Eastern Michigan University

DigitalCommons@EMU

Senior Honors Theses & Projects   Honors College

2008

Doubling identities: Character representation and narrative style in Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim*

Bushra M. Malaibari

Follow this and additional works at: https://commons.emich.edu/honors

Doubling identities: Character representation and narrative style in Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim*

Degree Type
Open Access Senior Honors Thesis

Department
English Language and Literature

Keywords
Conrad, Joseph, 1857-1924. Lord Jim Criticism and interpretation, Conrad, Joseph, 1857-1924 Literary style, Conrad, Joseph, 1857-1924 Characters

DOUBLING IDENTITIES: CHARACTER REPRESENTATION AND NARRATIVE
STYLE IN JOSEPH CONRAD'S *LORD JIM*

By

Bushra M. Malaibari

A Senior Thesis Submitted to the

Eastern Michigan University

Honors College

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Graduation

with Honors in English Literature

Approved at Ypsilanti, Michigan, on this date _____

_____
Supervising Instructor (Print Name and have signed)

_____
Honors Advisor (Print Name and have signed)

_____
Department Head (Print Name and have signed)

_____
Honors Director (Print Name and have signed)

Doubling Identities: Character Representation and Narrative Style in Joseph Conrad's
Lord Jim

Table of Contents:

Acknowledgements

The task would be as impossible as trying to explain love at first sight. There was something in this conjunction of exulting, almost physical recognition, the same sort of emotional surrender and the same pride of possession, all united in the wonder of a great discovery; but there was on it none of the shadow of dreadful doubt that falls on the very flames of our perishable passions. One knew very well that this was for ever.

Joseph Conrad
from <u>A Personal Record</u>
("Works," VI, vii-viii)

Abstract

A character's presence is not always as finite as a reader would like to believe.
Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* complicates the presence of two characters, Marlow and Jim,
through the narrative mechanism. Marlow's role as Jim's narrator leaves both of their
presence in the story to be ambiguous. Marlow and Jim are not definitive characters, but
are "becoming" representations of as individual characters and a unified character.
Deconstructive observations allow a chance to witness the "becoming" of Marlow and
Jim throughout the text. This paper discusses occurrences of individual presence of Jim
and Marlow and also the haunting of the joined complex, Jim=Marlow. Jim=Marlow
presents itself in the text at times when Jim or Marlow are under duress. However,
classifying when the characters want to complex and when they want to remain
individual is ambiguous. No definite conclusion on the effect of the narrative voice can
be made by this paper in the same way that character presence in the *Lord Jim* is vague.

Where to Start If There's No "Beginning": An Introduction

Can two personalities cleave, becoming one; can one personality cleave, becoming two? Fiction allows for characters to interact with one another and blur their individual space. The reader's role is involved with the text to understand the associations of the characters. A character represents him/herself in various ways that obscures their personality; when this type of character interacts with other personalities in the text, the interpersonal dynamic between the characters can decrease. Readers cannot approach the text to cordon characters off from one another so as to allow their behavior to interchange amongst themselves. In essence, the characters have a chance of "becoming," rather than already "being." There is no finite way to describe character behavior, attitude, or action. This appearance of integration between characters is a major theme in Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim*.

Lord Jim is the tale of a young sailor, named Jim, narrated by Marlow, a fellow sailor. The story's central plot begins when Jim is the first mate of the ship *Patna*. The crew abandons ship believing it is sinking after some bizarre events, all the while leaving hundreds of passengers fending for themselves. The crew becomes particularly embarrassed when the ship does not sink and disappear from the text before they can be tried for desertion in a court of law. Contrary to the general reaction of sailors when confronted by an authority that could end their career, Jim stands trial and is found guilty. This verdict is so mentally distressing to Jim that he spends the rest of his life running and hiding from his past. Any time a person recognizes him, Jim leaves for a new location. He finally gets far enough (physically and emotionally) from his past that he is able to settle into a happy routine in Southeast Asia. In the small village of Patusan, Jim

is popular and successful—the very thing he has wanted since the beginning of the story. Jim's utopia is disrupted when a pirate enters his domain and kills his best friend, the crown prince; Jim is killed in retaliation by the king for his poor judgment of the European stranger who Jim should have prevented from coming into the area. Jim's life could be described as wanting to be chivalrous, but instead appears wasted due to his blunders and inability to act in heroic gestures.

Because Marlow narrates the majority of the story in *Lord Jim*, his relationship with Jim should be scrutinized to observe deviations in Jim's representation. Marlow's narrative control imprisons Jim to limit his access to the audience; the reader can only access the story through Marlow's point of view. Catherine Delesalle, in the article "'The Last Word' or The Ambivalence of Quotation Marks in *Lord Jim*," identifies how, "a closer study of the novel uncovers inconsistencies in the narration which call into question the reliability of discourse" since, "the use of quotation marks actually participate in the general blurring of the frontiers…calling into question the very significance of quotation marks" (29-30). [1] The consequence of Marlow's narration is that he is able to adulterate any information, details, and perceptions of Jim to the audience; therefore, not accepting Marlow's narration as the absolute truth is integral in recognizing the ambiguities of the text. Julian Wolfreys explains the false conception of a narrative voice: "A narrational voice is never a voice at all, but a weave of inscriptions and articulations. Such acts of inscription show how texts are not merely transparent media through which the reader has direct access to either the voice or the presence of the

---

[1] While this paper focuses on the typographical implication of quotation marks in *Lord Jim*, it fails to offer any consideration to how this narration changes the implication of character presence in the text. There are greater implications for "becoming" for characters knowing that the quotes are inaccurate. This paper presents deconstructive observations on narration.

'author' or subject" (77-78). The narrative device never fully discloses the story to the audience; there is an ambiguity to the entire text because it is placed in a fantasy domain. Fictional texts, like *Lord Jim*, are only a pseudo-reality that can transcend natural laws, such as physical presence and mental capabilities of individuals. The ambiguity of narration is enhanced by the fact that Marlow and Jim, in Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim,* are associated either as one combined individual or two separate characters as directed through the narrative mechanics of the text.

A deconstructive reading should be effective to distinguish between Jim and Marlow's presence and voice. Deconstruction performs close readings of a text to observe ambiguities. Thus in considering the quote above by Wolfreys, a text is never a finite entity, but rather is continuously "becoming" a domain with social and cultural constructs that relay biases through narration. The narration's function is to represent; deconstruction scrutinizes the narrative mode's ability to represent. In *Lord Jim* Marlow is a major narrator to dictate the development of the plot that he is also participating in. Marlow's dual role in the domain should be scrutinized. How to go about approaching the implications of narration in *Lord Jim* allows a paradox of deconstruction to surface: unlike most traditional literary critical forms that are described with words like "analysis," "process," or "methodology," deconstruction is an *observational mode*; deconstruction is incorporated with and, more importantly, directed by a text.

The text needs to be explicitly observed from the writing, and also implicitly through the connotations of the writing. Donald Hall coins the term "forms of signification" for features in a text such as the plot, characters, symbols, or settings (163). The text's depicted society is developed by the forms of signification to reveal a dynamic

system that is singular. A paradox ensues from alleging forms of signification: a text will naturally construct them, but they do not always "signify" the text. The forms of signification are not standards of the text—they are parsed characterizations, which sometimes are in conflict with later denoted versions. Nevertheless, texts have often been considered as having "one way" of presenting forms of signification and anything else is an "ambiguity." Ambiguities in various forms of signification reveal biases, stereotypes, and developments that do not lock the text's features into a defined domain. (An example of such an ambiguity is if a character is described as calm, but then turns violent.) Hall also distinguishes that a forms of signification are, "never fully self-contained—it is polyvalent—, for its complex meanings are always deferred and complicated" (163-4). Any inspection of the environment and behavior of forms of signification will reveal that they act unpredictably. A greater parallel can be developed from this ambivalence in regards to the quest of establishing a finite definition for deconstruction: it is impossible because the very ideals that maintain deconstructive observations undermine anything "definite."

Ironically, scholars have attempted to "define" deconstruction by a list of characteristics that it *cannot* maintain. Better stated, deconstruction is ~~defined through~~ an anti-relationship of suppléments in binary pair though deconstruction, itself, is not a dominant signifier. Jacques Derrida explains that binary pairs are associations of polarized status, such as light/dark, good/evil, male/female, and heaven/hell; the supplément, or the second, "lower" status attribution, can only be maintained in the presence of the dominant sign, the "higher" status attribution named first (141-143). The dominant is the ultimate status holder in the associated pair. Deconstructive observation

identifies the arrangement of signs, but observes the ambivalent association in "becoming" through the course of the text. [2] The concept of "deconstruction" cannot be a dominant signifier because it does not have any presence that could allow its involvement in a hierarchical dichotomy. Deconstruction has no autonomy—it does not have anything at all. Scholars are hesitant to state a definitive definition for "deconstruction" because a supplément would emerge that would counter its range of motion; the idea of deconstructive observation is fluid to any situation. There can be no limitations on deconstruction because it can observe all signs of signification.

What Did You Say?*: The Ambiguous Narrative Binary of Speaking/Telling

The general ambivalence towards "defining" deconstruction is similar to "developing" characterizations through narration. While observing *Lord Jim* one must remember the role of the narrator is to interpret the events for the audience. The forms of signification, and moreover their assembly into binary relationships, influence the reader's perception of the text's dynamic quality. The reader observes the narrator's cataloguing the dominant signs, but also observes how the suppléments have autonomy in their own right. One of the binary pairs established in *Lord Jim* provides autonomy for speakers, as exemplified by the narrative mode. Prior to Marlow's dominating the narration, a third person omniscient narrator begins Jim's tale. Jim becomes the supplément because another character is controlling his past, present, and future in the text. However, the power relationship is further complicated by added tension between

---

[2] Scholarly works on *Lord Jim* do not always maintain a sense of "becoming" in a text. For example, Frederick Karl's article, "Conrad's Stein: The Destructive Element" from 1958 pre-dates the post-structuralism movement. Mr. Karl says, "that weakness…if found more in the particular constitution of the characters themselves" (163). This statement characterizes the participants in "make believe" as absolute finite entities. This is problematic since the characters are not allowed to verge off their "established" mind frame. This paper's deconstructive perspective allows for characters to constantly alter themselves in "becoming" since nothing is finite in the text.

Jim and Marlow: why did this narrator allow Marlow to become the primary narrator of Jim's tale? Marlow is privileged to speak for himself and all the other characters that Jim encounters in Jim's life. This distinct representation establishes a binary that maintains Jim in the supplément below Marlow and the third person omniscient narrator. Even with all of this "defined," the audience will become aware of Jim's ambivalent availability to access power as his story of his "becoming" is narrated by another character, Marlow.

A narrator's influence on forming the binary relationship of "speaking about" and "telling about" is defined at the onset of *Lord Jim*. If a narrator "speaks about" itself, that narrator has been afforded autonomy to regulate information about itself to the audience as it so chooses; however, if a narrator "tells about" a noun, that noun is reactive based upon the narrator's desires and may leave it misrepresented. "Speaking about" oneself becomes the dominant because there is absolute control of the language by the same entity being represented. *Lord Jim* begins with a "telling about" description of Jim to establish and solidify the power hierarchy with the omniscient narrator subjugating characters, like Jim: "He [Jim] was an inch, perhaps two, under six feet, powerfully built, and he advanced straight at you with a slight stoop of the shoulders, head forward, and a fixed from-under stare which made you think of a charging bull" (Conrad 3). This is a brilliant move on the part of the narrator to firmly establish an actual space for the idea of "Jim," without him, literally, speaking to recognize his autonomy. Wolfreys states that the beginning sentence of a text initiates and authorizes an empty domain of "make believe," where the story takes place (69). Each subsequent detail that is revealed to the audience will add to the "make believe's" environment. The distinction that Jim is

shorter than six feet also relays a sense of inadequacy—the narration could have just as easily said, "He was five foot, ten inches" to afford Jim an affirmative presence; instead, he is looked upon in a subordinate role of not being "tall," or in this case, it is hard to not think the narrator is saying that Jim is not a "great" man.

It should be noted that the first four chapters of *Lord Jim* are actually presented by a third person omniscient narrator that stands apart from the characters involved in the plot. Mark Currie, in the book titled *Transitions: Postmodern Narrative Theory*, describes the importance of narrative analysis saying:

> Its [point of view analysis'] power was partly the power of analytical terminology, to describe subtle shifts in the narrative voice, the movement into and out of other minds, or the modes of presenting the speech and thought of characters. But it was more than descriptive power. It was a new exploration in the rhetoric of fiction, the way that fiction can position us, can manipulate our sympathies, can pull our heart strings, in the service of some moral aim. The analysis of point of view above all made critics aware that sympathy for characters was not a question of clear-cut moral judgement. It was manufactured and controlled by these newly describable techniques in fictional point of view. It was the beginnings of a systematic narratology which seemed to assert that stories could control us, could manufacture out moral personalities in ways that had not previously been understood (18).

Narrative techniques influence the understanding of characters as the audience first encounters them. Readers are bound to strongly associate truth or untruth based on its usage. This third person narrator in *Lord Jim* establishes its power because of the general

absence of any other voice, even though it is "telling about" the forms of signification. Compared to Marlow talking, this narrator has the supplément form of speaking because Marlow is assumed to be there in the realm of "make believe" to clarify any questions from the audience. However, this is all a false sense of security because *all* of Marlow's monologues to the audience are indicated by a *written* quotation mark—Marlow is not speaking, he is being written down. In terms of writing, both the first and third person narrator has equal autonomy because no clarifications can be made to writings. Moreover, a third person narrator cannot write of himself because then it would be in first person. The general presence of a voice ensures that it maintains biases that may be elucidated by close readings just like any other first-person narrator. This omniscient narrator stands apart from the story's plot to make competition with presented characters appear idiotic, and lessens the narrator's autonomy gained by parsing information to the audience. Even with the biases of this voice, its authority is heightened by its unanimous censorship of all the characters. However, the third person narrator will always be subjugated by the actual characters' speech because they are able to represent themselves; the power hierarchy demarcating speaking "above" writing is grounded. "Telling about" becomes a mechanism that is restricted, highly selective, and subjective.

As an example of this representative complexity of speaking, the second sentence of the text involves this third person narrator describing Jim's voice, while not affording Jim the actual ability. While his voice is commanding, Jim has not used it to further his presence through a definition outside of the supplément: "His voice was deep, loud and his manner displayed a kind of dogged self-assertion which had nothing aggressive in it" (Conrad 3). Jim is described with a voice that conveys a sense of strength and control,

while the narration concurrently keeps Jim silent. The reader has been dealt their first ambiguity of Jim: he should be able to control his life, but has no autonomy by addressing the audience. This designation may not be a negative association since Jim, alone, has an individualized presence in the "make believe" of the text. As a result, the audience can construct a domain for Jim to operate, even if he has not presented himself to the audience. Nevertheless, these distortions are the type that reveals the shortcomings of a character through the narrative mode of "telling about."

The third person narrator also spends time discussing how Jim has various names that predicates a need to position them in a binary relationship relating their respective autonomy in the dominant and supplément form. The importance of naming should be considered since the one physical body that has space in the empty world of "make believe" has been introduced with different words to signify its presence. (Even Jim's simple participation in plot developing scenes and voice has yet to be presented in the text.) The narrator says:

> To the white men… he was just Jim—nothing more. He had, of course, another
> name, but was anxious that it should not be pronounced. His incognito [Jim],
> which had as many holes as a sieve, was not meant to hide a personality but a
> fact… He kept to seaports because he was a seaman in exile from the sea…
> [W]hen his keen perception of the Intolerable drove him away for good from
> seaports and white men… he had elected to conceal his deplorable faculty, [and]
> added a word to the monosyllable of his incognito. They called him Tuan Jim: as
> one might say—Lord Jim (4).

The beginning of this passage indicates the association of numerous names to one body: one name is "Jim," and another name that represents the same physical presence of Jim, or Jim's authentic name. The proliferation of names supports the separation of identity, since each name provokes a different mental reaction, but the various labels are confined in one body that physically moves together in one unit. These identities can individually be presented, but there can never be a physical separation of the identities. Derrida describes this event as a "doubling," so that one character can have extra-textual representation because of the narrative device; using nouns and pronouns in narrations allows for an additional written presence to emerge into the realm of "make believe," while the original physical representation is found in the text or maybe even completing the narration (qtd. in Wolfreys 70). For example, saying "I am writing," creates a second form of "I" by this reader and as in Jim's case, this form is limited in experience and perception from the "I" who actually wrote the sentence.

This case from *Lord Jim* maintains another fold of uniqueness by the immediate expression of one identity as the other side is suppressed. Just like a light switch is either "on" or "off," the forms of the "Jim" character cannot both be present. Remember from the story that Jim is a sailor charged with desertion and spends his life migrating from port to port, working with sailors that know his criminal background. The emergence of the authentic name causes the physical body to flee; though the Jim form can work in the sailing industry without censure. Knowing this alias (Jim) is only represented and the authentic name can simply and greatly affect the location of the body, why is this authentic name never presented in the text? The reader is not provided with a detailed explanation, but this authentic name could prove the end to Marlow. Since Jim

ultimately dies at the end of the story under this alias, this authentic name is not a shield of immortality for Jim. This scene is not presented by Marlow, but rather the third person omniscient narrator so that Marlow is not exposed to the name's affect on his own existence in "make believe." It is even more distressing to know "Jim" is an ineffective alias because the audience has no idea how to positively identify the body in "make believe"; at the same time, a large problem with Jim is his inability to act, which can explain the initial criticism of Jim: his fellow shipmates fled the courts while he remained to bear sole accountability for the crew's actions.

A large portion of the text describes how the *Patna* did not sink but still defamed this character in the sailing world, but his presence is only identified as "Jim." "Jim" signifies the end of heroic capabilities in text. Nevertheless, Jim's authentic name would seem to be an important detail to maintain. The naming metamorphosis is not explained in order to save Marlow to present the text to the audience. He is jeopardized by the authentic name because he could be related to this true identity of Jim. The authentic name and Jim could be phonetically similar, so that individuality is completely precluded; renaming is ineffective in re-presenting something new. The use of language is only capable of expressing "make believe's" reality where one object has only one name.   The reader needs to stay aware of the ambiguity of Jim's presence that maintains his dynamic quality.

The text shows the distinction of identity by relaying the authentic name's movements affecting (in terms of time and space) Jim's space. While the two representations have discordant mental reactions to social issues, they must act harmoniously in their physical response, since they must uniformly flee or remain in their

location. New space cannot be occupied if they encounter a situation that calls for individualized reactions. The omniscient narrator's silence regarding the individual actions of these two personalities could imply confusion between their associations. This character cannot leave the sailing industry, whether because he enjoys it or is only trained for it. The mere utterance of his name causes the character to flee his location, only to continue working in the sailing industry. The establishment of "speaking" as the dominant sign over "writing" causes a visceral reaction by an identity, and flips the binary between speaking and writing (writing/speaking) since the omniscient narrator, who does not use quotation marks, is solely representing Jim through writing. The text's limited physical space to the name that was distressing to the authentic name's representation relays the name's marginalization by the name "Jim" in the story. It now stands that the physical representation of "Jim" is predominant, though he does not speak for himself to garner any autonomy.

The time frame of this story is set around the turn of the 19$^{\text{th}}$ century when racism, in terms of white supremacy, is not unheard of. Thus it could be inferred that because Jim is white, he "gains" nobility in Southeast Asia by the social conditions that elevate a white men above the Other. Edward Said, in *Orientalism,* describes how

> Being a White Man was therefore an idea and a reality…. One [of the
> generalizations in nineteenth century literature was] the culturally sanctioned
> habit of deploying large generalizations by which reality is divided into various
> collectives: language, races, types, colors, mentalities, each category being not so
> much a neutral designation as an evaluative interpretation…. [For] nineteenth-
> century Europe an imposing edifice of learning and culture was built, so to speak,

in the face of actual outsiders (the colonies, the poor, the delinquent), whose role

in the culture was to give definition to what *they* were constitutionally unsuited

for (227-28).

White men are given priority amongst people based upon their ethnic and racial identity.

In Europe, Jim's character is tarnished by his actions on the Patna, so that he is common

and pushed into the lowest rungs of society. However, Jim's movement to the anti-

European land of Patusan in Southeast Asia disrupts his characterization as European to

become the Other, but also a man of importance to the community. Jim tries to assimilate

into the general population by renaming himself, but his physical appearance endows him

with a higher class amongst the general population in Patusan, which could explain his

particular attachment to the area. Jim garners additional autonomy in Patusan because of

the way he looks, so even if he did not manage the narration that indicates a character's

higher power status. Nevertheless, Jim's complete submission to living in Patusan

reclassifies his status from a European to the Other.

The character that takes Jim to Patusan shows a marked similarity to Jim through

his inability to effectively communicate. This man is also unnamed and is only described

to the extent of being "a dapper little half-caste" who uses English poorly (Conrad 238).

This characterization of a Southeast Asian associates Otherness with lack of English

proficiency. While Jim might know English, his limited use throughout the text

juxtaposes him well to a man that has dialogue, but has limited sense of vocabulary.

When Marlow first talks Jim in to going to Patusan, Jim can hardly express his feelings

and even questions Marlow to tell him how he should feel: "'Why? Why,' he [Jim]

stammered, 'this is the very thing that I ...'… [H]e looked more puzzles than ever. He

was in a fair way to make life intolerable to himself…'Do you think so?' he asked, disturbed" (231). Jim's difficulty in explaining his own emotions shows how marginalized he is in the text since speaking equates to autonomy. The language barrier experience by both Jim and the man who takes him to Patusan reduces their chance to gain autonomy. Moreover, their lack of English skills emphasizes their inability to function in Britain where Marlow is located. Marlow is acting as the reader's bridge into "make believe," so if he does not understand the characters, then the reader has less chance of removing the veil that is clouding the character's presence. Marlow explains how poorly the master of that ship speaks saying, "His flowing English seemed to be derived from a dictionary compiled by a lunatic. Had Mr. Stein desired him to 'ascend,' he would have 'reverentially'—(I think he wanted to say respectfully—but devil only knows)—'reverentially, made objects for their safety of properties" (238-239). The malapropisms only indicate how marginalized the character is, just like Jim. Jim becomes part of the supplement once again: he is the Other to Marlow's dominant presence as the European.

The third person narrator's Oriental marginalization that distinguishes Jim as nobility in Patusan refutes his attempts at assimilating into society. The presence of a nobility title is specifically relayed through the Other's language (Indonesian) as he is called "Tuan." Not only does Jim take a space among the Other in Southeast Asia, but he procures a title that he did not have when part of the European community. Jim's actions that garner the title are not explained at the beginning of the story when this narrator is in control. It is unclear whether the narrator is commenting that titles are easily procured, especially by outsiders of the community or if Jim really warranted it. The narrator

explains in the first chapter that Jim escapes to Southeast Asia, "where he had elected to conceal his deplorable faculty, added a word to the monosyllable of his incognito. They called him Tuan Jim: as one might say—Lord Jim" (5). Moreover, the audience has no idea if it is a real title or one added to his name in a mocking effect. The inference that the title is only monosyllabic emphasizes the importance of language, but more specifically of phonetic ability, in the story. Because speaking is so important to the power infrastructure within the text, short words possess lesser power than longer words, while still maintaining a presence above something not spoken and only written by the narration.[3] It is possible that Jim could have obtained a longer title, but he was not qualified even for that. Even the doubled phonetic presence in the story does not give Jim presence: other people refer to him as "Lord Jim," but he does not use the title to address himself. Jim's doubled effect takes more from the speaker/reader (in terms of space, association, and speech), but Jim does not equate this personality to his real self and is still left not speaking or reading. A man considered by European standards to be a criminal is elevated to a lord and gains presence to the reader, but not to himself, simply by evading the presence of white men.

Does Marlow Ever Need a Lozenge?: Marlow's Narrative Control Allows for Autonomy

---

[3] The power distinction between short and long words is illustrated by the French lieutenant who was part of the crew that saves the *Patna*'s passengers after the ship's crew, along with Jim, fled. The lieutenant's voice is embedded in Marlow's narration to relay this added information to the audience. When the lieutenant finishes his story, Marlow narrates, "After these words, and without a change of attitude, he, so to speak, submitted himself passively to a state of silence…. and suddenly, but not abruptly, as if the appointed time had arrived for his moderate and husky voice to come out of his immobility, he pronounced, '*Mon Dieu!* How the time passes!' Nothing could have been more commonplace than this remark" (Conrad 143). This quote illustrates how a character's silence can be equated to mainstream phrases. The French lieutenant is not remarking on something elaborate. In this way, long words have power over shorter, ordinary words.

Marlow's role is important to understand in the text since he relates most of Jim's actions, feelings, and beliefs to the audience. It is puzzling why the narration and the subsequent autonomy are passed on to Marlow. Unlike Jim, Marlow acquires autonomy with his introduction to the audience by speaking: "Oh yes. I attended the inquiry… and to this day I haven't left off wondering why I went" (34). Marlow's first insistence that only fate allowed his introduction to Jim is bothersome because these words acquit him from losing the audience's interest. If Marlow poorly narrates the story, he could lose his audience; if he loses his audience, Marlow has lost his purpose in this realm of "make believe." [4] Marlow's existence in "make believe" is not even dependent on his own life, which makes him a supplément under the third person narrator, as Jim is to Marlow's narration.

Moreover, Marlow and the third person narrator present conflicting arguments for repeating the story: the third person narrator reminds the audience that Marlow has practiced telling this story; Marlow can only exist (and thus be dominant) by narrating Jim's tale. [5] The audience was told by the omniscient narrator at the end of the previous chapter that, "Marlow showed himself willing to remember Jim, to remember him in

---

[4] Richard Pedot's article "'With sealed lips': The Enigma of Rhetoric in *Lord Jim,*" relates how the ambivalence of a narrative is an inherent quality, and not a feature part of the rhetorical quality. This paper was problematic in that it looked for the origin of the narrative, which Derrida encourages to forego in the logocentric assumptions of reading literature. Mr. Pedot says that because the origin is unknown then, "we are not only, like Marlow, faced with a story that 'won't tell' and hence engenders a narrative by displacement, but also with an impossibility, for the narrator, to tell why the story did capture his attention and induce him in retelling it after his manner" (187). The ambiguity behind Marlow's attention to this story allows him a presence in "make believe," but this article does not consider the implication of character "becoming" in regards to the movement of the narration.

[5] Brian Artese in the article "'Speech Was of No Use': Conrad, a New Journalism, and the Critical Abjection of Testimony," describes Marlow's narrative voice as "a 'filterer' of truth and an obstacle to the real" likened to the narrator of a newspaper article (176). This article describes the trends of the newspaper narrative mode that was "demanded of the novel" (177). This entire article is far from the position of this paper as Artese's article goes in depth on the newspaper narrator. This type of narrator may never be represented in "make believe" because journalists are real people reporting real events. Marlow's narration is entirely imaginary and haunts Jim's presence.

length, in detail and audibly" (33). Marlow is aware not only of the story, but how to influence the audience while telling it. In the article, "Meaning and Being in *Lord Jim*," Amar Acheriaïou describes how the narrative mode infers an ambivalent definition of "meaning" and "being" in the text, which can change the construct of "make believe"; Acheriaïou describes that:

> Marlow holds a central position in the narrative; yet he is a hollow centre with no
>
> power to confer authoritative status, either on his own claims or on those of the
>
> tale's completing voices…[D]isempowering of the central narrative
>
> consciousness ensures that meaning remains open always, constantly plural….
>
> As well as causing meaning to proliferate, these different interpretations add
>
> complexity to the protagonist's identity (9-10).[6]

Nevertheless, Marlow's presence in the story is less dynamic than Jim's, since Jim is "becoming" through Marlow's narration. Also, Marlow's presence in the story gives a setting for Jim to act in; the reader never directly hears Jim's reaction by Marlow to an event that only Jim must face. Marlow controls both the arenas and the reactions of the characters: Marlow drives Jim's life that gives him a presence in "make believe," which is otherwise unknown to the reader; however, Marlow permits his own existence by creating an audience that hears his story—the one in "make believe" and the one reading the text. Marlow could in fact make Jim in "make believe" complete actions that were never part of the events that occurred if Jim had full control over the narrative.

---

[6] This article developed an argument of character presence in a state of ambivalence through a rhetorical undercurrent of the narrative mode, similar to the focus of this paper. In this article, however, the emphasis was placed on the general practice of narration—there was no distinction of autonomy between characters speaking, especially as they are all patrolled by Marlow's quotation marks. One of the precepts to develop this article establishes two distinct presences in "make believe": Marlow and Jim; they are finite in their placement in the text, so far as the narration will allow. In contrast, this paper furthers the argument between the rhetorical qualities of a spoken narrative that fosters ambivalence towards character presence.

Marlow's introduction as the narrator shows how conscious he is of using language since he creates dinner guests in "make believe" to hear his authority through speaking. Marlow manipulates language by using the imperative voice when he says, "Talk!" as if the suggestion had come from his unidentified audience or he is somehow shocked by the suggestion to continue his autonomy by speaking (Conrad 35). The reader's role in relationship to Marlow is even more tenuous since they are not hearing his voice, but rather reading it. Marlow would not want to exist outside of "make believe" since he would not have the power to create an audience to listen to him and give him a role in society. This underhanded way of discussing the events of their association continues through all of Marlow's speech. Marlow is masterful in manipulating his audience by implying the audiences' interest over his own.

This is important because though Marlow communicates via the dominant form of speaking, he employs the supplément of all other forms of signification. V.M.K Kelleher, in the article "A Third Voice: The Dialectical Structure of *Lord Jim,*" describes Marlow as "often employ[ing] an ironical tone, and at times he adopts a paradoxical attitude, both identifying with Jim and also trying to distance himself from him" (24). As seen with the "definition" of deconstruction discussed earlier, the problem of consistently explaining a word by everything that it is *not* removes the sense of active presence in society. Take for example a binary between the "known" and "hidden:" the "known" stands as a dominant because of its finite presence. Someone can maintain the known, while the hidden is ambiguous to perception. Marlow shrouds Jim within the hidden of Patusan: "And his [Jim's] opportunity sat veiled by his side like an Eastern bride waiting to be uncovered by the hand of the master. He, too, was the heir of a shadowy and mighty

tradition!" (Conrad 244). While Jim's Otherness is established yet again upon entering the land of the Other, Jim is further cloaked by uncertainty. This is all the more frustrating to read since Marlow knows the story. Marlow's narration that keeps the reader at a distance from creating a finite shape for objects in "make believe." Marlow never directly narrates the state of any character or setting—he always presents the "make believe" through antonyms that assume the audience is interpreting "make believe" with the same social constructs that Marlow maintains. Denise Ginfray in the article, "'There is a Wired Power in the Spoken Word': Authority in Question(s) in *Lord Jim"* states, "Marlow…very well knows that all semblance of authority upon facts and words, if any, revolves around the evil core draped in the robes of institutional discourses and representations, and that 'Only a meticulous precision of statement would bring out the true horror behind the appalling face of things'" (66). Marlow's emphasis on describing Jim's "becoming" through suppléments in binary pairs makes him conscious of his use of language to sway the audience to think badly of Jim. In this way, Marlow's attention to the needs of his audience is extremely lacking since he is only concerned with how he interprets his own words.

Marlow's introduction further complicates the story by naming a new identity for Jim: "Master Jim." Jim's representation as "Tuan Jim" is too marginalized for Marlow, so that he re-identifies Jim as "Master Jim" because he wants his audience to know that he was associating with another European. This is why the first time Marlow refers to Jim by his name, rather than a pronoun, is "Master Jim" (Conrad 35). The audience has no background information on this new person in "make believe;" one can only hope that "Master Jim" is comparable to "Tuan Jim." However, renaming automatically assumes a

doubling of a character. When Marlow first visits Patusan, he notes how Tuan Jim is a

hero: "He [a villager] called him Tuan Jim, and the tone of his references was made

remarkable by a strange mixture of familiarity and awe" (242). People in Patusan admire

Jim like a lord but are also comfortable with him like a friend. It is in Patusan that Jim

can be the hero he strives to be. But Marlow impedes on his dream by continuing the use

of the word "master" throughout the text. Marlow only calls Jim "Master Jim" that one

time as noted above; the rest of the novel is filled with Jim being labeled a master: "the

trust, the fame, the friendships, the love—all these things that made him master had made

him a captive, too" (247). Reading any other occurrences of the word "master" imply a

sense of servitude, which only furthers Jim's ambivalent presence within the text.

Marlow's reference to Jim allows Jim's "becoming" to be increasingly subjective

towards Jim's presence in regards to other characters. While Marlow might have been

trying to represent the same person in "make believe," his narration specifically explains

and describes either "Master Jim" or "Tuan Jim." The reader is forced to allocate more

space for a character without any assurance of this character being fully developed. Also,

the personality identified by that name is limited. No one will ever be able to completely

experience the life of another character; there will always be missing details.

While "Tuan Jim" doubles Jim's representation in the text, Marlow's doubling by

referring to Jim as a "master" specifically directs the narration towards a European

audience to maintain authority over Jim. Since the dinner guests are Marlow's invention

in "make believe," he is also implying a higher status to the guests' presence by

relinquishing Jim's royal title for a more common form of address. The sense of

"master" has to be clouded by the implication of "captive." Marlow integrates a label on

Jim of the dominant sign to insinuate the supplément that continues Jim's

marginalization. This new identity could be a defense mechanism by Marlow because he

does not have any clearer idea of who Jim "really is." By quantifying a new space,

Marlow has full authority to control how it is formed.

The Orientalism of renaming the identity is problematic to Jim's existence since

he himself left Europe and was not interested in associating with Europeans. The reader

knows Marlow has the insight in Jim fleeing and staying away from Europe because of

his tainted name. Marlow's renaming of Jim's identity adapts a way for Jim to once

again exist in the European world, but in a flawed, "untrue" identity. By perpetuating

space in "make believe," Marlow is also ensuring that he maintains a purpose, but more

importantly his dominant position as a narrator of the tale. His narration illustrates that

Jim was most effective and happy outside of Europe, in Southeast Asia. Marlow

explains:

> he [Jim] loves to see people go to sleep under his eyes, confident in the security of
>
> tomorrow. 'Peaceful here, eh?' he asked. He was not eloquent, but there was a
>
> deep meaning in the words that followed. 'Look at these houses; there's not one
>
> where I am not trusted. Jove!... There was elation and pride, there was awe
>
> almost, in that low exclamation. 'Jove!' he cried, 'only think what it is to me.'
>
> Again he pressed my arm. 'And you asked me whether I thought of leaving.
>
> Good God! I! want to leave! (246-47).

This quote shows quite a change in the understanding of Jim in Patusan: he gains

autonomy once he is happy by speaking, although he does not have the extensive practice

in using English to effectively display his feelings. Marlow wanting to remove him from

this setting only shows how special speaking is in "make believe;" Marlow wants to re-silence Jim after he has found what setting can give him a voice. It is even more interesting that Jim's happiness in Patusan is not entirely explicit to the reader—they are left without full disclosure on Jim's state.

The narrator also makes a point of situating Marlow in a relaxed position, inconsistent with Jim's erect and active body. The reader has become acquainted with the idea of Jim being physically and mentally comfortable in areas with the Other, while Marlow contradicts this feeling by spending time in that area if it can support Marlow's need to speak negatively of Jim. Nevertheless, Marlow's setting where he recounts Jim's story is above sea-level, clearly not the altitude where Jim would be at as a sailor—Jim would be near the water, not above it. The third person omniscient narrator introduces Marlow to "make believe" saying he was sitting, "on a verandah draped in motionless foliage and crowned with flowers" (33). Marlow finds the need to geographically subvert Jim below him; the final description of the night being full of "freshness and starlight," which would "make the best of us forget we are only on sufferance here" presents a setting of peaceful reflection and luxury (35). This setting is completely opposite to the weather conditions on the night of the *Patna* incident where Jim suffers a blow to his hopes of becoming a great man. While Jim is supposedly retelling his story to Marlow, it is Marlow who narrates the conditions of the night:

> first you see a darkening of the horizon—no more; then a cloud rises opaque like a wall. A straight edge of vapour lined with a sickly whitish gleams flies up from the southwest, swallowing the stars in whole constellations; its shadow flies over

the waters, and confounds seas and sky into one abyss of obscurity. And all is

still. No thunder, no wind, no sound; not a flicker of lightening (101-102).

The reader is once again reminded of the polarity established to distance Jim from

Marlow. While Marlow has gained autonomy through his voice, he has been ineffective

at yielding that power so that the reader can have a more complex understanding of the

"make believe" he has bothered to create.

Contrary to Jim's youthfulness, Marlow is presented as an older man who is

hypercritical of Jim. The distinction between Jim and Marlow's age implies that Marlow

has a personality that Jim is too young and impulsive to have; knowing this, Marlow's

control over the narrative may be antagonistic towards Jim. Marlow explains his right for

speaking autonomy by proving Jim is a poor narrator saying, "If you think I was either

surprised or shocked [by Jim's version of the Patna incident] you do me injustice in more

ways than one! Ah, he was an imaginative beggar! … He had no leisure to regret what

he had lost, he was so wholly and naturally concerned for what he had failed to obtain"

(83). Marlow has the insight to filter Jim's narration and relay this meaning to the reader.

But Marlow takes his role too far by interpreting Jim's silence: "I did not ask Jim about

the nature of his feelings…about the nature of his feelings…. I was at liberty to infer he

was partly stunned" (82). Marlow believes that he can explain all of Jim's feelings, even

though Marlow occupies a different space in "make believe." Marlow qualifies his

presence in the story by relating how inept Jim is, but then claiming his own authority to

speak from his sailing experience and age:

He [Jim] was the kind of fellow you would, on strength of his looks, leave in

charge of the deck—figuratively and professionally speaking. I say I would, and I

ought to know. Haven't I turned out youngsters enough in my time, for the

service of the Red Rag [the Red Ensign of the British Merchant Navy], to the craft

of the sea, to the craft whose whole secret could be expressed in one short

sentence, and yet must be driven afresh every day into young heads till it becomes

the component part of every waking thought—till it is present in every dream of

their young sleep! The sea has been good to me, but when I remember all these

boys that passed through my hands, some grown up now and some drowned by

this time, but all good stuff for the sea, I don't think I have done badly by it either

(33).

Marlow allows himself to parent Jim, but the praise he gives himself foreshadows Jim's

failure in the text. From this quote, the reader is made aware of Marlow's superficial

attitude towards Jim. Jim only cares to look like a superhero, but forgets that he lacks the

confidence or the physical ability. Marlow quickly establishes the truth behind his

opinion since Jim is not the first sailor he has trained, but this is where the extent of his

opinion falls apart: the reader is sensitive to Marlow's connotations in his narration so

that Marlow's casual remark that some of those very same sailors he trained are now

dead should be an anomaly. Moreover, he personifies the sea and considers these sailors

sacrifices. These statements should question Marlow's ability at training or leading those

younger than him. The reader should be outraged over Marlow's carelessness with the

main character. Having said that, it could be that Marlow is experiencing first-degree

jealousy because the text is not focused on him though he supposedly has the most power

with his narration.

With Marlow leading the narration, he maintains absolute power over Jim; but Marlow's existence is only within the text so that he cannot have power anywhere else outside of "make believe." Marlow's active domain in limited as much as Jim's because *il n'y a pas de hors-texts;* this French phrase means "there is nothing outside of the text" and is an important Derridean precept of deconstruction. Hall clarifies this concept as "redirect[ing] critical attention away from issues such as the intention or the biography of the author and places primary emphasis on the signs present in the text itself" (167). The "make believe" is only constructed by the facts and figures quantified between the first and last word of the text. The audience cannot gain more information regarding the text because the information is finite on the page.

Lord Jim complicates "il n'y a pas de hors-texts" with Marlow's narration of Jim's story as a spoken narrative and as a written narration through a letter to complete Jim's tale; however, the text will always reside in the hands of the reader. The communication binary established earlier in the paper distinguishes that a speaker has greater power over a written document because they can continuously clarify their point; written texts are only explanatory to the extent of the words on the page. In the case of *Lord Jim,* Marlow maintains control over the narration by speaking directly with quotation marks, yet all the while the audience is *reading* the text. How should the audience observe the text as something written or as something spoken? The audience should not necessarily interpret the narration's veracity to establish a binary for the narration; the entire book is tangible in the reader's hands so parts may not be discredited by the audience as irrelevant. However, the audience's interpretation of the narration maintains its singularity. So while the reader must invent a "make believe" to view the

"becoming" of the forms of singularity, a haziness surrounds any definitive structuring of "make believe."

Categorizing either speaking or writing as the dominant sign for communicating is relevant to understand the presence of characters in the text. The reader must take into consideration how the tale unfolds in "make believe;" we must consider that this is a story being told. This affords Marlow greater autonomy in presenting the story. However, if we consider the text as being simply written and "becoming," the text becomes too finite to allow the characters a chance of "becoming." A written text will never have a chance of clarifying itself to a reader, although the text renegotiates the power structure between characters to equalize their presence. In this sense, readers need to consider "make believe" as both a written and also a spoken domain. This duality affords a change in characterization. Deconstructionists will allow the text the right for "becoming" that can blur the sense of finite characterizations. Marlow and Jim may not always be as contained as we have thought them to be.

A Knock-Knock Joke When No One's "There": The Ambivalence of Marlow and Jim

Jim and Marlow develop as two separate characters in a literal reading *Lord Jim*, but an uncanny association of their presence represents these characters as one entity within the text in a closer reading. A complex character emerges from the text that equally represents Jim and Marlow, so that the signifier "Jim=Marlow" will be used. Simply by looking at the signifiers "Jim" and "Marlow" there is an association of their names with one another. The "m" physical bridges Jim to Marlow. Bear in mind that "Jim" is a forename and "Marlow" is a surname. Whether Conrad intentionally created

this association is irrelevant since deconstruction does not consider the author's role in relation to the text; what should be noted is that the audience knows and can establish a connection between these two characters by their relationship. There are numerous ways that this naming scheme could be interpreted: Jim could represent an earlier version of Marlow, Jim is the beginning of Marlow, Jim is the better form of Marlow (in terms of a binary association); Jim is simply the specific member of the Marlow family; this letter bridging establishes a supplémental equality. Neither one of these names has a cultural or societal precedent for dominance, so they are counterparts for one another. This character complex between Marlow and Jim offers a sense of relief in the chaotic development of "make believe." With all the uncertain occurring around these characters, the formation of the complex allows the readers to establish a larger perception of what is occurring in the text, while still maintaining the dynamic behavior of "becoming" rather than establishing a definite "being."

The complex is a haunting identity that emerges within the text at moments of extreme pressure. A haunting character lurks in the background of the text in such a way that the audience is not introduced formally to it, but the haunting affects the movements and emotions of the other characters. The elusiveness of the haunting complex makes a character resemble a supernatural being within the text. The saying "being one with God," explains how the complex forms. Quite suddenly, a character has a chance to rule over their behavior, while also acting out the behavior through the narration. In this sense, Marlow could be acting as the divine ruler of Jim who governs the Jim=Marlow complex, or vice versa. Marlow is perplexed by his elevated divine status in Jim's eyes saying, "I can't explain to you who haven't seen him and who hear his words only at

second hand the mixed nature of my feelings. It seemed to me I was being made to

comprehend the Inconceivable—and I know nothing to compare with the discomfort of

such sensation" (Conrad 93). There is ambivalence as to who is a higher being in

Marlow's confusion: he stands as an authoritative figure to Jim who is confessing his

sins, but at the same time Marlow is overwhelmed by Jim's words in the same way a

prophet is changed when receiving the word of God. In this sense, Marlow and Jim

merge their identities to be diving leaders for each other. The narrative style can alter

their behavior and speech for dramatic effect. This religious affiliation to establish the

stability of the Jim=Marlow complex justifies its narrative control that leads develops the

story.

       The omniscient narrator concedes narrative control to Marlow after explaining

their first encounter at Jim's trial. Jim and Marlow share an interest in one another, even

with the third person narrator providing them a chance to interact with practically anyone

in "make believe:"

> Jim's eyes, wandering in the intervals of his answers, rested upon a white man
>
> who sat apart from the others, with his face worn and clouded, but with quiet eyes
>
> that glanced straight, interested and clear…. He met the eyes of the white man.
>
> The glance directed at him was not the fascinated stare of the others. It was an act
>
> of intelligent volition. Jim between two questions forgot himself so far as to find
>
> leisure for a thought. This fellow—ran the thought—looks at me as thought he
>
> could see somebody or something past my shoulder. He had come across that
>
> man before—in the street perhaps. He was positive he had never spoken to him.
>
> For days, for many days, he had spoken to no one, but he had held silent,

incoherent, and endless converse with himself, like a prisoner alone in his cell or

like a wayfarer lost in a wilderness (32-33).

This passage illustrates an occasion of the complex between Jim and Marlow. Initially,

they are both isolated and alone. The physical separateness between the characters from

the surroundings emphasizes that they are not like the other bodies occupying "make

believe." The physical presence turns into a magnetism locked by their gaze. The

emphasis of Marlow's "intelligen[ce]," rather than "fascination," removes the exoticism

surrounding Jim. Jim is not representing the Other to contrast Marlow's European

dominance. Rather, Jim is Marlow's equal to the extent that they pool as one character

instead of two individuals. Their complex creates an ethnicity merging characteristics of

both European and Other. Since the quote explicitly notes that Jim has been silent, it is

fitting that Marlow is also silent in the court room. Furthermore, the presence of the third

person omniscient narrator is too powerful for the complex to speak. Apart from the

omniscient narrator, an autonomous voice for Marlow or Jim is not established since the

characters are talking; the reader cannot have access to them.

  The next chapter, Marlow speaks as the narrator, demarcated by quotation marks

that distinguish his words from the omniscient narrator, that allow him autonomy over

Jim.   It should come as no surprise that Marlow's narration begins two paragraphs later

in the next chapter. Marlow's first words are telling:

Oh yes, I attended the inquiry... and to this day I haven't left off wondering why I

went. I am willing to believe each of us has a guardian angel, if you fellows will

concede to me that each of us has a familiar devil as well…. I know I have him—

the devil, I mean I haven't seen him, of course, but I go upon circumstantial

evidence. He is there right enough, and being malicious (34).

While Marlow's presence might have been ambiguous to himself, the complex would

need to attend to give a voice to the movement that Jim acts. Marlow's narration is

powerful since his uncensored words direct Jim; even the omniscient narrator reporting

the events that transpired includes Marlow's presence in the text. The quote is also

important to note the reference to spiritual entities in Marlow's opening statement:

Marlow recognizes he maintains both virtue and evil that alludes to Jim's presence when

forming the complex. However, Marlow's inability to clearly designate a presence for

Jim indicates how the complex is ambiguous to physical representation. The effect of the

complex in "make believe" can be identified when Jim speaks to obtain autonomy for the

silenced and Marlow moves to obtain power for the immobile. The complex has the dual

power of fitting words and actions together for a God-like existence in the text.

The text's primary focus on confession, on both virtue and sin, develops the

Jim=Marlow complex to offer solace and reproof of the past. Essentially, the beginning

half of the text is of Jim's confession to the "actual" events of abandoning the ship. Jim

and Marlow amalgamate into the complex because Jim's silencing at the trial (as seen in

the previous quote) dismisses any outlet to discuss the events that lead up to the trial.

This trial hugely affects European society with both interest and outrage because of the

absolute neglect by the Patna crew of human life; the crew abandons ship rather than

even attempting to save the passengers. In a contemporary allegory, this trial has the

unprofessional conduct of the Titanic's crew only saving select passengers and the

popularity of the O.J. Simpson trial. The community that surrounds Jim isolates and

ostracizes him as they try to learn the truth or gain insight about the Patna event. Marlow invites Jim to his home when Jim is overwhelmed with the need to explain his behavior: "I [Jim] would like to explain—I would like somebody to understand—somebody—one person at least! You [addressing Marlow]! Why not you?" (81). The confession allows Jim a sense of absolution by elevating Marlow as his judge. The designation of roles in this case is problematic since Jim's distress combines his character with Marlow to form the complex. In this sense, Jim only admits to himself what he took part in.

  Quotation marks physically separate Jim's words from Marlow's to imply they are unaltered and transposed into the text from their conversation. The earlier chapters present Jim in a quite and passive role; this quote's tone implies Jim is becoming mad because of his current predicament (Conrad 82). The concept of "becoming" allows characters changes in their presentation to the audience within the text. However, the significance of this quote is the implications of authority by speaking: Marlow has been narrating the story thus far because it was his experience meeting and talking with Jim; Jim has now gained autonomy by speaking and furthermore is dictating that he will maintain the narration to explain *his* experience of *his* life. This flip-flop between listener and speaker has changed the association between Jim and Marlow, and simultaneously altered their respective power directed through Marlow's first-person, limited narration. But the situation is more complex than that since the actual retelling of Jim's story will be predominantly narrated through Marlow; this distinction between whose story is being told and who is actually telling it represents the Jim=Marlow complex stepping forward in the text to preclude the sense of individuality the characters previously maintained.

The retelling of the Patna experience offers the audience an insight in Jim's failure and Marlow's bias, and more importantly an illustration of how these characters develop through the presence of the other character's commentary. As mentioned previously, Marlow takes over the narration of the events on the Patna to explain the conditions of the boat, the attitudes of the people, and Jim's reaction. Although Marlow distinguishes the events as Jim's experience by using pronouns of "he" or "him," Marlow has yet to distinguish himself as an honest narrator. Jim does not explain his own behavior or feelings. Marlow's narration becomes questionable when he suddenly allows Jim to voice his own story as distinguished by the use of additional quotation marks. Because of the third-person omniscient narrator, Marlow's dialogue has always been given through the double quotation marks (" "); when Marlow extends the privilege for Jim to speak embedded quotation marks distinguish Jim's voice ("' '"). The text's physical representation of a speaking voice makes the story interact with the audience as printed book: while much of the prose feels like storytelling, little distinctions like the embedded quotation marks pinpoint the text's reliance as a printed medium rather than oration. At the first instance of Jim narrating his own life, the double quotation marks are used and Marlow does not insert an introducing statement. Thus to distinguish between speakers in the text, the reader has the added burden to recognize a slight typographical difference. Moreover, Marlow gives Jim a voice that is indistinguishable from his own, which supports their synergized representation. There is no distinction of a start or end to their personalities as they are always "becoming."

The third person narrator interrupts Jim=Marlow's narration without the typographical signal of quotation marks to inform the presence of the complex in the text

to the reader. In general, the narration in quotation marks is continuous throughout the text. However, at various times the third person narrator breaks that mode by inserting commentary, usually regarding the physical state of Marlow in the presence of the audience that hears the story. In this way, the third person narrator regains control ultimately over the text's "becoming" by asserting power to stop the quoted narration. The reader must remain aware that while Marlow may be Jim's answer for being, the omniscient narrator is in fact relaying this entire story to the reader. However, that statement is problematic since the narrator is not talking but maintains a written presence. In this way the third person narrator reverses the communication binary from speech/writing into becoming writing/speech. Nevertheless, the Jim=Marlow complex best operates with "writing" as the dominant sign as in the latter binary association of communication. The written form will combine the two individual voices, so that they cannot be distinguished separately.

One instance of the third person narrator breaking into the spoken narration allows Jim=Marlow to be critiqued by the audience in "make believe" in a similar fashion. Marlow speaks to the audience directly about his personality and motivations for telling a story, and the narrator reorganizes the audience members' autonomy by making them speak:

> "I [Marlow] could never get up any enthusiasm about these things [fine linens].… and then comes a soft evening; a lot of men too indolent for whist—and a story…."
> He paused again to wait for an encouraging remark perhaps, but nobody spoke; only the host, as if reluctantly performing a duty, murmured—

"You are so subtle, Marlow."

"Who? I" said Marlow in a low voice. "Oh, no! But *he* was; and try as I may for the success of this yarn I am missing innumerable shades—they were so fine, so difficult to render in colourless words. Because he complicated matters be being so simple, too—the simplest poor devil (94)!"

It is as if the third person narrator forces the audience to speak, but only at a "murmur"—their autonomy in the text is unimportant. Although Marlow gets complimented on his "subtl[y]" in his narration, Marlow quickly passes this characteristic off to Jim as well. Jim gets the same assessment of personality as the host's describes Marlow. In a roundabout way, the complex bonds the two independent characters together and critiques the complex in the exact same way. The limitation of expressing the complex with a definite presence ensures that the Jim=Marlow complex only haunt the text.

There are also instances in Marlow's narration that he gives himself dialogue in embedded quotes to maintain an equal power structure for the Jim=Marlow complex. Marlow's interactions with Jim in his narration of the story are always set apart with introducing phrases. These interactions ensure that Marlow and Jim are operating in the same frame of "make believe." It is important that both of these characters can interact with one another to manage their subsequent supplementation. The distinction of embedded quotes does not definitely represent two physical bodies in "make believe," but allows an interaction that perpetuates the complex's haunting behavior. Marlow inserting his voice in Jim's narration usually gives little addition to the story. When Jim explains his experience with jumping Marlow says, "I couldn't help exclaiming, 'What an extraordinary affair!"(118). This comment keeps the audiences attention on the

narration, but also maintains Marlow's presence in a section where Jim's voice speaks through Marlow's. Marlow's interruptions rarely add to the reader's understand of Jim's perspective, but rather add more clarification for the audience to stay tuned into the narrative's increased drama. Marlow's added insight into the events around Jim's ship sinking affords the complex a presence in the text.

There's No Such Thing as "Ending": A Wrap Up

The narrative mode in Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* is ambiguous: while it allows for distinction of character presence, the narration also disrupts the very sense of presence. Marlow and Jim exist in the text, but only in the text. The reader observes Marlow and Jim's "becoming" that allows a physical representation in "make believe." But this physical presence is not finite—the reader can also observe how these two characters merge their identities together. The extent of their new personalities is unknown. We cannot say we know to what point the complex seems more like Marlow or more like Jim because the presence of Jim=Marlow is elusive, at best. This character presentation haunts the text that continues the audience's interaction with the text to allow the character's "becoming."

The implication of this essay asks the reader to reconsider the state of a character in "make believe" as well as the power in language, spoken or written. All too often, readers like to define characters as something very tangible because of definite nature of printed material; some readers even allow these characters to enter their real world. A reader has every right to do that but should know that they have just made an imaginary friend. We cannot live with the imaginary in reality. The domain of these worlds cannot exist together, although a person can have fun trying to blur them together. In this

> **Comment [BM1]:** Add new section about how complex fights other characters
> -Brierly
> -Jewel
> -Stein
> -French Lieutenant

fashion, ambiguities exist everywhere. Edward Said says in regards to the narrative

mechanism in *Lord Jim* that,

> To have chosen to write then is to have chosen in a particular way neither to say
>
> directly nor to mean exactly in the way…[one] hoped to say or to mean. No
>
> wonder that Conrad returned to this problematic concern repeatedly, a
>
> problematic concern that his writing dramatized continuously and imaginatively
>
> (116).

While this paper focused on the deconstructive observation of the text that negates the

need for Conrad's presence in understanding the text, Mr. Said eloquently states not only

the ambivalence of language, but also the importance of understanding modes of

communication in discourse. In that vein, this open door for discourse might be able to

allow communication in writing and speech a chance of "becoming" something clear to

our audience. Striving for "definite" communication may be elusive in *Lord Jim*, since

there are no boundaries for character presence. Readers need to consider that the

characters merge with one another that change the dynamic of the text. We can no longer

read the text as a simple narration by Marlow on other characters; *Lord Jim* is a narration

of characters acting on one another. The presence of Jim or Marlow is never definite—

they are always present together and apart. It is the job of the reader to identify both their

presence together, apart, or individual. However, a deconstructionist will see that

Marlow and Jim are all, yet none, of the above.

Works Cited

Acheraïou, Amar. "Meaning and Being in *Lord Jim*." Époque Conradienne. 30 (2004):

    9-17. MLA Bibliography. Eastern Michigan University Halle Lib., Ypsilanti,

    MI. 16 Dec. 2007 <http://www.mlabibliography.com>.

Artese, Brian. "'Speech Was of No Use': Conrad, a New Journalism, and the Critical

    Abjection of Testimony." Novel: a Forum on Fiction 36.2 (pr. 2003): 176-197.

    MLA International Bibliography. CSA Illumina. Eastern Michigan University

    Halle Lib., Ypsilanti, MI. 10 Nov. 2007 <http://www-mi9.csa.com.>.

Cain, William E. "Deconstruction in America: The Recent Literary Criticism of J. Hillis

    Miller." College English. 41.4 (Dec. 1979): 367-382. JSTOR. Eastern

    Michigan University Halle Lib., Ypsilanti, MI. 6 Sep. 2007

    <http://www.jstor.com>.

Conrad, Joseph. *Lord Jim: A Tale.* New York: Doubleday, Page & Co, 1926.

---. *The Works of Joseph Conrad.* 26 vols. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Co,

    1925.

Currie, Mark. *Transitions: Postmodern Narrative Theory.* New York: St. Martin's, 1998.

Delesalle, Catherine. "'The Last Word'; or, the Ambivalence of Quotation Marks in *Lord*

    Jim." Époque Conradienne 30 (2004): 29-46. MLA International Bibliography.

    CSA Illumina. Eastern Michigan University Halle Lib., Ypsilanti, MI. 10 Nov.

    2007 <http://www-mi9.csa.com>.

Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology.* 2nd Ed. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U., 1976.

Ginfray, Denise. "'There is a Weird Power in the Spoken Word': Authority in Question(S)

    in *Lord Jim*." Époque Conradienne 30 (2004): 65-79. MLA International

Bibliography. CSA Illumina. Eastern Michigan University Halle Lib., Ypsilanti, MI. 10 Nov. 2007 <http://www-mi9.csa.com>.

Hall, Donald E. *Literary and Cultural Theory: From Basic Principles to Advanced Application.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2001. 161-198.

Karl, Frederick. "Conrad's Stein: the Destructive Element." Twentieth Century Literature 3 (Jan, 1958): 163-169. JSTOR. Eastern Michigan University Halle Lib,, Ypsilanti, MI. 6 Sept. 2007 <http://www.jstor.org>.

Kelleher, V.M.K. "A Third Voice: the Dialectical Structure of *Lord Jim*." Unisa English Studies: Journal of the Department of English 25.1 (May, 1987): 24-28. MLA International Bibliography. CSA Illumina. Eastern Michigan University Halle Lib., Ypsilanti, MI. 26 Nov. 2007 <http://www-mi9.csa.com>.

Miller, J. Hillis. *Ariadne's Thread: Story Lines.* New Haven: Yale U., 1992.

Pedot, Richard. "'With Sealed Lips': the Enigma of Rhetoric in *Lord Jim*." Époque Conradienne 30 (2004): 185-198. MLA International Bibliography. CSA Illumina. Eastern Michigan University Halle Lib., Ypsilanti, MI. 15 Oct. 2007 <http://www-mi9.csa.com>.

Said, Edward. "Conrad: the Presentation of Narrative." NOVEL: a Forum on Fiction 7.2 (Winter, 1974): 116-132. JSTOR. Eastern Michigan University Halle Lib., Ypsilanti, MI. 10 Oct. 2007.

---. *Orientalism.* New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

Wolfreys, Julian. *Transitions: Deconstruction Derrida*. New York: St. Martin's, 1998.

Appendix A: Symbolic Representation of Speech and Writing Communication Binary

Speaking

1ˢᵗ Person
Perspective

3ʳᵈ Person
Perspective

Writing

1ˢᵗ Person   ——   3ʳᵈ Person
Perspective   ——   Perspective