

HOW TO LIVE: THE PRECARIOUS EXISTENCE IN JOSEPH CONRAD'S NOVELS

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ABSTRACT

The essence of Conrad's work is about struggle in life, and his characters are constantly "in the process of becoming". Although these Conradian figures hold an optimistic view of themselves, they are indeed flawed. In their tendency to dream the impossible dreams, to reach the unreachable heights, they are often taken for a rough ride by destiny. For the numerous wandering figures depicted in Conrad's novels, their nomadic/displaced existence was the result of crime committed, law broken, trust abused, or confidence breached. Whilst their shame and guilt condemn them to the outcast status, their self-imposed exile often amounts to an endless pursuit that typically leads to nowhere and ends only in self-destruction. In the face of the resultant self-destruction, how do these fallen heroes react? This paper thus seeks to examine the precarious existence of Conrad's fallen heroes.

Keywords: Self-destruction, Existence, Humanity.