

THE LIFE OF JOSEPH CONRAD AS REFLECTED IN HIS NOVELS

by

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INTRODUCTION

A study of the life of Joseph Conrad as revealed in his novels results in a better knowledge of life itself. He portrays human nature as he knew it, and he studied and knew it well; he explains the meaning of life as he saw it, and we see and understand it a bit better. As a novelist he is ranked by most critics as equal to Thomas

Barry and superior to Arnold Bennett, John Galsworthy, George Moore, Hugh Walpole, or H. G. Wells, who rank second to Conrad as English contemporary writers. It is, therefore, quite profitable to know what Joseph Conrad thought of life and of people, to know his experiences, and to get his thoughts and experiences from his own style of writing.

While his fourteen novels have been discussed and criticized from many different angles, they have rarely been examined, if they have been examined at all, in the light of his own personal history. Joseph Conrad--Life and Letters by G. Jean Aubry approaches the subject more definitely than other writings before or since Conrad's death. The first part of each of the two volumes deals with Joseph Conrad's life. The latter half consists of his letters; from these one may clearly see a definite relation between Joseph Conrad's philosophy and experiences and the philosophy and experiences as portrayed in his novels.

Conrad intended his novels to have much autobiography in them. In A Personal Record he writes:

"One's literary life must turn frequently for sustenance to memories."¹

¹ Joseph Conrad. *English Journal*, Jan., 1925, p. 5.

He writes of some of these memories:

"I have tried with an almost filial regard to render the vibrations of life in the great world of waters, in the hearts of the simple men who have for ages traversed its solitudes, and also sentient which seems to dwell in ships--the creatures of their hands and the objects of their care."¹

He knew the sea, men, psychology, atmospheres, background, and romance of which he wrote. His philosophy of life permeates his stories and impresses those who read. Fidelity to duty is the keynote of it all. He portrays himself best when he writes of the sea and of ships. His land books are not as expressive either of his philosophy or of his experiences.

The absence of moral teaching, mysticism, and creeds in Joseph Conrad's books is explained by a letter he once wrote to Mr. Noble, who later became quite a noted sea writer:

"Everyone must walk in the light of his own heart's gospel. No man's light is good to any of his fellows. That's my creed from beginning to end. That's my view of life--a view that rejects all formulas, dogmas, and principles of other people's making. These are only a web of illusions. We are too varied. Another man's truth is only a dismal lie to me."²

He, therefore, does not judge and condemn people in his books; and when they seem to succeed or fail, he ap-

¹ Conrad, Joseph. A Personal Record, p. 7.

² Intimate Letters. World's Work, Vol. 53, p. 185, Nov., 1927.

peals to our sense of pity, beauty, pain, or to the latent feeling of fellowship to all creation and to the conviction of loneliness in joy, sorrow, hope, illusions, fear, or failure, which unite us to all mankind.

There is extreme tension in all of Conrad's works, which tires the minds of the readers. This unrest and tension is due, no doubt, to Conrad's own unrest and extreme tension. He constantly observed details and remembered them. He was always alert, never calm or cool; nothing escaped his scrutiny. It is to this that we owe the pictures of scenes and life, long past.

Conrad was a Slav in temperament; he devoted his life to duty and adventure; he did a great amount of reading; and he adopted the English language. With all this as a background Conrad emerged with his highly individual work, that reveals something of his biography in every story.

This thesis will not deal with Joseph Conrad's short stories at all, but will direct attention mainly to the fourteen novels written by him alone; and some space will be devoted to the three novels written by him in collaboration with Ford M. Hueffer.

THE EARLY LIFE OF KONRAD AS REFLECTED IN HIS NOVELS

Social and Racial Inheritance

Theodor Jozef Konrad Korzeniowski was born in Southern Poland in 1857. He spent his early years on the vast, lonesome plains. His mother was of noble lineage and his father a man of letters. Joseph had the best heritage, experience, and education possible to prepare him for the kind of writing he did. He knew nothing but suffering and hardship, which molded his mind in his early youth into the somber and thoughtful philosopher that we find in his books.

The tragic history of Poland had its effects on him. In 1815 the Congress of Vienna restored to the different powers the territories which Napoleon had taken away from them. Poland was allowed to make its own constitution and have a sort of Congress of its own. The real power, however, was vested in the Czar of Russia. The ruler in 1825 was tyrannical, and the Poles rebelled against Russian power. People in Poland held secret meetings and planned ways to get back those portions of Poland which had been absorbed by Austria, Prussia, and Russia in 1795 and which were not yet free.

In 1830 the students of the cadet school at Warsaw tried to seize the Archduke Constantine, who was a brother of the Emperor of Russia and who had all the governing power in Poland; several hundred of his guards were killed, but Constantine escaped. Russia overpowered the Poles in 1831.

In 1862 an attempt was made to assassinate Archduke Constantine. The Russian government determined to put all Poles into the Russian army who resisted in any way the Russian government. Other countries sympathized with Poland, but in 1864 Russia forbade the Polish language to be used in schools of Poland. Many Poles were banished, imprisoned, or executed; and in 1868 Poland ceased to exist and became a part of the Russian Empire.

In 1862 Joseph's father was arrested for secretly helping to arouse sentiment against Russian rule: he was sent to Vologda in Northern Russia as an exile. Joseph's mother requested that she might go with her husband and was granted the right provided she would subject herself to the same discipline. She and Joseph went with him. Joseph was then eight years old. He became severely ill on the way, and Madame Korseniowski also became very ill. With difficulty, an officer finally got permission for them to rest in an inn for awhile.

The first writing we have of Joseph Conrad was written from Vologda, Russia, to his grandmother. He thanked her for sending some oaks to his poor father in prison—"Pole, Catholic, and Gentlemen." Conrad later uses a similar expression in The Arrow of Gold in describing one of the characters: "American, Catholic, and Gentleman."

The cold, deprivations, and hardships soon killed Joseph's mother, and Joseph observed the slow death of his father. He became acquainted with his father's somber philosophy; he felt the cold, tense, and gloomy atmosphere of the sick room. Perhaps the feeling of helplessness under a situation too difficult to be mastered was born in Joseph Conrad during those days. He had no playmates; and later when he was sent to a relative, he became homesick for the loneliness to which he had been accustomed. He spent many long hours reading when his father was sick. That was his one pleasure. His first introduction to the sea was when he read Victor Hugo's Travailleurs de la Mer to his father. He was then eight years old.

What he got out of that early experience was more than a body of reminiscences. It was a scheme of valuations. He was born with a sensitive nature, and it had been made keener by the sight of suffering of those he loved.

H. L. Mencken writes that Conrad came to his writing

years with a disdain for the trifling bazarde and affairs of market places and drawing rooms and that it shows itself whenever he sets pen to paper.

In A Personal Record Conrad writes of "the still voice of that inexorable past" from which his work of fiction is remotely derived.

Emotional Response

He lived and learned from early childhood the seriousness and hardships of life. He wrote of men who were conquered and undone by fate. How well he pictures the hopelessness of struggle in Under Western Eyes. He knew the Russian mind and spirit and was akin to it. The memory of the suffering that Russia caused his family made him repress his hatred many times in the writing of that book. He afterward wrote that he had never been called before to a greater effort of detachment; detachment from all passions, prejudices, and even from personal memories.

There is in the novel a bitter irony and hopelessness of tone which discloses Conrad's disgust and contempt for all things Russian. He describes Russia in the preface of the novel as "tyrannical lawlessness, which in general human terms, could be reduced to the formula of senseless

desperation provoked by senseless tyranny." He writes at the close of the author's note that the oppressors and the oppressed were all Russian together--and the tiger could not change his stripes nor the leopard his spots.

It was not so much man, the individual, that interested Conrad as the vague accumulation of traditions, instincts, and blind chances which shape each one's destiny.

The characters in the story Under Western Eyes are based on Conrad's knowledge and experience of things Russian. The leaders in the story are inconsistent and blind; Victor Haldin is idealistic but fanatical and strikes blindly at existing government; Razumov revolts against revolt; Mikulin, the police chief, suspects Razumov of treason and is later suspected by others. Tekla learns that the revolutioners are as evil as the oppressors; Peter Ivanovitch is a revolutionist and a whited sepulcher; Nikita, a detective for the revolutionists, turns out to be a spy, traitor, and brute. There is nothing honest, stable, or basic with which to build a government.

Conrad shows his inheritance and Eastern mind in portraying the struggle of Razumov in Under Western Eyes. It is like the struggle of Lord Jim. Neither can stand to be debased in his own mind. Their extreme introspection is a

result of Joseph Conrad's nationality, heredity, and early education. Under Western Eyes is so Slavic that it is doubtful if anyone born in Western Europe could have thought of it or understood the social and historical details of the situation.

Joseph Conrad's novels emphasize situation. Men are put in helpless conditions against fate. The effects of events are then shown upon the characters. The resulting struggle shows Conrad's tragic vision of life as well as his admiration for struggling humanity to win ideals. He feels and makes us feel that the fight is hopeless, but we, with him, admire the heroic men who strive to win against a fate too strong for them.

He expresses a feeling of fellowship toward struggling humanity when he writes:

" . . . Why should the memory of these beings, seen in their obscure, sun-bathed existence, demand to express itself in the shape of a novel, except on the ground of that mysterious fellowship which unites in a community of hopes and fears all the dwellers on this earth."¹

Decoud, in Heart of Darkness, on the island alone, died of solitude; and Conrad explains it by saying that in our activity alone do we find the sustaining illusion of an independent

¹ Conrad, Joseph, A Personal Record, p. 27.

existence as against the whole scheme of things of which we form a helpless part.

Conrad is not a fatalist in the spiritual realm. His heroes may lose in outward battles and happenings, but they win in the spirit. In Chance, The Rover, and Lord Jim the heroes die and win. It is Conrad's admiration for such men that keeps his novels from becoming pessimistically morbid.

In his notes on Almayer's Folly he earnestly and directly portrays his attitude toward the characters in his novels. He is content to sympathize with people no matter where they live--

" . . . in houses or in tents, in the streets under a fog, or in a forest behind the dark line of dismal mangroves that fringe the vast solitudes of the sea . . . Their hearts, like ours, must endure the load of the gifts from heaven; the curse of facts and the blessing of illusions, the bitterness of our wisdom and the deceptive consolation of our folly."

Conrad understands man's idea of suicide to end all when his fight against fate fails. In this way he shows a knowledge, at least, of the Eastern mind of extreme melancholy and is aware of his fellow man's morbid idea of using suicide in extreme cases when human strength breaks:

Captain Brierly in Lord Jim is one in authority who helps to try Lord Jim. After Captain Brierly considers the weakness of mankind, he becomes bored with it all and

commits suicide.

Mrs. Verloo in The Secret Agent is tried to her limit of endurance. She kills her husband and commits suicide.

Heyat in Victory sets fire to the house and burns himself with Lena's lifeless body.

Decoud in Mastroso commits suicide and Linda Viola meditates seriously on doing it.

In The Nature of a Crime the teller of the story is constantly contemplating suicide, and we are told that he will perform the act unless the girl accepts him. He wears a ring containing poison in the set. He intends to bite through the glass and take the poison.

In The Inheritors Wolderschrodt, the banker who gets tangled up in money affairs with Mersch, commits suicide when their railroad scheme fails.

In Romance Tomas Castro meditates on dying; the hero meditates on taking his own life, and Conrad shows his own idea of life and of suicide under those circumstances:

"An endless contest in which there is no peace of victory or defeat. . . In a moment, I went through all the agonies of suicide, which left me alive, alas, to burn with the shame of the unreasonable thought."¹

Again in Romance when John Kemp, the hero, is saved

¹ Conrad, Joseph, Romance. 1924, p. 331.

from death Conrad writes that John Kemp dreaded to face life, and that the gray realities of life were always present and romance always in the distance like a mirage.

In An Outcast of the Islands Willem meditates suicide after his plans fail and he grows tired of life.

Flora de Barral in Chance tries twice to commit suicide, and the first of the story centers around the state of mind she is in while expecting to commit suicide.

All this tends to show not a happy, hopeful mind in the author. Conrad used suicide in dealing with weaker characters but never with a hero like Singleton, Captain Anthony, or Peyrol. All are sorely tried by loneliness, but only the weaker vessels are destroyed by suicide; yet he believed that a purpose to live comes from illusions:

"For every age is fed on illusions lest men should renounce life early and the human race come to an end."¹

Thus he pities the weaker vessels that cannot withstand the storms, and admires those who see, through colored glass, an unreal world with a bit of romance and poetry to struggle for.

He confesses that he has nothing to do with the mystic and the supernatural; he is satisfied to work with the ma-

¹ Conrad, Joseph, Victory. 1918, p. 108.

terial of life that he is given--namely, human nature and its struggles.

He confesses a lonesomeness for fellowship in Lord Jim through the character of Marlowe; Marlowe receives a packet of letters which is to tell him the last news of Lord Jim. Conrad is describing the situation and meditates on his own farewell to the sea. He thinks of his sea comrades, his alien birth, his earlier and later life--loneliness and longing--and then he describes it all through Marlowe.

This note of longing and of fellowship is found in all of Conrad's novels. He describes it again very well in An Outcast of the Islands when he pictures Aissa after Willems grew tired of her:

"Her hands slipped slowly off Lingard's shoulders and her arms fell by her side, listless, discouraged, as if to her--to her, the savage, violent, and ignorant creature--had been revealed clearly in that moment the tremendous fact of our isolation, of the loneliness impenetrable and transparent, elusive and everlasting: of the indestructible loneliness that surrounds, envelops, clothes every human soul from the cradle to the grave, and, perhaps beyond."¹

In The Shadow Line Conrad again expresses loneliness, but there are added notes of introspection and determina-

¹ Conrad, Joseph, An Outcast of the Islands. 1926, p. 250.

tion to meet stern reality, even though there is no rest or no winning of victory.

Conrad looked at the chair where the captains had sat before he became captain of the "Otago." He then writes that the unrest of life was about to fall on his shoulders and no one would remember or care for the struggles he made, even as they had forgotten those who had gone before. Captain Giles and Conrad were talking just after Conrad's awful, first command. Conrad had anticipated with joy that first command. He, like all youth, had thought of the glory without the responsibility. He explained his disappointment and disillusion, his heartache and restlessness to Captain Giles:

"You must feel jolly tired by this time."

"No," I said. "Not tired, but I'll tell you, Captain Giles, how I feel. I feel old, and I must be. All of you on shore look to me just like a lot of skittish youngsters that have never known a care in the world."

He didn't smile. He looked insufferably exemplary. He declared:

"That will pass. But you do look older, that's a fact."

"Aha!" I said.

"No! Not The truth is that one must not make too much of anything in life, good or bad."

"Live at half speed," I murmured perversely. "Not everyone can do that."

"You'll be glad enough presently if you can keep going even at that rate," he retorted, with his air of conscious virtue. "And there's another thing: A man should stand up to his bad luck, to his mistakes, to his conscience and all that sort of thing. Why what else would you have to fight against? . . ."

"There's no rest for me 'til she's out in the Indian Ocean and not much of it even then."

'Yes, that's what it amounts to,' he said in a musing tone. It was as if a ponderous curtain had rolled up disclosing an unexpected Captain Giles. But it was only for a moment, just the time to let him add, 'Precious little rest in life for anybody. Better not think of it.'¹

Ideals and Philosophy

The ethical view of the universe, he believed, involves us in so many cruel and foolish contradictions, that he finally suspected that the aim of creation was not ethical at all. He believed it to be mainly

"a spectacle for awe, love, adoration, or hate, if you like, but in this view--and in this view alone--never for despair."

Lord Jim reveals Conrad's ideal, "the ideal of an applauded heroism, the necessity of adding to one's conviction the world's acceptance and acclamation." Lord Jim is a soul "drunk with the divine philter of an unbounded confidence in himself." That illusion is suddenly and unexpectedly put to the test; he fails, goes into a state of remorse, emerges out of it and dies a conqueror over self. It is Conrad's masterpiece and reflects the deeper hopes, fears, and sympathies of Conrad himself.

In The Nigger of the Narcissus he describes life's heroes and uses a seaman as a symbol of heroism. He is de-

¹ Conrad, Joseph, The Shadow Line. 1926, pp. 131-133.

scribing Singleton when he writes of men hard to manage but easy to inspire, "but men enough to scorn in their hearts the sentimental voices that bewailed the hardness of their fate."

Conrad, no doubt, was among the group who loved such men and believed them true, and in his books we see that he subtly confesses a faith in them. Why? Because he knew from experience and sympathy the struggles of life for the simple ideals.

What in Lord Jim did Jim lack if not this very quality of a seaman, which temporarily losing, he forever suffered from conscience. It is Conrad himself which speaks in Lord Jim and reproves him.

The villain or enemy of mankind is described in the same book. Conrad's idea of a man under the influence of such a foe is given in his description of Donkin:

" . . . the creature that knows all about his rights, but knows nothing of courage, of endurance, and of the unexpressed faith, of the unspoken loyalty, that knits together a ship's company. . . The independent offspring of the ignoble freedom of the slums, full of disdain and hate for the austere servitude of the sea. Is there a spot on earth where such a man is unknown, an ominous survival testifying to the eternal fitness of lies and impudence?"¹

Nearly every one of Conrad's main characters is locked in a life and death struggle with the foe. He shows men

¹ Conrad, Joseph, The Nigger of the Narcissus. 1921, p. 11.

struggling with it in the form of selfishness, fear, despondency, hopelessness, ambition, or passion. Life is always shown as a testing ground which plays havoc with minor virtues and weaker vessels.

Conrad is almost a scientist in the study of passion: he analyses it from a detached aloof position of one who knows. In Nostromo Gould's passion for his mine and wealth is symbolic and ironical of human nature at large. In The Rescue Mr. Travers has a similar ambition for wealth. Juez O'Brien in Romanoe has a passion for gold, and Nostromo in the book Nostromo a passion for praise and appreciation. Soevola Bron in The Rover loves and hates in extreme measure. The passion of fear is shown in Hirsch of Nostromo. In The Secret Agent Mrs. Verloc has extreme maternal love for her idiotic brother; but Conrad has her, like all his women characters, so silent in her suffering that we hardly understand the intensity of her passion until she kills her husband.

In all this extreme there is shown the weakness of life; but the greatest debauchery of excess is shown when Conrad portrays the half-mad sex passion. In An Outcast of the Island he shows the remorse of debauched sex passion. He describes Willem in a state of ecstasy:

"A delirious peace, a happiness that is infamous, cowardly, and so exquisite that the debased mind refuses to contemplate its termination: for to the victims of such happiness, the moment of its ceasing is the beginning afresh of the torture which is its price."¹

Willem commits a crime against Conrad's main principle of life when Willem betrays fidelity and tells Lingard's secret, all for the sake of a burning passion.

Ortogo in The Arrow of Gold and Wilhelm Schomberg in Victory are like Willem in being half-mad, raving, passionate fiends. Edward Burden in The Nature of a Crime has been overcome by his passion for a married lady. Tom Lingard was caught in the forces of passion for a time; but like a strong vessel tossed about in a storm, he again took control of himself.

In all this display of struggle, hopelessness, courage, passion, and remorse, Conrad analyzes, explains, and portrays life as he saw and felt it according to the background of his inheritance, training, and atmosphere of early youth.

Always he seems to be looking on and ourbing his own feelings of blame or praise, and picturing only the stern meaning of life in the background. We have an excellent de-

¹ Conrad, Joseph, An Outcast of the Islands. 1926, pp. 141 and 142.

scription of this attitude toward the world's activities, from his own acknowledgment in A Personal Record when he describes the landing of Almayer's pony. Here we have his treatment of so many of his characters and his relation to them from his "elevated position" and his duty idea of steeling his heart against the expression of praise or blame. Life and duty were sterner to him than that.

One feels that Conrad would have liked to let himself loose and tell in a romantic way how Jim redeemed himself nobly, but the Conrad philosophy would not let him be eloquent.

There is irony, pity, admiration, and hopelessness in his philosophy on man's aim, because to Conrad purpose is only an illusion.

In thinking of the universe as struggling, suffering humanity Conrad once wrote that the retreating sun was like a long gash inflicted on the suffering body of the universe.

One must constantly keep in mind Conrad's heredity and early experiences to understand fully the seriousness of his novels; for the surrounding atmosphere of his stories is the result of a master mind and feeling which has gathered material through those hard but impressionistic years of childhood.

The things that he writes about, his symbols, are chiefly the result of later experiences, his experiences at sea and the people he met; but it is again the master mind which is able to portray those experiences in the vivid way, peculiarly his own.

CONRAD'S EXPERIENCES AS REFLECTED IN HIS NOVELS

His Early Love Affairs

Joseph Conrad was formally educated by a tutor, Mr. Fulman, a student of the University of Cracow. Joseph and his tutor took a trip together in 1873. At Venice Conrad saw the sea for the first time. He had said before that he wanted to be a sailor, and nothing after this trip could convince him otherwise. His uncle, Thaddeus Bobrowski, took Joseph Conrad's part and consented.

It is possible, however, that sentimental reasons may have had a part in strengthening his idea. In a young romantic nature like Conrad's the disappointments of first love are apt to prompt a desire for flight.

He had at least two love affairs before he met the Rita in The Arrow of Gold. His first love he later called "a devil." He came out of his first love experience hurt and with a complete mistrust of himself and an awful fear. He

then thought of the girl as a superior being, but not yet "a devil." That opinion came to him later. But he said to himself, "if that's it, then, never again." The second one pressed his hand and shed a tear when she said good-bye. He never expressed his love to the second one; he tried to profit from his first experience, and so he resisted his feelings. He never forgot her, nevertheless. He patterned Antonia in Mostrano after her. He wrote The Arrow of Gold in answer to an inquiry of hers. She had asked what he had been doing since she knew him, and he took notes on his French experiences with the idea of answering her inquiry. He later used these notes and put them in book form for the public to read.

Conrad in comparing his love with Antonia wrote that his love had perhaps more glow and less serenity in her soul than Antonia, but she was a determined "Puritan of patriotism with no taint of the slightest worldliness in her thoughts."

After the experiences of the first two love affairs he felt "that being a Pole all doors were closed to him." He was sixteen and wanted to escape from Polish oppression and his love affairs to a freer world, but it was not so much the sea--he had only once caught a glimpse of it--that was

drawing him; it was life in the open that he longed for with all the eagerness of a youth who had hitherto been physically and spiritually cramped and suffocated.

His French Experiences

From 1874 to 1878 Conrad lived in France, his headquarters being Marseilles. He went to France because France was then particularly friendly to Poland, and he had learned the French language when he was a small boy. Without his French experience he would never have written in the French style, and he certainly would never have written An Arrow of Gold. The setting in Montromé is largely based on his memory of South America. He took two trips there from France, one in 1875 and one in 1876.

His first sea trip was in 1874. In 1875 he took a sailor's trip to St. Pierre, then to Martinique in the West Indies, then to St. Thomas, and finally to Cape Haitian in Northwestern Haiti. The ship's crew collected log wood there and sailed back to France, to the city of Le Havre. This trip took six months. Conrad was an apprentice. He went by land from Le Havre to Marseilles and waited six months for the "Saint-Antoine" to return from the West Indies. We have reason to believe that during that time he

lived rather a wild and carefree life, spending his money in riotous living.

In 1876 he left in the "Saint-Antoine" under Captain Escarra. This ship took about the same route as the other one. It secretly carried arms and ammunition for some party in a Central American country. Several passages in Conrad's works show references to this adventure.

He then met the man whom he pictures as Ricardo in Victory. Conrad later wrote in a letter that the physical Ricardo was a fellow passenger on board a small schooner "during a four days' passage between two places in the Gulf of Mexico whose names don't matter."

He got the setting for Nostromo when he went ashore and spent nearly twelve hours at Caracas, Venezuela, near the Magdalena River. He then saw the landscape of the track to the silver mine. However, he put this scene on the western coast of South America when he wrote Nostromo. The description of Caracas, the capital, as given in the geography, is similar to Conrad's scene in Nostromo. It is five or six miles from the sea; it is situated upon a highland over three thousand feet above the sea level. It is connected with its parts by a short railway which winds about in its descent to the sea.

Conrad heard the story of a robbery of silver bullion while he was on this second voyage. He later read a book called On Many Seas in which an American sailor helped by an American journalist wrote of the sailor's adventures, legal and illegal. The robber in the story was a captain of a schooner in which the American was a sailor. The robber boasted of the stealing and told that he was getting rich gradually, but that if the sailor told on him, no one in the port would believe it. The sailor's life then would be in danger. About three pages of this book were devoted to this story, which was supposed to be true. The real life story thief was a rogue, but Conrad decided to make *Mostrono* with finer feelings, a little more of the hero, and a bit of the conscience of Lord Jim.

One of the strongest character influences of Conrad's sea experiences and writing life was Dominio Cervoni. Conrad first met this man on the second trip to the West Indies. Dominio became a sort of ideal seaman to Conrad. Many of Conrad's main characters show the stamp of Dominio. *Mostrono* in Mostrono represents the man of the people, but he is Dominio in initiative, command, strength, and courage.

Dominio, a man of about forty years, had seen twenty

- First trip to West Indies. Second trip was similar to it.
- Location of Nostramo.
- Scene which is described in Nostramo and transferred imaginatively to Western Coast.



years of sea service when Conrad first met him. He was serious, humane, without illusions, adventurous, stern, ironical and sympathetic toward the impulsive of youth. He is a character in The Arrow of Gold. He is Tom Lingard in An Outcast of the Islands and again in The Rescue. This Tom Lingard is a bluff, domineering, tender hearted, old seaman, overwhelming in his affection, but terrible in his revenge, just as Dominio was. Dominio is portrayed in The Rover as Peyrol, the old seaman who is adventurous and romantic. He is shown again in Suspense as Attilio, the tower keeper. Here again Conrad refers to South America; Attilio had come from South America, where he had lived with an old gentleman for a year. Age and nationality between Attilio and Cosmo in Suspense holds good of Dominio and Conrad in 1878. The scene of action is the Mediterranean, where Conrad had had experiences with Dominio.

Conrad also refers to his Western Hemisphere experience in Romance, for the scene of action is chiefly concerned with the West Indies, where he had been each time he took the two trips.

What happened to Conrad after his first two trips is pretty accurately told in The Arrow of Gold. Before his West Indies trips he had gotten in with sympathizers of Don

Carlos. Don Carlos and his followers were members of a political party of Northern Spain which was opposed to King Amadeus of Spain. Members of the party were called Carlists. Many people in France took sides in Spanish politics, and Conrad was inspired to take up the Carlist cause, hardly knowing why he did it. Perhaps it was because he had enjoyed his adventures in the West Indies and wanted new thrilling experiences. He writes in the first of The Arrow of Gold about returning from his second West Indies trip and of his experiences "lawful and lawless" and of their charm and their thrill.

He describes two cafes in The Arrow of Gold, one Bohemian and the other aristocratic, where he had his reserved table in the petit salon up the white staircase. This cafe was patronized by people who belonged chiefly to the Don Carlos sympathizers.

Conrad and three others got together and bought a small boat, the "Tremolino." It was built on the river of Savona, rigged in Corsica, and was to be manned by four men. Conrad was the youngest. The oldest was thirty; he was a North Carolinian, who "lived and died by the sword." Dominic Cervoni of Corsica, from a respectable family, was also in the group, but was not one of the four. Henry C____, the next to the oldest of the four, was from a good London family.

- I. Havannah, where O'Brien became a marine judge in Romance.
- II. Somewhere near Rio Media, the home of Balazar Riego, the rich man in Romance.
- III. Kingston, where John Kemp worked on a plantation for two years and was finally taken on board a ship that was bound for Havannah.



He became a good friend to Conrad. In The Arrow of Gold he is called Mills. Conrad also gave Mills the appearance of Harivoud, a friend of Conrad's whom he met thirty years after the time alluded to in The Arrow of Gold. Roger de la S_____ was the fourth member of the group. He was Scandinavian in looks, and that is about all we know of him.

The "Tremolino" secretly carried ammunition to the Carlos forces of Spain. The trips were planned mainly according to information gotten from Dona Rita. Conrad took messages to her uncle from time to time and gave them to muleteers in the Gulf of Rosas. Her uncle was a Carlist and a priest, living in a little mountain parish called Guipuzcoa. The "Tremolino" was officially known as a fruit and corkwood trader, going from Haracilles to somewhere in Spain near Barcelona.

Dominic's brother had shot a man and had skipped out. The brother's son, a half wit, sullen fellow, was to be taken care of by Dominic. His name was Cesar; he was a contemptible fellow, and Dominic many times had, with a pretense gesture, knocked him down on purpose. This Cesar was the real cause of the "Tremolino's" disaster, for out of spite he betrayed the men to the coast patrol. Dominic was so embarrassed at Cesar's stealing gold from Conrad and be-

traying them that when the ship was purposely guided on the rocks, Dominio saw to it that Cesar was drowned. He then apologized to Conrad for bringing such a sneak aboard and left Conrad forever. A part of this story is told in The Arrow of Gold, but the part that Cesar played in the "Tremolino" disaster is not mentioned in the novel.

The characters in The Arrow of Gold are pictured true to facts. Rita was a love of Conrad's; the outcome of this love was the same as related in the story. It took place sometime during the year 1876. Conrad actually fought a duel. This ended the love affair, but the memory of Rita always lived in Conrad's mind.

The other main characters in the book are people whom Conrad had known at Marseilles: Mrs. Blunt, who was ambitious in society for herself and for her son; Madame Leonore, who was Dominio's love; Therese Lastabla, Rita's sister, who was prayerful and awful; Henry Allegre, who was the rich man of Paris and who took Rita to live with him; Azzolati, who was the financier with a criminal soul; Rose, who was Rita's trustworthy maid; Jose Ortega, the brute, passionate fellow, who, when a child, tormented Rita and again later when they both grew up--a half mad creature, and contemptible. From his portrayal of these characters

we learn of Conrad's power of insight into human behavior and his close observation of people around him.

In commenting on The Arrow of God Conrad wrote that the novel may be described as the study of a woman who might have been a brilliant phenomenon but remained obscure, playing her little part in the Carlist war of '75 and '76 and then going as completely out of the world which knew her "as though she had returned in despair to the goats of her childhood in some lovely valley on the south slope of the Pyrenees."

He referred to this novel later and wrote that he felt a particular interest in the book because it was so much of a portraiture of vanished years and of feelings that he once had, their actuating power, and of people whom he once had known.

He tells us that this book is a study of young love "told with a depth of emotion pointing to experience," and this makes the quality of the book. He confesses that the divine madness was so strong that he would have walked into a precipice deliberately with his eyes open for its sake. Later it seemed incredible to him, and yet it was the same Conradian heart; for even when he grew older, he could not smile at it.

He admitted he did not understand women and did not understand his love for Rita. He left out certain facts and motives in writing the story because he wrote it from personal experience and did not know those facts. He wrote that he would consider it dishonest in this case to supplement his want of knowledge by the exercise of inventive faculty. It is a record of his life during the years 1876 and 1877.

His idea of love between the sexes is shown through the description of his own experiences. At the close of 1877 the idea--"never again"--had complete possession of his mind. The Rita that haunted him had no history to him; "she was but the principle of life charged with fatality. Her form was only "mirage decoying one step by step into despair."

The story of The Arrow of Gold takes place in and near Marseilles, France. Conrad calls himself George in the story.

Mr. Mills, a Carlist, has Captain Blunt join with him in getting George interested in the Carlist movement. They succeed, and George joins with them and a few others. They buy a boat and secretly carry ammunition from Marseilles to Spain. They do this to help the Carlist cause.

Don't Rita is the inspiration and help in directing this small company. Her past is partly explained. We are told that she had been a poor herder of goats when she was a child. A wealthy man, Allegre, had become interested in her and had taken her to live with him. After his death she had inherited all his wealth.

Many men in the story are in love with Rita, either because of her wealth or because of her charming and fascinating ways. Azsolati is contemptible in his mercenary love. George loves her with a passionate, romantic glamor of youth. Conrad pictures her as his idea of "the woman of all time." She partially returns his love but never entirely.

George and Rita are seen coming out of a room together in the early morning. Therese, Rita's sister, sees them. Rita feels compelled to go away with George rather than face her sister's wrath. They go away together and live for six months in some secret place.

George goes to town to get some money and learns that Mr. Blunt has been insulting George by remarks concerning George and Rita. Mr. Blunt and George fight a duel, and George is seriously injured. Rita nurses him back to life, and then without warning she leaves him forever.

Mills suggests to George that he follow his other love, the sea. Mills gives him Rita's comb, the arrow of gold, that she always had worn in her hair since George had known her. She had left it with Mills to give to George to keep as a remembrance of her.

Conrad later lost the arrow of gold during a storm at sea. It satisfied him to lose it. He felt it was safe with the sea and that thereafter it would be only a part of his memory mixed with the other memories of that year of his life.

Conrad's Early English Experiences

Conrad left France to get away from the scenes of his love. He had been three years at Marseilles, including the time spent on his trips to the West Indies. He was twenty-one years old and could not speak English at all. It was thus that he left on an English steamer, "Mavis," in April, 1878, bound for Constantinople; from there the "Mavis" went to Yelisk at the extremity of the Sea of Azov, then to Lowestoft, England, in June, 1878. By July, 1878, Conrad was a sailor on "The Skimmer of the Seas," a coaster between Lowestoft and New Castle. He took six voyages between those two points. October, 1878,

he went on the "Duke of Sutherland," bound for Australia. This trip took a year. Conrad was appointed night watchman by Mr. B____, second mate. Mr. B____ would often come on port drunk. He would say, "Ports are no good, ships rot, men go to the devil!" Conrad's port and land novels seem to show that he thought so, too. In Chance de Barral frets to get away on the sea where he can live a clean life free from evils of finance and where he can struggle with the elements only. It is typical of Conrad's treatment of land and sea situations.

On this trip Conrad met a Negro named James Wait. Conrad used this name when he wrote The Nigger of the Narcissus, even though the character is another "nigger" that he had met.

The first scene of the book in The Nigger of the Narcissus was inspired from the experience of the embarkation of the crew on board this same "Duke of Sutherland."

In 1879 he embarked in the "Europa," a steamer bound for ports in the Mediterranean. He touched at Genoa, Leghorn, Naples, Patras, Cephalonia, Messina, and Palermo. This was a two months' trip. Conrad thought of leaving the sea after this trip and of becoming secretary to a Canadian business man; but his uncle, Bobrowski, influenced him

to stay with his job and work up in his sailor's profession and make something of himself. The trip of 1879 helped him later in writing his Mediterranean novels: The Rover and Suspense.

In 1880 he passed the examination for third mate. He records his feelings concerning that time in Chance, which was written thirty years later. He shows how he felt, through the character of Powell, in chapter one. Conrad's first trip after passing the examination was to Australia and back to England, an eight months' trip.

From 1881 to 1883 he took a voyage to Bangkok. In 1883 he passed the second mate's examination and voyaged to Madras. On this trip he got ideas for scenes in the 'Verndale' episodes in Chance.

Conrad disputed with the captain and left the ship. He went to Bombay to look for another commission. While he was sitting on the porch of the sailors' home, he first saw the "Harcissus." It was a thirteen-ton boat, built by a sugar refiner of Greenock and built nine years before Conrad saw it. It was intended to be used in the Brazilian sugar trade, but was being used in the Indian Ocean and the Far East. Conrad was second mate on this vessel.

The Nigger of the Harcissus is really an actual record of four months of Conrad's life during the year 1884.

Pictures taken
from "The Independent"
ber 17, 1924.



BATAVIA, JAVA, THE SCENE
OF "ALMAYER'S FOLLY."
HERE DAIN AND NINA ES-
CAPE OUT OVER THE SEA.
THE SEA THAT CONRAD
BRINGS BEFORE US IN HIS
FIRST BOOK WITH ITS CALLS
OF WONDER, MYSTERY, DAN-
GER, AND LOVELINESS



A TYPICAL STREET SCENE
IN THE CITY OF BOMBAY.
THE CHIEF SEAPORT OF
WESTERN INDIA. HERE,
JAMES WAIT, THE "NIG-
GEL," JOINED THE CREW OF
THE SHIP "NARCISSES" THE
NIGHT BEFORE SHE LEFT
PORT

MORRO CASTLE, HAVANA
BELOW, IS A LANDMARK OF
"ROMANCE," A MOST FASCINAT-
ING NOVEL, WHICH WAS WRIT-
TEN IN COLLABORATION WITH
FORD M. HUEFFER



The voyage of the "Haroieus" from Bombay to London was the same as given in the novel. Most of the personages in this book are the same as Conrad met on this trip: Singleton's real name was Sullivan; Archie Belfast and Donkin were real. The two Scandinavians were taken from another ship. The story of the gale and the "nigger" dying was the same in reality as revealed in the novel. The conclusion of the book was taken from other voyages.

From this book we learn a great deal of what Conrad's life was like, during all those years he spent on board sailing ships. The atmosphere, the dangers, and the background of that life become real to us; also its romance and beauty, which appealed intimately to Conrad, brought up from childhood as he was, to be familiar with the sentiment of the sublime and with struggles against odds.

The Nigger of the Haroieus by Joseph Conrad is psychological, realistic, and in the real meaning, it is romantic and idealistic. The "To My Readers in America" and "Preface" of the 1921 edition give one a clearer understanding of the meaning of the book. In the preface Conrad writes:

"The attempt made in the tale that follows is to present an unrestful episode in the obscure lives of a few individuals out of all the disregarded multitude of the bewildered, the simple, and the voiceless." Back of this at-

tempt is the "feeling of mystery surrounding our lives" and an appeal "to the latent feeling of fellowship with all creation."

The story takes place on this four-months' trip from Bombay to England in 1884. Captain Allistoun's ship takes on new helpers before starting on a trip around the southern point of Africa. The crew is a very common crowd of ship men. They are interesting because Conrad shows us the psychological working of their minds in situations they would be apt to encounter on just such a trip.

Mr. Fever, chief mate, calls the roll and finds one man is missing. The nigger, Mr. Wait, is the man missing. However, he comes in late, and the ship starts on its journey the next morning. The nigger is soon taken with a pretended sickness after leaving shore. He makes nearly the whole crew think that he is really sick. In this way he travels through the four months without working. Off the coast of Southwestern Africa an awful storm arises. The captain and crew think the ship will sink. Everyone is expectant: then suddenly someone wonders where Jim Wait, the nigger, is. The ship is lying on its side, and Jim has been kept in his cabin room by the water jamming the door. With much risk and difficulty the crew rescue him. After the storm and suspense the nigger decides he is getting better. They are nearing the English port; and, of course,

he wants his pay for the four months. He has done this trick on another ship before; so he tries it again. Captain Allistoun tells him plainly that his sickness has been feigned and that he is not to come on deck for the rest of the voyage. The nigger does really become sick and dies before the ship lands.

Mr. Baker, the chief mate, is liked by his men. Although he grunts rather roughly, they have learned how to take him. He is determined to have the nigger in his watch, because he sees that the nigger is a strong, big fellow.

Wamibo, the Finn, is rather an easy-going, sluggish man. He must have done his part as a sailor, because Mr. Baker tells Creighton, the second mate, that the Finn is in his, Creighton's, watch so it is only fair for Baker to have a good man, too, meaning he should have Jim Wait, the nigger.

Donkin is a contrary, cowardly fellow. He is "hot on making trouble" continually. He comes to the ship looking like a half-clothed beggar. He is about the only one of the helpers that Jim Wait doesn't use his power on.

Craik, or Belfast, believes Jim Wait is about ready to die with his pretended sickness. He believes it so strongly that we actually feel sorry for Belfast. He is so very

kind to Jim because he, Belfast, is under the superstitious spell, or idea, that he has of death.

Singleton is a noble seaman. He is sixty years of age and has weathered the sea life and dangers of his time. He is solid, trustworthy in time of storms and calms, loyal, quiet, and a reader. The author puts him into the story so vividly in order to keep for us and for himself the idea of a true sailor of the old school. Singleton is a great contrast to Donkin.

James Wait is unaffected and scornful of humanity at the beginning. He is wise and experienced in the psychology of fear. He has death for his companion to serve his own wants. Since it is an actual story, we can only guess the real cause of the nigger's death. Perhaps he really had been sick all the time, or perhaps he was overcome by the fear of death that he came to believe in by acting the part so well and so long.

Podmore, the cook, is not a real seaman at heart. He loves the land more than the sea. He is religious, serious, and a good cook. He is so demonstrative in his religious fervor that he causes a commotion in trying to convert Jim Wait.

Captain Allistoun is quiet and seems to "know everything and hear every whisper" without seeming to see or hear. He is true to the ship in a storm, and he knows human nature enough to command men, especially one like Donkin.

William McFee, a writer and a sea captain, once gave this book to a sailor to read. The sailor commented so favorably that McFee tried the experiment of letting different ones read it. He said that he found that the ones who did not like Conrad's works were the cunning, the avaricious, and the ignoble, or those who were looking for a story told for the story's sake alone. The reason is that Conrad in his style and spirit "reaches surely and inexorably down into a man's moral resources and sounds them for him." There is another reason to fit those who wish a thrilling story with a climax. They want action and not meditation. Conrad's books are full of meditation and explanation of situations.

The sea is his background "simply because he knows the sea." He is primarily interested in giving us situations and showing us characters in the struggle to overcome the situation. The situation may be inside one and not a storm without. One writer, E. P. Dargen, says of The Flipper of the Narcissus that it is a voyage into the self deception

of the nigger. Conrad takes us on this voyage as well as his actual voyage from Bombay to London.

Conrad has some quiet humor in this book. The men's actions in waiting on the nigger and the way they get him out of his room during the storm are humorous touches.

It pays to cultivate Conrad's acquaintance through his books, for he is more interesting as one understands his underlying principles of living. It is true that "when he judges his characters, his final test is the seaman's." It must be so, or he never could have said of the "Harclesus" men, "Good-bys, brothers! You were a good crowd." We wonder how he included Donkin.

After the trip described in The Nigger of the Harclessus Conrad spent the winter in London.

In 1885 he left England as second mate on the "Tilkhurst," bound for Singapore. His health was not good at this time.

In 1886 he passed his captain's examination; also during this year he tried to write his first English story.

He took a trip as first mate in 1887 from Amsterdam to Samarang, Java. The crew had to wait for the cargo at Amsterdam, and Conrad was accustomed to visit a Mr. Hudig. This name was later used in Almayer's Folly and An Outpost of the Islands as a name for a Dutch trader.

The cargo was not loaded right and Conrad was struck by a spar and was laid up at Samarang. He then went to Singapore and took a job on the "S. S. Vidar," a small boat, and he took the job on account of his ill health. Eighty-two Chinamen served on board the "Vidar." Conrad got his idea of Chinamen, to be used on board the ship in Lord Jim, from his experience at this time.

Malay Influences in Conrad's Novels

From August 22, 1887, to January 5, 1888, Conrad, as chief mate, made five or six voyages from Singapore to Bulungan, Sambir.

During these voyages he met Almayer, Willem Abdulla, Babahtobi, Lakamba, and Tom and Jim Lingard. He used these characters in Almayer's Folly, An Outcast of the Islands, The Rescue, and Lord Jim. He learned Malayan local color at this time, also. He learned a great deal of the customs of these people from his captain.

Almayer was a half-caste Dutchman living at Bulungan. Conrad's captain said that Conrad drew an exact moral and physical portrait of him. In the novel Conrad portrays to us a universal trait that he had observed in Almayer: "the discord between the imagination of man and his power to perform."

- The Shadow Line trip.
 ... Five or six trips of three weeks each in 1887.
 ○ Somewhere near The Rescue scene.
 △ Island scene of Victory.
 □ Scenes of Almayer's Folly and An Outcast of the Islands.



The real Almayer was an Eurasian, and married a Malay-an woman. The child was a boy instead of a girl as Conrad has made it in Almayer's Folly. The real Almayer died of a wound received on a python hunt.

On one of the voyages the "Vidar" came in contact with a small canoe half filled with water, in which a runaway Malayan slave was awaiting death. They took him to a small island where he worked for some time on a pepper plantation. He then returned to his own island. This event, according to Captain C_____ must have given Conrad a suggestion for writing An Outcast of the Islands.

Willems was a Dutch trader who had taken to drink and was living on Almayer and others. Conrad met him when Conrad dined with Almayer. No one seemed to want to tell Conrad about Willems; so he made up his own story about him.

Conrad met Tom Lingard during these trips. Tom Lingard became the hero of An Outcast of the Islands and The Rescue. He was created for the novels out of the real man and from Dominic Cervoni. The real Tom Lingard was in the East Indies. Jim Lingard was his nephew and served on his uncle's ship, and then became a trader for Tom's interests. He was first called Lord Jim on board the "Vidar." He got the title from his swaggering manner.

Picture taken from "The Independent" for September 17, 1924.



NATIVE CRAFT IN THE HARBOR OF SINGAPORE WHERE LORD JIM WENT ON TRIAL FOR ABANDONING HIS SHIP

The real Jim married a Malayan woman and had a large family. The real Jim and the Lord Jim of Conrad's novel were alike only in name and physique. The physical Jim served on board the "Vidar" for two or three trips while Conrad was second mate.

Babalatchi and Lakamba were two natives of Celebes and were merchants at Broeuw.

Abdulla was the oldest son of Syed Mosin, the Arab. The "Vider" partly belonged to Syed Mosin.

The story part of Lord Jim was partly inspired by Conrad's knowledge of a ship that ran over a sunken derelict and "broke her back." The officers left her. The real name of the ship was "Jeddah."

The tricky fate that Conrad loved so much to write about seemed also to play her tricks on him as well as the characters in his books; for as much as he hated to be on board a steamer and bemoaned his fate while on one, it was during the two times that he served on steamers that he collected most of his material and the best of his material for his writing years. This included the two years 1887 and 1890--1887 on the "Vidar" near Malay and 1890 on the "Congo" in Africa.

The "Vidar" finally became unbearable to Conrad. His

health improved; he then became restless for the deep water. He tells us exactly how he felt in The Shadow Line. That piece of his work is really an autobiography of his life during the time near March and April of 1888.

Captain C_____ appears as Kent in The Shadow Line. Patterson is Captain Giles. Ellis has the same name. Hamilton may not be fact; at least it is not the real name of anyone living at the sailors' home at that time.

Conrad wrote that he believed the very speeches were accurately reproduced in the novel. The Bangkok part of the story has been proven to be true by a letter written from the doctor there.

Schomberg, whom Conrad describes in Victory and again in Lord Jim, was in Bangkok at the time Conrad was there.

The "Otago" took three weeks to reach Singapore. It then made a trip to Australia to its owner; Conrad was in command. He then went to Mauritius, a small island east of Africa, and then back to Australia. He gave up the command and went back to Europe because of his uncle's ill health.

The Shadow Line is introspective and psychological. The story is realistic adventure. The theme is that one "must not make too much of anything in life, good or bad."

The plot concerns Conrad's experience on his first

trip as captain of a ship. He had resigned his position under Captain Ellis for no known reason. He was given command of a ship by the superintendent of marines. The honor and the thought of adventure made Conrad supremely happy.

Captain Giles bade Conrad "good-bye" and did not seem so inclined to get emotionally upset with joy or sorrow. He had experienced struggles with the sea and knew the grim duty connected with it. He met Conrad at the officers' sailors' home after Conrad had given up his job on the "Vidar." He helped Conrad in getting the new job; and when Conrad would have thanked him, the captain, somehow, put him off and merely said "good-bye."

When Conrad left the first job and went to the officers' sailors' home, he met the chief steward who was constantly fearful of losing money on roomers and boarders. The steward lost so much on Hamilton, a boarder, that he was willing to keep back a letter sent to Conrad in order that Hamilton might get Conrad's job and not board any longer at the home. The letter was an offer to Conrad to be captain of a ship. Hamilton seemed very human in sneaking around, expecting to get the job offered to another.

Ramsome was another interesting character. Although he had a weak heart, he worked harder and did more things

on the ship than any normal man could do. When everyone but Conrad and he were sick on the ship, he quietly went about work and did an enormous amount for one man; then when the ship came to port, he asked to resign. It is a surprise to see his attitude after the hard part is over.

The story is better organized than Almayer's Folly or Lord Jim and is therefore easier to read. Conrad's descriptions are so vivid that when he tells about the waiting for the wind to blow, the time seems to drag. One feels the situations when he explains them: the sickness, worry, and restless waiting; and even the insane Mr. Burns seems vividly present.

THE LATER LIFE OF CONRAD

His Writing Years

Conrad arrived in London about June, 1889. He had to wait nearly four months for a document to allow him to go to Poland. With time on his hands and a natural inclination to be restless and busy, he began to think and meditate on the illusions, desires, disappointments, and ambitions of the people he had known. He thus began writing Almayer's Folly. He was rather indifferent toward it, for he had no idea of ever becoming an author.

Because he spoke French, he was given a position to serve on a steamer on the Congo River in the year 1890. He met a Swedish captain, who in a measure became Heyst, the Swedish hero of Victory.

The Congo experience affected Conrad's whole life, for he contracted a fever similar to the gout, and his illness, which kept him from being an active seaman, gave the author a chance to express himself in writing. From 1890 to 1898 he wrote three novels. He still thought he would some day go back to the sea as his one life job. His disease caused a gloom to rise to the surface, and in his writings there is a bitterness and restlessness mixed with his generous mind and spirit. He wrote partially to take his mind off his illness. Conrad's uncle believed Conrad's ill health caused pessimism and gloom, but he wrote also of Conrad's naturally "melancholy temperament."

In 1891 and 1892 Conrad made trips to Adelaide. He met Galsworthy on the second trip home. He planned a trip to Canada in 1893, but never made it. He finally left the marine service for good in 1894. His uncle died during this year, and Conrad lived in London and finished Almayer's Folly, which he had been working on for five years.

Edward Garnett started Conrad on his second novel by asking him why he didn't write another. He finished his

second novel, An Outcast of the Islands, in one year and started The Nigger of the Narcissus and The Rescue.

He was married in 1896 and spent his honeymoon at Ile Grande on St. Malo for five months, and then he went to Essex, England. Much of his time during his honeymoon was spent in writing The Nigger of the Narcissus. He finished it in 1897.

About this time Conrad moved to a place called Pent Farm. Ford M. Ford writes that Conrad's grocer while Conrad lived at Pent Farm might have been the Stein of Lord Jim. This grocer was benevolent, pleased, blinking a little, a solid, wealthy man of about fifty years of age, several times mayor of his ancient town, and with great knowledge of men.

Miss Colboy, who also worked in the store, was always extremely silent. She was very much like one of the silent women of Conrad's early books.

Lord Jim was started in 1898 and also another novel, Romance, to be written in collaboration with Ford Madox Ford. Conrad's oldest son, Borys, was born this year. During 1899 and 1900 Conrad had much trouble; he worried about his son's ill health; he had a debt which worried him. He later mortgaged The Rescue to pay the debt. He worked on

three novels and three short stories; all this trouble, worry, ill health, and work caused a breakdown.

Conrad worked so earnestly and so steadily that the close of many of his books is extreme in tense dramatic situations, as if he had driven himself with his last effort. Heartbreak is an excellent example of this weakening at the end of the book.

During the years of 1901 and 1903 he made several trips to visit literary men. In this way he learned more of the different views of literary styles. Some critics claim to see a difference in his writings from English born authors because of his inexperience in using the English language. Some examples cited are: "The left shore is very unhealthy," and "A half an hour." Such details, however, seem insignificant, for his command of language was of the best. He thought in three languages because he had lived in three different countries. Ford Madox Ford said Conrad was accustomed to formulate his sentences in French mentally and then translate them into English. He probably wrote in English because: it was the language of the people he was living among at the time he wrote; he would have a larger public; he felt freer to express himself about Russia; and the subject matter of the sea could be better understood by the English speaking world. Conrad himself said he did not

choose English as his medium of expression but that the ground was prepared by his reading of Shakespeare, Dickens, and much other English literature in Polish translations. He liked the English ways and culture. He expresses it in Suspense and in The Rover. In Suspense he has Attilio act surprised when Cosmo followed him into the tower. Attilio says:

"Nobody but an Englishman would behave like that. You are an eccentric people The audacity of your people!"¹

He expresses the same kind of awe and admiration in The Rover when he writes that Peyrol was told the English officers had come into a French port and walked unconcerned into an eating house while France was at war with England. Conrad has Peyrol say:

"What audacity! But that's just like what they are."²

Conrad had read Marryat and Cooper in his youth and this began his devotion to England. Marryat wrote of the frigate warfare of Napoleonic times, 1795 to 1815. The reading of Marryat, no doubt, influenced Conrad in writing The Rover and Suspense. Conrad's grand-uncle was a great admirer of Napoleon, and this helped to influence Conrad in writing of those times.

¹ Conrad, Joseph. Suspense, 1925, pp. 3 and 4.

² Conrad, Joseph. The Rover, 1923, p. 32.

In 1905 Conrad took a trip to Capri for his and his wife's health. The trip did him no good in health or inspiration. However, he had a conversation with a stranger in Geneva which gave him the inspiration later in writing Under Western Eyes.

He started The Secret Agent about this time, while his son was having scarlet fever, his wife ailing, and he himself very sick with the African fever. He was in an extremely gloomy mood. He afterward said that the book was not good because of his illness and worry while writing it. He promised to do parts of it over.

Ford Madox Ford claims to have inspired Conrad to write The Secret Agent. He claims that he provided him with a great amount of anarchist literature and gave him the knowledge of at least one anarchist young woman who is used in the story. Ford's first poems were set up by that same young lady on an anarchist printing press.

While young and interested in such things, Ford had become acquainted with the work and movement of the anarchists. Conrad feared to tell all this in the preface of the novel, for he feared it might hurt Ford's reputation. Ford writes that Conrad met him in 1920 and said, "You know--the preface to The Secret Agent--I did not give you away too much--I was very cautious."

Conrad knew of the attempt to blow up the Greenwich Observatory, and he made up the story to fit as best he could the results of that attempt. The idea of the sister's committing suicide was made up by Conrad, but the killing of her husband was told to him by Ford. Later Conrad read a statement from a book which helped to piece together the plot of The Secret Agent. The statement was: "All that's very well. But your idea of secrecy over there seems to consist of keeping the home secretary in the dark."

Conrad went to Montpellier, France, in 1906. This trip was a success in that he gained health and inspiration. One scene in Victory is based on his experience in Montpellier, France, in 1906. He had gone into a cafe called Place de la Comedie; a small orchestra was playing, and he then got his idea for the orchestra scene in Victory, and he also got an idea for one of the main characters in Victory.

Some suggestions for the writing of Suspense came at this time, also, for Conrad became better acquainted with French military life and Napoleonic romance while in Montpellier. Suspense is based on the struggle between the French and the English for Capri in 1808. Much of Conrad's material was gotten from the library at Capri, and the novel follows closely to the historical facts that he read.

Chance was begun in 1906. In Chance, Marlowe, telling about meeting the Fynes, says he met them "one summer in the country where they were accustomed to take a cottage for the holidays." Conrad at times lived in the country for short and long periods; so this is a bit of his own imagination based on his own background of experience.

Conrad became dissatisfied with writing Chance and left it in 1908 to start Under Western Eyes. This story, inspired from the conversation he had at Geneva in 1895, was revived in his mind when he revisited Geneva in 1905, for he again thought of the conversation. His health was very poor when he started the book. He finished it in two years and took up Chance again and finished that in 1911. The two years before the World War he worked on Victory.

The war had its effects on Conrad's life and writings. He wrote that he could not think of writing pure fiction at a time like that; so he started The Shadow Line; he finished it in one year. He was exceedingly ill during this time and wrote under great difficulty. After finishing The Shadow Line he again wrote on The Rescue and started The Arrow of Gold and finished them both by 1919.

He visited Corsica in 1921 to get the atmosphere for Suspect. He worried much over the novel and felt incapable

- B Scene of Chance and The Secret Agent.
 A Scene of Under Western Eyes.
 C Ship wreck of "Patua" as described in Lord Jim.
 C Scene of Romance.
 - - - The trip after the close of The Shadow Line story.
 - The trip described in The Nigger of the Narcis-
 sus.
 O The destination of the "Ferndale" as told in
 Chance.



ble of writing it. He started The Rover to relieve his thoughts from the strain of thinking on Suspense. He intended The Rover to be a short story, but it lengthened into a good sized novel. He finished it in 1922.

In 1923 Conrad visited the United States, made a public talk, and read parts of The Secret Agent. At this time he said it was interesting to see how near he came to actuality in writing The Secret Agent, a work mainly of imagination. But since so much of his work deals with actuality, it is not surprising that even the imaginative stories have the touch of truth and reality.

Joseph Conrad died August 3, 1924, before Suspense was finished.

CONCLUSION

Conrad's life as seen in the persons and situations of his drama shows him to be restless and never at ease. All his work has a touch of personal confession; nevertheless, one feels that there is much more at the source that is never confessed.

Conrad is neither a realist nor a romanticist. He is an actualist, for he deals with truths whether they be sordid, cramped, distasteful, or beautiful and romantic. There is too much autobiography in Conrad's writings for

him to take sides with realism or romanticism. There seems to be romanticism in his heart but realism in his reasoning; for even in his cold analysis of life situations, his tone and treatment of those situations are lyrical, and are softened by his belief in honor and good hearts and pity.

The style of Conrad's novels is not attractive to the average reader, for to get the story in order in many of his books one must reorganize the novel. Conrad's style is original. He was too honest to use any other kind. He looked into his heart a long time before he began to write; and what he found there he expressed under white heat of strain and effort to make it absolutely truthful to his views of life. He used the methods which seemed to him to portray best what he saw within him. In doing this he sometimes starts at the middle or end of the story, reverts, and then goes to the middle or end of the story again. The story becomes minor, and the meaning or explanation of a situation becomes major, just as Conrad intended it to.

Because of his honesty in portraying clearly life as he saw it, we know more of what Conrad's life was like. He always looked for honesty in other writers, and he was disgusted when he could not find it. Ideas of formulas and techniques were repulsive to him. To him a man had to live his own life, think his own way, express himself, and use

his own way in expressing himself.

Conrad once said of Bennett's work that it stopped just short of becoming absolutely real because Bennett was too faithful to the dogmas of realism, and that realism in art would never approach reality. Believing this, Conrad has made his style extremely personal and real.

Joseph Conrad is professedly "not literary" in the special sense. He lived only for the sea and did not write a line till he was thirty-two years old. The sea's rhythm is in his sentences. Her swift and horrible fickleness is in his works. He compares artistic creation to voyaging; he compares life to details of voyaging; and he compares a woman's love to the treachery and heartlessness of the sea.

The real voyages of Conrad are a basis for his fictional adventures. We know that many actual ships and scenes served as starting points for his imagination.

Conrad knew the tropics better than any other locality, and especially the Indian Ocean and the islands in and near the Malay Archipelago. His style peculiarly fits into the romantic, tropical atmosphere, a style that is his through circumstances of birth and experience. He writes the truth from a clear memory and also clings to his fancy and sentiment in portraying it. He used the English language in his writing, but the French style was strong in him; the deli-

oacy, illusiveness, and subtlety.

His best stories were in the best sense lived. His characters are never at rest. He exposes the soul of man under the stress of sorrow, passion, and anger. His themes include the adventures, physical and spiritual, of man, with an ever present symbol. His heroes are human passions, not men. He lived in the setting described and knew the main characters of Almayer's Folly and An Outcast of the Islands: he understood and felt the stress and strife in Lord Jim, the helpful sympathy in Victory and Chance, the longing and disappointment in Romance, the hopelessness in Under Western Eyes and The Inheritors; and The Shadow Line, The Arrow of Gold, and The Nigger of the Narcissus are "the raw material of his own life transmuted into the gold of fine art."

His main characters are men he had known and analyzed in real life situations. They live in his books because they lived in his actual life. He shows them in situations that bring out the Conradian philosophy of fidelity. He takes them through fire and leaves it to us to judge their worth. His books permeate a moral stronger than expression. He plays upon all our emotions in giving us a glimpse of truth, and he does away with the "old, old morals, worn thin, defaced by ages of careless usage."

There is first hand knowledge and intimate experience with the people and scenes he writes about, and there is a power with words, expressions, and manners which enables him "to make you feel, to make you hear, but above all to make you see."

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Ethlyn Marie Aleop

LIFE LINE IN JOSEPH CONRAD'S NOVELS

- 1854-70 Spirit of antagonism against all things Russian was born, which was later expressed in Under Western Eyes and The Secret Agent.
- 1875-76 Two trips to the West Indies were taken; the setting for Mostramo was seen; two characters in Victory were met; the spirit of Romance was begun; and Conrad met Dominio, the hero of all Conrad's sea stories.
- 1877 What happened to Conrad this year was the same as happened to "George" in The Arrow of Gold.
- 1880 Conrad passed the examination for third mate. His feelings were recorded in Chance thirty years later.
- 1883 Ideas were gotten for scenes in the "Ferndale" episodes of Chance on his voyage to Madras.
- 1884 The account of a four months' trip from Bombay to England is told in The Nigger of the Narcissus.

- 1897 Conrad made five or six voyages from Singapore to Bulungan. He became acquainted with customs, characters, and events which he used in Almayer's Folly, An Outcast of the Islands, Lord Jim, Victory, and The Rescue.
- 1898 The Shadow Line is an autobiography accurately told concerning the experiences of this year.
- 1895 The spirit of Under Western Eyes was aroused by a conversation Conrad had with a stranger in Geneva.
- 1906 The orchestra scene in Victory was suggested by an orchestra Conrad heard in Montpellier, France. Many of his ideas of French military life were gotten this year and were used in writing The Rover and Suspense.

LIST OF NOVELS READ

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Almayer's Folly
The Shadow Line
Lord Jim
The Nigger of the Narcissus
Victory
The Secret Agent
Nostromo
An Outcast of the Islands
The Arrow of Gold
Under Western Eyes
The Rover
The Rescue
Chance
Suspense

Novels by Joseph Conrad and Ford Madox Ford:

The Inheritors
Romance
The Nature of a Crime

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