

**“That Legacy of a Boatful of Pirates”  
—Conspiracy in Joseph Conrad’s *Almayer’s  
Folly* and *An Outcast of the Islands***

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**Abstract**

This paper discusses pirate conspiracy as the nexus between text and context in Joseph Conrad’s Malay novels. It argues that the narrative of *An Outcast of the Islands*, which establishes itself as the prequel to *Almayer’s Folly*, points to an under-represented past—the suppression of piracy. It demonstrates that the legacy of this “beginning” contributes to the conspiracy which propels the narrative events. This paper shows that the “originary impetus” of the pirates suggests a “textual” impetus to return to the beginning, and that the local conspiracy of the pirate is compatible with regional sentiment across Borneo in reaction to the suppression of piracy. This paper calls for attention on conspiracy in Conrad who witnessed an epoch when conspiracy was a powerful strategy for colonial resistance.

**Key Words:** conspiracy, piracy, Conrad’s Malay novels