[Bull. Tokyo Kasei University 27, p. 165~177, 1986]

Honor in Patusan: a Study of *Lord Jim*

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(Received September 30, 1986)

Introduction

Since 1900, when he first published it, Conrad has been criticized for making *Lord Jim* too long. On the simplest level, critics have argued that since so much of the novel is told at one prolonged sitting by Marlow, it was probably planned as a much shorter work, and the length of the narrative in itself is implausible.[1] On a more relevant level – in my opinion, at least – some critics have argued that there is no convincing link between the first half of the novel, dealing with Jim's dereliction of duty aboard the *Patna*, and the second half, dealing with his attempts to retrieve the honor he lost in that affair. *Lord Jim* has come in for special censure because of the romantic ambience of Patusan, the predominant local of the latter half of the novel. At best, some critics feel, the interest in Jim's problem of honor is stretched too thin in this section.[2] The reader feels no organic connection between exotic events in Patusan and the brilliantly presented *Patna* episode, with which the novel is properly concerned. At worst, a promising novel, technically original and uncompromising in its moral realism, dwindles into a romantic boys' story about love and adventure in the South Seas.

Having read *Lord Jim* several times, and having read other works of Conrad that put it in perspective, I feel that the Patusan section is justified. It is the best possible locale for testing whether Jim's lost honor can ever be regained. Of course the setting is exotic, and the action reminds us of a boys' story. But Conrad is deliberately tailoring this section to the psychological needs of Jim, who requires such an atmosphere to have any chance of regaining his honor. In this paper I will try to show that Jim does not, in fact, succeed in doing so, and that the Patusan section is uniquely suited to making Jim's failure thematic. It suggests that, at least for a certain kind of man, lost honor cannot be recovered even under the most favorable circumstances.

Part One

When Marlow invites Jim to his quarters after the official hearings on the *Patna* affair, he gives Jim the chance he has been waiting for to talk about the night of the collision. But Jim wants to do more than just talk about it – he wants to conjure it up. Jim feels that if he can get beyond the barren facts[3] to which he was restricted at the hearing and recreate that dreadful night, nuance by nuance, for a sympathetic audience, his innocence will be recognized. In fact, Jim wins Marlow over in a very practical sense: Marlow determines to help him find a new position. This becomes in effect a decision to help Jim for the rest of his life. But Marlow is not taken in by Jim's eloquence. Although he knows that Jim is more than a nice-looking variation of the *Patna* officers who ran off,[4] there are degrees of guilt, and Jim's account falls short of explaining away his own misconduct.

For instance, one of Jim's main points is that the *Patna* was sure to sink far too quickly for the pas-

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sengers to be saved, even if there were enough lifeboats to hold them. But since it would be better to save some passengers than none at all, this really implies that the ship would sink too quickly to lower even one lifeboat (beyond the one the captain and his cronies appropriated for themselves). In hammering home the urgency and futility of this situation for Marlow, Jim seems to have forgotten the simple fact that destroys his whole argument: the ship's bulkhead held. The ship not only stayed afloat for a reasonable period of time – it never sank at all.[5] Marlow gently brings Jim back to this reality: " 'So that bulkhead held out after all,' I remarked, cheerfully" (p. 67). It is Jim's meditation on this damning detail that reveals his own view of his misconduct:

> "Thrown back in his seat, his legs stiffly out and arms hanging down, he nodded slightly several times. You could not conceive a sadder spectacle. Suddenly he lifted his head; he sat up; he slapped his thigh. 'Ah! what a chance missed! My God! what a chance missed! ' " (p. 68)

Jim then begins to fantasize about what he might have done, so plainly that Marlow can read it on his face:

> "With every instant he was penetrating deeper into the impossible world of romantic achievements. He got to the heart of it at last! . . . A strange look of beatitude overspread his features, his eyes sparkled in the light of the candle burning between us; he positively smiled! " (p. 68)

Marlow finds this withdrawal in the middle of Jim's explanation rather offensive. "I whisked him back by saying, 'If you had stuck to the ship, you mean! ' " (p. 68) Marlow is irritated on behalf of the mercantile service and this violation of its standards. He is charmed by Jim's romanticism, to a point. As he puts it later, "He . . . had that faculty of beholding at a hint the face of his desire and the shape of his dream, without which the earth would know no lover and no adventurer" (p. 134). But, on the other hand, the fact of the deed is plain enough: "about as naked and ugly as a fact can be" (p. 32). Granted that his "high-minded resignation" prevented him from helping the blatantly bad officers to lower a lifeboat for themselves, it also "prevented him lifting as much as his little finger" (p. 77) to help the sleeping passengers. And ultimately, he jumped ship – leaving the passengers to drown and even availing himself of the scorned lifeboat. Marlow notices that Jim's attention is directed not on these unbecoming truths, but on his tarnished image: ". . . the fact obtrudes itself that he made so much of his disgrace while it is the guilt alone that matters" (p. 136).

All of this suggests both the root of Jim's virtues and the root of his problem. As Stein says later, " 'He is a romantic.' " (p. 162) His charm and enthusiasm are infectious. He also proves himself a good and humane man in the latter part of the novel. But he cannot accept the gulf between his romantic dream of himself and his actual conduct during the *Patna* crisis. His concern with what Marlow calls his "disgrace" – the reproach of others – further confuses the deeper problem of how he judges himself. Of course, the various references to honor reflect Marlow's concern with the latter issue: what he actually did and his consequent self-esteem. When he and Marlow first meet, at the end of the *Patna* hearing, Jim's mortification verges on shock, and Marlow has to tread gently to avoid trampling on his ego. Jim even imagines that Marlow calls him a "wretched cur" when Marlow points out a flea-infested mongrel (a *real* cur) within his hearing. Marlow's comment sums up the state of Jim's ego at this juncture:

> "There had never been a man so mercilessly shown up by his own natural impulse. A single word had stripped him of his discretion – of that discretion which is more necessary to the decencies of our inner being than clothing is to the decorum of our body . . . I perceived he was incapable of pronouncing a word from the excess of his humiliation" (p. 61).

What this temporary loss of discretion reveals, of course, is that Jim expects people to think of him as a cur (the "single word" alluded to by Marlow). Jim is humiliated because he has betrayed to intelligent scrutiny (Marlow's) a projection of his own view.

The final days of the hearing are Jim's low point.

But his honor is not retrieved by the various jobs Marlow finds for him. He excells at all of them, earning Marlow the gratitude of Jim's various employers. Yet he drops each job and moves on as soon as he perceives that he has been connected with the *Patna* affair. The depth of his feeling of disgrace is suggested by a recurring irony. In each case, when Jim has left, his abandoned employer protests to Marlow that he doesn't care about Jim's past failures. The *Patna* scandal has run its course, and Jim is almost the only man in Southeast Asia for whom it is a fresh memory. The thematic relevance of this obsessive job-leaving can be educed from an exchange between Marlow and the ship chandler Egstrom, of the firm Egstrom & Blake. Jim told Egstrom that he had to resign for reasons that he preferred not to state: " 'I give you my word that if you knew my reasons you wouldn't care to keep me.' " So Marlow explains that Jim had been a mate on the *Patna* during its notorious voyage. What follows is Egstrom's reaction:

> " 'And who the devil cares about that? ' 'I daresay no one,' I began. . . 'And what the devil is he – anyhow – for to go on like this? ' He stuffed suddenly his left whisker into his mouth and stood amazed. 'Jee! ' he exclaimed, 'I told him the earth wouldn't be big enough to hold his caper' " (p.150).

Egstrom's last sentence raises the question that concerns us here: Is the earth big enough for Jim's "caper" – his attempts to regain his self-esteem? On the purely conceptual level this is really a question of means: Is there a *way* for Jim to recover his honor? But Conrad expresses means in terms of place here, foreshadowing Jim's life in Patusan, the one place where there might be a way.

In reading Jim's account of what happened aboard the *Patna*, it is easy to see things from his point of view and to wonder if Marlow isn't overly strict in holding his actions up to the rigid code of conduct endorsed by the merchant service. Marlow himself admits to being troubled by "the doubt of the sovereign power enthroned in a fixed standard of conduct" (p. 44). One way in which this novel could fail – as some religious novels fail, at least for me – would be to hinge the central question on standards the reader cannot take seriously. If we cannot agree that Jim has lost his honor after making allowance for the special circumstances he faced – if we think any sane man would have acted as he did – then we will be bored and irritated by the insistent question of whether he ever *recovers* his honor. To justify the urgency of his theme Conrad supplies three examples of proper conduct against which to measure Jim's actions.

One is "little Bob Stanton," first mate of the *Sephora*, who drowned trying to save a lady's maid while the ship was sinking. Somehow, in packing away the passengers on lifeboats, the crew had overlooked this girl, who "stood five feet ten in her shoes and was strong as a horse." The girl panicked and "held to the rail like grim death," hysterically refusing to come with Bob and get in a lifeboat. Being "the shortest chief mate in the merchant service," Bob was unable to budge her, but died trying: ". . . after a bit the old ship went down with a lurch to starboard – plop" (p.117; previous quotes, p.116). All the time Bob was struggling with this obdurate Amazon, he kept his eyes on the boat below, occasionally shouting a warning for it to keep clear of the ship. This incident is passed on to Marlow, not without a certain rough humor, by one of the *Sephora*'s survivors. Of course, Bob's identical rank reminds us of Jim, as does the suddenness with which his ship goes down ("plop"): this abrupt lurch was exactly what Jim feared.

The second example of prescribed conduct comes to light at the hearing. The heroes in this case are neither officers nor Europeans, but the two Malay helmsmen of the *Patna*. While all of the officers – including Jim – abandoned ship, these Malays remained aboard, oblivious of the activity below them, holding to the wheel, until they were rescued by a passing French gunboat. The helmsmen's rhetorical impact in the novel is two-pronged; it involves both their action and their testimony. Asked what he thought about during the ordeal, the first Malay answers through the interpreter that he thought nothing. Asked why he remained at the helm, the second Malay explains "that he had a knowledge of some evil thing befalling the

ship, but there had been no order; he could not remember an order; why should he leave the helm? " The passage continues:

> "To some further questions he jerked back his spare shoulders, and declared it never came into his mind then that the white men were about to leave the ship through fear of death. He did not believe it now. There might have been secret reasons" (p. 79).

The latter helmsman is an especially "damning witness," and he creates a sensation with everyone but Jim, who sits moodily on his bench and never looks up at him. This testimony is so effective because it sets forth quite innocently the ideal of conduct by which Jim is being tried. Furthermore, it suggests the relationship between proper conduct, mutual trust among the crewmen, and the ultimate safety of the ship.

Both of these examples contrast the heroic deeds performed with the total lack of glamor of the heroes. In both cases, the heroes are physically odd: Bob Stanton is very small for his job – and weaker than the woman he refuses to abandon; the Malays, in turn, look excessively young and excessively old and shrunken. And both accounts are rather humorous, thus depriving the heroism displayed of the usual pathetic glow. Bob's scene looks like farce; and the older Malay, to demonstrate his respect for the "white Tuan," trails off in a litany of white men's words, bereft of any intelligible context, until he has to be silenced.

The third instance to set against Jim's conduct completes this motif. He is a plain-looking old French lieutenant whom Marlow comes across in Sydney – "a quiet, massive chap in a creased uniform sitting drowsily over a tumbler of some dark liquid." Marlow also notices that his shoulder straps are "a bit tarnished" and that his cheeks are "large and sallow" (p.108). At first glance he resembles the anti-heroes of many modern novels, but Conrad stifles any suggestion of inverted romance by portraying him as quite respectable-looking. Hence, for instance, his cheeks are "clean-shaved." This man had been one of the boarding officers from the ship that rescued the people on the *Patna*. His ship safely towed the *Patna* to port in Aden – stern foremost. While the actual time that Jim stuck to the *Patna* after the collision had been brief indeed, it was the French lieutenant's duty to remain aboard that ship during the entire thirty hours of her towing – with two men stationed on the French ship near the towing rope to cut it loose at the first sign that the *Patna* was going to sink. The look he gives Marlow as he relates his own ordeal is neither proud nor satisfied but one of "profound disgust." For while he did what he could ("'*on fait ce gu'on peut*'" – a modest reference to an act of great courage (p. 110)) and had every right to be proud, his keenest memory is of having to eat without his customary glass of wine.

The French lieutenant's conduct sheds light enough on the gravity of Jim's dereliction. It also completes the pattern established by little Bob Stanton and the Malays. All four men acted courageously without any trace of adventure-story heroism. By contrast, Jim's very impulse to become a merchant marine was rooted in the "sealife of light literature" (p. 11), and he was dreaming of "valorous deeds" (p. 21) even at the onset of his *Patna* failure. But the Frenchman has a further purpose in the novel, for Marlow perceives in him a special kind of wisdom and maturity, and the two veteran seamen engage in a discussion of Jim's case. As Marlow observes, "His imperturbable and natural calmness was that of an expert in possession of the facts, and to whom one's perplexities were mere child's play" (p. 112). Everything the French lieutenant says has a ring of finality about it. His first comment on Jim, for instance, is, "'And so that poor young man ran away along with the others'" (p. 113). This clears up the obfuscations Marlow has heard on this point with amusing simplicity, which is perhaps why he observes that the latter part of this statement in French – "'*S'est enfui avec les autres*'" – "sounded funny."

The lieutenant next brushes aside the question of whether Jim had been afraid with the same laconic certainty: "'Ah! The young, the young . . . And after all one does not die of it.'" "Of it," Marlow learns, means "Of being afraid" (p. 113). The lieutenant

regards fear the way an athlete accepts fatigue, as an unpleasant fact of his profession. His philosophy boils down to the observation that everyone has his breaking point: " 'Given a certain combination of circumstances, fear is sure to come. Abominable funk (*un trac épouvantable*).' " But this breaking point must never, in the lieutenant's profession, alter one's conduct:

> " 'Man is born a coward. . . . It is a difficulty – *parbleu*! It would be too easy otherwise. But habit – habit – necessity – do you see? – the eye of others – *voilà*. One puts up with it. And then the example of others who are no better than yourself, and yet make good countenance . . . .' " (p. 114).

Marlow wonders hopefully whether this statement – basing proper conduct on " 'the example of others' " – doesn't exonerate Jim, who was surrounded by scoundrels: " 'That young man – you will observe – had none of these inducements – at least at the moment.' " Here the lieutenant, though personally disposed to tolerance, raises his eyebrows "forgivingly" and makes a distinction that amounts to a prophecy of doom:

> " 'There's nothing much to get upset about [in] knowing that one's courage does not come of itself . . . But the honour – the honour, monseiur! . . . The honour . . . that is real – that is! And what life may be worth when . . . the honour is gone – *ah ca! par exemple* . . . I can offer no opinion – because – monsieur – I know nothing of it' " (p. 115).

Marlow's comment on this parting speech of the lieutenant's is, "Hang the fellow! he had pricked the bubble" (p. 115). This turns out not to be a final judgment on Marlow's part, but his hopes for Jim are dampened by the lieutenant's reply. Marlow wants to believe that Jim has retained his honor at least in the negative sense that he will not be dragging his burden of dishonor with him through life. Marlow argues that Jim's honor is saved by the unusual facts of the *Patna* case. If a seaman of the lieutenant's caliber has mastered his fear and acted properly because of the vigil of his peers, it follows that he might have acted no better than Jim did if his companions had been of the ilk of the *Patna*'s scoundrels. Surely Jim's crime is not so serious then? But the lieutenant "pricks the bubble" by politely but firmly removing honor from this abstract discussion: philosophical questions of ethics and man's nature can be discussed endlessly, but "honour" (both the French and British spelling) is for the Frenchman something that makes all discussion futile. It is a man's intuitive sense of self-approval. He retains it not through a disposition to courage – for "man is born a coward" – but through courageous action in spite of his natural proclivities. And if a man forfeits his honor in a weak moment, no philosophy, no psychology, no explanations of any kind, however convincing, will help. He can never recover it. Marlow last sees the Frenchman opposing his burly physique to a harsh southern wind: "I saw the southerly buster get hold of him and drive him down wind with his hand to his head, his shoulders braced, and the tails of his coat blown hard against his legs" (p. 116). This most unromantic exit is appropriate in every way. The French lieutenant is the spokesman for unglamorous conduct and harsh reality. If what he says is true, Jim's lost honor is irretrievable, and he is destined to feel the loss for the rest of his life.

Part Two

Opposed to the French lieutenant's concept of honor is the concept implied in Jim's desire for redemption. " 'Some day,' " he confides to Marlow, " 'one's bound to come upon some sort of chance to get it all back again. Must! ' " (p. 137) For the Frenchman honor is like life itself. One either has it or lacks it – one cannot have *some* honor – and he has no more chance of regaining lost honor than of rising from the dead. For Jim, as we see, honor is a more tractable thing, like a commodity. It can be lost and regained, in part or completely. A person may retain a part of his honor, and he may hope to regain the rest.

A weakness may be concealed in Jim's view. It could hint at the dependence on the opinion of others that Marlow complains about. There is nothing in the text to prove what exactly Jim has in mind by getting "it all" back, but one application that fits both his

frame of mind in this scene and his actions in the rest of the novel is regaining the favor of those around him, "it all" suggesting a kind of majority vote of confidence. The only important thing for Marlow is a person's actual guilt or innocence; how other people judge him should have nothing to do with it. For the rest of the novel, Jim continues to confuse the inherent rectitude of his actions with the view that people take of them. This explains the thin-skinned vigilance that causes him to leave one job after another. And it also clarifies his motivation in key parts of the Patusan section that ends the novel.

Nevertheless, the French lieutenant's outlook does not elicit one's spontaneous assent.[6] However maladroitly Jim comes to grips with the nature of his honor, his hope of getting it back must seem reasonable enough to most readers. In his conversation with the Frenchman, Marlow counters the latter's polite refusal to hold out any hope for Jim with a suggestion of his own: " 'Very well,' I said with a disconcerted smile, 'but couldn't it reduce itself to not being found out? ' " The Frenchman seems to disapprove of this question, and he distains to answer it. He simply concludes the conversation: " 'This, monsieur, is too fine for me – much above me – I don't think about it' " (p. 115). Critics have taken this at face value, as a deserved chastening of Marlow on the part of the wise Frenchman,[7] but the issue seems less clear to me. In the next development, the solution to the dilemma of finding not merely another post for Jim, but one that he can endure, entails just such a proviso: it must be in a place where he is unknown – in no danger of being "found out."

This solution is provided by Stein, an old German trader who has lived in the Malayan Archipelago even longer than Marlow. By the time Jim's problem reaches its crisis, his desire for anonymity is a joke in the European community throughout the Archipelago. Most of his companions tactfully pretend to know nothing of his past, but when a drunken Dane in a Bangkok bar makes insulting reference to Jim's part in the *Patna* scandal, Jim literally throws the man through a window into the river outside. Shocked by this behavior, Marlow turns to Stein with the problem of finding a job for Jim that will spare him further bouts with his tormentors (most of whom mean no harm at all). In bearing and experience Stein is an excellent match for the French lieutenant. He has the same air of hard-earned wisdom. And just as Marlow infers a life of danger behind the bullet scar on the Frenchman's hand, Marlow knows that his German friend faced and suffered all the trials of war in the Celebes when he was a young man. Among other things, he married a Malay princess and allied himself with her brother in a war for succession. Both of these companions have died. Stein is also an established trader, with exclusive access to many outposts in Southeast Asia, and a renowned entymologist.

But the similarity of Marlow's two confidants serves mainly to set off their differences. Stein is approachable, open, and free with his opinions. Above all – for this is the contrast most relevant to the question of lost honor – Stein stands out in opposition to the Frenchman because he sees hope in Jim's case. His analysis falls into two parts, an explanation of Jim's present predicament and the solution to it. Having heard Marlow out on the subject, Stein offers a concise preview of his fuller discourse. The explanation is simply that " 'He [Jim] is a romantic' " (p. 162). Impressed with the terseness of this statement, Marlow compares it to a medical diagnosis and asks Stein the same question a patient would ask a doctor: " 'What's good for it? ' " This leads Stein to make a useful distinction: " '. . . strictly speaking, the question is not how to get cured, but how to live.' " He then contrasts "man" with a specimen from his beloved butterfly collection, having already observed that man is less "perfect" (p. 162):

> " 'We want in so many different ways to be. This magnificent butterfly finds a little heap of dirt and sits still on it; but man will never on his heap of mud keep still. He want to be so, and again he want to be so. . . He wants to be a saint, and he wants to be a devil and every time he shuts his eyes he sees himself as a very fine fellow – so fine as he can never be . . . And because you not always can keep your eyes shut comes the real trouble – the heart pain –

> the world pain. I tell you, my friend, it is not good for you to find you cannot make your dream come true, for the reason that you not strong enough are, or not clever enough. *Ja!* . . . And all the time you are such a fine fellow, too! *Wie? Was? Gott in* [*sic*][8] *Himmel!* How can that be? Ha! ha! ha! '" (pp.162-63).

Thus far, Stein's analysis seems simple enough, despite his imperfect English. A man's despair – his "heart pain," a truly German-sounding compound – springs from the impossibility of measuring up to his own ideal self: the futility of "making his dream come true." Stein's attitude towards Jim is compassionate and amused, not at his weakness, but at the universal human predicament – the "world pain" – that he exhibits. There seems nothing very difficult in this. But the elaboration of the analysis and the proffered solution turn this rather traditional dream metaphor into something more obscure:

> "'Yes! Very funny this terrible thing is. 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 endeavour to do, he drowns *nicht wahr*? . . . No! I tell you! The way is to the destructive element submit yourself, and with the exertions of your hands and feet in the water make the deep, deep sea keep you up . . .'" (p. 163).

There are really two metaphors here – that of the dream and that of the sea. A man's (or simply *man's*) dream is forced on him by his very nature, at birth. To survive – to stay afloat, in terms of the metaphor – he must exert himself within the element in which be is immersed. That element is the dream. But what does the dream signify? From Stein's earlier statement, we can assume that it is man's wish to be the impossibly "fine fellow" of his untested imagination. This is consistent with the dream being a "destructive element," since a man can be destroyed by the difference between this dream and the reality of his weakness, as Jim stands in danger of being. The next turn of the metaphor appeals to common knowledge: an inexperienced swimmer who falls into the sea can drown by panicking, when he should accept his new element and concentrate on staying afloat within it.

The implied advice for Jim, then, is to continue the stuggle to measure up to his ideal self – to submit himself completely to his dream of perfection ("the destructive element")[9] in the hope that the very intensity of his delusion will keep him afloat.

Although this advice sounds slightly insane from a rational point of view, it addresses a problem that has resisted all treatment up to this point. At any rate, Conrad hints that Stein himself has misgivings. This scene, which takes place in Stein's house, is accompanied by a play of light and shadow. His terse observation that Jim is a romantic is simple and assured. The assurance is accompanied by the bright circle of light from the lamp he uses to examine his butterflies. Before Stein proceeds to his oracular solution ("'. . . the way is to the destructive element submit yourself . . .'"), he steps away from the lamp, to Marlow, seeming to blend into the dusk:

> "He lowered the glass lid, the automatic lock clicked sharply, and taking up the case in both hands he bore it religiously away to its place, passing out of the bright circle of the lamp into the ring of fainter light – into shapeless dusk at last. It had an odd effect – as if these few steps had carried him out of this concrete and perplexed world . . . his voice, heard in that remoteness where he could be glimpsed mysteriously busy with immaterial cares, was no longer incisive, seemed to roll voluminous and grave – mellowed by distance" (p. 163).

This near-darkness gives Stein's comments a prophetic air; he sounds like an oracle. But then he approaches the lamp again, and the luminence seems to dissolve his confidence:

> "His extended hand aimed at my breast like a pistol; his deep-set eyes seemed to pierce through me, but his twitching lips uttered no word, and the austere exaltation of a certitude seen in the dusk vanished from his face . . . The light had destroyed the assurance which had inspired him in the distant shadows. He sat down and, with both elbows on the desk,

rubbed his forehead. 'And yet it is true – it is true. In the destructive element immerse.' . . . He spoke in a subdued tone, without looking at me, one hand on each side of his face. That was the way. To follow the dream, and again to follow the dream – and so – *eviq* – *usque ad finem* ' . .' " (pp.164-64).

It is no coincidence that the question with which this paper is concerned – whether Jim can get his lost honor back – has been explicitly stated and argued from both sides by this point in the novel. For this is the question which the final segment of the novel is intended to answer. Stein serves a dual purpose in respect to this question: First, as I have tried to show, he is an advocate of hope, and in impressiveness balances the French lieutenant, who regretfully denies the possibility of hope. Second, Stein is the medium though which the plot advances. Marlow comes to him with the dilemma of finding a place for Jim where he can fulfill himself but where he will be free from the torment of recognition. Marlow was not being frivolous when he suggested to the French lieutenant that saving Jim might reduce itself to a question of placing him where he is not known.

Therefore, after offering such apparently theoretical help, Stein takes the practical step of appointing Jim the representative of his trading company in an uncharted recess of the Malayan Archipelago called Patusan. As I suggested in the introduction to this paper, the Patusan section has struck some critics as too arbitrarily connected with Jim's problem to satisfy the organic needs of the novel. But however well or poorly it succeeds in the concrete – and this question must remain a matter of dispute, since we can never prove the validity of our subjective responses – I would suggest that the Patusan section provides a perfect testing ground for Jim's honor. If the French lieutenant is correct, Jim has no chance of getting his honor back. If Stein is right – though his confidence is less than absolute – what Jim needs is a place a thousand miles from anyone who knows his past, where he can immerse himself in the romantic dream he was born into. And that place is Patusan.[10] If Jim can "get it all back" anywhere, he can there. Conversely, if he cannot regain his self-respect in Patusan, he could never do so anywhere. Jaques Berthoud sums up this section nicely – if perhaps too sanguinely – by observing that Jim "makes a fairy-tale conquest of love . . . , of friendship . . . , and above all of honour . . ." Berthoud also demonstrates that Jim's "conquest" involves "a step-by-step re-enactment of his original failure."[11] Briefly, it can be agreed that all the humiliations of Jim's past life, starting with his jump from the *Patna*, have their symbolic parallel in the occurences, things, and people of Patusan. With the enormous Bugis chief Doramin, there is even a counterpart to the *Patna*'s obese captain.

In short, Patusan is Jim's dream right up to, but not including, the end. When Marlow comes on one of his fatherly visits, Jim says as much: " 'It's like something you read in books' " (p. 198). This effusion gathers strength from the fact that Jim was originally sent to a merchant marine academy because of his passion for boys' sea stories (cf. p. 11). Patusan is a place which Jim can enjoy despite his covert distaste for the diurnal druggery of real life aboard ship, of which we were warned early in the novel: ". . . the prosaic severity of the daily task . . . whose only reward is in the perfect love of the work. This reward eluded him" (p. 14).

Mentioning only the highlights of Jim's accomplishments in Patusan is already an imposing task. He becomes friends with Dain Waris, son of the chief, Doramin, and the bravest and most resourceful of the Bugis men. Together Jim and Waris wage successful war on Sherif Ali, the most active of the local tyrants under whose whim the people of the area suffer. By virtue of this victory, Jim accomplishes two things: he frees the surrounding people from the exploitation of Ali and the other tyrants (the uncles of the local Sultan, presented in the novel in the figure of the "worst" uncle, the cruel, rapacious, and cowardly Rajah Allang); and he establishes himself as the day-to-day ruler of the people within the Patusan walls. He proves a wise and efficient ruler, absolutely honest and fair, and also practical in his defense measures: thus, Marlow tells us, he postmarks his letters "Fort Patusan," referring to the stockade within his com-

mand post.[12]

Two other "conquests" must be mentioned because of the light they shed on Jim's character. The first may be an essential part of any romantic dream: Jim finds a near-ideal mate in a beautiful half-European girl named Jewel. Owing to Jewel's estrangement from her odious father, Cornelius, she actually received her name from Jim. The second conquest is a replay in minor key of Jim's victory over Sherif Ali. In this instance he defeats three would-be assassins. Since Jim distains to chase Jewel's father away despite the latter's proven cruelty and overall vileness, Cornelius dwells in the same house as Jim and the daughter he has always abused. Though he is far too cowardly to have the hated intruder (Jim) murdered himself, Cornelius has sent out feelers in the confidence that someone else will do the job for him. Eventually, Sherif Ali accepts the challenge, and with Cornelius's help has three assassins smuggled into Jim's house. Jim calmly shoots the only man to actually attack him and captures the other two. Then, just as he did with Sherif Ali himself after his victory, Jim sets the men free, with insouciant greetings for Ali. Nor does Jim punish Cornelius for his obvious role in the fiasco.

What all of this demonstrates is the degree to which Jim has realized his heroic dream – and how handsomely and honorably he does it justice. The persistence of his mercy is punctuated by Cornelius's contempt, for to that paragon of vice it proves again that Jim is like "a little child" (p. 246). And, ironically, Cornelius has a point: Jim's lenience, though humane in itself, is related to his egoism.[13] To a veiled threat of Cornelius's, he replies, " 'Nothing can touch me! You can do your damnedest' " (p. 221). This recalls the remark of another Conrad exile, Axel Heyst in *Victory*. "Nothing can break in on us here," says Heyst, just before a group of bandits invade his island.[14]

In Jim's case nemesis[15] also appears in the form of a group of bandits. Appropriately, in this sea story, they are pirates. The leader is a vicious cutthroat named Brown, called Gentleman Brown because he is supposed to be the outcast "son of a baronet" (p. 265). Brown has moored his ship – with a mere skeleton crew and scant provisions – at the mouth of the river leading to Patusan, and with of few of his men approached the command post in a longboat in the hope of robbing and destroying the place. But Brown has heard nothing of Patusan's defenses. In Jim's absence Brown and his accomplices are beaten back to a stronghold across the river by Dain Waris and the Bugis men at the command post. There is no escape. The jungle behind the pirates is impenetrable, and the river in front of them would make them easy targets for armed Bugis positioned along the opposite bank.

Hopeless as things seem, another collusion of jealous interests – this time those of the Rajah Allang and Cornelius – shows Brown a way out. Cornelius, who speaks English (he is a Malaccan Portuguese), musters the nerve to approach the pirates and apprise them of the situation in Patusan. He advises Brown to have a meeting with Jim when he returns – and then to have him shot: " 'All you have to do is kill him and you will be king here.' " (p. 277). Implicit in this advice is Cornelius's trust in Jim's fearlessness: " 'he is a fool' " (p. 277) and will not hesitate to confront Brown from the opposite bank of the river. Brown has his own plans, but when Jim returns he does demand the meeting. And Jim, as predicted, agrees to it.

The meeting between Jim and Brown is fairly eventful, and it is the subject of several interesting analyses. In summary, Brown convinces Jim to let him and his men leave. This can be seen both as a strength and a weakness on Jim's part. A strength because it is yet another example of his benign use of power. A weakness because Brown (who knows nothing of Jim's case but assumes that the rest of humanity, Jim included, are no better than himself) is able to work on Jim's sublimated guilt. Brown's basic theme is that Jim has probably done something as bad as himself to account for his ending up in Patusan. And Jim responds to this onslaught in a way that presages a terrible truth: even after the unbelievably heroic life he has led since, Jim is still racked with guilt over the *Patna* incident.

The denoument of the novel is simple enough. Brown, with the guidance of Cornelius, takes advan-

tage of the fog and uses the free passage that Jim (with the reluctant agreement of the Bugis) has given him to betray Jim's generosity. His longboat creeps up behind an outpost of sentries commanded by Dain Waris, and his men shoot dead most of the Bugis, including Waris, before rowing off in the fog. This enrages Doramin, who had mainly seconded Jim's proposal to protect his son (Waris) from a battle with the white men.

The contrast between Jim's reaction to the news of Brown's betrayal and Jewel's is touching. Jim thinks he should rally his people in case of another attack by the pirates. Jewel knows – as well as the witness, his servant Tamb' Itam – that the people will no longer follow him: that he is already perceived as a conspirator.[16] Jewel and Tamb' finally open Jim's eyes to this fact and try to convince him to fight his way out, for he has "all the powder in Patusan" (p. 306). But Jim refuses to fight. He is deaf to Jewel's reminder that he promised never to abandon her. After Tamb' Itim confirms the mood of the people, Jim marches out of his stronghold into Doramin's arms, knowing perfectly well that the old chief will kill him. Doramin shoots him with a pistol, and Jim dies with a defiant smile on his lips.

Conclusion

This denoument is tragic not because Jim misunderstood Brown – though the mistake reflected the flaw in Jim's character – but because Jim identifies his honor with the people's approval. The slaughter of Dain Waris and the sentries was not his fault. He erred with the best of intentions, and due in large part to simple ignorance.[17] But when Jim realizes that he has lost the people's confidence, he reverts to the state in which Marlow first met him. This entirely convincing development turns the Patusan section of the novel from a romantic study of life's ironies into a revelation of character that perfects the theme of honor. In answer to Jewel's pleading, Jim is able to say, " 'Enough, poor girl. I should not be worth having' " (p. 310). He is echoing the fatal analysis of the French lieutenant: " 'And what life may be worth when . . . when the honour is gone . . . I can offer no opinion' " (p.115). Of course, the polite Frenchman had left the word "Nothing" unspoken, but that, clearly, is his opinion. And the life of Jim seems to bear this opinion out. Thus Jim, wedded, as Marlow says, "with a shadowy ideal of conduct" (p. 313), was simply waiting, amid all the good fortune, for one bad thing to happen to him. When it does, he reveals the latent guilt that enables him to abandon Jewel with no additional remorse. This lesson is what the Patusan section of *Lord Jim* demonstrates to us in a way that no other landscape or scenario could.

Footnotes

1. Conrad himself mentions this common observation in his Author's Note to a later edition. But he disagrees: "After thinking it over for something like sixteen years I am not so sure about that." Basically, he feels he has heard "yarns" just as long: Joseph Conrad, *Lord Jim*. (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1900, 1977), p. 7. (All subsequent references to *Lord Jim* are to this edition and are included in the text of this paper. Where several quotations are clearly from the same page,one page number covers the unreferenced quotes as well. Page numbers are only duplicated where genuine confusion is possible.)
2. See, for instance, F. R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition*. (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1948, 1972), p. 218: "But the romance that follows, though plausibly offered as a continued exhibition of Jim's case, has no inevitability as that: . . ." Leavis's preferences have determined the Conrad "canon" (the common choice of first-, second-, and third-rate Conrad novels) in England for two generations.
3. Jeremy Hawthorn observes truly (in what I feel to be an overly political book) that Jim's abhorence of facts at the hearing reflects an "utterly confused" understanding "of the relationship between facts and ideas": Jeremy Hawthorn, *Joseph Conrad: Language and Fictional Self-Consciousness*. (London: Edward Arnold Ltd., 1979), p. 41.
4. The difference between Jim and the other officers – all of whom are recognizable Conradian shirkers –

is plain enough. But R. A. Gekoski pins it down to a relevant formula: "Jim, unlike the other officers . . . both accepts and believes in the standards by which he is judged": R. A. Gekoski, *Conrad: The Moral World of the Novelist.* (London: Paul Elek, 1978), p. 99.

5. Norman Sherry points out that the model for the *Patna*, a ship named the *Jeddah*, was actually not an old ship, as Jocelyn Baines supposes. Sherry surmizes (and I agree) that Conrad makes the *Patna* old "to increase the sense of the inevitable disaster felt by Jim": Norman Sherry, *Conrad's Eastern World.* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 46.

6. C. B. Cox, one of Conrad's most interesting critics, does not accept the French lieutenant's view. Cox considers the Frenchman a dreary fanatic. "Has he not," Cox asks disarmingly, "sacrificed his imaginative life, the quick of his personality, to a fixed standard of conduct? Are we to accomplish our salvation only by dullness? ": C. B. Cox, *Joseph Conrad: The Modern Imagination.* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1974), p. 35.

Jaques Berthoud agrees that the lieutenant "cannot understand that there is more to human life than the demands of the code." But he nevertheless insists that "He sees with the clarity of experience that the code has to be a fixed one because it must withstand the assault of the most powerful impulse of our nature: the instinct of self-preservation": Jaques Berthoud, *Joseph Conrad: The Major Phase.* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1978) p. 70. Jim, as one of those who accepts the code (see Gekoski, above), is a relevant object for the lieutenant's view of honor, while a normal civilian might not be.

7. Gekoski, pp. 101-102, for instance, feels that this is a rare instance in which Conrad would definitely disagree with Marlow. He finds Marlow's suggestion "cynical."

8. I am indebted to Professor Wolf-Uwe: Ostermann, currently lecturing at Tsukuba University, for pointing out that "Gott *in* Himmel! " should be "Gott *im* Himmel! " Since this is obviously no joke on Conrad's part (Stein would never make the mistakes in his native German that he makes in English), either Conrad or the Penguin editor is at fault.

9. Cox, p. 39, apparently feels that the "destructive element" and the "dream" are two different things: "The repetition of the word 'dream' makes our destiny a mystery without solution, and the call to follow the dream appears to contradict the advice to immerse ourselves in the destructive element."

However, it seems clear to me that the two terms are in apposition. As Adam Gillon observes "the destructive element" is the imagination: Adam Gillon, *Joseph Conrad.* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), p. 84. Surely the dream, in this novel and in traditional usage, is emblematic of the imagination as well. The dream is "destructive" in metaphorical terms because we can drown in it – it is compared to the sea. Furthermore, Marlow calls the imagination "the father of all terrors": Conrad, *Lord Jim*, p. 15.

10. Cox, p. 41, notes a brilliant nuance. The brig-master, "in his wonderful suggestive misuse of English," explains that Patusan is "situated internally.' " Aside from suggesting the womb, this suggests "an ascent towards an ideal" – of course, Jim's subjective ideal.

11. Berthoud, p. 90.

12. Hunt Hawkins points out that Jim's ultimate failure with the natives he treats so ideally is part of a pattern of "egoistic paternalism" that runs right back to Tom Lingard of Conrad's earliest novels. Jim's and Lingard's kind usage, Hawkins notes, "proves nearly as destructive as outright exploitation": Hunt Hawkins, "Conrad's Critique of Imperialism in Heart of Darkness," *PMLA*, vol. 94, no. 2, March, 1979, p. 297.

13. Cox, p. 43, puts it this way: "Jim ignores Cornelius, pretends he does not exist, and so we feel Cornelius is right to call him a child."

14. Conrad, *Victory*. (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1915, 1980), p. 187.

15. This suggestion of the part of fate in *Lord Jim* is reinforced by H. M. Daleski's assertion of the frequency with which chance plays an unpleasant role in Conrad's novel. Daleski feels that the floating

derelict that fells the *Patna* is a perfect Conrad image of the unsafe universe. "Indeed, the *Patna*'s striking of the derelict is yet another epiphany – the central epiphany, perhaps, in Conrad's *oeuvre*, for it evokes a view of the nature of things that recurs again and again": H. M. Daleski, *Joseph Conrad: The Way of Dispossession*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1977), p. 81.

16. Perhaps the poignancy of this scene is explained by Loyd Fernando's biographical note. "Conrad the expatriate saw the expatriate as uniquely placed to experience the exciting possibilities of fresh extensions of the human mind, human culture, and human society. That these potential extensions were of infinite depth and direction and still ultimately of no lasting validity was what made the prospect frightening beyond any power of words to convey": Lloyd Fernando, "Conrad's Eastern Expatriates: A New Version of His Outcasts," *PMLA*, vol. 91, no. 1, January, 1976, pp.83-84.

17. Osborn Andreas and Jocelyn Baines both feel that Jim should sacrifice himself. Andreas seems more consistent, since he at least explains Jim's culpability: while Brown makes a desparate attempt to understand Jim when they confront each other across the river (he stares at his face), Jim is not even looking at Brown. He is looking inward at himself. 'So he begins to look on Brown as an unfortunate" rather than the "gratuitous and unalloyed evil" that he is. Thus, his life-risking decision stems from a confusion of good and evil. Osborn Andreas, *A Study in Non-conformity* (London: Vision Press Limited, 1959, 1962), p. 62.

Baines, on the other hand, feels that Jim did the right thing. The offer of " 'a clear road or else a clear fight expressed the conviction of an honourable, civilized man, and not mental paralysis." This being the case, I cannot understand why Baines decides that Jim could never "touch his reward [Jewel] with clean hands": Jocelyn Baines, *Joseph Conrad. A Critical Biography*. (London. Wedenfeld and Nicolson, 1960, 1967), p. 251. If he acted nobly, how did he dirty them?

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Honor in Patusan: a Study of *Lord Jim*

コンラッドの作品「ロード・ジム」の研究

グレゴリー・ハウス・ハッチンソン

（昭和61年９月30日　受理）

ジョセフ・コンラッドの作品「ロード・ジム」は今にも沈没せんとし，パニック状態に陥っている客船に一等航海士として乗船している主人公ジムの物語である．英雄的な行動を夢みていたにもかかわらず，彼は就寝中の乗客を見捨てて他の卑怯な船員たちと救命ボートに逃げてしまう．客船は沈没こそしなかったが，彼は地位と自尊心を失う．小説後半部分は彼が贖罪のため東南アジアのパトゥサンという遠隔の地で数々の危機を人のために打開し，一見，自尊心を回復したかのようにみえるが，結局は不測の事態（運命）で破れる場面を扱っている．多くの批評家たちは，この部分は冗長なロマンス的部分であると断定しているが，私はこの部分こそ小説全体にとって論理的，組織的かつ適切な結論部に相当するということを本論文で論究した．