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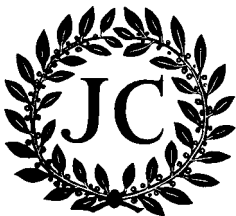
THE COLLECTED LETTERS OF
JOSEPH CONRAD

GENERAL EDITOR
LAURENCE DAVIES

FOUNDING GENERAL EDITOR
FREDERICK R. KARL (1927–2004)

CONSULTING EDITOR
HANS VAN MARLE (1922–2001)

VOLUME 7



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This volume is dedicated to the memory of three Conradians:

Philip Conrad
Bruce Harkness
Frederick R. Karl

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PLATES

between pages 190 and 191

1. Conrad by Powys Evans, *London Mercury*, December 1922
2. G. Jean-Aubry
3. Deck of the *Endymion*, painting by John Everett
4. Jessie Conrad featured in the *Woman's Pictorial*,
14 October 1922
5. Conrad in rehearsal with Miriam Lewes and Russell
Thorndike
6. Thomas J. Wise
7. Conrad with Aniela Zagórska, Oswalds
8. Conrad with J. B. Pinker, Reigate, c. 1921

These plates appear by kind permission of: Baker-Berry Library, Dartmouth College (2, 6, 7, 8); British Library Newspaper Collection, Colindale (4); Cambridge University Library (1); National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (3).

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The editors are grateful to holders of manuscripts, listed separately, for their co-operation.

Special thanks are due to Mr Owen Knowles, the late Hans van Marle, and Dr Gene M. Moore whose gracious help and wise counsel greatly facilitated work on this volume.

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The editors are grateful to the following individuals for answering inquiries or otherwise facilitating their work: Ms Wanda Bachmann, Mr Jamie Barnes (Curator, Keswick Museum and Art Gallery), Dr Katherine Baxter, the Revd J. S. Bell (Senior Chaplain, Tonbridge School), Dr Steve Bell (Her Majesty's Nautical Almanac Office), Dr Martin Bock, Dr Xavier Brice, Mr C. F. P. Chapman (Secretary, Old Oswestrian Society), Ms Claire Cross (Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine), Dr Charles Cutter (Brandeis University Library), Ms Caroline Dalton (Archivist, New College, Oxford), Mr A. J. Essery, Ms Glenda Gale (Alexander Turnbull Library), the late Raymond Gauthier, Ms Lee Grady (McCormick-International Harvester Collection Archivist, State Historical Society of Wisconsin), Dr Richard J. Hand, Professor James Heffernan, Dr Susan Jones, Professor Joseph M. Kissane, Ms Pamela Painter, Professor Walter C. Putnam III, Professor S. W. Reid, Professor John Rassias, Ms Erin Schlumpf, Dr Patrick Scott (Thomas Cooper Library, University of South Carolina), Dr Allan H. Simmons, Dr Carl Spadoni (Russell Archivist, MacMaster University), Dr Mariuccia G. R. Sprenger, Professor Ray Stevens, Mr Asa Tapley, Ms Régine Tessier, Dr Anne N. Thomas, Dr Robert W. Trogdon, Mr Robert Warren (Royal Observatory, Greenwich), Professor Cedric Watts, and Dr Andrea White.

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The late Frederick R. Karl began gathering texts of Conrad's correspondence in the 1970s, working at first in tandem with Professor Zdzisław Najder. When Cambridge took up the proposed collected edition of the letters, Frederick R. Karl became its founding general editor; a critic and biographer of many interests who always saw the broader cultural landscape, he delighted in Conrad's artistry and gravitas and left his inimitable mark on Conrad studies. The late Bruce Harkness was both a generous and genial mentor and a master of anticipation, alert to those rewarding mysteries that scholars often overlook. The unassuming pride that the late Philip Conrad took in his grandfather's life and work showed itself in many kindnesses to those who shared his admiration. All three of these Conradians, so different from each other yet bound by the same enthusiasm, died in the spring of 2004. We dedicate this volume to their memory.

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Berkeley	Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley
BL	British Library
Black	Robert Black Autographs
Bodleian	Bodleian Library, Oxford University
Brown	Special Collections, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island
Bryn Mawr	College Archives, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania
Churchill	Churchill College, Cambridge University
Clifford	Mr Hugo Clifford-Holmes
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Duke	William R. Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina
Fitzwilliam	Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
Forbes	The late Malcolm Forbes, Jr
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Goulden	H. J. Goulden, Ltd, Archives, Canterbury
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Heinemann	William Heinemann, Ltd, London
Hofstra	Special Collections, Hofstra University Library, Hempstead, New York
Hurrell	Mrs Rosamond Hurrell
Indiana	Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington
Janta	The late Aleksander Janta
Karl	The late Professor Frederick R. Karl.
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Melbourne	State Library of Victoria, Melbourne
Morgan	Pierpont Morgan Library, New York
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Neel	Neel Family Archives, Paris
Neville	Mr Maurice F. Neville
Nielson	Mr John Nielson
NLS	National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh
NYPL	Miscellaneous Manuscripts Division, New York Public Library
NYU	Fales Collection, New York University Libraries
Ohio	Special Collections, Ohio State University, Columbus
Penn State	Rare Books Room, The Pennsylvania State University Libraries, University Park
Princeton	Special Collections, Firestone Library, Princeton University, New Jersey
Queen's	Queen's University Archives, Kingston, Ontario
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Texas	Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin
Thomas	Mrs Beryl Thomas
Turnbull	Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington
UCL	Library of University College, London
UNC	Special Collections, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill
Virginia	Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville
Wagner	Hormann Library, Wagner College, Staten Island, New York
Warsaw	State Archives of Poland, Warsaw
Williams	Chapin Library, Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts
Wright	Mrs Purd B. Wright III
Yale	Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut
Zagayski	Mr Mieczysław Zagayski

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CHRONOLOGY, 1920–1922

Unless otherwise stated, dates are for book publication in Britain rather than the United States; dates and locations for essays in periodicals record only the first appearance.

January-February 1920	Corrected proofs for the book version of <i>The Rescue</i> .
30 January 1920	Serialisation of <i>The Rescue</i> began in <i>Land and Water</i> (completed 31 July).
February 1920	Serialisation of <i>The Arrow of Gold</i> in <i>Lloyd's Magazine</i> concluded.
27 February 1920	Karola Zagórska arrived at Oswalds for a six-month stay.
4 March 1920	Finished preface to <i>The Secret Agent</i> .
15 March 1920	Finished first draft of <i>The Secret Agent</i> dramatisation (begun October 1919).
9 April 1920	Finished preface to <i>A Set of Six</i> .
26 April 1920	Cabled Washington, D.C., in support of loan to the Polish Government.
May 1920	Wrote prefaces to <i>Under Western Eyes</i> , <i>Chance</i> , <i>Victory</i> , and <i>The Shadow-Line</i> .
21 May 1920	<i>The Rescue</i> published in book form in America (on 24 June in Britain).
7 June 1920	Visited the British Museum for research on <i>Suspense</i> .
20 June 1920	Began <i>Suspense</i> .
18 July 1920	T. E. Lawrence visited Oswalds.
c. 21–24 July 1920	Drafted 'Memorandum on the Scheme for Fitting out a Sailing Ship'.
August 1920	The Conrads visited Rudyard Kipling at Bateman's.
1–21 September 1920	In Deal, Kent, revised <i>Notes on Life and Letters</i> texts and worked with J. B. Pinker on 'Gaspar the Strong Man' film scenario.
Before 5 October 1920	Finished preface to <i>Arrow of Gold</i> .
5 October 1920	Death of William Heinemann.

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Chronology, 1920-1922

8 October 1920	Finished 'Gaspar the Strong Man'.
9 October 1920	Finished preface to <i>Notes on Life and Letters</i> .
November 1920	Translated G. Jean-Aubry's 'Joseph Conrad's Confessions' into English.
November or December 1920	Sat for a Max Beerbohm caricature.
16 December 1920	Finished draft of <i>Laughing Anne</i> . Began correcting <i>Notes on Life and Letters</i> proofs.
January 1921	First volumes of collected edition published by Doubleday and Heinemann.
23 January 1921	Accompanied by Borys Conrad and G. Jean-Aubry, the Conrads left for Corsica.
25 February 1921	<i>Notes on Life and Letters</i> published (22 April in USA).
4 March 1921	<i>Notes on My Books</i> published in USA (19 May in Britain).
24 March 1921	The Conrads celebrated their silver wedding anniversary.
10 April 1921	The Conrads returned to England.
May 1921	Introductory Note to <i>A Hugh Walpole Anthology</i> published.
12-25 June 1921	Translated Bruno Winawer's play <i>The Book of Job</i> .
7 and 14 July 1921	Sat for a portrait medallion by Theodore Spicer-Simson.
27 July 1921	'The Dover Patrol' in <i>The Times</i> .
10 October 1921	Began <i>The Rover</i> (as short story).
November 1921	Foreword to Alice Kinkead's exhibition catalogue <i>Landscapes of Corsica and Ireland</i> published.
December 1921	'The Loss of the <i>Dalgonar</i> ' in <i>London Mercury</i> .
12 December 1921	'The First Thing I Remember' in <i>John O'London's Weekly</i> .
Mid-January 1922	Corrected text of 'The Warrior's Soul' for eventual collection of short stories.
24 January 1922	Signed agreement with T. F. Unwin for two new novels and volume of short stories.
8 February 1922	Death of J. B. Pinker in New York.
22 February 1922	Completed proof-reading Jessie Conrad's <i>Simple Cooking Precepts for a Little House</i> for pamphlet publication.
June 1922	Captain J. G. Sutherland's <i>At Sea with Joseph Conrad</i> published, with Conrad's foreword.

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late June 1922	Finished <i>The Rover</i> ; revisions continued into July.
July 1922	Met Maurice Ravel through G. Jean-Aubry.
25 July 1922	Sat for his portrait by Walter Tittle.
1 August 1922	Finished foreword to Richard Curle's <i>Into the East</i> (published 1923).
8 August 1922	Made his will; Richard Curle and Ralph Wedgwood appointed executors.
14 August 1922	Death of Lord Northcliffe.
2 September 1922	Borys Conrad secretly married (revealed to Conrad in summer 1923).
14-18 September 1922	The Conrads visited Sir Robert Jones in Liverpool and toured North Wales.
2-11 November 1922	Stage adaptation of <i>The Secret Agent</i> at Ambassadors Theatre, London.
5 November 1922	Paul Valéry visited Oswalds.
3 December 1922	Conrad's sixty-fifth birthday.
4 December 1922	'Outside Literature' in <i>Manchester Guardian</i> .
23 December 1922	Death of S. S. Pawling.

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INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME SEVEN

According to the folklore of creativity, artists in their last years express a serenity, a wisdom, a mastery of their craft that shows them both at home in this world and ready to leave it. Austen's *Persuasion*, Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale* and *Tempest*, Goya's Bordeaux paintings, Beethoven's last quartets all supposedly display this ripeness, this readiness. Between 1920 and 1922, Conrad completed one novel and made substantial advances on another, left unfinished when he died in August 1924. Many readers of *The Rover* have seen in Peyrol's final voyage either one, last resounding gesture of sacrifice in a cause whose adherents have slighted the old freebooter or a tranquil coming to terms with death, or even both. For obvious reasons, *Suspense* is harder to assess, but the temptation to read it in a similar way remains, down to its concluding words. Such interpretations may be too sentimental for the tough of spirit or too naïve for the sceptic – Don't they depend on *post hoc ergo propter hoc* reasoning? Can't that touching quotation from *The Faerie Queene* gracing both *The Rover* and Conrad's grave also be taken as the voice of Despair? – but they have helped to shape his literary reputation. That he also chose in this period to dramatise his bleakest, most ironic novel, *The Secret Agent*, clouds this image of a poignant sunset, and so, even more, does the state of mind, whether playful or dejected, expressed in his correspondence.

Far from feeling any mastery of his art, Conrad still had the habit of discounting any and all of his achievements, as in this avowal to Pinker about *Suspense*, his 'Napoleonic novel':

I don't know that a great subject is an advantage. It increases one's sense of responsibility and awakens all that mistrust of oneself that has been my companion through all these literary years. Mine, my dear Pinker, is the only instance within my knowledge of practice not giving self-confidence. There is a strain of anxiousness in my character that even the encouragement of your friendship and sympathy cannot altogether overcome. (14 June 1920)

Far from feeling serene about his life, he often seemed to flounder in a swamp of melancholy. During an attack of gout, he wrote to Walpole:

I have been in great pain and, what is worse, in the depth of dumps. Have dumps any depth? Anyway the impression was a most horrible nightmare – unable to think, afraid to move and only able to worry . . . The whole thing was so brutal and unexpected

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that I feel as if I had been robbed of the last shred of my confidence in the scheme of the Universe. It all appears one great chaotic worry.

(14 June 1920)

As readers of Conrad's earlier letters will know, these states of mind were not new – these passages could have been written in the 1890s – but were all the worse for never being banished by achievement or success. At times, he could make light of his own nervousness, for instance about attending rehearsals of *The Secret Agent*: 'My spirit became like unto that of the field-mouse palpitating in its hole, though my body (and a considerable proportion of my native irritability) went up twice to town' (to Ada and John Galsworthy, [7 November 1922]). At other times, wit and irreverence break in, as towards the end of the letter to Bertrand Russell of [22–23 October 1922] in which Conrad also mounts a spirited attack on political and philosophical self-assurance, but the tone is certainly not that of the wise and tranquil elder.

Periods of despondency, as so often before, had much to do with the uneven rhythms of his writing: 'I have done no work to speak of for months, – such is the dreadful truth which I conceal from as many people as possible' (to Ada Galsworthy, 9 February 1922). Over these three years, Conrad begrudged the time he spent on literary housekeeping. There were fugitive articles to be rescued for *Notes on Life and Letters* or reprinted as pamphlets, preparations for the collected edition, letters to answer from correspondents all over the world who wanted his opinions on this literary question or that, and attractive side projects such as translating Bruno Winawer's comedy *The Book of Job*. None of these activities was impossibly time-consuming, but, in concert, they interrupted the narrative momentum he needed for good financial and artistic reasons:

All I can leave to my people will be my copyrights – which are worth something now. But this is a precarious provision at the best. Meantime I must keep in at work. But I've had two hard lives – each in its way – physically and mentally and I feel the need of easing down a bit. I assure you that through all my writing life I have never had the time to "look round" so to speak. When I went away from the desk it was to be laid up. Such were my holidays. I don't complain. (17 July 1920)

The last sentence was a reproach to John Quinn, the recipient, who complained at length about his own misfortunes, and the generally defensive tone is a response to Quinn's unhappiness at no longer being the preferred buyer of Conrad's manuscripts. Nevertheless, this letter does speak for Conrad's condition – and his decision to take a working holiday in Corsica only exacerbated his plight.

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Before leaving, he told Agnes Ridgeway, his friend from the days of visits to the Sandersons at Elstree, about his hopes for *Suspense* and his recent dramatisation of *The Secret Agent*. By a macabre accident, Conrad gave the letter a posthumous date, 28 December '24', instead of 1920: 'I want to breathe the air of [the] Western Mediterranean where my young life began – and I hope I will be able to do some work on my new novel. For the last year I have done nothing except correcting the text of my Collected Edition and writing prefaces for the same. I have also written a 4-act play.' The prospects for this journey into the past had seemed alluring: escape from a soggy English winter, respite for Jessie Conrad from the strain of running a household while in miserable pain, the celebration of their silver wedding anniversary, and for Conrad new territory, wildly picturesque and associated with Dominique Cervoni, his mentor and co-conspirator in Marseilles, and Napoleon Bonaparte, the anything but grey eminence of Conrad's later, 'Mediterranean' fiction. The Conrads were going at just the right moment: 'All the vendettas have been settled or have died out and it is very quiet there, I am told. On the other hand no golf courses have been laid out yet and no invasion from the dismal tribe with clubs is to be feared – for this year at least' (to John Galsworthy, 17 January 1921). The island had been discovered, however. The company at the hotel in Ajaccio came straight out of an early E. M. Forster novel: 'An atmosphere of intense good form pervades the place. Low tones – polite smiles – kind inquiries – small groups. The only disreputable looking person is the unavoidable Clergyman of the C[hurch] of E[ngland] who looks as tho' he must have had a few adventures in his time' (to Eric Pinker, 5 February 1921). At least the expedition gave Jessie Conrad some pleasure, but, for her husband, the time was otherwise completely wasted. 'The truth of the matter is', he told Alice Kinkead, 'that I like Corsica incomparably more in your pictures than in nature' (10 October 1921) – and he made no headway on his writing.

The Pinkers' grand excursion to Kent was another such occasion. When they arrived at Oswalds in the last days of July 1921, they came by mail-coach with J. B. Pinker on the box, driving four horses. This was not a tranquil visit, and it lasted more than a week.¹ An overflow of kitchen, stable, and dining-room servants had to be billeted in local inns. Catered lunches had to be laid on: 'I am afraid that those lunches won't be tip-top . . . At any rate I intend to use all my powers of persuasion and fascination to get those Canterbury people to turn out decent things, whatever they may be' (to J. B. Pinker, 18 [or 19] July 1921). The occasion was the annual Cricket Week, and Canterbury's mediaeval streets could not accommodate with

¹ This account depends on passages in John Conrad's *Joseph Conrad: Times Remembered* as well as on letters written between 18 July and 2 August.

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ease a massive vehicle designed for the broad and well-paved post roads of nineteenth-century England. At least once, a wrong turning landed the coach in a cul-de-sac, so that it had to be backed out in an atmosphere of polite exasperation. On the first day of play, the would-be stylish arrival at the Kent County Cricket Ground became a little too dashing when the horses stampeded and spectators had to scramble for their lives.

Conrad, who had been enticed into coming along on the two-day journey from Reigate, soon grew weary of Pinker's running commentary on the art of carriage driving and had little relish for the days ahead of cricketing and picnics, since his own idea of sports and pastimes did not extend beyond nocturnal games of chess with his younger son and the occasional shot at palatable birds. He was trapped in an irritating pastiche of what Yeats, around this time, was calling 'ceremony', and Conrad wanted to be writing.

Nevertheless, Conrad also had an ancestral streak of *grand seigneur*. At Oswalds, he commanded an extensive 'lower deck' crewed by indoor and outdoor servants and Audrey Seal, the cantankerous but much-needed nurse who would eventually marry 'Long Charlie' Vinten, the chauffeur. Living in this way required extensive credit or a steady income, neither of which comes frequently to a writer. Once again, in fact, Conrad relied upon Pinker as his banker, and this system was liable to crisis:

You cannot doubt that if I had been given a clear view of having doubled my expenditure between the years 1918–1919 I would not* have pulled myself together and prevented the doubling of it again between 1919–1920 – which is pretty near what in fact happened . . . Believe [me] my dear it is not good for a man (even of much steadier character than mine) to have money falling on him in envelopes as if from heaven without even a clear view* of the resources from which it flows and opportunity of comparing and checking. Especially if he's a man by nature not particularly given to counting pennies. (to Pinker, 19 April 1921)¹

Illness permitting, the Conrads liked to entertain. They played host to such regulars as Jean-Aubry and Curle, and to writers and academics from around the world. One of the sharpest and most original observers of the Conrads at home was Tadaichi Hidaka, a lecturer from Waseda University, Tokyo, who describes Conrad's greeting at the railway station, the drive to Oswalds, the tour of the gardens, the generous lunch, the chat in the study – a hospitality ceremonious but warm.² Although suffering through yet more surgery, painful and mostly ineffectual, Jessie Conrad took great pleasure in society and, when possible, in visits to London, which she found a more

¹ For the use of asterisks, see 'Editorial Procedures'.

² 'East Meets West: Tadaichi Hidaka's "A Visit to Conrad"', translated and introduced by Yoko Okuda, *The Conradian*, 23, no. 2 (Autumn 1998), 73–86.

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agreeable place than her husband did: ‘Thank you dear people for being good to Jessie when she was in town. I couldn’t face the racket (!) of it. Perfectly ridiculous – but I can’t help it. I don’t know what to say to people’ (to Rothenstein, 17 December 1920). When the *Woman’s Pictorial* serialised her cookery book, the recipes were flanked with photographs of her, her home, and her choicest dishes as featured at the Peter Pan Tearooms in Shaftesbury Avenue. The première of *The Secret Agent* was an alarming event for Conrad, one that he chose to avoid, but afterwards:

Mrs C confessed to me with an agreeable grin that she had *the* evening of her life, having never seen anything like that before and being sure of never seeing it again. The crowd around her box the compliments, the courtly respects of Benrimo, the speeches on the stage after the last curtain* – a perfect Function, as the Spaniards say.
(to Agnes Ridgeway, 7 November 1922)

Beyond the fuss of entering a new school, their younger son did not give the Conrads much anxiety. Despite a modest performance in the entrance exam, John took a place at Tonbridge, not too far from Oswalds, where he was to live under the friendly eye of Agnes Ridgeway, whose husband was his housemaster.

Borys Conrad was another matter. Reading the dismal catalogue of lying and concealment, debts unpaid, fugitive jobs, and edgy dealings with employers, one should remember that posts in the first few, economically depressed years after the war were hard to find and hard to keep, even (some veterans said especially) for ex-servicemen – and this ex-serviceman was still suffering from the effects of gas and high explosives. All the same, Borys Conrad caused his parents much distress. When a ‘financial agent’ called in a loan, Conrad wrote: ‘I hope I received the shock with becoming fortitude. One does not want to quarrel with one’s son as long as one still keeps some belief in him. It is a crippling affair for me. One could get the money by extra work but in this affair the element of time is important’ (to Graham, 7 July 1922). Borys’s affairs required much ‘becoming fortitude’, even when he was not in any serious way at fault, as when the Surrey Scientific Apparatus Co. failed, taking with it his job and his and his father’s investment, and ending the latter’s long-standing friendship with Dr Mackintosh.

Few members remained of Conrad’s extended family. The most important to him were the Zagórska sisters, Karola and Aniela. For a while, he subsidised Karola’s life in Italy, where she was training to become an opera singer. Aniela kept him in touch with Polish cultural affairs, worked on translating his books, and generally acted as his Polish representative and prophet. Especially in Cracow and Warsaw, artistic life was flourishing, but, politically

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and economically, this was a parlous time for Poland, menaced by a Bolshevik invasion, and bitter, sometimes bloody, quarrels with Germany, Lithuania, and Ukraine over national boundaries. To Prince Sapieha, who was keen to enlist him in the newly founded Anglo-Polish Society, Conrad professed ignorance: 'As to the actual events of the last three years I am absolutely in the dark, not so much perhaps as to facts themselves but as to their profounder significance' (20 February 1920). The 'profounder significance' puzzled most observers, but Conrad could hardly escape the 'facts themselves' since the London papers covered the violent aftermath of war and revolution in Eastern and Central Europe quite extensively. Passing references in Conrad's letters show that he grasped the paradoxes of ethnic hostility and irredentism and, like many other liberal or right-wing Britons, feared the westward spread of Bolshevism (to Miller, 26 January, to Chassé, 21 June 1922).

Amidst all the anxieties over health, family, sluggish writing, and post-war malaise, Conrad took comfort from his friends. Pinker's sudden death on a business trip to New York was one of the hardest losses of these years. Outwardly, Pinker seemed a stiff, intimidating man. In his perennial morning-dress, tail-coat and all, he made Conrad, always meticulous with his clothes, look almost informal (see Plate 8). Under his pseudonym, 'Simon Pure', Frank Swinnerton told the readers of the New York *Bookman* about Pinker's way of doing business: 'Pinker did not let the publisher become sentimental. His "yes" had extraordinary potency as an interjection. It was quiet, expressionless, and it pulled the publisher up short. It held all the significances of assent, deprecation, sarcasm, and baffling incomprehensibility. It is quite likely that some publishers were rather afraid of Pinker in his lifetime' (May 1922, p. 275). Yet Swinnerton also recalled Pinker's kindness to young authors, and Hugh Walpole's *Times* obituary (10 February 1922) brought out Pinker's admiration for Conrad and Henry James. Although Conrad's response to this obituary sounds rather lordly, his own letters to Pinker reveal a closer, warmer friendship:

Gradually since 1914 an intimacy developed between us in a strange way. He seemed to think that he had earned the right of laying his innermost thoughts and feelings before me. A peculiar but in its way a touching assertion of the right of good service and – no other word will do – of devotion . . . He had a pride in his work and in his power to help people in ways that from a cold business point of view could not be justified to common prudence. (to Walpole, 10 February 1922)

I feel I must get away for a few hours and who could I want to see but you? I may also find perhaps something to say. I can hardly use the pen to-day. Sheer worry.

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But you won't see me a wreck and you won't find me a great trial. I simply feel that a couple of hours with you will do me all the good in the world.

(to Pinker, 5 May 1920)

This friendship between author and agent was quite remarkable, especially in the early twentieth century, when the commercial aspect of the relationship was new enough to seem less 'natural' than it has become. All the more remarkably, the friendly feelings transferred after Pinker's death to his elder son, who soon became 'my dear' or 'Dearest Eric'.

Other than J. B. Pinker, only Dr Mackintosh and Lord Northcliffe left the roster of long-standing correspondents; the former vanished in a fog of monetary claims and counter-claims; the latter died a feared and ridiculed tycoon whose worldly power and Napoleonic fantasies had fascinated Conrad. Commiserating with Edward Garnett on the loss of W. H. Hudson, Conrad noticed something odd: 'Strange fellows these Harmsworths! It is as if they had found an Aladdin's lamp. Stranger still to think that I had been more intimate with N[orthcliffe] than with Hudson. Funny world this' (25 August 1922). Friendships do not, of course, inevitably overlap. Among Conrad's friends, for example, Garnett was close to Cunninghame Graham but not to Jean-Aubry. Although Jessie Conrad was to shape a book around the idea, there was not so much a 'Conrad circle' as a Conrad archipelago, replete with islands.

Friendship has, of course, its varying rhythms. Conrad saw individual friends more or less often than he had in the past, and his surviving correspondence establishes a similar fluctuation. The contents of this volume suggest a special closeness to Garnett, Curle, Jean-Aubry, and, strong as ever but less frequent, with Cunninghame Graham, that incurable peripatetic. A wider list would include among familiars Harriet Capes, Sir Hugh Clifford, Hugh Walpole, Gordon Gardiner, Christopher Sandeman, Allan Wade, Edmund Candler, André Gide, the Rothensteins, the Galsworthys, the Colvins, and the Sandersons. Then there are those who were involved in some way with the business side of Conrad's writing: such translators, collectors, publishers, or producers as Philippe Neel, Thomas J. Wise, John Quinn, F. N. Doubleday, J. Harry Benrimo. Others concerned themselves with Conrad as a literary figure: George T. Keating, Wilfred G. Partington, Elbridge L. Adams, F. Tennyson Jesse, C. K. Scott Moncrieff, and many more. Some of this spate of correspondence flows through channels already opened. Jean-Aubry, for instance, continued to brief Conrad on events in the worlds of music and current French literature; Cunninghame Graham was travelling again, this time to Colombia, and adding to the stack of his books on Latin America.

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Other correspondence flows in new directions, as, for example, in the discussions about staging *The Secret Agent* with Eric Pinker, Allan Wade, John Galsworthy, and Benrimo, or the exchanges over recent Polish literature with Bruno Winawer. The variety is such, however, that a brief sampling is more revealing than an inventory.

Because of its range, a collection of letters, incomplete thanks to the vagaries of survival as it must be, is not simply a heap of raw material for some hypothetical biography. It will certainly attract biographers and also critics of biographical inclination; the letter to Edmund Candler of 3 April 1922 gives the only known evidence that Conrad visited the Basque country during the Carlist Wars, a clue to his putative career as a gun-runner. A biographer drawn to cultural affairs would see in the letters to and about the sailor-artist John Everett and the Irish landscape-painter Alice Kinkead (familiarily known as 'Kinkie') signs of a fresh interest in the visual arts. The linguist, and perhaps the psychologist, will consider the abrupt changes of register, the Gallicisms and Polonisms, the slips of the pen, and the traces of Conrad's pronunciation in the letters dictated to Miss Hallowes. Yet Conrad's reactions to the strife in Poland, Russia, and Ukraine, the prospects for class conflict in Britain (to Adams, 20 November 1922), the flood of American visitors to Europe (to Lucas, 23 July 1920), the future of China (to Russell, [22–3 October 1922]), or the welfare of ex-servicemen (to Hatton, 14 July 1921) are matters for a historian as much as for a biographer. Similarly, the letter to Scott Moncrieff of 17 December 1922 with its echoes of nineteenth-century theories of 'analysis' in fiction and its awareness of Proust's deep originality belong to a moment in European cultural history as well as to the history of Conrad's own opinions. Yet other letters deserve to be read in their own right as unintended comedy, especially those to Wise and Quinn, competing for access to the slightest morsel of Conradiana. Some of the letters to Wise, the scholar, thief, and master-forgery who warned collectors against spurious editions of Conrad, choice examples of ingenious marketing as they are, read like parodies of bibliographical scholarship: 'Three MS pages consisting of a message cabled to the Polish Government Committee of the State Loan to be raised in U.S. . . It is hardly literature but, at any rate, it is a public act of mine and very likely to be the only specimen of Conrad's cable style' (20 May 1920).

An episode in the correspondence with Richard Curle speaks to the insufficiencies of a narrowly biographical understanding. Curle helped Conrad with his finances – selling pamphlets, settling tax-demands, arranging publicity for his work. He also helped with more literary chores, such as assembling

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Notes on Life and Letters. Moreover, Curle's presence, like Pinker's, reassured Conrad and sustained him:

While revising the text [of *Notes on Life and Letters*] You were very vividly with me – your friendship, your kindness, your personality and I missed more than ever your voice, your characteristic turn of conversation, the downrightness of your mind and the warm genui[ne]ness of your feelings. (9 October 1920)

I have been doing nothing but thinking – absorbing myself in constant meditation – over *the* Novel [*Suspense*]. It's almost there! Almost to be grasped. Almost ready to flow over on the paper – but not quite yet. I am fighting off depression. A word from you would help. (1 October 1922)

When Curle wrote up his older friend for an article in *Blue Peter*, however, he became proprietorial and dogmatic:

Didn't it ever occur to you, my dear Curle, that I knew what I was doing in leaving the facts of my life and even my tales in the background. Explicitness, my dear fellow, is fatal to the glamour of all artistic work, robbing it of all suggestiveness, destroying all illusion. You seem to believe in literalness and explicitness, in facts and also in expression. (24 April 1922)

Here we return to the gap between what Conrad thought and felt and what he wrote. The letters are not so much a key to the fiction as a multiple reflection of complex states of mind as, in another mode, are the novels. The oscillation in his novels and stories between the ironic and the operatic is audible too in the correspondence, and on a broader scale there is a comparable oscillation between the novels and the letters. The proportion of the operatic is higher than usual in the late fiction, a result of what one could call his turn to history, but it is easy enough to oversimplify the tonal variation in these novels. Referring to a visit to New York, Conrad told Pinker: 'you will be able to see personally how Doubleday and his fourteen partners go about the business of publishing a Conrad. According to what they say themselves it must be something as impressive almost as an earthquake, heaven and earth clashing together like a pair of cymbals, and all that sort of thing' (10 February 1920). In his advance publicity, Doubleday promoted an impression of *The Rescue* as one of the greatest of romances. Booksellers and reviewers eagerly assisted him in this aim. The Liberty Tower Bookstore took out full-page advertisements in the literary section of the *New York Times* (30 May 1920) offering free copies, returnable without obligation if the reader did not think this the most wonderfully romantic of all novels. In this spectacularly tropical light, the book's satirical touches such as Mr Travers's opinions about correct

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dress in low latitudes and its sharp-eyed observations of local politics were simply flattened out, and everything quotidian disappeared. The necessities of survival that Conrad describes in a letter to the Dowager Rancee of Sarawak were too trivial to register:

the Cage . . . I have lifted bodily from your palace in Kuching and transported on board the “Emma” – a great liberty; but I really had to do something to save Mrs Travers from mosquitos. Your Highness will see yourself that from the position of that old hulk, right against the edge of the forest and on a swampy shore, unless I had done something like this Mrs Travers would have been eaten alive long before the end of that bitterly romantic episode in her life. (15 July 1920)

Nevertheless, the difference between the elegiac cadences of *The Rover’s* final pages and the wry grumpiness of passages like the following echo the distance between the ‘explicitness’ of everyday life and the ‘glamour . . . of artistic work’ as Conrad understood them:

Your letter reached me this morning, bringing warmth and light to my spirits gloomied by the November sky and chilled by the November temperature of this Blessed Isle. As to the story of this household, it is soon told: “*Nous avons vécu.*” This saying of a Frenchman (Abbé Sieyès, I think) may be supplemented and coloured by the saying of an American (name unknown): “Life is just one damned thing after another.” The longer I live the more I feel that the above *est une très belle généralisation*. Children and savages are alone capable sometimes of such illuminative sayings.

(to Christopher Sandeman, 21 November 1922)

One thinks of Conrad in the mail-coach, ill at ease, not wanting to be there, a believer in tradition – he sent his essay on that subject to the British Legion’s magazine – an admirer of confidence (the subject of another essay) yet a writer who never ceased to disconcert, a writer whose favourite metaphor for his own sense of life was that of a man dropped into a dream.

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CONRAD'S CORRESPONDENTS

1920-1922

A dagger before a name marks a tentative ascription.

Elbridge L(apham) ADAMS (1866-1934) was a New York City lawyer whose acquaintance with Conrad began in 1916. During the visit to the USA in 1923, Conrad spent two days at the Adams's country house in the Berkshire Hills of Massachusetts. 'Joseph Conrad - The Man', published in *Outlook* later in the same year, benefitted from Conrad's help with it. Adams also admired the works of Bernard Shaw and published his letters to Ellen Terry at his own Fountain Press.

Clarence Edward ANDREWS (1883-1932), a professor of literature at Ohio State University, specialised in verse, writing books on the seventeenth-century playwright Richard Brome, on Romantic and Victorian poetry, and the poetry of the 1890s. An avid traveller, he dedicated his book on Morocco to Conrad.

The New York publishing firm D. APPLETON & Co. was founded in 1838 by Daniel Appleton, who had been involved in publishing from 1831. Selling both fiction and non-fiction, the firm was a vital force until the 1930s. The publisher of Stephen Crane, Edward Bellamy, and Edith Wharton, Appleton brought out the first American edition of Conrad's *An Outcast of the Islands*.

Jean-Frédéric-Émile AUBRY (1882-1950), French music critic and writer on literature, wrote under the names G. or Gérard Jean-Aubry. An admirer and close friend during Conrad's later years, he became a one-man Conrad industry, promoting the writer's reputation in France, translating a number of his works, producing the first biography, and compiling the first edition of his letters. Among his other friends were many composers, including Debussy and Ravel; both Manuel de Falla and Roussel wrote settings of his poems. From 1919 to 1930, he lived in London, editing *The Chesterian*, a magazine published by a firm of musical instrument makers.

Thérèse AUBRY (née Contant), the mother of Conrad's friend Jean-Aubry, lived in Rouen with her husband Frédéric-Ferdinand Aubry.