

AFTER THE INQUIRY: THE REPERCUSSION OF THE *PATNA* INCIDENT IN JOSEPH CONRAD'S *LORD JIM*

Yang, Yu-Miao, PhD (First and Corresponding author)

Assistant Professor,
Department of Applied English
I-Shou University
No.1, Sec. 1, Syuecheng Rd.
Dashu District, Kaohsiung City 84001, Taiwan
yyangp@isu.edu.tw

ABSTRACT

Conrad's *Lord Jim* is a story that depicts a man's trajectory from bright prospect to utter destruction. On board as a chief mate to the *Patna*, an ill-fated pilgrim ship, Jim, the protagonist, deserts the ship when it was in danger of submergence. Violating every ethical and moral code for a seaman and as a human leaves Jim a social outcast. The *Patna* incident is undoubtedly an event designed for Conrad to preach the values of codes of conduct. In the novel, the moral significance of the *Patna* is scrutinised by various characters who conduct inquiries of their own into the incident. Through their efforts to seek truth out, the *Patna* incident becomes a stage for them to reveal their own moral natures and their beliefs about the moral fibre – or lack thereof – of human nature. By examining the verdict made by various characters on the public trial of the *Patna* incident, this paper seeks to examine the destructive element as well as fragile morality that exists in all human being.

Keywords: Code of conduct, Morality, Humanity.