Guilt and Atonement in "Lord Jim" and "Under Western Eyes"

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GUILT AND ATONEMENT IN LORD JIM AND UNDER WESTERN EYES

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of English
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by
Norma Sue Tester Wilson
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APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze Joseph Conrad's treatment of guilt and atonement in the novels *Lord Jim* and *Under Western Eyes*; to compare and contrast the protagonists, Jim and Razumov, in their confrontation with a crucial test, in their acts of betrayal, and in their attempts to atone for their guilt; and to show that as a result of their acts of betrayal, through their suffering of guilt and through their efforts to redeem themselves and reenter the community, the protagonists experience a moral regeneration, acquired at the expense of their physical well being.

Following their acts of betrayal for which they are predisposed by their isolation, excessive imagination, and lack of identity, Jim and Razumov seek to reenter the human community. Each protagonist attempts at first to repress his sense of guilt by justifying his act to himself and to others. But the guilt which refuses to remain dormant compels the protagonists to recognize the nature of their crimes and to seek atonement. Jim, who tries to bury his past and to rehabilitate himself in Patusan, is forced to recognize his guilt when the past and the outside world enter Patusan through Gentleman Brown. After the death of Dain Waris, Jim accepts his responsibility to the community and offers himself to Doramin in a virtual suicide. Razumov confronts his crime and guilt, when, through the increased self-awareness derived from his love for Natalia Haldin, he realizes he cannot continue to live a lie. Razumov forfeits a future with Natalia through his confession to her; and through his confession to the revolutionists he forfeits his physical well being.

The atonement which results in death for Jim and maiming for Razumov also results in maturation and moral growth. Jim matures and finds his own identity through his commitment to the community in Patusan. In his final act he conquers his destiny by proving that he has mastered the cowardice in his character. Through Razumov's acceptance of someone other than himself, he realizes his own identity and becomes a more nearly complete person. By going to the revolutionists, he cements his bond with the community, atoning for his crime against Haldin and human solidarity by placing himself in the position into which he had formerly placed Haldin. Both Jim and Razumov come to realize that the individual cannot exist alone and that one finds his identity and his role within the context of the community.
GUILT AND ATONEMENT IN LORD JIM AND UNDER WESTERN EYES
Joseph Conrad wrote in "A Familiar Preface" to A Personal Record in 1912:

Those who read me know my conviction that the world, the temporal world, rests on a few very simple ideas; so simple that they must be as old as the hills. It rests notably among others on the idea of Fidelity.

Conrad's fiction, essays, and letters emphasize that loyalty to the human community is of first importance. Through loyalty to family, career, and friends, "to what is nearest to hand and heart in the short moment of each human effort,"2 one demonstrates one's fidelity to the larger community. Conrad felt that all people of all times, in spite of different cultures and values, are bound "to each other and . . . to the visible world"3 by certain inner qualities that all people share in common. Defining those qualities which he believes to be constant and enduring in human nature, Conrad writes in the "Preface" to The Nigger of the "Narcissus" of the artist's appeal to

our capacity for delight and wonder, to the sense of mystery surrounding our lives; to our sense of pity and beauty, and pain; to the latent feeling of fellowship with all creation—to the subtle but invincible conviction of solidarity that knits together the loneliness of innumerable hearts, to the solidarity in dreams, in joy, in sorrow, in aspirations, in illusions, in hope, in fear, which binds men to each other, which binds together all humanity—the dead to the living and the living to the unborn.4
Conrad's view of the unity of mankind is also evident in the "Author's Note" to Almayer's Folly:

And there is a bond between us and that humanity so far away... I am content to sympathize with common mortals no matter where they live; in houses or in tents, in the streets under a fog, or in the forests behind the dark line of dismal mangroves that fringe the vast solitude of the sea.5

A belief in human solidarity and in one's responsibility to the human community is one which Conrad apparently adopted early and maintained through life. In the "Author's Note," 1919, to A Personal Record Conrad recalls that

an impartial view of humanity in all its degrees of splendour and misery together with a special regard for the rights of the unprivileged of this earth, not on any mystic ground but on the ground of simple fellowship and honourable reciprocity of services, was the dominant characteristic of the mental and moral atmosphere of the houses which sheltered my hazardous childhood: matters of calm and deep conviction both lasting and consistent. ...6

And in a letter written to his aunt, Marguerite Poradowska, on March 5, 1892, Conrad states:

... I cannot admit ... that one human being may have the right physically or morally to wound another ... In my circle, family feeling manifests itself in a complete solidarity among all the members, which sanctions by approval all the acts of individuals--so long as these acts are not dishonorable.7

Fidelity, duty, and performance are interrelated in Conrad's philosophy. One exhibits one's loyalty through action, and the individual's worth is equivalent to the service he performs for society. Conrad expresses this view in a letter to Marguerite Poradowska dated September 4, 1892:

The fact is ... that one becomes useful only in realizing the utter insignificance of the individual in the scheme of the universe. When one well understands that
in oneself one is nothing and that a man is worth neither more nor less than the work he accomplishes with honesty of purpose, and means, and within the strict limits of his duty towards society, only then is one the master of his conscience, with the right to call himself a man. 

Although Conrad describes the force which compelled him to write as "a hidden, obscure necessity, a completely masked and unaccountable phenomenon," it was his own sense of the individual's responsibility to humanity that served as the germ of his literary career. Writing was for Conrad, as his career as a seaman had been previously, a performance of duty. In a letter written to E. L. Sanderson on October 12, 1899, Conrad compares his doing his "appointed work" to "the ant bringing its grain of sand to the common edifice." The moral nature of his decision to write is also described in A Personal Record. Explaining his reasons for beginning his first novel, Conrad speaks of the "irresistible appeal" of the host of characters whom he portrays in Almayer's Folly:

They came with a silent and irresistible appeal—and the appeal, I affirm here, was not to my self-love or my vanity. It seems now to have had a moral character, for why should the memory of these beings, seen in their obscure sun-bathed existence, demand to express itself in the shape of a novel, except on the ground of that mysterious fellowship which unites in a community of hopes and fears all the dwellers on this earth?

A dominant theme in the fiction of Joseph Conrad is the relationship of the individual to the human community. Many of Conrad's characters have, in one way or another, broken their bond with humanity through infidelity. With many variations on the theme Conrad shows that one may be unfaithful
to the unity of mankind through the betrayal of a single individual or a group, or through the betrayal of a conviction or a particular code. In Lord Jim the protagonist betrays eight hundred pilgrims, his trust to the merchant marine, and his own sense of honor. Under Western Eyes deals with the betrayal of a single individual, while Heart of Darkness is concerned with the exploitation of natives in the Congo. Willems in An Outcast of the Islands betrays both his tradition and the man who has served him as father. In Victory Conrad is concerned with the individual who separates himself from the human community by refusing to recognize a bond with humanity. Heyst detaches himself from others and aspires to total non-involvement in order to pass "through life without suffering, and almost without a single care in the world—invulnerable because elusive." Although the nature of disloyalty varies, the result, alienation from society, is the same for each guilty protagonist.

Showing the complexity of one's obligations to humanity, Conrad also treats the subject of conflicting loyalties. The young captain in The Secret Sharer must choose between fidelity to the seaman's code and fidelity to another individual; the central character in Lord Jim must choose between a pledge of trust to Doramin and obligation to Jewel and Tamb' Itam; and the protagonist in Under Western Eyes must choose between loyalty to a fellow student and to his own father.

The captain's choice of loyalty to an individual over
loyalty to the seaman's code in *The Secret Sharer* is one which Conrad obviously approved, as the ending indicates. The captain allows Leggatt, who has been accused of murder on another ship, to escape as "a free man, a proud swimmer striking out for a new destiny." As if in reciprocation for his giving Leggatt liberty, the captain is enabled by Leggatt's floating cap to steer the ship through a difficult passage, proving his ability to command the ship and winning the respect of his crew.

In *The Secret Sharer* the captain is faithful to human solidarity through his loyalty to Leggatt. But much of Conrad's fiction is concerned with the individual who betrays his trust to humanity. "The real significance of crime," Conrad says through Marlow in *Lord Jim*, "is in its being a breach of faith with the community of mankind." Through their acts of disloyalty the protagonists, Willems, Kurtz, Jim, Razumov, and Heyst, are alienated from society. Through utter isolation each comes to realize the meaning of fidelity and the significance of the bond he has broken. Each has a moral awakening which enables him to grasp the implication of his betrayal. Thus Kurtz in his final words before death realizes in a "supreme moment of complete knowledge . . . the horror" of his betrayal. And Heyst, realizing the error of his philosophy of detachment, confesses to Davidson before his suicide: " . . . woe to the man whose heart has not learned while young to hope, to love--and to put its trust
When Lingard abandons Willems to the jungle, Willems realizes the extent of his separation from men as a result of his disloyalty:

On Lingard's departure solitude and silence closed round Willems; the cruel solitude of one abandoned by men; the reproachful silence which surrounds an outcast ejected by his kind, the silence unbroken by the slightest whisper of hope; an immense and impenetrable silence that swallows up without echo the murmur of regret and the cry of revolt.  

With a similar recognition Jim realizes he cannot return home, which "for each of us ... must be like going to render an account" (159), and Razumov realizes that through his betrayal of another he has betrayed himself.

Lord Jim and Under Western Eyes are the two Conrad novels which most fully develop the theme of the individual's relationship to the community. Several critics have observed similarities between the two novels in structure, theme, and characterization. In Joseph Conrad: A Critical Biography Jocelyn Baines has noted that the first part of each novel centers on the act of betrayal, while the second half "set in a different place with a variety of new characters, is devoted to the consequences of this act."  

In Conrad the Novelist Albert Guerard shows in a capsule summary of Lord Jim and Under Western Eyes the similarities of the protagonists and of their crucial confrontation. Comparing the situation in Under Western Eyes to that in Lord Jim, he says,

Once again we have the story of a not uncommon man whom chance and suffering render extraordinary; who suddenly has to face a boundary-situation and most
difficult choice; whose crime both makes and breaks him. The act of betrayal, carrying him out of one solitude and into another, lends him a somber magnitude and new moral awareness, and compels him to destroy himself at last.19

Guerard's point is very well made, but his primary objective in the discussion of Under Western Eyes is not to compare it with Lord Jim but rather to compare Conrad's view of anarchy in Under Western Eyes and The Secret Agent. In a study of the two novels, "Joseph Conrad and Revolution," Robert F. Haugh has compared "the forces of the sea as they act upon men in Lord Jim" to "the currents of revolution in Under Western Eyes."20 Haugh views Razumov as Jim's older brother in betrayal, undergoing much the same experiences as Jim, but with a fuller awareness of what is happening. In spite of the general agreement among Conrad critics that the two novels and their protagonists have striking similarities, no one has made a full comparative analysis of Conrad's treatment of guilt and atonement in the two novels. The writer believes that a comparative study of Lord Jim and Under Western Eyes is valuable. Through an analysis of the contrasts and similarities of the two novels one can more easily draw conclusions concerning Conrad's view of the nature of guilt and of atonement.

In both Lord Jim and Under Western Eyes the central character is an average young man21 who has little awareness of his identity or of his obligation to society. Each confronts a crucial test of the kind Conrad describes in Lord Jim, one of those
events . . . that show in the light of day the inner worth of a man, the edge of his temper, and the fibre of his stuff; that reveal the quality of his resistance and the secret truth of his pretences, not only to others but also to himself(10).

In their confrontation with the crucial testing situation, in their vulnerability to the situation, in their attempts to deal with their crime and their guilt, and in their final acts of redemption there are parallels and contrasts between the protagonists of the two novels. Given a situation for which they are psychologically unprepared, both Jim and Razumov betray their trust to humanity and, in so doing, betray themselves as well. Alienated by their acts of betrayal, the two central characters seek to atone for their crimes against humanity and to reenter the community of mankind. Having had their illusions shattered by their "acts" and having had to reconstruct the world on a different basis, Jim and Razumov grow in social and self awareness. During the process of self discovery both mature and progress. Each passes from his previous position of egotism and self-interest to one of genuine commitment to humanity and becomes, according to Conrad's definition, a man.

In Lord Jim and Under Western Eyes the protagonists are predisposed for their acts of betrayal by their isolation, imagination, and lack of identity. An analysis of these elements in the two central characters will clarify why they react as they do in the crucial test.

Isolation, imagination, and lack of identity are closely
connected in Jim's psychology. Jim identifies with his heroic, idealized concept of himself. But this image of himself is so far removed from reality that Jim is unable to actualize his identity in the real world. His ego, then, exists primarily in his daydreams and fantasies in which he is a hero. Because of his concept of himself, Jim considers himself superior to most other people and more capable of performing heroic deeds. He seems purposefully to seek inferior people with whom to work in order to exalt himself. Therefore, although he chooses to go on the *Patna*, he separates himself from the other members of the crew:

> The quality of these men did not matter; he rubbed shoulders with them, but they could not touch him; he shared the air they breathed, but he was different(20).

Jim lives to such an extent in a world of fantasy that he has trouble distinguishing between the real and the imagined. Thus when an actual situation affords him the occasion to practice heroism, he becomes paralyzed, unable to express his thoughts in action. His excessive imagination also makes him see everything out of proportion to reality, infinitely better or infinitely worse. Fear immobilizes him, not fear for himself, but fear of the emergency. Jim needs a predictable routine as his equilibrium is upset by the unexpected. He is, therefore, unable to cope with any new situation. As long as he is following orders and a set routine, he is able to do a commendable job. He would also be able to perform if he could be presented with a situation identical to one
he has enacted in his imagination. But in a crisis, which depends on no routine and follows no order, he cannot move. Thus he fails the test with which he is presented in the crisis of the Patna.

He stood still looking at these recumbent bodies, a doomed man aware of his fate, surveying the silent company of the dead. They were dead! Nothing could save them! There were boats enough for half of them perhaps, but there was no time. No time! No time! It did not seem worth while to open his lips, to stir hand or foot. Before he could shout three words, or make three steps, he would be floundering in a sea whitened awfully by the desperate struggles of human beings, clamorous with the distress of cries for help. There was no help. He imagined what would happen perfectly; he went through it all motionless by the hatchway with the lamp in his hand—he went through it to the very last harrowing detail. . . . "I saw as clearly as I see you now that there was nothing I could do. It seemed to take all life out of my limbs. I thought I might just as well stand where I was and wait"(64).

Later, when relating the incident to Marlow, Jim explains, "It is all in being ready. I wasn't; not—not then"(60).

Unable to cope with the situation, convinced of the futility of action, and shrinking from the "horrors of panic, the trampling rush, the pitiful screams, boats swamped"(65) evoked by his imagination, Jim jumps from the Patna. His abandoning a ship and eight hundred passengers is an act of impluse so foreign, Jim believes, to his true nature that he has no recollection of actually jumping from the skip. Thus, in telling his story to Marlow, he says, "I had jumped . . . it seems"(81). A convincing explanation of Jim's being unable to recall the jump is given by Eben Bass. To jump from the Patna while remaining true to his self-concept would have been
impossible for Jim. Therefore, when he trips over the dead third engineer whom the other three deserters are calling to join them in the boat, Jim assumes the dead man's identity and jumps. But, as he realizes in a moment, it is he himself who must take responsibility for the act.

Unlike Jim who is unaware of a decision to abandon the Patna, Razumov makes a conscious decision to betray Haldin. His act of betrayal, like Jim's, is motivated by hidden psychological forces, and his vulnerability, like Jim's, is due to isolation, imagination, and lack of identity.

Razumov's lack of identity is expressed by his seemingly irrelevant remark, "There goes my silver medal!" when he learns the reason for Haldin's presence in his room. He is dependent on the silver medal to give meaning to his life, to give him a sense of identity and direction, and to make his future secure. As the illegitimate son of a mother whom he has never known and of a prince who does not recognize him except through providing money for him, Razumov is "as lonely in the world as a man swimming in the deep sea". His lack of identity results in part from his isolation, his having no one in the world to lend a sense of kinship. Without a family, friends, ties, or roots of any kind, he has no clear sense of values, no strong convictions, either personal, religious, or political. The hope of winning the medal to be awarded to the writer of the best essay gives his life focus; it is the center, the pivotal point, upon which his equilibrium depends.
Having nothing else to cling to, Razumov feels his security and his identity slipping away from him at the thought of not being able to obtain the silver medal. On a practical basis, he is depending on his winning the medal in order to gain distinction which will be an asset to him in his goal of obtaining a position at the university he attends. Haldin's intrusion, which could result in Razumov's being dismissed from the university, threatens this goal.

Haldin also threatens the comfortable, small world Razumov has made for himself. He shrinks from involvement or commitment of any kind, preferring to remain in his shell of solitude and security. Although aware in a vague way of the dissension within Russia, Razumov shrinks mentally from the fray as a good-natured man may shrink from taking definite sides in a violent family quarrel(7).

Razumov, therefore, is furious with Haldin for placing him in the position of having to commit himself either to the revolutionist movement in Russia by aiding Haldin or to the autocracy by betraying Haldin. Forced to make a decision for which he is unprepared, Razumov decides to betray Haldin to government authorities as that decision offers less threat to his emotional and physical security.

Razumov's imagination is also a factor in his decision. Through fear of being implicated in Haldin's crime, Razumov imagines a horrible fate:

Razumov saw himself shut up in a fortress, worried, badgered, perhaps ill-used. He saw himself deported by
an administrative order, his life broken, ruined, and robbed of all hope... 

He saw his youth pass away from him in misery and half starvation—his strength give way, his mind become an abject thing. He saw himself creeping, broken down and shabby, about the streets—dying unattended in some filthy hole of a room, or on the sordid bed of a Government hospital(16).

Razumov's excessive imagination prohibits him from doing what in his case would be the best thing to do, to simply tell Haldin to leave his room, thereby involving himself neither with the autocracy nor the revolutionist movement. But he, like Jim during the crisis of the Patna, is betrayed by his imagination.

Razumov's mind works not only through imagination, however, but also through rationalization to bring him to betray Haldin. In his mental debate of what to do about Haldin, Razumov thinks he relies on his intellect to make the decision. But what he will not admit is that he is merely attempting to justify in his mind what he has already decided to do. Determined to make himself see betrayal as the best course, he ignores the prompting of guilt expressed in uneasiness, a feeling of sickness, and the visual hallucination of Haldin. It is not logic but rationalization upon which Razumov rests his fate. According to Conrad, however, this is the way in which thought usually operates, and it is almost impossible for one to detach one's mind from the totality of what is implied in one's personality. In Victory Conrad maintains that "most of our convictions are the disguised servants of our passions" and that "the use of reason is to justify the obscure desires that move our conduct,
impulses, passions, prejudices and follies, and also our fears." In justifying his first impulse of betraying Haldin, Razumov thinks of Haldin's act, "It is a crime ... a murder is a murder"(20). And his need for identity, in conjunction with his rationalization and his need for security, makes it possible for Razumov to make a decision. When he suddenly stamps his foot on the vast, white, obliterated ground of Russia, "inanimate, cold, inert"(26), Razumov feels a kinship with his motherland. He identifies with Russia which like himself lacks identification and is "awaiting the record of an inconceivable history"(26). In his need for security, peace, and identification, feelings of patriotism arise, and he argues that autocracy offers greater hope for Russia than revolutionism:

It was a guarantee of duration, of safety, while the travail of maturing destiny went on—a work not of revolutions with their passionate levity of action and their shifting impulses—but of peace. What it needed was not the conflicting aspirations of a people, but a will strong and one: it wanted not the babble of many voices, but a man—strong and one(26-27).

In his identification with Russia, Razumov believes that he is being true to a conviction in his decision to betray Haldin:

"If I must suffer let me at least suffer for my convictions, not for a crime my reason—my cool superior reason—rejects"(28).

And as he steps over the apparition of Haldin, he argues:

"Betray. A great word. What is betrayal? They talk of a man betraying his country, his friends, his sweetheart. There must be a moral bond first. All a man can betray is his conscience"(30).
The agonizing experience which follows his betrayal of Haldin, resulting in Haldin's execution, will bring Razumov finally to realize that in betraying Haldin he has betrayed his conscience and also a moral bond, the bond of "solidarity . . . which binds men to each other, which binds together all humanity." 27

Another unconscious motive, also reflecting his need for identity, which leads Razumov to betray Haldin is illustrated by his going to his father instead of going to the police with his information. He remembers the "distinct pressure of the white shapely hand . . . like a secret sign"(9) which he had felt when he once came in contact with Prince K—.

In his longing to be identified with his father, Razumov is further motivated to join with the autocracy. Thus, prompted by his desire for peace, equilibrium, and identity, and justified by his reasoning, Razumov decides to go to the authorities and betray Haldin. Given a crucial test, Razumov, like Jim, fails, having been made vulnerable by his isolation, his imagination, and lack of identity.

From the moment Jim discovers himself in the boat with the deserters and from the moment Razumov first contemplates betraying Haldin, they are plagued by guilt. Although at first they are not conscious of a sense of guilt, it finds expression in various ways. An early indication of Razumov's sense of guilt, expressed while he is still debating whether or not to betray Haldin, is his reaction to hearing someone
shout, "Oh, thou vile wretch!" (29). Spinning around, he reacts as though the remark were directed at him, and, finding that it was not, he still has a vague feeling of uneasiness. A moment later he sees an apparition of Haldin lying on the snow, the visual manifestation of his guilt which will repeatedly find expression. Paralleling Razumov's response to the shout intended for another is Jim's response to a remark which he hears as he leaves the court of inquiry. Hearing someone say, "Look at that wretched cur" (52), Jim subconsciously identifies himself with the remark and, taking offense, spins around to see who has insulted him.

From the moment Jim discovers himself in the boat with the other deserters of the Patna, he is haunted by guilt. The remainder of his life will be spent in an attempt to escape from the "well . . . [the] everlasting deep hole" (82) of guilt and self-doubt into which he has plunged. Jim has to deal with his conscience not only for his act of betrayal in deserting the Patna but also for his failure to achieve heroism which would have been possible had he stayed with the ship. But it is only after learning that the eight hundred passengers did not drown that his guilt-ridden mind focuses on what he has failed to do instead of what he has done.

Jim's guilt in breaking his bond with humanity is revealed in a hallucination. He imagines he hears the voices of the drowning victims of the Patna, and as his guilt becomes
more acute the voices grow louder. The fact that he mentions the voices to Marlow almost as an afterthought shows the significance of the hallucination just as the part of a dream which a person recalls as an afterthought is often the most significant expression of the operation of the subconscious mind. Expressing to Marlow his relief at learning that the Patna had not sunk, Jim asks:

"Do you know what was my first thought when I heard? I was relieved. I was relieved to learn that those shouts—did I tell you I had heard shouts? No? Well, I did. Shouts for help... blown along with the drizzle. Imagination I suppose. And yet I can hardly... How stupid... The others did not. I asked them afterwards. They all said No. No? And I was hearing them even then! I might have known—but I didn't think—I only listened. Very faint screams—day after day.... I wonder how much longer I could have stood it. It was getting worse, too... I mean—louder" (97-98).

Jim's guilt is also expressed in his compulsion to swim back to the spot where he believes the Patna to have sunk, to drown and to atone for his guilt where he believes the others to have gone down. After Jim relates this impulse to Marlow, Marlow, convinced of the anguish which Jim felt for the eight hundred passengers, says:

"I believe that, in this first moment, his heart was wrung with all the suffering, that his soul knew the accumulated savour of all the fear, all the horror, all the despair of eight hundred human beings being pounced upon in the night by a sudden and violent death..." (83).

When he learns that the passengers of the Patna are safe, Jim is relieved and the hallucination stops, but his sense of self betrayal is not relieved. He becomes alienated,
isolating himself from others because of his shame, "detached from his surroundings, irresolute and silent, like a ghost without a home to haunt" (61). But even so he has a need to confess and to be understood. He appears before the court of inquiry partly through a need for punishment, "to go through the ceremony of execution" (110), but also in the hope of explaining what had happened and of being understood. "For truth's sake... for his own sake" (24), he refuses to run from the investigation as the other deserters of the Patna do. But the court, interested only in facts and not in the slight shades of distinction between right and wrong, is unable to give Jim the satisfaction he seeks. What he does not realize is that no court can give him a clear conscience, that no clean slate is possible, except within himself.

The guilt which Jim carries is no more intense than that felt by Razumov. From the moment he betrays Haldin, "Razumov is," as Albert Guerard has said, "always on a rack; or on the two racks of fear and guilt."28 At first he fears that he will be suspected by the government authorities of having had a part in Haldin's crime. After that fear is dispelled by his accepting a mission for the autocracy, his fear is that his role as a double agent will be discovered by the revolutionists.

Razumov's subconscious guilt finds expression in his need to confess and in his expressing truths which he himself does not fully understand. Entering his room where Haldin
is awaiting his return, Razumov confesses to him, if not
the betrayal itself, the motives which led to the betrayal:

"And there are secret motives of conduct... For
instance, a man goes out of a room for a walk. Nothing
more trivial in appearance. And yet it may be momentous.
He comes back—he has seen perhaps a drunken brute, taken
particular notice of the snow on the ground—and behold
he is no longer the same man. The most unlikely things
have a secret power over one's thoughts—the grey whiskers
of a particular person—the goggle eyes of another"(49).

Razumov is actually telling Haldin why he betrayed him, but,
of course, Haldin does not understand what he is saying. When
Razumov shrieks to Haldin, "Why! I am responsible for you"(49),
his conscience is forcing him to express what at this time
he does not understand, that he is indeed responsible for
Haldin through the bond they share as fellow human beings.
It is the truth which had prompted him earlier to run to
Haldin with a confession of his thoughts of betrayal which
would "end in embraces and tears; in an incredible fellow­
ship of souls"(32).

Razumov's need to confess, before bringing him at last
to a full confession to Natalia and the revolutionists, forces
him to engage in a kind of double talk with Mikulin and the
revolutionists. Hating to lie, he plays a dangerous cat and
mouse game, actually telling the truth but in such a way or
in such a context which causes them to interpret it in view
of their own situation. For instance, when Peter Ivanovitch
tells Razumov that he has received information about him from
various sources, Razumov confesses: "Oh, we are great in
talking about each other. . . . Gossip, tales, suspicions, and all that sort of thing, we know how to deal in to perfections. Calumny even"(174). But Peter Ivanovitch, making the opposite inference, arrives at the conclusion that Razumov is for the revolutionists "one of us"(175). Razumov also confesses to Madame de S— that he has seen a phantom(189) of a living enemy whom he hated(190). And when Sophia Antonovna suggests that perhaps he is "only playing a part"(211), he answers that "it must be done very badly since [she] sees through the assumption"(212). In this play of words Razumov comes closest to giving away his duplicity when he confesses to Peter Ivanovitch:

"I have been impelled, compelled, or rather sent—let us say sent—towards you for a work that no one but myself can do. You would call it a harmless delusion: a ridiculous delusion at which you don't even smile. It is absurd of me to talk like this, yet some day you will remember these words, I hope. Enough of this. Here I stand before you—Confessed"(193)!

Razumov's guilt also finds expression in other ways. Ironically, although Razumov had feared that Haldin's intrusion would result in upsetting his routine, his guilt results in a worse loss of equilibrium, lack of control over his sensory, mental, and motor faculties. Not only does he experience a visual delusion, Haldin's phantom, but he also loses control over his thoughts, is subject to outbursts of speech, talks as though his throat were parched, stumbles
frequently, and appears to be a sleepwalker. He also has insomnia and feels that he is suffocating, as though there were not enough air to breathe. As a result he experiences dizziness, frequently having to sit down or to hold to something to keep from falling.

From the time Haldin leaves Razumov's room to be apprehended by the police, Razumov's life becomes a nightmare. The fact that he drops his watch at that moment causing it to stop running indicates, according to Tony Tanner, "an interruption to, perhaps an end of, the well-regulated normality of his life. From now on his time is not normal society's time and tomorrow is revoltingly unlike yesterday." The significance of the watch's stopping is demonstrated by Razumov's distress at not being able to determine the time:

And the watch had stopped. This reduced him to despair. Impossible to know the time... Razumov looked wildly about as if for some means of seizing upon time which seemed to have escaped him altogether...

He went to the window... "I will stay here till I hear something," he said to himself... His mind hovered on the borders of delirium. He heard himself suddenly saying, "I confess... I am on the rack," he thought. He felt ready to swoon. The faint deep boom of the distant clock seemed to explode in his head—he heard it so clearly... One I (53-54+).

Razumov's loss of control is also expressed in his inability to concentrate. On the night of Haldin's arrest Razumov attempts to work on his essay, but he is unable to concentrate then or later. Realizing his loss of control over his most prized faculty, his intellect, Razumov feels his independence and his future escaping him. The disorder of his mind causing
him to lose all control over his life is symbolized by his being profoundly affected by finding his papers disordered and experiencing "a distinct sensation of his very existence being undermined in some mysterious manner, of his moral supports falling away from him one by one"(63).

Razumov's sense of distress, of fear and guilt, his alienation from society, from his moral self, and even from time, make life unbearable. His need to be understood and to communicate with someone who has some concept of his problems impels him finally to go to Councillor Mikulin. But instead of finding satisfaction in his conversation with Mikulin, Razumov involves himself deeper in deception by accepting the mission of going to Geneva as a spy. Falseness exists in his position not only in his having to pretend before the revolutionists and Natalia, but also in his pretending to himself that he supports his mission. After he has already committed himself to the Russian autocracy and has paved the way for his role by winning the confidence of the student revolutionists at the university, he realizes, at the point of his departure from Russia, that he has committed himself to something he does not believe in:

The journey was decided—unavoidable. He had fixed the next day for his departure on the mission. And now he discovered suddenly that he had not believed in it. He had gone about listening, speaking, thinking, planning his simulated flight, with the growing conviction that all this was preposterous. . . . It was like a game of make-believe(265).
As Razumov in his terrible aloneness goes to Mikulin, Jim, who is just as much alone, goes to Marlow with his story. But he needs not merely someone to hear his confession, but someone to understand and to forgive. Interpreting Jim's motives, Marlow says:

"Didn't I tell you he confessed himself before me as though I had the power to bind and to loose? He burrowed deep, deep, in the hope of my absolution, which would have been of no good to him. This was one of those cases which no solemn deception can palliate, which no man can help; where his very Maker seems to abandon a sinner to his own devices"(71).

Both Jim and Razumov try to rid themselves of guilt by blaming fate for the acts of betrayal. Razumov views fate as entering his room in the form of Haldin and robbing him of his peace and freedom(69-70), while Jim blames the weather, the ship, the crew, anything except himself for robbing his life of its illusion and "all its glamour"(94). Both also seek to avoid blame through rationalization. Razumov argues that Haldin betrayed himself by his criminal act and by putting trust in someone he had no cause to trust, while Jim argues that "there was not the thickness of a sheet of paper between the right and wrong of this affair"(94). But although fate did play a part in each act of betrayal, neither Jim nor Razumov has a satisfactory scapegoat for his guilt.

Jim attempts to deal with his guilt, after confessing to the court of inquiry and to Marlow, by ignoring it. He is painfully aware of the guilt himself, but he is unable to live among men who know of his disgrace. He wants to keep
his shame to himself and not be reminded by others of his act on the Patna. He tries to live among men and to rehabilitate himself, but everywhere he goes there is something or someone to remind him of the cause of his loss of honor. He goes from place to place, from job to job, but he cannot rid himself of his past. Marlow, realizing that each disappointment makes it more difficult for Jim to "rebound back into his uncompromising position" (144), goes to Stein for advice. Stein gives Jim a formula to live by and the means of carrying it out. Jim, therefore, alienates himself from men of his own culture and race and goes to Patusan where the inhabitants do not know of his "jump" and even if they did would not judge it by the criteria of Jim and his race. Having received Stein's advice to submit to the destructive element (154), Jim yields to his romanticism and attempts to live his dream by expressing his ideals and illusions in action. Gaining the trust and confidence of the people in Patusan, Jim almost lives up to his heroic concept of himself. His success in Patusan, however, is only a partial victory for he realizes that he can be a hero only in an isolated world where his moral values are not shared and where his conscience, "that heirloom of the ages, of the race, of the group, of the family," 30 is not called to account. Although Jim would like to return to his own people, he realizes that it is impossible for him to go home. The clean slate he has in Patusan is an illusory one which cannot be carried to the outside world: Jim will stay in
Patusan because it is his "limit, because nothing less will do" (239).

Through submission to his romanticism, Jim almost becomes what he envisions. Living in a community for the first time instead of separating himself from others and performing heroic acts instead of simply imagining them, Jim becomes in Patusan a more nearly complete human being than he had been in the outside world. He cannot be condemned for his romanticism because it is what makes him what he is. Had he been a realist like Chester, Cornelius, or the skipper of the *Patna*, his deserting of the ship would not have mattered and would not have resulted in his loss of honor because there would have been no honor to lose. He would have been able to "shirk" it like the other deserters and would have been a less moral person as a result.

The illusion that he has not sinned, that he is immaculate, is necessary for Jim. His romanticism is his refuge, but when he is forced "to climb out into the air" (153) by the intrusion of the outside world in the person of Gentleman Brown, his idealism can no longer sustain him. Brown, a thief and a deserter from a home ship, who, like Jim, seeks refuge in Patusan, is symbolic of Jim's hidden self which has been suppressed since his leap into Patusan. Adept at discovering another's points of vulnerability, Brown causes Jim's repressed sense of guilt to emerge with remarks which are clear reminders of Jim's past. His uncanny allusions to cowardice, jumping
"out of trouble and leaving them in a . . . lurch"(276) and to the "infernal hole"(276) deprive Jim of his confidence. He again is paralyzed, and, seeing himself as Brown's sharer of guilt, is unable to deal with him objectively. He promises Brown free passage from Patusan and unwittingly betrays those who trust him.

The guilt, which finally surfaces and demands recognition in both Jim and Razumov, forces them to respond. Jim, having taken responsibility on his head for anything that might go wrong as a result of his allowing Gentleman Brown to go free, goes to Doramin to pay with his life for the death of his comrade, Dain Waris. Having committed himself to the community in Patusan, Jim is able to take responsibility for others as formerly he had been able to do only in his fantasies of helping and saving people. In going to his death by facing Doramin, Jim is following the impulse he had had when he contemplated suicide in the boat with the other deserters. But, as he told Marlow, at that time his death would have proved nothing. Now, however, since he has succeeded in becoming his idealized self, he is ready for the final self-sacrificial act of heroism. It is the opportunity he has been awaiting to redeem himself and to atone for all his sins. Having gone through the stages of self-imposed separation and socially imposed alienation to community fellowship in Patusan, Jim is again isolated, having to face alone and with his own sense of values, truth as he sees it. And Marlow, in support of his final act, says,
"The point... is that of all mankind Jim had no dealings but with himself, and the question is whether at the last he had not confessed to a faith mightier than the laws of order and progress"(244).

While he had been living in Patusan realizing his dreams, Jim knew that he could not be entirely satisfied, that he could not completely compensate through deeds for his one act of betrayal. He had been waiting all along for the opportunity to conquer his destiny and to be completely satisfied with himself. Only through his death could he accomplish his ultimate goal. Jewel attests to Jim's anticipation of this opportunity when she says,

"When I used to sit at his feet, with my cheek against his knee and his hand on my head, the curse of cruelty and madness was already within him, waiting for the day. The day came... and before the sun had set he could not see me anymore... He went from me as if I had been worse than death. He fled as if driven by some accursed thing he had heard or seen in his sleep..." (250-251).

And Marlow, expressing the belief that in the final moment Jim had surpassed even his boyhood dreams of heroism, affirms that "not in the wildest days of his boyish visions could he have seen the alluring shape of such an extraordinary success"(299).

Razumov, like Jim, at first attempts to ignore his sense of guilt. His first interview with Mikulin shows that he had planned to keep his life as normal as possible following his betrayal of Haldin. Mikulin's question, "Where to?"(83) in response to Razumov's remark that he plans to retire, implies what Razumov comes to realize—that there can be no retirement
or peace for his soul until it is free of guilt. Mistaking the disorder of his mind and senses to be the result of fear alone, Razumov refuses to admit his guilt until he no longer has a reason for fear. When Razumov learns that Ziemianitch has been implicated in the betrayal of Haldin, he has a momentary sense of relief which gives him "ease such as he had not known for many days, ever since that night . . . the night"(23). But finding the relief to be only temporary, he faces the truth. Having a perfect alibi and having the trust of the revolutionists and the love of Natalia, Razumov could have continued to live with them without ever confessing. But he cannot live with himself:

The choking fumes of falsehood had taken him by the throat—the thought of being condemned to struggle on and on in that tainted atmosphere without the hope of ever renewing his strength by a breath of fresh air(227).

Through his love for Natalia Razumov comes to realize the nature of his crime and to accept his guilt. He recognizes not only that he had been responsible for Haldin, but also that he had been false in accepting a mission to which he was not dedicated. As Leo Gurko has said,

The instant that he begins to love someone else the foundations of his pure self-love are undermined, and he can no longer stand on his old ground. At the same time he makes the agonizing discovery that his attachment to Russia, deriving from self-interest, has been fed by betrayal and deception, and is therefore itself a deception.34

In his response to Natalia, in his acceptance of another human being, Razumov gains an awareness of his own consciousness.
Natalia's honesty and purity allow Razumov to face the truth within himself:

It was as though he were coming to himself in the awakened consciousness of that marvellous harmony of feature, of lines, of glances, of voice, which made of the girl before him a being so rare, outside, and, as it were, above the common notion of beauty(288).

And Razumov confesses to Natalia,

"It was as if your pure brow bore a light which fell on me, searched my heart and saved me from ignominy, from ultimate undoing... you have freed me from the blindness of anger and hate--the truth shining in you drew the truth out of me" (304).

Razumov emerges from his nightmare of deception into the world of truth. Through the discovery of his moral self he realizes the meaning and the implication of the words he had shouted at Haldin on his return from his midnight journey, "I am responsible for you" (49). Recognizing his betrayal of Haldin to have been a breach of faith with humanity, Razumov reenters the community by confessing to Natalia and to the revolutionists.

Razumov's confession to Natalia destroys any hope of a future with her but it also gives him new life. Purged of his guilt, "washed clean" (301) by his confession, he gains peace and truth and has air to breathe. Although he is freed of his guilt through his confession to Natalia, Razumov is further compelled through his commitment to the community to confess to the revolutionists whom he has betrayed through deception. In a reenactment of Haldin's arrest, Razumov, "a puppet of his past" (305), goes to the revolutionists at the stroke of midnight. Although he does not die as Jim does in his confrontation with Doramin, Razumov's confession to the
revolutionists results in his loss of hearing and in his being maimed. His atonement, like Jim's, results in a virtual suicide.

As a result of their confrontation with the crucial test and their attempts to deal with their betrayal both Jim and Razumov develop. The act of betrayal is for each protagonist, as Albert Guerard has noted in comparing Razumov with Jim, one which "both makes and breaks him." The act leads to physical destruction while resulting at the same time in moral regeneration. During the process of moral and personal maturation, Jim and Razumov become more nearly complete human beings. Isolation, imagination, and lack of identity which led to the acts of betrayal are largely eliminated from the psychology of the protagonists as they deal with their guilt. Jim's imagination converts to action in Patusan. As he commits himself to the people of Patusan and performs for the good of the community, Jim also realizes his own identity. He becomes, except for the submerged presence of his dishonorable act, the hero he has imagined. As he acts instead of dreams, he becomes more articulate, more self-assured, more aware of his own identity, and more aware of his role in society. And in acceptance of responsibility to the community, he becomes, not an isolated individual, but a member of a group. His relationship to the community makes it possible for him not only to work for others but also to atone for his loss of honor. The self-assurance which he acquires through his fellowship with others makes it possible for him
to face Doramin, keeping his contract to the community and proving to himself that cowardice is no longer inherent in his character. His death may be viewed purely as a self-sacrificial act, a destructive compulsion to die for his jump. But more than that it is Jim's assertion of himself, a positive act which proves his lack of cowardice. Jim's confrontation with Doramin is the opportunity he has been awaiting to atone for his act by mastering his fate. As Jocelyn Baines has stated,

Fate and destiny are forces to be mastered and conquered. Cowardice in the face of the crucial test was contained in Jim's destiny, and only by conquering his destiny could he atone for his offense. An act of cowardice had to be expiated with the supreme act of courage, the deliberate going to meet certain death.  

The act of betrayal leads to progression for Razumov, as well as for Jim. Razumov means understand and in his struggle for truth, Razumov gains an awareness and an understanding he had not had before the betrayal. Like Jim, he gains definition and a sense of identity. Through his love for Natalia, his emotions, which have been repressed formerly, become released. As he accepts his emotional self, a necessary ingredient of human nature, Razumov becomes a more nearly complete person. And with this recognition he also realizes that he had been deceived by excessive imagination and biased thinking. As Razumov acquires identity, his rationalized thoughts are replaced by clear ones. On the day of his confession Razumov looks at himself and at the world without any
illusions. He, like Jim, had previously had illusions, however. It was an illusion to believe that he could isolate himself from the world as he had attempted to do by burying himself in his studies and his aspirations. It was also an illusion to believe that he could live a double role and could ignore his act of betrayal and his sense of guilt. As he faces reality Razumov realizes his true political position, that it is impossible for him to accept the ideals of either revolutionism or autocracy. Like Jim who, although committed to the community, must finally follow his own convictions, so Razumov, although accepting a bond with others, realizes that his mind must be independent. He accepts the community through his acceptance of Natalia and through his confession to the revolutionists, but, because he adheres to his principles, he remains, even as he reenters the community, on the fringe of society. As he confesses to Natalia,

"Only don't be deceived, Natalia Victorovna, I am not converted. Have I then the soul of a slave? No! I am independent— and therefore perdition is my lot" (304).

The fault here is not Razumov's, but Russia's. He can accept the human community, he can also accept a bond with individuals, Natalia, Haldin, Tekla, but he cannot accept either of the alternatives Russia provides. His position is the same as Conrad's expressed in the "Preface" to Under Western Eyes; neither revolution nor autocracy offers any hope for the Russian predicament, and one is as bad as the other:
The ferocity and imbecility of an autocratic rule rejecting all legality and in fact basing itself upon complete moral anarchism provokes the no less imbecile and atrocious answer of a purely Utopian revolutionism encompassing destruction by the first means to hand, in the strange conviction that a fundamental change of hearts must follow the downfall of any given human institutions. These people are unable to see that all they can effect is merely a change of names. The oppressors and the oppressed are all Russians together; and the world is brought once more face to face with the truth of the saying that the tiger cannot change his stripes nor the leopard his spots (lxii).

In Lord Jim and Under Western Eyes Conrad shows the complexity of the individual's role in society. One must be true to the community, but one must also be true to oneself. In the complexity of this relationship, one realizes one's own individuality and identity. Without society to give meaning to one's action and thoughts, identity cannot be realized. Thus Jim during his separation from others can only think his role. He is so engrossed in his own ego that he is not able to act intuitively. Like Heyst, another Conrad character who has lost the ability to act, Jim is paralyzed by reflection. And Razumov, a partial being whose only sense of identity comes from his focus on an immediate goal, cannot find his identity in isolation. Only through interaction with others in the community does one learn who one is. In Conrad one can maintain a bond with the community through one's relationship to a group or to an individual. Jim reenters the community by accepting Doramin's tribe in Patusan, but he maintains his place in the community by keeping his pledge to one member of that society; Razumov reenters the community
through Natalia; the captain in *The Secret Sharer* realizes his identity and also his role in society through his loyalty to Leggatt; and Heyst enters the community through his acceptance of Lena.

The abstract community of mankind, though the basis for all human relationships, is too intangible for the individual to demonstrate his loyalty to it directly. And when one attempts to be loyal only to humanity at large, one may lose the significance of personal relationships. Peter Ivanovitch, for instance, though a leader of the revolutionist and feminist movements, does not understand the meaning of fellowship. He professes compassion for society at large but has none for the individual human being. He uses Madame de S—, who is guilty of the same misunderstanding as he, for her money, and treats miserable, loyal Tekla with less respect and compassion that he would an animal. The individual's fidelity to human solidarity must be demonstrated through loyalty to those with whom he comes in contact.

Conrad's world is a secular one in which the individual finds meaning only through society. Through his fiction Conrad "dramatically affirms," as Avrom Fleishman has said, "that an integrated community . . . is the only viable framework of man's life." There is no God to assist the individual in his search for identity, in his struggle with his guilt, or in his attempts to atone for his sins. His sins are not against God, but against society and against himself, and
his redemption, therefore, must come from society and from within himself.

Jim and Razumov are never viewed as criminals by the reader. Their lonely struggle to gain awareness, identity, and understanding is the quest of every man in his search for truth and identity. As the reader responds to Jim and Razumov in their attempts to atone for their guilt and become integrated into the community, the reader, like the protagonists, gains an increased awareness of the bond Conrad describes in "The Preface" to *The Nigger of the "Narcissus."

Through his fiction Joseph Conrad

awakens]in the hearts of the beholders that feeling of unavoidable solidarity; of the solidarity in mysterious origin, in toil, in joy, in hope, in uncertain fate, which binds men to each other and all mankind to the visible world.39
NOTES


3 "Preface" to The Nigger of the "Narcissus," Wright, p. 163.


5 "Preface" to Almayer's Folly, Wright, pp. 159-160.

6 "Preface, 1919" to A Personal Record, Wright, pp. 188-189.


8 Ibid., pp. 45-46.

9 A Personal Record, Wright, p. 134.


11 A Personal Record, Wright, pp. 127-128.


16 Conrad, Victory, pp. 338-339.


21 In the "Preface" to Lord Jim Conrad calls Jim "a simple and sensitive character" (Wright, p. 165). In the "Preface" to Under Western Eyes Conrad describes Razumov as "an ordinary young man, with a healthy capacity for work and sane ambitions" (Wright, p. 203).

22 Eben Bass, "The Verbal Failure of 'Lord Jim,'" College English, 26 (March 1965), 439. Bass views Jim as having verbal and auditory confusion resulting from unsoundness within himself. This error causes him not only to jump when someone else is being called but also to misunderstand the beggar who is asking for water for his son. He also reacts personally to the remark about the yellow dog and, when he is in the boat with the other deserters of the Patna, imagines he hears voices. His verbal failure is evidenced in his inarticulate expression.


25 Ibid., p. 68.

26 Julian B. Kaye views Russia as representing Razumov's dead mother for whom he is searching. "Concomitant with the search for a mother is the desire to return to the womb. Razumov feels secure in Switzerland only when he sits in a garden or on an island in Lake Geneva." "Conrad's Under Western Eyes and Mann's Doctor Faustus," Comparative Literature, 9 (Winter 1957), 63.

28Guerard, p. 234.

29Tony Tanner, "Nightmare and Complacency: Razumov and the Western Eye," *Critical Quarterly,* 4 (Autumn 1962), 207. Tony Tanner sees Razumov from the time of his decision to betray Haldin living in a nightmarish dream. He loses the ability to speak clearly and rationally and reacts as a sleepwalker would. When he finds he has a perfect alibi for the night of the betrayal, he also discovers that it is not external punishment or discovery but his own conscience that he has feared all along.

30A *Personal Record,* Wright, p. 144.

31With a different view Dorothy Van Ghent views Jim as judging Brown, as he had judged himself, a victim of circumstance. In his decision to let Brown go free, he is also motivated by his bond with men of his own race, a bond he does not share with the people of Patusan. In his decision to let Brown go free he is performing "a lonely act of faith with the white men 'out there.'" *The English Novel* (New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1953), p. 235.

32Expressing a similar conviction of the necessity of the individual's finding his own truth, Conrad wrote to Edward Noble on November 2, 1895:

Everyone must walk in the light of his own heart's gospel. No man's light is good to any of his fellows. That's my creed, from beginning to end. That's my view of life, —a view that rejects all formulas, dogmas and principles of other people's making(Jean-Aubry, I, 184).

33Leo Gurko, "Under Western Eyes: Conrad and the Question of 'Where to?'", *College English,* 21 (May 1960), 448.

34Guerard, p. 231.

35Baines, p. 252.

36Gurko, p. 448.

37Whether or not Razumov finally becomes a revolutionist is a debatable point. Avrom Fleishman believes that Razumov finally finds the community he has been seeking with the revolutionists. He bases his argument primarily on Razumov's being visited by the revolutionists after his accident and on Sophia Antonovna's statement that "He has ideas. . . . He talks well, too"(319). *Conrad's Politics* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), pp. 236-239. It appears to me, however, that Razumov's confession to Natalia that he has not been
converted to revolutionism must be accepted. Furthermore, his statement to her that he plans after going to confess to the revolutionists to "go away and bury myself in obscure misery"(304) suggests that there can be no community for him in Russia.

38Fleishman, p. 76.

39"Preface" to The Nigger of the "Narcissus," Wright, p. 163.
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