Words:** conspiracy, piracy, Conrad’s Malay novels

## I. Introduction: The “Originary Impetus”

In the Author’s Note to *An Outcast of the Islands*, his second novel published a year after *Almayer’s Folly* in 1896, Joseph Conrad was not exactly correct to say that his second novel was “second” in “the absolute sense of the word” (vii). Although, as Conrad points out, *An Outcast of the Islands* was “second in conception, second in execution,” it was not “second as it were in its essence” (vii) as he claims: Conrad’s second novel creates a history—a prequel—for its predecessor, *Almayer’s Folly*. In the public domain of *Almayer’s Folly*, Almayer “struggle[s] with the difficulties of his position” amid “unscrupulous intrigues” and “a fierce trade competition” (24). The desperate prospect of his career is created by “the great revolution in Sambir” (Conrad, 1949: 360) that, as *An Outcast of the Islands* shows, significantly reshapes the socio-political life there. Lingard, Almayer’s mentor, “disappear[s] as though he had been a common coolie” (Conrad, 1949: 364). In *Almayer’s Folly*, accordingly, Lingard has completely “disappeared” (27) from Sambir, once his private entrepôt and the economic base for his legendary career as “the Rajah Laut” (7). In the private domain, *An Outcast of the Islands* also serves as the prequel to *Almayer’s Folly*. As Almayer tells a visitor at the end of *An Outcast of the Islands*, his daughter has been under the guardianship of Mrs. Vinck in Singapore. The beginning of *Almayer’s Folly* shows that Nina has returned to Sambir, and a significant part of the novel deals with her decision to be “a Malay”<sup>1</sup> (180) owing to her

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<sup>1</sup> As D. J. M. Tate notes, the term “Malay” may refer widely to peoples in Borneo, especially those in Brunei and the west coast; the Bugis in South-east Borneo; “aborigines converted to Islam”; and peoples in North Borneo. Moreover, as Tate notes, this term can also mean “the Malays as a distinct race”; “Malay speaking peoples”; “peoples in the region of the same basic ethnic stock” (1971: 37). I think Conrad uses the term “Malay” broadly in these two novels. In Nina’s case, as a mixed descendent of the Dutch and the Sulu, she is “Malay” because she speaks Malay and considers herself ethnically as a Malay. The various non-European settlers in Sambir such as Babalatchi, Aissa, and Mrs. Almayer can all be regarded as “Malays.” However, because of the political intrigues in Sambir during its “revolution,”

“Singapore life” (31) which made her feel “rejected with scorn by the white people” (180).

The link between Conrad’s early Malay novels leads Reynold Humphries to argue that “an extra dimension can be given *An Outcast of the Islands* by memory”: “the reader is able to take up where *Almayer’s Folly* left off, but in reverse” (1993: 32). As Humphries notes, the reader is able to “fuse the two books into a self-contained and homogeneous entity” and thus make “the ending of *An Outcast* lea[d] on smoothly and naturally to the beginning of *Almayer*” (32). Priscilla L. Walton also highlights the temporal reversal in the development of events from Conrad’s first novel to the second one. Foregrounding Almayer’s desire to return to Europe and Nina’s choice of a Malay identity, Walton argues that “[t]he locus of Conrad’s writing...points to a desire to return to the beginning” (1995: 95). As Walton explains, “[t]he precedent...assumes an inordinate importance in this text [*Almayer’s Folly*], which overtly privileges that which has gone before” (95). Moreover, this “originary impetus”—the “effort to return to origins” —“constitutes an attempt to erase the ‘present’ and to impose an originary [sic] moment...” (97).

This paper will read Conrad’s first Malay novels in reverse order, returning to the beginning as did Walton and Humphries. It demarcates these two novels by reference to “the great revolution in Sambir” so as to foreground the distinct historical period represented in each novel. Particular attention is given to the machination of conspiracy that successfully re-moulds the

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Conrad differentiates the settlers into two major camps, which I shall call the Arabs and the Malays. In fact, the leader of the “Arab” camp is closely related to some major figures in the Malay camp. As Abdulla says, “Omar is the son of my father’s uncle” (Conrad, 1949: 120). Aïssa’s mother “was a woman from the west; a Baghdadi woman” (Conrad, 1949: 47). Yet as “Brunei rovers” (Conrad, 1949: 52), Omar, Aïssa, and Babalatchi affiliate themselves with the “Malay” camp. I use the term “Malay characters” to refer to all the major characters—such as Babalatchi, Lakamba, Aïssa, Nina, Mrs. Almayer, Dain (who speaks Malay)—except the Europeans and the “Arabs” in Sambir.

socio-political domain in each period of Sambir's development. This paper argues that the significance of "what has gone before" can be illuminated by exploring conspiracy and its history. For Almayer in *Almayer's Folly*, his misery is not simply the result of the monopoly of Abdulla, his trade enemy: it is the product of the conspiracy devised by Lakamba and Babalatchi in *An Outcast of the Islands*. Almayer's "originary impetus" is to return to Europe, but this impetus has been hindered by local conspiracy. In *An Outcast of the Islands*, the conspiracy represents a similar strategy on the part of the Malay settlers to inhibit the "originary impetus" of Willems. This "outcast of the islands" falls victim to conspiracy in much the same way as Almayer's dream to return to Europe is destroyed by the conspiring Malays and Arabs.

Another "historical" event that has drastically altered socio-political life in Sambir is the suppression of piracy.<sup>2</sup> In *Almayer's Folly* and *An Outcast of the Islands*, the major Malay characters are all categorized as "pirates," and are directly or indirectly connected to the traumatic experience during the suppression of piracy. Apart from the Malay "pirates," there are "the Sulu pirates" (Conrad, 1947: 7): Omar, Aïssa, Babalatchi, and Mrs. Almayer. As the next section will argue, the true-to-life portrayal of these "Sulu rovers" (Conrad, 1949: 52) shows that they have been the direct victims of the European policy to destroy "pirate" strongholds in North Borneo and Sulu Islands. Similarly, the major European characters are also directly connected to "pirates." Lingard earns his fame during his "Carimata days" (Conrad, 1949: 223) because of "his successful recklessness in several encounters with pirates" (Conrad, 1949: 14). Almayer is married to Lingard's adopted "daughter" (Conrad, 1947: 7), "that legacy of a boatful of pirates" (Conrad, 1947: 10), abducted from "the pirate prau" (Conrad, 1947: 9). Willems is infatuated with

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<sup>2</sup> As *Almayer's Folly* and *An Outcast of the Islands* suggest, such European forces come from the British, the Dutch, and the Spanish. To the Malay characters, they are all referred to as "the white men."

and finally killed by Aïssa, herself a Sulu “pirate.”<sup>3</sup>

Most important, these “pirates” seek to restore an “originary state” in which they can combat Europeans on an apparently equal footing. This under-represented “beginning” refers to that moment in the past when Europeans began to suppress piracy systematically. I will argue that the legacy of this “beginning” contributes to the subsequent conspiracy in Sambir that triggers the “revolution” — the revolution that primarily propels the narrative events in the novels. In other words, *An Outcast of the Islands* establishes itself as the prequel to *Almayer’s Folly*, while its narrative points to a “(hi)story,” albeit under-represented—the suppression of piracy.

## II. Conspiracy and Piracy

At the end of *Almayer’s Folly*, Babalatchi reveals his “originary impetus” to Captain Ford:

“...Ah, Tuan!” he went on, more quietly, “the old times were best. Even I have sailed with Lanun men, and boarded in the night silent ships with white sails. That was before an English Rajah ruled in Kuching.” (206)

Nostalgic of the glorious “piratical days” (Conrad, 1947: 90) before James Brooke reinforced the policy of pirate-suppression in

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<sup>3</sup> I retain the term “pirate” to describe the Malay characters of Sulu or Brunei origin. As this paper will show, local resistant forces in West Borneo against Sarawak were all deemed “pirates.” I use this term in order to foreground the context of resistance through conspiracy. The English themselves, of course, were renowned for piracy in the seventeenth century. C. M. Senior notes: “there was probably no other nation so well equipped to pursue a course of piracy as the English. The saying ‘none make better pirates than the English’ soon passed into a proverb” (1976: 79). In this light, Lingard’s reckless daring in the Malayan sea as one of “the English peddlars” (Conrad, 1947: 7) follows the legacy of English piracy. Moreover, as Archibald Allison noted, commercial intrigues among European planters in North Borneo were so fierce that he considered those Europeans “*The Real Pirates of Borneo*” (1898). It could be inferred that, for the Malay settlers in Sambir, the monopolizing agents in Lingard & Co. could all be seen as “pirates.”

Sarawak, Babalatchi used to live “by rapine and plunder of coasts and ships in his prosperous days” (Conrad, 1949: 52). Mrs. Almayer, also of a “Sulu origin” (Conrad, 1947: 38), shares with Babalatchi the same nostalgia. Her “childhood reminiscences” are those of the “glories” (Conrad, 1947: 41) of her people that “shone far above the Orang Blanda” (Conrad, 1947: 42) when the “great prowess” of the Sultan of Sulu “benumbed the hearts of white men at the sight of his swift piratical praus” (Conrad, 1947: 41). But when their sea-roving life “received its first serious check at the hands of white men” (Conrad, 1949: 52), the sense of an ending is bleak and apocalyptic. As Babalatchi and Aïssa witnessed:

he stood faithfully by his chief [Omar], looked steadily at the bursting shells, was undismayed by the flames of the burning stronghold, by the death of his companions, by the shrieks of their women, the wailing of their children; by the sudden ruin and destruction of all that he deemed indispensable to a happy and glorious existence. The beaten ground between the houses was slippery with blood, and the dark mangroves of the muddy creeks were full of sighs of the dying men who were stricken down before they could see their enemy. They died helplessly, for into the tangled forest there was no escape...they [Babalatchi and Aïssa] could hear the cheering of the crews of the man-of-war’s boats dashing to the attack of the rover’s village...“They shall find only smoke, blood and dead men, and women mad with fear there, but nothing else living,” she said, mournfully. (Conrad, 1949: 52-53)

Having witnessed the devastation of his people, Babalatchi, unsurprisingly, becomes “the hater of white men” (Conrad, 1949: 56). He “hate[s] the white men who interfered with the manly pursuits of throat-cutting, kidnapping, slave-dealing, and fire-raising, that were the only possible occupation for a true man of the sea” (Conrad, 1949: 52). In Sambir, he hates, similarly, Lingard’s intervention and monopoly. As he understands, “white man’s talk” brings no fair trade: “Obey me and be happy, or die!” (Conrad, 1949: 226).

Aïssa expresses the same racial hatred in front of Willems and Joanna: “Hate filled the world, filled the space between them—the hate of race, the hate of hopeless diversity, the hate of blood... And as she stood, maddened, she heard a whisper near her, the whisper of the dead Omar’s voice saying in her ear: “Kill! Kill!” (Conrad, 1949: 359). As Heliéna Krenn notes, it is significant that Aïssa saves Nina in *An Outcast of the Islands*: she gives Nina “another chance” to sustain the hope in *Almayer’s Folly* to resist the value systems of white Europeans (1990: 66). Yet what is equally significant is the fact that Aïssa is also a Sulu “pirate.” A legacy of “pirates” is thus passed down from one generation to another as exemplified by the bloodline from Mrs. Almayer through Nina to her newborn son in Bali.

I would like to highlight two aspects of this “pirate” legacy. Firstly, at the level of narrative continuation, Aïssa not only rescues little Nina in *An Outcast of the Islands*, she also “saves” *Almayer’s Folly*, since its narrative retrospectively depends upon *An Outcast of the Islands*. Without Aïssa’s rescue of Nina, Lingard would not have been able to take little Nina to Singapore to “be brought up decently” (Conrad, 1947: 26). If Nina had drowned, there would have been nothing to sustain Almayer’s aspirations in *Almayer’s Folly*. Without the rescue of her daughter by a Sulu “pirate,” Almayer would not have proceeded on his gold-hunt justified by the dream to make Nina “the richest woman” (Conrad, 1947: 26); nor would he have had to resort to the “distasteful” (Conrad, 1947: 62) alliance with Lakamba. Without this expedient alliance, Almayer, “owing his life only to his supposed knowledge” (Conrad, 1947: 27) of Lingard’s gold mines, would have been killed by Lakamba soon after Sambir’s “revolution.” This is the first level of the “pirate” legacy from Aïssa to Nina.

Secondly, there is an accompanying legacy vital to *An Outcast of the Islands*. The suppression of piracy by European men-of-war—the true-to-life warfare experienced by Aïssa and Babalatchi—was what had driven these “pirates” to escape to Sambir in the first place. It enabled Lingard to justify his reckless

fighters with “pirates” in Carimata—the fights that made Mrs. Almayer “an orphan” (Conrad, 1947: 23). Without this fighting, Lingard would not have gained his fame as the “Rajah Laut” and Mrs. Almayer would never have been “saved” and then married to Almayer. More importantly, both Babalatchi and his chief Omar, the “leader of Brunei rovers” (Conrad, 1949: 52), had fought with Lingard. As Babalatchi tells Lingard: “I have seen your face and felt your hand before—many years ago” (Conrad, 1949: 219). In this light, the suppression of piracy, marking the “beginning” that creates the grudge against Lingard and his agents in Sambir, could indeed be read as an under-represented prequel to *An Outcast of the Islands*.

While such “beginning” is inadequately represented, the often true-to-life Conradian “fiction” makes it possible to map out the historical context as “co-text.” Moreover, to reconstruct such “(hi)story”—a way of “reading back” that establishes a counter-narratorial perspective—is to engage oneself in what Edward Said has called “contrapuntal reading” (1993: 35-60). Studying the history of pirate-suppression is thus helpful to understand the “pirate” legacy in Conrad’s Malay novels, since it divulges the involved correlation between history and fiction that, as Said points out, would enact “a simultaneous awareness” of the mode of dominance and of those “concealed histories against which the dominant discourse acts” (59). The purpose of the next section, reading back “contrapuntally” at pirate history, is not to create an alternative “univocal context” for Conrad’s Malay novels. Rather, it seeks to discover what a univocal perspective—that of the narratorial voice of the novel—might conceal about the political “worldliness” of the text (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 1999: 93-94).

### III. History as Prequel to Conspiracy

In his report to Stamford Raffles on Borneo, John Hunt (1812) explained the origin and spread of piracy in the region. According to Hunt, the “rich products and fertile shores” of

Borneo “appear[ed] abandoned by all the European nations of the present age, and handed over to the ravages of extensive hordes of piratical banditti, solely intent on plunder and desolation” (1812: Appendix xvi). The decline of Borneo’s commercial ports was singled out by Hunt as the main cause for piracy in the area:

In exact proportion as the intercourse of the Europeans with China has increased, in precise ratio has the decrease of their direct trade in junks become apparent. The Portuguese first, and subsequently the Dutch...exacted by treaties and other ways the Malay produce at their own rates, and were consequently enabled to undersell the junks in China. (1812: Appendix xxii)

Yet, as Hunt pointed out, “these powers went further”: by establishing trading post at Borneo’s ports, enforced by “their guardas de costas” (1812: Appendix xxii), these European powers forced the local produce to be transported to Malacca and Batavia. Owing to the loss of direct trade with China, local Rajas had been “tempted to turn their views to predatory habits,” and resorted to “maritime and piratical enterprises” (1812: Appendix xxii-xxiii). Accordingly, Hunt believed that “the commercial ports of Borneo ha[d] become a nest of banditti, and the original inhabitants...ha[d] degenerated to the modern pirates of the present day” (1812: Appendix xxi).

For Hunt, “the sordid desire of the Dutch of monopolising the whole produce of the eastern Archipelago” (1812: xxv) was the main factor responsible for Borneo’s commercial decline and the subsequent proliferation of “pirates” in the region. Interestingly, Hunt’s report dissociated Britain from the existing European powers in Borneo (the Dutch, for example) while depicting the British as the injured party:

the piratical ports of Borneo, & c. have been in the habit of committing depredations upon the commerce of British India, in the capture of her ships, the insulting of her flag, the offering of outrageous violence to the persons and lives of her mariners, merchants, & c., and this too, with

the most perfect impunity; no retribution having been exacted, no reprisals made, no remonstrance presented, and, in fact, no notice taken of their atrocious depredations. (1812: Appendix xlv-xlvi)

As Hunt noted, Borneo's main "pirate-ports" were in Sambas, in the west; "Port Borneo Proper" in Tempasuk, in the north; in Pasir, in the south-east. In addition, there were the Sulu and Ilanun pirates that travelled with the monsoon around the Malay Archipelago (1812: Appendix xlvii). Among these "piratical ports," Tempasuk was "the most considerable pirate-port in the Malay seas," and was thus called "Pirates' Point" by the English (1812: Appendix lix). Since Raffles was made Lt.-Governor of Java in 1811, Hunt concluded that Borneo's "destinies [were] transferred to the enlightened head and liberal hearts of Englishmen" (1812: Appendix lxiv). After Hunt submitted this report on Borneo's natural resources and the seriousness of piracy, Raffles sent two expeditions to Sambas in 1812 and 1813 in order to suppress piracy (Tarling, 1963). In 1814, following Hunt's argument, Raffles advocated this policy of suppression for "the encouragement and extension of lawful commerce," for "the civilization of the inhabitants of the Eastern Islands," and for the expansion of British influence over local sovereignties (Tarling, 1963: 14).

But it was not until the 1840s, after James Brooke was made the governor of Sarawak, that Britain was significantly involved in the suppression of piracy in Borneo. As Babalatchi says, the joyful adventures of the "old times" were terminated when "an English Rajah ruled in Kuching" (Conrad, 1947: 206). In September 1841, Brooke was made "Raja of Sarawak" by Raja Muda Hassim of Brunei owing to his help in suppressing local rebellions in Sarawak (Tarling, 1971: 34-41). Brooke, the "English Rajah," was another key proponent of piracy-suppressing through the policy of reprisals. In 1843, with the aid of Captain Henry Keppel of HMS *Dido*, he launched his campaign against piracy. During 1843-1844, they destroyed major "pirate" strongholds in the Saribas and Sekrang

regions. In November 1844, Brooke was appointed by the British Government as “their Agent near the person of the Sultan of Borneo” in order to “facilitate the suppression of piracy and the extension and protection of British Trade” (Tarling, 1971: 48). In 1845, he urged a new campaign against the Arab sharif Usman in North Borneo who encouraged the Balanini and Tempasuk “pirates.” With the fleet commanded by Admiral Thomas Cochrane, Brooke bombarded the houses of Pengiran Yusuf in Brunei, the ally of Usman. After the bombardment, part of the fleet attacked Usman’s strongholds around Marudu Bay. In 1846, during the rebellion in Brunei against Hassim and the “English party,” Hassim was overthrown. Brooke blamed the “piratical party” for this incident, and subsequently, Cochrane’s fleet bombarded and occupied Brunei. The notorious strongholds of the Ilanuns in Tempasuk and Pandasan were all attacked soon afterwards (Tarling, 1971: 47-48, 57-58; Also see 1963: 127-128). As a result of Cochrane’s occupation of Brunei, a treaty was made with Sultan Omar Ali to reinforce the authority of the British naval forces to suppress piracy (Tarling, 1971: 65-75). In early 1849, the joined Sarawak and British fleet again attacked the “pirate” strongholds in Saribas and Sekrang. The victory of the “battle of Batang Marau” that year enabled Brooke to establish forts in Sekrang and Kanowit in order to police piracy in the region (Tarling, 1963: 133).

Brooke, following Hunt’s argument, strongly favoured British intervention in Borneo against piracy. Like Hunt, he advocated the expediency of pirate-suppressing in order to exploit Borneo’s natural resources, to secure the British trade route to China, and most importantly, to counteract Dutch monopoly in the region. Although his report attributed the origin of piracy to the Dutch displacement of Borneo’s commerce, Hunt refrained from tackling this cause. For example, he could have concluded in his report that any European monopoly should be restrained from Borneo in order to rejuvenate local commerce. Following his own argument, such restoration would have led local rajas and Arab sharifs to

abandon “piratical” depredations as the means of survival.

However, the idea of Britain’s share of Borneo was too alluring for Hunt to miss, nor would he enjoy the prospect that other European nations were allowed to continue monopolizing this huge field of resources. The suppression of piracy, therefore, was meant to bring in the English influence. In a later report on the Sulu islands and the notorious “Lanun” (or Ilanun) piracy, Hunt, accordingly, argued that Sulu was “the nucleus of all the piratical hordes.” He contended that “if the extirpation of piracy should be considered a desideratum by the British government, the blow must be struck here, the subordinate establishments burnt, and the Lanuns dispersed” (Hunt, 1837: Appendix 51). It was the same consideration that made Brooke emphasize the urgency of wiping out the Ilanun and Balanini strongholds. As Brooke pointed out in 1845, the best way to suppress piracy was to attack directly the strongholds of Sulu “pirates”—especially “with a force which should convince all other pirates of the hopelessness of resistance” (Keppel, 1846; Vol. 2: 197). Like his predecessors, Brooke was silent upon the original cause of piracy. In 1838, he even claimed that the “Datus,” or local Malay chiefs, were all “pirates by descent” (Keppel, 1846; Vol. 1: 195).

Since piracy was understood as *de facto* an “evil” way of life persisting across Borneo and the Sulu islands, all the original inhabitants living in these areas were thus tagged “pirates.” As Keppel similarly puts it, “the principal occupation” of all the Malays and Dayaks in Borneo was piracy (1846; Vol. 2: 164, 198). Afterwards, Brooke still followed Hunt’s essential argument to advocate the advantage of establishing a fort in Labuan. As he argued, this plan would develop Borneo as “a rich and fertile country” solely “for British enterprise and capital.” By securing Labuan, Brooke contended: “We shall have a post in time of war highly advantageous as commanding a favourable position relative to China, we shall extend our commerce, suppress piracy, and prevent the present and prospective advantages from falling into other hands...” (Keppel, 1846; Vol. 2: 205-206).

It is, therefore, significant that those “pirates,” as they were called by Europeans, were also the fiercest political opponents of Brooke’s rule in Sarawak and of British intervention in Brunei politics. For example, one of the notorious “pirate” leaders was “Seriff Houseman” in Tempasuk. According to Brooke, this Arab sharif was “a pirate direct and indirect” who intrigued with Ilanun “pirates” around Marudu Bay to threaten Brunei’s security. In Brooke’s words: Houseman, “having surrounded himself by a body of pirates...arrogates the rights of sovereignty, defies European power, contemns every right principle, and threatens the recognised and legitimate government of the Archipelago” (Keppel, 1846; Vol. 2: 192, 195). Brooke, of course, considered his rule in Sarawak as part of the “legitimate government” of West Borneo. Any defiant local ruler was logically labelled as “pirate”: especially notable oppositional figures such as Sahap, Mullar, Laksamana, Mahkota, Masahor, and Rentab. As the principal intriguers with Mahkota in the Saribas and Sekrang regions, Sahap and Mullar were the first to be dealt with during Brooke’s 1843-1844 campaign. Laksamana’s force was the main target for the “battle of Batang Marau” in 1849. Rentab, surviving this battle, continued to resist Brooke’s power in the area around Sekrang until the 1860s. Plotting the “Mukah” rebellion to seize Kuching, Masahor was responsible for “a general conspiracy to get rid of all Western influence in Borneo” (Tate, 1971: 188).<sup>4</sup>

As Nicholas Tarling argues, Brooke’s policy to suppress piracy could be taken as a tactical manoeuvre to reform Brunei politics and expand British commerce (1963: 122-127). It enabled him to crush the Ilanuns and those Dayaks that formed the primary oppositional forces with local Arab sharifs. Such a policy was also a convenient pretext for Brooke to acquire naval support from the British government (Tarling, 1963: 118-121). The chart showing the course of HMS *Dido* during the suppression of piracy

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<sup>4</sup> For a succinct account of these oppositional figures, see Tate (1971: 186-188). For the “Mukah” rebellion, see Tarling (1971: 107-125).

conspicuously maps the location of each oppositional force.<sup>5</sup> Brooke's policy thus served a double-purpose. Not only was he able to justify his intervention into local politics, it also allowed him to draw the reinforcement of the British navy with the "legitimate" reason of securing the British sphere of influence against the Dutch monopoly.<sup>6</sup>

Brooke was well aware of the practical difficulty in discerning "piratical" activities. He wrote: "A question may arise as to what constitutes piracy; and whether, on our efforts to suppress it, we may not be interfering with the right of native states to war one upon another" (Keppel, 1846; Vol. 2: 198). In Brooke's definition, "the plunder or seizure of a peaceful and lawful trader on the high seas constitutes an act of piracy" (Keppel, 1846; Vol. 2: 199). Brooke argued that this definition of piracy would make it "easy to discriminate a war between native nations from the piracies of lawless hordes of men." As he explained: "all chiefs who have seized on territory and arrogate independence (making this independence a plea of piracy) can never be allowed the right of declaring war...." (Keppel, 1846; Vol. 2: 199-200). In reality, however, this policy was not really concerned with the "act of piracy" at sea. Nor did Brooke intend to limit this policy within the boundary of a rescue mission. He advocated the policy of directly destroying "pirate" strongholds—to depopulate completely some major villages of Dayaks and Illanuns across West Borneo. The dubious logic was that the Dayak and Ilanun villages were held responsible for depredations at sea and, consequently, were to be extirpated in order to protect the "legitimate" British trade.

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<sup>5</sup> See the maps enclosed in Keppel's two-volume *Expedition*. Tate provides the reader with a map showing the main centres of oppositional forces. See Tate (1971: 187). A comparison of Tate's map with Keppel's illustrates that most oppositional centres were attacked by the HMS *Dido*.

<sup>6</sup> In Conradian criticism, Brooke's myth as "the White Rajah" is often associated with *Lord Jim* and Conrad's idea about "colonists" and "conquerors." See Fleishman (1969: 97-104). For Brooke's "one-man imperialism" in the context of the advancement and appropriation of scientific knowledge on Borneo, see Hampson (2000: 44-71).

Brooke’s policy was indeed less the one to combat plundering at sea than a political expedient to crush the independence of local sovereignties.

This political scheme manifested itself in the fact that he embarked on his campaign in the Saribas and Sekrang region where the resistance of the Dayaks and Arab sharifs significantly threatened Kuching’s security. During Brooke’s suppression of piracy in the 1840s, local Dayak crafts or passing Illanun vessels were all treated as “pirates.” As Keppel recorded in his account of Brooke’s expedition with HMS *Dido*, a typical episode of such “suppression” was a cat-and-mouse chase: as soon as the British men-of-war spotted the local craft, they proceeded to “suppress” those “pirates” until they were either destroyed or escaped. As Keppel described one encounter in 1843:

...on rounding Tanjong Datu, we opened suddenly on a suspicious-looking boat, which, on making us out, ran for a small deep bay formed by Cape Datu and the next point to the eastward. Standing a little farther on, we discovered a second large boat in the offing, which likewise stood in shore, and afterwards a third at the bottom of the bay. From the description I had received, *I easily made these out to be Illanuns, an enterprising tribe of pirates, of whose daring adventures I had heard much.* (1846; Vol. 2: 3, emphasis added by author)

As this episode illustrates, Brooke’s criterion of “piracy” was not always followed off the Sarawak coast. There was no evidence of “plunder” nor of the “seizure of a peaceful and lawful trader.” Rather, there were British men-of-war, acting on behalf of the British government that conducted their mission according to racial stereotype largely produced by maritime hearsay. This episode, moreover, shows the same displacement of responsibility as in Hunt’s 1812 report: piracy was considered a hereditary “occupation” of local tribes that jeopardized a British trade route.

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In Brooke’s time, as I have shown, some resistant Dayak

tribes in Brunei were actively conspiring with local Arab sharifs and the Ilanuns. Among these groups of “pirates,” Brooke singled out the Ilanuns as the most ferocious one in the Malay Archipelago. Hunt had noted earlier that “Lanuns” belonged to “a race of men living solely by piracy from the provinces of Illana and Lanow, situated on Magindanao to the northward of Bongo Bay...” (1837: 50). In “Magindano or Mindanao,” as Brooke wrote, “the inhabitants are warlike and numerous, and that that [sic] part of the island called Illanun Bay sends forth the most daring pirates of the Archipelago” (Keppel, 1846; Vol. 2: 197).<sup>7</sup>

In *An Outcast of the Islands*, the experiences of “piratical” warfare shared by Babalatchi, Omar and Aïssa implicitly suggest the political history of piracy. Babalatchi, Sambir’s “sagacious statesman” (137) who conspires with Lakamba and Abdulla, used to be a leader of “Sulu rovers” (52) before he served under Omar, “the leader of Brunei rovers” (52). Another evidence for Babalatchi’s identity as an Ilanun “pirate” is the fact that he used to “sai[l] with Lanun men, and boar[d] in the night silent ships with white sails” (Conrad, 1947: 206). The Ilanuns were known to “make long voyages in large heavy-armed prahus” (Keppel, 1846; Vol. 2: 190). With the help of the annual monsoon from August to October during the so-called “Lanun season,” their vessels were capable of reaching all the major commercial ports across the Malay Archipelago as far as the Gulf of Siam (Tate, 1971: 211).

The history of pirate-suppressing, moreover, helps to illuminate Babalatchi’s flights with Omar and Aïssa from Brunei. During 1845-1846, as I have shown, Brooke and Cochrane conducted a campaign against piracy that not only led to the capture of Brunei, but also to the destruction of “pirate” strongholds in Tempasuk and around Marudu Bay. Therefore, most probably, it is this period that is suggested by Babalatchi’s flight. Later, escaping to Sulu, Babalatchi and his comrades were “dispelled by the cold reception of the Sultan” (Conrad, 1949: 53).

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<sup>7</sup> Following Hunt, Brooke’s account treats “Lanun” and “Illanun” as interchangeable terms.

They soon found that they were “going to be made the victims of political expediency” (Conrad, 1949: 54) when “a Spanish frigate” arrived. Consequently, they escaped for the second time—this time from the Spanish rather than the English. Although they eventually fled to Sambir and became living legends, it was most unfortunate that they first sought shelter in the Sulu islands. After Brooke secured Brunei with the 1846 attack, the Spanish authorities, fearing the expansion of the British influence, embarked upon their own campaign against the Sulu pirates (Tarling, 1963: 160). In 1848, acting on the rumour of an imminent Sulu attack on Brunei, the Spanish Governor-General of Manila sent a squadron and 500 soldiers to attack Balanini (Tarling, 1978: 63-64, 75-76). If “pirate” fugitives sought asylum from the Sultan of Sulu, it was reasonable that the Sultan would deliver them to the Spanish navy as “political expediency.”

Babalatchi’s “Brunei experience” thus taught him the futility of confronting armed Europeans. He tells Lingard:

...I am only an Orang Laut, and I have fled before your people many times. Servant of this one—protected of another; I have given my counsel here and there for a handful of rice. What am I, to be angry with a white man? What is anger without the power to strike? But you whites have taken all: the land, the sea, and the power to strike! And there is nothing left for us in the islands but your white men’s justice; your great justice that knows not anger. (Conrad, 1949: 229)

As Babalatchi would know, the best way to “strike” back is by “prudent cunning” (Conrad, 1947: 86)—by conspiracy. Accordingly, as Lakamba’s counsel, he facilitates the conspiracy to introduce Abdulla: to bring in “a new element into the social and political life of Sambir” (Conrad, 1949: 58). Having secured the alliance with the Arab sharif, Babalatchi consolidates the new oppositional force by addressing the assembly of “the principal citizens” (Conrad, 1949: 113):

He spoke in a restrained voice still, but with a growing

energy of indignation. What was he [Lingard], that man of fierce aspect, to keep all the world away from them? Was he a government? Who made him ruler? He took possession of Patalolo's mind and made his heart hard; he put severe words into his mouth and caused his hand to strike right and left. That unbeliever kept the Faithful panting under the weight of his senseless oppression. They had to trade with him—accept such goods as he would give—such credit as he would accord. And he exacted payment every year . . . (Conrad, 1949: 115-116)

Before implementing the conspiracy with Abdulla, Babalatchi is well aware of the usefulness of fermenting “an all-pervading discontent” (Conrad, 1949: 56) among “the principal citizens” of Sambir. He successfully identifies the experience of the Sambir settlers with that of his Brunei days. Speaking generally for “the oppressed” (Conrad, 1949: 116), he accentuates a prevailing sense of injustice, while the same discontent is overtly acknowledged by Sahamin and Bahassoen. The “warlike and reckless” (Conrad, 1949: 117) Bahassoen is significantly reminiscent of the young Babalatchi sailing with “Lanun men.” As Bahassoen proclaims, “We shall fight if there is help and a leader” (Conrad, 1949: 117). Moreover:

The white man should be despoiled with a strong hand! . . . He grew excited, spoke very loud, and his further discourse, delivered with his hand on the hilt of his sword, dealt incoherently with the honourable topics of throat-cutting, fire-raising, and *with the far-famed valour of his ancestors*. (Conrad, 1949: 137, emphasis added by the author)

Under European eyes, Bahassoen is a “pirate” in the same way as Babalatchi was once a notorious one. The difference between them is that the former is an experienced “pirate” wise enough to know the fatal consequence of direct conflict, while the latter is an openly militant one, since he has not experienced any ruthless “suppression.”

Comparable to Babalatchi's tactics, most Ilanun “pirates” in

Tempasuk and the Dayaks in Sambas all resorted to conspiratorial warfare. During the 1870s, the historical period suggested in *An Outcast of the Islands*,<sup>8</sup> a Dayak oppositional figure called Lintong actively conspired against the Sarawak regime. Even until the 1890s, after more than four decades of “suppressing piracy,” Banting, a resistant Dayak leader, was still able to create political instability in Sarawak through conspiracy (Tate, 1971: 189-190). Like his real-life “pirate” compatriots, Babalatchi conspires with Abdulla, an Arab sharif, to oust a dominating European power. Thus, the conspiracy between the Malay camp and the Arab sharif in *An Outcast of the Islands* clearly suggests both the political milieu of pirate-suppression and a historical outlook of continual local resistance. Like the rebellions of the Dayaks and the Arab sharifs in West Borneo, Sambir’s “revolution” is the result of local conspiracy. Like other principal oppositional figures in West Borneo, the chief conspirator in Sambir, Babalatchi, is categorized as a “pirate.” Even in the case of Bahassoen, a young militant activist, his grudge against Lingard is portrayed by reference to the legacy of his “pirate” ancestry.

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Avrom Fleishman has noted the “commercial displacement” of Lingard and Almayer as a result of the local conspiracy to introduce Abdulla into Sambir. As Fleishman argues, Abdulla’s involvement contributes to Almayer’s downfall, since, by this means, “Sambir is secured for Lakamba and the Arabs” (1967: 83-84). Also noting the commercial ambition of Abdulla’s intrigues, Cedric Watts treats conspiracy in Sambir as, in effect, a local

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<sup>8</sup> References to “the British Borneo Company” established in 1881 (Conrad, 1947: 33), Nina’s age (“already twenty,” Conrad, 1949: 365), and Almayer’s days in Sambir (“I have been trying to get out of this infernal place for twenty years,” Conrad, 1947: 142) suggest that the major events in *An Outcast of the Islands* took place around 1871. In 1891, the Anglo-Dutch Frontier Convention roughly settled the boundary between British North Borneo and Dutch East Borneo. As Almayer notes, the Pantai region is left “under the nominal power of Holland” (Conrad, 1947: 34). The events in *Almayer’s Folly*, therefore, happened during the late 1880s and early 1890s.

conflict among commercial rivals (1984: 47-53). Watts unravels Abdulla's plot—the fact that he informs the Dutch about Dain's illegal gunpowder-smuggling—as the main cause of Almayer's undoing. Although Watts has noted the conspiracy to bring about Sambir's "revolution," he considers the conspirators as no more than "two wily rogues" that "ha[ve] come to Sambir as refugees" plotting for political power (135). However, I believe that this "local" conspiracy in Sambir actually signifies a wider, more general situation across Borneo. I would argue that conspiracy in *Almayer's Folly* and *An Outcast of the Islands* involves more than just a localized rivalry between malevolent camps of different races. The identity of Abdulla as an Arab sharif and his association with Babalatchi suggest the same kind of conspiracy as that in West Borneo where the oppositional Dayaks actively conspired with Arab sharifs and the Ilanun "pirates." When Almayer dies as "the only white man on the east coast that is a settled resident" (Conrad, 1947: 122), all the European residents of Lingard & Co. have been successfully expelled from Sambir. As a survivor of the suppression of piracy, Babalatchi finally avenges his past.<sup>9</sup>

I have suggested that the history of pirate-suppressing can be read as the prequel to the conspiracy against Lingard and his agent—the racial enmity that triggers Sambir's revolution. I have also argued that Babalatchi's plot to oust Lingard clearly suggests the same political agenda as that of the oppositional leaders in West Borneo. In the next section, moving from prequel to sequel, I will explore the conspiracy responsible for Sambir's "revolution" to show that intrigues and plottings are more than commercial rivalry. With the history of piracy in mind, I will discuss the politics of pirate-conspirators.

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<sup>9</sup> Drawing attention to the "unsettling of the opposition of [European] adventures and [Malay] pirates" in Conrad's Lingard trilogy (especially in *The Rescue*), Hampson notes: "'Piracy' is seen as part of a larger cultural practice with a political dimension that relates to both Malay politics and resistance to European imperialism" (2000: 100-101). Also see Hampson (2000: 99-115) for his discussion on "traders, adventurers, pirates" in the context of "cultural diversity" and hybridisation.

#### IV. "Some of Us Still Live"

The "revolution" in Sambir is the ultimate political context in which Willems is made "an outcast of the islands." Although he is exiled to Sambir as a result of the exposé of his fraud at Hudig's company, he is not a real "outcast" (Conrad, 1949: 30) before the "revolution." As Lingard's agent, he has Almayer, his compatriot-colleague, albeit in unpleasant companionship. Lingard's original plan is to bring Willems back to Macassar after a few years of rehabilitation in Sambir. However, he takes part in the conspiracy against Lingard: he pilots Abdulla's ship into Sambir. The "revolution" thus makes Willems a true "outcast" among his own kind. Almayer refuses to associate himself with Willems, while the understandable rage of Lingard, Willems's mentor, is so grave that he decides to abandon him for good. For Lingard, the fact that Willems defects to the new alliance is not just a betrayal of trade secrets but also a betrayal of their quasi father-son relationship. Yet it is more than the "shame" of Willems's betrayal that Lingard wants to "hide" in Sambir. The "revolution" in Sambir strips Lingard both of his political power and commercial monopoly. As Robert Hampson argues, it represents "a double betrayal of Lingard: by Willems and by the Malays" (1992: 50). To Lingard, abandoning Willems means abandoning his "private" kingdom. Lingard's leaving, his "disappearance," is not so much a matter of voluntary choice as the helpless consequence of his undoing.

Another political context in which Willems is made an "outcast" is created by Babalatchi's plot to induce the white men to "fight amongst themselves and perish both" (Conrad, 1949: 102). He serves as Babalatchi's "tool" in the conspiracy. According to "the logical if tortuous evolutions of Babalatchi's diplomatic mind" (Conrad, 1949: 239), Willems should soon be killed by the "Rajah Laut" in bitter rage. Yet Babalatchi does not foresee the extremity of Lingard's anger: Lingard abandons Willems as the ultimate punishment for his betrayal. Afterwards, events take an unexpected turn that indeed makes the white men "fight amongst themselves."

Distraught by the ruin of Lingard & Co. that, in turn, destroys his dream to become rich, Almayer revenges himself on Willems's betrayal by sending Joanna to meet her husband and Aïssa. Almayer intends to let Joanna, Willems, and Aïssa "fight it out amongst themselves." It is significant that Almayer hires Banjer's men, "Bajow vagabonds" (Conrad, 1949: 309), for the errand to sail Joanna to Willems's place. As he knows, they are "sea gipsies" (Conrad, 1949: 310), and they would be regarded as "pirates" by Europeans.<sup>10</sup> As Almayer says to Joanna: those "sea gipsies" are "ready for anything if you pay them" (Conrad, 1949: 312). Almayer knows that Aïssa, a ferocious "pirate," will never forgive Willems, and the unexpected reunion between Joanna and Willems indeed ends up costing Willems's life as Aïssa kills Willems in a final act of outrage and despair.

The irony of Willems's death lies in the fact that Almayer's plot is actually a plot-within-a-plot. Babalatchi's plan to undo Willems is accomplished by a Brunei "pirate" in front of three Bajow "pirates" hired by Almayer. As far as Almayer is concerned, Willems's death is the foreseeable result of the fatal encounter between Aïssa and Joanna. Yet Almayer's course of action is also the foreseeable consequence of Babalatchi's master conspiracy. In the first place, there is Babalatchi's plot to oust Lingard and his party; in the second, this conspiracy, greatly altering the private lives of these "white men," contributes to Almayer's private plot to undo his colleague. As Willems realizes, Joanna "ha[s] been made a tool...in some deadly plot" (Conrad, 1949: 345).<sup>11</sup> The inscription on Willems's tombstone ironically suggests: "Peter Willems, Delivered by the Mercy of God from his Enemy" (Conrad, 1949: 364). Unknown to Almayer, his plot to precipitate Willems's death is actually a foreseen part of Babalatchi's design in the grand

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<sup>10</sup> As Brooke noted, "Badjows (or sea-gipsies)" formed some "pirate hordes" in Tempasuk. See Keppel (1846; Vol. 2: 192).

<sup>11</sup> In order to establish his alibi in the plot, Almayer even goes to Lingard's brig to ask help from the crew. But he deliberately allows the boat to be stranded. See Conrad (1949: 322-326, 361).

conspiracy of Sambir’s “revolution.” Willems, the “outcast of the islands,” was killed, literally, by his “pirate” enemies.

During their flight from Brunei, Babalatchi told Aïssa:

“They [white men] are very strong. When we fight with them we can only die. Yet,” he added, menacingly—“some of us still live! Some of us still live!” (Conrad, 1949: 52-53)

Four decades later, during Almayer’s last few days of misery, Babalatchi informs Captain Ford, Almayer’s visitor, about Nina’s newborn son in Bali:

There will be fighting. There is a breath of war on the islands. Shall I live long enough to see?...the old times were best...Then we fought amongst ourselves and were happy. Now when we fight with you we can only die! (Conrad, 1947: 206)

As I have argued, the policy of suppressing piracy in West Borneo was a means of political coercion against the oppositional forces of the Dayaks, the Arab sharifs, and the Ilanuns. I have also pointed out that some “pirate” communities in West Borneo survived the suppression as late as the 1890s. Babalatchi’s words evidently point to the same history of “pirate” resistance. Like the later generation of “pirate” rebels during the 1870s, Babalatchi belongs to those surviving “pirates” that continue to fight against their European enemies in West Borneo. As he says, “[t]here will be fighting,” since “[t]he downfall of an enemy is the consolation of the unfortunate” (Conrad, 1949: 103).

His words are pertinent to the “pirate” legacy. It was the fighting with the European men-of-war four decades earlier that had driven Babalatchi, Aïssa, and Omar to Sambir. About two decades later, at the time when *An Outcast of the Islands* takes place, Babalatchi devises a conspiracy, avoiding direct confrontation, designed to “let the white men fight it out amongst themselves.” Indeed, Babalatchi acquires his will-to-fight from his Brunei experience. As he tells Omar, “I only saw a way for their

destruction and our own greatness. And if I saw aright, then you shall never suffer from hunger any more. There shall be peace for us, and glory and riches" (Conrad, 1949: 101). About two decades later, in *Almayer's Folly*, Babalatchi leads Lakamba to an expedient alliance with Almayer for gunpowder and Lingard's gold mines. Willems was previously Babalatchi's "tool" (Conrad, 1949: 126) in the earlier conspiracy with Abdulla; Almayer is now also appropriated by Babalatchi. The desolate Almayer is manipulated for the "glory and riches" of the Malay camps. In *Almayer's Folly*, by rescuing Nina and Dain from the Dutch, Babalatchi effects the transmission of his will-to-fight to Nina who, like her mother, inherits the legacy of the Sulu "pirates." Babalatchi had fought in the "past," and he continues to fight in the "present" when the narrative events take place. Moreover, the ending of *Almayer's Folly* suggests that Nina and her son also bear the same will-to-fight as the Sulu "pirates."

Tracing this "pirate" legacy, therefore, produces a trajectory of continuous "pirate" resistance into the "future" beyond the time represented in *Almayer's Folly*. In West Borneo, resistance to the Sarawak regime survived well into the 1910s. Babalatchi rightly predicts the incipient warfare in the Malay Archipelago. In Bali, the birth-place of Nina's son, resistance to Dutch annexation still continued in the early 1900s.<sup>12</sup> Babalatchi's will-to-fight is thus part of a regional phenomenon across Borneo and the adjacent areas in reaction to European domination.

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the limitation of such resistance as shown by Sambir's "revolution." At the reception for Abdulla, the fervency of Babalatchi and Bahassoan provides the assembly of the "revolutionary" parties with a nascent nationalist undercurrent.<sup>13</sup> Bahassoan, the young militarist, shares with

<sup>12</sup> Later rebellions against Sarawak and British North Borneo after the 1880s included the "Padas Damit affair"; the "Mat Salleh revolt"; and rebellions in the Sungai Balleh regions (Tate, 1971: 190-193). In Bali, there were major rebellions in 1906 and 1908 (Tate, 1971: 311).

<sup>13</sup> Christopher GoGwilt argues that *Almayer's Folly* "is perhaps the most relevant to the political complexities of nation-building in twentieth-century

Babalatchi the same animosity towards Lingard and his white agents. Yet Babalatchi’s tactics greatly differs from what Bahassoan has in mind. For the young “revolutionist,” all white power “should be despoiled with a strong hand” (Conrad, 1949: 137). However, Babalatchi and Lakamba do not pursue a drastic nationalist “revolution” to eradicate European power. While Lakamba desires an “independent” Sambir, he does not establish political independence from the Dutch. Rather, he uproots Lingard’s power only by strategically upholding another “white” power—by recognizing the “expedient protection” of the Dutch. As Lakamba proclaims—under the Dutch flag—on the first day of Sambir’s new era, “during all that day every one passing by the flagstaff must uncover his head and salaam before the emblem” (Conrad, 1949: 179). Consequently, realising that the “revolution” does not revolutionize Sambir’s politics but only replaces one kind of domination with another, Bahassoan publicly “abuse[s] Lakamba violently” (Conrad, 1949: 180). The “revolution” makes Sambir a Dutch protectorate under the “tricolour flag,” which is accurately described as the “emblem of Lakamba’s power” but “also the mark of his servitude” (Conrad, 1947: 132).

However, this limitation does not mean that Sambir’s “revolution” fell short of accomplishing its goal. As a “hater of white men,” Babalatchi conspires with Lakamba to eliminate Lingard’s influence. Unlike their compatriots in West Borneo, they manage to expel the English “Rajah” in Sambir. The “revolution” enables Abdulla to establish his trade, and consequently drives Lingard out of Sambir. Even if it officially brings in the Dutch

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Southeast Asia” (1995: 83). GoGwilt tackles the national identities of the females characters such as Nina, Mrs. Almayer, and Taminah in relation to “the historical formation of anticolonial Indonesian nationalism” (83-86). GoGwilt does not include *An Outcast of the Islands* in his discussion. As I argue, it is the conspiracy behind Sambir’s “revolution” that has affected the socio-political life in *Almayer’s Folly*. I believe that although the Malay characters do reveal the sentiment of a nascent nationalism, the inescapable fact of European domination at that time makes them unable to imagine a totally independent “nation.”

influence, the “revolution” still replaces the English country-trader—Lingard—with the co-religionist Arab trader—Abdulla. Another agenda of Babalatchi’s conspiracy is to let the agents of Lingard & Co. “fight amongst themselves.” As I have shown, this is accomplished—if in a rather tortuous manner—through Almayer’s subsidiary plot to induce Aïssa to kill Willems. The result of Babalatchi’s master conspiracy is obvious in *Almayer’s Folly*. Not only has Lingard gone but, after the “revolution,” Almayer is “struggling desperately” (25) as “the only white man on the east coast” (122), “ow[ing] his life only to his supposed knowledge of Lingard’s valuable secret” (27). After Abdulla’s arrival, “Lakamba calls himself a Sultan” while Babalatchi becomes “the Shahbandar of the State” (Conrad, 1949: 364). The undoing of “the only white man” in Sambir is thus a revenge upon history.

Moreover, the semi-nationalist “revolution” and Babalatchi’s tactics of indirect confrontation should both be evaluated within the history of pirate-suppression. Babalatchi, significantly, has never been “suppressed” by the Dutch. He is one of those “pirates” who survived the *British* suppression. Accordingly, his racial enmity is directed against the “English Rajah” (Conrad, 1947: 206) in Sarawak whose policy had shattered his life and his people. Babalatchi’s Brunei experience is largely responsible for his subsequent political decision not to organize a general revolt against the British power that claimed the adjacent areas in the north. Instead of making the British their enemy, Babalatchi facilitates Dutch “protection” in order to efface Lingard’s British affiliation.

It is understandable why the veteran “pirate” pursues such “tortuous” diplomacy. After all, Babalatchi has lived through a period when direct confrontation with Europeans would sometimes mean mass destruction. In 1843, Brooke had manifested this grim prospect to the “pirates” near Paddi in Sarawak. As Keppel summarized Brooke’s speech: “If...we heard of a single act of piracy being committed by them, their country should be again invaded and occupied; and their enemies, the whole tribe of Linga

Dyaks, let loose upon them, *until they were rooted out and utterly destroyed*” (1846; Vol. 2: 63, emphasis added by the author).<sup>14</sup> Babalatchi knows well that if the Sambir settlers rebel against “the white men,” the British in particular, they “can only die” (Conrad, 1947: 206).

Still, Babalatchi and Lakamba do not imagine the day when Sambir can live without any European “protection.” As Babalatchi says, Dutch protection “would make them safe for ever” (Conrad, 1949: 57). In other words, for Sambir’s eternal security, colonial rule should last “for ever.” Nevertheless, although he fails to foresee a “postcolonial” future, his diplomacy—conspiracy—embodies the best possible strategy in a colonial world in which an organized nationalist movement is unimaginable. To be a “pirate” is never a question.

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At the early stage of his new career as a novelist, *An Outcast of the Islands* brought Conrad the distinct reputation as an “exotic writer” (Conrad, 1949: ix). If India was “discovered” by Kipling, Conrad similarly “discovered” the Malay Archipelago for the British reader. Conrad gains his knowledge of the Malay world from reading Alfred Russel Wallace’s popular *The Malay Archipelago*, one of his favourite “bedside” readings and the book whose reputation equals that of Darwin’s *The Origin of Species*.<sup>15</sup> Although Wallace notices cultural diversity in the Malay Archipelago, he portrays a rather flat image of the Malay and the pirates. As Wallace observes: “The intellect of the Malay race seems rather deficient. They are incapable of anything beyond the simplest combinations of ideas, and have little taste or energy for the acquirement of knowledge” (2000: 448-449). As Hampson argues, while Wallace’s observations register cross-cultural encounters, he fails to evaluate, and thus understand, the true

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<sup>14</sup> Paddi was destroyed in June, 1843.

<sup>15</sup> See Curle (1968: 109). Florence Clemens has shown that Conrad used this book as the source of Malay novels (1939: 305-315). Also see Sherry (1966); Moore (1997: 29-48).

implication of such encounters (2000: 76).<sup>16</sup> Wallace often reiterates Brooke's idea of racial superiority and the need for suppressing Malay pirates. Moreover, speaking like a Brooke, he even proclaims that the "only effectual way to put a stop to [pirates'] depredations would be to attack them in their strongholds and villages, and compel them to give up piracy, and submit to strict surveillance" (Wallace, 2000: 261). Wallace, like other naturalists and adventurers of his time, were determined by his own "western eyes." By sharp contrast, Conrad, as this paper shows, envisions a much more complex and problematic racial encounter in his Malay fiction that gives Malay pirates a voice of their own, a voice that beckons the reader for a glimpse on the unrepresented history of their legacy.

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<sup>16</sup> For a discussion of Wallace and other historical sources as the "precursor text" of Conrad's Malay fiction, see Hampson (2000: 72-98).

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「整船海盜的後果」  
——康拉德小說《艾邁爺的愚舍》  
與《海島逐客》裡之陰謀

鄧鴻樹

摘 要

本文探討康拉德早期馬來小說裡之海盜陰謀，並解讀其與「歷史／虛構」之糾葛。作者認為《海島逐客》可視為《艾邁爺的愚舍》之首部曲，而前者意指掃蕩海盜的歷史為馬來小說「未現完全」之過去，使其文本隱藏另一「首部曲」。論文剖析此文本回歸動向與海盜陰謀動向之關連。馬來小說裡地方性的海盜陰謀實與婆羅洲區域性的反歐活動不謀而合。「整船海盜的後果」點出馬來海盜的反動歷史，也襯托出康拉德的歷史關懷。

**關鍵詞：**陰謀、海盜、康拉德馬來小說