The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad offers a wide-ranging introduction to the fiction of one of the most influential novelists of the twentieth century. Through a series of essays by leading Conrad scholars aimed at both students and the general reader, the volume stimulates an informed appreciation of Conrad’s work based on an understanding of his cultural and historical situations and fictional techniques. A chronology and overview of Conrad’s life precede chapters that explore significant issues in his major writings and deal in depth with individual works. These are followed by discussions of the special nature of Conrad’s narrative techniques, his complex relationships with late-Victorian imperialism and with literary Modernism, and his influence on other writers and artists. Each essay provides guidance to further reading, and a concluding chapter surveys the body of Conrad criticism.
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JOSEPH CONRAD
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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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PREFACE

Like the work of other major writers, that of Joseph Conrad has occasioned a large critical industry devoted to its interpretation and appreciation. And since Conrad is read both in translation and in the original throughout the world, this body of criticism spans linguistic and cultural boundaries to include commentaries not only, as might be expected, in French, Italian, and Polish but even, for instance, in Japanese and Swahili.

Conrad’s almost universal presence on school reading-lists and in university courses as well as at the corner bookshop testifies to the fundamental centrality of his writing to modern literature and the modern experience. In English alone the books, articles, and notes published about his life and work amount to several thousand items, and even the guides directing the student or the interested general reader to this mass of material now total some thousand pages.

While it does not and cannot make Conrad’s writings easier, the present volume of a dozen essays aims at increasing their accessibility. It opens with an overview of Conrad’s life and then proceeds to engaged readings of the major fiction. These chapters, devoted to individual works or to groups of texts, develop formal and thematic concerns with an eye on a range of ideological issues. This essential contextualization should help readers appreciate an author whose work is sometimes regarded as dauntingly complex and whose imaginative world and cultural framework may at moments seem remote from their own. The chapters that follow explore some of the larger questions raised by Conrad’s writings as a whole. They focus on the special nature of his narrative techniques, on the current debates about his relationship to imperialism and to literary Modernism, and on the varied influence his work has exerted on other writers. Lastly, a guide to further reading provides information about Conrad scholarship and the body of standard Conrad criticism.

The emphasis of this volume falls on informed appreciation based on an understanding of Conrad’s cultural contexts and fictional techniques. Con-
PREFACE

rad’s own life, the object of considerable interest and comment, is discussed since it illuminates a number of the preoccupations of his fiction. These concerns are particularly contemporary in their nature and scope, and include, for instance, the complex interrelationships between an individual and his or her social and economic milieu, ethnicity and multi-cultural identity, linguistic confrontation and alienation, and the interactions between empire and colony.

The contributors to this volume live and teach in a number of countries and are actively engaged in the on-going process of discovering and re-discovering Conrad through a variety of perspectives. They bring to bear diverse scholarly and critical traditions – American, British, and Continental. The volume takes advantage of the rich heritage of Conrad studies that has evolved from the 1940s, and, more particularly, takes note of the critical movements and debates of the past two decades.

The task of preparing this volume has been greatly eased by the generous advice of Dr Owen Knowles, Hans van Marle, Dr Gene M. Moore, and, at Cambridge University Press, Josie Dixon and Kevin Taylor.

J. H. STAPE
CHRONOLOGY OF CONRAD’S LIFE

1857  Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski, only child of poet, dramatist, translator, and political activist, Apollo Korzeniowski and Ewelina (or Ewa), née Bobrowska, born on 3 December in or near Berdichev in the Ukraine.

1861  Apollo Korzeniowski arrested and imprisoned in Warsaw for anti-Russian conspiracy.

1862  The Korzeniowskis are exiled to Vologda, northern Russia.

1865  Death of Ewa Korzeniowska.

1868  Apollo Korzeniowski and his son move to Lwów.

1869  Death of Apollo Korzeniowski in Cracow. Maternal uncle, Tadeusz Bobrowski, becomes young Korzeniowski’s guardian. Privately tutored because of ill health, also occasionally attends schools during the next few years.

1873  Visits Austria, Germany, Switzerland, and northern Italy with his tutor Adam Pulman.

1874  Leaves Poland for Marseilles to become a trainee seaman in the French Merchant Service. Works for shippers and bankers Delestang et Fils.

1874–7  Passenger and apprentice in the Mont-Blanc and ‘steward’ in the Saint-Antoine (to the Caribbean).

1878  Shoots himself in the chest in Marseilles after accumulating gambling debts but escapes serious injury. Joins the steamship Mavis, his first British ship. Serves as ordinary seaman in the Skimmer of the Sea (English coastal waters).

1878–80  Ordinary seaman in the Duke of Sutherland (to Australia) and in the steamship Europa (Mediterranean).

1880  Passes examination for second mate. Third mate in the Loch Etive (to Australia).

1881–4  Second mate in the Palestine, Riversdale, and Narcissus (to South-East Asia and India).
Chronology of Conrad’s Life

1884  Passes examination for first mate.
1885–6 Second mate in the Tilkhurst (to Singapore and Calcutta).
1886  Becomes a British subject. Passes examination for master’s certificate.
1886–7 Second mate in the Falconhurst. First mate in the Highland Forest (to Java). Injured on board, is hospitalized in Singapore.
1887–8 First mate in the steamship Vidar (from Singapore to various Netherlands East Indies ports).
1888  Master of the Otago, joined in Bangkok, sails to Australia and Mauritius.
1889  Resigns from the Otago. Settles briefly in London and begins Almayer’s Folly.
1890  Friendship with marriage relation and writer Marguerite Poradowska. In the Congo Free State for the Société pour le Commerce du Haut-Congo as second in command and, temporarily, captain of the river steamer Roi des Belges.
1891  Manages the warehouse of Barr, Moering in London.
1894  Almayer’s Folly accepted for publication. Meets Edward Garnett, publisher’s reader, and Jessie George, a typist, whom he later marries. Signs on as second mate in the Adowa but sails only to France and back. End of his sea career.
1895  Almayer’s Folly published under the pen name ‘Joseph Conrad’.
1897  Begins friendships with writer and political figure R. B. Cunninghame Graham and with Stephen Crane. The Nigger of the Narcissus published.
1899  ‘Heart of Darkness’ serialized.
1899–1900 Lord Jim serialized
Chronology of Conrad’s life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td><em>The Inheritors</em> (collaboration with Ford) published.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td><em>Youth: A Narrative; and Two Other Stories</em> published ('Youth', ‘Heart of Darkness’, ‘The End of the Tether’).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>Moves to Aldington, Kent. Breaks with Ford.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Completes <em>Under Western Eyes</em> and suffers a nervous breakdown. Moves to Capel House, Orlestone, Kent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td><em>Some Reminiscences</em> (later <em>A Personal Record</em>) and <em>Twixt Land and Sea</em> published ('A Smile of Fortune', 'The Secret Sharer', 'Freya of the Seven Isles'). <em>Chance</em> serialized in New York.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td><em>Chance</em> published in book form. First financial success. Visits Poland in summer with family. Trapped for some weeks by the outbreak of war, returns to England via Austria and Italy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td><em>The Shadow-Line</em> published.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td><em>The Rescue</em>, begun in 1898, published.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Visits Corsica, begun 1898, does research for <em>The Rover</em> and <em>Suspense</em>. <em>Notes on Life and Letters</em> published. Collected Editions begin publication.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<td>1922</td>
<td>Dramatization of <em>The Secret Agent</em> staged in London.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td><em>The Sisters</em> (fragment) published.</td>
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</tbody>
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ABBREVIATIONS

Citations to Conrad's writings are to Dent's Collected Edition. Where a volume in this edition has been reprinted by Oxford University Press in its World's Classics series it is cited by the title assigned to it in that series. Full publication details of works referred to are given in the Works Cited section at the end of each chapter.

AF    Almayer's Folly
AG    The Arrow of Gold
Ch    Chance
HD    'Heart of Darkness' and Other Tales
In    The Inheritors
LE    Last Essays
LJ    Lord Jim
MS    The Mirror of the Sea
NLL   Notes on Life and Letters
NN    The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'
No    Nostromo
OI    An Outcast of the Islands
PR    A Personal Record
Re    The Rescue
Ro    The Rover
SA    The Secret Agent
SL    The Shadow-Line
SS    A Set of Six
Su    Suspense
TH    Tales of Hearsay
TLS   'Twixt Land and Sea
TOT   'Typhoon' and Other Tales
TU    Tales of Unrest
UWE   Under Western Eyes
ABBREVIATIONS

Vi  Victory
WT  Within the Tides
YOS  Youth: A Narrative; and Two Other Stories


In quotations, spaced points (…) indicate an ellipsis by the writer, while unspaced points (...) occur in the work being cited.