Abstract – In the present essay it will be suggested that in the structure of *Lord Jim* we can find traces of the author's search for a literary form more suited than adventure to give representation to the contradictions emerging by the late 1890s in the imperial project. This form, it will be argued, was Greek tragedy. I will base my interpretative hypothesis on a parallel reading of *Lord Jim* and *The Eumenides*, two works that give representation to an opposition between an old and a new law – in the case of Conrad’s late nineteenth-century adventure novel, between British maritime law and an ancestral law of retaliation. In the pages that follow, the tragic model, based on the chorus-hero dynamics will be applied to a re-examination of Marlow’s function in the novel.

**Keywords:** Greek tragedy, interdiscursivity, choir, tragic hero, narrative form