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The Recurring Motif of the Jump in Lord Jim

Lord Jim is a British man with full of ambitions. He always thinks of big dreams, and he considers himself a hero. He is an idealistic and imaginative person. He is not a politician, but he wants to see himself as famous as the kings and generals of the army. He joins the ship in search of opportunities that enable him to prove his bravery and daring. Throughout his life, Lord Jim dreams of performing acts that can prove his bravery and courage and that can make him a hero like personality. Lord Jim joins a naval ship as a clerk. He wants to grow his career as a sea-man. He works very hard there and soon he becomes the chief mate of the port of Patna. He gets his trip on a ship that plans to move from Patna to Mecca. All of the passengers of the ship are pilgrims. During the journey, the ship sticks into a sea storm and there seem no chances of survival. In this situation, Lord Jim jumps from the ship that he later considers a jump into a well.

The Patna incident is the event that provides Lord Jim an opportunity to prove his courage and daring. In the 9th chapter of novel Lord Jim, this Jump of Jim is narrated in a way where it becomes very difficult for the reader to identify the true reasons behind the jump of Lord Jim. In this chapter, the jump is surrounded by many impressionistic details. The impressions of the ship crew make it difficult to separate them with the true feelings of Lord Jim. Impression of all the ship crew provides a reader with the thought that Lord Jim jumps because of the fear of death. But the lord Jim's view is different. Lord Jim wants to save the pilgrims at that time, but the time is very short. All the staff of the ship is trying to save their own life. Lord Jim is not happy with the behavior of his fellowmen who save their life by jumping into the boat. The whole staff of the ship farces and urge Lord Jim to jump into the boat to save his life.

Lord Jim considers this event as an opportunity to become a hero, but the voices of the crew forced him to jump. Their voices were full of fear. Lord Jim considers himself as a better person than the other member of staff because he does not feel the fear of death. He wants to save the 800 sleeping pilgrims. He wants to become a hero, a brave person. But the behavior of the crew forces him to jump. He neither jumps from the boat to save his life, nor does the fear of death become the reason for his jump. He jumps in a feeling of helplessness and confusion. His decision to jump is just an unconscious action. He listens to the awful screams of his fellowmen. They all want him to jump on the boat to save a life. His mind wants to stay on the ship to save the pilgrims. But he finds himself helpless. The emotions of helplessness and the screams of his fellowmen make him confuse, which leads him to make a jump unconsciously. The writer of Lord Jim, Joseph Conrad, presents the story of another seaman Brierly (Conrad). Brierly is the captain of a ship, and he earns a lot of respect as a courageous seaman. He also has to jump from his ship to save a life. This jump of Brierly gives him so regret and shame that he attempts suicide.

This event of jumping changes the life of Lord Jim. He feels regret that he should have stayed on the ship to save the life of pilgrims. He thinks that he had lost the opportunity to prove himself as a hero. His idealistic nature cannot accept the bitter reality and harsh words of others. He considers his jump as a jump into a dark well. His jump becomes a source of permanent guilt for him. He hopes to have other opportunities that can give him a chance to prove his bravery. Lord Jim has to face many consequences of his jump from the ship. After many years of the Patna incident, Lord Jim met a white girl named Jewel. They both fell in love and Lord Jim stays in Patusan with Jewel. Jewel has many trust issues with Lord Jim and he cannot demolish this mistrust just because of his regret and shame. Gentlemen Brown is a pirate who comes to Patusan. Jewel demands Lord Jim, the death of Gentleman Brown. Jim cannot take his life just because Brown also carries some regrets with him.

The idealistic and romantic nature of Lord Jim becomes the source of his problems and guilt. He has set very high standards for him. He wants to become a hero and wants to be known as the symbol of bravery. His jump from the Patna ship is entirely unconscious. He jumps from the ship just because of the fearful noises of the ship's crew. He does not want to save his life at this time. But his jump becomes a permanent source of regret for him that dictates him throughout his later life. Although other members of the staff also make a jump from the ship in the Patna incident, they never feel regret over their decision. It is the gentleness of Lord Jim’s nature that he always feels the affliction of his jump. His bigger dreams and artistic nature never frees him from regret.