

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences

Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim*: A Contrapuntal Reading

A Dissertation

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By

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation reads Conrad's *Lord Jim* with a simultaneous awareness of Conrad's metropolitan history and concealed history of the colonized. It argues that Conrad highlights their disjunctions and discrepancies in the colonizer-colonized relationship. Conrad's characters in the novel are not mere products of his racist imaginings of a disturbed and ultra-reactionary imperialist. They are the consequences of the imperialist sensibility that Conrad inherits in the white colonial milieu with a pinch of salt. At a certain level, he has an ambivalent attitude to colonialism: he justifies and criticizes it at the same time. But he posits positive image of white characters and negative image of the natives. This reading is particularly indebted to Jim, the white protagonist, whose presence is, Conrad feels, indispensable to regulate a chaotic world torn by internal strife. Jim is required to rescue it from its own pettiness despite the resistance of the natives. Thus Conrad involves in imperialist complicity. This reading offers a synthetic view by balancing aesthetic as well as historical value of the text.

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