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0521021464 - Conrad in Perspective: Essays on Art and Fidelity

Zdzislaw Najder

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Zdzislaw Najder, one of the world's leading authorities on Joseph Conrad and author of the major biography *Joseph Conrad: A Chronicle* (1983), is widely acclaimed for his particular insights into Conrad's Polish background. The fruits of thirty years of Conrad study appear in this landmark volume of his essays, which explore a wide range of topics: Conrad's national and cultural heritage; his fictions, from the unfinished *Sisters* and *Lord Jim* to *The Secret Agent*; his attitude towards Russia in general and Dostoevsky in particular; his concepts of man and society and the role of the idea of honour in his work. In a series of more general essays Najder goes on to place Conrad's work within a broad European philosophical, political and literary context. *Conrad in Perspective* offers new insights into the life and work of one of the twentieth century's greatest novelists by one of his most perceptive critics.

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NOTE ON THE TEXTS

Most of the papers and essays included in this volume have been either published or presented at conferences between 1963 and 1996, in English or in Polish. All texts have been revised, with new documentary material taken into account. However, no sustained attempt has been made to lift the presented ideas and arguments from their original time context. Only exceptionally do I join later debates, although I sometimes refer to analogous thoughts expressed in later publications.

- 1 'Introduction, or confession of a mastodon.' Based on a paper, 'Return of a Mastodon', presented in September 1992 at the Geneva Conference of the French Joseph Conrad Society.
- 2 'Joseph Conrad's Polish background, or from biography to a study of culture.' Paper presented at the Modern Language Association 1984 convention. *Conradiana* 18 (1986), no. 1.
- 3 'Joseph Conrad's parents.' Paper presented in September 1996 at the Joseph Conrad Conference in Lublin, Poland.
- 4 'Joseph Conrad and Tadeusz Bobrowski.' Published in Polish in *Przegląd Humanistyczny* (1964), no. 5.
- 5 '*The Sisters*: a grandiose failure.' Paper presented at the International Conrad Conference in Pisa, September 1983; published in *The Ugo Mursia Memorial Lectures*, ed. Mario Curreli, Milan 1988.
- 6 '*Lord Jim*: a Romantic tragedy of honour.' *Conradiana* 1 (1968), no. 1.
- 7 '*The Mirror of the Sea*.' Based on the Introduction to Oxford World Classics edition, 1988.
- 8 '*A Personal Record*.' As above.
- 9 'Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent*, or the melodrama of reality.' *New York Literary Forum*, 1980.
- 10 'Conrad, Russia and Dostoevsky.' Earlier versions in Polish, *Życie Literackie* (1963), no. 8 and in *Nad Conradem*, Warsaw 1964.
- 11 'Conrad and Rousseau: concepts of man and society.' Published in *Joseph Conrad: A Commemoration*, London 1976.
- 12 'Conrad and the idea of honour.' In *Joseph Conrad: Theory and*

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World Fiction, Proceedings of the Comparative Literature Symposium, Lubbock, Texas, 1974.

- 13 'Joseph Conrad: a European writer.' *L'Epoque Conradienne*, Limoges 1995.
- 14 'Joseph Conrad after a century.' A Copernicus Lecture at the University of Michigan. *Cross Currents, A Yearbook of Central European Culture*, Ann Arbor 1988.
- 15 'Joseph Conrad in his historical perspective.' *English Literature in Transition* 14 (1971).
- 16 'Fidelity and art: Joseph Conrad's cultural heritage and literary programme.' Paper presented in February 1995 at a Joseph Conrad conference at Kent, Ohio.

ABBREVIATIONS

- CL* *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad*, eds. Frederick R. Karl and Laurence Davies, Cambridge. Vol. I (1861–1897), 1983; vol. II (1898–1902), 1986; vol. III (1903–1907), 1988; vol. IV (1908–1911), 1990; vol. V (1912–1916), 1996.
- CPB* *Conrad's Polish Background, Letters to and from Polish Friends*, ed. Zdzisław Najder, transl. by Halina Carroll, Oxford 1964.
- CUFE* *Conrad Under Familial Eyes*, ed. Zdzisław Najder, Cambridge 1983.

All references to Conrad's works are to the Dent Collected edition, unless otherwise specified.