



† *Designated as an Exemplary Master's Project for 2015-16*

**From Prose to Policy:  
Leonard Woolf's Literary Journey from Unconscious Imperialist to  
Conscientious Internationalist**

**Richard Leslie Barlow**

**Faculty Advisor: Prof. Craufurd Goodwin**

**Department of Economics**

**Submitted Date: February 2016**

This project was submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Graduate Liberal Studies Program in the Graduate School of Duke University.

Copyright by

Richard Leslie Barlow

2016

## Contents

<b>Abstract .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
From London to Ceylon .....	3
Leonard in Ceylon: The Factual Accounts.....	9
A Brief Introduction to the Fictional Works on Ceylon.....	18
<b>A Tale Told by Midnight: Subverting an Imperialist Genre .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Pearls and Swine: Taking the Direct Approach.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>The Two Brahmans: Searching for the Native Voice.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>The Village in the Jungle: Going Native .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Economic Imperialism: From Experience to Policy .....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>91</b>

## Abstract

Leonard Woolf used writing, both fiction and non-fiction, to work through many of the issues of colonialism which he encountered both in his direct experience as part of the colonial administration of Ceylon and in his subsequent extensive research. This paper will show how, through this process, he went from being a “very innocent, unconscious imperialist” to what he would term an internationalist. It will trace his growth as a writer, looking in detail at the three short stories that make up the collection *Stories of The East*, and the novel *The Village in the Jungle*. Additionally, it will illustrate how he used his fiction to begin to articulate some of the issues that he would later write about in policy documents, in particular *Economic Imperialism*. Leonard’s observations and thoughts on imperialism went against the thinking of the establishment and some of his Bloomsbury contemporaries. It could be argued that they were ahead of their time. As such, this work will occasionally compare the writing of more contemporary writers on the subject, such as Edward Said, with those of Leonard’s to illustrate the level of analysis and perception Leonard brought to his work. Leonard himself did not see his work either as an author of fiction or as a political research and policy advocate as having had very much of an impact. However, his fiction while mainly ignored in the West, is still read and discussed widely in its subject country of Sri Lanka and the themes of his political research still resonate today.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to think of this paper not as an ending, but rather as another step on a journey. This leg of the journey has been both incredibly rewarding and intensely challenging. I found myself studying texts that I had never heard of before and coming away wanting more. I have written on subjects and shared stories about myself that I never dreamed of doing. My companions on this leg of journey have been a myriad of intelligent and thoughtful people, and it is to those individuals I would like to express my gratitude.

Firstly I have to thank my wife Caroline. My GLS journey has run parallel to our married life, the conclusion of my first semester coinciding with our wedding (Note to future students: Wedding planning and academic study do not make the best bedfellows). I want to thank Caroline for encouraging me to apply to the program, and then her support through the years of taking classes. Thank you for being my sounding board, a constant cheerleader, for the “us” time sacrificed and for being proofreader and translating the Queen’s English into American. To my American family, thank you for your enthusiasm and interest in my studies, your constant interest and questions have spurred me on. To my family spread around the globe, thank you for your support from afar, and also for the good time spent together exploring the physical landscape of the Bloomsberries. I cherish our trip to Charleston and wandering the squares of Bloomsbury in search of historical landmarks. To my friends both American and English, thank you for being there for me, letting me talk at you about whatever subject I happened to be studying that semester, and importantly providing the excuse to take a break when needed.

Donna Zapf and Kent Wicker are the heart and soul of the GLS program. I would like to thank them for all that they have done and continue to do. For always making it so hard to select just one class each and every semester. For always being available to us all, providing guidance and encouragement over the duration of the program. A special thank you to Kent, for his writing seminars, always fun, informative and a real help with all the writing I've done during the years.

Dink Suddaby deserves a medal of valor for dealing with all the questions and panicked phone calls that she has fielded from me over the years. Thank you for always being there to provide those much-needed answers, and for always doing so with such grace and a smile.

One of the things that made the whole Graduate Liberal Studies program so fantastic has been the professors I have encountered throughout the whole of the program. Without exception, each one has brought an unparalleled passion and enthusiasm to their subjects. Thank you each and everyone. To Kent for introducing me to graduate level analysis and writing, and for the even more incredible feat of making reading Jane Austen palatable. To Martin Miller for introducing me to the world of Soviet cinema and sharing his insights into life in Russia. To Ann Marie Rasmussen, for both her passion for the Arthurian legend and art of story telling generally. She rekindled my desire to engage in creative writing. I'll miss our conversations about Scandinavian detective dramas. To the incredible Margret Sartor, for creating an environment where writing about myself, and sharing personal experiences was both safe and fun. To Thomas Pfau for immersing us in the world of philosophical discussion and sharing his encyclopedic knowledge of the written word. I still have a list an arm long of

“you simply have to read” books as a result of his course. To Susan Thorne, for both her investment in her subject matter but more importantly for being living embodiment of ideas she teaches. Lastly, thank you to Martin Eisner for guiding us, like Dante’s Virgil, so enjoyably through the labyrinthine world of the *Decameron* and medieval Italy.

The beauty of the program’s structure and intimate size was that every class would bring together a mixture of new friends to be made, and old friends to reconnect with. I would like to acknowledge a few of the friends I have made amongst my fellow scholars. To Claudia De La Cruz, with whom I entered the program and hope to walk out with, thank you for your encouragement, especially through this project, and for being there when I have a silly question. To Erica Tucker for her guidance and friendship, especially during the memoir class, but also for the daily inspiration she provides and the dedication she has for her craft. To Amanda ‘Bing’ Zhu for her lively and enquiring mind and stimulating conversation. To Bridgid MacSeoin for her friendship and support. Finally to my fellow Bloomsberry scholar, Cheryl Capaldo Traylor, our paths have crossed frequently on my Duke journey. I know that our Bloomsberry explorations are far from complete.

This acknowledgment would not be complete without expressing my gratitude to Craufurd Goodwin. Taking his class on Bloomsbury early on in my GLS career ignited a spark that I believe will burn for years to come. After the taking his initial course I have often turned to the subject of Bloomsbury in my writing for other classes, and every time he has been there without fail to offer support and suggestions. He took me under his wing for an independent study, which has indirectly led to this paper. His passion for this group of individuals is

infectious and I hope that one day I can inspire someone in the same way. Thank you, and Nancy, for your patience, time and most of all for your friendship.

## Introduction

“At the height of the British Empire very few English novels were written that dealt with British power. It’s extraordinary that at the moment in which England was the global superpower the subject of British power appeared not to interest most writers” (Salman Rushdie, *The Art of Fiction* No. 186).

An afternoon spent in a typical bookshop would seem to bear out Rushdie’s words. The reader may find a copy of Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, some of Kipling’s more popular books, and more than likely a copy of E.M. Forster’s *A Passage to India*. But outside of this small selection one is unlikely to find much other fiction written on the subject of Empire by English authors living during that crucial period between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century when the British Empire was at its zenith.

When I first started to think about this project, I did so in broad strokes. I knew that I wanted to look at how the artists and thinkers that comprised Bloomsbury dealt in their prolific output with non-European races and culture. However, the deeper one researches the topic the more apparent it becomes that if looked at in its totality, this is a potentially huge area of study. Additionally, it became clear that as with many issues that this group of friends wrestled, there really was no one “Bloomsbury” position. However, the more I researched the more I was drawn to the experience and writing of Leonard Woolf.

Leonard’s contributions to fictional writing are sadly relegated to the used or rare bookshops. Occasionally fragments of his work are included in weighty compendiums specializing in either the histories of Bloomsbury or Sri Lanka. The size of Leonard’s fictional

output is relatively small compared to the other Bloomsbury authors, Virginia, E.M. Forster (Morgan) and David “Bunny” Garnett. Leonard published two novels, *The Village in the Jungle* (1913) and *The Wise Virgins* (1914). In addition, he published four short stories; *Three Jews* (1917) and the compilation *Stories of The East* (1921), containing three separate tales. His final fictional work was a play titled *The Hotel*, which was published in 1939. However, of all of Bloomsbury, Leonard Woolf was the most prolific explorer of the relationship between the European races, specifically the English, and the non-European world. Unlike others in the Bloomsbury circle, this issue was one that he returned to over and over again during the course of his life. He moved from direct experience of living in The East, to interpreting that experience in the form of fiction, and later to tackling the issues of colonialism and empire at a policy level. Finally, he reflected on all his experiences in the volumes of his autobiography. None of his fictional works seem to have been particularly well received either by his peers or European audiences. I believe this body of work deserves further study.

Both *The Village in the Jungle* and *Stories of The East* are set in the country of Ceylon, now known as Sri Lanka. One of the key themes that runs through all the work is the impact of the imperial endeavor, both on the Europeans involved with it at the local level, and more significantly on the subjugated populations themselves. Leonard is able to bring an authentic perspective to this as he spent seven years in the colonial administration of Ceylon. Having had little critical and financial success exploring these issues in his fiction he turned to other outlets. During the years of and after The Great War (1914-18), he became more involved with the nascent Labour Party and in particular advising and educating politicians in the area of imperial and foreign policy. His writing in these areas was voluminous and erudite.

In this paper, I will describe and discuss how Leonard Woolf used writing, both fiction and non-fiction, to work through issues of colonialism, which he understood both from his direct experience and his extensive research. I will show how, through this process, he went from being a “very innocent, unconscious imperialist” (Growing 25) to what he would term an internationalist. I will trace his growth as a writer and show how he used his fiction to articulate some of the issues that he would later write about in policy documents. I believe that Leonard articulated observations and thoughts on imperialism that were ahead of their time. As such, I will occasionally compare the writing of more contemporary writers on the subject, such as Edward Said, with those of Leonard to demonstrate this. I am in no way saying that these contemporary writers owe any intellectual debt to Leonard, as I am certain many have never read him. Rather, I want to show the comparison to demonstrate the level of analysis and perception Leonard brought to his work on imperialism.

### **From London to Ceylon**

Leonard’s journey from England, to colonial administrator, to author and finally policy writer was a convoluted one. In many respects each career move was necessitated by money.<sup>1</sup> He was born to liberal Jewish parents on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 1880. While his grandfather had been a gentlemen’s outfitter, Leonard’s father Sidney had, by the time Leonard was ten, worked his way up through the English legal system to the prestigious position of Q.C. (Queen’s Counsel). Sadly, Sidney passed away when Leonard was eleven and with his death the

---

<sup>1</sup> Biographical information in the following paragraphs on Leonard’s childhood and Cambridge years is summarized from the opening four chapters of Victoria Glendinning’s *Leonard Woolf: A Biography*.

family's fortunes changed. Leonard's early years had been solidly upper-middle class, but after his father's passing things became less financially secure. After Sidney's death, the family was forced to move to a remoter, less prestigious neighborhood of London and at eleven Leonard started to attend Arlington House public school, the headmaster agreeing to let him do so at reduced fees. He performed well enough to earn a scholarship to the prestigious St. Paul's School. At St. Paul's, Leonard did well in his studies, excelling in both Latin and Greek. More importantly, while there he came under the influence of one of the tutors, A. M. Cook, who greatly expanded the scope of his reading, writing, and thought in general. In March 1899, Leonard travelled to Cambridge to take the scholarship exams for Trinity College. He did not get a scholarship but was awarded enough money to be able to attend.

Leonard's university education started in October 1899. Cambridge was highly significant for Leonard. It was also important in the history of Bloomsbury, as it could be argued that it was its birthplace. While at Cambridge, Leonard would form bonds with fellow students and their friends that became the male nucleus of Bloomsbury. He would also meet his future wife for the first time. In addition, he, along with his other future Bloomsbury compatriots, was exposed to a philosophy that at the beginning of the "Bloomsbury era" was influential to the group's development. Within a very short time of being at Cambridge, Leonard had already struck up friendships with Saxon Sydney-Turner, Lytton Strachey, Clive Bell and Thoby Stephen, the brother of his future wife, Virginia. Given the social strata that populated Cambridge, it is no surprise that two of Leonard's close friends came from families with backgrounds enmeshed in empire and colonialism in one way or another. Lytton's father, Sir Richard Strachey, had a career in colonial administration, particularly in India, and at the

opposite end of the spectrum, Thoby Stephen's father, Sir Leslie Stephen, had been involved in the abolitionist movement. This group of young men became inseparable, and it soon became clear that their love for and discussion of philosophy, literature and art were more important to them than their formal studies.

A big part of life in Cambridge for many students was involvement in clubs and societies. In 1901, Leonard and his friends founded the "Midnight Society" and became members of another preexisting society called the "X." Both societies were forums for the discussion and performance of poetry and literature. In October 1902, Leonard reached the apex of this scene when he was elected to membership of "The Society," also known as the "Cambridge Conversazione Society" or "The Apostles." The name "The Apostles" stemmed from the fact that there were never more than twelve active members at one time, although it was not uncommon for former members who had "taken wings" and become honorary members or "angels," to continue to attend meetings when in Cambridge. Lytton had become an Apostle a few months prior to Leonard and was instrumental in getting him his membership. It was through The Apostles that Leonard and Lytton came into contact with Goldworthy (Goldie) Lowes Dickinson, Roger Fry and E.M. (Morgan) Forster. In early 1903, Lytton and Leonard inducted a young John Maynard Keynes into the society which essentially completed the male core of Bloomsbury. There is one Apostle who while not considered a "Bloomsbury" himself, some would argue is at the base of the group's philosophy; this was G.E. Moore.

Moore had been an Apostle since 1894, and by the time Leonard and Lytton were inducted into The Society he had received a philosophy fellowship and was lecturing. In

September 1903, Moore's book *Principia Ethica* was published. Maynard, in his essay "My Early Beliefs," describes its effects on the group.

We were at an age when our beliefs influenced our behavior, a characteristic of the young which it is easy for the middle-aged to forget, and the habits of feeling formed then still persist in a reasonable degree. ... The influence was not only overwhelming; but it was the extreme opposite of what Strachey used to call *funeste*; it was exciting, exhilarating, the beginning of a new renaissance, opening of a new heaven on a new earth, we were the forerunners of a new dispensation, we were not afraid of anything.

Nothing mattered except states of mind, our own and other people's of course, but chiefly our own. These states of mind were not associated with action or achievement or with consequences. They consisted in timeless passionate states of contemplation and communion, largely attached to 'before' and 'after'. Their value depended, in accordance with the principle of organic unity, on the state of affairs as a whole which could not be usefully analyzed into parts. ... The appropriate subjects of passionate contemplation and communion were a beloved person, beauty and truth, and one's prime objects in life were love, the creation and enjoyment of aesthetic experience and the pursuit of knowledge.

Broadly speaking we all knew for certain what were good states of mind and that they consisted in communication with objects of love, beauty and truth. (85-87).

This philosophy in various altered forms would go on to influence Bloomsbury immensely, sparking concepts such as Clive Bell's theory of "significant form" and Roger's artistic aesthetics. It is also a concept that Leonard touches on in some of his earlier stories.

Leonard did poorly in his final exams. He knew a fellowship would not be forthcoming, and that he was now without the funding to continue his studies. He was reliant on whatever money his mother or elder brother could send. He and Saxon, who was in a similar situation, decided to study for the Higher Civil Service Open Competition, which they both were able to undertake while remaining in Cambridge.

Leonard did not seem overly enthused about entering the competition. In a letter to Lytton dated the 25<sup>th</sup> July 1904 he writes, "I just read my books & go to bed, & as I don't remember anything I read, it does not much matter. Still I think I shall be glad when the 24<sup>th</sup> comes. As regards the exam., I find it sheer death, there are practically no [Civil Service] vacancies &, what there are, are wretched" (Letters 40). In the end, when he took the exam he did not do particularly well. In another letter to Lytton on the 27<sup>th</sup> September 1904 he writes, "It came just an hour ago. I'm 65<sup>th</sup>! absolutely hopeless. I suppose one ought not to mind really, & in a strange rather real way I don't, but I'm sunk under the weight of solemn faces, of gloom, of what people don't say & what they will" (Letters 44). It is clear from a further letter to Lytton on the 29<sup>th</sup> September of the same year that the family was putting pressure on him. He writes, "there is the whole financial crisis, & I find that I simply must make enough not only to support myself but to contribute [to the family]. Would the Yen [Moore] say that I therefore ought to go to the colonies? I believe I ought ... I should come back every 6 years for a year, very yellow & silent – but I should be making £600 a year! ... I am summoned to decide by next Thursday." (Letters 45). From Leonard's letters it is clear that by the 21<sup>st</sup> October 1904 Leonard knew for certain that he would be heading to Ceylon. With this news, and knowing that he was leaving Cambridge he "took wings" from The Apostles. On the 19<sup>th</sup> November 1904 Leonard set sail for Ceylon.

Ceylon, or Sri Lanka as it now called, was no stranger to colonialism. Three European powers had exerted power over the island since the early 1500s: The Portuguese (1505/6-1658), the Dutch (1658-1796) and finally the British (1796-1948). The Sri Lankan

professor of South Asian Studies, Nira Wickramasinghe, provides this very succinct summary of colonialism in Sri Lanka:

The exceptional length – four hundred years – of the colonial impact on Ceylon, particularly in the coastal areas, radically modified social and economic structures of the island. Ceylon encountered modernity gradually and unevenly. In some respects, the colonial impact extroverted the economy, overturned the traditional systems of trade, and distorted links with India, while introducing into society new elements of heterogeneity: Christianity, the language of the successive conquerors, new communities such as the Burghers and later Indian immigrant plantation workers. It also imposed unifying factors: modern modes of communication, a unified administrative system, a common language of domination, monetarisation of exchanges. However, the depth of the colonial imprint must not be overestimated: family structures, the caste system and Buddhism were maintained, especially in the center of the island where foreign domination was resisted for three centuries (qtd. in *The Colonial Encounter*, 133).

There were some key differences between the British colonization and the previous tenures of Portugal and the Netherlands. While the Portuguese had used Ceylon for its spices and the Dutch for growing and exporting cinnamon, by the time British gained control of the island neither of these industries was economically viable. The British developed a plantation culture growing first coffee and then tea. The production of coffee was so successful that by the late 1880s, Ceylon was the primary Asian producer for the European and British markets. The workers on these British plantations tended to be Indian immigrants rather than the native population. The native population was heavily involved in transport of the product from the interior of the country where the plantations were located, to the coast where the products were sold and shipped. Additionally, there were a number of native Sinhalese owned plantations. The native peasants would also grow coffee on their own land. However at just about the same time as coffee production was peaking, it collapsed due to a massive fungal

outbreak on the island that destroyed the majority of the coffee plants. With coffee gone, the plantations shifted to producing tea and rubber. As noted before, the plantations were concentrated inland in an area known as the Kandyan kingdom. Previous colonial administrations had concentrated their activities around the edges of the island leaving the interior relatively untouched, both physically and culturally. The British however, gained control of the interior with the signing of the Kandyan Convention in 1815, which changed its nature greatly. The agriculture and economy changed but as K. M. de Silva notes it also caused the “disruption of the traditional social relations in Kandyan villages thus accentuating the inequality between the elite and peasants. In addition, the growth of the plantation saw the migration of diverse peoples and cultures into the previously relatively homogeneous and isolated homeland of the Kandyan Sinhalese” (The Impact of Colonialism 138).<sup>2</sup> This is the Ceylon that Leonard set foot on in 1904.

### **Leonard in Ceylon: The Factual Accounts**

Leonard used various forms of writing to both describe and analyze his time in Ceylon. There are the letters to family and friends, his official government diaries, his fictional works and of course his autobiography. The second volume of his autobiography *Growing* is solely dedicated to his time in Ceylon. *Growing* was not written until 1964, fifty plus years removed from the events, so there is an air of reflection in the book that comes with age and distance. The letters have a more visceral quality to them. Leonard likens his relocation to

---

<sup>2</sup> The information on the impact of the British on Ceylon is taken from De Silva, K. M. “Sri Lanka: National Identity and the Impact of Colonialism.” *The Sri Lanka Reader*. Ed. John Clifford Holt. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011. 135–151. Print.

Ceylon to a rebirth, “the umbilical cord by which I had been attached to my family, to St. Pauls, to Cambridge and Trinity was cut when, leaning over the ship’s taffrail” (Growing 11). Leonard breaks *Growing* into three parts, based on the three distinct locations in which he was stationed. He spends some time explaining the administrative and geographical structure of imperialism in Ceylon. The island was made up of nine Provinces, and some of the Provinces were subdivided into Districts. The head of a Province was a G.A. or Government Agent, who usually had decades of experience. The G.A. would live in the chief town in his Province. Districts were run by an A.G.A. or Assistant Government Agent, who was experienced, but less so than the G.A. The G.A. had a British staff of two: the more senior, an O.A. or Office Assistant and a junior Cadet (Growing 34-35).

His first posting was as a Cadet in Jaffna, in the Northern Province of the island. It is on his journey to this posting that he starts to perceive the differences between the imperialist and subject. He recognizes it at first as a feeling, which he describes as follows, “we were all rather grand, a good deal grander than we could have been at home in London or Edinburgh, Brighton or Oban. We were grand because we were a ruling caste in a strange Asiatic country; I did not realize this at the time, though I felt something in the atmosphere which to me was slightly strange and disconcerting” (Growing 24). He describes himself in those early days as “a very innocent, unconscious imperialist” (Growing 25) but points out that over the course of his time in Ceylon, he “gradually became fully aware of its [British imperialism’s] nature and problems” (Growing 25). Tamils, who were originally an immigrant population from India, made up the majority of Jaffna’s population. Leonard says that he “came to like them and their country, though never as much as I like the lazy, smiling, well-

mannered, lovely Kandyans in their lovely mountain villages or the infinite variety of types among the Low Country Sinhalese in their large flourishing villages or the poverty and starvation stricken villages in the jungle” (Growing 33). It was in Jaffna that Leonard came to first experience the absolute separation of ruler and subject in social settings. He notes it in reference to the Jaffna tennis club, which was the hub of European social life there. Leonard writes that, “no ‘natives’ were members of the Jaffna tennis club. Our society was exclusively white. The only Tamils admitted were the podyans, the small boys who picked up the tennis balls and handed them to us when we were serving” (Growing 45). Leonard observes the hyper-Britishness of the whites, “We all pretended to be tougher, more British, more homesick than we really were, yet there was a pinch of truth and reality in all our posturings” (Growing 47). Leonard makes an interesting observation about the attitude of the European administrators in dealing with the strictures that were placed on the local population. Leonard writes, “There are many things in the manners and methods of Sinhalese or Tamil who comes to a kachcheri to get a cart license or to buy a piece of Crown land or to protect himself against a dishonest and malignant village headman or to ruin a hated neighbor which are exasperating and distasteful to a European” (Growing 52). Leonard observes that although he initially shared the same feelings, they gradually faded (Growing 53). However, he misses the key point that it is the European that has caused the Tamil and Sinhalese to behave this way. It is European reordering of society, the laws and restrictions the rulers have put in place to administer their Empire, that lead to these “exasperating and distasteful” behaviors. In giving an account of the qualities he admires in the local people Leonard says that “I do not think that I sentimentalize or romanticize them” (Growing 54) when he writes:

“They are ... nearer than we are to primitive man and there are many nasty things about primitive man. It is not their primitiveness that really appeals to me. It is partly their earthiness, their strange mixture of tortuousness and directness, or cunning and stupidity, of cruelty and kindness. They live so close to the jungle ... that they retain something of the liveness and beauty of jungle animals. The Sinhalese especially tend to have subtle and supple minds. They do not conceal their individuality any more than their beggars conceal their appalling sores and ulcers and monstrous malformations. Lastly, when you get to know them, you find beneath the surface in almost everyone a profound melancholy and fatalism which I find beautiful and sympathetic- just as something like it permeates the scenery and characters of a Hardy novel” (54).

This description is problematic. Leonard does, however benignly, lump the native cultures together. On the one hand he extolls their individuality, while on the other he aggregates traits such as melancholy and fatalism in a whole race of people. In addition, likening them to jungle animals, however complimentary the phrase is meant to be in the hands of the well-known animal lover, strays dangerously close to the language of the Orientalist.

It would be worth noting here that when the Orientalist or the practice of Orientalism is referred to throughout this work, it is done so with the negative connotations implied by Edward Said's *Orientalism*, a work in which he describes how Western or Occidental scholarship, if it can be called that, had been used to prove the superiority of the Western races and justify dominion in varying forms over Eastern peoples and cultures.

It was while stationed in Jaffna that Leonard was sent to help the A.G.A. of the district oversee the activities of the pearl fishery at Marichchukaddi. This experience would go on to form the backbone of the story “Pearls and Swine” (Growing 86-98). At Marichchukaddi, Leonard first came into contact with another ethnic group, Arabs. His writing about them in his autobiography is conflicted. On the one hand you have his physical treatment of them, which

he notes in a letter to Lytton on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 1906, where he states that “the Arab will do anything if you hit them hard enough with a walking stick, an occupation in which I have been engaged for the most part of the last 3 days & nights” (Letters 114). On the other hand in another letter to Lytton, the date of which is unknown, he rhapsodizes over them saying, “the Arab is superb, he has the grand manner, absolutely saturnine, no fuss or excitement” (qtd. in Growing 93). In comparing the Arab and the Tamil, Leonard notes the different way they each treated the Whites. Leonard observes that “the Tamil treated one as someone apart; he would never dream of touching one, for instance. The Arabs, on the other hand, although extremely polite, treated me as a fellow human being” (Growing 94). Interestingly, it is this sense of “human equality” (Growing 94) that he uses to account for his behavior to them with his walking stick. While still in Jaffna, Leonard started to become “fully conscious of my position as a ruler of subject peoples ... and the awareness brought my first doubts whether I wanted to rule other people, to be an imperialist and proconsul” (Growing 111). This doubt was sparked by two complaints against him by the Jaffna Tamil Association, one for disciplining a clerk for spitting on the verandah and the other, an allegation brought against him that he had struck a Tamil lawyer with his horse whip while out riding. Leonard was exonerated in both cases but as he describes, “I felt a twinge of doubt in my imperialist soul, a doubt whether we were not in the wrong, and the Jaffna Tamil Association and Mr. Sanderasekara in the right, not right in believing that I would and had hit him in the face, but right in feeling that my sitting on a horse arrogantly in the main street of their town was as good as a slap in the face” (Growing 114).

In August 1907, Leonard received his second posting on the island, this time to the interior, as an O.A. in Kandy. He comments, “I did not like it in the way I like Jaffna and

Hambantota, and it did a good deal to complete my education as an anti-imperialist” (Growing 133). Kandy was heavily Europeanized, a fact that Leonard disliked. However it is clear that Leonard enjoyed the native populations. He writes, “everything to do with the Sinhalese seemed to me enchanting. The Kandyans, both the Ratemahatmayas, the feudal chiefs and headsmen, and the villagers were generally, and often also individually, the most charming people I have ever come across. They were typically mountain people, independent, fine mannered, lively, laughing, in their enchanting villages hidden away in the mountains, and isolated, unchanged and unchanging” (Growing 156). Leonard began to contrast the “extraordinary, hierarchical, and complicated engine of Empire and imperial government” (Growing 157) of which he was a part with the feudal society he observed in the villages. He perceived that these village societies “on the surface had socially a satisfying depth, harmony and beauty” (Growing 158). While at this posting he describes a change in his personality, recording that he was becoming “more ambivalent, politically schizophrenic, an anti-imperialist who enjoyed the fleshpots of imperialism, loved the subject peoples and their way of life, and knew from the inside how evil the system was beneath the surface for ordinary men and women” (Growing 159).

While in Kandy, Leonard also became more aware of Buddhism. Although not a practitioner himself, being skeptical of religion in general, it still held an attraction for him. He explains his understanding of its system of beliefs, “It was a philosophy rather than a religion, a metaphysic that eliminated God and gods, a code of conduct civilized, austere, springing ultimately from a profound pessimism” (Growing 159). There is one other aspect which attracted Leonard to it; that was seeing those Buddhists who had withdrawn “into a life of

solitude and contemplation,” which he rightly notes as being different from the withdrawals that took place in Western religions for the purposes of penance. This appealed to him, as some of the happiest times he describes in *Growing*, are those times when he was travelling the country by himself on his bicycle. This desire to withdraw from society and seek the solitude and majesty of nature would be something he would seek all his life. Of course he observed, as with all faiths, that often the people with the responsibility of being leaders are flawed and very, very human. It is the organization rather than the belief that is at fault. As he summarizes, “The way of life preached by Gautama Buddha is extraordinarily gentle, unaggressive, humane, far more so, it seems to me, in its verbal presentation and attitude than even that preached in the Sermon on the Mount” (Growing 162).

It both Jaffna and Kandy, Leonard had to deal with some of the harshest realities of imperialism, administrating the law and witnessing the punishment of members of the native population. In Jaffna he witnessed the flogging of a man with a cat-o’-nine-tails, which he described as “the most disgusting and barbarous thing I have ever seen” (Growing 166). In Kandy he had “to give the signal to the executioner for the ‘drop’ which would hang the man” (Growing 167). This experience would forever confirm in him the belief that capital punishment was morally wrong and also ineffective as a deterrent. After a year in Kandy, Leonard received what was to be his final posting in Ceylon; he was appointed A.G.A. of Hambantota.

Leonard held this position, in the southern part of the island for two and half years until his return to England in 1911. This is how he described the posting to Lytton; “I am on my own in my district which is about 1000 sq. Miles with 100,000 people in it” (Growing 174). Compared to other postings he could count the number of Europeans in reasonable

proximity to him on the fingers of one hand. The district had three distinct areas. The eastern portion “was almost entirely covered with jungle. It contained the small town of Hambantota, but otherwise only small scattered and usually poverty stricken villages” (Growing 175). A portion of this eastern area was cultivated as paddy fields and salt was also produced here. The other two western areas had more rainfall and so were more fertile, producing rice, dry grain and coconuts. Even though the western portions were more prosperous, Leonard writes that it was “the eastern part of the district which really won my heart and which I still see when I hear the word Hambantota: the sea perpetually thundering on the long shore, the enormous empty lagoons, behind the lagoons the enormous stretch of jungle, and behind the jungle far away in the north the long purple line of the great mountains” (Growing 176).

Leonard immersed himself in this district, he wrote, “I rarely thought of anything else except the District and the people, to increase their prosperity, diminish the poverty and disease, start irrigation works, open schools. There was no sentimentality about this; I did not idealize or romanticize the people or country; I just liked them aesthetically and humanly and socially” (Growing 180). Leonard truly worked hard in this district, carrying out a census, renegotiating contracts for the transportation of the salt harvest and dealing with an outbreak of *rinderpest* that hit buffalo in the district. The *rinderpest* incident was depressing to Leonard because as he notes, it was the only time in the seven years in Ceylon that he “heard that note of communal hostility against myself or the Government from villagers” (Growing 191).

Leonard could understand it though. He writes, “I knew that the order to impound cattle was practically futile, because it would not be obeyed and could not be enforced. I knew that the villagers did not believe what I said to them; to them I was part of the white man’s machine,

which they did not understand. I stood to them in the relation of God to his victims: I was issuing from on high orders to their village which seemed arbitrary and resulted in the shooting of their cows. I drove away in dejection, for I have no more desire to be God than one of his victims" (Growing 191). It is clear, as Leonard reflects, that the situation was "a moral tale about imperialism – the absurdity of a people of one civilization and mode of life trying to impose its rule upon an entirely different civilization and mode of life" (Growing 193).

By early 1911, imperial life was wearing on Leonard. He was rubbing other officials the wrong way, and as he notes "I became more and more doubtful about my future. What may be called the imperialist side of my profession had become consciously distasteful to me" (Growing 224). However, he realized that he did have the potential to stay in the service and advance far up its ranks. This would offer security, but in doing so he would lose "a kind of independence or freedom denied to you in Civil Services and similar occupations which bring you pomp and power" (Growing 225). On the 24<sup>th</sup> May 1911, he set sail from Colombo back to England, officially to take the year's leave due to him, but in his own mind still pondering his future. On his return, he reconnected with his Cambridge, and now Bloomsbury, friends. However, he observed that the civil service experience had changed him, "the seven years in Ceylon left a mark upon my mind and even character which has proved indelible, a kind of reserve or withdrawal into myself which makes me inclined always to stand just a little to one side of my environment" (Growing 247). By the autumn of 1911, he had taken rooms in Adrian and Virginia Stephen's house. Leonard soon realized he was in love with Virginia. He says that in his mind he set himself a choice, he would either marry her or return to the service. However, he notes that "at the back of my mind I think I knew that this last solution was

fantasy. ... I had been born in an age of imperialism and I disapproved of imperialism and felt sure that its days were already numbered” (Growing 247-48). On the 7<sup>th</sup> May 1912, the government accepted Leonard’s resignation, which took effect on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May the same year. Three months later Leonard and Virginia were married.

### **A Brief Introduction to the Fictional Works on Ceylon**

After leaving the civil service, Leonard became immersed in the world of Bloomsbury, and also started work on processing his experiences of Ceylon using fiction. Leonard’s fictional writing about Ceylon falls into two styles. The first are stories told by a narrator who, while not always named, is clearly European. The second are stories told, using to a greater or lesser degree, the indigenous voice. We know when *The Village in the Jungle* was written and published (1911-1913), and this clearly falls into the second style. *Stories of The East* was self-published by the Hogarth Press in 1921.<sup>3</sup> However, it is impossible to determine when the three individual stories, “A Tale by Moonlight,” “The Two Brahmins,” and “Pearls and Swine” were written. All the stories in in *Stories of The East* as well as the novel *The Village in the Jungle* are set in Ceylon and three of them, clearly, in the period when he had been in the country.

The ordering of the analysis of Leonard’s fictional work in this paper follows the movement from the works written in the European voice, to works in the indigenous voice. There are a number of reasons for this. The move from the European voice to attempts at an

---

<sup>3</sup> The title of the collection in the original printing was *Tales from The East*, and in subsequent printings it was changed to the title used in this paper. There seems to be no clear record as to why the change was made.

indigenous voice would seem to be something you would observe in a writer developing over time and gaining confidence in his abilities. Additionally, the move may have been prompted by frustration at his inability to get the larger messages in the more Eurocentric stories across to the audience of his peers. Finally, there may have been a desire on Leonard's part to move away from being grouped stylistically alongside established imperialist writers such as Kipling and Conrad, in that his fictional writing, as it developed, was aiming for very different goal.

## A Tale Told by Midnight: Subverting an Imperialist Genre

The first of the *Stories of The East*, “A Tale Told by Midnight,” taken at face value seems to be potentially the most problematic of Leonard’s writing. It would, at first glance seem to be filled with Orientalist and imperialist tropes. However, it narrowly avoids falling into the trap of pure Orientalism because both the ending of Jessop’s tale, and the framing of the entire story redeem the work by indicating a desire on Leonard’s part to illustrate two much larger themes. The autobiographical nature of this piece also confounds the Orientalist argument.

The story is short, a mere fourteen pages. Its structure is that of a tale told by one of the characters, Jessop, inside the frame of the story as a whole. The narrator of the story is an unnamed white observer. The tale contained within has two main male characters, one, the narrator, Jessop, and the other, the male protagonist of the tale, Reynolds. There are clearly elements of Leonard in both the characters of Jessop and Reynolds. For example, the very opening lines of the story could have been culled from a biography of Leonard. “Many people did not like Jessop. He had rather a brutal manner sometimes of telling brutal things – the truth, he called it” (A Tale Told By Moonlight 7). Leonard’s search for, and philosophical desire to state the truth, as he saw it, had really started to come to the fore in his days as an active Apostle. In a paper delivered to The Society in May 1904, titled “Embryos or Abortions?” he stated that, “merely to give faithful descriptions of things as they are in the world is of no value” (qtd. in Glendinning 61). As Leonard’s biographer Victoria Glendinning elaborates, “Leonard in this paper, envisaged a modern form of fiction which would demonstrate this

distinction between realism and reality – the apostolic reality, a matter of perspective, universal truth, and the perception of links and connections between disparate happenings” (Leonard Woolf: A Biography 61). Outside of seeking truth in writing, Leonard, along with Lytton and Saxon had at around the same time, been experimenting with something called “The Method,” which Leonard himself described in *Sowing* as “a kind of third-degree psychological investigation to the souls of one’s friends. Though it was a long time before we had any knowledge of Freud, it was a kind of compulsory psychoanalysis” (qtd. in Glendinning 55). “The Method” had mixed, often deleterious effects, but was symptomatic of Leonard’s need to explore and express his truth which would become a hallmark of his life and work.

The setting of *A Tale Told by Moonlight* is an all male gathering, an after dinner stroll “in the cool moonlight down the great fields which lead to the river” (Woolf 7). This description of the gathering seems less like Ceylon and more like Leonard’s Cambridge days. There are various phrases in the opening that lead the reader to this conclusion, for example “It was very cool, very beautiful, very romantic lying there on the grass” (Moonlight 7) and “It loosed our tongues and we began to speak – all of us except Jessop – as men seldom speak together of love. We were sentimental, romantic” (Moonlight 8). In none of the accounts of life in Ceylon does there appear an episode like this, but one could quite easily picture this transposed to the banks of the River Cam, with Leonard, Lytton, Saxon and Thoby behaving this way.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> In fact, Anindyo Roy in “Telling Brutal Things”: Colonialism, Bloomsbury and the Crisis of Narration in Leonard Woolf’s “A Tale Told by Moonlight,” states that the “four interlocutors are clearly representative of figures in the Bloomsbury circle – the narrator, an ex-colonial; Alderton, the novelist; Pemberton, the poet; and Hanson Smith, the critic” (201).

The party observes a man and a woman talking and kissing “in the shadow of trees” (Moonlight 8), which elicits from some of the party a poetic and rhapsodic response. However from Jessop it gets a very different reception. “It’s just a flicker of the body it will be cold, dead this time next year” (Moonlight 9). Jessop goes on to blame novelists for the group’s response “You’ve made a world in which everyone is always falling in love – but its not this world” (Moonlight 9). Is this Leonard attempting to articulate what he sees as apostolic reality first articulated in “Embryos or Abortions?”, in this case on the subject of love? Jessop describes what he believes to be true love, a “feeling, a passion immense, steady, enduring. But not one person in twenty thousand ever feels anything at all for more than a second, and then it’s only a feeble ripple on the smooth surface of their unconsciousness” (Moonlight 10). Jessop says he has only known two cases of this real love; the story of Reynolds being the first example. Reynolds is a public school and Oxford educated, successful novelist who seemed to Jessop to possess “some power of feeling under the nervousness and shyness” (Moonlight 11). Reynolds comes to visit Jessop in Ceylon because “he wanted to see life, to understand it, to feel it” (Moonlight 12). After some un-stimulating interactions between Reynolds and colonial Europeans, Jessop determines that “by love, I’ll show him a side of life he’s never seen before at any rate” (Moonlight 13).

It is at this point in the story that any criticism of Leonard as Orientalist comes dangerously close to being valid. Jessop takes Reynolds to a local brothel. Jessop describes their arrival, “Suddenly there came the sound of bare feet running and giggles of laughter, and ten or twelve girls, some naked and some half clothed in bright red or bright orange clothes, rushed down the steps upon us” (Moonlight 14). He continues with his description of the

establishment, observing that, “it always reminded me somehow of the Arabian Nights; that room when you came into it so bare and empty, and then the sudden rush of laughter, the pale yellow naked women, the brilliant colours of the cloths, the white teeth, all appearing so suddenly in the doorway up there at the end of the room” (Moonlight 14). Two paragraphs later he describes the female protagonist, the “astonishingly beautiful” Celestinahami. Jessop observes that, “her skin was the palest of pale gold with a glow in it, very rare in the fair native women. The delicate innocent beauty of a child was in her face; and her eyes, Lord her eyes immense, deep, dark and melancholy, which looked as if they knew and understood and felt everything in the world. ... She carried about her an air of slowness and depth and mystery of silence and of innocence” (Moonlight 15). In these two pages of description, Leonard seems to be conjuring up a series of Orientalist clichés. Edward Said describes in *Orientalism*, the long traditions of writing on the subject of the “Oriental” woman in Western texts. He writes that it is “especially evident in the writing of travelers and novelists: women are usually the creatures of a male power-fantasy. They express unlimited sensuality, they are more or less stupid, and above all they are willing” (Orientalism, 207). It would be foolhardy to argue that the scene Leonard describes does not contain elements of what Said is describing. The description of Celestinahami’s eyes which, “looked as if they knew and understood and felt everything in the world” and her “air of slowness and depth and mystery of silence and of innocence”, seem to be textbook examples of what Said describes when he observes that, “the very possibility of development, transformation, human movement – in the deepest sense of the word – is denied the Orient and the Oriental. As a known and ultimately an immobilized or unproductive quality, they come to be identified with a bad sort of eternity: hence, when the Orient is being

approved, such phrases as ‘the wisdom of the East’” (Orientalism, 208). However, in Leonard’s defense, there are significant autobiographical elements that cannot be ignored and may mitigate accusations of Orientalism.

Prior to leaving for Ceylon, while Leonard may have talked a lot about sex with his friends in Cambridge, he certainly had no practical experience. It is highly likely that his very first sexual encounter occurred with a “loose living” (Growing 67) young Burgher girl, when he was stationed at his first posting in Jaffna. In *Growing*, he describes how he noticed her whilst riding and was then propositioned by a young boy on her behalf. He took up the offer, and spent the night with her. He did not repeat the experience with the same girl after finding out that she was “the niece of one of my own very respectable clerks” and also that “she was being kept by a Tamil Lawyer” (Growing 68). While there are no more mentions in his autobiography of interactions with native prostitutes, it is clear from letters home to Lytton that this was not a one-time occurrence. On the 1<sup>st</sup> October 1905 he wrote to Lytton that he was “worn out or merely supine through a night of purely degraded debauch. The pleasure of it is of course greatly exaggerated certainly with a halfcaste whore” (Letters 102). Whether this “halfcaste whore” was the model for Celestinahami we cannot be absolutely certain, but it may account for the phrase “her skin was the palest of pale gold with a glow in it, very rare in the fair native women” (Moonlight 15). The Canadian Bloomsbury scholar Catherine Nelson-McDermott notes that there may be elements of an eighteen-year-old white woman, Gwen, whom Leonard was involved with for a while in Ceylon (Visions of an Incurable Rationalist 200). She quotes Leonard’s friends Ian Parsons and George Spater who recorded that “Leonard admired Gwen’s body, but he could see right through her ‘two big cow eyes which could never understand

anything which one said' even though they looked 'as if they understood everything that has ever been, is or will be'" (qtd in *Visions of an Incurable Rationalist* 200). The opening description of the brothel contains an additional autobiographical reference. Jessop states that, "the girls themselves interested me; I used to sit and talk to them for hours in their own language; they didn't as rule understand English. They used to tell me all about themselves" (*Moonlight* 14). This seems to mirror another of Leonard's letters. This letter was to Maynard in the later part of 1905 and contains the line, "the conversation of whores was more amusing than the conversation of bores" (*Glendinning* 80). The "bores" in question we must assume were white Imperialists, with whom Leonard usually socialized.

The way that "A Tale Told at Midnight" then develops, whilst not being autobiographical in a real sense, may have stemmed from a fantasy of Leonard's that he described to Lytton in a letter. In the letter from the 12<sup>th</sup> November 1905, during the period he was in Jaffna, Leonard writes that he could see himself living "alone with a burgher concubine in a long bare whitewashed bungalow overlooking the lagoon, where time is only divided between reading Voltaire on the immense verandah & copulating in the vast empty rooms where there is a perpetual smell of bats & damp & the paint & plaster peel off the walls & gather on the stone floors" (*Letters* 107). In the story, Jessop witnesses Reynolds experiencing the real love Jessop had previously defined, with Celestinahami. As Jessop describes it, "the power to feel, the power that so few have, the flame, the passion; love, the real thing" (*Moonlight* 16). Jessop also sees the effect it has on Reynolds, driving him mad enough that he makes an unsuccessful attempt to kill himself. Jessop convinces him that rather than shoot himself, to "see what you can make of life with her" (*Moonlight* 18). This is the point where

Leonard's fantasy described to Lytton and the story collide, because two paragraphs later the following description appears, "We bought her out, it cost twenty rupees. I got them a little house down the coast on the seashore, a little house surrounded by palm trees. The sea droned away sleepily right under the verandah. It was to be an idyll of the East: he was to live there for ever with her and write novels on the verandah" (Moonlight 18). So once again the reader can clearly see the echoing of Leonard's letters in his fiction.

At this point in the story Leonard, or at least the tale's narrator Jessop, falls into the language of the Orientalist when describing how and why the relationship between Reynolds and Celestinahami falls apart. Jessop says, "he couldn't speak to her and she couldn't speak to him, she couldn't understand him. He was a civilized cultivated intelligent nervous little man and she – she was an animal, dumb and stupid and beautiful" (Moonlight 18). This seems similar to Said's interpretation of how many in the European establishment; in particular Arthur James Balfour and Lord Cromer (real name, Evelyn Baring who got masterfully critiqued by Lytton in his portrait of General Gordon in *Eminent Victorians*) saw the relationship between Western and non-Western races. As Said says, "Many terms were used to express the relation: Balfour and Cromer, typically, used several. The Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, 'different'; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, 'normal'" (Orientalism, 40). Jessop's description of the way that Celestinahami's 'love' for Reynolds developed seems to embody the "irrational" and "depraved" of Balfour and Cromer. In Jessop's words, "It's the love of dogs and women, at any rate of those slow, big-eyed women of the East. It's the love of a slave, the patient, consuming love for a master, for his kicks and caresses, for his kisses and his blows" (Moonlight 19).

In a last ditch attempt to win back Reynolds's affections, Celestinahami starts to dress like the European women she sees in the capital, under the assumption that this is what Reynolds is missing. This, however, does not improve the situation. The ending of Jessop's tale is both sad and interesting. The behavior of Reynolds and the fate of Celestinahami moves the tale away from what could superficially be read as Orientalist fantasy into the realm of a thinly veiled critique of imperialism.

Celestinahami is aware that Reynolds seems to be falling out of love with her, while she is clearly still in love with him. Jessop describes her thinking in what appears to be typical Orientalist language, saying, "She reasoned like a child that it was because she wasn't like the white ladies whom she used to see in Colombo. So she went and bought stays and white cotton stockings and shoes, and she squeezed herself into them. But the stays and the shoes and the stockings didn't do her any good" (Moonlight 20). Jessop convinces Reynolds to leave the island, which he does after signing over the house to Celestinahami. As Jessop recalls, "So Reynolds wiped out his past and Celestinahami by the help of a dirty Burgher lawyer and a deed of gift and a ticket issued by Thomas Cook and Son for a berth in a P & O bound for Aden" (Moonlight 20). Jessop, and particularly his influence over Reynolds, would seem to represent Kipling's "White Man." As Said states, "being a White Man, for Kipling and for those whose perceptions and rhetoric he influenced, was a self-confirming business. One became a White Man because one *was* a White Man; more important, 'drinking that cup,' living that unalterable destiny in 'the White Man's day', left one little time for idle speculation on origins, causes, historical logic" (Orientalism, 227). Jessop carries an air about him, in particular with regard to his actions in convincing Reynolds to leave Ceylon, of "living that unalterable destiny."

Reynolds being a mere tourist in The East compared to Jessop, does not seem to inhabit that space yet, as evidenced by Reynold's self-justification, "he was to continue his travels but he was coming back – he said so over and over again to me and to Celestinahami" (Moonlight 20). Reynolds has not fully constructed the mental apparatus of "us" and "them" with regards to Celestinahami that Jessop seems to exhibit. It should be noted that the motif of the "White Man" appears more fully in the character of White in "Pearls and Swine."

Jessop sees Celestinahami one last time. The girl has committed suicide and had been found, "floating in the sea that lapped the foot of the convent garden below the little bungalow – bobbing up and down in her stays and pink skirt and white stockings and shoes" (Moonlight 20). Virginia Woolf scholar Natania Rosenfeld suggests that this final image of Jessop's tale is Leonard's "most powerful allegory of imperialism ... Celestinahami ... embodies the entrapment of women and subalterns, the lies and false promises of imperialism; the story inscribes Leonard's own departure from an arena in which he could not but exploit, despite all his efforts at sympathy and his fantasies of marriage and benevolent government" (qtd. in *Vision of an Incurable Irrationalist* 201). Anindyo Roy also states that "Celestinahami's action thus becomes a symbolic act of defiance against the entire colonial civil and legal apparatus fashioned in order to secure the privilege of the white man" (*Telling Brutal Things* 205).

In his analysis of the story and its framing, Roy raises the question of another possible theme at play, one for which he puts forth a convincing argument. The theme he suggests is that while Jessop's tale itself is clearly an allegory of "the 'brutal' history of power relations between the metropolis and the colony" (*Telling Brutal Things* 190), its framing, Jessop's tale told inside the story as a whole, raises the possibility that Leonard "had targeted

his own Bloomsbury audience for being complicit in maintaining these power relations while professing to be emancipated left liberals” (Telling Brutal Things 190). One of the key parts of the story that seems to Roy to indicate this, is the literal gap between the end of Jessop’s tale and the content of the two short paragraphs that make up the end of the story. If you accept the premise that the audience listening to Jessop is a thinly veiled reference to Bloomsbury, then these following two paragraphs speak volumes.

Jessop stopped. No one spoke for a minute or two. Then Hanson Smith stretched himself, yawned and got up.

“Battle, murder and sentimentality”, he said. “You’re as bad as the rest of them Jessop. I’d like to hear your other case – but it’s late, I’m off to bed”.

Roy questions whether “this [is] the kind of response that Woolf expected from his Bloomsbury friends to his own story?” (Telling Brutal Things 207). As Roy points out, all three of the stories that make up *Stories of The East* “failed to generate any interest during Woolf’s lifetime, and Woolf’s contemporary Bloomsbury friends and peers, who had on other occasions been eager to express their personal views on his work, remained silent about this work” (Telling Brutal Things 189). Roy theorizes on the reason for this silence. His suggestion that it possibly stemmed from “an inability ... to comprehend the stories’ undercurrents” (Telling Brutal Things 190) seems unlikely. While it is true that only Morgan had any significant real life experience living in non-European countries for extended periods of time, the other Bloomsberries could in no way be considered to be sheltered or unaware of the realities of imperialism. His second theory, that it stemmed from “their persistent and often troubled questioning of the legitimacy of narrative authority derived from the power of metropolitanism and evoked in the name of the liberal State” (Telling Brutal Things 190), also seems flawed.

There is no evidence that they considered Leonard and his work in this light. His final suggestion that Leonard's fictional writing was a "challenge to the deeply entrenched orientalist impulse within Bloomsbury to objectify the colony as the realm of the 'other'" (*Telling Brutal Things* 190) again seems somewhat far-fetched. Outside of Leonard's writing, during this time period, there was very little writing by other Bloomsberries to compare it with. We only have Morgan's *A Passage to India* (1924) and minimal description of "the other" in Virginia's *The Voyage Out* (1915) with which to compare. The fact that so little space is given to "the other" in *The Voyage Out* really precludes its mention in this discussion. Morgan's work could be considered, but in my opinion Leonard's *Stories of the East* and *The Village in the Jungle* are a more in depth and clearer critique of the effects of colonialism on the colonized. It would seem rather that this silence was simply due to a general lack of recognition within the group of Leonard's creative writing talents. It is more likely, as a reviewer of *Telling Brutal Things* mentions in the footnotes, that the other Bloomsberries saw it as simply, "part of a recognizable subgenre that goes back to Rudyard Kipling and even to the adventure novels from the 1830s" (Roy 209). Leonard was not considered one of the novelists amongst Bloomsbury, so it seems that the others may have missed that which Roy quotes in the final parts of that same footnote: the fact that Leonard had managed to subvert this subgenre in order to:

"bring up the larger economic and political questions involved in the traffic of colonial desire. In fact, he shows that behind a simple and melodramatic love story set in the colony lies a more complex set of questions about the privilege of being a colonial man, an individual whose assertions of freedom and choice may be the very conditions for denying the life of the colonized" (*Telling Brutal Things* 209-210).

## Pearls and Swine: Taking the Direct Approach

Of all the *Stories of The East*, “Pearls and Swine” was the best received. Leonard notes in *Downhill All The Way* that Hamilton Fyfe in a *Daily Mail* review said that this story “will rank with the great stories of the world” (88). Based on this review Leonard was offered an American publishing deal provided that he made “a few artistic alterations” (Downhill 89). His justification for turning down the offer was that he “could not bear to contemplate rewriting anything which I wrote a long time ago” (Downhill 89). This gives credence to the theory that this work and possibly all the other *Stories of The East* were authored prior to the publication of *The Village in the Jungle*.

As with “A Tale Told by Moonlight” we see the recurrence of the story within a story structure in “Pearls and Swine”. The narrator remains nameless, but is someone who has been involved in the administration of empire, on leave in the homeland. He describes himself as being “run down, out of sorts generally, and – like a fool, I thought now – had taken a week off to eat, or rather to read the menus of interminable table d’hôte dinners, to play golf and to walk on the ‘front’ at Torquay” (Pearls 35). Leonard is alluding to the alienation that many Europeans felt on returning to their home countries after serving in the colonies. Describing the narrator’s companion, the Colonel, the narrator recalls, “his kind choleric eyes bulging out on a life which he was quite content never for a moment to understand” (Pearls 30) and the narrator says of himself about his own experiences abroad, “how one hated it and how one loved it” (Pearls 31). The narrator and the Colonel are having evening drinks and are joined by two other men. The supposed professions – the narrator only guesses at them - of the two is

important. The character of the stock-jobber is meant to represent the conservative establishment and the archdeacon, liberal European society (Kerr 275). These perform a similar function to the audience of "The Tale Told by Moonlight", acting as both inquisitors and antagonists to the narrator.

Prior to the tale being recounted, there is a discussion on the state of the Empire between the four participants. Both the narrator and the colonel have experienced empire first-hand while the stock-jobber and archdeacon have not. Leonard uses this to highlight the disconnect between opinions of the English establishment at home and the realities faced by those administering the colonies. In addition, it serves to illustrate some of the Orientalist and imperialist tropes prevalent at the time. The narrator describes the two metropolitans this way, "they hadn't been there of course ... But they knew all about it, they had solved, with their fat voices and in their fat heads, riddles, older than the Sphinx, of peoples remote and ancient and mysterious whom they had never seen and could never understand" (Pearls 36). This seems to echo what Said says of a number of famed twentieth-century Orientalists when he writes that, "Their imaginative perspectives were provided principally by their illustrious contemporary Rudyard Kipling, who had sung so memorably of holding 'dominion over palm and pine'" (Orientalism, 224). The disconnect between the metropolis and colonies that Leonard highlights was a very real problem. Men exactly like the two metropolitans were formulating foreign and imperial policy in England at that time, and it had been left up to administrators like Leonard to deal with the consequences. Details in this story seem to indicate a specific time frame. Leonard writes how the stock-jobber and archdeacon "had started on the Durbar and the King's visit. They had got on to Indian unrest" (Pearls 36). There were two

*darbars*, which were gatherings organized by the British to celebrate the succession of an Emperor or Empress of India, in the early 1900s, one in 1903 and one in 1911. However the monarch, in this case, King George along with Queen Mary, only physically attended the 1911 one. As historian Julie Codell states in her article *On the Delhi Coronation Darbars, 1877, 1903, 1911*, the “lavish darbars thinly disguised the sword on which the Raj relied, while also revealing the Raj’s vulnerability balanced upon the goodwill of maharajas humiliated and subjugated by the Raj.” She also describes a subtle act of rebellion that occurred at this event that is symptomatic of the “Indian unrest” mentioned in Leonard’s story. Codell describes how, “The Congress’s exhibition speaker, Sayajirao, Gaekwad of Baroda, appeared ‘in the simplest of simple dress,’ a form of political resistance vis-à-vis mandates regarding maharajas’ dress, and Hardinge interpreted this as a sign that Sayajirao was seditious.”

Leonard uses the interaction between the stock-jobber and archdeacon to highlight the nature of the discussion in the metropolis regarding the rights of subject peoples and attitudes to a growing movement in a number of colonies for independence. The liberal argument against imperialism is articulated by the archdeacon who states that, “You can’t impose Western civilization upon an Eastern people ... without a little disturbance. ... It seems to me a good sign, this movement, an awakening among the people. ... I am not making any excuses for the methods of the extremists. ... Nothing can condone violence, the taking of human life, it’s savagery, terrible, terrible” (Pearls 37). Leonard satirizes the liberal position that imperialism is an outmoded system but the colonized should use only legal means to obtain their liberty. The flaw in the argument, which should be glaringly obvious to the reader, is that the legal system in the colonies was set up by the colonizers, for their benefit. While

Leonard became over time strongly aligned with the pacifist movement particularly over the duration of The Great War, I think even he would have resonated with Franz Fanon's observation made years later in *The Wretched of the Earth* that it was highly unsurprising that, "the very same people who had it constantly drummed into them that the only language they understood was that of force, now decide to express themselves with force. In fact the colonist has always shown them the path they should follow to liberation" (42). The stock-jobber articulates the more conservative view, stating that, "There is too much Liberalism in the East. ... They want a strong hand. After all they owe us something: we aren't going to take all the kicks and leave them all the halfpence. ... let 'em know we are top dog. I am a white man, you're black; I'll treat you well, give you courts and justice; but I'm the superior race, I'm master here" (Pearls 38). This matches the thinking that Said describes when he says that; "Theses of Oriental backwardness, degeneracy, and inequality with the West most easily associated themselves early in the nineteenth century with ideas about the biological bases of racial inequality. ... To these ideas was added second-order Darwinism, which seemed to accentuate the 'scientific' validity of the races into advanced and backward, or European-Aryan and Oriental-African. Thus the whole question of imperialism, as it was debated in the late nineteenth century by pro-imperialists and anti-imperialists alike, carried forward the binary typology of advanced and backward (or subject) races, cultures, and societies" (Orientalism 206). Leonard's unsympathetic attitude to the stock-jobber and his opinions, clearly demonstrate that they are not beliefs shared by the author.

It is around this time in the story the Leonard introduces the fifth character in the lounge, the teller of the upcoming tale. This man, whose role in the story is that of a

Commissioner at a pearl fishery, has spent thirty years overseas in the service of the Empire. The narrator once again focuses attention on his eyes saying “above all the eyes themselves that had grown slow and steady and unastonished watching, that inexplicable, meaningless march of life under blazing suns. He had seen it, he knew” (Pearls 38). Life outside the metropolis had clearly taken a toll. While Leonard had not spent thirty years in Ceylon, this character is clearly at least semi-autobiographical. The Commissioner, who in this story is based in India rather than Ceylon, tells his audience that, “I had a district then about as big as England. There may have been twenty Europeans in it, counting the missionaries” (Pearls 41). This would be a slightly exaggerated description of Leonard’s final posting in Hambantota. In a letter to Lytton dated the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1908, Leonard reports, “I am on my own in my district which is about 1000 sq. miles with 100,000 people in it ... There are no Europeans in Hambantota itself ... 26 miles away on one side are two Europeans a judge and a Supt. Of Police and 20 miles away on the other is another an Irrigation Engineer” (Letters 138). All of the factual portions of the story of the pearl fishery were based on an assignment Leonard received while stationed in Jaffna, which he recounts in *Growing* (86-98). The description of the divers and the method of harvesting the pearls, by having the oysters rot for days in primitive dug-out canoes - one that had not changed in a thousand years despite the presence of the comparatively technologically advanced British administration - is repeated almost verbatim in both the tale and Leonard’s biography (90). The wonders of Western industry had not been brought to bear on these far-flung shores, and why would they when there was cheap labor.

This story sees Leonard explicitly describing the economic exploitation of the colonies for the benefit of the metropolis for the first time. He would go on to describe it

further in “The Village in the Jungle” and then specifically critique it in his policy writing. As the Commissioner says, “Well, we rule India and the sea, so the sea belongs to us, and the oysters are in the sea and the pearls are in the oysters. Therefore of course the pearls belong to us. ... we – Government I mean – take two thirds of all the oysters fished up: the other third we give to the diver, Arab or Tamil or Moorman, for his trouble in fishing ‘em up” (Pearls 42).

There are two other European characters in the tale. The first is Robson, “a little boy of twenty-four fresh-cheeked from England, just joined the service” (Pearls 43). Robson highlights the naiveté of many of those civil servants, fresh off the boat, full of ideas and preconceptions drummed into them at home. As the Commissioner says, “He hadn’t seen anything, but he knew exactly what it was all like. There was nothing curious, astonishing, unexpected, in life, he was ready for any emergency. And we were all wrong, all on the wrong tack in dealing with natives” (Pearls and Swine 46). The character of Robson seems to articulate what Said wrote later when discussing the “principal dogmas of Orientalism” (300). The dogmas are, “absolute and systematic difference between the West, which is rational, developed, humane, superior, and the Orient, which is aberrant, undeveloped, inferior. ... a third dogma is that the Orient is eternal, uniform and incapable of defining itself; therefore it is assumed that a highly generalized and systematic vocabulary for describing the Orient from a Western standpoint is inevitable and even scientifically ‘objective’. A fourth dogma is that the Orient is at the bottom something to be feared or to be controlled” (Orientalism 300). Robson, articulates similar sentiments when he declares “we [the English], of course are superior. They’ve stopped somehow on the bottom rung of the ladder of which we’ve nearly, if not quite, reached the top. They’ve stopped there hundreds, thousands of years: but it won’t take any

time to lead 'em up by the hand to our rung. It's to be done like this: by showing them that they're our brothers, inferior brothers; by reason, arguing them out of their superstitions, false beliefs; by education, by science, by example" (Pearls and Swine 46-47).

The second European character at the fishery is White who "was a planter, so he said, and he had come to 'deal' in pearls" (Pearls 44). Commenters on this story often point to its Conradian nature and specifically the Kurtz-like character of the planter White (Kerr, S.P. Rosenbaum and Nelson-McDermott). White personifies the worst aspects of the European capitalist presence abroad. White is an acute alcoholic, clearly in the last stage of his disease when he shows up at the fishery. He has traveled the length and breadth of the East, systematically exploiting both Europeans and the natives along the way, but ultimately failing in every venture he undertook. Nelson-McDermott points out a distinction between Leonard and Conrad in that "Woolf takes special care to emphasize the way in which White's atrocities are 'civilized'" (Visions of an Incurable Rationalist 202). She cites this passage in particular. "There wasn't a station where he hadn't swindled and bamboozled his fellow white men. But it was what he had done when he got away 'among the natives' – to men, and women too, away from 'civilization', in the villages and high up in the mountains. God! The cold, civilized, cruelty of it" (Pearls 54).

The story comes down to a juxtaposition of two deaths. The first is that of White who after experiencing severe *delirium tremens* and being tied to a post for his own safety and that of everyone else in the camp, finally succumbs to his alcoholism and heat exposure. The Commissioner describes, "As dawn showed grey in the East, he was suddenly shaken by convulsions horrible to see. He screamed for someone to bring him a woman, and, as he

screamed his head fell back: he was dead. I cut the cords quickly in a terror of haste, and covered the horror of the face” (Pearls 56). The second death is that of one of the Arab fishermen, drowned while diving for pearls. The dead Arab is described as follows, “The body was laid on the sand. The bearded face of the dead man looked very calm, very dignified in the faint light” (Pearls 56). What a contrast Leonard makes! What fate awaits those who have knowingly spent their lives oppressing their fellow man for the sake of dishonest material gain, compared to dignity of the oppressed but honest worker? The reactions of each of the deceased’s acquaintances to the deaths are also very different. They are both emblematic and problematic at the same time. With the death of White you have the Commissioner telling his audience that, “Robson was sitting in a heap in his chair. He was sobbing, his face in his hands” (Pearls 56). There is little dignity in this reaction. We are being shown that the European is out of his element in The East, unable to cope with hardships that he has in essence created for himself. Leonard compares this with the reaction to the death of the Arab pearl-fisher, “An Arab, his brother, sat down, upon the sand near his head. He covered himself with sackcloth. I heard him weeping. It was very silent very cold and still on the shore in the early dawn” (Pearls 57). Leonard’s description has an almost tableaux like feeling to it. It is dripping with pathos. He goes on to describe an interaction between the grieving brother and someone he calls “the Arab sheik, the leader of the boat” (Pearls 57). The two are talking, and the Commissioner says, “I didn’t understand Arabic, but I could understand what he was saying. The dead man had lived, had worked, had died. He had died working without suffering, as men should desire to die” (Pearls 57). Kerr criticizes this aspect of Leonard’s story writing that, “the scene is another parable of liberal orientalism ... the commissioner assumes a hermeneutic authority over the

Arab's discourse" (Genres of Colonial Discourse 276). However Leonard is mocking the Commissioner, "I didn't understand Arabic, but I could understand what he was saying" is a ridiculous thing to say, especially when the dialogue that follows is so nuanced. He is clearly lampooning the arrogance of the European races, in thinking that because they had some kind of dominion over non-European races, had any real understanding of their cultures. Leonard is satirizing an attitude that Said would later describe in Orientalism when he wrote, "The Arab family, Arab rhetoric, the Arab character, despite copious descriptions by the Orientalist, appear de-natured, without human potency, even as these same descriptions possess a fullness and depth in their sweeping power over the subject matter" (310). Whilst the commissioner may be doing exactly what Kerr and Said describe, Leonard is mocking him for doing so.

As in "A Tale Told by Moonlight," the framing of the short story is important. Leonard copies the physical structure, inserting a demarcated space, before returning us to the smoking-room in Torquay for the final couple of paragraphs, and once again uses the reaction of the listeners to make his final commentary on the tale the commissioner has told. "The Colonel had fallen asleep with his mouth open" (Pearls 58), seems to indicate that to the established colonial apparatus, the tale told was nothing out of the ordinary. The use of the word "tried" in the narrator's next observation that, "The jobber tried to look bored" (Pearls 58), would indicate that it was clear that his boredom was a mask and that the conservative metropolitan political establishment tried to affect an air of normality about the effects of imperialism, but in reality they could not help but be affected by situations that were reported to them. The Archdeacon's reaction is given the most space. The narrator says that "The Archdeacon was, apparently, rather put out ... He got up. 'Don't you think you've chosen rather

exceptional circumstances, out of the ordinary case?’” (Pearls 58). I believe Leonard is trying to illustrate that the segment of society represented by the Archdeacon, the liberal religious and political establishment, was incapable with dealing with realities of empire. Additionally, whilst the Commissioner may have been stereotyping the Arab, one wonders whether the Archdeacon’s response additionally implies some religious bias; a disbelief that the so-called Christian “actors” of the tale behaved with less dignity than the Arab.

This story is bookended by sayings or proverbs that are worth touching on. The first is the title of the piece itself *Pearls and Swine*. This is an allusion to the biblical quotation from Matthew’s account of the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus says, “Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.” I do believe that Leonard interprets the swine of the biblical quote as the colonized or native populations, not in the way that many of British society at the time would have perceived, but as a warning. As Nelson-McDermott notes “Woolf frequently suggests in his political writings that imperialists are certain to reap the violence they sow in colonized lands” (Visions of an Incurable Rationalist 204). The story ends with the Commissioner who has narrated the events at the pearl-fishery quoting a Tamil proverb, “When the cat puts his head into a pot, he thinks all is darkness” (Pearls and Swine 58). Natania Rosenfeld in her book *Outsiders Together: Virginia and Leonard Woolf*, is absolutely correct in stating that the proverb, “sums up a complete loss in translation: not only has the story been lost on others, but the culture of ‘the pot’ – the culture and continent intruded upon by a deluded and incapable predator – is translated by that predator into a place of darkness. ... the

language with which he presumes to name unfamiliar beings is the vocabulary of blind imposition" (42). This is the essential crux of Said's argument throughout *Orientalism*.

## The Two Brahmans: Searching for the Native Voice

The second story in the *Stories of The East* finds Leonard attempting to see the world through the eyes of “the other” in a substantive way for the first time. Scholars of Leonard’s work have mostly dismissed the story. Nelson-McDermott, one of the few scholars to look at this story in any depth references various other Bloomsbury scholars’ opinions of it. S.P. Rosenbaum in *Edwardian Bloomsbury* calls it a “slight, non-realistic satire” (qtd. in Nelson-McDermott 205). Douglas Kerr describes it as, “a rather uninteresting third-personal tale that satirizes the operations of the caste system in Ceylon” (*Genres of Colonial Discourse* 274).

As Kerr notes the story is written in the third person. It tells of two Brahmans living in the village of Yalpanam in the north of Ceylon. Each Brahman does something that defiles his caste. Chellaya, the first Brahman has a desire to fish, does so, and being caught breaks the rule that his caste should not “work any trade” (*The Two Brahmans* 23). The second, Chittampalam, is miserly and when he finds out he requires a new well, decides to dig it himself rather than pay workers to do the job. In doing so he breaks the rule that his caste should not “carry earth on their heads” (*The Two Brahmans* 23). When the other Brahmans in the village discover these acts they, “were enraged with Chellaya and Chittampalam and, after abusing them and calling them pariahs, they cast them out for ever from the Brahman caste ... and they took an oath that their children’s children should never marry with the grandsons and granddaughters of Chellaya and Chittampalam” (*The Two Brahmans* 29). Years later the distant grandson of Chellaya sees the distant granddaughter of Chittampalam and wants to marry her,

but as soon as negotiations for a dowry begin the past is brought back up and in the end neither side gets what they want and the marriage does not occur.

The story is clearly satirizing the caste system, a system that colonial powers used to help keep order. As Nelson-McDermott explains using a quote from Zeylancius;

The chiefs exercised an authority and exacted feudal services inconsistent with British ideas of the rights of subject peoples, for under their ancient laws and customs which the [1815 Kandyan] Conventions sought to preserve, these feudal overlords held jurisdiction over the people and decided lawsuits and other disputes according to [traditional] notions of caste and social status (Visions of an Incurable Rationalist 205).

Nelson-McDermott believes it goes further than this, and in addition, satirizes the Western caste system, or what we would readily identify as the class system. She quotes Leonard's novel *The Wise Virgins* in which he states that "the caste system alone explains the existence of The Poor Dear Things ... Now obviously you cannot try to do good to your own castes or to castes higher than your own without insulting them; and the really low castes, which form the great lower classes, are so curiously constituted that they are inclined to resent any attempt of the wives and daughters of the lower and middle middle-class to enter their homes and do good to them" (qtd. in Visions of an Incurable Rationalist 206).

More importantly this story shows Leonard attempting to see life from the perspective of the Ceylonese, something he perfects in *The Village in the Jungle*. This is the first fictional writing where the native takes the foreground throughout the totality of the piece. However, it is clear that he is still honing his skills. The narration of this story is less consistent and polished than both the previous Eurocentric works and *The Village in the Jungle*. Unfortunately for Leonard this is probably unintentional.

Leonard is clearly attempting to emulate the stories that he would have heard during his time in Ceylon. However Leonard knows he is writing for a European audience. Because of this, Leonard makes a short story very long, with paragraphs and paragraphs of description. But, "it is the intimate and particularized nature of the story which allows a western reader to assume a knowledge of a 'real' place with 'real' characteristics" (Nelson-McDermott 209). He is using this technique to experiment with trying to get the reader to see through native eyes. However, it is clearly an early attempt so at points comes off as rather clumsy. But by showing us the characters' thoughts and feelings, those of Chellaya in particular, Leonard is attempting to have the reader empathize with the native rather than just observe. This move beyond the Western voice is significant in any defense of Leonard against charges of Orientalism. Said says that, "Orientalism is never far from what Denys Hay has called the idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying 'us' Europeans as against all 'those' non-Europeans" (Orientalism, 7). In the shift in narrative style that occurs in this story, and becomes more fully developed in *The Village in the Jungle*, we start to see a clear rejection by Leonard of Hay's idea of the East-West divide.

Douglas Kerr examines in great length differences in the narrative voice Leonard used in his different forms of writing, in or about Ceylon. He identifies distinct styles. The letters home to his Cambridge and Bloomsbury friends are about sustaining those friendships more than anything else. As he says, "what Woolf has to say about his life in Ceylon is primarily in the rhetorical service to sustaining this sense of *us*, this collective self" (Kerr 262). Ceylon is not ignored in the letters, but when it is brought up - and he raises two specific examples, the trial and sentencing of 'road-tax' defaulters (Kerr 263) and Leonard's harsh interrogation of a

dying man stabbed in a fight in a hospital (Kerr 264), “the first-person pronoun leaves no grammatical trace of his agency, except as observer and reporter. ... The letter-writer constructs himself, for the benefit of his correspondent as a kind of apostate, one who stands aside from things” (Kerr 264). His official government diaries, mandated as part of his work, show a different kind of “I” represented. As the diaries are in a sense an ongoing performance evaluation, “the story the diaries tell is an account (in both senses) of what can be seen and measured, its people and animals, its distances, its occasional crimes, its areas of cultivation and its seasonal yields of paddy and salt” (Kerr 266). Ceylonese people that Leonard had observed in his letters and would go on to write about in his fiction, “are mostly seen as fundamentally economic creatures, a management problem and resource, to be counted and organized, trained and protected” (Kerr 267). Most importantly, because of the evaluative nature of the colonial diaries, Kerr notes that the “I” when it does appear has “a godlike or epic agency. The diarist speaks, casually, of ‘the dam I had constructed’ ... he really means ‘the dam I had had constructed’ and so on” (Genres of Colonial Discourse 269). However, it is clear that what we are seeing in “The Two Brahmans” is a mixture of Leonard, the letter-writer, a rejection of the colonial voice and the emergence of a new voice, attempting to reflect the psyche of the native, something he would achieve to greater success in his novel *The Village in the Jungle*.

This story should not be judged too harshly. Leonard’s story was deemed to have enough merit to be turned into true folktale form in 1979 by the Sri Lankan writer Manel Ratnatunga. Ratnatunga explained that she did this because Leonard’s story “was such an incisive comprehension of our Jaffna Tamils by an alien that I wanted to preserve it as a folktale

... The Jaffna [Woolf] wrote about, the Brahmins and their way of life, all that is no more” (qtd. in *Visions of an Incurable Rationalist* 206). Praise enough for a first attempt.

## The Village in the Jungle: Going Native

*The Village in the Jungle* was the first of Leonard's Ceylonese works published and is an accomplished though sadly unrecognized book in the West. Its level of complexity and the strength of its narrative is far beyond that of the short stories. Additionally, you can see themes, touched on in the stories, developed and explored here in greater detail. This would lead one to question whether of all the Ceylon works this was the first to be written? Leonard says in his autobiography that the theme of the book is the jungle, stating that, "the jungle and jungle life are also horribly ugly and cruel. When I left Ceylon and wrote *The Village in the Jungle*, that was what obsessed my memory and my imagination and is, in a sense, the theme of the book" (Growing 212). However, while one cannot deny that the jungle does act like a character in its own right within the book, this is a story of imperialism told from the side of the subjugated, containing commentary on many themes relating to the evils and folly of the practice. As Leonard was to write in *Beginning Again*, it "was a novel in which I tried somehow or other vicariously to live their lives. It was also in some curious way, the symbol of the anti-imperialism which had been growing upon me more and more in my last years in Ceylon" (47).

The novel is set in the fictitious village of Beddagama, a village of ten houses surrounded by the jungle. The book is divided into three parts with the character of Silindu acting as thread that ties them all together. The three parts tell three inter-related stories. The first part introduces the reader to the dynamics of life in the village. It also tells of the relationship between one of Silindu's daughters, Punchi Menika and her husband Babun. As E.F.C. Ludowyk says in the Introduction to the 1981 Oxford University Press edition, "The desire

of Babun for Punchi Menika is natural, the shared and reciprocated love of two persons for each other” (xii). The second story tells of his second daughter, Hinnihami, who to “save her father’s life, sacrifices herself to a malignant magician, escaping from his clutches only to perish later” (Introduction xii). The final part tells of the moneylender “Fernado’s attempt to seduce Punchi Menika ... Rebuffed by both the girl and Babun, the conspirators institute false charges against the latter and Silindu” (Introduction xiii). The ending of the book is almost operatic, with the murder and imprisonment of key characters and the heroine dying alone in a hut in the village with the ever-encroaching jungle closing in on her.

One key device Leonard uses, which sets this novel apart from other fictional writing about empire, is the genuine attempt to inhabit a native voice. The stories are told predominantly from the villager’s perspective, something we had already seen start to evolve in *The Two Brahman*. Leonard attempts to include as much of the native Sinhalese culture, in particular language and ways of speaking, as he can, while knowing that his audience is going to be predominantly Western. There is no real practical need for him to do this, the words the characters say would be just as effective if English translations were used, but he uses the Sinhalese language to get us, as readers, to inhabit the native characters more fully and also as a tool for articulating the divide between the native peoples and their subjugators more fully. In order to aid the Western reader, Leonard utilizes footnotes to explain Sinhalese terms he uses. The Leonard Woolf scholar Yasmine Gooneratne was able to obtain access to the original handwritten manuscript of the novel and examined all the revisions and changes Leonard made to it. She discusses how deliberate use of the native tongue was used to modulate the meaning of certain events. She cites two specific instances where Western dialogue had deliberately

been replaced with Sinhalese. Both are done for very different reasons. The first is the cry of “Aiyo! aiyo!” (Village 30) that Punchi Menika makes when she and Babun consummate their relationship in the jungle. The line leading up to the cry is, “A cry broke from her, in which joy and desire mingled with the fear and the pain” (Village 30). Originally Leonard had her cry out “It hurts me so”, but as Gooneratne notes, the change to “Aiyo! aiyo!” is “a positive improvement, permitting the Sinhala exclamation to carry (which it does adequately, and with no inclination to one side or the other) the haunting message of her involuntary and conflicting emotions” (A Novelist at Work 94). This would appear to correlate with Ludowyk’s assessment that the relationship between Punchi Menika and Babun is a committed one, and while this is their first sexual encounter, the use of the original English phrase may have imparted a more negative impression than Leonard desired. The second instance that Gooneratne cites is a simple word substitution used several times. This is the replacement of the word “whore” with the Sinhala “vesi.” This is a substitution that “could have been suggested at the proof stage by an editor of tender sensibilities, but which no one but Woolf herself is likely to have had the linguistic background and knowledge to authorize or make with confidence” (A Novelist at Work 94). Once again we have to remember the original intended audience of this was English and not as liberal as audiences today.

Leonard uses language in another important way in the novel. He utilizes the divide between the English of the colonial administrators and the native languages of the subjugated to highlight flaws in the colonial system of administration. It also illuminates the innate unfairness of the system for those at the bottom of the pile. There is one particular

episode in the novel where this device is used to great effect. It involves the judicial process, an area with which Leonard was intimately involved in Ceylon.

The episode occurs when Fernando the moneylender, conspiring with the village headman, frames Babun and Silindu for a robbery. Fernando's goal is to remove Babun from the village so that he can possess his wife, Punchi Menika. After staging the robbery, the village headman reports it to the Korala, a native official in charge of several villages. The Korala conducts the initial investigation finding the damning, but planted, evidence. As a result the Korala takes the accused, along with the headman whose property had been stolen, Fernando and other witnesses to see "a white Hamadoru" (Village 111). The Hamadoru was the Sinhalese name for the A.G.A., a position Leonard had held, who acted as judge in incidents such as these. From the very beginning of the judicial process, Leonard demonstrates that it is going to be an uphill battle for the falsely accused. He describes the accused's perception of a conversation between the judge and interpreter, writing, "the conversation being in English was unintelligible to Babun and Silindu. ... They did not understand what exactly was happening. This was 'a case' and they were 'the accused', that was all they knew" (Village 111). The role of the Sinhalese interpreter is confusing to the accused, as they "were never quite certain whether he was or was not speaking to them, or whether, when the interpreter spoke to them in Sinhalese, the words were really his own, or whether he was interpreting what the judge had said" (Village 112). As the trial progresses it is clear that being native, poor and uneducated is a distinct disadvantage. Because of his role as headman, and his greater literacy, "Babehami knew exactly what to do; it was not the first time that he had given evidence" (Village 112). Leonard, mocking the fact that the headman is perjuring himself, continues, "he was quite at

his ease when he made the affirmation that he would tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" (Village 112). Literacy as well as the imposed colonial power structures are key to the outcome of the trial. The headman, because of his position of power in the colonial structure, calls witness after witness to give false testimony in the case. The accusers and their witnesses spin their fabrications of victimhood and blamelessness. At the conclusion of each perjured testimony the judge, always via the interpreter, asks Babun and Silindu if they have any questions for that particular witness, and over and over like a mantra their response is "What questions are there to ask? It is lies what he said." (Village 116). Neither Silindu nor Babun are educated enough to have the skills, nor powerful enough to have the influence, to expose the witnesses on the stand. Luckily for Silindu the judge soon sees that there is no way that he had any involvement in the incident and dismisses the charges against him. But even then after being ejected from the courtroom, Silindu has no comprehension of what has happened. The spectators on the verandah tease him telling him that the judge had said that, "they will hang you in the evening, father" (Village 114) and that, "the judge Hamadoru said ten years' rigorous imprisonment" (Village 114). Due to Babun's low status and ignorance he is powerless against the onslaught of false witnesses. In the end the judge delivers his sentence. "There is almost certainly something behind this case which has not come out. There is, I feel, some ill-feeling between complainant and accused. The complainant impressed me most unfavourably. But the facts have to be considered" (Village 123). That first sentence of the judgment is key. The judge can sense that something is amiss, but because he is divided from both the accused and accuser by language he cannot get to the bottom of it, yet as the highest colonial power, he is called to judge. He does so on the evidence, however false, presented to

him and as a result Babun is sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment. Once again there is an autobiographical element to this episode. Part of Leonard's duties in the colonial administration was to act as investigator and judge of crimes. The line in the novel "There is almost certainly something behind this case which has not come out" (Village 123) echoes an entry in his colonial diary for the 7<sup>th</sup> January 1910 describing the investigation of an alleged murder in which he concluded, "There are many small points which show that I have not got the truth yet" (Diaries 125). He records his attitude towards being a judge in *Growing*. He reflects that in his view, "the judge, whatever his private opinion may be about the goodness or badness of the existing law, must apply it to the man in the dock without fear or favour, impartially, justly, objectively, strictly, even sternly" (Woolf 169). However he concludes that he "felt again and again that much of our criminal law was both uncivilized and stupidly inefficient as a method of punishing or deterring crime" (Growing 169).

As well as language, Leonard sets himself apart from other Western writers on empire in his respectful handling of native culture. The Sri Lankan writer Mervyn de Silva commended Leonard's "sensitivity to nuance in the mixing of Buddhist thinking with both Hinduism and 'primitive ritual devils and jungle gods' in the popular consciousness (qtd. in Glendinning 151). An example of Leonard illuminating the mixing of religions in Sinhalese culture is the pilgrimage to the temple at Beragama (Village 52-73). The rationale for the pilgrimage itself is interesting as it demonstrates how the mixing of cultures due to long-term imperialism results in cultural changes that goes as deep as religious myth. Again the pilgrimage is clearly based on experiences that Leonard witnessed at a place called Kataragama. Leonard had been tasked with supervising a pilgrimage. As usual he was under resourced, and

had the safety of up to 4000 pilgrims in his hands (Growing 226-232). In both the novel and his autobiography, Leonard describes the legend that inspired the fictional and real pilgrimages. The legend has elements of the biblical *Good Samaritan* story to it. It tells of a Tamil god, Kandeswami, who lived in the mountains who one day wished to live in the plains below, but to do so he would need to cross a river. In order to cross the river he needed to be carried. A group of Tamils on their way to collect salt passed by in the opposite direction and Kandeswami requested that they take the time to carry him across. They told him that they were poor and feared that if they took the time to do this then the salt would be destroyed by the rain. They decided that they would go and collect their salt and on their return carry him across. Soon after a group of Sinhalese came by, also on their way to collect salt. The god made the same request of them. They did not hesitate and carried him from the mountains to the plains and placed him in the shade of trees, the place where his temple now stands. As a result “the god swore that he would no longer be served by Tamils in his temple, and that he would only have Sinhalese to perform his ceremonies; and that is why to this day, though the god is a Tamil god, and the temple a Hindu temple, the kapuralas are all Buddhist and Sinhalese” (Village 62).

Leonard comments on the pilgrimage in *Growing* writing that “there was something fundamentally genuine, primitively real there in the jungle. The people believed what they believed simply and purely. The beliefs were deplorable, no doubt, but the purity, simplicity, and their motives for taking the terrible journey to the temple I respected” (231). Leonard, a skeptic about any form of religion or supernatural belief, is able to subsume any negative Western judgment about the “deplorable beliefs” from the episode as described in the novel.

He shows it through the eyes of those experiencing it, and in doing so, preserves the simplicity and purity he witnessed and admired.

Stories of The Buddha and Buddhist scripture show up in several places in the novel. H.R. Perera notes in his book *Buddhism In Sri Lanka – A Short History* that “Buddhism was introduced to Sri Lanka in 236 B.E. (cir. 250 B.C.) and became the national religion of the Sinhalese from that date” (3). Buddhism played such a vital role in Ceylon that when in 1815 the Kandyan Convention was signed, a document that in effect handed the island over to the British, it was stipulated that Buddhism would remain the national religion. As Perera observes, “On the one hand, it indicates how concerned the Sinhalese leaders were about the future of Buddhism even in the hour of their misfortune. On the other hand, the British had obviously considered that its omission would bring disastrous results” (*Buddhism in Sri Lanka* 84). Perera describes how towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, Buddhism was prevalent on the island, with the island being a center of Buddhist scholarship. Additionally Buddhism was an issue of social and national identity. He writes that the Buddhist leaders present during the time of Leonard’s stay in Ceylon were “able to unite and bring together all Buddhists in Sri Lanka, to inspire them to be active, to collect funds for educational and other religious purposes, to give the Buddhist children a sound religious and secular education, to do a great deal of social work and to raise the spiritual and moral standard of the people” (*Buddhism in Sri Lanka* 101). As previously noted, Leonard was exposed to Buddhism during his time in Kandy. In particular, the man who taught him Sinhalese, Gunaratana, was both a librarian of Pali texts and a Buddhist priest. As Leonard remembers, “we became friends and I used to go up into the Octagon [the library] of an

evening when I could find time and sit with him on a verandah overlooking the Lake and talk with him about Buddhism” (Growing 159). It was most likely these conversations that informed the Buddhist stories that appear in the novel. While all the stories that appear in the book are there for a purpose, there is one Buddhist teaching towards the end of the novel, which is critical to the book’s interpretation.

At the point in the book that it occurs, Silindu has been driven to murder both the village headman and a local moneylender. He has given himself up to the colonial authorities. The local magistrate carries out an investigation into the murder. A description of the investigation bears a striking resemblance to one Leonard noted in his colonial diaries on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 1910 as having participated in. Silindu is to be tried in the Supreme Court for the offense and undertakes a journey on foot with a “fiscal peon.” As they rest up for the night they encounter “one of those wanderers whom one meets from time to time in villages, upon the roads, or even sometimes in the jungle. Very old, very dirty, with long matted hair and wild eyes, ... mumbling to himself in a corner” (Village 151). The beggar is clearly a Buddhist aesthete, constantly traveling and living on the charity of strangers. The beggar explains the Buddhist concept of non-violence saying, “The Lord Buddha said: Kill not at all, kill nothing. It is a sin to kill. If he saw a caterpillar in the path he put him on one side” (Village 153). He goes on to explain how he sees Silindu’s life and all the lives he observes on his travels, “All this doing and doing – running around and round like the red ants – thieving, stabbing, killing, cultivating this and that. Is there much good or wisdom in such a life? It seems to me full of evil – nothing but evil and trouble. Do they ever sit down and rest, do they ever meditate? Desire and desire again, and no fulfillment ever” (Village 153). Clearly the beggar is asking Silindu to question the

rationality of his actions. But Leonard is additionally asking the reader to look deeper. Leonard is cleverly using the concept of *samsara* in the colonial setting to question the rationality of the whole endeavor of Empire. All the resources required to maintain it, the pain and suffering afflicted on many of the subjugated; all for what benefit? As he will go on to explore in greater depth in his non-fictional writing, the economic gains of colonialism were not as great as proclaimed, and what monetary benefit there was, was not for the betterment of the nation, but lined the pockets of select capitalists. Towards the end of the exchange, the beggar explains the concept of reincarnation, the wheel of life, and how the struggle Silindu is experiencing in this life are punishments for sins in a previous life. He explains how all living things are caught in this cycle. Only by following The Path does anyone stand a chance of escaping this cycle (Village 156-57). Again one wonders if by including this in the novel, Leonard is again pointing a finger at the metropolis, warning them that if they don't reconsider the misadventure of Empire, future generations will suffer the consequences.

Another theme that Leonard explores throughout *The Village in the Jungle* is the economic unfairness of the imperial endeavor. He returns to this repeatedly in his non-fiction writing. The economic aspects of imperialism seem to him very much like a pyramid scheme, with wealth flowing from the bottom to the top. Each successive layer piled on top of the base does better financially than the one below it. In order for this to work, the capitalist at the apex of the pyramid, must, using the colonial system, enforce rigid social order that keeps this structure in place. Kipling, as quoted in *Orientalism*, describes the general form of this structure as follows; "Mule, horse, elephant, or bullock, he obeys his driver, and the driver his sergeant, and the sergeant his lieutenant, and the lieutenant his captain, and the captain his

major, and the major his colonel, and the colonel his brigadier commanding three regiments, and the brigadier his general, who obeys the Viceroy, who is the servant of the Empress” (Said 45). While the system in Ceylon is not as militaristic as the one Kipling describes, it was as rigidly structured. This was both to enable the maintenance of order in the Western sense with minimal English resource and sustain the upward flow of the economic benefits. Leonard does a great job in describing this structure, and its resulting economics. Silindu, his family and most of the other members of the village sit at the base of the pyramid. The villagers would work *chenas*, small patches of cleared jungle. Leonard describes the process; “In August every man took a katty and went out into the jungle and cut down the undergrowth, over an acre or two. ... In September he went out again and set fire to the undergrowth ... In October the land is cleared of ash and rubbish, and when the rains fall in November the ground is sown broadcast with millet or kurakkan or maize, with pumpkins, chillies, and a few vegetables. In February the grain is reaped, and on it the village must live until the next February” (Village 8). Presiding over the villagers was the headman, he had the authority to grant access to cultivate *chenas* and in addition he was in charge of collecting taxes, such as “the three schilling body tax” (Village 13) from his villagers. From an exchange in the novel between Nanchohami, the headman’s wife, and her husband, it also seems that the government provided some kind of payment to the headman, which was pro-rated on the size of the village. As she says, “The father of my children has but nine houses under him, and makes but five shillings a year from his headmanship. His father’s father, who was headman before him, had thirty houses in his headmanship, and twenty shillings were paid him by the government every year, besides twenty-four kurunies of paddy” (Village 19). The headman would use these resources to lend,

at usurious rates, to villagers in times of need. However, this cycle of debt did not end with the headman. The villagers relied on traders from nearby villages to provide other essential supplies, items that could not be grown or foraged throughout the year. These traders would show up at harvest time to collect what was owed from the fruits of the villagers' harvest. As Leonard describes, "the Moorman boutique keeper, had supplied clothes to be paid for in grain, with a hundred per cent interest, at the time of reaping" (Village 20). He goes on to describe many other traders who would appear at harvest looking to reclaim debts in a similar fashion, "with their little greasy notebooks, full of unintelligible letters and figures, they descended upon the chenas; and after calculations, wranglings and abuse, which lasted for hour after hour, the accounts were settled, and the strangers left the village ... And when the strangers had gone, the settlement with the headman began; for the headman, on a small scale, lent grain on the same terms in times of scarcity ... In the end the villager carried but little grain from his chena to his hut. Very soon after the reaping of the crop he was again at the headman's door, begging for a little kurakkan to be repaid at the next harvest" (Village 20).

The fact that the villagers were almost always in the headman's debt was the source of his power, and with the chena system the power he wielded was very real. As Leonard explains, "The villagers owned no jungle themselves; it belonged to the Crown, and no one might fell a tree or clear a chena in it without a permit from the Government. It was through these permits that the headman had his hold on the villagers. Application for one had to be made through him; it was he who reported if a clearing had been made without one, or if a man, having been given one, cleared more jungle than it allowed him" (Village 21). So in a very real sense the headman held the villagers lives in his hand. He could deny a man a chena

and thereby deny him his means of existence. Even if he granted a chena to a villager, the headman could make their lives difficult; potentially levying fines if he deemed the chena too big, whether it was or not in actuality. As Leonard states in *Growing*, for the colonial official “the machinery of his government was a large number of headmen in each village, and superior or chief headmen in charge of larger areas” (55-56). It is obvious that the system as Leonard describes it in *The Village in the Jungle*, is flawed, if not outright corrupt. It is this economic imbalance that is the catalyst for the misfortunes that befall Silindu and his family and lead to their ultimate demise. In a final economic insult to Silindu and Babun, they both end the novel imprisoned and providing free labor by “preparing coir by hammering cocoa-nut husks with wooden mallets” (Village 159). The coir would then be sold and used to make rope and matting. Once again someone else is profiting economically from the social and economic structures imposed by imperialism.

Said in the Introduction to *Orientalism* says the following;

There is a difference between knowledge of other peoples and other times that is the result of understanding, compassion, careful study and analysis for their own sakes, and on the other hand knowledge-if that is what it is-that is part of an overall campaign of self-affirmation, belligerency, and outright war. There is, after all, a profound difference between the will to understand for purposes of coexistence and humanistic enlargement of horizons, and the will to dominate for purposes of control and external dominion” (*Orientalism*, xix).

Leonard in *The Village in the Jungle* was attempting, with a good degree of success, to demonstrate “understanding, compassion, careful study and analysis.” There are however, some contemporary critics who accuse Leonard of an Orientalist bias. All these critics are viewing the book from a post-Said perspective. Rajiva Wijesinha critiques Leonard for being “patronizing and paternalist” (Ranasinha 40) and not showing the faults of the British

administration in Ceylon more explicitly. The critic M. Samarakkody takes issue with the fact that both of Silindu's tormenters, the headman and the moneylender, are Ceylonese and not British. Samarakkody also takes issue with the fact that Leonard does not propose solutions to the situations illustrated in the novel (Ranasinha 39). What Samarakkody seems to fail to understand is that the book as a whole is a criticism of the colonial system and the British. Without the structures of empire in place the chance that the headman and moneylender would exert the influence they have over the life of Silindu and his family would be greatly diminished. Additionally, is it the role of a novel to propose solutions? The fictional works are a stepping-stone to the proposed solutions, which are to be found in Leonard's non-fictional writing on the subject. It is very easy once a major piece of sociological and anthropological theory such as *Orientalism* has come into existence, to view all past Occidental writing about the Orient through this new lens. But one has to be very careful when doing so. Does Leonard deal with his subject matter perfectly? Of course not. But he deserves credit for attempting to show the effects of colonialism on the subjugated population, from their perspective, at a time when a Ceylonese author would not have had access to a British audience. He also deserves to be acknowledged for attempting to do this in a culturally sensitive and nuanced way.

What were the reactions of his fellow Bloomsberries to his writing and passion for the people and country of Ceylon? Morgan seemed to have had faith in Leonard's work, encouraging him to approach his own publisher, Edward Arnold, about publishing the novel. His wife Virginia makes scant mention of *The Village in the Jungle* or any of the short stories that make up *Stories of The East* in her diaries or published letters. There is a reference to the acceptance of *The Village in the Jungle* in her letters, specifically in a letter to Lytton dated the

16<sup>th</sup> November 1912 where she writes, “Our great event has been that [Edward] Arnold has taken Leonard’s novel with great praise. Of course he makes it a condition that certain passages are to go out – which, we don’t yet know. It’s triumphant to have made a complete outsider believe in one’s figments” (V. Letters 13). Other than references to a friend reading it and a note to Leonard in 1914 that they should talk to Arnold about further reprinting of the book, these lines to Lytton are the most substantial published comments of hers on the novel. Lytton’s own reaction was much less favorable. He noted in a letter to Saxon that, “I was disappointed to see that it was about nothing but blacks – whom really I don’t much care for” (qtd. in Ondaatje 238). One wonders, given Lytton and Leonard’s relationship, whether part of his negativity may have stemmed from jealousy, as it would be another five years before Lytton garnered any literary success of his own. There is no other record of how the others in the Bloomsbury circle perceived this novel or any of the short stories.

The book was initially a publishing success, requiring two initial reprints, and was translated into French, German, and by the 1940s into Sinhala. By 1929 it had sold 2,149 copies and earned Leonard £63 in royalties (Ondaatje 236). The popularity of the novel began to fade in the West, but its merit was still noted by critics. Edward Thompson believed it was, “one of the best half-dozen novels ever written about the East, and the only one I recall which concentrates on a native scene and does it convincingly with a single white character in contrast to Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1899) and E. M. Forster’s *A Passage to India* (1924)” (qtd. in Ranasinha 34). The one country where it has been in almost continual circulation is Sri Lanka. The translation into Sinhala was published in 1947 and by 1949 it was a set text in schools under the title *Beddegama* (Ranasinha 35).

Even after Leonard's time in Ceylon and his fictional writing on the subject was over, he remained engaged with its people and politics. Glendinning notes in her biography of Leonard that in May 1915, at a point when Leonard was already engaged in the pacifist and embryonic League of Nations movements, he was drawn back into the world of the Ceylonese. Rioting had broken out that month between Sinhalese and Muslims. This event was an inter-ethnic dispute, but the British government mistook it for an attempt at revolution. In response they imposed martial law, condemning eighty-three people to death and imprisoning sixty more for life. There were attempts by members of the Legislative Council of Ceylon to approach the Governor to resolve the situation, but they were rebuffed and told to send representation in writing. The situation and tensions, now between the native people of Ceylon and the Imperial government, escalated, and two delegates, E.W. Perera and D.B. Jayatillaka, who was later the prime minister of Sri Lanka, were sent to London to request an official enquiry. The Colonial Office rejected the request, and so the two men contacted Leonard for help. Leonard responded by writing articles about the situation for *The New Statesman* magazine and helping edit the delegate's pamphlet and distributing it to all the MPs he knew. In 1917, Leonard invited the two Ceylonese men to Hogarth House. Leonard and Virginia's experiences with the visitors were very different. It is clear from scattered diary entries between 1917-1918, that she did not like these men. On the 16<sup>th</sup> October 1917 she notes, "We came back to find Perera, wearing his slip & diamond initial in his tie as usual; in fact, the poor little mahogany coloured wretch has no variety of subjects. The character of the Governor, & the sins of the Colonial Office, these are his topics; always the same stories, the same point of view, the same likeness to a caged monkey, suave on the surface, inscrutable

beyond" (The Diary of Virginia Woolf 60-61) and six months later she is referring to them as the "the two darkies" (V. Woolf 122). Leonard had a different opinion, writing, "Jayatillaka was an exceptionally nice person and so was his wife, she used to come and dine with us and sing Sinhalese songs more beautifully than I had ever heard singing in Ceylon" (Beginning Again 230). Leonard continued the campaign; the *Daily News* and *Yorkshire Post* picked up on the issue after reports of sexual abuse of Sinhalese women during the aftermath of the riots came to light. In January 1918 the Secretary of State for the Colonies agreed to meet the Ceylonese delegation, as well as Leonard and the Bishop of Lincoln. Leonard had drafted the talking points for all the delegates, but as he later recalled in *Beginning Again*, "We all did our best, but all we got ... was the inevitable and expected refusal" (Woolf 231). Whilst the effort was a failure, the events that had precipitated Leonard's re-engagement with the politics of Ceylon turned out to be a spark that ignited the nationalism movement that would much later lead to Sri Lanka's independence.

## Economic Imperialism: From Experience to Policy

While Leonard's fictional work probes many of the evils of imperialism, its economic impacts and consequences seem to have been of particular interest to him. After putting aside his aspirations to become a successful novelist, he increasingly turned to the writing of non-fiction in order to further the ends of various causes in which he believed passionately. As he writes in *Beginning Again*, "once one has been personally concerned with communal affairs and has felt personally responsibility for them, one can never escape a feeling of political responsibility. I had to study the details of the social system in which I was now going to live as carefully as I had studied that of the Tamils of Jaffna and the Sinhalese of Kandy or the Southern Province" (99). These studies led to Leonard's involvement in the anti-war movement before and during The Great War, advocating for the development of international government, specifically The League of Nations, and shaping of the nascent Labour Party's foreign policy. As with many aspects of Leonard's post-colonial activities, his involvement in the investigation and development of policy on these subjects was in part spurred on by personal connections he made. Directly after his return to England and marriage to Virginia, Leonard carried out some research and writing on the co-operative movement. This resulted in an article on the subject published in the *Manchester Guardian*. As Leonard explains, "the Webbs, sitting in the centre of their Fabian spider-web, always kept an eager eye watching for some promising young man who might be ensnared by them." He continues, "the Webbs thought as well of me as they had thought of my article and they got me to join the Fabian society at once. This led to my doing work for the Fabians and for the *New Statesman*" (*Beginning Again* 114). After the Great War, Leonard would join the staff of *The Nation*, where

he reunited with J.A. Hobson, with whom he'd been a founding member of the League of Nations Society prior to and during the conflict. It should be noted that J.A. Hobson had also written scholarly works on the problems of empire, in particular *Imperialism: A Study* published in 1902. Leonard explains in *Downhill All The Way* what the original intent of the Fabian Society had been, writing, "It was pre-eminently a creation of Sidney and Beatrice Webb. They meant it to be and they made it an instrument for the political education of the labour movement and ultimately of the Labour Party" (218).

One topic he returns to repeatedly in his research and writing is the problem, both practical and moral, of empire. He published four significant works on the topic, *Economic Imperialism* (1920), *Empire & Commerce in Africa: A Study in Economic Imperialism* (1920), *Mandates and Empire* (1920) and *Imperialism and Civilization* (1928). One of the earlier books, *Economic Imperialism*, shows how threads of what he was attempting to describe in his fiction, especially "Pearls and Swine" and *The Village in the Jungle*, start to coalesce here in hard criticism and policy recommendations.

In the opening of *Economic Imperialism* Leonard notes that, "the relation between European and non-Europeans, between European civilization and non-European civilizations, was so profoundly modified during the nineteenth century that the changes have now constituted a world movement whose effects are as wide and drastic as those of Christianity or feudalism" (11). He additionally points out that, "to-day practically the whole of the world which has not been Europeanized has been subjected openly or covertly to European control" (*Economic Imperialism* 11). This echoes what Said observes about the expansion of the influence of Orientalism over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when he writes

that, “the period of immense advance in the institutions and content of Orientalism coincides exactly with the period of unparalleled European expansion; from about 35 percent of the earth’s surface to about 85 percent of it” (Orientalism 41). Leonard goes on to describe the two processes involved in this “Europeanisation.”

The first of these processes is the age old ebb and flow of people over the earth. He describes the colonization of North America, South Africa and Australia as examples of this. The important point of this process is, that although, “such colonization may begin with slaughter and conquest, it at least ends in the creation of a new civilization, rooted in the soil, controlling its affairs in its own way” (Economic Imperialism 13). This is an overly simplistic view, and would seem to ignore the extreme violence and exploitation that was involved in this form of colonization. He writes that in these situations “the European conqueror or colonist has either fused with the native population or has himself multiplied to form new and independent communities” (Economic Imperialism 13). Again Leonard minimizes, the suppression of, or attempted elimination of, the native population that occurred.

The second process, the primary concern of this book, is that which he observed first hand in Ceylon and researched in Africa and Asia. “The land and peoples have simply been conquered and subjected to the direct and autocratic rule of European States” (Economic Imperialism 13). He breaks this second process down into two subtypes of control. Africa, he writes, is a region where, “the power of the European State has been used directly to acquire and to subject the populations to European rule” (Economic Imperialism 13). China, Persia and Turkey are regions where, “the power of the European State has been applied indirectly, not to

acquire territory and complete administrative control of the population, but in order to further the economies of the inhabitants of the European State” (Economic Imperialism 13).

As with Said’s *Orientalism*, Leonard is interested in exploring the “motives, objects, and results of this policy” (Economic Imperialism 14). He starts with the observable motivations behind imperialism, stating that they “can be analyzed into four different kinds, moral, sentimental, military and economic” (Economic Imperialism 15). He observes that the moral imperative can be summed up by Kipling’s “white man’s burden” (Economic Imperialism 15). Leonard’s description of this is in essence what Said would call “manifest Orientalism” (206) in *Orientalism* fifty-nine years later. According to Leonard this doctrine assumed that “the white man is superior to other races, in heart and brain, above all in his political and social institutions, his morality, and his religion; he is in fact one more of God’s Chosen Peoples” (Economic Imperialism 16). This doctrine was articulated forcefully by the stock-jobber character in “Pearls and Swine” when he spouts arrogant phrases such as, “I am a white man, you’re black; I’ll treat you well, give you courts and justice; but I’m the superior race, I’m master here” (Woolf 38). Leonard points out that this position is false moral superiority used to mask the acquisition of empire for selfish purposes when he writes, “the white man’s burden becomes a duty only after, in a fit of absence of mind or in order to fill his own pockets, he has placed it upon his own shoulders” (Economic Imperialism 18).

The second motivation used to justify imperialism is sentimentality. This Leonard considers, can be broken down into romanticism and prestige. Romanticism he defines as “the adventure of conquest and war, provided that they are carried on at distance sufficiently far to spare us any actual experience of them” (Economic Imperialism 18). One

must remember that this book was published two years after the end of The Great War, so the realities of the conflict fought close to home would have been fresh in readers' minds. Leonard writes mockingly, "The prestige of a State is very seriously affected by whether it has or has not savages. In fact the glory of a European nation is not only increased by the acquisition of territory outside Europe; it appears to be also diminished by the mere fact of such acquisition by some other nation" (Economic Imperialism 20). He makes both an astute and somewhat satirical comparison between the psychology of nations and the psychology of class with respect to prestige. He notes, "The acquisition of white lace-curtains and an aspidistra, or in another class of a motor car or a footman, confers social prestige; but everyone must have observed the further fact that the acquisition of one of these possessions by an individual A, is regarded as an affront to the prestige of an individual B, who does not possess one, when A and B are of the same class" (Economic Imperialism 20-21). This concept was clearly drawn from the work of Thorstein Veblen, specifically his influential book *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. Leonard is describing the concept that Veblen termed "conspicuous consumption." Leonard, however, is applying it for satirical effect at an international level. Leonard concludes that both the moral and sentimental justifications for imperialism are really only of any value to the imperialist when confronting anti-imperialist sentiment in the metropolis, stating that, "if the empire is glorious, there is an obvious relation between imperialism and patriotism, and it becomes unpatriotic to say a word against either imperialism or the empire, or to urge abandonment of any imperial acquisition" (Economic Imperialism 22-23). Returning to "Pearls and Swine", the reader can clearly see this type of thinking embodied in the characters of the archdeacon and stock-jobber.

Leonard highlights one other non-economic motivation for imperialism. This is the strategic motivation, which he says is often articulated with phrases like, “Unless we seize this territory, the other country may seize it and use it as a base for military operations against us” (Economic Imperialism 23). While this logic holds some water, it does so only if the country already has other imperial conquests. As he points out “Britain holds Egypt not because Egypt protects Britain strategically, but because if she did not hold Egypt, she could not hold India” (Economic Imperialism 24). Leonard observes that all the motivations described previously “would not of themselves either collectively or singly, have been sufficient to set in motion or to maintain in motion the expansion of Europe and the subjection of Africa and Asia” (Economic Imperialism 24).

So if these psychological and strategic motivations are a façade, then what are the real motivations and objectives? In one sentence Leonard illuminates them, “At every step in the imperialist expansion of Europe, the impulse of economic causes is evident” (Economic Imperialism 26). He observes that there were phases to economic imperialism. He divides these into a phase which took the form of “private commercial undertakings and adventures by which foreign markets were found for the products of European industry and these exchanged for the products and raw materials of Asia, and to a less extent of Africa” (Economic Imperialism 26). This follows the economic “bedrock of European civilization, to sell in the dearest and to buy in the cheapest market” (Economic Imperialism 26). He notes that the key point about this early phase was an absence of, or minimal involvement in these activities by European governments in “pushing or protecting the economic interests of their European subjects outside Europe” (Economic Imperialism 27). This attitude however changed radically

from about 1870 onwards. Leonard, a prize winning gardener, utilizing the lyricism of his fictional writing, uses the following analogue to describe this change. “The outbreak was as sudden as the outburst of leaves and buds in spring, but, ... the spectacular budding and flowering of spring under a few hours of warm sunshine are really caused by slow and unseen changes which have been going on all through the winter in plant and tree” (Economic Imperialism 27). What were the “slow and unseen changes” that had been occurring in Europe that precipitated this change? Leonard highlights two key ones: firstly the massive growth of the European population, especially concentrated in urban areas bringing with it the need to feed, clothe, house and employ them. Secondly, the new “religion” of capitalism required that the end results of obtaining raw materials for manufactured products “should result in the maximum of profit to the small class who provided the capital for and controlled the operations of industry” (Economic Imperialism 28). As a result “politics became another name for economics” (Economic Imperialism 29). Leonard quotes Chamberlain’s belief, “universally accepted and acted upon that, ‘commerce is the greatest of all political interests’” (Economic Imperialism 29).

Leonard points to two events that led to the exploitation of Asia and Africa for economic gain by Europe. The first was the opening up of these regions to the West by explorers such as Stanley, and the second a growing move to protectionist policies by European countries, over the doctrines of free trade that had held sway previously (Economic Imperialism 30). The move to protectionism from free trade would seem counterintuitive going hand in hand with European imperial expansion, but as Leonard explains this protectionist theory “implied that the organization of the State should be used as a weapon against the industrial

and commercial interests of the citizens of other States. A ring fence of tariffs and administrative regulations was to be drawn around territory under the control of the State in order to reserve within it for its own citizens the markets and the stores of raw materials” (Economic Imperialism 30). The key here is the phrase “territory under the control of the State,” because as Leonard describes, in a span of ten years a land-grab of epic proportions was undertaken by the European powers. “In the ten years 1880-1890, five million square miles of African territory, containing a population of over sixty millions, were seized by and subjected to European States” (Economic Imperialism 32). While the Asian land-grab was not impressive in terms of square miles, it was in no way insignificant. Leonard constantly reminds the reader that the primary impulse for these State sponsored “annexations, protectorates, or penetration, came from financiers or capitalist joint-stock companies” (Economic Imperialism 33). Leonard concludes the “Introductory” chapter by showing how the governments of the major European powers openly acknowledged their role in the capitalist doctrine. With respect to the English government he once again quotes Chamberlain who “declared that the care of his Government was that ‘new markets shall be created, and that old markets shall be effectually developed,’ and he explained that there was therefore ‘a necessity, as well as a duty, for us to uphold the dominion and empire which we now possess’ and a ‘necessity for using every legitimate opportunity to extend our influence and control in that African continent which is now being opened up to civilization and to commerce” (Economic Imperialism 35). Leonard also quotes Lord Rosebery, who said the same thing less eloquently when he said, “the British were ‘pegging out claims for posterity’” (Economic Imperialism 35).

Leonard, spends the next two chapters discussing in detail the process by which this economic imperialism occurred in the African and Asian continents. He points out early on in the chapter on Africa that while “the weapon of expansion was war and conquest, the aims of expansion were markets, raw materials, and profits” (Economic Imperialism 42). He repeats Chamberlain’s quote on the British occupation of Egypt, justifying it by saying that it was necessary so that “new markets shall be created and that old markets shall be effectually developed” (Economic Imperialism 44-45). Leonard spends a good deal of the second chapter on the exploits of Cecil Rhodes in Southern Africa, and his expansion policy, which was based solely on trade routes. The British Government was in agreement with this policy and as a result the British territory was “drawn without any reference to native rights or occupation: half a tribe was left on one side and half on the other side of the line. The result was years of unrest, discontent and fighting among the natives” (Economic Imperialism 47). Leonard also notes that while the British government sanctioned the expansion, often private companies themselves raised the military forces needed for the operations. As a result as Leonard observes, “a joint-stock company ... claimed to become the absolute owner of 148,000 square miles of territory and 700,000 Africans situated between latitude 16 and 22 south of the equator. Here we have a good example of economic imperialism reduced to its simplest terms” (Economic Imperialism 48). Leonard is scathing in this critique of the exploration process, carried out by individuals, such as Stanley, or small groups of individuals on behalf of these companies in order to obtain treaties with native rulers. He describes the process as follows. “These treaties are curious documents: the king or chief signs them by making a mark, and thereby proclaims to the world that he has received from the European and his company a little

cloth, some bottles of gin, and the promise of protection, while he has given in exchange to the European and the company the sovereignty over the whole of his lands and people” (Economic Imperialism 48). Leonard notes that whilst the dirty work of empire building was put in the hands of these private companies, “the European Governments not only gave official support and recognition to these financial groups and joint-stock companies, which acquired sovereignty by the most dubious methods ... they allowed and encouraged them to make good their occupation of those territories by every means, including warfare against the inhabitants. And long before the occupation was effective, they handed over to these companies the administration of the countries” (Economic Imperialism 51).

As with his fictional writing it is the effects of this process both on the European nations and the colonized peoples that most interests Leonard. He points out that European nations initially saw Africa and Asia as being like America and Australia, both a new market and a source of raw materials. Additionally they were a potential “new home overseas for a large number of emigrants from the mother country” (Economic Imperialism 53). It soon became clear that the idea of Africa and Asia as both a prospective profitable market, and emigration destination was a fallacy. The percentage of European people living in any given colonial territory was always incredibly low. Additionally as Leonard shows, using official trading statistics for all of Britain’s African colonies, “the whole of these possessions would only have provided a market for two per cent. of British exports, and would have furnished only two per cent. of British imports” (Economic Imperialism 56). The reason for this failure according to Leonard is the fantastical thinking on the part of the imperialist that “millions of natives can be converted into consumers of European manufactured goods” (Economic Imperialism 58).

Focusing on just the factual, he does not dwell on why there might not have been a cultural desire on the part of the colonized for huge amounts of European goods. He prefers to focus on what should have been obvious to the imperialist, the massive income disparity between Europe and Africa. He summarizes this by noting that, “the few score inhabitants of Park Lane have a far higher purchasing power and are a far better market for British industries than the millions of Africans” (Economic Imperialism 59). Leonard also highlights, using import figures, the fact that the value of imports from imperial territories was also small compared to the value of imports from more established trading partners. So as Leonard concludes, “the budget of no European State has ever shown any credit balance from the administration of its African possessions” (Economic Imperialism 62). So if the colonized countries are not benefiting the overall economies of the European countries under whose name they are administered, then who are the beneficiaries? As Leonard observes, “the only people to whom tropical possessions are a source of considerable wealth are to be found not in the industrial classes, but in the small class of concessionaires and capitalists who actually exploit the land and labour of the tropics” (Economic Imperialism 62). Leonard proceeds to examine the effect on the colonized peoples.

Leonard ridicules the moral claim that the process “gave to the natives law, order and the blessings of Christianity and civilization” (Economic Imperialism 64). Of law and order he says “it is too a strange use of language to call by the name “law and order” the savage and atrocious system of administration which was applied in the Belgian Congo, the French Congo and German South-West Africa, and which led to the extermination of large numbers of the inhabitants” (Economic Imperialism 65). Of Christianity, he points out that, “there are nine

million persons in Africa who are nominally Christians out of a total estimated population of 170 millions. So much for Christianity” (Economic Imperialism 65). He observes that had Europe wanted to “share in the blessings of their civilization” (Economic Imperialism 65) they could have invested in education, which as he pointed out did not happen. In Nigeria in 1917, for example, only one percent of government expenditure in the country went towards education. Having given examples of the false promises of the imperialist powers he turns his attention to their legacy.

The legacy is economic; the gift of a system that is “almost the antithesis of the indigenous African economic system which the European found when he first entered Africa” (Economic Imperialism 66). This system is capitalism, the “(1) private individual ownership of land and instruments of production, (2) the division of the population into economic classes” (Economic Imperialism 66). Leonard explains how this works in the colonies. The European capitalist or joint-stock company takes the land and then the native is forced by one means or another to work on that European’s land (Economic Imperialism 68); the ultimate threat being that of starvation if he does not. The means of compulsion can be various, ranging from reducing the amount of land the natives have to support themselves, the imposition of taxes on natives who are not working, or the use of the tribal structure to compel work (Economic Imperialism 70). Leonard explores these methods, to great effect in his fiction. As previously illustrated in *Pearls and Swine* where the British take a two thirds share of the oysters retrieved through the labor of the native populations simply because “the sea belongs to us. ... Therefore of course the pearls belong to us” (Woolf 42). The native people’s motivation for their labors is survival, while for the English it is profit. While Leonard does not go into great detail about his

schemes, it is implied that the European character of White is an equal opportunity capitalist of the worst kind. As the Commissioner recalls, “he talked a great deal about the hidden wealth of India and exploitation” (Pearls and Swine 48). Like every good capitalist White bemoans any government interference saying “the Government always put difficulties in his way. They made ‘the native’ their stalking horse against European enterprise” (Pearls and Swine 48). White’s view of colonial capitalism is certainly extreme, but the views articulated were very real for a segment of the European population. It is the non-Sinhalese in *The Village in the Jungle*, in particular the trader and usurer Fernando, who reap the profits of the villagers’ labors. Additionally, in the novel Leonard spends time, as previously described, explaining the various structures put in place by the colonizers that moved wealth up the social structure and left the native on the bottom rung and in constant fear of starvation (Village 18, 19-21). Additionally, as previously noted, the legal system with its punishment of “rigorous imprisonment” (Village 64) was essentially a way of extorting free labor from predominantly poor, illiterate natives.

Leonard cites theories of racial superiority, later described by Said and also articulated by characters like the stock-jobber in “Pearls and Swine,” as being used by apologists of this system. As Leonard says, their “argument is that an inferior civilization must give way before a superior, and that it is both inevitable and right that the native who cannot exploit the riches of his own country should stand aside and allow the European to do so” (Economic Imperialism 71). However, as he demonstrates in the last few paragraphs of this chapter, when comparing territories where the British treated the land as though the native owned it to those where the native is compelled to work, the value of exports produced was always higher when the native has more autonomy and ownership.

The economic exploitation of Asia, particularly Turkey, Persia and China, required a different method, which Leonard described in the next chapter. A different approach was required because all of these societies already had “highly developed civilizations with complex political institutions and economic systems which may be different from, but are not necessarily inferior to, those of Europe” (Economic Imperialism 77). Additionally, Japan had become an imperial power. As Leonard points out, “the Japanese deliberately adopted the political, military, and economic system of Europe in order to protect themselves against political absorption and economic exploitation” (Economic Imperialism 78). The process of exploiting Asia required a more indirect and political approach, but of course backed up with military might. Leonard describes how the British, using national pride as a motivation, were able to make in-roads in to Chinese territory in the mid 1800s. British citizens and merchants had been expelled from Canton after they had tried to import foreign opium into China, breaking a Chinese prohibition. “British subjects had suffered insult and loss, and it was the duty of their Government to demand an apology and compensation” (Economic Imperialism 82). The end result was that Britain gained control of Hong Kong and access to five ports, which was all that was needed for Britain to gain a toehold in the country. From that point on, the economic domination of the Chinese was inevitable. It is at this point in the book that Leonard starts to propose solutions. He starts by citing a specific example that shows that if an “internationalist” stance had been taken, both the West and China could have mutually benefited.

The example he cites is that of the Chinese Customs Service. By the mid-1800s, “smuggling and the evasion of duties had become the rule rather than the exception, and in

such circumstances it was naturally the more honest trader who was penalized” (Economic Imperialism 85). This led to constant intergovernmental wrangling concerning disputes over treaty breaches or unfair treatment. In 1854, an agreement was reached between the British, American and French and the Chinese Customs service in Shanghai. The agreement was that the Chinese would appoint a board of customs inspectors, one British, one French and one American to oversee customs activities in that port. The system worked. Over time the customs service became a truly international organization, by 1912 comprising Chinese as well as English, American, French, German, Russian, Japanese and nine other nationalities (Economic Imperialism 86). The system was organized around the principle that “the European customs officials considered it their duty to build up for the Chinese Government a service that would protect the legitimate interests and the rights of the Chinese people” (Economic Imperialism 87). As Leonard notes, the service was a success and “benefited both China and Europe. But the experiment was not repeated” (Economic Imperialism 88). Once China was opened up, the forms of economic imperialism that had been used in Africa and other parts of Asia began to assert themselves, and by 1900 China had effectively been broken up into “spheres of interest” controlled separately by the British, French, Germans and Russians (Economic Imperialism 90). Once again, it was the Chinese that fared worst in all of this. As Leonard explains, “no attempt was made to safeguard the interests of the Chinese. China’s communications, and much of her mineral wealth was mortgaged to foreign financiers, whose sole object was the making of profits” (Economic Imperialism 93). This led to the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, which was put down by European powers. “The Christian Powers of the West, who had directly provoked this outbreak by robbing China of territory and by forcing her

to mortgage the wealth of her people to their financiers, then proceeded to extract from her an indemnity of £67,000,000, presumably as a fine upon an Asiatic people for resisting the aggression and economic imperialism of Europe” (Economic Imperialism 94). Things did not improve; there was infighting between the European powers, the collapse of the Chinese monarchy, the formation of the Chinese republic and the increased influence of Japan in the Chinese territories, including those that had previously been in the hands of Europe. As Leonard concludes at the time of writing in 1920, “economic imperialism has completed its task: civil war in China is endemic; the Government is hopelessly corrupt; the finances are in chaos; large portions of Chinese territory are occupied by foreign armies; the revenue is all mortgaged to pay the interest on foreign loans from which the Chinese have derived little or no benefit and infinite loss; and by a system of mingled fraud and force foreigners now hold in their hands China’s communications and a large part of her mineral wealth” (Economic Imperialism 98).

In the final chapter of *Economic Imperialism*, Leonard looks at “Causes and Results.” He states that, “we have here an international problem which centers round the relations between western civilization and the civilizations of Africa and the East” (Economic Imperialism 100). As he observes, there is no escaping that western civilization in the twentieth century is based around “the making of profits, buying cheap and selling dear, these are the principles of a capitalistic society, and the economic motives which result from accepting these principles determine the actions not only of the holders of capital but every class in the community, from the capitalist to the artist or worker” (Economic Imperialism 101). To the capitalist, Leonard observes, economic imperialism is the only logical form of internationalism.

What has resulted are clearly defined international classes, “the imperialist Powers of the West and the subject races of Africa and the East, the one ruling and exploiting, the other ruled and exploited” (Economic Imperialism 102). But turning to the examples of India and Egypt, Leonard asserts that, “neither the Asiatic nor the African will submit indefinitely to the despotic government and exploitation of a European State, and that the time comes when that rule can only be maintained by ‘controlled rifle fire,’ machine guns, and bombing aeroplanes” (Economic Imperialism 103). Leonard argues that while the capitalist and imperial apologist will say that there is no other alternative, the peace treaties signed at the end of The Great War do provide such an alternative path.

Leonard was no stranger to the proposed path. This is something that he had been researching and writing about in the years leading up to the 1916 publication of his *International Government*. He began advocating politically for this approach with the League of Nations Society around the same time. The path is the principle of the mandatory system, which is enshrined in Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, much of which was lifted wholesale from *International Government*. Leonard describes the key points as he saw them, being “that the ‘well-being and development of’ the peoples of these African and Asiatic territories, ‘form a sacred trust of civilization,’ that ‘the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations, ... and that this tutelage of such peoples should be exercised by them as Mandatories on behalf of the League,’ and that ‘securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant’” (Economic Imperialism 104). Leonard rightly bemoans the fact that in the time between the signing of the Covenant and the writing of *Economic Imperialism* there was no effort at all to implement Article 22. He correctly observes,

that while capitalism remains the overarching political and economic doctrine of the West there is no motivation for European States to act in this manner (Economic Imperialism 105).

However, Leonard, ever the political optimist wants to show the reader how the mandatory system could work. First, he says that Article 22 states that many subject peoples are “not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world” (Economic Imperialism 106). This he points out is not to do with the innate nature of the people but has to do with damage that economic imperialism has done. Therefore Leonard points out that “the European must himself help in undoing the evil which he has caused if it is to be undone rapidly” (Economic Imperialism 106). Leonard then cites the Covenant again, where it proposes that the “well-being and development of these peoples’ shall be publicly recognized as a ‘sacred trust of civilization’” (Economic Imperialism 107). This development will take many forms, which could range from access to international advisors to, in worst cases, a temporary mandatory government “whose main purpose should be to promote their [the subject peoples] material well-being and educate them to govern themselves” (Economic Imperialism 107). Leonard also outlines a six point plan that the European Powers could immediately institute with regard to China that would repair some of the economic damage and raise China back up into a position where it could be a partner on the world stage (Economic Imperialism 109). He also outlines a four-point plan for Africa (Economic Imperialism 110-111). However he repeats over and over in these last few pages that most importantly unless there is a radical change of the West’s thinking then these plans and the mandatory system outlined in Article 22 are unlikely to work.

## Conclusion

The preceding sections, have given a flavor of Leonard's direct experience with non-European culture. I have explored how Leonard processed his feelings about his experiences of colonialism in Ceylon in his writing, firstly in the short stories that make up *Stories of The East*, and then in the novel *The Village in the Jungle*. I have demonstrated how some of the ideas that find their genesis in his fictional work, after further research became more explicitly stated in Leonard's policy writing. I have also shown that although he cannot necessarily be considered in the same league as someone like Edward Said in terms of sociological thought, he did start to raise issues about the interactions of Europeans with non-European races that contemporary theorists would later write about.

As I mentioned in the opening section, when beginning this research I had originally intended to look at a broader spectrum of Bloomsbury personalities and endeavors. However the question of attitudes of the men and women that made up the Bloomsbury circle to the non-European races is not at all clear-cut. If anything, it demonstrates how much applying a "Bloomsbury" label to anything is a problematic proposition. As with any group of friends, there are a range of different attitudes on display. As noted previously when discussing Lytton's thoughts on *The Village in the Jungle*, there seems to be evidence among some of them of, at best, a less than tolerant attitude to non-whites. Virginia's attitude to Leonard's Ceylonese friends was less than cordial and her noted outbursts about them seemed to focus on their color. But running counter to this, one finds in *Orlando* at least a literary interest in the Romany culture, when the title character encounters 'gipsies' in Turkey. However Virginia only

engages with them as an observer, through the eyes of Orlando. She does not achieve what Leonard does in his later fictional writing and get beneath the skin of this other culture. The outcome of Orlando's encounter is to accentuate the differences between the European and the Oriental. For example, the fact that the gipsies "thought a descent of four or five hundred years only the meanest possible. Their own families went back at least two or three thousand years" (Orlando 147). Orlando also comes to the realization that her Western ideas of ownership ran counter to those of the gipsies, noting, "it was clear that the gipsy thought there was no more vulgar ambition than to possess bedrooms by the hundred ... Looked at from the gipsy point of view, a Duke, Orlando understood, was nothing but a profiteer or robber who snatched land and money from people who rated these things of little worth" (Orlando 148). The differences become too much to bear for all parties and after Orlando experiences a vision of England which causes her to "burst in to a passion of tears" (151), she decides to return to her home. Is Virginia commenting on an unbridgeable divide between cultures, or is it more of a critique of European values of capital and land ownership? If it is the latter then she does seem to share more of Leonard's sentiments. However, unlike Leonard, she does not dwell on the issue long, the whole episode taking up only a scant few pages of the novel. Much like her handling of the encounters with the natives in *The Voyage Out*, she does not focus on "the other" in depth. It should be noted that while there is little focus on native peoples in *The Voyage Out* there is a subtle critique of the capitalist system. It comes in the form of the characters of Mr. and Mrs. Flushing, who are traders of Oriental curios. As Virginia writes "Mrs. Flushing remarked. 'My husband rides about and finds 'em, they [the natives] don't know what they're worth, so we get 'em cheap. And we shall sell 'em to smart women in London (The

Voyage Out 229). Leonard echoes this phrase when describing capitalism in *Economic Imperialism* when he says the goal is “buying cheap and selling dear” (L Woolf 101).

Other Bloomsbury writers did try and write from the perspective of the non-European. As mentioned in the opening, one book you are almost guaranteed to find on the shelves at any bookshop is Morgan’s *A Passage to India*. Much scholarly ink has been spilled over this book, its depiction of imperial relations in India and the divide between cultures. However, what separates Leonard’s writing from that of Morgan is the strata of society that they deal with. Morgan’s characters, both English and Indian inhabit the upper tiers of their respective societies. Leonard’s Ceylonese characters are most definitely situated in the underclass of society. Leonard’s native characters would not socialize with the English. This is not an attempt to diminish what Morgan did in *A Passage to India*. However, the two authors while highlighting the divide that imperialism causes have two very different goals in mind in their writing. Leonard’s aim is to show the very real physical and economic effects of what he came to believe was an unjust system of oppression. Morgan, more of a humanist, writes more of a clash of cultures, specifically how a lack of understanding of the other leads to social dissonance. In essence it is the same theme he has written about before concerning European culture, in books like *Howards End* where he deals with domestic class issues and in *A Room With A View* where he explores in part the inability of the English to understand other European cultures they are immersed in, and their desire to bring their Englishness with them wherever they travelled.

Of all of Bloomsbury writers, it may be Bunny that comes closest to Leonard in exploring the experience of “the other” both in his fictional and historical-fictional writing. In

the novel *The Sailor's Return* (1925) he writes about the experience of a black woman returning with an English mariner and their bi-racial son to rural Dorset where they run an inn called 'The Sailor's Return.' The novel is a period piece set in the 1850s and is a very effective work of literature. It deals with issues experienced by both parties in the relationship. The sailor, William Targett clearly loves his wife Tulip and their son. However, Targett finds that members of his family are against the union and make the situation difficult. Some of the locals, in particular the parson, take issue with Tulip and her heathen heritage. Tulip also has difficulties adjusting, reconciling the life she has known in her home country with expectations of her in England. The novel has a tragic ending, with Targett dead and Tulip widowed, her son forced to leave to be a sailor. Tulip is eventually reduced to poverty, becoming a servant at the establishment she previously co-owned. Bunny's depiction of English life has a sense of realism to it, but his depictions of African life, through Tulip's description of the history her people is full of cliché and stereotype. Tulip sums up this history saying, "I have told you that story so that you should understand what sort of people we are; cruel, savage, and liking the sight of blood. Here in England you never do cruel things like those I have been telling you about" (Garnett 139). While one can easily fault Garnett for the fantastical nature of his depiction of African life, I believe he does so in part ironically. For while there might not have been as much direct bloodshed in her life in England, it was because of cruelty that Tulip is reduced to her final station.

Bunny also deals with the issue of race relations in his short story *A Man in the Zoo* (1924). In the story, after being called "the missing link" by his girlfriend during an argument at the zoo, the protagonist, John Cromartie, decides to put himself on display there.

A baboon in the neighboring cage badly mauls him but he survives only to find that a black man, Joe Tennison, has replaced the baboon. As Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina says in her paper *Bushmen and Blackface: Bloomsbury and "Race"*, Joe Tennison "begins as a quiet fellow brushing a bowler hat, then becomes a zoot-suited caricature, and ends as a wild creature with yellow eyes ordered back into his cage by his keeper" (60). This according to Gerzina "is a negative reflection of Cromartie's situation. As the black man becomes dehumanized, Cromartie becomes humanized; as the black man talks about rejecting women, Cromartie becomes accepted by a woman; as the black man seems poised to become a permanent display, Cromartie – whitened, humanized and Anglicized – is set free to assume his appropriate station with his rich fiancée. Natural order has returned" (60). Bunny, flirts with the issue of European and non-European relations in his historical novel *Pocahontas, or the Nonparell of Virginia* (1933). The novel is set for the most part in America and as Gerzina observes "he makes it clear that the European settlers surrounding John Smith are the interlopers" (Bushmen 60). Over the course of the novel Bunny "shows the whites as greedy and uncivilizable barbarians who cannot even manage to feed themselves, and the Indians as noble but doomed to be colonized" (Gerzina 61). As Gerzina observes, Pocohontas' fatal flaw is her fascination with England and that "By marrying and going to London, she loses not only this vision but her life, as life among the barbarians [the English] proves simultaneously fascinating and repellent, and fatal" (Bushmen 61). Again as with Leonard, you see a development in thinking towards "the other." From the antagonistic use of the black man to hyper-emphasize the final Englishness of the protagonist in *A Man in the Zoo*, to a more nuanced exploration of the clash

of cultures within England in *The Sailor's Return* to what appears to be a critique of the colonial enterprise in *Pocahontas*.

This paper has focused predominantly on the literary arts. The Bloomsbury circle also explored non-European culture in both their visual artwork and their art criticism. From Roger Fry's effusive praise of African sculpture in the *Burlington Magazine* and his incorporation of Ottoman motifs in his Omega Workshop mural designs, to Duncan incorporating gypsy iconography in his paintings are all evidence of an interest in an artistic influence outside the normal Western tradition. However this is an area that requires further independent research. The question that should be posed is whether these explorations of other cultures by the Bloomsbury artists were a real investment in native cultures, mere flirtations with the exotic, or whether they were being used in a reactionary way, to kick against the bricks of the staid English art establishment in the same way they had done with their championing of post-impressionist art. Another thing to consider, especially when it comes to Roger, is whether he was simply using these "other" artworks and influences to prove the universality and timelessness of his theories of formalist aesthetics. These are all questions that should be given the proper attention they deserve, so will not be addressed any further here, but just left to show that this interest in non-European cultures was not limited to the written word.

Let us return to Leonard. What is his legacy with regard to colonialism and British imperialism? If one were to leave it up to Leonard, his assessment of his efforts in this area would give the causal observer a less than favorable opinion. Writing in the final volume of his autobiography he writes "in a wider context, though all that I tried politically was

completely futile and ineffective and unimportant, for me personally it was right and important that I should do it ... 'It is not the arrival, it is the journey which matters'" (qtd. in Ondaatje 293). However he does himself a disservice in both his assessment of the results he achieved and the importance of that journey he took. While his journey started out the way many others of his gender and background did during those times, from Oxbridge into the colonial services, how he then engaged and processed the experiences that followed was significantly different from others who took that same path. While carrying out his duties in the colonial administration in the manner expected of him and efficiently, it is clear that he enjoyed a special rapport with the Ceylonese people. This relationship with them may have developed in part because of his evolving attitude to the question of imperialism. Over time it became harder for him to ignore the humanity of the Ceylonese, something that made it difficult to defend the practices of imperialism. It was this recognition of the shared humanity of "the other" that informed his fictional writing, driving him to experiment with writing using the native voice in "The Two Brahmans" and *The Village in the Jungle*. He was able to move away from his authorial inspirations, writers like Conrad and Kipling, to find his own unique voice. While he may have only had moderate success in the Western world with his fiction, compared with his wife, Bunny or Morgan, he was no less innovative. The success of *The Village in the Jungle* in Ceylon and the East was itself a testament to its success. Yasmine Gooneratne quotes a letter from Alec Waugh to Leonard in 1965 in which he writes, "A year ago when I was reading about 'The Village in the Jungle' in your autobiography, I said to myself 'That's a book I've got to read', and a few weeks later in Singapore, I was saying to a young Malay student 'no Western novelist – not even Forster – has really got inside the Asian mind. Kipling and Maugham described the

effect of the Far East on the Westerner'. The Malay said 'There is one novel that has. The Village in the Jungle'" (The Novelist at Work 103). This is high praise indeed. While in the light of the work of scholars such as Said, Leonard's fictional work has been reassessed, often in a less favorable light, it needs to be looked at in the context of the the time it was written. If an examination is done in this manner one would hope, the reader will come away with as positive an assessment as that of the Malay student.

Leonard judged the impact of his non-fiction and policy research work harshly. Leonard whole-heartedly believed in the things he wrote. However, while he was an advisor to the government he was not in an actual position of power. He alone was not in position to effect change single-handedly. Any democratic system requires that the will of the majority of the political establishment be behind an idea before any change is effected. Unfortunately for Leonard's legacy, it took a long time, beyond the period of his active engagement, for that political will to surface. Additionally, the changes that saw the dissolution of the British Empire were not necessarily born out of a moral imperative, but out of revolution and economics. However, Leonard can say he was on the right side of the argument. The language of empire that he analyses in *Economic Imperialism* was in evidence well up to his death on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 1969, and gentle echoes of that language can still be heard today. The techniques of economic imperialism he elucidated are still in evidence. The violent strategies he outlined on the African continent may be practiced less frequently, but imperialism by treaty, as occurred in China still continues today. Legislation such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) passed in 1994 and now the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) would seem to have much in common with the Asian situation Leonard wrote about. One would have to believe that had

Leonard been alive and politically active today he would have possibly spoken out against agreements such as these.

I choose to end my analysis with a quote from Leonard, that Christopher Ondaatje cites in his work on Leonard's Ceylon; "*Sub specie aeternitatis*, in the eye of God or rather of the universe, nothing human is of the slightest importance; but in one's own personal life, in terms of humanity and human history and human society, certain things are of immense importance: human relations, happiness, truth, beauty or art, justice and mercy" (293). If there is one thread that runs throughout Leonard's life and through the works that I have studied in this paper, it is Leonard's constant striving for those positive qualities he highlights as being so important, in particular justice and mercy, not only for himself but for those whose lives and cultures he touched.

## Bibliography

- Codell, Julie. "On the Dehli Coronation Dunbars, 1877, 1903, 1911." *BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History*. Ed. Dino Franco Felluga. *Extension of Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net*. Web. 02 Oct 2015.
- De Silva, K. M. "Sri Lanka: National Identity and the Impact of Colonialism." *The Sri Lanka Reader*. Ed. John Clifford Holt. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011. 135–151. Print.
- Fanon, Franz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 1963. Print.
- Garnett, David. *The Sailor's Return*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1925. Print.
- Glendinning, Victoria. *Leonard Woolf: A Biography*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2006. Print.
- Gooneratne, Yasmine. "A Novelist at Work: The Manuscript of Leonard Woolf's *The Village in the Jungle*." *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 18 (1983): 91–104. Print.
- Holbrook Gerzina, Gretchen. "Bushmen and Blackface: Bloomsbury and 'Race.'" *The South Carolina Review* 38.2 (2006): 46–64. Print.
- Holt, John Clifford. "The Colonial Encounter." *The Sri Lanka Reader*. Ed. John Clifford Holt. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011. 133–134. Print.
- Kerr, Douglas. "Stories of the East: Leonard Woolf and the Genres of Colonial Discourse." *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920* 41.3 1998: 261–279. Print.
- Keynes, John Maynard. "My Early Beliefs." *The Bloomsbury Group: A Collection of Memoirs and Commentary*. Ed. S. P Rosenbaum. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995. 82–97. Print.
- Nelson-McDermott, Catherine. "Visions of an Incurable Rationalist: Leonard Woolf's *Stories of the East*." *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature* 42.3-4 2012: 197–215. Print.
- Ondaajte, Christopher. "The Literary Woolf." *Woolf in Ceylon: An Imperial Journey in the Shadow of Leonard Woolf 1904-1911*. Toronto: Harper Collins, 2005. 235–264. Print.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Should We Be Afraid Of Leonard Woolf?" *Woolf in Ceylon: An Imperial Journey in the Shadow of Leonard Woolf 1904-1911*. Toronto: Harper Collins, 2005. 279–293. Print.
- Perera, H. R. *Buddhism in Sri Lanka - A Short History*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1988. [http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf\\_file/bud-srilanka.pdf](http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/bud-srilanka.pdf). Web. 26 Oct. 2015.

- Ranasinha, Ruvani. "The Shifting Reception of The Village in the Jungle (1913) in Sri Lanka." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 50.1 (2015): 33–43. Print.
- Rosenfeld, Natania. *Outsiders Together: Virginia and Leonard Woolf*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000. Print.
- Roy, Anindyo. "'Telling Brutal Things': Colonialism, Bloomsbury and the Crisis of Narration in Leonard Woolf's 'A Tale Told by Moonlight.'" *Criticism* 2.2 2001: 189–210. Print.
- Rushdie, Salman. "The Art of Fiction No. 186." *The Paris Review* 174 (2005): n. pag. Web. 4 Jan. 2016.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979. Print.
- Glendinning, Victoria. *Leonard Woolf: A Biography*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2006. Print.
- Spotts, Frederic, ed. *Letters of Leonard Woolf*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989. Print.
- Woolf, Leonard. "A Tale Told By Moonlight." *Stories of The East*. Geneva: The Long Riders Guild Press, 2007. 7–21. Print.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Pearls and Swine." *Stories of The East*. Geneva: The Long Riders Guild Press, 2007. 35–58. Print.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Two Brahmans." *Stories of The East*. Geneva: The Long Riders Guild Press, 2007. 23–33. Print.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Village in the Jungle*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1913. Print.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Economic Imperialism*. London: The Swathmore Press Ltd., 1920. Print.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Diaries in Ceylon 1908-1911: Records of a Colonial Administrator*. Colombo: The Ceylon Historical Journal, 1962. Print.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Growing: An Autobiography of the Years 1904 to 1911*. Orlando: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1961. Print.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Beginning Again: An Autobiography of the Years 1911 to 1918*. New York: Harcourt Brace & World, Inc., 1963. Print.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Downhill All The Way: An Autobiography of the Years 1919 - 1939*. London: The Hogarth Press, 1967. Print.

Woolf, Virginia. *The Diary of Virginia Woolf: Volume One 1915-1919*. Ed. Anne Olivier Bell. San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1977. Print.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Letters of Virginia Woolf: Volume Two 1912-1922*. Ed. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976. Print.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Orlando*. New York: Harcourt Inc., 1928. Print.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Voyage Out*. New York: Barnes & Noble Classics., 1915. Print.