

A PRACTICAL BASIS FOR THE USE  
OF VALUES AS A FOCUS IN  
THE TEACHING OF WORKS  
OF LITERATURE

by

Robert B. Coulter

A thesis submitted to the  
Faculty of Graduate Studies  
in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements  
for the degree of  
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## ABSTRACT

This study seeks to define a rational, practical basis for the intent to use values as a focus in the teaching of works of literature. This basis is not found in proof that literature actually influences moral character; a review of research on literature and values suggests that there is little or no proof that such an influence actually exists. Narrowing and redefining the issue, this study concludes that the theoretical point of intersection between literature and values is a connection between moral ideas in literary works and the conscious understanding of the reader. An actual influence on values, implying an effect on moral behaviour, may be thought of as a potential but need not occur in fact. While it does not grant to values-based literature teaching the sweeping authority that would be given by proof of an actual effect on values, this conception gains by its logic and its consistency with the nature of both the reading process and moral value itself.

The definition of a point of connection between literature and values as outlined above provides a conceptual framework for the remainder of the study, in which it is shown by example that some literary works may be found to have integral to them moral issues or ideas susceptible of development in classroom practice. A model of classroom literary inquiry, developed from Louise Rosenblatt's Literature as Exploration--a model encompassing the moral, intellectual, and aesthetic aspects of literary response--is shown to be consistent with the process of inquiry integral to a reading

of Joseph Conrad's novel, Lord Jim. Analysis shows that the details of Lord Jim revolve around inquiry leading from response to moral issues through a broader understanding of the text in all its aspects, to the possibility of a broad understanding of the moral philosophy dramatized in the novel.

Thus the context within which it may be considered warranted to use values as a focus in teaching literary works is one in which (1) theoretical grounding in a connection between literature and values is limited to a conception in which moral ideas in literary works become part of a reader's intellectual awareness without necessarily altering his moral character as defined by his behaviour, and (2) moral ideas are indeed present in an integral way in the literary work, such that they may be understood and developed in a classroom study of the work as a whole.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Purpose

This study lies within a field that may be termed "literature and values". Broadly, what this study will seek to demonstrate is a context within which values implicit in literary works may be seen to be a legitimate focus for the teaching of those works. More specifically, it will be shown that the teaching of literature with a focus on values is both possible and warranted if the literary works to be taught have integral to them values issues susceptible of development in the classroom. The detailed examination of a major work of literature will show by example that exploration of values or values-related insights may be integral to the process of literary inquiry. Within the conditions established in the first two chapters of the present study, this will suggest a legitimacy in using values as a focus in the teaching of literary works.

#### Method

To fulfill the purpose of this study it will be necessary to do more than just point out the presence of moral questions or concerns in a text.

First, a sound, critically based working definition of the connection between literature and values will establish the

general conceptual framework which the remainder of the study will substantiate and particularize. This definition will be developed in Chapter Two through an extensive review of relevant articles and documents on literature and values.

Then, it must be shown that there exists a sound methodological model for values-oriented literature teaching--a model with which the values exploration process central to the literary work chosen for this study is demonstrably consistent. Such a model, well-grounded in the psychology of literary response, is a necessary link between the content of the work and the purpose of the present study. Values-related ideas in a literary work would prove little, after all, if they were not realizable through some process in the mind of the individual reader; and, even if they were realizable in the individual reader's mind, they would not be a justifiable basis for classroom teaching of the work unless they were subject to a broader process of realization on the scale of a class-sized group. The individual process of response to the work, though controlled by the content of the work, will be enhanced and enlarged when it directly parallels, or actually embodies, a classroom process with which it shares a common goal. Thus, for the purposes of this study, a necessary component of the values content of the literary work must be consistency with a recognized values-related teaching model.

Prior to an examination of any particular work of literature, then, will be the task of identifying a general literature teaching model that is practical and at the same time broadly based in values. This will be undertaken in Chapter Three

of the present study. The model or framework will be derived from Louise Rosenblatt's Literature as Exploration, which details a systematic, values-based approach to the actual teaching of literary works in the classroom.

Chapter Four of this study will then proceed to examine in detail Joseph Conrad's Lord Jim, with a view to showing that this novel is built around moral issues, such that its content demands in the reader a response of values-based inquiry and clarification. Further, it will be seen that this response parallels and would be enhanced by teaching according to the model derived from Rosenblatt's work.

The Values-Shaping Function  
of Literature: the Need  
for a Critical Approach

Because the assumption is so basic and so widely held among teachers and researchers that literature at some point influences the moral character of its readers, the idea of such an influence may be considered important enough to introduce here under its own heading. In saying this, it must be emphasized that it is not part of the purpose of this study to attempt to prove--or disprove--that literature has a values-shaping function. As will be explained, it is important to be willing to subject the matter to critical scrutiny; the purpose of this scrutiny in the present study, however, is only to aid in defining a practical, working idea of a point of intersection between literature and values in the classroom, and hence to help establish the conceptual framework within which values may be thought to be a legitimate focus for literature teaching.

Most people involved in English instruction would affirm that literature and the study of the skills of reading literature are important because literature can at some point touch people's lives with a beneficial effect on their moral character. Clearly, though, the fact that this assumption is so widely made is not proof that the assumption itself is a matter of fact; history shows that many widely or even universally held ideas were later proven to be false. Further, as will become evident in the second chapter of this study, an outstanding feature of the affirmation of a values-shaping function for literature is its uncritical nature. Indeed, it should be taken into account in this regard that the assumption of a moral influence in literature gives authority not only to the study of literature but also to the lives of teachers who invest whole careers in furthering this study. Thus the virtual universality of the assumption may be due in part to the simple fact that no teacher of English, or of any other subject for that matter, is likely to deny a principle without which his life's work would become a circular, rather superfluous, exercise.

The fact that a values-shaping function for literature is widely assumed, then, does not make it immune to critical examination. Indeed, it could be argued that no principle with such far-reaching implications ought to remain unexamined. Of course, if the principle were universally reflected in consequences in the real world, the inquiry could end shortly. However, it must be admitted that the nature of the world casts into doubt the effective power of literature to evoke humane values. George Steiner, in one of a series of essays on the future of literacy,

points out the cruelty and inhumanity in our history that "puts in question the primary concepts of a literary humanistic culture."<sup>1</sup>

Steiner's further comments on this matter are pertinent and, in spite of their length, worth quoting in full. He goes on:

The ultimate of political barbarism grew from the core of Europe. Two centuries after Voltaire had proclaimed its end, torture again became a normal process of political action. Not only did the general dissemination of literary, cultural values prove no barrier to totalitarianism; but in notable instances the high places of humanistic learning and art actually welcomed and aided the new terror. Barbarism prevailed on the very ground of Christian humanism, of Renaissance culture and classic rationalism. We know that some of the men who devised and administered Auschwitz had been taught to read Shakespeare and Goethe, and continued to do so.

This is of obvious and appalling relevance to the study or teaching of literature. It compels us to ask whether the knowledge of the best that has been thought and said does, as Matthew Arnold asserted, broaden and refine the resources of the human spirit. It forces us to wonder whether what Dr. Leavis has called "the central humanity" does, in fact, educate toward humane action, or whether there is not between the tenor of moral intelligence developed in the study of literature and that required in social and political choice a wide gap or contrariety. The latter possibility is particularly disturbing. There is some evidence that a trained, persistent commitment to the life of the printed word, a capacity to identify deeply and critically with imaginary personages or sentiments, diminishes the immediacy, the hard edge of actual circumstance. We come to respond more acutely to the literary sorrow than to the misery next door. Here also recent times give harsh evidence. Men who wept at Werther or Chopin moved, unrealizing, through literal hell.

This means that whoever teaches or interprets literature--and both are exercises seeking to build for the writer a body of living, discerning response--must ask himself what he is about (to tutor, to guide someone through Lear or the Oresteia is to take into one's hand the springs of his being.) Assumptions regarding the value of literate culture to the moral perception of the individual and society were self-evident to Johnson, Coleridge and Arnold. They are now in doubt. We must countenance the possibility that the study and transmission of literature may be of only marginal significance, a passionate luxury like the preservation of the antique. Or, at worst, that it may detract from more urgent and responsible uses of time and energy of spirit. I do not

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<sup>1</sup>George Steiner, Language and Silence (New York: Atheneum, 1967), p. 51.

believe either to be true.<sup>2</sup> But the question must be asked and explored without cant.

Steiner raises extreme examples of possible negative effects of literary study. Clearly, however, his intent is not to show that such effects exist, but to promote the idea that the study and teaching of literature should proceed on the basis of an objective, critical appraisal of the alleged capacity of literature to shape moral and social values. The teaching of literature can proceed even if literature is only "a passionate luxury", but it would proceed in the context of a more limited authority.

It must be considered preferable, then, rather than blindly accepting the effect of literature on moral character as self-evident, to proceed in the light of a critical appraisal of the extent to which, according to present knowledge, literature can fairly be said to influence values. This appraisal will be one of the tasks of the second chapter of the present study.

#### Definition of Selected Terms and Concepts

This study will work within an area represented roughly by the common ground alleged to exist between literature and values. This remains a rather vague delineation of the subject area, however; certainly it is not enough to provide a clear basis for understanding of the terms and ideas that will be central to this inquiry. Before proceeding, therefore, it is important to define,

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<sup>2</sup>Steiner, p. 5.

to whatever extent is possible or appropriate within the context of this study, a number of terms that will be used. Many of these terms will surface in, or be necessary to an understanding of, the second chapter of this study. Others, particularly the basic working definitions of values and values-related concepts, will be central to the entire investigation.

### Literature

Many definitions of literature exist, and it is doubtful whether one succinct meaning can be pinpointed that will serve all needs. For the purposes of the present study, it will be sufficient to define literature in terms of what actually fulfills the function of literature in high school and university English courses, and what most researchers in the field of literature and values seem to mean by the term. Broadly speaking, in these terms, literature is almost any written material whose form and style give it an effective purpose not limited to the simple transmission of information or ideas. To explain further, in the basic, literal communication of information or ideas, there is a one-to-one correspondence between the fact or concept on the printed page and the fact or concept registered in the mind of the reader. In literature, the correspondence is not one-to-one; here the response in the reader may be said to be greater than the content of the page. However, since facts or ideas may be intellectually or emotionally stimulative in themselves, completely apart from any control exercised by the writer, it is necessary to add that the response must be at least partly to the formal and stylistic rendering of the material. Thus what would qualify as literature

would be that written material in which aspects of form and style--not simply content--stimulate in the reader intellectual or emotional responses that are broader than the literal substance of the words and sentences on the page.

This definition is intended to serve the purposes of the present study, and it does so because it includes the usual genres that make up English courses: poetry, the novel, short stories, dramas, essays, and in some cases historical and philosophical works. It would be possible, but is not necessary here, to attempt to define literature so encompassingly and so precisely as to cover all the possible dynamics of literary response and to account for all apparent exceptions. Since to all intents and purposes this investigation is limited to what actually functions as literature, it is enough to have a definition that includes and gives some focus to the kinds of materials studied in English classes.

It is common to designate one chapter of a study such as this one to a "review of the literature". This usage of the word "literature"--to refer to research material--is avoided here for the sake of clarity. Other terms such as "review of articles and documents", "review of critical works", "body of available research material", will be used instead.

### Universality

A concept that will be significant for Chapter Four of this study is that of universality in literature. In a general way, first, the key to universality in any principle is the perception of generalizability. If from a single case one is warranted in

inferring a principle that may be generalized to apply to all related cases, then the principle may be said to have universality. If the justification for the inference of the principle is found within the case, then the case itself may be said to have universality. These points may be applied to literature. The meaning of a literary work may be said to have inherent universality if two conditions are met: first, the principle said to be universal in the work must be one that may reasonably be seen to be generalizable to cover parallel circumstances in life; second, there should be justification within the text of the work for perceiving its meaning as universal--some internal evidence that the meaning offered by the work may be received in terms of universal principles.

### Reading

It might be noted at this point that this study will include references to material that is classified under the headings "Reading". While there may be much in the general field of reading to differentiate it from "the study of literature", the present study really focusses only on areas that the two fields have in common. Therefore for the purpose of this inquiry literature study will be assumed to be synonymous with reading.

### Values

The term "values" is even less susceptible of exact definition than the concept of literature. Indeed, there is such a diversity of opinion as to what values are that only exploration of, and synthesis from, various viewpoints, would give a

substantial grasp of the term as it relates to literature.

Nevertheless, as with literature, it is possible to give a broad working definition sufficiently specific to eliminate unwanted senses of the word. The term "values", as used in this study, will refer to an individual's moral character or identity as put into practice in actual behaviour and attitudes. This is not, it should be noted, necessarily the same as what the individual consciously professes to be as a moral being.

To elaborate, each action committed by a person affirms, whether the person knows it or not, some standard giving one act a greater degree of acceptability than its alternatives. This affirmation of a standard, in turn, implicitly acknowledges more general moral principles, which ultimately affirm a particular philosophical view of the world and man's place in it.<sup>3</sup> A person's moral character is thus the totality of what his actions affirm.

It should be noted again that this remains a broad definition. There is room in the study of ethics for further inquiry into the possibility of judgments as to whether what one person's actions affirm is morally better than what another person's actions affirm, or whether what the actions of the majority in society affirm is better than what the actions of an individual or a minority affirm. There is room for classification

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<sup>3</sup>This view is summarized fairly concisely in the Introduction, written by the editors, to Knowledge and Value: Introductory Readings in Philosophy, ed. Elmer Sprague and Paul W. Taylor (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1959) pp. 5, 6.

of values under headings such as social values and political values. However, these are matters that, while they are included in some studies of literature and values, are outside the scope of this study. The reason is simply that insofar as literature can be said to shape values, it would first influence the individual reader; all other aspects of values follow from the individual's moral identity, but are at a minimum of one remove from the actual sphere in which the supposed influence of literature operates. In other words, the common ground for all inquiry into the humanistic function of literature--the basic unit of currency, as it were, in values-- is the moral character of the individual. Therefore, although further moral questions may be raised by articles and documents referred to in this inquiry, the definition of the term "values" assumed here will remain as outlined above.

#### Personal Insight

Another concept that will emerge in the ensuing discussion is what can be called personal insight. Others have referred to such closely related terms as self-awareness, self-concept, or even values clarification. All these notions, insofar as they are seen as effects of the experience of reading literature, are in effect synonymous with the term "personal insight".

It is not difficult to see how, in the context of the nature of moral identity as outlined above, personal insight becomes a potential link between values implicit in a literary work and the moral character of the reader. While the affirmation that establishes moral identity occurs whether the individual is conscious of it or not, it is considered desirable that a person

be aware of the standards--and ultimately the world-view or philosophy--that his actions affirm, in order that he be able to develop a critical understanding of his values position and thus equip himself to deal with moral problems by anticipating them and to revise and update his values position.<sup>4</sup> The term "personal insight", for the purposes of this study, will be assumed to include any perceptions the individual has of himself that may lead to or enhance this awareness.

Such perceptions could include the awareness of the moral implications, in the above context, of specific actions, or the insight into some basic universal aspects of the human condition that might limit or define the individual's capacity to find for his actions authority based on critical understanding. Literature, it is supposed by many, has the power to evoke such perceptions, and within this framework may be seen the direct relevance to values of studies inquiring into the effect of literature on self-awareness.

The concept of personal insight also points up the importance of the distinction between shaping values and clarifying them. Clarification of values, implying an absence of the imposition from outside of moral standards, depends on the individual's gaining insight into himself, and is an integral part of the kind of self-development that is essential to the supposed values-shaping function of literature.

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<sup>4</sup>Sprague and Taylor, pp. 6-8.

Humanism

At some points in Chapter Two of this study, reference will be made to the terms "humanism" and "humanistic". Because these terms have had specific historical usages, it is important here to specify the distinct sense in which they are used in modern educational thinking.

The main thrust of humanism in teaching is to enhance that which makes man essentially human. Fadiman, in the context of defending the Humanities against what he sees as a movement toward vocational education, states the general nature of humanism succinctly if oversimply: the Humanities, he says, "does not teach the man how to become a plumber. It tries to teach the plumber how to become a man."<sup>5</sup> Of course, in response to such statements it is possible to say that the implicit standard of humanity is somewhat arbitrary--that making a man a plumber might make that person a man. Nevertheless, it seems to be characteristic of the educational humanist's position to affirm that people fulfill themselves as human beings more through the process of self-discovery than in the end of adjustment to some moral--or vocational--norm. In the process of self-discovery, so important to the humanist, is implicit the concept of personal insight as described above.

A matter that remains to be considered is the assumption, implicit in parts of this study, that the term "influence of

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<sup>5</sup>Clifton Fadiman, "The Humanities: Looking Back, Around and Ahead," The Nation's Schools, XC (December, 1972), p. 46.

literature upon values" and the term "humanistic function of literature" are synonymous and interchangeable. Strictly speaking, an examination of the supposed influence of literature on values does not preclude the idea of a non-humanistic influence, in which literature would be said to mold character directly, without the intervening step of self-discovery. However, in terms of the concept of values outlined above, in which actions are the primary determiners of moral character, this would mean that literature must directly influence behaviour, in a stimulus-response relationship, with no room for rational consideration between the stimulus and the responsive behaviour. The immediate, almost automatic response to this is that it is unthinkable, that it flies in the face of the most basic and engrained conceptions of humanity. To respond in this way, however, is to presume as defining characteristics of humanity principles that have not been substantiated: a capacity for rational reflection and foresight; transcendence, through intellect, of the purely natural mechanisms of cause and effect. Surely, one may argue, it is circular to speak of the influence of literature upon values as necessarily humanistic.

In answer to this, it must be stated again that the purpose at present is only to define terms. Whether or not the presumption of an intellectual capacity in man for reflection and foresight can be substantiated is not, in fact, the issue. Nor is the scientific, metaphysical, or epistemological truth of any of the terms outlined above--or their underlying assumptions--within the scope of this inquiry at this point. The presumption of rationality referred to above is one that is pervasive among those who write literature and those who write about it. It is implicit

in the concept of values already given as underlying this study, and, in fact, in most conceptions of moral value. Widespread assent to the presumptions of an inquiry does not verify the presumptions, but it does form a common denominator that helps establish working definitions of the basic terms of the inquiry. Thus for the purposes of a practical clarification of terms in a study involving what has in fact been written and thought, the pervasiveness is enough: it may be assumed that the humanistic function of literature and the influence of literature upon values are concepts that are synonymous and interchangeable.

## CHAPTER 2

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### Review of Articles and Documents on Literature and Values

Stated very broadly, the overall purpose of this study is to suggest a context within which the values-centred teaching of literature is justified. Clearly an important step in this direction is the attempt, through analysis of research findings, to define meaningfully the connection between literature and values. As was pointed out in the previous chapter, one must not assume blindly that literature has the power to improve or otherwise influence the moral character of its readers. An extensive, critical examination of what has been written on the subject will lead to a sound concept of what can be assumed in this regard.

The greater part of this chapter will, therefore, be taken up with giving some shape and substance to the mass of diverse opinions encountered in the body of material written on the subject of literature and values. Within this body of writings will be identified a number of positions that are persistent enough to be thought of as significant tendencies. In line with the purpose of giving shape and substance, each of these positions is seen as embodying part of a continuum--an entire dimension in which a range of opinion is possible.

Positions Defined by Substance  
or Content

Illustrated first will be positions identifiable by what is affirmed, as opposed to the manner in which it is affirmed-- positions definable, in other words, according to their substance. Of these, perhaps the most immediately apparent has to do with the nature of the reader's involvement with literature. On one end of the spectrum a number of writers seem to hold as an ideal a kind of total vicarious involvement. The reader, in this view, can identify so completely with a character that the character's experiences in effect become the reader's experiences.

Harbans Narang suggests that identification "is the real or imagined affiliation of one's self with a character in the story read."<sup>1</sup> Most of those who deal with identification seem to see the nature of this affiliation with a literary character as something similar to what John Flavell, writing in the context of real-life relationships, calls "role-taking", a "process of adopting the perspective or attitude of another, silently 'putting yourself in his shoes' in a given situation."<sup>2</sup> It is implicit in the concept of vicarious involvement through identification, at any rate, that any insights the reader gains into the character through identification are also personal insights into himself.

Typical of many of the statements of such a view is that of

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<sup>1</sup>Harbans L. Narang, "Bibliotherapy: A Brief Review," ERIC Document ED 110 940, 1975. p.2.

<sup>2</sup>John H. Flavell, The Development of Role-Taking and Communication Skills in Children (New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc., 1968), p. 6.

Patricia Cianciolo: "When one identifies with . . . literary characters, one does experience facets of the human experience, albeit vicariously."<sup>3</sup> Howard Lowry and others, in a 1943 report on the relationship between literature and education, point out that literature has the power to broaden understanding by becoming experience, taking a person beyond the limitations of the small number of people he will meet in his lifetime.<sup>4</sup>

Some credence, in psychological terms, is lent to the notion of vicarious involvement by Eunice Newton, who indicates that the identification with characters as models, which is a central aspect of the process by which literature allegedly shapes attitudes and beliefs, is not something anomalous but merely a broadening of a tendency to identify with real-life models.<sup>5</sup>

Of a number of curriculum outlines and models that acknowledge the role of literature in granting personal insight through identification, perhaps the most explicit is that of the Bellevue, Washington, Public Schools, which specifically points to empathic involvement in literature as an "expectation" of the program: "to feel another person's feelings, to perform another person's actions, to be transported to other places and times

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<sup>3</sup>Patricia Cianciolo, "'Feeling Books' Develop Social and Personal Sensitivities," Elementary English, LII (January, 1975), 39.

<sup>4</sup>Howard F. Lowry and others, "Literature in American Education." New York, Commission on Trends in Education, Modern Language Association of America, ERIC document ED 036 560, 1943. pp. 13-15.

<sup>5</sup>Eunice S. Newton, "Bibliotherapy in the Development of Minority Group Self-Concept," Teaching Reading for Human Values in High School, ed. James Duggins (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing C., 1972), pp. 224-226.

through literature" are considered opportunities that should be available to every student.<sup>6</sup>

The advocates of vicarious experience seem generally to avoid mention of cognitive processes in the response to literature, stressing instead the immediacy and the emotional content of the literary experience. This would lead one to expect that the opposite end of the continuum would be a purely detached, intellectual understanding. Baird Shuman, in fact, though firmly in favour of the values-centered teaching of literature, uses terminology that suggests a focus on cognitive processes. Literature as studied in the school, he says, should be for the student a way "of developing a means of understanding and interpreting the world around him."<sup>8</sup> It must be seen, however, to balance the perspective, that the use of terms like "understanding" and "interpreting", referring to cognitive processes, does not preclude a role for vicarious experience in or affective response to literature: the kind of understanding that Shuman speaks of could be at least in part the result of emotional involvement or identification with literary characters.

The evidence thus seems to suggest that the positions presently under discussion embody a spectrum not from vicarious

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<sup>6</sup>Bellevue Public Schools, "The English Language Arts and Basic Skills Program of the Bellevue Public Schools, Junior High Level," Bellevue, Wash., Bellevue Public Schools, ERIC Document ED 074 488, 1972., n.p.

<sup>7</sup>R. Baird Shuman, "Values and the Teaching of Literature," The Clearing House, XLVIII (December, 1973), 232, 233.

<sup>8</sup>Shuman, p. 233.

involvement to detached cognition, but from a fairly narrow emphasis on vicarious involvement to a much more inclusive concept of the internalization of ideas from reading--a concept that gives more latitude for different kinds of response to literature. Such views are typically stated in general terms. An example is provided by Howard Kirshenbaum and Sidney Simon:

We have seen literature open up whole new worlds of experience and deepen our insight into ourselves, our fellow man, and our society. We agree with Camus that literature "illuminates the problems of the human conscience in our time."<sup>9</sup>

There is within this view considerable room for interpretation as to the exact nature of the "opening up" and "illumination" processes. Like the other viewpoints at this end of the spectrum, this position does not contradict the possibility of vicarious involvement; rather, it implicitly includes it.

A second dimension of substance involves the degree to which emphasis is placed on an active role for the reader. It appears to be a universal belief among those who have written on the subject that a work of literature, in exercising its power to shape ideas and attitudes, plays what could be termed an active role. The diversity lies in the conception of the role of the reader. For many, the reader is to all intents and purposes presumed to be a passive respondent to literature at the time of reading; the only factor seen as governing the nature of the outcome is the literary work. This is not to say that the reader in

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<sup>9</sup>Howard Kirshenbaum and Sidney B. Simon, "Teaching English with a Focus on Values," English Journal, LVIII (October, 1969), 1071.

such a view may not engage in active mental processes as a consequence of his reading, but that these processes seem to be conceived as ends, to which literature is the means. This is evident in statements like the following: "Reading is surely one golden key to generating the creative power of self-discovery which leads to maturity and attunement to the world of reality in which one lives."<sup>10</sup> A similar kind of means-and-end conception is held by Shuman, who points out "the need for literature study to be personalized enough to allow the student to work toward grappling intelligently with his own values system."<sup>11</sup> This kind of orientation is explicit in a number of writers and it is implicit in many documents giving program outlines and bibliographies as guides to the use of literature to clarify values, to enhance self-awareness among minority groups, to stimulate cultural awareness generally, to correct the consequences of sex bias in society, and so on.

On the other end of the spectrum are a few who maintain that the reader plays an active role in the experience of literature: that the nature of the reader, as well as the nature of the literary work, is a variable that governs the outcome of the process. Perhaps the clearest example of such a position is found in what has been termed transactional reading theory, in which the reader is thought to be involved in the immediate experience of reading to the extent that his experiential background and state

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<sup>10</sup>Lettie J. Austin, "Reading: A Dimension of Creative Power," Journal of Reading, XV (May, 1972), p. 566.

<sup>11</sup>Shuman, p. 233.

of mind at the time affect the meaning he derives from the literary work:

The transaction involving a reader and a printed text thus can be viewed as an event occurring at a particular time in a particular environment at a particular moment in the life history of the reader. The transaction will involve not only the past experience but also the present state and present interests or preoccupations of the reader. It stresses the possibility that printed marks on a page will become different linguistic symbols by virtue of transactions with different readers.<sup>12</sup>

Louise Rosenblatt's view, presented in the above quotation, is supported by Patricia Cianciolo, who recommends the choice of appropriate books to stimulate the active involvement of the reader.<sup>13</sup>

Transactional reading theory appears to be contradicted by David Bleich, whose study is difficult to place on the continuum since it affirms active roles for both reader and text, yet in effect denies their direct interrelationship. From an informal experiment, he concludes that literary meaning is derived by the reader not from the text but from his own already-internalized responses to it: "The real psychic action is not between an individual and the text, but between parts of an individual's mental apparatus or between two or more individuals."<sup>14</sup> Bleich goes so far as to say that "meaning is created as if the text did

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<sup>12</sup>Louise M. Rosenblatt, "Towards a Transactional Theory of Reading," Teaching Reading for Human Values in High School, ed. James Duggins (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1972), p. 129.

<sup>13</sup>Cianciolo, pp. 38, 39.

<sup>14</sup>David Bleich, "Emotional Origins of Literary Meaning," College English, XXXI (October, 1969), 40.

not exist."<sup>15</sup>

Bleich's study may be criticized, however, on the grounds that it depends upon free association of ideas as the initial response to the literary work: in fact, Bleich admits to having eliminated all test subjects who could not free-associate, leaving himself with only one subject.<sup>16</sup> It is at least questionable whether free association is a natural or desirable response to reading. It may be an artificial step placing a gap between the reading of the work and the final conceptualization of meaning, and, if this is so, then Bleich's entire study begs the question.

The implications of the transactional view are potentially far-reaching. To the extent that differences among individual readers of literature can produce different but equally valid conceptions of meaning, the grounds are weakened for a sometimes-cited defense of literature: that it can draw people together, even strengthen a sense of national or cultural identity, by evoking shared values and by engendering common understanding.

Further light can be shed on this problem by the identification of a third dimension of substance in the research. On the one hand, a number of writers place their emphasis largely on an open-ended development of the individual: literature, in this view, offers insight, as well as a variety of experiences and alternatives, but the job of actually synthesizing a values position is quite pointedly left to the reader. Maxine Greene, for example,

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<sup>15</sup>Bleich, p. 40.

<sup>16</sup>Bleich, p. 31.

speaks of "making it possible for individuals to choose themselves freely, to make of themselves what they can."<sup>17</sup> Such positions typically see the end to which literature is a means as a state of potentiality, a self-awareness which, ideally, can become actualized in a moral direction freely chosen by the individual on the basis of personal insight gained through literary experience.

Perhaps influential in the establishment of this camp is a reaction, evident in some of the writers, against an alleged tendency to attempt to impose and reinforce particular values systems through the use of literature. Shuman states that such a tendency arose in the 1940's and warns against the choice and teaching of literary works as guides to conduct.<sup>18</sup> He adds that "even today many teachers would use literature to teach values and suggest desirable value systems rather than to expose the student to a broad gamut of value systems and allow him thereby to arrive at a value system of his own."<sup>19</sup> James Miller issues a similar warning, pointing out the inappropriateness of using literature to promote one set of ethics or another.<sup>20</sup>

It is this moralizing tendency that may be seen as occupying the opposite end of the spectrum from free individual self-development. What may be inferred from the warnings of Shuman and Miller--warnings presumably based on contact with

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<sup>17</sup>Maxine Greene, "Literature and Visibility," NASSP Bulletin, LVI (February, 1972), 71.-72.

<sup>18</sup>Shuman, p. 236.

<sup>19</sup>Shuman, p. 236.

<sup>20</sup>James E. Miller, "Literature in the Revitalized Curriculum," NASSP Bulletin, LI (April, 1967), 30.

actual classroom activities--is, probably, only that certain practices have actually existed. Similarly, Nyla Ahren's study of the problem of censorship,<sup>21</sup> Carolyn Carmichael's plea for a loosening of the criteria for approved literature,<sup>22</sup> Glenn McCracken's investigation of children's reactions to violence in literature,<sup>23</sup> and Evelyn Swenson's argument for an honest portrayal of death in children's literature,<sup>24</sup> all implicitly attest to the existence in society and within school systems of forces whose aim is to limit the range of acceptable literature in the schools in the name of promoting what are seen as desirable values.

That this tendency exists in practice helps to define one extremity of the dimension presently under discussion: it does not, however, prove that writers in the field affirm a moralizing tendency as a positive principle. In fact, there seems to be no published material that explicitly espouses as a desirable goal the imposition of particular values through literature. Nonetheless, some studies do seem to give tacit assent to the concept of such a goal. Even a brief survey of the articles and document

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<sup>21</sup>Nyla Herber Ahrens, "Censorship and the Teacher of English: A Questionnaire Survey of a Selected Sample of Secondary School Teachers of English," Unpublished Ed. D. Dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University, ERIC Document ED 061 224, 1965. passim.

<sup>22</sup>Carolyn W. Carmichael, "Modern Realistic Fiction--Shocking to Whom?" Speech given at the 60th Annual Convention of the National Council of Teachers of English, Atlanta, Ga., ERIC Document ED 058 183, 1970, passim.

<sup>23</sup>Glenn McCracken, "Violence and Deception in Children's Literature," Elementary English, IL (March, 1972), passim.

<sup>24</sup>Evelyn J. Swenson, "The Treatment of Death in Children's Literature," Elementary English, IL (March, 1972), passim.

relating to literature and values reveals numbers of studies arguing for the use of literature to promote cultural awareness and enhance individual self-image among minority groups. These groups will be discussed in more detail later; for the present, a very general familiarity is enough to suggest that, when the range of literature is narrowed to include only that relevant to a particular minority group, the line between exposing children to many alternatives and imposing a values system on them becomes very difficult to draw. When one adds to the picture the obvious social and political motives that may go into this particular use of literature, one finds it impossible not to suspect that there is to some degree an effort to unify certain social groups by actually molding the values of their members through control of the literature to which they are exposed.

Positions Defined by Approach  
or Method

The remaining dimensions that may be found within the field of literature and values have to do more with the way in which positions are stated and supported than with the substance of the positions themselves. As will become apparent, however, these dimensions are equally relevant to an informed appraisal of the assumption that literature is capable of influencing values by evoking personal insight.

Although all the writers on literature and values seem to assent to some version of the above proposition, there is considerable difference in the ways in which this assent is given, and it is in this difference that another dimension may be identified. At one end of the spectrum, some writers simply make an outright

statement. Enough examples have already been cited in this chapter to make this clearly evident. The other end of the spectrum is occupied by those documents whose assent takes the form of tacit acknowledgement. In general these studies are of the following types: specific curriculum outlines; suggested sets of instructional objectives; bibliographies and reading lists; studies of censorship and related kinds of problems; programs for cultural awareness and minority group self-concept, including material relating to blacks, Mexican-Americans, Indians, and, currently, women. All of these kinds of documents, insofar as they relate to the question of literature and values, presume with little or no explicit proof, that literature has the power to bring about the enhancement of an individual's insight and consequently the clarification or development in the individual of a moral identity. As has been suggested, it may be that in some of these programs the range for the individual's self-development is controlled, through selection of literature, with a view to making the resulting moral character coincide with some social norm. Nevertheless, although the end in such cases may be in effect a social reality, the effect of literature on individual moral identity is implicitly acknowledged as a step in the process.

A closely related dimension of the problem is seen in the difference between studies based essentially on faith, either implicit or explicit, in the values-shaping function of literature and inquiries that actually attempt to support the proposition or some aspect of it on the basis of experimental data. In the former category lie the vast majority of articles and documents encountered in the present study, including many of those already

cited in this paper. It is not necessary to go into examples of these in further detail: it is sufficient to say that most such studies use the capacity of literature to grant personal insight or shape values as a starting point for further inquiry.

Some studies may be said to occupy positions along the spectrum, though not at the opposite end, by virtue of their reference to, or argument by analogy with, empirically supported psychological principles. Rosenblatt's transactional approach to reading, for example, is grounded by analogy in psychological studies of transactional theory.<sup>25</sup> Patrick Groff's study of children's reactions to adult biographies is similarly grounded in that it hinges on the criterion of compatibility with certain established psychological principles.<sup>26</sup> Eunice Newton's suggestions for the use of bibliotherapy to help enhance the self-concept of black students, similarly, supports the concept of identification with a literary figure by relating it to identification with real-life models.<sup>27</sup>

In fact, however, there is very little empirical research relating directly to the question of the influence of literature upon values. As David Russell suggests, "the evidence that reading affects lives is largely confined to . . . subjective,

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<sup>25</sup>Rosenblatt, "Transactional Theory," p. 128.

<sup>26</sup>Patrick Groff, "How Do Children Read Biography about Adults?" *The Reading Teacher*, XXIV (April, 1971), passim.

<sup>27</sup>Eunice S. Newton, "Bibliotherapy in the Development of Minority Group Self-Concept," Readings for Teaching English in Secondary Schools, ed. Theodore W. Hipple (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1973), pp. 223, 224.

individual testimony . . . and to some reports of bibliotherapy in individual case studies."<sup>28</sup> One study, however, that is experimental in nature, is that conducted by Fehl Shirley. Acknowledging that little research has been done into the positive effects of reading in terms of its power to produce attitude and behaviour change,<sup>29</sup> he reports on a test conducted by way of questionnaire and self-evaluation, with 420 Tucson high school students.<sup>30</sup>

Within the terms of the test, the results were clearly positive: "The introspective and retrospective reports of 420 adolescents confirmed that reading influences concepts, attitudes and behaviour."<sup>31</sup>

As conclusive as this statement sounds, it must be reviewed in the light of Russell's caution about all studies based on subjective reaction as identified by questionnaire: Russell points out that the conclusions may be "optimistic because of the desire of students to give congenial answers."<sup>32</sup> Another caution worth noting in regard to Shirley's investigation is that students may absorb from their teachers certain ways of articulating responses to literature; teachers may have spoken of

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<sup>28</sup>David H. Russell, "Contributions of Reading to Self-Development," Teaching Reading for Human Values in High School, ed. James Duggins (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1972), p. 137.

<sup>29</sup>Fehl L. Shirley, "The Influence of Reading on Concepts, Attitudes and Behaviour," Teaching Reading for Human Values in High School, ed. James Duggins (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1972), p. 46

<sup>30</sup>Shirley, pp. 46-55.

<sup>31</sup>Shirley, p. 53.

<sup>32</sup>Russell, p. 137.

particular ways of responding or followed certain conceptual schemes in assigning and evaluating work related to literature. When students describe their response to literature on a questionnaire, it is at least conceivable that in some cases they will actually create the response in the process of articulating it, simply because their training has primed them, albeit unintentionally, with some conventional concepts of literary response: in these cases the engrained conventions of thought would be a greater influence on what the student actually writes on the questionnaire than would be the literary works themselves. Bleich's study, already cited, in spite of the reservations expresses about it, lends some support to this criticism of Shirley's experiment.

Of the available empirical studies, not all have positive conclusions. Jaquelyn Stephens, for example, reports an experiment in bibliotherapy, designed "to investigate the effects of prescribed literature on the reader's self-reliance,"<sup>33</sup> from which she concludes

that bibliotherapy may not be an effective tool in promoting greater self-reliance. This finding does not support the theoretical implication that bibliotherapy can help solve some developmental problems of adjustment and growth.<sup>34</sup>

Stephen's study, though it is based on only one limited aspect of attitudes and behaviour, is at odds with Shirley's experiment.

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<sup>33</sup>Jaquelyn W. Stephens, "An Investigation into the Effectiveness of Bibliotherapy on the Reader's Self-Reliance," Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Washington, D. C., ERIC Document ED 103 824, 1975, p. 2.

<sup>34</sup>Stephens, p. 3.

Another closely related dimension in the field of research into values and literature may be found in the diversity between relatively objective inquiries into particular aspects of the problem and documents that seem to be of a more crusading, polemical nature. For the purpose of this study, an objective study will be considered to be one in which the author concerns himself primarily with the presentation of his points and his evidence, leaving acceptance or non-acceptance of his thesis as a judgment for the reader to make. A crusading document is assumed here to be one in which the author attempts to sway the opinions of his readers through means other than the presentation and explanation of evidence; in which, in other words, the author moves into the area of judgment that for the objective writer is the province of the reader.

Examples have already been cited in other contexts of studies that may be placed toward the former end of the spectrum; they comprise the majority of articles and documents encountered and include the experimental inquiries mentioned above. Of crusading documents, toward the other end of the range, Miller's work is probably typical. Miller's purpose is clearly to plead the cause of humanity in teaching literature;<sup>35</sup> his writing gives the impression of being more exhortation than explanation: "In this new conception of English, focussing on the faculty of Imagination,

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<sup>35</sup>James E. Miller, "Councilletter: To Preserve Humanness: Language and Literature in the Seventies and Beyond," Elementary English, IL (March, 1972), passim, and Miller, "Revitalized Curriculum," passim.

there is a new realization that imaginative growth involves both receptivity and creativity, both witnessing and making, both intake and output."<sup>36</sup> It is not that there is anything extremely unusual about what Miller says. The difference is in how he says it. In the sentence quoted above, the use of sweeping phrases like "new conception of English", and "new realization", along with the rhetorical redundancy in the series of paired concepts in the latter half of the sentence, suggests the crusading nature of the material. This is not to imply that there is not a place for such inspirational works; in all likelihood, Miller would make no pretense of being objective. The ultimate credibility of crusading studies, however, must rest on a knowledge of the degree to which the writer's partiality is reflected in his work.

#### Further Considerations

It may be worthwhile to deal with several other points concerning the body of research material on literature and values, points that either do not organize themselves readily into dimensions or may be more usefully considered in isolation. Basically these factors may be categorized as, first, reactions against particular ideas or practices, and, second, problems seen in the actual practice of values-oriented teaching of literature. It is important in the present context to identify reactions because any study motivated even in part by reaction to an overbalance in one direction runs a risk of becoming overbalanced in the opposite direction; the very risk of this unbalance weakens the credibility of the study to some extent. As for the illustration of potential problems

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<sup>36</sup>Miller, "Revitalized Curriculum," p. 29.

associated with the humanistic teaching of literature, the relevance should be self-evident: any problems in the implementation of a concept will tend to weaken the authority inherent in the concept.

Easily identifiable in several studies is a reaction against the emphasis, in teaching, upon technical elements of literature at the expense of its human significance. Joseph Hojak states it explicitly: "To purge one's self of emotional involvement and limit response to analytical and intellectual interests has been the message of contemporary critics and scholars, but it has proved to be a blighting message."<sup>37</sup> Walter Loban makes a similar point, not rejecting technical and analytical matters in literature study, but seeing them as means to a larger, humanistic end.<sup>38</sup>

Another reaction, alluded to earlier in this paper, is against the manipulation of literature to impose or shape particular values or particular notions of moral character. Shuman, as seen in a passage quoted earlier in this paper, finds that there is in practice a tendency among some teachers of English to moralize in this way.

A number of possible problems associated with the implementation and practice of values-oriented literature teaching

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<sup>37</sup> Joseph L. Hojak, "Appreciating Human Accomplishments. A Guide to the Analysis and Interpretation of EQA Scores and Related Intervention Techniques, Guide to Strategies for Improvement, Goal 9. PDE Working Papers," Harrisburg, Bureau of Planning and Evaluation, Pennsylvania State Department of Education, ERIC Document ED 114 969, 1975. pp. 36-37.

<sup>38</sup> Walter Loban, "Literature and the Examined Life," English Journal, LIX (November, 1970), 1087.

have been pointed out by various writers. Carolyn Carmichael reports on a test designed to show whether children perceive the same values in literature as adults perceive.<sup>39</sup> The implications of this experiment are serious: since adults are given the jobs of writing, selecting and teaching works of literature, a discrepancy between adults and children in the way values are perceived would bring about a communication gap. In fact, Carmichael's test showed that as long as the values were stated in language the children could understand, the perceptions of the children and of the adults correlated highly.<sup>40</sup> Indirectly, the test points up the need for any teacher attempting to deal with values in literature to use terminology the students can understand.

Fadiman warns of another potential problem when he points out the consequences that may arise from too much stress on poorly understood terms:

Vague phrases such as "humanizing the whole curriculum" must be carefully looked at. The humanities are by definition man-centered. But much of the cosmos is not. . . . If astronomy and geology and physics become overly "humanized", they lose much of their worth.<sup>41</sup>

Fadiman's point is not specifically concerned with literature study, but the relevance is clear. It can be argued that there are aspects of literature, such as technical elements and critical concepts, that will not bear humanization to any great degree; that even within the field of literature it may be desirable to

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<sup>39</sup>Carolyn W. Carmichael, "Values in Children's Literature-- As Perceived by Whom?" Elementary English, IL (November, 1972), 996-999.

<sup>40</sup>Carmichael, p. 999.

<sup>41</sup>Fadiman, p. 46.

apply humanistic concepts carefully and selectively.

A possible difficulty in the teaching of literature for personal insight is put forward by Darwin Turner, who questions whether students will have the breadth of either personal or reading experiences to be able to derive positive benefits from their reading:

Whenever a reader cannot use his personal experience of his previous study to expand the portraiture of a single work, he may believe that the values represented are faithful and full representations of the values of . . . an unfamiliar group. Moreover, if he has already formed judgments about the characters, attitudes, and experiences of groups whom he does not know intimately, his prejudices may be fortified by the reading of a single work which seems to conform to those prejudices; in contrast, his prejudices probably will withstand the onslaught of a single work which refutes them.<sup>42</sup>

The most serious implication of this problem is that without caution in the selection and teaching of literary works it is possible that literature teaching activities directed toward personal insight may do more harm than good.

An implication of the humanistic approach to literature study that may or may not lead to a serious problem is suggested by D. B. Gowin and J. Strzepek:

Educational values also come out of literature, as they come out of other aspects of subject matter. A teacher's judgment of a pupil may be directly influenced by the teacher's concept of human nature derived from the study of literature. Writers who seem to assert in their writing that human nature is dual, that man suffers from original sin, and so on, may influence teachers who read

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<sup>42</sup> Darwin W. Turner, "Literature and Society's Values," Readings for Teaching English in Secondary Schools, ed. Theodore W. Nipple (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1973), p. 144.

them to adopt these same views about pupils.<sup>43</sup>

There is nothing wrong with a teacher's drawing into his own view of human nature concepts from literature; this is probably a natural process. The danger, perhaps, lies in the possibility of giving to certain values a reinforcement or de-emphasis beyond that provided in the literature itself, thus prejudicing the development of the student's own insights.

### Conclusions

The preceding review leads to a number of conclusions relevant to the purposes of this study. First it has become apparent that there are grounds for doubt of the credibility of many of the studies that have been examined. There are studies--those that give purely tacit acknowledgment to the values-shaping capacity of literature and those that assert it out of faith--whose authority in this regard is weakened because they cannot be demonstrated to originate in a critical, informed understanding. There are also studies that seem to show a grounding in knowledge of the problem but whose conclusions must be qualified to some degree because of the reactionary or crusading nature of some of the points made.

Indeed, it must be said that if one removes from the picture all studies not based on fairly solid empirical evidence--those that take for granted that literature influences values, those that assert it on faith, those that embrace it out of reac-

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<sup>43</sup>D. B. Gowin and J. Strzepek, "The Far Side of Paradigms. Conditions for Knowledge-making in English Instruction," Oswego, N.Y.: New York State English Council, ERIC Document BD 040 985, 1969. p. 22.

tion, that promote it as part of a movement--if one removes all these studies, one is left with remarkably little in the way of support for the idea of a values-shaping function for literature. This is true even if one narrows the field of inquiry down to include only the experimental studies, which have the authority of measurement and statistical analysis. As has been seen, even these investigations are somewhat less than conclusive.

It seems, in fact, that on the basis of the preceding review there is no substantial ground for believing that literature influences values. One response to this would be to conclude that no researcher has devised an experimental instrument adequate for the task, and to set about trying to devise such an instrument. A quite different response, however, is to attempt to remove the vagueness and imprecision which surrounds the prevalent assumption that the link between literature and values is somehow a values-shaping influence in literature. Without negating what is positive in the research material, it is possible as a result of analyzing it to give focus to its ideas, to define a more precise, more soundly-based connection between literature and values. It is this latter response that will be pursued here.

Most, if not all, of the articles and documents surveyed in the preceding examination deal with cognitive and affective responses to literature and more or less presume that the influence of literature upon values, to the extent that it exists, simply follows from these responses. Few would quarrel with the statement that it is possible for a reader to arrive at an awareness of values-concepts--related or otherwise--in a literary work, or to evolve attitudes toward characters or events in the work. It

involves a considerable leap, however, to say that this implies an effect on the reader's values, for according to the terms of the definition of "values" established in Chapter One of this study, one's actions are primary determiners of one's moral character. Regardless of any achievement of conscious awareness of values concepts in literature, and regardless of any profession of moral attitudes toward characters and events in literary works, literature cannot be said to influence moral character unless it can be shown to have affected the actual behaviour of the reader. Perhaps, then, the effect of literature upon a reader is upon his conscious awareness, and the real gap to be bridged at the theoretical level is not between literature and values but between awareness and values within the individual reader.

Lest this be thought of as an artificial distinction, it can easily be seen that such a gap is in one sense a positive presumption in literature teaching. One expects, for example, not to produce a classroom of racists from exposure to the word "nigger" in The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn; one would encourage students to see the word in its historical context and in the context of positive values exemplified in the novel. In other words, one would encourage in the student the ability to detach himself at some point from the work, to view it as reflecting the author's awareness of and attitudes toward his world, and to reserve final judgment until the author's awareness and attitudes are reasonably clear. The capacity of readers to understand, but to say in the end, "It's just a story," may in the light of the potential negative effects of immediate behavioural response be a very

desirable capacity.

The implication is that what so often is referred to, implicitly or explicitly, as the influence of literature on values, should be thought of as a power in literature to convey conscious insight and understanding, which may be related to values, but which is not necessarily actualized in moral character. In other words, rather than a power to influence behaviour, the connection between literature and values should be seen as a more limited capacity in literature to bring about awareness of moral ideas. It matters little whether changes in moral behaviour occur or do not occur as a result of the process; the total sphere of any values component to literary inquiry is simply the possibility that literature may establish in the reader intellectual and emotional conditions under which he can alter his moral character if he chooses to. Thus insofar as literature intersects in a meaningful way with values, it does so in contributing to the kind of broad, conscious insight suggested in Chapter One of this study to be part of an expanded, critical base for one's moral identity.

This is an important conclusion, since it defines a practical, reasonable connection between literature and values that is entirely consistent with the process of literary inquiry described in Chapters Three and Four of this study, and at the same time is not subject to the theoretical doubts to which the notion of an actual values-shaping function for literature is so clearly open. Further, it is only within the limitations imposed by this conclusion that it is possible to see certain other implications of the research material as contributing positively to the present study. For example, there has been seen to be a strong affirmation

of empathy as a process central to literary response. Even if empathy cannot be shown to bring about changes in moral character, it is still an obvious vehicle for the enhancement of conscious moral awareness. Given the appropriate literary work, a reader, by living through the actions of a character, can gain knowledge of values systems that might be relevant to him. By reflecting a connection between literature and values that is not necessarily a values-shaping power in literature, assent to the idea of empathy thus provides a degree of support for the intent of the present study: to show by example that some literary works do possess values content realizable through classroom study and that, therefore, in such cases teaching should focus on this values content.

In a very similar way, the persistence of the practice of bibliotherapy, testified to in the review described in the preceding pages, adds support to the intent of this inquiry. It testifies to a connection that can quite reasonably be thought of as existing solely between literature and the conscious awareness of the reader.

Similarly, the widespread acceptance of the humanistic approach, evident in the preceding review, lends authority by analogy to the purposes of the present study. It is basic to the notion of humanism in this context that a reader is exposed through literature to a variety of values positions. Implicit in this is the deferral of any choice by the individual of particular values for himself from among those to which he has been exposed. Since only the individual's conscious awareness can be the repository for these deferred values, the humanistic approach can

be seen to parallel precisely the approach taken in this chapter: literature contributes to an ever-expanding intellectual awareness of values that need never have more than simply the potential of being translated into moral behaviour.

In any case, the overriding point of the preceding review seems clear. On the basis of an analysis of relevant articles and documents, one may limit the concept of a link between literature on conscious awareness of moral ideas. In the demonstration of a critical, rational basis for such an effect, one of the major steps of the present study is accomplished: the general formulation of a context in which values-focussed literature teaching may be held to be a legitimate activity. It is now possible to flesh out this conceptual framework and confirm it in practice: to proceed to show by example that the kind of morally-centred literature study permitted and warranted by the general context is possible and practical in the particular case.

Review of Critical Works  
Relating to Lord Jim

Since so much of the present study will hinge on the approach taken to Conrad's Lord Jim, it is appropriate to conduct a survey of critical opinion on Conrad. In recounting this survey, there will be no attempt to review exhaustively the range of ideas encountered. Mention will be made only of some critical works judged to have a bearing on the present study. If recognized critical works can be seen to involve ideas that are similar or related to aspects of the approach to be taken here, then a degree of support will have been contributed to the conclusions of this

study.

It is possible, first of all, to find a large number of critics who acknowledge, directly or indirectly, that Conrad's central concerns are, in general, moral ones. For example, John A. Palmer says explicitly of Conrad's work that "its psychological, philosophical, and symbolic subtleties are secondary to his central moral interest, and largely derivative from it."<sup>44</sup> This is entirely consistent with the approach taken here, in which the central moral questions in Lord Jim will be held to govern virtually all other developments in the novel.

Pursuing further the idea of a central moral interest in Conrad, it is possible to find support for positive moral qualities that, it will be contended later in this study, Jim exemplifies: fidelity, instinctive courage, and strength of will to endure as a moral being. Arthur J. Price states:

This one quality above all others with which Conrad endows his characters is endurance; an endurance which implies loyalty and heroism. It may be loyalty to a simple idea arising from a sense of duty; it may be the continuous suffering under trying conditions to carry out that duty; yet Conrad's men and women endure."<sup>45</sup>

Further, linking the idea specifically to Lord Jim, Price says:

This power of endurance to the end, whereby a purpose is achieved, is best exemplified in the character of Jim. Even though endurance against numerous and frequent obstacles, and loyalty of soul to that which is best in one, bring not the coveted reward as one

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<sup>44</sup>John A. Palmer, Joseph Conrad's Fiction: A Study in Literary Growth (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1968), p. x.

<sup>45</sup>Arthur J. Price, An Appreciation of Joseph Conrad (London: Simpkin, Marshall Ltd. [n.d.]), p. 49.

would visualize that reward, yet Conrad insists on constancy of purpose, and purity of life.<sup>46</sup>

J. Hillis Miller finds that even in the face of the "darkness" of ultimate futility, the positive characters in Conrad's work often show "an increasing act of will, a will to keep the darkness out and to keep what is within the charmed circle of civilization clear, distinct, and inventoried."<sup>47</sup> Peter J. Glassman develops the idea that the value exemplified in Jim is one of instinctive, willful courage against the limitations imposed on the human condition by a universe hostile to and destructive of moral value.<sup>48</sup>

Even stronger in modern criticism than a concept of positive value in Conrad's characters, and also central to the interpretation of Conrad's meaning to be developed in this study, is an emphasis on Conrad's pessimism--his pervasive sense of a nihilistic cosmos that ultimately renders futile all ideals or conceptions of value and, therefore, limits the basis on which men may know themselves to be moral. Miller, who has already been seen to speak of a "darkness" in Conrad's vision, elaborates on the idea:

The human world is a lie. All human ideals, even the ideal of fidelity, are lies. They are lies in the sense that they are human fabrications. They derive from man himself and are supported by nothing outside him. There is a gap between man and the world, and what remains isolated within the human realm is illusory and insubstantial.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Price, p. 50.

<sup>47</sup>J. Hillis Miller, Poets of Reality: Six Twentieth-Century Writers (New York: Atheneum, 1969), p. 13.

<sup>48</sup>Peter J. Glassman, Language and Being: Joseph Conrad and the Literature of Personality (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), pp. 251-256.

<sup>49</sup>Miller, p. 17.

C. B. Cox similarly affirms a cosmic pessimism in Conrad, contending that the author of Lord Jim struggled with a "paralyzing vision" of a monstrously, mechanistically nihilistic universe.<sup>50</sup> Paul L. Wiley states that part of Conrad's vision involves "replacement of a man-centered design of creation with one in which the individual and his values become insignificant."<sup>51</sup> Royal Roussel bases his entire approach on an affirmation of the dark side of Conrad's vision--the nihilism, the cosmic pessimism about human beings and truth.<sup>52</sup>

As a supplement to the above-mentioned critical references, it may be added that Conrad himself, in one of his letters, gives a darkly pessimistic, mechanistic view of the cosmos:

There is a--let us say--machine. It evolved itself (I am severely scientific) out of a chaos of scraps of iron and behold!--it knits. I am horrified at the horrible work and stand appalled. I feel it ought to embroider--but it goes on knitting. You come and say: 'This is all right; it's only a question of the right kind of oil. Let us use this--for instance--celestial oil and the machine shall embroider a most beautiful design in purple and gold.' Will it? Alas no. You cannot by any special lubrication make embroidery with a knitting machine. And the most withering thought is that the infamous thing has made itself; made itself without thought, without conscience, without foresight, without eyes, without heart. It is a tragic accident--and it has happened. You can't interfere with it. The last drop of bitterness is in the suspicion that you can't even smash it. In virtue of that truth one and immortal which lurks in the force that made it spring into existence it is what it is--and it is indestructible!

It knits us in and it knits us out. It has knitted time, space, pain, death, corruption, despair and all the

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<sup>50</sup>C.B. Cox, Joseph Conrad: The Modern Imagination (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1974), pp. 10-11.

<sup>51</sup>Paul L. Wiley, Conrad's Measure of Man (New York: Gordian Press, Inc., 1966), p. 19.

<sup>52</sup>Royal Roussel, The Metaphysics of Darkness: A Study in the Unity and Development of Conrad's Fiction (Baltimore: the Johns Hopkins Press, 1971) passim.

illusions--and nothing matters. I'll admit however that to look at the remorseless process is sometimes amusing.<sup>53</sup>

This indeed supports in Conrad a vision of the world in which, to use Miller's words again, "what remains isolated within the human realm is illusory and insubstantial."

Essential to the approach to be taken to Lord Jim in the present study is the idea that Conrad represents moral ideas dramatically in actual characters confronted at a basic level with actual situations; that from his human response to these characters the reader is drawn through the text in an ever-enlarging, ever-clarifying process of inquiry until a conception of the author's meaning is reached. Various aspects of this idea find support in a reading of critical works. Bruce Johnson finds that Conrad uses "psychological models" in his novels; that he embodies in particular characters certain conceptions about mind and then in his stories explores the implications of these conceptions.<sup>54</sup> Certainly the idea of using the concrete example of a character and his actions to initiate the reader's insights into more complex problems and ideas is consistent with aims that Conrad has stated for himself; he has, after all, said, "My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel--it is, before all, to make you see."<sup>55</sup> Wiley, pursuing this notion, asserts that Conrad's stated emphasis on concreteness, on

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<sup>53</sup>Quoted in Cox, pp. 10-11.

<sup>54</sup>Bruce Johnson, Conrad's Models of Mind (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971) pp. 3, 4.

<sup>55</sup>Joseph Conrad, "Preface to The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'". Joseph Conrad on Fiction, ed. Walter F. Wright, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964) p. 162.

"visual" effects, may actually be part of a larger purpose: "finding visual or dramatic equivalents for states of inner experience or for ideas embodied in his tales."<sup>56</sup> One of the objectives of Wiley's study, in fact, is to demonstrate "that Conrad did so rely upon visual procedures that he attempted to project even the most subtle moral and psychological matters through dramatic and concrete situations."<sup>57</sup> That Lord Jim, no matter how complex it may be in totality, appeals to its reader first at a human level through its concretely rendered main character is further affirmed by Albert Guerard, who summarizes: "Lord Jim . . . is an intricate novel about possible emotional responses to a relatively simple man."<sup>58</sup> This is quite in line with the concept of an initial subjective human response to literature that, it will be seen, is fundamental to the model of literary inquiry that in the present study will form the basis of an approach to Lord Jim.

Guerard carries the idea further when he emphasizes the importance of a close second reading to derive the full meaning of the novel; whereas a first reading will tend to involve limited, subjective responses to Jim as a simple human being whose actions pose some fairly simple moral questions, a detailed directed re-reading leads to awareness of facts that allow the reader to render objective judgments that may differ from or even contradict

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<sup>56</sup>Wiley, p. 12.

<sup>57</sup>Wiley, p. 13.

<sup>58</sup>Albert J. Guerard, Conrad the Novelist (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958) p. 145.

the first responses.<sup>59</sup> This parallels remarkably closely the model of literary inquiry to be put forward later in this study--a model in which the reader returns to the text at every stage to amplify and objectify this initial response to the characters and their actions. Moreover, the implication by Guerard that this process is demanded by the text of Lord Jim offers support for the contention in Chapter Four of the present study that the details of Lord Jim are contrived to stimulate and perpetuate the enlargement and clarification process.

As has been stated, this account of critical works on Conrad and Lord Jim is by no means intended to be exhaustive. A very selective review has been sufficient to show that there is critical grounding for some of the key aspects of the approach that the present study will take to Lord Jim: the basic moral concern; certain positive values exemplified in Jim; the pessimistic side of Conrad's vision; the nature of the inquiry process invited by the text of the novel.

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<sup>59</sup>Guerard, pp. 131-133, 140-146.

## CHAPTER 3

### A MODEL OF LITERARY INQUIRY IN THE CLASSROOM

It has been pointed out, earlier in this study, that any values-related ideas found to form the basis of Lord Jim must, to satisfy this investigation, be able to be developed and realized in the process of classroom study. To ensure that this demand is met, it will be the purpose of this chapter to formulate a teaching model that, when used as a focus for the analysis of Lord Jim, will serve as a practical grounding for that analysis.

The model to be used will be derived from Louise Rosenblatt's Literature as Exploration, a widely recognized book on the dynamics of literary response in the classroom. Rosenblatt's work is chosen for reasons that will be specified and substantiated during the course of this chapter. Generally, it is a book that is practical in a broad, flexible way, and involves values in a way that is consistent with the concept--developed in Chapter Two of this study--of a practical link between literature and values.

It is neither necessary nor appropriate here to present the entire content of Rosenblatt's book. Rather, illustration will be made of those key ideas that lead to development of a teaching model suitable for the purposes of the present study. The nature and suitability of the teaching model itself may then be explained in detail.

Central Ideas in Rosenblatt's  
Literature as Exploration

Subjective Initial Response  
to Literature

For Rosenblatt, the reader of a work of literature, even the youthful reader, is not merely the passive recipient of words and ideas; he is an active, creative participant in the process. Reading Literature is "a transaction between the reader and the text."<sup>1</sup> The reader brings to his experience of literature certain unique emotions, attitudes, personal experiences, and so on. (p. 30) Further, what the reader brings to literature may be different at different times, depending on circumstances and moods in his life. (p. 35) In short, the reader's role in the literary experience is totally subjective. It is the inevitability of this that leads Rosenblatt to establish the subjective initial response as a crucial part of the teaching process:

The teacher realistically concerned with helping his students to develop a vital sense of literature cannot, then, keep his eyes focused only on the literary materials he is seeking to make available. He must also understand the personalities who are to experience this literature. He must be ready to face the fact that the student's reactions will inevitably be in terms of his own temperament and background. Undoubtedly these may often lead him to do injustice to the text. Nevertheless, the student's primary experience of the work will have had meaning for him in these personal terms and no others. No matter how imperfect or mistaken, this will constitute the present meaning of the work for him, rather than anything he docilely repeats about it. Only on the basis of such direct emotional elements, immature though they may some-

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<sup>1</sup>Louise M. Rosenblatt, Literature as Exploration, Revised ed. (New York: Noble and Noble, Publishers, Inc., 1938) pp. 34-35. All subsequent references to Rosenblatt in this chapter are to this edition and are noted parenthetically in the text.

times be, can he be helped to build any sounder understanding of the work. The nature of the student's rudimentary response is, perforce, part of our teaching materials. (p. 51)

The initial response is fundamentally "human", often a process of identification with characters, (pp. 37, 38) and because of its very inevitability cannot be neatly separated from "formal" elements of the work. (pp. 51, 52) It is for Rosenblatt a grave disservice to students to view as part of the teaching process only the formal, theoretical aspect of literature; (pp. 52-53) the human, subjective response is the primary motive force of the transaction between reader and text. (pp. 51-52) "Literary training", Rosenblatt believes, is thus "the refinement of the student's power to enter into literary experiences and to interpret them." (p. 52) Learning to apply a knowledge of the formal elements of literature is part of the refinement process, not some distinct and transcendent vehicle for development of sophisticated literary taste.

It is in the light of the fundamental need to recognize and work with the reader's primary subjective response to literature that Rosenblatt devotes two entire chapters to implications it has for the teacher. First, she discusses the need for, and the means of, encouraging a classroom atmosphere in which the subjective response is expressed freely, with as little inhibition as possible. (pp. 57-77) Second, she points out the need for an awareness on the teacher's part of what students can and do bring to their experience of literature, (p. 78) and she suggests some directions such an awareness might take. (pp. 78-109)

The Importance of the Text of  
the Literary Work

Rosenblatt emphasizes the nature and role of the reader because, apparently, she sees this as a neglected area. The basic concept of the literary experience as a transaction, however, is balanced: the text, as well as the reader, is given a participatory role in the process:

The literary work exists in the live circuit set up between reader and text: the reader infuses intellectual and emotional meanings into the pattern of verbal symbols, and those symbols channel his thoughts and feelings. Out of this complex process emerges a more or less organized imaginative experience. (p. 25)

The text is not, in this conception, just an initial stimulus; it is part of a spiralling process in which the reader's thoughts and feelings, as channelled by the text, colour and direct further reading of the text, which in turn further channels thoughts and feelings, and so on. Thus Rosenblatt's references to the teaching process show an emphasis on following up the initial subjective response by "leading the students toward a fuller participation in what the text offers." (p. 78) The teacher's practised awareness of what the student brings to the literary experience is not an end in itself, but "should constantly be brought to bear upon the problem of ensuring that the student has responded to what is actually offered by the text." (pp. 110.-111) As has been suggested, the subjective immediate response to the work is not left behind as an initial stimulus but becomes integrated into a totality of understanding. (pp. 111-113)

Clearly, Rosenblatt holds as a central standard, truth to the text of the literary work. She asserts directly that "the clarification of the reader's personal understanding of the novel

or poem or play carries with it a responsibility to the text itself." (p. 114) This centrality of the text is, indeed, part of what makes teaching principles derived from Rosenblatt suitable for the purposes of this investigation. It was stated in the beginning of this study to be axiomatic that what is integral to the text of a literary work ought to be integral to the teaching of that work; in a basic way, therefore, the text itself is central in governing the possibility of any particular emphasis in the teaching of it. The centrality of the text in Rosenblatt's approach is quite consistent with this concept.

#### Intermediaries in the Transaction

As far as the classroom is concerned, there are, for Rosenblatt, two intermediary forces between the initial response and a final achievement of understanding. The first of these is essentially a social process; interaction among students in the classroom. The teacher's task of encouraging spontaneity and sincerity in the expression of primary responses implies also the "need to develop the security to permit a rather free-flowing discussion to begin with, before the group can be helped to focus on problems and skills of interpretation relevant to them." (p. 71) The ideal discussion situation is one in which there is an interchange among students, with the teacher simply one of the group. (p. 72) The realization of subjectivity that will come from such an exchange of primary responses is what will motivate a continuing return to the text and the development of a more objectively based response:

In the interchange of ideas the student will be led to compare his reactions with those of other students and of the teacher (later, if necessary, of established critics). He will see that a particular work may give rise to attitudes and judgments different from his own. Some interpretations, he will discover, are more defensible than others in terms of the text as a whole. Yet he will also become aware of the fact that sometimes more than one reasonable interpretation is possible. From this interplay of ideas questions will arise: Why was his reaction different from the other students? Why did he choose one particular slant rather than another? Why did certain phrases of the book or poem strike him more forcibly than others? Why did he misinterpret or ignore certain elements? The attainment of a sound vision of the work will require the disengagement of the passing or irrelevant from the fundamental and appropriate elements in his response to the text. What was there in his state of mind that led to a distorted or partial view of the work? What in his temperament and past experience helped him to understand it more adequately? (pp. 78 - 79)

The free exchange of subjective opinions thus itself focusses and directs the revolving transaction of reader and text that constitutes the literary experience: the reader returns to the text with questions in mind and re-reads in a purposeful way.

The other intermediary in the transactional process in the classroom is, of course, the teacher. The teacher's task, at a general level, is twofold. First, he must, as has been suggested, establish an atmosphere "enabling the student to approach the text without artificial restrictions and to respond in his own terms." (p. 76) Second, the teacher must "initiate a process through which the student can clarify and enlarge his response to the work." (p. 76) Since it is basic to the transactional concept that growth of objectively-based response to literature is tied constantly to a concurrent growth in the reader's critical insight (pp. 76,-77), the second of these two tasks for the teacher is focussed in both these areas of awareness. The teacher must be

aware of, and prepared to deal with, whatever psychological and sociological forces may colour a student's response to literature. (p. 78) He must actively work to maintain the security that students feel to express themselves and yet moderate and control discussion, leading it in productive directions. (p. 71) He must be prepared to offer on his own part "flexible command of the text and understanding of the reading skills it requires." (p. 71)

More specifically, the teacher can inject into the transaction a number of things, on the condition that the initial and final responses are to the text. Concepts of literary form and structure--the formal elements--may be discussed as long as they contribute to a total understanding that is not based on a distinction between form and content. (pp. 42-51) There is room left for reference to critical standards by Rosenblatt's assertion that in spite of the highly individual nature of literary response, "the student should be led to discover that some interpretations are more defensible than others." (p. 115) Such potentially tangential areas as background study, biographical material, the literary tradition in which the author operates, or the context of the work in literary history, all may have their place. (pp. 115-117) If the emphasis is properly upon the elements of the transactional process of experiencing literature as outlined above, the apparent outward movement of these "concentric circles of interest" will actually lead inward--deeper into the text and into the student's own personality.

The Values Focus in the  
Transactional Concept

Rosenblatt skirts the problem of an actual influence of literature upon values. Although she says that, ultimately, "the criterion for judging the success of any educational process must be its effect on the actual life of the students", (p. 182) she does not feel that in the case of literary experience in education the criterion can be applied at present:

We are now venturing on ground that is thorny with unexplored difficulties. Much emotion has been expended upon this problem of the influence of literature, but little careful or controlled study has been made of it. (p. 183)

Implicitly, Rosenblatt makes the same distinction that was made in Chapter Two of the present study: she leaves any actual effect of literature on values as a potential, (pp. 183 ff.) and deals with the more practical and realizable goals of literary and personal insight. In this respect, then, Rosenblatt's approach is consistent with the general framework defined earlier in this study.

Aside from the idea of an ultimate grounding of literature study in values-related insights, it is clear in Rosenblatt's book that the student's insight into his own personality and values is an inescapable part of the transactional concept. Among the subjective factors that colours the primary response to literature are values held by the reader; the process of seeking an enlarged, objectively-based response to literature will focus critical awareness on the self as responder (and hence the values of the self) as much as on the literary work responded to (pp. 76-77). Growth of personal insight in this manner is fed by, and in turn feeds, growth of the capacity for literary understanding. (p. 77)

It is in the context of this allowance for cyclical growth within the transactional process that Rosenblatt makes statements like the following:

The attempt to work out the author's system of values and assumptions about man and society should enable the student to discover the unspoken assumptions behind his own judgment. His conclusions about this particular work imply the unarticulated theories of human conduct and ideas of the good that shape his thinking. (p. 120)

Further, Rosenblatt notes that students led through the literary experience in the manner she suggests "will develop a more critical, questioning attitude and will see the need of a more reasoned foundation for their thoughts and judgments, a more consistent system of values." (p. 121) This seems consistent with the concept, developed in Chapter Two of the present study, that the link between literature and values is the connection between the content of literature and a conscious, critical awareness in the reader; that any manifest change in actual values remains only a theoretically possible product of the link.

Clearly, a values emphasis is in every way integral to the transactional concept put forward by Rosenblatt. If classroom literary inquiry is carried out according to Rosenblatt's ideas, and if the literary work is suitable for such inquiry, the teaching will inevitably have a values focus. This is one of the key points to be carried into Chapter Four of the present study.

#### The Practicality of the Rosenblatt Approach

Since the process of classroom literary inquiry suggested by Rosenblatt is what serves to ground the present study in

teaching practice, it is important to show that the process is indeed a practical concept. The key point to remember in this connection is that while she insists on certain principles and directions, Rosenblatt does not prescribe the actual content of classroom activities. Her ideas are general enough to allow application through a range of particular practices, of which one may be found to suit almost any classroom situation.

The key to the practicality of the Rosenblatt approach, then, is simply its flexibility. Clearly, if one were firmly bound to develop every new point to be considered in a literary work from initial spontaneous response through open but controlled discussion to an eventual critical appraisal, the process would become tedious and disproportionately time-consuming. The basic considerations of time and motivation thus make flexibility a necessary characteristic of the approach.

In any case, the precise direction of discussion and assignments at any point in the process is not something that can be indicated ahead of time. The individual human differences that would lead the study of the work down any one of many possible paths are basic to the concept offered by Rosenblatt. The teacher's awareness of the factors creating those human differences, of the text itself, of techniques for leading discussion, and of the objective of a refined, critical response to the text, would guide the work within the principles established in the preceding pages.

The basic need in the Rosenblatt concept is only that the general thrust of the entire process be a movement from initial

subjective response to broad critical understanding. Most points necessary to a total understanding of the work will be brought in by students or by the teacher as the base for critical response widens to a larger, overriding issue. The larger issues would be relatively few in number, allowing for a considerable variation in procedures without straying from the overall direction of the study program.

For example, then, lectures or other methods directly pointing out matters helpful to interpreting the text are not precluded by the Rosenblatt concept; there is no compulsion in the teaching principles derivable from Literature as Exploration to spend all the class time in inductive discussion activities. It seems conceivable that responses at any given point in the process may be written rather than oral, and that evaluation of and commentary on assignments may contribute to returning students to the text and encouraging the evolution of a more objectively based response.

It has already been pointed out that there is a wide range of literary facts, terms and ideas that can be brought into the process; there is no need for the class to be discussing values issues at any given time. It may be noted as well in this context that there is no need, in order to produce a values focus, for every question or discussion topic to be couched explicitly in values terms and concepts. As has been seen, values-related insight is, for Rosenblatt, part and parcel of literary insight in any case, and, if the insights into values are integral to the text, whatever questions lead to an informed awareness of the text

will be suitable questions for a values-focussed approach.

A reading of Rosenblatt's work reveals, then, that the transactional concept of literary inquiry is flexible enough to allow almost any standard teaching practices while still functioning to guide classroom activities in the directions that it establishes. The concept is practical not because of specific prescribed details but because of the flexibility it allows.

#### A Model of Literary Inquiry Based on Rosenblatt

It is possible at this point to put together a framework or model of classroom literary inquiry derived from the principles explained in Rosenblatt's work. According to these principles, questions or discussion topics would be formulated to invite response to characters and events at a subjective, human level, but to allow of resolution through a searching, wide-ranging examination of the text. These questions would provide the stimulus and focus for discussion of each key aspect of the work. Discussion would be guided from the initial subjective response prompted by the question, through a refinement process; in discussion and written assignments students would be led to return to the text to substantiate ideas, to clear up discrepancies, and to broaden the objective base of their responses. Naturally, the overall direction of the questions would be toward the insights that ultimately form the author's vision as conveyed by the totality of the text.

Stated more concisely, the framework that will be referred to in this study as "the Rosenblatt model" is one in which inquiry proceeds from subjective response to characters and their actions

through successive re-examinations of the text to an enlarged, more objectified response, and ultimately, to an understanding of the author's world view as represented in the work. The full significance of such a model will become evident in the following chapter; for the present it is sufficient simply to outline the nature of the model and the key ideas and principles that go to make it up.

It has been seen that the Rosenblatt model has inherent in it both the values focus and the practicality demanded by the present study. Further, it may be considered a sound, authoritative model simply because of the range of variables that it encompasses. In a systematic, coherent, and flexible way, Rosenblatt allows for the importance of the literary work, the individual student, and the teacher. Her work seems impossible to fault seriously for narrowness of approach, unconsidered possibilities, impracticality or inflexibility, or unsubstantiated generalizations. In short, the Rosenblatt model is a sound one because it derives from a concept that touches all the necessary bases in a comprehensive way.

## CHAPTER 4

### VALUES-RELATED INQUIRY AS THE BASIS OF CONRAD'S LORD JIM

The Rosenblatt approach yields a model that is not just of classroom practice, but of literary inquiry itself. The model inevitably involves a grounding in values, not as an imposed emphasis but as an integral part of the process of understanding. The initial response to a character's actions and attitudes must necessarily be in terms of the reader's own subjective values, but the directed re-examination of the text leads to a more objective view of the issue and in the end to an encompassing understanding of the author's meaning. In this understanding is the potential for the reader of bringing aspects of the author's view into his own.

Viewed in this way, the Rosenblatt model is absolutely central to the purpose of showing that the content of Conrad's Lord Jim validates teaching this novel with a values emphasis. To elaborate, it is possible to identify three large sections or parts in Lord Jim: The Patna incident, including the hearing that follows it; Jim's behaviour subsequent to the hearing, including his rise to power in Patusan; the final tragic events in Patusan. In each of these sections, it may be seen that the focal point of events and characters is a moral problem exemplified in the actions and attitudes of Jim. It is basically this focus on open questions of the rightness or wrongness of Jim's behaviour at the key points

in the story that makes the Rosenblatt model a suitable approach to this novel. The response invited in the reader is, initially, to Jim's actions and attitudes, and takes the forms of moral questioning. The reader is then led not only by the circumstances of Jim's problem but by Conrad's use of the inquiring Marlow as narrator to search out and weigh details that may substantiate one side or the other of the issue. This process of inquiry embodies precisely that found in the Rosenblatt model; the reader responds subjectively to the particular actions and attitudes of the character, questioning in the light of his own values; he returns to the text for clarification and enlargement of his understanding of the issue; he emerges with an enlarged and more satisfying account of the problems to which he has responded; in the end, it is hoped, he gains a comprehension of the author's world-view or values position--a comprehension that grants him the potential of internalizing and evaluating this view.

Since in the Rosenblatt model the thrust is always back to the text for substantiating and elucidating detail, a process of inquiry paralleling this model can be shown to be demanded by the text only if details in the text really do substantiate and elucidate a response to the initial question. In other words, if plot and character details can be seen consistently to revolve around the central moral issues, such that inquiry according to the Rosenblatt model is invited, then it may be inferred that this inquiry is part and parcel of the response the author intends his reader to experience. The greater the weight of details that fit the pattern, and the more coherent and consistent the approach that accounts for these details, the stronger the inference will be.

Thus much of this chapter will be devoted to showing how details of the story expand upon and focus on certain controlling moral questions. Given the practicality and the values basis already seen to exist in the Rosenblatt model, this will establish that values issues susceptible of clarification in the classroom are indeed integral to the content of Lord Jim.

Part of the Rosenblatt model involves the reader's ultimate comprehension of the author's overall world-view as embodied in the work. On this count, again, Lord Jim parallels the Rosenblatt model. Jim's problem, it will be seen, remains essentially the same throughout the novel even though its different manifestations control distinct sections of the story. The process of inquiry described above has a cumulative effect, building toward a total understanding of the philosophical view represented by Lord Jim as a whole.

Thus, in addition to establishing that inquiry into certain moral issues governs the content of Lord Jim, it will be the purpose of this chapter to pursue the inquiry until it can be seen to lead to an encompassing philosophical view that the novel may be said to dramatize. The derivation and articulation of such a view will be the final confirmation that inquiry according to the Rosenblatt model is integral to the totality of the text.

#### The Moral Problem of Lord Jim

The approach taken here implies, generally, that Conrad dramatizes in the concrete events of Lord Jim a hypothetical moral problem, for the sake of inquiry into the limits and conditions of moral truth. Further, he builds his novel in such a way as to

invite the reader to participate in the inquiry. As was documented in Chapter Two of this study, such an approach is well supported by a reading of certain critical works on Conrad. Although it appears in several different outward manifestations, and although its implications have grown in scope and significance by the end of the story, the moral problem remains essentially the same throughout the novel, and in one way or another is always at the centre of a process of thoughtful inquiry.

An explanation of the general nature of the problem will aid in the understanding of later references to it in the course of the examination of Lord Jim. The problem is based on the idea that there may be two potential levels or spheres of moral reality, each displaying its own kind of truth, but each contradicting the other. An analogy in the form of a different moral problem will serve to illustrate the point. A man fully prepares himself to commit murder. He has the weapon; he sneaks into the intended victim's house in the dead of night; his intention is, as certainly as it can be, to commit the murder. Weapon poised, he finds at the last second that someone else has already murdered his intended victim.<sup>1</sup> The question raised by this situation is whether or not the man is a murderer. At the level of what is generally thought of as reality--the level of concrete facts and objects--he is not, since he has not in fact committed the act of murder. At another level, the inner level of his most deeply held convictions, he is

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<sup>1</sup>This problem is based on one presented as part of a discussion exercise in ethics, in John Hospers, Human Conduct: an Introduction to the Problems of Ethics (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1961) p. 40.

a murderer, since he was fully prepared to commit the act and was stopped only by a coincidence at the last possible moment.

There is no apparent way of resolving this dilemma, since there is no third standard by which to judge that either inner intention or objective fact is a more valid basis than the other for moral judgment. The man may be assigned two equally true but contradictory moral identities. According to one, he is undeniably innocent; according to the other, he is irrefutably guilty.

It is such a dual reality, though actually the reverse of that seen in the problem outlined above, that Conrad embodies in Jim, his main character. At the level of innermost intentions, Jim is innocent; at the level of outer reality, he is guilty. Through the example or model provided by Jim, Conrad explores the moral consequences of a case in which these contradictory moral identities are fully realized in one person. The meaning of the novel revolves around the ultimate nature of these consequences.

The First Part of the Novel:  
Establishment of the  
Problem

Prior to exploring the nature and origins of Jim's problem, it is necessary to provide an outline of Jim's role in the Patna incident, for it is here that the basic conflict of the novel is born. The Patna is the ship on which Jim takes a job as chief mate after an injury has caused him to be left behind in an Indian Ocean port. The Patna is "a local steamer as old as the hills, lean like a greyhound, and eaten up with rust worse than

a water tank."<sup>2</sup> The decadence of the officers matches the unseaworthy condition of the ship. The captain, described as "a sort of renegade New South Wales German", (p. 8) is enormously fat, brutal, and foul-mouthed; the chief engineer spends much of his time in bed in a drunken stupor, and the second engineer appears to have been driven half to lunacy by the heat and noise of the Patna's engine room.

It was common in the latter part of the nineteenth century for such ships and officers to engage in the corrupt practice of transporting shiploads of poor Muslim pilgrims from the Indian Ocean to the holy places on the Red Sea. Thus the Patna, rusted as she is, is overloaded with about eight hundred pilgrims, "driven on board of her" (p. 8) like animals and spread about the decks and holds like "human cargo." (p. 9)

It is on this ship, then, and with these men, that Jim encounters the events that shape the rest of his life. While the captain and the second engineer are engaged in a furious argument on the bridge one night, with Jim standing nearby, the ship runs over something in the water. The incident seems harmless enough at the time:

A faint noise as of thunder, of thunder infinitely remote, less than a sound, hardly more than a vibration, passed slowly, and the ship quivered in response, as if the thunder had growled deep down in the water. . . . The sharp hull driving on its way seemed to rise a few inches in succession through its whole length, as though it had become pliable, and settled down again rigidly to

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<sup>2</sup>Joseph Conrad, Lord Jim (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1900) p. 8. All subsequent references to Lord Jim in this chapter are to this edition and are noted parenthetically in the text. This edition is used because it is the standard text of Lord Jim used in Manitoba high schools.

its work of clearing the smooth surface of the sea. Its quivering stopped, and the faint noise of thunder ceased all at once, as though the ship had steamed across a narrow belt of vibrating water and of humming air. (p. 16)

When Jim is sent to check, however, he finds that the ship's hull has sustained a hole toward the bow, and the forepeak is filling with water. Only a single bulkhead separates the forepeak from the forehold. When Jim is sent a second time to investigate the forehold, he finds the bulkhead actually bulging with the force of the water in the forepeak. Knowing that awakening the sleeping pilgrims to warn them would only cause a panic, and knowing that there are not enough lifeboats for more than half of them, and feeling certain that there is in any case no time because the ship will sink any second, Jim returns to the bridge, where the captain and the other officers are frantically trying to release one of the lifeboats. In spite of the urgings of the others, Jim does not participate in the efforts to unfasten the boat. It is only after the other officers, through much effort, have got the lifeboat into the water that Jim, apparently without any conscious volition on his part, leaps into the boat. He and the other officers are rescued later by another ship, the Avondale, and taken to port.

The precise circumstances surrounding Jim's leap from the Patna are crucial, and will be enlarged upon in due course. The fact that complicates matters for Jim is that the Patna does not sink. She is discovered and towed into port days later by a French gunboat. It is this that renders Jim and the other officers manifestly guilty of dereliction of their duty by abandoning the ship and its passengers. The resulting Court of Inquiry, for

which Jim is the only one of the Patna's officers to remain, does in fact judge him guilty of the cowardly desertion and strips him of his certificate.

While the facts of the Patna incident leave no room for doubt of the verdict of the inquiry, Jim clearly feels the facts are inadequate to establish the real truth of the matter: "They wanted facts. Facts! They demanded facts from him, as if facts could explain anything." (p. 17) In Jim's stubborn sense of another level of truth may be found the basis of the conflict of moral identities that dominates the novel. Factual, objective reality shows Jim to be a coward and a deserter; his own innermost conviction tells him that he is a hero, true to his duty. Marlow, reporting one of their conversations, discusses Jim's attitude: "By Jove! he was amazing. There he sat telling me that just as I saw him before my eyes he wouldn't be afraid to face anything--and believing in it, too." (p. 60) Jim believes inwardly that he is innocent, and he believes it with a strength that fires the raging conflict Marlow senses in him: "He was not speaking to me, he was only speaking before me, in a dispute with an invisible personality, an antagonistic and inseparable partner of his existence--another possessor of his soul." (p. 59)

The initial response, then, is to the basic question of Jim's guilt or innocence, and it is a question given great force by its concrete representation in Jim at this point, by the emotional shock value of Jim's commitment to his own innocence in spite of the facts. This question is at the centre of this section of the novel, not because the novel provides an answer, but

because the details seem contrived to lend credibility and substance to the question itself. After all, it could well be asked how it is plausible that Jim could believe in something the truth of which is so obviously contradicted by reality. Why, in other words, should the reader grant Jim the benefit of the doubt and believe that he is, inwardly, anything but what the inquiry judges him to be--a coward? In order to establish that the conflict in Jim, with all its implications as an abstract moral problem, controls the content of the story, it is necessary to show the extent to which Jim's character and the circumstances of his conduct in the Patna incident lend credibility and consistency to his inner conviction of himself as having been true to his duty.

In the early chapters of the novel--prior to the Patna incident--it can be seen in Jim's background that it is characteristic of him to dream of himself as a hero even when the actuality does not bear out the dream. This tendency to dream is seen in the description of his activities on the training ship to which he had been sent, while still a boy, to learn to be a merchant marine officer: "His station was in the fore-top, and often from there he looked down, with the contempt of a man destined to shine in the midst of dangers." (p. 3) Off duty, he often withdraws completely into fantasy:

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 shellfish 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.(p.3)

A dramatic occurrence, however, an event that in fact clearly foreshadows the Patna incident, puts Jim's dream to the test. While the training ship is at anchor in the river during a storm, there is a collision between two other ships. The boys on the training ship man a rescue boat but Jim hesitates and the boat goes without him. In the evening, after the rescue, as the boys who had manned the rescue boat bathe in the adulation of the others, Jim does not participate. He is contemptuous of the proceedings, thinking them "a pitiful display of vanity." (p. 5) In one of a series of foreshadowings of his conduct on the Patna, he blames the storm itself for not giving him a fair chance: "He felt angry with the brutal tumult of earth and sky for taking him unawares and checking unfairly a generous readiness for narrow escapes." (p. 5) He remains, however, "rather glad he had not gone into the cutter, since a lower achievement had served the turn." (p. 5) In other words, he seems to feel that his own courage is of a much higher order than that demanded by this incident. The result of the entire affair is that his sense of his own heroism is strengthened, rather than weakened:

When all men flinched, then--he felt sure--he alone would know how to deal with the spurious menace of wind and seas. He knew what to think of it. Seen dispassionately, it seemed contemptible. He could detect no trace of emotion in himself, and the final effect of a staggering event was that, unnoticed and apart from the noisy crowd of boys, he exulted with fresh certitude in his avidity for adventure, and in a sense of many-sided courage. (p. 5)

That Jim should become more determined than ever in his conviction of himself as a hero may in part be attributed to a youthful "sour grapes" attitude. A key point, however, and one that will figure also in the Patna incident, is that there is no

clear-cut evidence that Jim had acted in a cowardly way. In the rush for the rescueboat, he had been "jostled" and "pushed," and it had been as he staggered, catching a rope to keep himself up, that the boat had been launched without him. (p. 4) While he had not forcefully taken hold of his opportunity, neither had he consciously rejected it. Thus in the case of the training ship episode it seems plausible that Jim does not allow the incident to shake his inner faith in his own courage.

It is made clear early in the novel, then, that Jim is a dreamer who under the right circumstances can hold to the truth of his dream even if that dream is not substantiated by the facts. What must be shown at this point is that such circumstances prevail in the Patna incident.

There are in fact several aspects of the incident that tend to lend credibility to Jim's contention that his dream-image of himself as a hero has not been betrayed. In the first place, Jim's argument that he had not simply rushed thoughtlessly to save his own life has some credibility:

'Do you suppose,' he said, 'that I was thinking of myself, with a hundred and sixty people at my back, all fast asleep in that fore-'tween-deck alone--and more of them aft; more on the deck--sleeping--knowing nothing about it--three times as many as there were boats for, even if there had been time? I expected to see the iron open out as I stood there and the rush of water going over them as they lay . . . What could I do--what?' (p. 54)

Jim's contention that he had in fact given consideration to the plight of the pilgrims is supported by Marlow:

"You must remember he believed, as any other man would have done in his place, that the ship would go down at any moment; the bulging, rust-eaten plates that kept back the ocean, fatally must give way, all at once like an undermined dam, and let in a sudden and overwhelm-

ing flood. 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 think he went through it again while he was telling me these things he could not tell the court." (p. 55)

If one can believe Jim, then, it must be granted that he had sincerely believed, after due consideration, that nothing could be done to aid the pilgrims--that his remaining on the ship would make no difference whatever.

An incident that occurs during one of Jim's investigative trips into the hold of the ship lends some further support to his claim that he had not been thinking of himself. Stepping among sleeping natives on the deck, he is grabbed by a man who repeatedly cries out "Water." (p. 57) Thinking at first that the man is referring to the water entering the forepeak of the ship, and not wishing him to awaken others and start a panic, Jim strikes the man in the face with his lantern. In the process of choking the man to keep him quiet, Jim realizes that he has misunderstood--that what the man wants is simply a drink of water for his sick child. Jim then goes to his own cabin and gets his water bottle, which he gives to the man.

If it is granted that Jim believes sincerely at this point that the ship will sink at any second, it must then be conceded that in effect Jim risks his life to obtain water for the native

who had accosted him. This is one of few parts of the whole incident in which Jim is seen actually acting in response to events, and this action shows him to be thinking not of himself but of another.

Even as the officers on the bridge frantically prepare the lifeboat for launching, Jim does not participate, in spite of curses, threats, and urgings of the other men. Were he thinking consciously of saving himself, he would surely aid them in their efforts. The worst that can be said of Jim's attitude at this point, in fact, is that, resigned to what he sees as certain death, he is paralyzed into inaction by his sense of his own courageous, though passive, confrontation of death.

The passivity of Jim's stance is broken only when the heat and a vague sense of having been trapped remind him of his intention to cut loose the life boats for the pilgrims, and he carries out his intention, "slashing as though he had seen nothing, had heard nothing, had known of no one on board." (p. 66) The fact that Jim is stirred to this action, done for the sake of the native pilgrims, by his own sense of entrapment, suggests that there is still operative in Jim a capacity to empathize with the ship's passengers. This capacity, again, is not consistent with a conscious desire on Jim's part solely to save himself.

It has been shown thus far that Jim's conscious intentions during the events of the Patna incident are, under the circumstances conceivably honourable. What remains to be determined, in this connection, is whether the nature of the events surrounding the actual leap from the Patna justifies Jim's feeling that he has been the victim of circumstances beyond his control.

Several factors may be pointed out that suggest what could well appear to be a conspiracy of fate to bring about Jim's leap from the ship without any conscious intention on his part. First, the weather plays a definite role. It is the first engineer, frantically trying to enlist Jim's help in freeing the life boat, who first points out to him the "silent beach squall which had eaten up already one-third of the sky." (p. 65) Such squalls, Marlow points out, involve wind and rain, striking "with a peculiar impetuosity as if they had burst through something solid." (p. 65) The officers, he continues, "were perfectly justified in surmising that if in absolute stillness there was some chance for the ship to keep afloat a few minutes longer, the least disturbance of the sea would make an end of her instantly." (p. 65) The squall lends even greater urgency to the efforts of the struggling men, and further credibility to Jim's contention that he was certain the ship would sink.

As it happens, the heavy swells immediately preceding the squall strike the ship just as the life boat is loosed. The squall itself hits while the life boat is still beside the ship. Jim relates what happens when the squall actually strikes: "The ship began a slow plunge; the rain swept over her like a broken sea; my cap flew off my head; my breath was driven back into my throat. . . . She was going down, down, head first under me." (p. 71) Jim does not recall the actual act of leaping; he realizes moments later, in the life boat, what he has done. Clearly, however, his leap takes place just as the ship plunges in the first waves of the violent squall; it seems reasonable under the circumstances that Jim would feel the ship to be sinking. The unconscious pressure on

him to save himself would be real and believable.

Coinciding with the arrival of the storm is the culmination of another bizarre chain of events. One of the officers, a third engineer named George, collapses and dies from an apparent heart attack in the exertion of trying to free the life boat. Nobody, including Jim, realized until later that the man is dead. The officers, of course, have ignored Jim completely after his refusal to help, and make no effort to include him in the life boat party. However, not knowing that George is dead, they call up to him after the boat is launched, urging him to jump. Thus it is that at the precise moment of the arrival of the squall, when Jim is already under the extreme pressure of feeling certain that the ship is actually sinking, he hears "another wild screech 'Geo-o-o-orge! Oh, jump!" (p. 71) Although the calls are not intended for him, they could not fail at that moment to have the effect of increasing the unconscious pressure on him to leap.

In the detailed analysis that Marlow makes of Jim's actions, it emerges that Jim begins to move toward the rail of the ship about the same time the life boat is dropped into the water but before the squall hits and the boat pulls away; this Marlow deduces from Jim's matter-of-fact statement, referring to George's corpse, "I stumbled over his legs." (p. 70) Neither Jim nor Marlow is aware of what prompted the movement: "Something had started him off at last, but of the exact moment, of the cause that tore him out of his immobility, he knew no more than the uprooted tree knows of the wind that laid it low." (p. 70) Since the beginning of his movement coincides approximately with the first sounds of wakefulness and activity among the pilgrims below, it is conceiv-

able that, as has already occurred once, Jim has been snapped out of inaction by his sense of the plight of the eight hundred passengers. Clearly, in any case, Jim's passage from the bridge to the rail and ultimately to the lifeboat begins in a small movement, the motive for which cannot with any certainty be ascribed to a cowardly desire to save himself. Hence there may be added to the two simultaneous events discussed above the fact that Jim is in motion when the squall strikes and the men make their last frantic call. The inertia, in this case, favours leaping rather than staying.

None of the points discussed above would be significant in isolation, and none would be significant were it not for Jim's semi-conscious state at the time and his resulting susceptibility to unconscious forces. It must be remembered, too, that all the events from George's death to Jim's leap take place in about a minute, in what Marlow refers to as "a tumult of events and sensations which beat about [Jim] . . . like the sea upon a rock." (p. 69) There would not be time for Jim to sit back, critically evaluate the forces acting on him, and make a rational decision.

What the preceding examination suggests is that Conrad has built his story in such a way that the reader, inquiring in response to the initial marvel of Jim's contention that he is innocent, is permitted to grant Jim the benefit of the doubt and accept the fervency, the sincerity, and the potential truth of a conviction that is flatly belied by the facts--and to do it without denying the truth of the facts. Inquiry as in the Rosenblatt model thus seems to be precisely the process invited by this part of the novel: the natural direction of understanding seems quite clearly

to be from an initial response to Jim and his conflict, through an examination of details building sympathy and credibility for Jim, to a sense of a moral problem with broad dimensions.

The Middle Part of  
the Novel

What is here termed the middle part of the novel extends from the conclusion of the hearing to Marlow's departure from Patusan as he visits Jim for the last time. Again, it will be shown that this part of the novel may be approached in the light of the Rosenblatt model: details in the text enlarge and objectify one's response to the immediate problem dramatized in Jim's actions. Further, for the sake of supporting what will finally be shown to be a cumulative effect building throughout the novel, it will be emphasized that the understanding arrived at in this part of the story is of an inner conflict in Jim that is essentially the same as that established in the first section.

It will be helpful, once again, to outline the relevant events of the plot in this section of the novel. Following the hearing, Marlow obtains a job for Jim. On this and a series of other jobs Jim works successfully and is well liked but moves on suddenly at any reminder of the Patna affair. Marlow gives details of several of these incidents, but for the purposes of this inquiry the general pattern of behaviour will be sufficient: Jim leaves a job and moves on when it becomes apparent to him that his employers know of the Patna case and his role in it.

Marlow, pursuing his interest in Jim's life, and at a loss over Jim's unsettled behaviour, seeks advice from Stein, "a wealthy

and respected merchant," (p. 129) and, Marlow reports, "one of the most trustworthy men I have ever known." (pp. 129-130) Stein is interested in Jim's problem and agrees to help. He employs Jim as manager of his trading post in the remote settlement of Patusan, displacing a man named Cornelius.

When Jim arrives, he finds Patusan torn by a three-way conflict over trade in the area. The groups involved in the sometimes-violent conflict are the Bugis, an immigrant group headed by a man named Doramin, the native group headed by Rajah Allang, and the followers of Sherif Ali, a religious fanatic and bandit. Sherif Ali, in effect, holds the balance of power in the area; members of the other two parties are both afraid of him and covetous of his friendship, since whichever group he allies himself with will be able to defeat the other group and gain the trade monopoly. When Jim arrives, the situation is in this delicate balance and no alliances have yet been formed.

It is by engineering the defeat of Sherif Ali and driving the bandit into the jungle that Jim establishes himself as the third power in Patusan. He incurs the gratitude and trust of the people and comes to be known as "Tuan Jim," or "Lord Jim." He marries a girl named Jewel, the stepdaughter of the displaced Cornelius, and settles into his position.

As far as the reader's understanding of Jim and his problem is concerned, the content of this middle part of the novel revolves around one focal question. Since Jim moves from job to job at any mention of the Patna incident and finally finds a niche in a place so remote, is he not in fact running away from his past?

It is common to conceive of facing up to a situation as the courageous act and to see running away from it as evidence of cowardice. Does Jim's behaviour, then, not seem to detract from the credibility of his stubborn inner faith that he is a hero?

Conrad does not clearly resolve this question, but a re-examination of the novel does raise enough doubts about the common concept of running away as cowardice--at least in Jim's case--to allow Jim again to be given the benefit of the doubt. What emerges from an inquiry stimulated by the problem of Jim's apparent running away is in fact an enlarged and strengthened understanding of the conflict explained earlier in this chapter.

Marlow, the only available interpreter of the question, is not at all sure of an answer; he comments, "What I could never make up my mind about was whether his line of conduct amounted to shirking his ghost or to facing him out." (p. 126) Again, Marlow says that even with the thorough exercise of his "mental eyesight," he finds that "the shade of difference was so delicate that it was impossible to say. It might have been flight and it might have been a mode of combat." (p. 126) The only clue to Marlow's reasoning here is his statement, in the same connection, that "to fling away your daily bread so as to get your hands free for a grapple with a ghost may be an act of prosaic heroism." (p. 126) Perhaps what Marlow means is that to accept the situation, to acknowledge that the fight must be fought on the world's terms, would be tacitly to give ground in the battle. If Jim is heroic here, then, his heroism lies in his insistence on fighting the battle on his own terms, in his refusal to compromise, even to the

slightest extent, the intensity of his inner vision.

This motivation, along with the inner conflict that it fuels, seems to remain a controlling force in Jim's life even after he establishes himself in Patusan. During Marlow's final visit with Jim in Patusan, Jim makes it clear that he is still aware of his past and still unable to conceive of existing in a world that would necessarily compromise his inner vision. Jim says to Marlow, "The very thought of the world outside is enough to give me a fright, because, don't you see . . . because I have not forgotten why I came here. Not yet!" (p. 197) As with Jim's behaviour after the hearing, it would be possible to interpret this at first glance as "running away," or at least as hiding from the truth. In fact, however, the same arguments apply here as were used above: the determination to keep from compromising his inner vision can be seen as a positive force. This determination is clearly evident in his statements to Marlow. "I feel that if I go straight nothing can touch me," (p. 210) Jim comments and, as he says goodbye to Marlow for the last time, "I must go on, go on for ever holding up my end, to feel sure that nothing can touch me." (p. 210)

As with the details of the Patna incident, inquiry into Jim's actions in this part of the novel leads to a sense--greater than may seem justified at first glance--of the plausibility of Jim's problem. Without coming down on one side or the other of the question, Conrad makes it possible to see Jim as acting positively to preserve his inner truth in spite of the external appearance of his actions.

In support of granting Jim the benefit of the doubt, it may

be pointed out that his motivation here is entirely consistent with that established, in discussion of the first part of the novel, to be the basis of Jim's inner conflict. If his actions present evidence of cowardice, they do so in the world of facts; the nature of the dilemma is exactly such that the inner conviction of truth can be held intact even in the face of facts that belie it. Thus there is a cumulative effect of enlightenment: casting back into the first part of the novel contributes to a clearer understanding of the middle part, and this enhanced insight into the middle part, in turn, confirms and clarifies what has been gained from the first part.

Clearly, literary inquiry according to the Rosenblatt model can be seen as part and parcel of a reading of the novel so far. The proof for this, as was suggested earlier, lies in the fact that this approach accounts in a consistent, coherent way for so much detail.

#### The Last Part of the Novel

The last part of the novel tells of the final events of Jim's life, events that Marlow was not aware of as he recited his after-dinner tale. In the chronology of the story, these events take place several years after Marlow's last visit with Jim in Patusan, and are presented through an unknown narrator--apparently a member of Marlow's audience on the veranda as he told his tale--on the basis of letters and documents received from Marlow.

Again the purpose here will be to demonstrate that details in this part of the novel revolve around and elucidate a central

moral problem, and again the criterion will be whether a coherent, consistent interpretation can be seen both to account for the details and to embody the kind of inquiry involved in the Rosenblatt model. Further, it will be shown that there is, as in earlier sections of the story, a cumulative understanding encompassing the entire novel so far, that may be gained of Jim and his problem.

Again it will be helpful to provide an outline of what occurs in this part of the novel. As has been seen, Jim achieves a position of power and prestige in Patusan. Into this scene comes Brown, leader of a group of pirates attempting to sail a stolen ship to Madagascar. He and some of his men come inland to Patusan for food and supplies. Ambushed and fired upon by the natives, they entrench themselves near the village, and remain well-fortified but cut off from escape.

Jim, having been away for several days, returns to find the situation as described above. He meets Brown and talks with him, and Brown finally convinces Jim to allow the pirates to leave. In convincing the natives to go along with his decision, Jim takes the responsibility for Brown's release entirely upon his own shoulders.

Brown and his men set out again down the river. In the meantime, Doramin had sent his beloved only son, Dain Waris, with a party of men to guard the mouth of the river. Knowing this, and on the lookout for any opportunities to hurt the man who has displaced him, Cornelius shows Brown a back route by which the camp of Dain Waris and his men, left to guard the river mouth, may be

approached secretly. Brown and his men attack the camp, killing Dain Waris.

Jim, who has taken the responsibility "for every life in the land" (p. 256) in convincing the Bugis to allow Brown and his men to go free goes voluntarily to Doramin that night. Doramin kills Jim with a single shot from one of his flintlock pistols.

The immediate moral issue on which this part of the novel is based lies essentially in the rightness or wrongness of releasing Brown. All the details of Jim's life in Patusan, and particularly those of his actual encounter with Brown, can be seen to bear upon this problem. Again, a return to the text for details will be seen to enlarge and crystallize one's understanding of a dilemma in Jim that is the cumulative product of all that has occurred so far in the novel.

A first reaction to Jim's decision to release Brown may well be disapproval. After all, by this decision he places the people under his care in great danger, and, it would appear, betrays the trust the people have placed in him, therefore, compromising his inner vision of himself as a hero. A close re-examination of the confrontation between Jim and Brown, however, and of the motives that lie behind their actions, will show that the matter is not so simple.

As has been mentioned, Jim is away when Brown and his men arrive. Brown speaks to others who attempt to connive with him, but he quickly realizes that if he wants to turn the situation to his own profit, "the white man was the person to work with." (p. 240) As far as Brown is concerned, Jim can have no motives

other than his own gain and will welcome the opportunity to form a partnership from which both will profit:

Brown's object was to gain time by fooling with Kassim's diplomacy. For doing a real stroke of business he could not help thinking the white man was the person to work with. He could not imagine such a chap (who must be confoundedly clever after all to get hold of the natives like that) refusing a help that would do away with the necessity for slow, cautious, risky cheating, that imposed itself as the only possible line of conduct for a single-handed man. He, Brown, would offer him the power. No man could hesitate. Everything was in coming to a clear understanding. Of course they would share. (p. 240)

Brown's aim at this point, of course, is eventually to have complete control himself, doing away with Jim:

The man was no fool, it seemed. They would work like brothers till . . . till the time came for a quarrel and a shot that would settle all accounts. (p. 240)

Thus Brown bides his time, waiting for Jim's return.

Brown's first sight of Jim, however, changes his aspirations drastically:

I know that Brown hated Jim at first sight. Whatever hopes he might have had vanished at once. This was not the man he had expected to see. He hated him for this-- and in a checked flannel shirt with sleeves cut off at the elbows, grey bearded, with a sunken, sun-blackened face--he cursed in his hearth the other's youth and assurance, his clear eyes and his untroubled bearing. That fellow had got in a long way before him! He did not look like a man who would be willing to give anything for assistance. He had all the advantages on his side-- possession, security, power; he was on the side of an overwhelming force! He was not hungry and desperate, and he did not seem in the least afraid. And there was something in the very neatness of Jim's clothes, from the white helmet to the canvas leggings and the pipe-clayed shoes, which in Brown's sombre irritated eyes seemed to belong to things he had in the very shaping of his life condemned and flouted. (p. 247)

From this point, then, all of Brown's evil cunning is directed not toward working with Jim to exploit the natives but toward finding

some way to attack Jim personally, to gain some advantage over him and thus be able to save himself.

Brown's first opportunity comes quickly. The following is their first exchange:

'Who are you?' asked Jim at last, speaking in his usual voice. 'My name's Brown,' answered the other, loudly; 'Captain Brown. What's yours?' and Jim after a little pause went on quietly as if he had not heard: 'What made you come here?' 'You want to know,' said Brown bitterly. 'It's easy to tell. Hunger. And what made you?' (p. 247)

Completely unwittingly, in asking Jim what had brought him to Patusan, Brown touches upon Jim's sore point--his past. That Brown is aware of having awakened something in Jim is evident from his later description of the moment: "The fellow started at this and got very red in the face." (p. 247) Without knowing exactly what his advantage is, Brown presses it shrewdly and mercilessly, as is seen in Marlow's report of Brown's account of the situation.

When he asked Jim with a sort of brusque despairing frankness, whether he himself--straight now--didn't understand that when 'it came to saving one's life in the dark, one didn't care who else went--three, thirty, three hundred people!--it was as if a demon had been whispering advice in his ear. 'I made him wince,' boasted Brown to me. 'He very soon left off coming the righteous over me. He just stood there with nothing to say, and looking as black as thunder--not at me--on the ground.' He asked Jim whether he had nothing fishy in his life to remember that he was so damnedly hard upon a man trying to get out of a deadly hole by the first means that came to hand--and so on, and so on. (p. 251)

In this way, Brown plays upon Jim's capacity to empathize:

And there ran through the rough talk a vein of subtle reference to their common blood, an assumption of common experience; a sickening suggestion of common guilt, of secret knowledge that was like a bond of their minds and of their hearts. (pp. 251-252)

Thus Brown builds and strengthens the psychological process of

identification.

Jim considers the matter of allowing the pirates to leave, and his question, "Will you promise to leave the coast?" (p. 252) signals his capitulation. Jim asks also that they surrender their weapons, but Brown, apparently sensing his advantage, refuses. Jim agrees to attempt to convince the natives to go along with the decision.

The reason for Jim's judgment lies in the empathy that Brown so shrewdly plays upon. In identifying with Brown, Jim is placed in a dilemma. It will be remembered that Brown had "asked Jim whether he had nothing fishy in his life to remember that he was so damnedly hard upon a man trying to get out of a deadly hole by the first means that came to hand . . ." (p. 251) Jim himself has spent a good part of his life trying to escape the "deadly hole" that he was plunged into by the Patna incident; Jim has had his second chance. Further, his sense of having been worthy of this chance has been part and parcel of his tenacious faith in the truth of his inner vision of himself.

For Jim, then, to deny Brown his chance is to deny himself the moral right to the chance that he in fact has had. To deny his own worthiness of such a chance is, in turn, to deny the moral identity his inner conviction tells him is true. This is something Jim cannot do; as has been seen, the maintenance of that inner sense of integrity and courage has been a primary motivating force in Jim throughout. He allows Brown to go because the alternative would be to violate a conviction that, for him, is the very essence of his being. Indeed, in none of his actions from this

point onward does Jim violate his inner conviction. Jim convinces Daramin and his chiefs to accept the decision to release Brown by staking the integrity of his judgment, in fact staking his very life, on the safe outcome of his action:

He was ready to answer with his life for any harm that should come to them if the white men with beards were allowed to retire. They were evil-doers, but their destiny had been evil, too. Had he ever advised them ill? Had his words ever brought suffering to the people? he asked.  
(p. 255)

The chiefs assent, for the most part, not for any clear reason, but simply because "they 'believed Tuan Jim.'" (p. 256) It is made clear in Marlow's interpretation of events that Jim's acceptance and use of their complete trust is itself an affirmation of his inner conviction of his own heroism:

'In this simple form of assent to his will lies the whole gist of the situation; their creed, his truth; and the testimony to that faithfulness which made him in his own eyes the equal of the impeccable men who never fall out of the ranks.' (p. 256)

In the end, after the attack on Dain Waris' party, Jim seems to see his fate as inevitable. In spite of the urgings of Jewel, his wife, and Tamb 'Itam, his servant, he refuses either to fight or to escape. Rather, Jim goes to Daramin, prepared to accept the death sentence which is the inevitable consequence of his having taken upon himself responsibility "for every life in the land."  
(p. 256) After the fatal shot, and before Jim falls, he gives the people gathered around him "a proud and unflinching glance,"  
(p. 270) The evidence thus seems to suggest that Jim does not see his death as a defeat. It may reasonably be concluded that Jim faces his death for the same reason he stayed for the inquiry into the Patna incident: to do otherwise would be to violate the inner

vision of heroism.

It is essential to an understanding of Jim's position, then, to realize that in the events leading to his death Jim may be holding true to his inner vision, not violating it. This is the appreciation that inquiry into the text brings from an initial response to Jim's decision to release Brown: Jim can be seen as the victim of a tragic dilemma in which his inner truth once again belies the outer reality. The full implications of this dilemma will be discussed in due course. For the present, it is important to have shown that this deeper, more complex understanding of Jim's situation results from inquiry into the circumstances surrounding Jim's decision. Since the direction of thought is clearly from an initial response to a moral problem, through examination of the text, to a broader, more objective understanding of the problem, the Rosenblatt model once again is entirely consistent with the inquiry invited by the novel.

As with the first two parts of the novel, it should be reiterated here that Jim's inner conflict, and the motivation within him that sustains and intensifies the conflict, are in the end essentially the same as they have been throughout. Jim struggles to maintain a sense of inner truth that is belied by external reality. Much of what is to be said later about the overall, cumulative meaning of the novel depends on this consistency in Jim's character and situation.

#### The Novel as a Cumulative Whole

In the preceding discussion, it was suggested at various

points that there is possible a cumulative insight into Jim's problem, confirming the tenacity and consistency of his motivation throughout. This development raises a further problem, however. If Jim's motivation remains the same throughout, and if Jim's dilemma in the end is essentially what it was in the beginning--the compulsion to maintain the truth of an inner vision while the external facts belie that truth--then what has the whole process proved? Why would Conrad lead his story to an ending that offers no solution to the problem posed in the beginning, and that implies no exemplary change or growth in the central character?

The answer must be that the very insolubility of the dilemma and the very consistency of Jim's character are intended to prove something in the end that they could not prove earlier. The question that initiates inquiry into the overriding meaning of the novel, then, is that of the significance of Jim's death and the events leading to it. It is a question that must be answered if the interpretations offered in the preceding pages are to be considered at all meaningful: the end product of inquiry according to the Rosenblatt model is a coherent, consistent picture of the author's meaning as dramatized in the work. Clearly, to verify that the process of inquiry seen in the Rosenblatt model is an accurate reflection of that invited by Lord Jim, it is necessary to show that one may reasonably proceed from the understanding detailed so far in this chapter to a coherent, consistent concept of overall meaning in the novel. The clearer and deeper the overall insight that can be built from an approach embodying the Rosenblatt model, the more authoritative is the assertion that

Rosenblatt-style inquiry, and therefore values, are integral to the novel within the terms of this study.

If it is to be contended that there is a cumulative whole to be examined in Lord Jim, further attention must be given to the matter of the novel's unity. It is important to examine the factors that link the various parts of the novel together and that, therefore, help demonstrate Conrad's intention to have his novel convey a meaning in the end that is a product of what has been developed throughout. An understanding of the operation of these factors is itself part of the enlarged, objectified response that is a basic aspect of the Rosenblatt model.

Some of the basic connections among the three parts of the novel have, in fact, already been shown. It has been demonstrated that the inner conflict in Jim remains operative and essentially the same throughout, and that his motivation--the determination not to see compromised his inner vision of himself--is as strong in the events leading to his death as it was in those surrounding and following the Patna incident. It has been seen that inquiry into the novel according to the Rosenblatt model leads to precisely this view of Jim's problem. It is evident, moreover, that the words and actions of Brown in convincing Jim to release him provide a psychological link for Jim, and therefore a conceptual one for the reader, to the Patna incident. Jim explicitly acknowledges his memory of his past. During Marlow's visit to Patusan, Jim says to him "The very thought of the world outside is enough to give me a fright; because, don't you see . . . because I have not forgotten why I came here. Not yet!" (p. 197) Again, the link that functions

psychologically for Jim functions conceptually for the reader.

Given the consistency in Jim's character and motives, the basic unity of the novel may be said to lie in the fact that the circumstances surrounding Brown's release may be viewed as a "replay" of the Patna incident. Jim remains to the end inwardly true to the integrity of his heroic vision of himself. In terms of factual reality, however, Jim's insistence on releasing Brown can fairly be judged to be an act of betrayal, a violation of the integrity of his position, and is so judged by the Bugis. Even Jim's death does not bring resolution: Jewel, who had urged him not to go to Doramin, judges him "false" (p. 227) for abandoning her in going to his death. As inwardly true as he may be, Jim is once again outwardly false.

Further support for the congruency of the first and last sections of the novel is found in a broad symbolic parallel in the general circumstances of these two parts of the story. Just as the Patna was rusty and unseaworthy, so society in Patusan is dangerously fragile, dependent for stability on a delicate balance between highly volatile groups. Connected with this is a grave personal danger to Jim, a danger, ironically, that increases in proportion to the elevation of his own position. When Jim becomes "virtual ruler of the land" (p. 176) by engineering the rout of Sherif Ali, Rajah Allang is desperately aware that he depends on Jim for his very life, that he is as Marlow senses during his own visit to Patusan, "afraid of Jim abominably." (p. 162) Marlow reports:

As to old Tunku Allang, his fears at first had known no bounds. It is said that at the intelligence of the

successful storming of the hill he flung himself, face down, on the bamboo floor of his audience-hall, and lay motionless for a whole night and a whole day, uttering stifled sounds of such an appalling nature that no man dared approach his prostrate form nearer than a spear's length. Already he could see himself driven ignominiously out of Patusan, wandering abandoned, stripped, without opium, without his women, without followers, a fair game for the first comer to kill. After Sherif Ali his turn would come, and who could resist an attack led by such a devil? And indeed he owed his life and such authority as he still possessed at the time of my visit to Jim's idea of what was fair alone. (pp. 170-171)

Indeed, Jim lives with the constant awareness that at any of his visits to the Rajah, he might be given poisoned coffee to drink.

Doramin's feelings are revealed in Marlow's description of his own encounter with the ruler of the Bugis. Doramin reveals to Marlow that his prime ambition is to see his son, Dain Waris, become ruler of Patusan. He then goes on to speak of the white men in general and Jim in particular: "They go away . . . they go to their own land, to their people, and so this white man, too, would . . ." (p. 177) When Marlow interrupts to deny that Jim will ever leave, he realizes that Doramin is deeply disturbed by such a denial. Clearly, the inference is to be drawn that Doramin harbours a deep resentment toward Jim because, if Jim stays, Dain Waris will never become ruler of Patusan.

Jim is in danger from others in Patusan--notably Cornelius--but it is sufficient here to point out the danger from the two leaders. Both Rajah Allang and Doramin have a vested interest in seeing Jim removed from his position. Just as the unseaworthiness of the Patna and the corrupt nature of the officers laid the groundwork for the actual events of the abandonment, and the dilemma into which Jim was plunged, so the undercurrent of danger

in the fragility and volatility of group and personal relationships provide the potential for a disastrous culmination to the events in Fatusan.

There seems, then, to be reasonable justification for judging that Lord Jim possesses a unity that is much more than simply a sequential or chronological connection of plot details. As will be seen, demonstration of this unity is essential to the task of developing an interpretation of the overall meaning of the novel.

The Impression of Universality:  
the Key to Meaning in  
Lord Jim

The evident unity of the novel serves, at first glance, only to underline the question posed earlier: if Jim's problem is in the end essentially what it was in the beginning, what is accomplished by the inclusion of the middle and last parts of the novel? One presumes that they are not narrated purely for a journalistic interest in the course of one man's life. The answer must be that they give to Jim's death a significance that it could not have had earlier in the novel. This significance, it will be suggested here, lies in a forceful impression of cosmic finality about the resurfacing of Jim's dilemma. Such an impression could not be conveyed without the weight of the entire story behind it, and it is an impression that is absolutely central to Conrad's meaning. As rendered in the novel, Jim's death and the events leading to it prove, for Conrad, that the impossibility of resolving a dilemma such as Jim's is a universal condition of

human life; that man is destined never to see his ideal inner vision of himself verified by realization in the world.

Of several identifiable factors in Lord Jim that lead the reader to see in the final events of Jim's life a universal scope of meaning not present in the events of the Patna incident, one of the most basic is the setting of the last part of the novel. Jim's movement from job to job, in the middle part of the novel, emphasizes that there is really no place in the ordinary world where he can escape the facts of his past. The remote settlement of Patusan comes as close to being another world--for Jim, a second chance or "clean slate"--as can be hoped for. This extreme remoteness makes the events of the last part of the novel the ultimate test for Jim: if the conflict cannot be resolved in Patusan, it cannot be resolved.

More important than the setting in carrying Lord Jim from a level of specific facts to a level of cosmic finality is Marlow's role in the novel. Marlow's probing for understanding and awareness provides the dimension of growth and development not present in Jim's character. It is through Marlow that the particular details of Jim's life achieve universality in their implications.

Necessary to an understanding of this essential point is an examination in more detail of Marlow's role in the novel. Marlow first appears as a character, in the third person, near the end of Chapter Four. Jim notices him in the courtroom, a man who somehow seems more perceptive and aware than the other spectators. The greater part of the novel, starting with Chapter Five, consists of an after-dinner story told by Marlow--told, it is

suggested, more than once in different places--concerning the events of Jim's life from the Patna incident through to the final parting of the two men after Marlow's visit to Patusan.

One feels that at the basis of Marlow's interest in Jim is his sense of something that links Jim's life to his own. He says of Jim, "he was one of us," (p. 27) meaning by "us" himself and his listeners. The link that Marlow senses is such that Jim's problem becomes Marlow's problem. Marlow, in describing the conflict in Jim, feels himself to have a stake in it:

He was not speaking to me, he was only speaking before me, in a dispute with an invisible personality, an antagonistic and inseparable partner of his existence--another possessor of his soul. There were issues beyond the competency of a court of inquiry: it was a subtle and momentous quarrel as to the true essence of life, and did not want a judge. He wanted an ally, a helper, an accomplice. I felt the risk I ran of being circumvented, blinded, decoyed, bullied, perhaps, into taking a definite part in a dispute impossible of decision if one had to be fair to all the phantoms in possession--to the reputable that had its claims and to the disreputable that had its exigencies. I can't explain to you who haven't seen him and who hear his words only at second hand the mixed nature of my feelings. It seemed to me I was being made to comprehend the Inconceivable--and I know of nothing to compare with the discomfort of such a sensation. I was made to look at the convention that lurks in all truth and on the essential sincerity of falsehood. He appealed to all sides at once--to the side turned perpetually to the light of day, and to that side of us which, like the other hemisphere of the moon, exists stealthily in perpetual darkness, with only a fearful ashy light falling at times on the edge. (pp. 59-60)

Marlow's listeners, linked by the "one of us" phrase, are invited to share Marlow's involvement, as is, in turn, the reader of the novel. In narrating and interpreting the events of much of the story, Marlow functions as a kind of intermediary between Jim and the reader, giving the finite, particular circumstances of Jim's life a broad significance in which the reader may share. The very

phrasing of Marlow's comments as quoted above confirms this. In responding to Jim's problem, Marlow uses terms suggestive of universal implications, terms such as "the true essence of life," "the Inconceivable," "all truth," "the essential sincerity of falsehood," "all sides," "perpetually," and, again, his use of the pronoun "us" in the phrase "to that side of us." Marlow's listeners, and in turn, Conrad's readers, are invited to share in the problem as one basic to life itself.

That Jim's inner conflict is intended to have universal implications is further confirmed by the full context of Marlow's statement that Jim "was one of us":

I liked his appearance; I knew his appearance; he came from the right place; he was one of us. He stood there for all the parentage of his kind, for men and women by no means clever or amusing, but whose very existence is based upon honest faith, and upon the instinct of courage. I don't mean military courage, or civil courage, or any special kind of courage. I mean just that inborn ability to look temptations straight in the face--a readiness unintellectual enough, goodness knows, but without pose--a power of resistance, don't you see, ungracious if you like, but priceless--an unthinking and blessed stiffness before the outward and inward terrors, before the might of nature, and the seductive corruption of men--backed by a faith invulnerable to the strength of facts, to the contagion of example, to the solicitation of ideas. (p. 27)

Marlow's description of Jim's inner faith fits precisely what has already been seen in Jim: the tenacious instinct to preserve the integrity of the inner conviction of moral identity in spite of a factual reality that contradicts it. Since Marlow implies that Jim is linked to other men by the common possession of the kind of faith he describes, and that whatever problems arise from the holding of this faith are problems not just for Jim but for everyone, it seems clear that the dilemma of moral identities forming

the substance of the story is intended to be perceived as having a broad scope of applicability.

If the preceding discussion is seen in conjunction with the explanation of the conflict running throughout the novel, simple deduction would suggest that it is Marlow, universalizing as he narrates, who follows through on the implications of Jim's problem and gives the final events in Patusan their full tragic significance. The presumption would be that Marlow's vision is Conrad's vision. This, in fact, would be a misapprehension of Marlow's role and would lead to a misunderstanding of the ending of the novel.

A crucial fact to remember is that in the chronology of the novel Jim is still alive as Marlow tells his tale to his friends. There is a gap of over two years between the end of Marlow's story and the revelation of the final events of Jim's life. The circumstances leading to Jim's death are passed on from the point of view of a man, unidentified, who had been listening to Marlow as he told his tale of Jim. This man receives by mail a bundle of papers from Marlow, giving the remainder of Jim's story as Marlow had been able to piece it together from facts given him by Jewel, Tamb 'Itam, and Brown. Thus any vision embodied in the final events of Jim's life cannot be the vision that colours the telling of Marlow's tale of Jim. Marlow's purpose and attitude, as he repeats his after-dinner story, must be examined carefully if one is to understand his role in carrying the events of the novel toward their final meaning.

From the Inquiry onward, Marlow seems aware of the impossibility of Jim's fully realizing his dream. He comments on Jim's expectation of a "clean slate" in the job that Marlow recommends

him for: "A clean slate, did he say? As if the initial word of each our destiny were not graven in imperishable characters upon the face of a rock." (p. 119) At another point, Marlow notes that "it is impossible to lay the ghost of a fact." (p. 126) So far this seems consistent with the re-emergence of the dilemma as it occurs in the final events of the novel: the factual reality of the world limits man from seeing his dream vindicated in the real world. It is not within ordinary human capability, in Marlow's view, to master the destiny that he sees as so inexorable a force in the world, for this would mean succeeding in imposing the truth of the inner ideal upon the world in such a way that the world reflected and confirmed the ideal.

When Marlow refers to the idea of "mastery of one's fate," he seems to mean successfully having one's existence bear out one's dream. For Marlow, the factual reality of one's existence is associated with destiny on a virtually cosmic scale--a destiny that limits man from substantiating his dream in the objective world.

It is directly against this backdrop of futility that Marlow sees Jim's story, nonetheless, as a tale of a man who has successfully mastered his fate. This juxtaposition is made clear in the following:

I had made up my mind that Jim, for whom alone I cared, had at last mastered his fate. He had told me he was satisfied. . . nearly. This is going further than most of us dare. I--who have the right to think myself good enough--dare not. Neither does any of you here, I suppose? . . ." (p. 210)

It is clear from this that Marlow thinks of Jim as having mastered his fate, and that he thinks of the accomplishment as something not within the ordinary human capacity.

In anticipating for his listeners Jim's achievement in Patusan, Marlow says, "The time was coming when I should see him loved, trusted, admired, with a legend of strength and prowess forming around his name as though he had been the stuff of a hero." (p. 112) Marlow confirms in this statement his opinion that Jim has mastered his fate: the objective eye reveals of Jim an objective reality paralleling his inner vision. This, for Marlow, seems to be cause for wonder: "It's true--I assure you; as true as I'm sitting here talking about him in vain." (p. 112) Again, Marlow's reflection that Jim, as he last saw him, "seemed to stand at the heart of a vast enigma" (p. 218) shows a sense of awed puzzlement, as does the statement "He was romantic, but nonetheless true. Who could tell what forms, what visions, what faces, what forgiveness he could see in the glow of the west!" (p. 216)

When one considers the virtually cosmic scale of Marlow's feeling of the impossibility of mastering one's fate, it is easily understandable that he would view Jim, who seems to have accomplished the task, with a sense of almost mystical wonder. Indeed, it is Jim's apparent transcendence of the problem that makes Marlow's tale remarkable enough that he would tell it repeatedly and that he would plausibly expect to be able to attract and hold the attention of his various audiences with it. Given the fact, already established, that Marlow identifies with Jim and sees himself as having a stake in Jim's problem, it may be said that the transcendence that Marlow sees in Jim remains significant for Marlow himself in that it provides for him a kind of vicarious vindication of his own "honest faith." In other words, Jim's

apparent mastery of his fate is taken as lending the authority of the essential truth in Jim to Marlow's own lifestyle. It may be inferred that Marlow tells Jim's story not only with wonder and awe, but with a certain feeling of self-satisfaction in a grounded, warranted awareness of the worth of a life lived in fidelity to an inner vision.

In his after-dinner tale, then, Marlow seems to feel that in some incomprehensible way, belief in an ideal has been verified in the world. He draws his listeners, and Conrad's readers, into sharing his sense of the events of Jim's life as a success story. Jim has exemplified faith in the truth of a vision; Marlow presumes to have gained knowledge of truth from Jim's example, and he preaches accordingly.

Again, it must be emphasized that Marlow is not aware, during his tale, of the final events of Jim's life; his vision is not necessarily Conrad's. Because he returns Jim to the same situation as he was in at the beginning, Conrad clearly intends a negative verdict on the possibility of mastering one's fate; Marlow, whose attitudes control so much of the reader's response, is in the final analysis mistaken. Marlow's and Conrad's views do not simply fail to coincide; they flatly contradict each other.

The contradiction is explained when one considers Conrad's intent to universalize the meaning of the conclusion of the novel. In order to make felt the full depth into which the circumstances of Jim's death plunge one's confidence in the ability to know truth, Conrad must first raise the reader's expectations to a high level. This he accomplishes through Marlow. It has been seen that

through his narration Marlow leads his listeners--and the reader-- to an almost mystical feeling that Jim has transcended ordinary human capabilities. When Conrad allows his reader to fall, it is from the heights that Marlow has taken him to, and it results therefore in a far greater sense of the cosmic breadth and depth of the negative vision implicit in Jim's death.

To put the matter another way: having Marlow tell his tale as he does focusses the meaning of the final events of the novel. Like a lens, Marlow refracts the particular into the universal. Jim's downfall and the events leading to it have been seen to show the re-emergence of the dilemma that runs partly submerged throughout the novel. If this were all there were to it, the novel would do no more than state a problem in the life of one person. There would be no fundamental human issue on which the conclusion of the novel could be seen to pass a verdict. It is only because Marlow tells his part of Jim's story as a tale of a remarkable man who masters his fate, that the reader is led to see the circumstances surrounding Jim's downfall as indicating a final judgment upon man's capacity to substantiate his dreams in the world.

Conrad's Moral Philosophy  
as Dramatized in  
Lord Jim

As has been suggested, the key to the meaning of Lord Jim is the verdict rendered by Jim's death upon the question of man's ability to master his own destiny. Given the universalizing of the implications of the question as explained above, the coming full circle of Jim's dilemma is itself a final judgment on the problem:

no person will ever, in the sense that Marlow wishes it, be able to engineer an existence that truly substantiates his inner conviction of truth. It may be possible, as it is for Jim, to achieve temporarily the illusion of such an existence, but it is only appearance and it does not last. As has been seen, the seeds of Jim's destruction are sown even as he builds his power base in Patusan; the danger and fragility so clearly foreshadowed in his position emphasize in the final analysis that his mastery of his fate was never more than appearance. Clearly Conrad intends to convey through the events of Jim's death a view that is essentially nihilistic: it is impossible for human beings to achieve knowledge or verification of truth no matter how strongly they may sense that truth within themselves.

The nihilistic philosophy outlined above obviously has strong moral implications. If it is considered to be futile to expect to see realized or substantiated in the world the dreams or ideals toward which one's moral aspirations are directed, then one might well question whether there is any point in morality at all. Without the authority and direction that would be lent to it by knowledge of its truth, moral value could be considered a pointless and arbitrary matter of individual belief, and, if it is so considered, it is effectively destroyed, for all actions would be equally acceptable on their own terms. One possible direction in the face of such an overriding futility might be abandonment to moral anarchy, a course exemplified in the novel by lesser characters like the other officers of the Ratna, Chester and Robinson, and Brown. Another direction, however, on the assump-

tion that moral value is preferable to no value at all, is to seek to establish more limited grounds on which to base judgments of moral value in persons or actions.

It is the latter of the above two courses that Conrad appears to follow in Lord Jim. Indeed, the final meaning of the novel may be said to be a statement about the nature and locus of moral being in a universe essentially destructive of moral truth.

While, as has been seen, the negative aspect of Conrad's vision is in the novel's final verdict on Marlow's presumptions, the positive aspect remains within Jim. This juxtaposition is reflected in the following passage in which Marlow, after learning of Jim's death, acknowledges both his own disillusionment and Jim's essential truthfulness to his vision:

From the moment the sheer truthfulness of his last three years of life carries the day against the ignorance, the fear, and the anger of men, he appears no longer to me as I saw him last--a white speck catching all the dim light left upon a sombre coast and the darkened sea--but greater and more pitiful in the loneliness of his soul, that remains even for her who loved him best a cruel and insoluble mystery. (p. 256)

The possibility of gaining knowledge of truth, once for Marlow a source of self-satisfaction, has, because of Jim's fate, become "a cruel and insoluble mystery." Jim, however, has been true, and Marlow's ability to acknowledge this in spite of his sense of its futility helps focus attention on the moral value of Jim's truthfulness.

If one is willing to grant to Jim's inner integrity a certain value within the limits imposed by Conrad's nihilistic view, then it is possible to see Jim's example as defining the positive side of the world-view represented in the novel. In this view, the

possibility of moral value for Conrad lies in two criteria. First, what is valuable for an individual is that which at a basic intuitional level is so essential to his concept of his own being that its maintenance becomes, in effect, a matter of survival. This is seen in Jim's inner conviction of his own heroism, a conviction whose inward integrity he maintains from beginning to end. A crucial distinction must be reiterated here, since in this conception the dream remains as the focus of moral value. The difference is in the motive: Marlow seeks to find in the substantiation of the dream the authority of knowledge, while Jim seeks only a kind of moral survival. Within the limits imposed by Marlow's failure, Jim is successful.

The second criterion for moral value, not unrelated to the first, is that what is valuable for the individual is that which is affirmed by the exercise of his will. Whatever Jim achieves in the novel is clearly the result of a sheer effort of will to keep inviolate the conviction that he is not a coward and traitor.

Conrad does not go so far as to prescribe how to be moral. He simply points out that, ultimately, moral value resides in people such as Jim, people who intuit at a fundamental level that their survival as human beings depends upon their ability to hold on to their dreams; people who, through the exercise of will, remain true to the dream--not because it can be realized, but in spite of the fact that it cannot.

#### Conclusion

The details of each section of Lord Jim, it has been shown,

seem to revolve around the initiation and the furtherance of a process of inquiry in which the reader may respond to a moral problem in Jim, then through re-examination of the text enlarge and objectify his response into a much broader understanding of the issue. In other words, the process of literary inquiry invited by the novel is similar to that derived from Rosenblatt's book in the previous chapter. This conclusion is justified by the sheer weight of detail in Lord Jim that fits into and supports an approach based on the Rosenblatt model.

The Rosenblatt model, so integral to a reading of Lord Jim, has already been established both to be susceptible of a values focus and to represent an approach that is practical for directing literary response in the classroom. Thus, since in Lord Jim itself the issues are so clearly moral ones, the novel may be said to embody within itself a values focus able to be realized and developed in teaching.

Part of this chapter has been devoted to the explanation of a broad moral view as dramatized in the novel. This, of course, fulfills the other standard implied by the Rosenblatt model: the process of inquiry should be able to lead the reader ultimately to an idea of the author's world-view. It is possible, without being untrue to the text, to pursue the inquiry into Lord Jim from the initial response and clarification process to a sweeping moral philosophy. This further verifies that the Rosenblatt model reflects precisely the kind of inquiry invited by the novel itself.

## Chapter 5

### FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The present study has, in effect, laid the groundwork for conclusions about the desirability of values-centred teaching of works of literature. The major tasks have been the definition and substantiation of a context within which it would clearly be considered valid to use a values emphasis in the teaching of literary works. It will be useful here to review the main points that have been established in this regard in the first four chapters of this study.

#### Summary and Review

In the first place, it seems there is little profit in pursuing the idea of an influence of literature upon values, in the attempt to justify values-based literature teaching. There is little or no substantial evidence that literature actually has an effect on values. While assent to such an effect is widespread, it is largely uncritical and is based on vague concepts of the actual connection between literature and values.

As was seen in Chapter Two of the present study, it is reasonable to put aside the matter of a values-shaping function for literature and to define the point of intersection between literature and values as coinciding with the link between literature and the conscious awareness of the reader. The connection between

conscious awareness and actual values--values as defined by behaviour--remains in the realm of the possible but need not in fact occur. The circuit between literature and values is complete if the reader gains conscious insight into moral problems or ideas as represented in literary works.

This definition of the link between literature and values has the authority and precision that are lacking in assumptions of an effect of literature upon moral behaviour. Further, it provides a conceptual framework encompassing many practical activities in classroom literary study. The Rosenblatt model of literary inquiry, and the values insights around which Lord Jim is constructed, can both be seen to operate within this framework.

To move to another point, Chapter Three of the present study showed the derivation of the Rosenblatt model, in effect a mechanism by which values-related insights in a suitable text would be realized and developed in the classroom. In this model of literary inquiry, a reader responds, subjectively at first, to a character, his actions, or his situation; the reader re-examines the text and his own response in a spiralling process that leads finally to an objectified understanding of both. The teacher, and the discussion activities that he initiates, of course, can direct and enhance this process.

The Rosenblatt model plays a pivotal role in the present study. It is consistent with and in fact helps substantiate the definition, offered in Chapter Two, of a point of intersection between literature and values. It anticipates, indeed forms the very basis of, the approach taken to Lord Jim in Chapter Four.

Ultimately, what the Rosenblatt model does in this study is provide a grounding in classroom practice for moral insights in Lord Jim; it confirms that these insights may be developed through teaching practice.

Finally, it was shown in Chapter Four of the present study that Conrad's Lord Jim has integral to it a process of inquiry similar to what would be pursued if the Rosenblatt model were followed in classroom practice. Each major section of the novel hinges upon a central moral issue, inviting both an immediate response and a return to the text for clarification; the clarification process can with consistency lead to a coherent concept of a moral philosophy embodied in the novel. Details of plot and character contribute to this clarification, and to the overriding world-view, to such an extent that it is possible to infer that the Rosenblatt model represents precisely the process envisioned by Conrad as integral to a reading of Lord Jim. Given the nature of the model, it was possible to conclude that Lord Jim does embody values insights that are susceptible of realization and development in classroom study.

The analysis of Lord Jim carried out in Chapter Four of the present study, then, has fleshed out and put into practice the theoretical concept of a positive, if limited, link between literature and values as outlined in Chapter Two. The realization and development of values issues in classroom study is possible; this is clear. It is also grounded in the ultimate possibility of benefiting the moral character of readers, provided that one is precise about stating that the benefit lies in contributing to

conscious moral insights and a critical perspective, not necessarily to a change in moral behaviour.

### Conclusions

Putting aside for the moment a large conclusion as to the desirability of values-focussed literature teaching, this study suggests several lesser points which are worth mentioning as they help confirm the results of the present investigation. First, if a practical authority for a values focus in literature teaching were sought solely in terms of values, it would be rather narrow. The foregoing examination, however, finds a broader base than just values. It is implicit in the Rosenblatt model, as detailed in Chapter Three, that the reader, through his process of inquiry, will be led to a comprehension not just of the issue and his response to it, but of factors in the text that determine the issue and his response. Thus values-based literary inquiry can include any relevant matters of form and style in the work; in the Rosenblatt model, in fact, it necessarily includes these. It is not difficult to see that in Lord Jim, the values-focussed study suggested here would demand awareness of a number of these elements; the unity of the novel, including the symbolic and psychological links that function to create that unity; the effectiveness of the point of view, and the importance of distinguishing between the narrator's attitudes and the author's; the structure of the novel, including the unusual chronology; basic considerations of character, setting, and plot. Clearly, then, values-oriented literature teaching as presented in this study

actively includes the formal and stylistic matters that most would say must form part of the study of literature.

It may be thought that the approach suggested in this study is possible only with certain well-motivated classes, since so much seems to depend upon discussion and interaction--activities that might be difficult to control in some groups. Again, the nature of the Rosenblatt model itself does not confirm this. Rosenblatt's approach has been seen to be flexible enough to allow for different kinds of activities in the classroom. Responses need not all be oral, and there is room for different teaching styles and methods in the course of the inquiry process. Should problems in class control make prolonged discussion inadvisable, the teacher could use written assignments or a more teacher-centred method without exceeding the bounds of the Rosenblatt model.

Another point is that placing a values emphasis on the teaching of literature is not the same as setting out to teach values. Clearly, in the Rosenblatt model, and in the analysis of Lord Jim, the emphasis was on questions rather than answers: questions could lead a reader to an understanding of the author's particular values position, but it would be clear in the very nature of the inquiry that it is simply an author's values position, not recommended by the teacher and only one of many to be stored by the reader for critical evaluation as he forms and modifies his own moral views. What is discussed in this study, then, is the teaching of literature, not the teaching of values. Values simply provide a focus for that teaching.

Lord Jim is a demanding novel, involving values insights

at a number of levels, and showing a remarkable consistency with the Rosenblatt model. Not every literary work, though, to be susceptible of teaching with a values focus, need be as complex or as true a paradigm of literary inquiry. In the Rosenblatt model, initial responses are values judgments, since the reader's subjective values are all that he can bring to the work at that point. Whatever the level of difficulty of the work, it will justify a values focus in teaching if the implications of characters' actions have some moral dimension the clarification of which sheds light on an aspect of the text.

Not every literary work would be taught with a values focus. Clearly, by the terms of this study, the teacher must make the judgment as to whether the work embodies values issues susceptible of comprehension in the classroom by way of a teaching approach such as Rosenblatt's. If values are found not to be integral to the work, another focus or emphasis will be chosen.

The overriding conclusion suggested by the present study is that values can provide a possible and justifiable basis for the teaching of a work of literature. The context within which they do so is the context established in the preceding four chapters. That is, the grounding in a connection between literature and values is limited to a practical connection between literary works and conscious moral insight, and the literary work is built around values-related ideas in such a way that these ideas may be clarified in classroom study.

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