

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

The Fiasco of Romantic Hero in Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim*

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Abstract

Conrad's *Lord Jim* exposes the romantic quest in the life of the central character, Jim who wants to be a hero but acts cowardly. Jim's aspirations and actions underline the disparity between idea and reality as what is generally termed as indissoluble contradictions of being. Jim's high-mindedness and character are problematic, and his scale of human values is excessively romantic. Thus, he romanticizes what it means to be a sailor, what duty is, even what cowardice is. The fact is that he is too romantic to accommodate real-life situations. In essence, the horizons Jim dreamed of are unattainable, the heroic dreams he imagined to himself he cannot realize in action. And ultimately, his egoistic and narcissistic attitude, pride, his lofty conception of what is required of him in responsible leadership and duty and his high idealism damage his life. Jim's conduct dramatizes to an unsafe degree, the extremes of arrogances and of self-delusion and self-assertion. Above all, his romantic idealism becomes a peculiar kind of escape from the paradoxes and antinomies that have to be faced. Thus his temporary success in Patusan episode reveals the brightly optimistic side of individual romantic idealism and his failure, at the same time, marks the failure of the romantic idealism as an individual outlook and, as well, the destructive elements of life itself.

Contents

I.	Jim as a Romantic Quester	1 – 6
II.	Romantic Idealism	7 -22
	Romanticism	7
	Romantic Hero	11
	Egoism	13
	Narcissism	17
III.	The Fiasco of Romantic Hero in Conrad's <i>Lord Jim</i>	23-43
	Jim's Romantic Quest	23
	Jim's Failure	28
	Causes of Jim's Failure	31
IV.	Conclusion	44-47
V.	Work Cited	48-49

Jim as a Romantic Quester

Conrad's *Lord Jim* foregrounds the romantic quest of a promising young English man, Jim. The novel is all about Jim's quest and his achievements and failures. The protagonist, Jim, is all the time in search of some opportunities which could fulfill his dreams of doing best. His dream of being romantic-idealist never escapes him. He dreams of heroic deeds even after he has been tested by the hardship of life at sea, before he becomes the chief-mate of the ship called the 'Patna'.

Jim is a romantic-idealist and a sailor of fine stuff, who has all his life been expecting the worst and doing the best in his imagination. He spends free time on training ship lost in day dreams, living in his mind the sea-life of light literature. His fantasies typically involve acts of heroism: rescuing people, putting down mutinies, conquering savages etc.

As a master of literary creation, if Conrad shows an Achilles his interest lies in the Achilles' heel. Jim is a romantic-idealist but he has been corrupted by his very dreams of being a romantic hero. He is a romantic-idealist with the usually accompanying negative characteristics of lack of grapes of reality and a lack of self-knowledge, a stubborn egoist and an extreme narcissist, an air of superiority and thoroughgoing self-deception. He is a creature of light, superior to many around him. Jim's heroic pose has many vulnerabilities and limitations. His incurable taste for romantic day-dreams nourished on fictional situations, his incapacity for self-knowledge, even the physical fact of being "an inch, perhaps two under six feet" with which the book all significantly begins, make the subtle unsoundness of a man having dream of romantic hero (Conrad 1). Jim envisions himself as "always an example of devotion to duty and as unflinching as a hero in a book" (5). But his heroic dream of

“saving people from sinking ships, cutting away masts in a hurricane, and swimming through surf with a line” does not square with what he really represents: one who falls from grace, and whose ‘crime’ is “a breach of faith with the community of mankind” (5).

In *Lord Jim* Conrad shows the gap between extreme forms of idealism and the necessity of responding to real situation in life. By showing his narrative around the moment of Jim’s leap, Conrad exploits the source material to explore the moral and epistemological ambiguities. Conrad anticipates romantic transcendence by presenting a bleaker sense of disillusionment with Jim’s romantic quest.

Jim spends much of his time on the training ship daydreaming about the amazing hero he will be someday. He hopes, one day, he gets a chance to show his heroic deeds when he is called to help with a rescue during a storm. Confronted with a real rather than a fantasy, he freezes, while the other boys rush to board the rescue cutter and row away without him. Jim’s vivid imagination keeps him from being able to act: the whole fury of the gale seems directed at him personally. But Jim learns nothing from his failure to act. Instead of admitting his fear, so that he could learn to deal with it, he decides that the rescue mission was a child’s-play, beneath him.

Later faced with disaster on the *Patna*, Jim freezes again. Once again he becomes the victim of his own imagination, envisioning a scene of terror if the ship starts to go down and the eight hundred pilgrims wake and panic. Instead of efficiently taking what precautions are possible, for example, reinforcing the rusty bulkhead that is the only thing keeping the ship afloat—Jim stands stunned as he had on the training ship. Faced with the terrible prospect his imagination creates, he finally abandons the ship with the other officer, once again missing an opportunity to prove himself the hero he dreams of being.

For Jim, the overwhelming question, “What could I do what?” brings the answer of nothing (7). The Patna, as it ploughs the Arabic Sea on its way to Red Sea, is close to sinking, with its engines stopped, the steam blowing off, and its deep rumble making “the whole night vibrate like a bacstring”(9). Jim’s imagination conjures up a dismal picture of a catastrophe that is inescapable and merciless. It is not that Jim thinks so much of saving himself as it is the tyranny of his belief that there are eight-hundred people on ship-and only seven life-boats. Marlow, Conrad’s storyteller, much sympathetic to Jim’s plight, discerns in him an affliction of helplessness that compounds his sense of hopelessness, making Jim incapable of confronting total shipwreck, as he envisions a ship floating down, checked in sinking by a sheet of old iron too rotten to stand being shored up. Jim is a victim of his imagination who surrenders his will to action.

Jim’s tendency to set his goals in unreachable ideals—like storybook heroism—is very bad, as Stein, one of the characters of Conrad, observes, because the distant between his dreams and achievement is a constant source of pain and disappointment. He wants to be as fine as he can never be, and he is depressed when he fails. This problem is especially apparent in the first half of the novel. Jim keeps of dreaming of heroic action and acting—abroad the training ship, abroad the Patna—in an un-heroic way. But being a romantic dreamer can also be good. Jim’s stubborn belief in his ideals keeps him from growing disillusioned, like Marlow, or worse-cynical, like Chester and Brown, he may not be able to reach his distant goals, but setting them high makes him reach that much farther than if he had not dreamt at all. None of the men, for example, in Patusan has the daring to come up with a scheme like Jim’s plan for defeating Sherif Ali. Jim’s big dreams are the foundations of his amazing success in Patusan.

Each of the critics explore his or her own unique aspect of the novel, examining virtually all angles of interpersonal relationship between characters, as well the more profound issues of human experiences. The majority of the critics sustain that the novel's true drama lies within Conrad's recurring questions, how to live, how does one behave in the dark when alone oneself, without guidance and without direction? While some believe that romantic and imaginative spirit is necessary ingredient in living a rich and meaningful life. There is also a dominant belief that there exists a monumental separation between the inner world, in which the principal characters live, and the outer world, which holds the rest of humanity.

Dorothy Van Ghent, a critic, writes "Jim's shocking encounter with himself at the moment of his jump from the Patna is a model of those moments when destiny each person carries within him, the destiny fully moulded in the unconscious will, lifts its blind head from the dark, drinks blood, and speaks" (68). She sees comparisons between Jim and the heroes of the classical tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles, and comes very near making an important observation. But she fails to reach at the heart of the matter, for she cannot bring herself to conceive of fate as a determining and compelling force shaping the nature and actions of a man. She uses the language of psychology of the unconscious, and makes fate identical with man's dark impulses. She writes with the references to the episode of Brown, for example, "The appearance of Brown is, in effect, an externalization of the complex of Jim's guilt, and his excuse for his guilt, for he judges Brown as he has judged himself, as a victim of circumstances. Therefore, he gives Brown a clear slate, a chance to climb out himself" (173).

Richard Ruppel, another critic, goes beyond the explanation of fate shaping a man's actions. She sees the novel as colonial one and writes that the most formulaic

colonialist representations in *Lord Jim* are of non-white people and cultures. She further writes:

Jim's ability to lead, to judge and to administrate come to him like keen scent to a well-bred hound. Jim's splendid isolation in the East, the deep respect verging on adulation that he inspires in the people of Patusan and his intuitive ability to impose order make him a recognizable type of the conquering European, another in a long line of Crusoe, who, after setting and defending their islands, becomes the lords of their people. (152,153)

Words like 'inert', 'static', and 'unchanging' nearly always adhere to late-nineteenth century description of Eastern and African worlds and their cultures. In *Lord Jim*, Ruppel writes, when Marlow is about to leave Jim and Patusan for the last time, he tells that "he is leaving a world that will never change to join a world in motion" (200). He was going back to England, and says, "to the world where events move, men change, life flows in a clear stream. . . . But as to what I was leaving behind I cannot imagine any alteration" (200). Marlow, in this excerpt, seems to categorize the world as moving and static where he refers England, the western world as moving whereas the African land as static and life doesn't flow in a clear stream as moves in English world.

Conrad's presentation of eastern world, in his novel *Lord Jim*, has given many ways to many critics to analyze the novel from colonial and post-colonial perspectives. Moreover his presentation of the westerners like 'God' in amidst of easterners enforced the critics to see the novel only a way to present the whites' superiority over non-whites. However, we must remember that Conrad was writing

during Victorian era and till then romanticism hadn't lost its roots. Some of his novels show the influence of romanticism on him.

In this context, Conrad's novel *Lord Jim* vividly shows the romantic influences on him. The novel presents a romantic idealist and that romantic idealist is Jim. But his quest for the romantic world never catches the reality. Conrad, in the novel, has shown a gap between his dream and actions. Furthermore, the protagonist's narcissism and egoism never allow him see the things exactly as they are and think him rationally.

II. Romantic Idealism

2.1 Romanticism

Romanticism is an attitude, an intellectual movement that originated in the late 18th century and stressed strong emotion, imagination, freedom from classical correctness in art forms, and rebellion against social conventions. Introducing romanticism, J. A. Cuddon writes:

Romanticism, as an attitude or intellectual orientation that characterized many works of literature, painting, music, architecture and criticism in Europe over a period from the late 18th to the mid 19th century. It can be seen as a rejection of the precepts of order, calm, harmony, balance, idealization, and rationality that defined classicism in general and late 18th century Neo-classicism in particular. It was also to some extent a reaction against the Enlightenment and against 18th century rationalism. (259)

As an intellectual phenomenon, romanticism dominated cultural thought from the last decade of the 18th century in to the first decades of the 20th century. It has exerted a powerful hold on Western thought and culture. Romanticism, more than anything else, is the cult of individual. It is the cultural and psychological navity of the self.

Describing the characteristics of romanticism, Cuddon further writes:

Among the characteristics of Romanticism were following: a deepened appreciation of the beauties of nature, a general exaltation of emotion over reason and of the senses over intellect, a turning in upon the self and a heightened examination of human personality and its moods and mental potentialities, a preoccupation with the genius, the hero and the exceptional figure in general and few on his passions and inner struggles;

an emphasis upon imagination as a gateway to transcendental experience;
and a prediction for the exotic, the remote. (261)

The ideologies and events of the French Revolution rooted in Romanticism affected the direction it was to take, and the confines of the Industrial Revolution had their influence on Romanticism, which was in part an escape from modern realities. Indeed in the second half of the nineteenth century 'Realism' was offered as a polarized opposite to Romanticism. Romanticism elevated the achievements of what it perceived as misunderstood heroic individuals and artists that altered society. It also legitimized the individual imagination, a critical authority which permitted freedom from classical notions of form in art. There was a strong recourse to historical and natural inevitability in the representation of its ideas.

Concern for the common man, for the Romantics, Romanticism evolved not only from the democratic ideologies of the age of revolution, but also from a renewed interest in folk culture. In aesthetic terms the individuality translated into the revolution of feeling against form—the rejection of classical equipoise in favour of romantic asymmetry. Jean Clay states, “Romantic poets, painters, and musicians ceased struggling to make the expression fit for conventional forms and carved out new forms to encase their expression and thought ever striking the romantic soul required an equally dynamic new language to make it understood (21). Romantics were against the conventional art forms of neo-classical era. To express their sentiments, feelings and imagination, they started using their own way of forms in their writings.

Embracing the unknown and unafraid of human existence, the Romantics overthrew the philosophical, artistic and even the geographical limitations of the Enlightenment. The quintessential Romantic figure was the wanderer, literally and figuratively journeying in search of new lands, new places in the imagination, and new vistas for

the soul. Exotic lands, the amorphous world of the dreams, the dark terror of the psyche as well as the dizzying height of creativity and the dazzling beauties of nature—these were all the way stations along the Romantic quester's route.

For the Romantic, nature was, indeed, a constant companion and teacher—both benign and tyrannical. Nature became a stage on which the human drama was played, the context in which man came to understand his place in the universe, the transforming agent which harmonized the individual soul with what the transcendentalists would call the over-soul. Throughout all of Romantic literature, music, and art, nature is a dynamic presence, a character who speaks in a language of symbols at once mysterious and anthropomorphic, who engages man in a dialogue with the life-force itself.

Romanticism, in art and literature, began in eighteenth century to revolt against the neoclassicism of the previous century. The German critic August William, who is given credit for first using the term 'romantic' to describe literature, defined it as "literature depicting emotion at matter in an imaginative form" (5). This is accurate a general definition as can be accomplished, although Victor Hugo's phrase "liberalism in literature" is also apt (12). Imagination, emotion, and freedom the certainly are certainly the focal points of romanticism.

One of American scholars A.L. Lovejoy once observed that "The word romantic has come to mean so many things, by itself, it means nothing. It has ceased to perform the function of a verbal sign" (qtd. in Ferguson 101). The variety of its actual and possible meanings and connotations reflect the complexity and multiplicity of romanticism. In *The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal*, Fredrick. Lucas counted hundreds of definitions of romanticism. In *Classical Romantic and Modern*, Barzun cites examples of synonymous usage for romantic which show that it is perhaps the

host remarkable example of a term which can mean many things according to personal and individual needs.

It is true that romanticism varies in its literary aspects, and it doesn't carry the same meaning everywhere. It is also true that romanticism, as a literary, artistic and intellectual movement, didn't occur simultaneously in different countries. And yet even the use of 'Romanticisms', in plural, suggests that all these literary phenomena did have something in common, however tenuous the similarity may be. Rene Wellek pleaded impressively for the unity of European Romanticism, arguing that:

We find throughout Europe the same conceptions of poetry and of the working and nature of poetic imagination, the same conception of nature and its relation to man, and basically the same poetic style, with use of imagery, symbolism, and myth which is clearly distinct from that of eighteenth century neo-classicism. (3)

Critics have discerned a 'new spirit' in writing dating from the end of the eighteenth century (109). Associated with this new spirit were a 'return to nature' and a 'new sympathy with man', both of which were the ideals of the French Revolution. In the beginning of the twentieth century, the era of 'romantic history' and 'young poets' were transformed into "the far-reaching and many sided revival of imaginative power commonly known as Romanticism" (20). Aspects of that romantic reawakening contained a creative interest in ideas and themes that expressed the character of the age: imagination, egotism, the remote, the primitive etc.

A French critic Emile Legouis has written that romanticism can be "defined only in terms of pure psychology (1024). Legouis states that the "events of romanticism occurred in the inner sphere of thoughts and feelings, and romantic writing was correspondingly introspective and focused on the self" (1024). Romantic literature

springs from the inner self of the writer. They express their feelings and emotions thorough their works. They are concerned with what they have in their imaginations rather than outer reality.

McGann, in his book, *The Romantic Ideology* sees romantic era from a broadly Marxist, materialistic standpoint. He argues that the romantic literature “characteristically evades its context and substitutes instead the idealized universe of romantic ideology” (160). McGann saw in romantic poetry a powerful denial of context and a wish to credit its own compensating alternatives, which he called as “fundamental illusions”(161). Romantic literature, therefore, became ways of escape in which history is displaced, repressed, erased or denied by the imagination.

2.2 Romantic Hero

The Romantic hero is a literary archetype referring to a character that rejects established norms and conventions. Sometimes, he is rejected by the society, and he puts himself at the centre of his own existence. The Romantic hero is often the main protagonist, the principle character who suffers and is destined to death in a literary work.

The Romantic hero is guided by the ideologies of romantic ideas. He is guided by imagination, emotion and is enchanted by the beauty of the nature. In the Romantic literature, the primary focus remains on the character’s thoughts rather than his or her actions. Northrop Frye, a literary critic, noted that the Romantic hero is often “placed outside the structure of civilized society and therefore represents the force of physical nature, a moral and ruthless, yet with the sense of power, and often leadership, that society has impoverished itself by rejecting him” (21). Other characteristics of the Romantic hero include: introspection, the triumph of the individual over the restraints

of theological and social conventions, alienation and isolation. Though another trait is regret for his actions and self criticism.

The romantic hero is often disillusioned about life, about his hopes and his dreams. He is always seeking for something spiritual in nature that is perpetually just out of reach, the unattainable. Wikipedia encyclopedia defines the romantic hero:

. . . is a man of extremes – no limitations are placed upon imagination or feelings. In his relationships, he is obsessive, and he often makes the connections between nature and the object of his affections. The attempt for spiritual meets with disillusionment and disappointment. In some cases, the result is suicide. . . . They are highly individualized, egocentric, obsessive creatures. (N pag)

Romantic hero is subject to flights of imagination, dreaminess, and hallucinations. Although the romantic hero often displays a kind of innocence, he is, nevertheless, entirely wrapped up in himself and his own problems. Wikipedia further defines, “Romantic hero indulges if not wallows, in his own feelings, sentiments, uniqueness and intuitiveness. His subconscious will take precedence over reason, objectivity, and the typical”. Romantic hero is guided by his imagination. He tries to separate himself from the rest of the people around him and be unique.

The romantic hero first began appearing in literature during the Romantic period, in works by authors like Byron, and Goethe and is seen in part as a response to the French Revolution. As Napoleon the “living model of a hero”, as Frye writes, “the typical notion of the hero as upholding social order begin to be challenged” (24). Literary examples of the Romantic hero include Byron’s *Don Juan*, Chateaubriand’s *Rene*, and Cooper’s famous literary character Hawkeye of the leather stocking tales.

2.3 Egoism

Egoism is a teleological theory of ethics that sets as its good the benefit, or greatest good of oneself alone as is the designation given to those ethicist systems which hold self love to be the source of all rational actions and the determinant of moral conduct. It is the motivation to maintain and enhance favourable views of self. Egoism means placing oneself at the centre of one's world with direct concern for the other.

Egoism is closely related to narcissism or "loving one's self", the possible tendency to speak or write of one boastfully and at great length. C. D. Brood defines:

Egoism may co-exist with allusion of one's own importance at the denial of others. This is a character trait of describing a person who lets to gain values in an amount excessively greater than that which he/she gives to others. Egoism is often accomplished by exploiting the altruism, irrationality and ignorance of others, as well do utilizing force or fraud.

(7)

Egoism requires explication of 'self interest'. Preference or desire accounts identity self interest with the satisfaction of one's desires. What makes a desire self regarding is controversial but there are clear cases and counter cases: a desire for my own pleasure is self-regarding; a desire for the welfare of other is not.

The term 'egoism' is derived from the Latin 'ego' meaning 'self' or 'I' and in a broad use of the term, any system might be called egoism which makes any good of the ego, the end and motive of action. The name, however, has been appropriated by usage to those systems which make happiness, pleasure or personal advantage, the sole end of conduct. In one form or another and with various modifications, the principle pervades the theory of the Epicurean and Utilitarian, and slightly disguised, it lurks at the bottom

of utilitarian altruism. Its typical expression is to be found in Hobbes and Mandeville, while Jeremy Bentham, combining it with the other cognate principle, that pleasure and pain are only good and evil, formulates it in its full character as egoist hedonism. One of Bentham's statements set forth concisely the egoist doctrine:

The search after motives is one of the prominent causes of man's bewilderment in the investigation of the question of morals. But this is a pursuit in which every moment employed is a moment wasted. All motives are absolutely good; no man has ever had, can, or could have a motive different from the pursuit of pleasure or shunning of pain. (12)

Egoism can be descriptive or a normative position. Psychological egoism, the most famous descriptive egoism claims that each person has one but ultimate aim: his or her own welfare. Normative forms of egoism make claims about what one ought to do, rather than describe what one does. Ethical egoism claims that it is necessary and sufficient for an action to be morally right that it maximizes one's self-interest. Rational egoism claims that it is necessary and sufficient for an action to be rational that it maximizes one's self-interest.

Psychological egoism follows for action that fails to maximize perceived self-interest, but rules out the sort of behavior. Psychological egoists like to target altruistic behavior or motivation by thoughts of duty alone. M. A. Slote writes that psychological egoist "follows for weaknesses of will, since in weakness of will cases I am still aiming at my welfare; I am weak in that I do not act as I am. And it allows for aiming at things other than one's welfare, such as helping others, where these things are means to one's welfare" (532). Psychological egoist asserts that people act in their own interests, even though they may disguise to helping others or doing duty.

Psychological egoism is supported by our frequent observation of self-interested behavior. Apparently altruistic action is often revealed to be self-interested. And we typically motivate people by appealing to their self interest (through, for example, Punishment and rewards). A common objection to psychological egoism, made by Joseph Butler, is that:

I must desire things to get welfare. For example, I desire welfare from playing hockey. Unless, I desired, for own sake to play hockey, I would not derive welfare from playing or I derive welfare from helping others. Unless I desired, for its own sake, that others do well I would not derive welfare from helping them. (15)

Welfare results from any action, but cannot be the only aim of my action. The psychological egoist can concede that one must have desires for particular things, such as playing hockey. But there is no need to concede that the satisfaction of these desires may consist simply in the satisfaction of self and regarding desires. In the case of deriving welfare from helping others, the psychological egoist can again concede that one would not derive welfare without desiring some particular thing, but need not agree that he desires for its own sake is that others do well. That he is the one who helps them may, for example, satisfy him regarding desire for power.

Ethical egoism claims that individuals should always to act in their own best interest. It is a normative claim. If ethical egoism is true, that appears to imply that psychological egoism is false: there would be no point to saying that we ought to do what we must do by nature. T. Nagel states:

If altruism is possible, why should it be avoided: some writers suggest we all should focus our resources on satisfying our own interests, rather than to those of others? Society will then be more efficient and will

better serve the interests of all. By referring to the interests of all, however, this approach reveals itself to be a version of utilitarianism, and not genuine egoism. It is merely a theory about how best to achieve the greatest good for the greatest number. (19)

Ethical egoism claims that any act done for self interest is not good. Its claim is that the promotion of one's own self interest is in accordance with morality.

An alternative formulation of ethical egoism states that one ought to act in his own self-interest—even if this conflicts with the values and interests of others—simply because that is what one values most. It is not clear how an altruist could argue with such an individualistic ethical egoist, but it is also not clear that such an egoist should choose to argue with the altruist. Since the individualistic egoist believes that whatever serves his own interests is (morally) right, he will want everyone else to be altruistic. Otherwise they would not serve the egoist's interests! It seems that anyone who truly believed in individualistic ethical egoism could not promote the theory without inconsistency. Indeed, the self-interest of the egoist is best served by publicly claiming to be an altruist and thereby keeping everyone's good favor.

Rational egoism claims that it is necessary and sufficient for an action to be rational that it maximizes one's self-interest. As with ethical egoism, there are variants which drop maximization or evaluate rules of character traits rather than actions.

Like ethical egoism, rational egoism needs arguments to support it. One might cite our most confident judgments about rational action and claim that rational egoism best fits these. Donald Parfit writes:

The problem is that our most confident judgments about rational action seem to be captured by a different, extremely popular theory—the instrumental theory of rationality. According to the instrument theory, it

is necessary and sufficient, for an action to be rational that it maximizes the satisfaction of one's preferences. Since psychological egoism seems false, it may be rational for me to make an uncompensated sacrifice for the sake of others, for this maybe what, on balance, best satisfies my (strong, non-self-interested) preferences. This conflict with the instrumental theory is a major problem for rational egoism. (16)

The rational egoist might reply that the instrumental theory is equally a problem for any standard moral theory that claims to give an account of what one ought rationally, or all things considered, to do. If for example, a utilitarian claims that one has most reason to give to charity, since that maximizes the general happiness, I could object that giving to charity cannot be rational given his particular preference, which are for things other than the general happiness.

A different problem for rational egoism is that it appears arbitrary. Parfit further writes:

Suppose I claim that I ought to maximize the welfare of blue-eyed people, but not of other people. Unless I can explain why blue eyed people are to be preferred, my claim looks arbitrary, in the sense that I have given no reason for the different treatments. As a rational egoist, I claim that I ought to maximize the welfare of one person (myself).

Unless I can explain why I should be preferred, my claim looks equally arbitrary. (18)

Rational egoism claims that the promotion of one's own interest is always in accordance with reason.

2.4 Narcissism

It describes the character trait of self love, based on self-image or ego. The word ‘narcissism’ is derived from a Greek Myth. According to the myth, Narcissus was a handsome Greek youth who rejected the desperate advances of the nymph, Echo. As punishment, he was to fall in love with his own reflection in a pool of water. Unable to consummate his love, he pined away and changed into the flower that bears his name, the narcissus.

However, in psychology, the term narcissism is used denoting vanity as simple selfishness. Applied to a social group it is sometimes used to denote elitism or indifference to the plight of others. Arguably, however, this story is used to draw allegations of self-centeredness, rather than toward healthy self-love.

Historian and social critic, Christopher Lasch describes this topic in his book, *The Culture of Narcissism*. He defines a narcissistic culture as “one in which every activity and relationship is defined by the hedonistic need to acquire the symbols of spiritual wealth. This becoming is only the expression of rigid” (3). Lasch’s definition of narcissism is related with the culture of the society. He says that it is a culture where liberalism only exists in so far as it serves a consumer society. In such a society of constant competition, there can be no allies and little transparency.

The characteristics that are commonly found are that the narcissist feels the need to have a lot of attention from others; the narcissist is preoccupied with himself/herself, his/her preferences, needs and aspirations and with his/her fantasies of unlimited success; the narcissist appears to be devoid of empathy (although it is sometimes suggested that the narcissist can, to some extent, empathize with other narcissists); the narcissist is inclined to lie or deceive; the narcissist often criticizes others, sometimes to the extent of damaging their reputation; the narcissist often behaves very differently in

public situations from private situations i.e. his or her public persona is very different from his or her private persona.

In his essay, *On Narcissism: An Introduction*, Sigmund Freud suggested that exclusive self-love might not be as abnormal as previously thought, and might even be a common component in the human psyche. He argued that narcissism “is the libidinal compliment to the egoism of the instinct of self-preservation”, or, more simply, the desire and energy that drive our instinct to survive (14). He called this: Primary Narcissism.

According to Freud, we are not born with a sense of ourselves as individuals or ego. The ego only develops during infancy and the early part of childhood, as the outside world, usually in the form of parental controls and expectations, intrudes upon primary narcissism, teaching the individual about the nature and standards of his social environment from which he can form an image of the perfect self towards which the ego should aspire.

According to him, secondary narcissism is a pathological condition which occurs when the libido withdraws from objects outside the self. Freud further claims that it is an extreme form of the narcissism that is part of all of us.

Freud regarded all libidinous drives as fundamentally sexual and suggested that ego libido (directed inwards to the self) cannot always be clearly distinguished from object-libido directed to persons or objects outside of ourselves.

An aspect frequently associated with Primary Narcissism appears in an early essay, *Totem and Tabo*’ where he describes his observations of children and primitive people, which he called magical thinking. An example of magical thinking would be believing that one can have an effect on reality by wishing or willpower. This demonstrates a

belief in the self as powerful and able to change external realities, which Freud believed was part of normal human development.

According to Freud, to care for someone is to convert ego-libido into object-libido by giving some self-love to another person, which leaves less ego-libido available for primary narcissism, and protecting and nurturing the self. When that affection is returned so is the libido, thus restoring primary narcissism and self worth. Any failure to achieve or disruption of this balance causes psychological disturbances. In such a case primary narcissism can only be restored by withdrawing object-libido (also called, object-love), to replenish ego-libido.

According to Freud, as a child grows, and his ego develops, he is constantly giving of his self-love to people and objects, the first of which is usually his mother. This diminished self-love should be replenished by the affection and caring returned to him.

German physician and psychiatrist Karen Horney (1885-1952) began to develop her own theory of psychoanalysis in the late 1930's. Though acknowledging Freud as the founder of psychoanalysis, she was critical of his work, arguing that personality was shaped mainly by social, cultural, and environmental factors. She felt that Freud was wrong to assume that the relationships, attitudes, and feelings common in his culture and times were largely driven by biological factors and could be applied universally.

Horney saw narcissism quite differently from Freud, Kohut, and other mainstream psychoanalytic theorists in that she did not posit a primary narcissism but saw the narcissistic personality as the product of certain kind of early environment acting on a certain kind of temperament. For her, narcissistic needs and tendencies are not inherent in human nature.

Narcissism is different from her other major defensive strategies or solutions in that it is not compensatory. Self-idealization is compensatory in her theory, but it differs

from narcissism. All of the defensive strategies involve self-idealization, but in the narcissistic solution it tends to be the product of indulgence rather than of deprivation. The narcissist's self-esteem is shaky, however, because it is not based on genuine accomplishments.

Viennese physician and psychiatrist Heinz Kohut, M.D. (1913-1981) is best known for his development of Self Psychology, a school of thought within psychodynamic psychoanalytic theory. Kohut explored further the implications of Freud's perception of narcissism. He says:

A child will tend to fantasize about having grandiose self and ideal parents.

He claimed that deep down we all retain a belief in our own perfection, and the perfection of anything we are part of, as we mature, grandiosity gives way to self-esteem, and the idealization of the parent become the framework for core values. It is when trauma disrupts this process that the most primitive and narcissistic version of the self remains unchanged. (11)

Kohut called this condition Narcissistic Personality Disorder. He suggested narcissism as part of a stage in normal development, in which caregivers provide a strong and protective presence for the child to identify with that reinforces the child's growing sense of self by mirroring his good qualities. If the caregivers fail to provide this adequately, the child grows up with a brittle and flawed sense of self.

He also saw beyond the negative and pathological aspects of narcissism, believing it to be a component in the development of resilience, ideals and ambition once it has been transformed by life experience or analysis.

Otto Kernberg uses the term Narcissism to refer to the role of self in the regulation of self-esteem. He regarded "normal, infantile Narcissism to be dependent on the affirmation of others and the acquisition of desirable and appealing objects, which

should later develop into healthy, mature, self-esteem” (11). This healthy Narcissism depends upon an integrated sense of self that incorporates images of the internalized affirmation of those close to us that is regulated by the super ego and ego ideal, internal mental structures us of our worth and that we deserve our own respect.

People who have a narcissistic personality style rather than narcissistic personality disorder are relatively psychologically healthy, but may at times be arrogant, proud, shrewd, confident, self-centered and determined to be dependent on praise to sustain a healthy self-esteem.

To sum up, Romantic writing is characterized by imagination in matter, expressed in a style more or less free of restraint—a style, that is to say, which may be simple or grand, passionate, depending on the mood or temperament of the writer. Romantic hero, influenced by the ideals of romanticism, wants to play a grand role—like that of hero in a story book—in his mind but acts cowardly. Furthermore, his narcissistic and egoistic attitudes never allow him to achieve the world he has imagined for him.

III. The Fiasco of Romantic Hero in Conrad's *Lord Jim*

3.1 Jim's Romantic Quest

Conrad's novel, *Lord Jim*, is about a young sea-man who is always in search of a romantic and ideal world where he is superior to all the people. That romantic idealist is Jim, the son of a priest. He always wants to be a hero in a book. Throughout his life, Jim has been expecting doing the best in his imagination. Jim's romantic spirit is captured in the first pages of the novel:

He loved his dreams and the success of his imaginary achievement. They were the best part of his life, its secrete truth, its hidden reality. They had a gorgeous virility, the charm of vagueness, they passed before him with a heroic tread; they carried his soul away with them and made it drunk with divine philtre of an unbounded confidence in itself. There was nothing that he could not face. (13-14)

This passage reveals the magnitude of Jim's vast imagination and the extent to which he allows his imagination to triumph over his reason. Conrad's protagonist, Jim, takes inspiration of his romantic idealism from the fictionalized account of his early reading of "the light literature" of the adventure stories he absorbed during his childhood in England. He dreams of becoming an example of devotion to duty; at the same time he has been brought up within firm moral parameters of Christian duty. It is to be noted that Jim is the son of a parson which is clarified after Jim's death from an answered letter from his father is found on his parson, showing the extent to which he was both attached to, and evasive of his origin.

The failure and public scandal that Jim gained through the Patna affairs compels him to peer into his deepest self to relinquish "the charm and innocence of illusion" (13). The shame of it follows Jim for years, forcing him out of job after job. Marlow

dimly realizes Jim's needs "something in the nature of an opportunity" and Stein is the only man he can turn to help for him (126). Stein immediately diagnoses Jim's problem. "He is romantic" and further explains, "The way is to the destructive elements submit yourself, and with the exertions of your hands and feet in the water make the deep sea keeps you up" (133). According to him, the only way for a romantic is "to follow the dream and again to follow the dream" (134). Stein diagnoses Jim as romantic. It seems that, for Jim, to express his romantic nature, a region such as Patusan needs to be available. His urge for romantic and heroic fulfillment can only be satisfied once when he becomes the agent of Stein in Patusan. None of the "opportunities to earn his bread" that Marlow has created earlier appease Jim's desire (126). To fulfill Jim's romantic and heroic nature, the world like Patusan appears to be necessary. And with the good offices of Marlow and Stein, Jim is given a chance where he is to prove himself to be romantic hero in a book. Finally, Jim is made the agent of Stein's business in the far land of Patusan where he is to show his heroic deeds and prove himself that he was not cowardice.

The second great leap of Jim's life is of Patusan, where he goes to try to live a new in a far away land. 'Romantic', according to those who know him, and determined as well, Jim has not only assumed leadership of a group of natives but has gained their total assent and confidence. His good faith he hopes will make him "in his own eyes the equal of the impeccable men who never fall out of the rank" (296).

In the Patusan episode, Jim appears to redeem himself performing feats of valor, protecting the local inhabitants against the local despot, finding the love of his life, and becoming adored as 'Tuan Jim', Lord Jim. During the Patusan sequences, Jim attains much power and influences. Marlow says, "He was like a figure set up on a pedestal to represent in his persistent youth the power and perhaps the virtues, of races that never

grow old that have emerged from the gloom. He dominated forest, the secular gloom, the old mankind” (166). As a result of Jim’s leadership, old Dormain’s followers rout their sundry enemies, led not only by the Rajah but also by the vagabond Sherif Ali, an Arab half-breed whose wild men terrorized the land. Jim becomes a legend that gives him even supernatural powers. By placing him to Patusan, Conrad has given Jim a magical chance to recreate the world in his own image, and he temporarily succeeds in the Malay land. He gets entry through the use of a ring of a friendship, “like something you read of in books” (146). The girl he finds there loves him unconditionally, and she becomes the reflection of himself:

She had learned a good bit of English from Jim, and she spoke it most amusingly, with his own clipping, boyish intonation.... She lived so completely in his contemplation that she had acquired something of his outward aspect, something that recalled him in her movements, in the way she stretched her arms, turned her head, and directed her glance.

(172)

In the fantasy world of Jim in Patusan, Tamb’ Itam is his shadow, a vigilant guardian spirit. The young and powerful Dain Waris becomes his war-comrade, and as the perfect ally to help Jim impose his vision on Patusan, for Dain “shows intelligent sympathy with Jim’s aspirations” (160). Sherif Ali is his fierce opponent, but when Jim puts his shoulder to the Sherif’s fortress, he demolishes it in a moment, almost magically. Jim’s followers insist that it was magic. The storming of the stockade is precisely like one of his boyhood dreams, a dream that comes true, that Jim succeeds in imposing on the world.

Placing Jim in Patusan, Conrad has given free rein to Jim’s romanticism. Patusan becomes a magic place where Jim imposes his imagination freely upon his

environment. Patusan is the world of romance, its historical specificity is denied precisely because it is only a stage upon which Jim's romantic and heroic deeds can be played out. The encounter between the white man, Jim, and the natives suggests the necessity for the white man to regulate a chaotic world torn by inherent strife. Jim's childishness serves him well, he quickly becomes Lord Jim by regulating the strife of the region in such a way that he manages the tension between the warring fractions of Dornain and the Rajah. Jim's dream, to play the schoolboy hero, the fearless rescuer, is realized for a time. Patusan is waiting to be rescued from its own pettiness and, in fact, is presented as needing Jim more than he needs it. Admittedly, when Marlow visits Jim at Patusan, Jim at least briefly expresses the cost at which his peace has been brought. Jim has exiled by an aspect of the code of white men and by his own understanding of that code. Nevertheless, he is living out another aspect of that code which allows him a space where he can follow his dream, and follow it so truly that his death, at last, has become most glorious act of his life.

Jim's greatest attempt to redeem himself is in his conquest of indigenous island of Patusan where his physical isolation is complete. He is the only white for hundreds of miles, and the knowledge that his dark secret is safely behind him which enables him to concentrate his efforts on bringing order and security to the troubled land of Patusan. Contrary to this view, Jim is very aware of his dark secret and during his rule, he never loses his sight of his reason so he initially came to Patusan. Jim has not yet abandoned his need to live up to his romantic conception of himself and he relentlessly strives to establish his superiority. In Patusan, Jim is initially able to regain his self-esteem and actualizes his romantic fantasies for a time. Lord Jim's world in Patusan now has become "the one truth of every passing day" (122). Certainly, from the standpoint of heroic feats and sheer physical courage and example, Jim was to travel a long way from

Patna to Patusan. If his part in the Patna affair led to the derision that pursued him in his flights to nowhere, fame and adoration now define his newly won greatness. The tarnished first mate of the Patna in the Indian Ocean is now the illustrious Lord Jim of the forest of the Patusan.

Jim's transforming influence in Patusan and his relationship with his people there make him the heir of the place. His influence in Patusan is entirely benign. After he defeats the Sherif Ali, he curtails the evil of grasping of the Rajah, ends all the internecine warfare that characterized Patusan before his arrival, and even settles domestic disputes. His success Jim tells Marlow was 'immense' and the power he gained over the lives of what become 'his' people, Marlow adds in confirmation, was also immense:

[...] no doubt it was immense; the seal of success upon his words, the conquered ground for the sole of his feet, the blind trust of men...the solitude of his achievement...I cannot with mere words convey to you the impression of his total and utter isolation. I know, of course, he was in every sense alone of his kind there, but the unsuspected qualities of his nature had brought him in such close touch with his surroundings that this isolation seemed only the effects of his power. His loneliness added to his stature. There was nothing within sight to compare him with, as though he had been one of those exceptional men who can be only measured by the greatness of their fame. (170)

In the territory of Patusan, Jim has now become the lord among the local inhabitants. They think that he has come there to redeem them from the hardships in their life. Marlow is enchanted by the fame and power that Jim gained in the place.

Jim's ability to lead, to judge, and to administrate came to him, Marlow tells us "like keen scent to a well-bred hound" (156). Jim's splendid isolation in the east, the deep respect verging on adulation that he inspires in the people of Patusan, and his intuitive ability to impose order make him a recognizable type of the conquering European, who, after setting and defending their island becomes the lord of his people. Even his failure confirms this, when he dies there is no power that can replace him and Patusan presumably falls back into chaos.

3.2 Jim's Failure

Jim's quest for romantic idealism brings nothing but only failures and death in the end of the novel. His failure begins from the very beginning of the novel. One winter day, when Jim is abroad on a training ship, fantasizing about becoming a hero, a commotion arises on deck. A collision has occurred nearby and a boat is lunched from his ship to rescue the survivors. Other boys rush to rescue but Jim is not one of the rescuers. Jim looks up "with the pain of conscious defeat in his eyes" and his disappointment is bitter because he loses a chance to prove himself as a romantic hero (6). The captain consoles him saying "Better luck next time. This will teach you to be smart" (6).

Jim, however, cannot learn anything from his failure. He can never change his will into action. In the narrative, embracing the Patna incident, in the first section of the novel, Jim is portrayed as being trapped, cornered, and imprisoned. "I was angry" he describes his feeling on the sinking ship to Marlow, "as though I had been trapped. I was trapped" (102). On the sinking ship again, he is reported to have darted desperate looks "like a cornered man" (103). Jim's last minute on the ship is described as being crowned with "a tumult of events and sensations which beat about him like a sea upon a rock" (108). Marlow adds that he uses this simile advisedly because from the manner

of Jim's narration of the events he is forced to believe that Jim has preserved through it all "a strange illusion of passiveness, as though he had not acted but had suffered himself" (108). In the Patna incident, he jumps leaving all the passengers to their fate. That jump is the jump that has ruined Jim's reputation and brought public scandal upon him, further it has also ruined his dream of being a hero like in a book.

Jim is said to have been torn out of his immobility from the Patna, but ". . . that tore him out of his immobility, he knew no more than the uprooted tree knows of the wind that laid it low" (109). At the trial, his mind flees:

[...] round and round the serried circle of facts that had surged up all about him to cut him off from the rest of his kind: it was like a creature that, finding itself imprisoned within an enclosure of high stakes, dashes round and round, distracted in the night, trying to find a weak spot, a crevice, a place to scale, some opening through which it may squeeze itself and escape. (20)

Jim seems coward to accept the fact that he has jumped from the sinking ship. When he is brought before the court, he cannot face the reality. In this desperate attempt to avoid reality he accuses the court saying "The demand facts as if facts could explain everything" (20). Jim never attempts to live with reality. To avoid reality he always flies in imagination.

During the days of the trial, he feels himself "like a prisoner alone in his cell or like wayfarer lost in wilderness (21). Marlow sees him as "a dry leaf imprisoned in an eddy of wind" (185).

In the second half of the novel, in the Patusan episode, Jim is given an opportunity to recover his wound that he gained in the Patna incident. Patusan, it seems, is an enchanted paradise that gave Jim every opportunity to take up for his shady past.

Jim's initial successes were indeed honorable, however, his true test comes when his dark secret is unveiled and Jim is forced to make a decision between the welfare of Patusan and the protection of his reputation. Jim compromises the safety and well being of Patusan in order to protect his image, another desperate attempt to live up to his romantic conceptions of himself. Jim allowed Patusan to be threatened and reorganized his failure. He accepts his responsibility and himself to be killed by the chief of Patusan to compensate for his neglect.

In Patusan, Jim is not, however, a helpless victim as before on the Patna. He has mastered his destiny there in a way. But one cannot have, it seems, absolute mastery over one's fate. Jim, as surely as he masters his destiny, becomes its victim. The readers are reminded of Jim as a victim almost every time there is a mention of his having become a master. Marlow observes that all the Jim's conquests in Patusan "made him master and made him captive too" (155). Again he observes that "If Jim took the lead, the other had captivated his leader. Jim, the leader, was a captive in every sense. The land, the people, the friendship, the love were like the jealous guardians of his body (164). He observes that Jim is "imprisoned within the very freedom of his powers and she (Jewel) though ready to make a footstool of her head for his feet, guarded her conquest inflexibly as though he were hard to keep" (177). Even Tamb'Itam puts on an air of guardianship "like a surely devoted jailor ready to lay down his life for his captive" (177). Jim is helped by many people in achieving his dreams. His amazing success in Patusan is only an illusion. His success has short life.

Even during the days of his triumph and glory in Patusan, Jim is seen as failed person who dies before he achieves what he imagines himself to be. In this way, Jim, an romantic immaculate hero from shoes to hat at the very beginning of the novel,

becomes a “tiny white speck that seemed to catch all the light left in a darkened world” at the conclusion of Marlow’s narrative (210).

3.3 Causes of Jim’s Failure

Jim is a romantic idealist with the usually accompanying negative characteristics of a lack of grasp of reality, a lack of reality, a lack of self knowledge, a stubborn egoist, an air of superiority, and a thorough going self-deception. He is a creature of light, superior to many around him. There are many limitations inherent in Jim’s heroic pose. His incurable taste for romantic day-dream nourished on fictional situation, his incapability for self-knowledge, even the physical fact of being “an inch perhaps two under six feet” with which the novel all significantly begins, makes the subtle unsoundness of the man somewhat less subtle thing that Conrad probably thought Jim is to obviously flawed (1). Critic Frederic Karl remarks that “Jim is clearly in the line of those romantic heroes whose awareness of reality never catches up with the roles they have idealized for themselves” (110-111). Jim hopes that he would be a hero in coming day but he doesn’t act in accordance of his expectation.

Two important incidents related to Jim’s life—his abandonment of the Patna and his decision to let Brown go, reveal the limitations that Jim has for his heroic dreams. Jim’s dissertation of the Patna and upon his views and feelings concerning this incident clearly reflect Jim’s self-delusion, inability to act, unwillingness to acknowledge reality, and cowardice. Jim’s famous words “I had jumped. It seems” emphasizes Jim’s inability to acknowledge the disparity between his will and his act (70). His jump is a fact which he has great difficulty in admitting. His contempt of facts is of course contempt of reality and his naïve disbelief in their relevance. The inquiry he thinks “demanded facts from him as if facts could explain anything” is a gauge of his innate resistance to truth (18). Under circumstances he cannot properly explain to himself, he

allowed himself to jump from the doomed ship, he nevertheless is convinced that there were some special, strange, indefinable extenuating circumstances which mitigate his guilt and account for everything. Jim is a kind of self-deception, clearly Jim will not face the truth about himself, he insists on regarding his past as a cruel accident. He goes on to qualify his statement, but he eventually makes his previous verdict even more emphatic. He is not wholly guilty; we can not help feeling, for the effect of that “I had jumped. It seems.” is to make the readers share his sense of disbelief in his own guilt (70). Yet the reader is aware at the same time that he ought not to share his disbelief. Despite Jim’s conviction of innate blamelessness, he was to blame, and the rest of the novel is taken up with his attempt to deal with his actions whereby he comes to a gradual realization of its significance and to the fulfillment of his destiny. He has no doubt that act of jumping was “an act of cowardice” (35). He protests too much-that he has nothing in common with these men, yet when pinch comes, when if it seems as though, he is really faced by the alternative of life and death. He suddenly finds that he had jumped, that he is down among those most contemptible of men. Jim’s conceptions of himself are vulnerable and romantic in the extreme and are responsible for culpable failures to act in the right way at the right time.

As in the Patna incident, Jim’s decision to let Brown go can be generally interpreted in terms of various limitations that we associate with a romantic temperament. Jim’s decision to let Brown escape is wholly characteristic of the temperament of Conrad’s hero as revealed in the Patna affair, the fatal gift of a personality that he tries and fails to master. Douglas Hewitt attributes Jim’s decision to his being “mentally helpless” and “crippling identification” or “paralyzed identification” before Brown (43). Jim’s wide experience of life has taught him almost nothing, his knowledge of himself and the world is a boy’s. He collapses

suddenly when Brown arrives, for he fails utterly to sense the man's malignity. Instead of killing Brown and his men, who are trapped on a knoll above the creek, he goes to confront Brown as Cornelius predicted he would. Brown knows nothing about the Patna affair, but he insinuates that Jim is no better than himself and hints that a secret bond joins them. Jim's vanity is wounded by the comparison. Instead of fighting, Brown, who is after all merely a heap of human rubbish, Jim gives him a clear road, partly because he sees Brown and his men as phantom doubles of the Patna crew. He acts like a gentleman when he should act ruthlessly. He responds humanely because unconsciously it is a kind of response he would like to evoke from the world for his own act of cowardice.

The question of Jim's complicity with the world and with the others is most forcefully played out in the affair of the Patna. Just as in the episode of the drawing men, when moment of crisis comes, Jim is the victim of fatal hesitation. Conrad implies that Jim's flaw is his imagination. If judgment is the faculty of the mind that links together theory and practice, Jim's imagination obstructs that link by excessive self-representation, by conjuring up either a soothing stasis or a paralyzing fear. After his terrible miscalculation, Jim decides that the only honorable course of action is to submit to the judgment of the court, even though all of his shipmates have fled. Again, at the end of the novel, after Jim has miscalculated regarding Gentleman Brown's promise to make a peaceful departure, he submits to the judgment of Dormain, who without hesitation shoots him through the heart. The cause of Jim's failure, from this point of view, is one of his misjudgment and atonement.

Jim's predicament is that despite all of his fantastic aspiration he is never quite able to escape the confines of his own mind. When given opportunity to tackle his

greatest, he slips into a dreamlike state, plagued by fear and entirely helpless. In the midst of crisis when the Patna was sinking, “His confounded imagination has evoked for him all the horrors of the panic, the trampling rush, the pitiful screams, boasts swamped. . . he wanted to die without the added terrors, quietly, in a sort of peaceful trance (56). At the end of the novel, Jim lets Brown shoot him to death. He was tired of his life and failures. He was not in a state to face any failure in life and he became aware that his dream was not reachable.

Jim’s cowardice does not spring from his fear of death but rather from the fear of emergency. His visions of trauma leave him with an extreme wariness of emotion and desire for peace. He, like so many of us, lacks the willpower to “fight a losing battle to the last” and his very desire to continue living ceases (56).

Jim’s battle between moral idealism and amoral pragmatism illustrates the “qualitative extremes of humanity: man as butterfly, man as beetle” (Tanner 108). Critic Tony Tanner presents a new insight on the role of symbols in the novel. He suggests that there is a possible correlation between Jim and butterfly, “a creature of beauty, a creature with wings, which can carry it above the mere dead level of the earth which beetles rudely hugs” (109). The metaphorical significance of Jim as butterfly translates to his being, “a creature of light threatened by the forces of the darkness; he is the creature of purity who stands above the dirty crowd” (109). Throughout the novel, Jim is portrayed with a mystical quality that makes him superior to the rest of humanity. He is often pictured on elevated ground, while “dark faces stare up at him from below” (109). Tanner interprets the beetles as being comparative to the dark side of humanity, “ugly-earthbound creatures, devoid of dignity and aspiration, intent merely on self-preservation at all costs: but gifted with hard shell, which serve them well in their intent to live” (109). Jim’s continual flight, Tanner suggests, is an attempt

to escape the battle of mankind, and Jim's drama springs from the beetles that are continually crossing his path.

The analogy linking Jim to a creature of fragility, beauty, and light gives a new depth to his character. Even though Jim abandoned his sinking ship alone with the rest of the crew, his motives were undeniably different than those of his shipmates. His behavior does not dictate moral identity, implying that people tend to act impulsively without questioning whether their actions are morally right or wrong. Jim is set apart from the rest of the crew because his imagination conquered the power of his rational consciousness during the emergency and there was "not the thickness of a sheet of paper between the right and the wrong of this affair" (98). His shipmates or they were devoid of dignity and merely concerned with their own self-preservation, morality was of no importance.

The sequence of the events described on the ship is intentionally vague and misleading. The moment that Jim jumps off the ship is neglected in Jim's recount of the episode, suggesting that his abandonment subconsciously occurs while he was submerged in his-dream like trance. The omission of the crucial moment of decision making in the narrative highlights the uncertain nature of the motive. Conrad puts much effort in illustrating the climactic events that lead up to the suspenseful crisis but purposefully avoid the explanation to describe the actual pinnacle of the events. Words are so definite and conclusive that for Conrad to thoroughly describe the event would mean eliminating any imaginative interpretation on behalf of the reader. Conrad strives to remain obscure into his portrayal of Jim and his inexplicable actions, rather allowing Marlow to struggle to decipher the meaning of Jim's mysterious actions. Jim's mysterious actions and behaviors in times of intense pressure give light to Conrad's unique into the human subconscious.

Conrad's portrayal of Jim is indicative of human nature. When mankind is faced with a life-threatening situation, it becomes an issue of morality versus the instinct to survive. What separates the strong from the weak is the ability to overcome fear and react morally and rationally in times of distress as well as the ability to fight until the battle is over. Conrad is interested in exploring the repercussions of "abandoning a sinner to his own devices", and challenging mankind to navigate in the dark, when there is no light to guide the way (73). Under the circumstances Jim demonstrates a lack of resolution and courage that renders him weak and incapable of living up to his idealistic and heroic conceptions of himself. For the rest of the novel, he struggles to recover his lost respect and recreates his tainted image. While some critics believe that his efforts to make heroic tales come to life are ultimately successful, Jim is never truly able to escape the repercussions of his failures. His eventual death at the end of the novel is a ridiculous effort to satisfy his romantic ideals.

There is no single instance in the novel, in which Jim is truly aware of his inadequacy, or his inability to fulfill his imaginary achievements. Contrary to some belief that Jim's story is one of self-loathing and reconciliation, Jim never actually loses his self-respect, nor is he convinced that his abandonment was immoral. Jim is undeniably convinced of his own self-worth, never loses sight of his preconceived, heroic images. Jim's anguish springs not from his true need for self-reconciliation, but for his need to be rid of his tainted image and public disgrace.

Jim's beliefs, his desires and his unwillingness to risk himself for others prove him to be narcissist. So Jim's falling is more like narcissism but this is not a clinical claim. It is not to prove that Jim suffers from a condition to be found in a psychiatric textbook. To put the point via an anachronistic metaphor, for Jim other people are merely actors and audiences for the movie he projects around himself,

the movie in which he is always the star. He views his life always in terms of others viewing it. Conrad enlarges upon Jim's penchant for valiant day-dreams, generating as he sinks into them, a state almost of beatitude. Jim constantly thinks of himself, Conrad says, as "hero in a book" and at times seems to regret most about the Patna incident that it was an opportunity for glory squandered (6).

Narcissism, as a term of art, is a kind of continual focus on oneself. It involves an extreme degree of self-preferentiality in how one sees the world. This could take many forms. Those characteristics of Jim are his tendency to interpret phenomena as directed at him, as with the storm when he is a cadet on a training ship:

There was a fierce purpose in the gale, a furious earnestness in the screech of the wind, in the brutal tumult of earth and the sky, that seemed directed" at him; and his tendency to his own situation in that of others, as when he identifies with Gentleman Brown, sees himself in this interloper cast out by the world. (5)

It is precisely this identification that pushes him to see his confrontation with Brown as a case of schoolyard honor, though to everyone else it is obvious that Brown is nothing at all like Jim.

Jim's excessive self-referentiality keeps him away from seeing the world accurately. One of the more engagingly despicable of the novel's minor characters, a bizarre entrepreneur named Chester, keeps harping that "you should see things exactly as they are" (162). The narcissist never quite sees people as they are. They are already extras in his movie or else he projects himself onto them, as Jim projects himself onto Brown.

Jim's narcissism also keeps him from the satisfactions specific to the craft of the sea, for these are available only to those who can find ordinary existence satisfying. Like the heroic, though ultimately hollow, Captain Brierly, and unlike Marlow, Jim thinks quite a lot of himself and, as perhaps with Brierly, simple satisfactions escape him. As Brierly's first officer says to Marlow about Brierly, "neither you nor I, sir, had even thought so much of ourselves where this can be taken as: thought so continuously for ourselves" (65). At the Patna episode, Jim is busy in talking about his dreams and imagination. He is not very much interested at what other people say. Jim's emphasis on his 'self' is very much apparent in the Patna episode.

The other side of Jim's obsession, however, is that he is immensely dependent on how other people see him and immensely susceptible to the pressure of others presence. He jumps from the Patna at the repeated urging of the men already in the life-boat, and when he meets Brown he is quickly unstrung by Brown's chance reference to their mutual guilt. Immediately, he cannot meet Brown's eyes, stares at the ground, as if it matters terribly what this ragged bandit thinks of him. Only at the end of the novel Jim raises his eyes. To quote from his death scene "They say that the white men sent right and left at all these faces a proud that others can see him willingness to face the death" (215). As always, his focus is on how others see him.

Marlow frequently says that "Jim is not clear or that he, Marlow, does not see him clearly" (151). He says us, "my eyes were too dazzled by the glitter of the sea below his feet to see him clearly; I am fated never to see him clearly" (151). He talks of Jim as enveloped in a mist. The metaphor is instructive. It is as if Jim inhabits a world not quite in phase with ours, and just as we can not see Jim clearly, he cannot see us and our world clearly. We can call this Jim's narcissism or romanticism.

We must be clear on the kind of problem afflicting Jim. It is not a question of his belief or his desires. Jim desperately desires to do the right thing. And while he has a false belief about Brown- falsely believes that Brown is no worse than himself- that belief is not a piece of ignorance or prejudice. Nor does it come from a failure of inference. Rather it is a consequence of his narcissism. Jim's narcissism filters how the world appears to him. His instance to the world is wrong, and as a result he sees Brown wrong.

Many things can prevent the correct description of situation, events and actions. Belief can be false, desires can be inadequate, desires can be blinding. But sometimes what distorts description is more amorphous. Much has been talked as Jim having a narcissistic stance to the world. His psychological condition wraps his perception. He sees the situation in which he is laid up at sea while a storm rages under the description "those elemental furies are coming at me with a purpose of malice" (7). And he sees Brown as a man who has acted "badly . . . without being much worse than others" i.e., he sees Brown in terms of himself, as like himself, and misjudges him accordingly (394).

Jim's narcissism functions as an interpretation of the world in somewhat the way a person's moods do. In a bad mood, everything seems bleak and drear. But if the mood shifts, all can seem well. Jim's narcissism is not temporary as moods are, but like a mood it is a psychological element that filters how the world and the people in it seem to him.

Narcissism is surely not the only distorting stance to the world. What is being pressed is that what is at issue in Jim's case is neither a belief nor a desire, and yet nevertheless a component of human psychology with a profound role in the process of judgment. Jim's inaccurate description of Brown is not due to lack

neither of information nor to an excusable miscalculation; it is a part and parcel of his narcissism. The claim about Jim is that his failure of Judgment with respect to Brown flows from his sympathetic incapacity to the things as they are. It flows from his character.

Marlow describes Jim's decision to let Dormain shoot him as follows, "He was going to prove his power in another way and conquer the fatal destiny itself" (183). "Nothing can touch me" he said in a flicker of superb egoism (183). Jim seems to see here a final grand part he can play, one whose denouement is hostage neither to his own uncontrollable impulses-as on the Patna- nor to the actions of others. Of course, and this is important to remember, such a part can function properly in Jim's eyes only if he both genuinely believes his actions are right and does it because it is right. Certainly, Jim wants to play the hero's role but he wants to be, not merely to seem, a hero. The worry, however, concerns how he comes to see the actions as right: the worry is that he sees his suicide as the right action only or at least primarily due to his continuous narcissistic blinders.

Jim tries to impose the vision of an ideal world on people who don't necessarily share that perspective. Jim was fortunate in that he was able to impose much of his vision on Dormain, the greatest power in Patusan, through his son, Dain Waris. And Jim is a good man; the rule that he imposes is thoroughly benign because his vision of an ideal world is one of harmony and justice. But in Conrad's world, even the ablest idealist with the best motives must fail, for no individual can succeed in realizing its ideal, much less imposing those ideals on another individual. Furthermore, they are partially corrupted by their extreme degree of egoism. Jim, in this case, is not an exception. His egoism springs from the very beginning of the novel. As we see, when he was on the training ship, he does not go to save the sinking ship, thinking that the

action others were doing was a child-play. He visions himself to be superior to many around him. Egoist Jim fails to prove himself that he was not a coward.

Even from his childhood, Jim had been living in an isolated place. As Conrad describes it, Jim's home was a sort of idyllic garden, walled in and secluded behind a "screen of leaves" (4). Later, Jim goes on searching for the same kind of safe a secluded place. He wants to set himself apart from the "stupid brutality of crowds" (16). He doesn't like to be "one of them" but altogether of "another sort" (59). Because of his concern with his own self and ego, Jim despises even his white companions in the Patna. He despises them because they "didn't belong to the world of heroic adventure" (15). "he rubbed shoulders with them, but they wouldn't touch him, he shared the air they breathed, but he was different. . ." writes Conrad (18). In his consciousness, Jim certainly inhabits a different world.

Jim denies his failure in the training ship by a characteristic and imaginative optimism, projecting a vision of himself that lacks any basis in reality that, in fact, finds the conditions of the world itself inadequate. His optimism keeps him aloof from the others who don't possess that imagination. Jim has egoistic belief in himself and heroic desire. Jim convinces the hero as a solitary individual braving the elements and overcoming his fears to sacrifice himself for the benefits of others. Jim in the inquiry proceeding is isolated. Amidst the crowd of people who attend the inquiry Jim keeps himself aloof.

Later, in Patusan episode, Jim temporarily is able to rule the place making its inhabitants dance according to his tune. But his success does not last long. As in the training ship, his dream is corrupted by his extremity of egoism. In Patusan, his egoism proves not only his incapability of realizing the reality of the people but it also brings

the destruction of the place. His egoism brings the death of many people of Patusan and Jim himself, and ends his quest of romantic and ideal world.

When Marlow is on his visit to Patusan, he realizes Jim's egoism. Jim tells Marlow, "Nothing can touch me" in a flicker of superb egoism (183). Later, Dain Waris is killed by Gentelman Brown whom Jim had given a clear road instead killing him. Dormain, Dain Waris' father is mad with wrath. Jim knows this even though he decides to face him. Jewel, his beloved, and her mother, appeal him not to do so. They, instead, encourage him to fight to survive. But, because of his egoism, Jim cannot really see Jewel when she appeals him for his life. Instead of trying to understand Jewel's perceptions and feelings, he can only work through the final term of his own dream, of his own redemption. He was 'blind' because of his egoism "and deaf without pity" as Jewel tells Marlow later (218). The Patusan episode, therefore, reveals the dark underside lurking in Jim's romanticism.

Jim is constantly seeking some redemption because of his failure to live up to his conception of himself as a hero, when, in a sort of funk, he jumped off a ship that he mistakenly thought was sinking, abandoning hundreds of Moslem passengers. If following a dream is only the dream then Jim has been consistent, long after his trail, in pursuing his heroic conception of himself in Patusan. Marlow tells us that Jim is "inscrutable at heart" and "excessively romantic" (261). There seems to be something exalted about his egoism. It seems that Jim's only honorable way of fulfilling his dream of himself, after Brown's treachery, was to give up his life, because he had told his people that he was ready to answer with his life for any harm that should come to them, if he let Brown and his gang leave.

Jim's romantic, egoistic and narcissistic attitudes weigh heavily on him and drive to death. His self-proclaimed autonomy dramatizes monomania for dreams he

dreamed of, and his egoistic and narcissistic attitude make him incapable of harmonizing human interrelations. His fate is defined and shaped by his tragic flaw. In Jim, it can be said, Conrad presents heroism with all its limitations.

4. Conclusion

Despite the popular conception that Joseph Conrad's novel, *Lord Jim*, is merely a fanciful tale about sea-faring adventures, this carefully crafted novel reaches far beyond its oceanic setting. Conrad's tale is a bittersweet portrayal of a romantic idealist, who dives into complex and mysterious nature of human psyche. *Lord Jim* tells the story of Jim, a youthful sailor who irreparably dishonors himself by abandoning his sinking ship during a crisis at sea, leaving hundreds of innocent pilgrims vulnerable to death. His cowardly act stripes him of his dignity in society and he is forced to seek refuge and isolation in the tropics to avoid the anguish of his crime. Jim is given the opportunity to regain his respect when he becomes the leader and protector of a remote territory named Patusan. The novel is deeply concerned psychological issues surrounding Jim's abandonment and how they affect his subsequent actions. The story is narrated in third-person by a spectator named Marlow, whose account of Jim's story presents a certain degree of ambiguity and uncertainty. Because the story is not told through the eyes of the protagonist himself, there is much room for the manipulation and speculation on behalf of the distant observer and narrator, Marlow. The ambiguous nature of the novel has promoted many critics to formulate their own interpretations of Conrad's originals objectives.

In retrospect, the essence of the novel is ultimately described in terms of man's inability to live up to his ideal conceptions of himself. Conrad is making the statement that although it is easy to conduct heroic images and aspiration for oneself; it is far more difficult to live up to these seemingly unrealistic goals. Conrad puts much emphasis on Jim's youthfulness, suggesting that in youth, it is easy to imagine a prospective future that fulfills all of ones dreams and aspirations. For many individuals, romanticism gradually turns pragmatism with maturity and

the individual abandons his need to fantasize about imaginary achievement. The novel suggests that romanticism, although, necessary for an enchanted life, interferes with mankind's ability to behave rationally, as evidenced by the character of Jim. Jim was tragically flawed in that he was unable to live up to his romanticized conception of himself. He was tired and tested by the opposing forces of both mankind and nature, but in extreme of danger, his ideals disintegrate and he is reduced to a state of paralyzed cowardice. Conrad's conception of romantic idealist is certainly pessimistic and reveals a distinct degree of existentialism. Jim's idealistic conquest is one in which he is perpetually penetrating deeper into the impossible world of romantic achievements, yet he is overwhelmed by a sense of helplessness.

The principal character, Jim is unable to meet the requirements of his imagination. Resisting the limitations of the human condition is a mistake. Through the novel, Conrad seems to say that the sensible man should be able to submit to the inevitability of dissatisfactions and commit his energy to simple survive rather than dwelling on imagination and romanticism. The main question in the novel is how to live?, and Conrad responds to the prevailing question by saying that in order to live, man must organize himself to opposing forces, which threatens human peace, solidarity, and dignity. And this is understandably valid because Jim's tragic flaw was that he was never able to succumb to the limitations of mankind. He could never let go of his crushing guilt and refuse to comprehend that humans are fallible. His eventual death is evidence of the fact that his condition prevented him from being able to simply survive.

Conrad's hero is not an archetypal hero; his hero is united by a common sense of isolation and loneliness. Jim believes that he embodies the heroic qualities of

romantic idealistic naturally but fails to understand that he must transcend the working of his inner mind and express himself actively with integrity and fearlessness in order to be truly heroic. Unfortunately, Jim engages in a battle with the cruelly unromantic outside world that causes him to confine within his own mind, behind a sort of iron curtain.

Jim thrives on his isolation, detaching himself from the dangerous outside world and living safely within his imagination. Though it is violent and adventurous world, it is an interior world; the real drama is what happens inside Jim. This separation between interior and exterior world is what makes it impossible for Jim to actively express himself. Inside, his mind is swimming with images of heroic, ship-bound conquest; in his mind, he truly believes that he is living a fantastic and adventurous existence.

Jim's death can be viewed from different angles. It is believed that in his death, Jim is finally able to live up to his romantic ideals and his spirit was finally able to transcend the ruins of his existence, the reality is actually quite different. Jim's death was an abrupt end to his romantic conquest; it is the final climax when reality violently collides with romance. Is this a noble act reversing his jump from the Patna, or his martyrdom a ridiculous gesture of satisfying his romantic ideals? It suggests that there is no concrete right or wrong answer, though it is logically seems that Jim's conquest for heroism never ceased, and his death was just a last attempt to prove his valiancy.

Jim's lifelong struggle is captured in Conrad's metaphor that ties all of the fragmented pieces of Jim's story together. A man that is born falls into a dream like a

man who falls into the sea. If he tries to climb out into the air as inexperienced people endeavor to do, he fails.

Conrad is making the argument that romantics who try to escape the destructive qualities of life will drown. In order to conquer the oppressive forces one must adapt to the circumstances and learn to live in them. The practical world in which Jim lives is comparatively the destructive elements in society. Since Jim refuses to submit to the practical world and face his reality, he will inevitably drown. Lord Jim is primarily developed around these abstractions. Jim is habitually fighting against invincible forces and it is for that reason that he will always be defeated. He will never be able to reach the surface, meaning that his dreams will never become reality. Jim is far too concerned with reaching the surface than attempting to survive in the present. Unless he is able to submit to reality, in the contest for survival, Jim will always lose.

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