

Abnormal Psychology in *Lord Jim*: Jim and Narcissism

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Abstract

One impression a reader may get after reading Conrad's *Lord Jim* is that Jim is an abnormal kind in psychology. The most likely disorder seems to be narcissism; therefore, enumerating the attributes of people with this disorder is helpful in verifying this probability. The most widely validated features among the patients with narcissism are as follow: sense of self-importance, sense of uniqueness not only about problems but also about friends, overestimation of one's own achievements, need for constant attention and admiration, fantasies of great success, having no enjoyment other than the received tributes and fancied attainments, lack of empathy, and fear of failure. The evidence drawn to attention from the text as well as those interpretations and examples used by other critics justify Jim's conformity to these distinct characteristics. The outcome of these separate features would be an integrated picture of Jim as a narcissist regarding abnormal psychology.

Key words: abnormal psychology, Conrad, Jim, Lord Jim, narcissism.

1. Introduction

Reading Conrad's masterpiece, one feels that there is something wrong with the young hero of *Lord Jim*. Regardless of the impression the reader is supposed to get from the narrated life story of Jim, there is a feeling that this young Englishman does not possess a normal kind of personality. Meanwhile, one may think of Narcissus from Greek mythology, who "fell in love with his own

reflection, was consumed by his own desire, and was then transformed into a flower” (Davidson & Neale, 1998:340). Narcissus’ name in its turn is a reminder of narcissistic personality disorder, which draws its name from this mythological character (Ibid.).

Concluding that it is possible to study Jim’s character as an abnormal type in psychology, this paper tries to shed light on those aspects of Jim’s life and personality that verify a resemblance between Jim and a narcissist. Marlow’s psychological vocabulary, which is full of concepts like egoism and imagination, is first drawn to attention. Other three sections of the Review part are concerned with the distinction between romantic conscience as a spurious one and the genuine one, the concept of honor and its implications, and bovarysme respectively. A short section on psychology and narcissism makes clear the criteria used in this paper.

The second step taken for verifying Jim’s abnormality is enumerating the distinguishing characteristics of a narcissist and comparing whatever support exist for proving the existence of those distinct features. The listed features that are supported by evidences from the novel or Review part constitute the sections of the third part, Discussion. These sections begin with the narcissists’ sense of self-importance and grandiosity. The next section deals with the sense of uniqueness that people with narcissism have toward their problems and friends. The third is the patients’ attribute to exaggerate their own attainments. The narcissists’ need for approval and admiration as well as their fantasies of extreme success are features attended to under two subsequent headings. The fact that narcissistic individuals only enjoy the tributes they receive as well as the daydreams they have is also stated separately. Two final sections of Discussion draw to attention lack of empathy and fear of failure as two common attributes of this abnormality. Obtaining a unified picture from the aforementioned characteristics observed in Jim, this paper comes to a sound conclusion that Jim is a person with narcissistic personality disorder.

2. Review of Literature

Jim's character, as the main character of Conrad's masterpiece, has been scrutinized, independently or dependently, to a large extent by many critics. Although none of these critics' works has paid much attention to the possibility of considering Jim as an abnormal type in psychology, most of them reveal some aspects of Jim's personality, his system of values, his preoccupations, and other important implications of his life story. All these can be read as symptoms of his probable personality disorder. The literature on abnormality and narcissism also will be studied briefly to clarify the criteria for the discussion in this paper.

2.1 Marlow's Psychological Vocabulary in Lord Jim

The possibility of Jim's abnormality in psychology and morality has been mentioned once, though not forcefully and argumentatively, by Saveson (1972:65) when he assigns the role of antagonist to Jim. However, he takes this argument no further and denies this assertion referring to Jim's actions in the protagonist role. Nevertheless, Saveson (1972:89-107), while trying to demonstrate Conrad's contemporary and informed Utilitarian trends in psychology and his use of psychological vocabulary through Marlow, one of *Lord Jim's* narrators, uses several terms and draws evidences which reinforce this paper's stance.

To prove his assertion, Saveson (1972:89) introduces James Sully not only as a leading English psychologist but "a chief spokesman for English Utilitarianism" at the end of the nineteenth century. Therefore, Sully was a great influence, through Conrad's close friend H. G. Wells, on Conrad when he wrote the novel at the beginning of the twentieth century. Regarding these facts, Saveson (1972:95) then claims that "Marlow's terms are essentially the same as Sully's."

2.1.1 Egoism and Jim

One of the key words in Sully's psychology is egoism, which he uses to describe and attack the Intuitional and Kantian moralist (Saveson, 1972:96). Saveson believes that Marlow uses this term in exactly the same sense; moreover, he enumerates many evidences of Jim's vanity in the first part of the novel. Jim's feeling of

superiority to other boys at Maritime school is an outstanding one. Jim feels himself superior to other officers of the *Patna*, the ship he was in charge when he abandoned at the fatal moment, and “desires that Marlow not confound him with the others: ‘he was not one of them, he was altogether of another sort’” (Ibid.). Saveson (Ibid.) also emphasizes Marlow’s remarks on Jim’s successes in Patusan as a result of “his ‘fine sensibilities, his fine feelings, his fine longings – a sort of sublimated, idealized selfishness.’” Marlow believes that Jim’s answer to his wife, Jewel, when she asked him to defend himself against assassins is in a “last flicker of superb egoism” (Saveson, 1972:96-97). Marlow also convicts that “Jim tore himself ‘out of the arms of a jealous love at the sign, at the call of his exalted egoism” (Saveson, 1972:97).

The consistency of egoism in the characterization of the hero of this work and the hero’s not exceeding Sully’s “sphere of egoistic feelings” show an essential lack: Jim lacks “in the specific Utilitarian sense of these words *pity*, *compassion*, and *altruism*” (Saveson, 1972:99). According to these, Jim’s feelings for the natives of Patusan and his attachment to Doramin’s people” begins “in an egoistic, empathic sympathy of the kind Sully distinguishes from true altruistic feeling” (Ibid.). Therefore, the use of sympathy in *Lord Jim* is to designate an egoistic emotion and pity to designate a Utilitarian one (Saveson 1972:100). Accordingly, Saveson (1972:99-100) interprets Jim’s staying in Cornelius’ house and his disregard for “his own safety in order to not leave Jewel” in the same light. Cornelius “seems to Jim an embodiment of all the meannesses and misfortunes that have plagued his own life; in that way Jim identifies himself with Jewel’s plight” (Ibid.).

2.1.2 Imagination, Illusion, and Jim

Two other terms that are common in Sully’s psychology and are affected in the Jim’s case with egoistic feelings are *imagination* and *illusion*. Saveson (1972:101) interprets Marlow’s observation of Jim as an “imaginative beggar” a means to show that “Jim’s imagination is stimulated in the strongest way by egoism.” This imagination, fed up on tales of romance, is responsible for Jim’s disability to will the

actual because his mind conditions itself to will illusory and ideal achievements (Saveson, 1972:102).

Disillusionment with idealistic and imaginative aspirations is recommended for Jim's disability, namely not seeing the reality of the things (Saveson, 1972:103). However, this disillusionment has some consequences. Brierly's case is a good example and can be read as a subplot to some aspects of Jim's story because of some similarities in character and ideals between them. Brierly as a white well-known captain with great honor is one of the assessors of Jim's case. "By his suicide Brierly preserves his exaggerated self-esteem from the kind of disillusionment he has witnessed at Jim's trial" (Saveson, 1972:104). It is true that the novel's hero has been disillusioned in the Maritime school incident and in *Patna's* story. Notwithstanding, in Patusan part of the novel he becomes a captive in Patusan because its primitive people and their unbridled imagination, which Sully compares to that of children, let Jim's "adventurous fancy" to find "its right milieu in" that "world of myth" (Saveson, 1972:105). However, this captivity and the consequent disillusionment lead Jim to his final decision to die.

2.2 Jim's Romantic Conscience

Engelberg (1972:172-185) studies Jim's "romantic conscience." He is suspicious of this hero's "pursuit towards the recovery of his lost honor" because of "his 'acute consciousness'... a consciousness that tends, as the book progresses, to inflate the wrong kind of conscience" (Engelberg, 1972:176). This kind of conscience is in Nietzsche's words "a 'bad conscience,' a sense of having failed to please oneself rather than the recognition that pleasing oneself has little, if anything, to do with the cultivation of a genuine conscience" (Ibid.).

Jim's awareness of his failure and the "pain of conscious defeat," as Engelberg (1972:177) points out, seem to be "the *leitmotif* of Jim's story." The failures of Conrad's hero recur throughout the story, and he is always conscious of them. His failure at the Maritime school in helping the helpless ship, his failure on the *Patna* to accomplish his duty toward its passengers, and his failure at the end of the story at Patusan to save the life of Doramin's son are all good examples

to support this notion (Ibid.). As a result, Engelberg (1972:177-178) accepts Marlow's judgement that "Jim leaves life and love 'at the call of his exalted egoism ... to celebrate a pitiless wedding with a shadowy ideal of conduct'" to distinguish between the genuine conscience and the romantic one. Engelberg (1972:181) approves Stein's diagnosis of Jim as a "romantic" and declares that "Stein quite correctly sees him as neither saint nor sinner but a self-indulged, self-congratulatory, overly righteous youth creating impossible moral standards for himself, so that, by failing to attain them, he can still be a 'fine fellow.'" Jim as a romantic person has that kind of romantic conscience which Schopenhauer called a "spurious conscience" (Engelberg,1972:183). Such conscience is not based on genuine ethical concern, but can better be "seen as remorse based on past performance in trepidation of future judgement" (Ibid.).

2.3 The Idea of Honor and Its Implications

Speaking about the notion of honor in Conrad's works, one readily remembers *Lord Jim*. Most of the critics, like those mentioned before, have paid attention to the importance of the lost honor in Jim's life story. As a result, the concept of honor and what it implies are worth examining. Najder (1974) deals with honor as a Janus concept that implies a consciousness and a reputation, both a feeling of accomplishment and its public acknowledgement. Thus, throughout this paper both implications of honor are noticeable, especially in the sections on narcissistic sense of superiority as well as narcissistic need for admiration.

2.4 Bovarysme and Jim

One aspect of Jim's character and story is what Jameson (1998:206) calls "bovarysme." Roberts (1998:226) defines bovarysme as a term "derived from the name of the heroine of Gustave Flaubert's novel *Madam Bovary*," which "means longing for, and attempting to live out in reality, a fantasy life based on the reading of fiction." Jim's bovarysme, in addition to other related aspects of his personality, provides a sound evidence for one part of our discussion on a common feature of narcissist patients.

2.5 Narcissism and Psychology

Comer (2001:103), before introducing DSM-IV (“the fourth, and current, edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*”) as “the most widely used classification system in the United States,” defines a classification system. In his words it is “a list of disorders, along with descriptions of symptoms and guidelines for making appropriate diagnoses.” On the other hand, Narcissistic Personality Disorder as one of the categories of DSM-IV is rooted in modern psychoanalysis. The idea of narcissism was interesting for Freud (Davidson, 1987:245-246). Heinz Kohut and Otto Kernberg are, also, two influential psychoanalysts with different views on narcissism (Davidson, 1987:246). In spite of the fact that the ideas of both of them (Kohut and Kernberg) are very influential, those of Freud and Kernberg are more fully reflected in DSM (Ibid.).

This paper will refer to Kernberg’s ideas, in addition to those presented in *Abnormal Psychology* books, for indicating the characteristics of people with this personality disorder to show whether any of them has been displayed by Jim. In doing so, my own evidences from *Lord Jim*, as well as some of the previously mentioned interpretations, will be drawn on to determine if they match the descriptions of this personality disorder, which will be listed consecutively.

3. Discussion

Clinicians’ approach to diagnosis is using the data from interviews, tests, and observations to determine “that a person’s psychological problems constitute a particular disorder” (Comer, 2001:102). Regarding the fact that this common practice can not be taken precisely, any of the outstanding and distinguishing characteristics of narcissism that has been displayed by Jim or has been emphasized somehow in the novel is listed and discussed in this part. It is important to be aware that although the following features have been presented distinctively, most of them are related to or result from each other and sometimes they even overlap. Therefore, it is possible to use one or more examples from the novel for more than one characteristic.

3.1 Sense of Self-importance

An extreme sense of self-importance and an inflated sense of one's own importance are common among narcissists (Sarason & Sarason, 1987:245). This grandiose sense of self-importance is noticeable in the person's grandiosity in manner (Comer, 2001:528). They expect "others to recognize them as superior, and often appear arrogant" (Comer, 2001:529).

Jim's grandiosity and his sense of superiority can be noted from the beginning of the book. General narrator, not Marlow, defines his manner as displaying "a kind of dogged self-assertion which" has "nothing aggressive in it" (Conrad, 1968:3). Still a young boy, his station in the training ship for officers of mercantile marine is "in the fore-top, and often from there he" looks "down, with the contempt of a man destined to shine in the midst of dangers" (Conrad, 1968:5). As a young boy he feels himself superior to other boys of the marine school, and even after the scene in which he fails to rescue the people on that sinking ship, he expresses such feelings. Jim describes the achievement of other boys, their success, and their subsequent retelling of the event with unconscious irony as a "pitiful display of vanity" (Conrad, 1968:6).

When older, after some incidents, he eventually becomes chief mate of the *Patna*. The *Patna* is "a local steamer as old as the hills, lean like a greyhound, and eaten up with rust worse than a condemned water-tank" (Conrad, 1968:9). Even on such a ship he feels himself superior to the officers. The officers of the *Patna* including her German captain and the engineer are quarreling before the incident which resulted in their shameful abandonment of the ship and its passengers, but Jim goes on "smiling at the retreating horizon ... and his heart" is "contemplating his own superiority" (Conrad, 1968:15). General narrator, reflecting Jim's thoughts and feelings, tries to confirm and naturalize this haughty sense: 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" (Conrad, 1968:16).

Jim keeps this feeling of supremacy to the end of the novel. The scene which Saveson comments on as an example of Jim's vanity and egoism is a good representative of Jim's grandiose sense of self-

importance. After Tamb Itam, his servant and guard, informs him of Dain Waris' death, Jewel begs him to defend himself. Nevertheless, his egoistic answer, nothing "can touch me," not only indicates his extreme sense of self-supremacy but also leads us to another characteristic of narcissists, namely their sense of uniqueness.

3.2 Uniqueness of Problems and friends

Narcissists have a grandiose view of their own uniqueness and abilities (Davidson & Neale, 1998:340). In their opinion their problems are unique; moreover, "they feel that only other equally special" or high-status people can appreciate their problems (Sarason & Sarason, 1987:245); therefore, "they are very choosy about their friends and associates" (Comer, 2001:525). Two subsequent sub-sections try to investigate whether Jim makes such distinctions or not.

3.2.1 Jim's Unique Friend

In Jim's view a few people can understand his problem. As a result, Jim looks for someone special. At the trial his "eyes, wandering in the intervals of his answers" to the questions about the *Patna*, rest "upon a white man," Marlow, who is sitting "apart from the others, with his face worn and clouded, but with quiet eyes that" glance "straight, interested, and clear" (Conrad, 1968:20). In his opinion the glance directed at him is "not the fascinated stare of the others" (Ibid.). General narrator's account of Jim's thoughts clearly shows the hero's disposition to idealize some person as being unique, special, and capable of understanding his trouble: "the fellow—ran the thought—looks at me as though he could see somebody or something past my shoulder.... That man seemed to be aware of his hopeless difficulty" (Conrad, 1968:20-21).

One night when Jim is dining with Marlow at the Malabar House, he openly displays his attitude. He needs someone who can appreciate his problem: "but I would like to explain—I would like somebody to understand" (Conrad, 1968:50). Nevertheless, this "somebody" should be a distinct one. Marlow is this extraordinary person who is worthy of Jim's confidence because Jim considers

him a high-status person as he regards himself: “of course I wouldn’t have talked to you about all this if you had not been a gentleman... I am—I am—a gentleman, too” (Conrad, 1968:80).

Jim’s extent of reliance is surprising even to Marlow himself as he tells his audience that “he confessed himself before me as though I had the power to bind and loose” (Conrad, 1968:59). However, this kind of surprise arises from the unusual sense of uniqueness experienced by the idealized person, who is regarded as a means to fulfill narcissistic needs and emotions.

3.2.2 Jim’s Unique Problem

The protagonist of *Lord Jim* needs a special friend like middle-aged Captain Marlow because he thinks his problems are peerless. When as a youngster in the training ship he fails to be the hero of the incident by helping the helpless people in that storm, his problem is not cowardice according to himself. On the contrary, he feels “angry with the brutal tumult of earth and sky for taking him unawares and checking unfairly a generous readiness for narrow escapes” (Conrad, 1968:6).

In spite of the fact that there is no one in this incident to appreciate his unusual problem, he has found his favorable person in the *Patna* story. The problem is the same in both incidents: “It is all in being ready. I wasn’t; not—not then” (Conrad, 1968:50). Nevertheless, this readiness is not a usual one according to Jim. When Marlow says propitiatory that “[i]t is always the unexpected that happens,” Jim’s contemptuous “Pshaw!” makes Marlow suppose Jim means “that the unexpected couldn’t touch him; nothing less than the unconceivable itself could get over his perfect state of preparation. He” has “been taken unawares...” (Conrad, 1968:58-59).

Marlow has got the exact meaning of Jim’s “Pshaw!” because the young man has “been preparing himself” through his inner life, which will be pointed to as another example of abnormality, “for all the difficulties that can beset one on land and water” (Conrad, 1968:58). Jim confesses “proudly to the kind of foresight” (Ibid.). Regarding this assumed readiness, Jim comes to the conclusion that his failure in remaining on the *Patna*, his fatal job, and his

abandonment of pilgrims whose ship he was the chief mate are beyond “unexpected;” these are really “unconceivable.”

3.3 Exaggeration of One’s Own Achievements

One attribute of people with narcissistic personality disorder which can be resulted from their grandiose view of themselves and their feeling of uniqueness is their being convinced of their own great success, power, or beauty” (Comer, 2001:528). Being convinced of themselves, these patients “exaggerate their achievements and talents” (Comer, 2001:529).

One outstanding incident in which Jim’s exaggeration of his achievements can be observed is at the end of that stormy day on the training ship. The cadets are speaking willingly about the event and how the drowning men were saved; the “bowman of the cutter” is “the hero of the lower deck” (Conrad, 1968:6). On the other hand, Jim has a contemptuous opinion of the boy’s heroism because he supposes the boy’s attainment as being meager compared to his. Although he is “angry with the brutal tumult of earth and sky for taking him unawares,” he is convinced of his success that he considers the precious outcome of not contributing to the contemptible experience:

Otherwise he was rather glad he had not gone into the cutter, since a lower achievement had served the turn. He had enlarged his knowledge more than those who had done the work. When all men flinched, then—he felt sure—he alone would know how to deal with the spurious menace of wind and seas.

(Conrad, 1968:6-7)

About two years later, Jim again experiences the rage of sea. He is the chief mate of a fine ship with a Scottish captain. He is injured by a falling spar. His injury disables him; he spends “many days stretched on his back, dazed, battered, hopeless, and tormented as if at the bottom of an abyss of unrest” (Conrad 1968:8). In spite of these troubles which make him “not care what the end would be,” he is satisfied with this indifference he feels and overvalues “in his lucid moments,” his indifference (Conrad, 1968:8).

Marlow’s guess about what Jim thought when he was on board of the *Avondale*, the ship that picked up Jim and other officers of

the *Patna*, confirms the narcissistic characteristic of exaggeration in Jim's character. Although the young mate of the *Patna* has abandoned her at the last moment, unwillingly or in his opinion unconsciously and impulsively, his act is shameful because he, as well as the other officers, has left the ship and its pious passengers to be sunk. Notwithstanding, Marlow infers from Jim's narration that he has been "stunned by the discovery he" has "made—the discovery about himself—and no doubt" is now "at work trying to explain it away to the only man who" is "capable of appreciating all its tremendous magnitude" (Conrad, 1968:50).

It is interesting to pay attention to Stein's evaluation of Jim, an evaluation that emphasizes overestimation of attainment as a narcissistic attribute of the protagonist. Stein, as a wise man whose counsel Marlow takes to help Jim after the *Patna* incident and his subsequent continuous wanderings, diagnoses Jim as a romantic. Engelberg, discussing about Jim's conscience as a spurious one, infers that Stein has evaluated Jim as a self-indulged, self-congratulatory youth like other romantics.

The most striking example of satisfaction with one's own success can be noticed at the last scene of the novel. Dain Waris, the only son of the tribe's titular chief, is killed as a result of Jim's decision to let their enemies escape safely. As a result, Doramin raises his pistol and shoots Jim who is standing "stiffened and with bared head" (Conrad, 1968:253). While falling, he sends "right and left at all those faces a proud and unflinching glance" (Ibid.). Even in that last moments of life he is proud of that valuable thing he thinks he has achieved or preserved through his death. Marlow has clarified well the "extraordinary" meaning that success has for Jim, though it has to be considered a result of his questionable decision:

Not in the wildest days of his boyish visions could he have seen the alluring shape of such an extraordinary success! For it may very well be that in the short moment of his last proud and unflinching glance, he has beheld the face of that opportunity which, like an Eastern bride, had come veiled to his side.

(Ibid.)

3.4 Need for Constant Attention and Admiration

Another common feature among people with narcissistic personality disorder is their great need to be loved and admired by those around them (Comer, 2001:528; Kernberg, 1975:227). They are “constantly seeking attention and adulation” because they are trying “to bolster their sense of the self through unending quests for love and approval from others” (Davidson & Neale, 1998:341). Kernberg (1975:227) draws attention to the “curious apparent contradiction between a very inflated concept of themselves and an inordinate need for tribute from others.” In fact, these patients’ grandiose sense of self-importance and uniqueness makes them to expect “others to recognize them as superior,” and admit this superiority and distinction (Comer, 2001:529). Consequently, the narcissists “tend to idealize some people from whom they expect narcissistic supplies” (Kernberg, 1975:228).

At the beginning of *Lord Jim*, general narrator speaks about a need, though he does not explain its nature, in Jim’s grandiose behavior. The stated “necessity” can be read as the hero’s narcissistic disposition for obtaining others’ admission of his superiority:

His voice was deep, low, and his manner displayed a kind of dogged self-assertion which had nothing aggressive in it. It seemed a necessity, and it was directed apparently as much at himself as at anybody else...and in the various Eastern ports...he was very popular.

(Conrad, 1968:3)

As it is common for people with narcissistic traits, Jim chooses some special friend, who can understand his unique problem, and idealizes this person, as a source for his narcissistic needs; it is because of the fact that Jim has realized Marlow’s admiring, approving opinion of him. Marlow’s attention to Jim as an outstanding youth is apparent from the first time he meets the young man in the harbor. Marlow confesses that “I would have trusted the deck to that youngster on the strength of a single glance” (Conrad, 1968:28). At the cur incident, Marlow reveals to his audience the adulation he has for what he regards as Jim’s “immense power of self-control or else a wonderful elasticity of spirits” (Conrad, 1968:48).

The important point is that there are many evidences to show that Marlow's inclination—it is better to say tribute—to Jim is known by the young man. Near the beginning of their long conversation at the Malabar House Jim discovers in Marlow “at once a desire that” he “should not confound him with his partners in—in crime;” because for Marlow Jim is “not one of them;” he is “altogether of another sort” (Conrad, 1968:49). Marlow's question, that is a reaction to Jim's refusal to come back to his homeland and family, confirms the young man's judgment about this ideal friend's attitude. When Jim asserts that he sees nothing but ship and he would be content by getting “perhaps a quartermaster's billet in some steamer,” Marlow asks Jim if he thinks he would be content by such a job. This question shows Jim that the older man does “not doubt his ability to steer a ship,” an attitude which is certainly the greatest admiration for a fellow like Jim who is so interested in sea work and satisfied with his abilities in it (Ibid.).

Marlow keeps his adulation for Jim not only after the *Patna* incident but also during Jim's successful life in Patusan. He admits that the young man's achievements are things “to be proud of, and he” is “proud—for him” (Conrad, 1968:151-152). When Marlow leaves Patusan, Jim “acknowledges the steadying influence he feels and will continue to feel in Marlow's good opinion” (Saveson, 1972:98).

3.4.1 Jim's Pseudosublimatory Potential

Distinguishing narcissistic personalities from the usual borderline patients, Kernberg (1975:229) draws attention to the former group's “‘pseudosublimatory potential,’ namely, the capacity for active, consistent work in some areas which permits them partially to fulfill their ambitions of greatness and of obtaining admiration from others.” This potential accounts for some parts of Jim's life story, which is an unending quest.

One instance of Jim's capacity for active work is his extraordinary effectiveness when working with Egstrom & Blake as a water-clerk. He has accomplished his duty so well that Egstrom expresses his adulation for him in the following words, while he is

describing the strange way Jim has left and put them “to a great inconvenience” as about his previous employers:

Can't get a man like that every day, you know, sir; a regular devil for sailing a boat; ready to go out miles to sea to meet ships in any sort of weather. More than once a captain would come in here full of it, and the first thing he would say be, “That's a reckless sort of a lunatic you've got for water-clerk, Egstrom. I was feeling my way in at daylight under short canvas when there comes flying out of the mist right under my forefoot a boat half under water...a yelling fiend at the tiller. Hey! hey! Ship ahoy! ahoy! Captain! Hey! hey! Egstrom & Blake's man first to speak to you...and he would give me a lead in—more like a demon than a man. Never saw a boat handled like that in all my life....” I tell you, Captain Marlow, nobody had a chance against us with a strange ship when Jim was out. The other ship-chandlers just kept their old customers.... Why, sir—it seemed as though he wouldn't mind going a hundred miles out to sea in an old shoe to nab a ship for the firm. If the business has been his own and all to make yet, he couldn't have done more in that way.”

(Conrad, 1968:117-118)

Egstroms' long appreciation of Jim's superiority emphasizes that Jim's pseudosublimatory potential has been at work. Jim's thirst for attention, admiration, and tribute has been satisfied in that harbor through his amazing effectiveness.

The consistency of his work in that satisfying area is impeded by the revelation of his shameful past life which is a real threat, at least in his idealistic opinion, to his self-fulfillment. Consequently, he leaves the previous sources of admiration and approval to reach a more favorable place. It is obvious that a place where he can gratify his narcissistic needs without any disruption is the best. This conclusion leads us to Jim's leadership in Patusan.

3.4.1.1 Tuan Jim: Jim's leadership in Patusan

Before explaining the role of Patusan and Jim's position there in the realization of his desires, it would be interesting to know that Kernberg (1975:229) considers highly intelligent patients with narcissistic personality disorder as probable leaders. Jim, in search of an ideal place, is led to remote Patusan, a place recommended by Stein. His heroic deeds in saving his life as well as his courage during the battle with Sherif Ali, resulting in Bugis' freedom of Sherif's cruelty, make the natives like the white man as a god. He is strong, wise, courageous, great, and true in their eyes; therefore, they call him Tuan, Malayan word for Lord. As a result of their faith in him as well as their love, the young man never ceases to exercise his beneficent powers on their behalf. However, it is natural according to his pseudosublimatory potential because he is a captive in an area that allows him completely, not partially, to satisfy his longings for greatness and admiration. Marlow during their visit in Patusan observes this captivity:

[A]ll his conquests, the trust, the fame, the friendships, the love—all these things that made him master had made him a captive, too. He looked with an owner's eye at the piece of the evening, at the river, at the houses, at the everlasting life of the forests, at the pride of his own heart; but it was they that possessed him and made him their own to the innermost thought, to the slightest stir of blood, to his last breath.

(Conrad, 1968:152)

3.5 Fantasies of Great Success

Preoccupation with fantasies of great success is said to be widespread among people with a narcissistic personality (Davidson & Neale, 1998:340). These kind of patients "often spend considerable amount of time preoccupied with fantasies of fame," power, brilliance, beauty, and ideal love relationships (Sarason & Sarason, 1987:246, 245).

Jim's bovarysme can be noticed as soon as "his vocation for the sea" after "a course of light holiday literature" declares itself (Conrad, 1968:4). As Comer (2001:530) accentuates the role of

book topics to a rise in narcissism, Jim's narcissistic daydreams, when he is still a young boy on the training ship, are triggered by those heroic books:

On the lower deck in the babel of two hundred voices he would forget himself, and beforehand live in his mind the sea-life of light literature. He saw himself saving people from sinking ships, cutting away masts in a hurricane, swimming through a surf with a line; or as a lonely castaway, barefooted and half-naked, walking on uncovered reefs in search of shell-fish to stave off starvation. He confronted savages on tropical shores, quelled mutinies on the high seas, and in a small boat upon the ocean kept up the hearts of despairing men—always an example of devotion to duty, and as unflinching as a hero in a book.

(Conrad, 1968:5)

Although these narcissistic-type “behaviors and thoughts are common and normal among teenagers,” they are not normal for adults (Comer, 2001:529). Jim's preoccupation with fantasies of success also does not cease as he grows up; his imagination makes it impossible for him to “cope with the gross Captain” of the *Patna* “and the imbecile engineer for the reason that they do ‘not belong to the world of heroic adventure’” (Saveson, 1972:102).

3.6 Life's Only Enjoyments: admiration and fantasies

The enjoyment that narcissists obtain from life, Kernberg (1975:228) declares, is very little than “the tributes they receive from others” as well as “their own grandiose fantasies.” It seems that justifying this assertion about Jim needs little more than what has been put forth in related previous sections; however, another example is more enlightening.

One scene in which Jim's satisfaction of life can be perceived is on the *Patna*, before the incident; he is wondered by the high peace of sea and sky. As general narrator sets forth, “at such times his thoughts would be full of valorous deeds: he” loves “these dreams and the successes of his imaginary achievements” because with him they are “the best parts of life” (Conrad, 1968:13).

3.7 Lack of Empathy

One of the widely assumed characteristics of narcissism is patients' lack of empathy or caring for others (Sarason & Sarason, 1987:245; Kernberg, 1975:228). It is because of this trait that "behind of a surface which very often is charming and engaging, one senses coldness and ruthlessness" (Kernberg, 1975:228).

Marlow's description of the first time he saw Jim reveals the same impression one will get confronting a narcissist. Marlow looks charmed by the appearance of the young man. It is right after the shameful abandonment of the *Patna*, and Jim is not still aware of the miraculous survival of Muslim passengers. Consequently, Marlow does not expect to see "him apparently so much at ease" that he seems "ready to start whistling a tune;" thus, the wise captain becomes angry and asks himself if the young man is "silly" or "callous" (Conrad, 1968:25). However, Marlow is a shrewd observer; therefore, regarding the traces of egoism in the youth's personality, one can justify his ironical judgement of Jim's indifference:

He looked as genuine as a new sovereign, but there was some infernal alloy in his metal. How much? The least thing—the least drop of something rare and accursed; the least drop!—but he made you—standing there with his don't-care-hang air—he made you wonder whether perchance he were nothing more than brass.

(Conrad, 1968:28)

In spite of these examples, other altruistic occasions of Jim's life story may prevent us from convicting that he lacks empathy. Nevertheless, Saveson's interpretation of sympathy and pity as egoistic and utilitarian emotions confirms the coldness under this engaging face.

3.8 Fear of Failure

People with narcissistic personality disorder are "deeply fearful of failure" (Davidson & Neale, 1998:341). This fear of failure can be interpreted as their fear of losing one of their only enjoyments of life, namely, good opinion and approval of others. In the case of Jim, he is aware of his failures; Jim has lost honor, with the feelings

of accomplishment and public acknowledgment it entails, in the outer world. Certainly, this loss should have been very painful for a person who only enjoys from people's acknowledgment of his superiority. Throughout his new life in the remote world, he tries to regain and preserve his honor. His remorse for the lost honor and his efforts to realize his daydreams, on which Engelberg comments as Jim's spurious or romantic conscience, is really overshadowed by his fear of failure. Even Jim's decision to face death may be interpreted as a result of his dread of likely subsequent disillusionment and failures he would bear no more.

4. Conclusion

Although this paper has drawn the reader's attention to distinct features of narcissism and also has presented various examples and interpretations that show conformity of Jim's behavior and characteristics to each of these features distinctively, considering Jim as an abnormal type in psychology needs an integrated picture. However, putting together what has been separately discussed in preceding sections can provide us with a picture similar to the clinical picture that clinicians use to come to their conclusion, namely, the determination of disorder.

Jim as a self-centered person who has a grandiose sense of self-importance tries to realize his fantasies of great success. His need for adulation as well as his bovarysme leads him to an unending quest. During this quest he confronts some problems which he interprets as extraordinary and unique because they have the power to impede such an important person like him. Moreover, some special friend like Marlow only can undertake appreciation of his peerless problem and his assumed superiority. He enjoys his life only when his needs for tribute are satisfied, or when he has the ease to have fantasies of boundless glory and success. In such favorable situations and areas he becomes efficiently active though he is deeply fearful of failure. Moreover, under his active, charming, and altruistic face, one can feel some sort of coldness resulted from his lack of genuine empathy and conscience.

This concluding picture matches the widely known narcissistic personality disorder described in most classification systems,

especially DSM. Therefore, the revision of ideas, like that of Saveson, that deny the possibility of Jim's abnormality in psychology appears to be inevitable.

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