

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-12644-2 - An Outcast of the Islands
Joseph Conrad
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

THE
CAMBRIDGE EDITION OF
THE WORKS OF
JOSEPH CONRAD

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-12644-2 - An Outcast of the Islands
Joseph Conrad
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-12644-2 - An Outcast of the Islands
Joseph Conrad
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

AN OUTCAST OF THE ISLANDS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-12644-2 - An Outcast of the Islands
Joseph Conrad
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

THE
CAMBRIDGE EDITION OF
THE WORKS OF
JOSEPH CONRAD

GENERAL EDITORS

J. H. Stape and Allan H. Simmons
St Mary's University, Twickenham, London

EDITORIAL BOARD

Laurence Davies, *University of Glasgow*
Alexandre Fachard, *Universités de Genève and de Lausanne*
Robert Hampson, *Royal Holloway, University of London*
Jeremy Hawthorn, *The Norwegian University of Science and Technology*
Owen Knowles, *University of Hull*
Linda Bree, *Cambridge University Press*

TEXTUAL ADVISOR

Robert W. Trogdon, *Institute for Bibliography and Editing*
Kent State University

FOUNDING EDITORS

[†]Bruce Harkness Marion C. Michael Norman Sherry

CHIEF EXECUTIVE EDITOR (1985–2008)

[†]S. W. Reid

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-12644-2 - An Outcast of the Islands
Joseph Conrad
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

JOSEPH CONRAD

AN OUTCAST OF THE
ISLANDS

EDITED BY
Allan H. Simmons



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-107-12644-2 - An Outcast of the Islands
 Joseph Conrad
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
 UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107126442

This, the Cambridge Edition of the text of *An Outcast of the Islands*, now correctly established from the original sources and first published in 2016 © the Estate of Joseph Conrad 2016. Introduction, textual essay, apparatus, appendices and notes © Cambridge University Press 2016. Permission to reproduce these texts entire or in part, or to quote from them, or to reproduce the introduction, textual essay, apparatus, appendices and notes entire or in part should be requested from Cambridge University Press.

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd. Padstow Cornwall



A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Conrad, Joseph, 1857–1924.

An outcast of the islands / Joseph Conrad; edited by Allan H. Simmons.
 pages cm. – (The Cambridge edition of the works of Joseph Conrad)

ISBN 978-1-107-12644-2 (hardback)

1. Europeans – Southeast Asia – Fiction. 2. Southeast Asia – Fiction.
3. Trading companies – Fiction. 4. Betrayal – Fiction. 5. Clerks – Fiction.
6. Lingard, Tom (Fictitious character) – Fiction.
7. Joseph Conrad, 1857–1924. An Outcast of the Islands. I. Simmons, Allan, 1955– II. Title.
 PR6005.O4082 2015
 823'.912–dc23
 2015016867

ISBN 978-1-107-12644-2 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content of such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-12644-2 - An Outcast of the Islands
Joseph Conrad
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Published in association with

THE CENTRE FOR JOSEPH CONRAD STUDIES
ST MARY'S UNIVERSITY
TWICKENHAM, LONDON

CENTER FOR CONRAD STUDIES
INSTITUTE FOR BIBLIOGRAPHY AND EDITING
KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

Preparation of this volume has been supported by

THE BRITISH ACADEMY

THE JULIET AND MAC MCLAUCHLAN BEQUEST TO
THE JOSEPH CONRAD SOCIETY (UK)

THE JOSEPH CONRAD SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-12644-2 - An Outcast of the Islands
Joseph Conrad
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CONTENTS

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| List of Illustrations | <i>page xi</i> |
| General Editors’ Preface | xiii |
| Acknowledgements | xv |
| Chronology | xvii |
| Abbreviations and Note on Editions | xxii |
| INTRODUCTION | xxv |
| Origins | xxvii |
| Sources | xxxix |
| Reception | xli |
| AN OUTCAST OF THE ISLANDS | 1 |
| Author’s Note | 5 |
| An Outcast of the Islands | 9 |
| THE TEXTS: AN ESSAY | 293 |
| The Growth of the Novel | 294 |
| Preprint Documents | 303 |
| Book Editions | 315 |
| Copy-text and Emendations | 327 |
| The ‘Author’s Note’ | 339 |
| Publication | 343 |
| The Cambridge Text | 350 |
| APPARATUS | 355 |
| Emendation and Variation | 355 |
| Emendations of Accidentals | 407 |
| End-of-line Word-division | 425 |
| TEXTUAL NOTES | 426 |

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-12644-2 - An Outcast of the Islands
Joseph Conrad
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

| | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----|
| x | CONTENTS | |
| | APPENDICES | 432 |
| | A The Manuscript | 432 |
| | B 1916 ‘Author’s Note’ | 434 |
| | C The 1916 Text of the Novel | 436 |
| | EXPLANATORY NOTES | 440 |
| | GLOSSARIES | 470 |
| | Glossary of Nautical Terms | 470 |
| | Glossary of Foreign Words and Phrases | 474 |
| | MAP | 477 |

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figures

| | | |
|---|---|----------|
| 1 | Manuscript of <i>An Outcast of the Islands</i> , page 1 The Rosenbach of the Free Library of Philadelphia | page 288 |
| 2 | Manuscript of <i>An Outcast of the Islands</i> , page 170 The Rosenbach of the Free Library of Philadelphia | 289 |
| 3 | Manuscript of ‘Note’ to <i>An Outcast of the Islands</i> , page 1 Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California | 290 |
| 4 | Revised typescript of ‘Author’s Note’ to <i>An Outcast of the Islands</i> , page 2 Detroit Public Library | 291 |
| 5 | Genealogy of <i>An Outcast of the Islands</i> | 352 |
| 6 | Genealogy of ‘Author’s Note’ of <i>An Outcast of the Islands</i> | 353 |

Map

| | | |
|---|---|-----|
| 1 | The Far East in the late nineteenth century | 477 |
|---|---|-----|

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-12644-2 - An Outcast of the Islands
Joseph Conrad
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-12644-2 - An Outcast of the Islands
Joseph Conrad
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

GENERAL EDITORS' PREFACE

JOSEPH CONRAD'S place in twentieth-century literature is now firmly established. Although his novels, stories and other writings have become integral to modern thought and culture, the need for an accurate and authoritative edition of his works remains. Owing to successive rounds of authorial revision, transmissional errors and deliberate editorial intervention, Conrad's texts exist in various unsatisfactory and sometimes even confused forms.

During the last years of his life he attempted to have his works published in a uniform edition that would fix and preserve them for posterity. But although trusted by scholars, students and the general reader alike, the received texts published in the British and American collected editions, and in various reprintings of them since 1921, have proved to be at least as defective as their predecessors. Grounded in thorough research in the surviving original documents, the Cambridge Edition is designed to reverse this trend by presenting Conrad's novels, stories and other prose in texts that are as trustworthy as modern scholarship can make them.

The present volume contains critical texts of Conrad's *An Outcast of the Islands* and 'Author's Note'. The Cambridge text of the novel is based on the extant manuscript preserved in the collection of the Rosenbach of the Free Library of Philadelphia. The selected copy-text is emended to incorporate authorial revisions drawn from later authoritative documents as well as editorial emendations. The copy-text for the 'Author's Note' is the revised typescript held in the Special Collections Department of the Detroit Public Library. The appendices present materials relevant to the successive states of the texts and print, for the first time, Conrad's initial draft of the preface.

The 'Introduction' provides a literary history of the work focused on its genesis, sources and early reception, including its place in Conrad's life and art. The essay on 'The Texts' traces the volume's textual history, examines the sources of its individual texts and explains the policies followed in editing them. The 'Apparatus' records basic textual evidence, documenting the discussion of genealogy and authority in 'The Texts: An Essay' as well as other editorial decisions, and the 'Textual Notes' deal with cruxes and textual issues. The 'Explanatory

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-12644-2 - An Outcast of the Islands
Joseph Conrad
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

xiv

GENERAL EDITORS' PREFACE

Notes' comment on specific readings that require glosses, dealing with sources, identifying real-life place-names and related matters. A glossary deals with nautical terms. Supplementing this material are illustrations and a map.

The textual essay, textual notes, appendices and 'Apparatus' are designed with the textual scholar and specialist in mind, while the 'Introduction', 'Explanatory Notes', the 'Glossary of Nautical Terms' and 'Glossary of Foreign Words and Phrases' are intended primarily for a non-specialist audience.

The support of the institutions listed on p. vii has been essential to the success of this series and is gratefully acknowledged. In addition to those, and the individuals and institutions listed in the Acknowledgements, the General Editors and the Editorial Board also wish to thank the Trustees and beneficiaries of the Estate of Joseph Conrad, Doubleday and Company and J. M. Dent and Company for permission to publish these new texts of Conrad's works.

THE GENERAL EDITORS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-12644-2 - An Outcast of the Islands
Joseph Conrad
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THANKS ARE DUE to the following institutions and individuals for facilitating access to manuscripts and unpublished and rare materials: the Rosenbach of the Free Library of Philadelphia, and Elizabeth E. Fuller, Librarian, and Patrick J. Rodgers, Curator of the Maurice Sendak Collection; the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, and Stephen C. Jones, Head of Access Services, and Tom Bolze, Catalog Librarian; Detroit Public Library, and Dawn Eurich, Archivist, Romie Minor, Assistant Manager, Special Collections Department, Mark Bowden, Coordinator for Special Collections, and Ruth McMahon, Researcher; the Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California, and Gayle M. Richardson, Library Assistant; the Lilly Library, Indiana University, and Zach Downey, Public Services Assistant; Canterbury Heritage Museum, and Craig Bowen, Collections and Research Manager; and to King's School, Canterbury, and Peter Henderson, Archivist.

A number of individuals kindly supplied information or shared their expertise. Warmest thanks are due to Alexandre Fachard and Jeremy Hawthorn, who read and commented upon parts of the volume, and to Gene M. Moore, with whom this project began. Also acknowledged here are the debts owed to the work of the late Mary Gifford Belcher. For responding to requests for information and various forms of scholarly help, I should especially like to thank Mary Burgoyne, Laurence Davies, Mike Foster, the late Hans van Marle, Richard Niland, John G. Peters, Kim Salmons, Donald Shewan and Robert W. Trogdon. Thanks for assistance with support tasks are due to Catherine L. Tisch at Kent State University and Christine Jarvis at St Mary's University, Twickenham. I am also grateful to Katherine Kim and John Young for their help in seeing the volume through the vetting processes established by the Committee on Scholarly Editing of the Modern Language Association. Gratitude is due, as ever, to the good offices and officers of Cambridge University Press, to Linda Bree and Anna Bond for their ongoing support and advice; to Christina Sarigiannidou, who saw the volume through production; to Penny Wheeler, my copy-editor; and to

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-12644-2 - An Outcast of the Islands
Joseph Conrad
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

xvi

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Margaret Berrill, my proofreader. Lastly, my most profound debts are to my friends and fellow Conradians, Owen Knowles and J. H. Stape, whose wisdom, encouragement and guidance helped shape this volume.

I should like gratefully to acknowledge the support of the British Academy in the form of a Small Research Grant, a grant-in-aid of research from the Juliet and Mac McLauchlan Bequest to the Joseph Conrad Society (UK) and a grant from the Joseph Conrad Society of America.

The facsimiles that precede the textual essay are reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California, the Rosenbach of the Free Library of Philadelphia and the Detroit Public Library.

CHRONOLOGY

JOSEPH CONRAD's life may be seen as having several distinct stages: in the Ukraine, in Russian exile and in Austrian Poland before his father's death (1857–69); in Austrian Poland and the South of France as the ward of his maternal uncle (1870–78); in the British merchant service, mainly as a junior officer sailing in the Far East and Australia (1879–early 1890s); after a transitional period (early 1890s), as a writer of critical esteem (1895–1914); as an acclaimed writer, although perhaps with his greatest work already achieved (1915–24). After 1895 the history of his life is essentially the history of his works.

Publication dates given below are those of the English book editions, except for those of the present volume.

| | | |
|------|------------|--|
| 1857 | December 3 | Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski (Nałęcz coat-of-arms) born in Berdyczów in the Ukraine to Apollo Korzeniowski and Ewelina (or Ewa), née Bobrowska, Korzeniowska |
| 1862 | May | Apollo Korzeniowski, his wife and son forced into exile in Russia |
| 1865 | April | Ewa Korzeniowska dies of tuberculosis |
| 1867 | | Conrad visits Odessa with his maternal uncle Tadeusz Bobrowski; perhaps his first view of the sea |
| 1868 | | Korzeniowski permitted to leave Russia |
| 1869 | February | Korzeniowski and Conrad move to Cracow |
| | May | Korzeniowski dies |
| 1870 | | Conrad, ward of Bobrowski, begins study with tutor, Adam Pulman |
| 1873 | May | Visits Switzerland and northern Italy |

| xviii | | CHRONOLOGY |
|---------|------------------------------|---|
| 1874 | October | Takes position in Marseilles with Delestang et Fils, wholesalers and shippers |
| 1875 | | Apprentice in <i>Mont-Blanc</i> (to Caribbean) |
| 1876–7 | | In <i>Saint-Antoine</i> (to Caribbean) |
| 1878 | late February or early March | Attempts suicide |
| | April | Leaves Marseilles in British steamer <i>Mavis</i> (Mediterranean waters) |
| | June | Lands at Lowestoft, Suffolk; first time in England |
| | July–September | Sails as ordinary seaman in <i>Skimmer of the Sea</i> (North Sea) |
| 1878–80 | | In <i>Duke of Sutherland</i> (to Sydney), <i>Europa</i> (Mediterranean waters) |
| 1880 | | Meets G. F. W. Hope and Adolf Krieger |
| | June | Passes examination for second mate |
| 1880–81 | | Third mate in <i>Loch Etive</i> (to Sydney) |
| 1881–4 | | Second mate in <i>Palestine</i> , <i>Riversdale</i> , <i>Narcissus</i> (Eastern seas) |
| 1884 | December | Passes examination for first mate |
| 1885–6 | | Second mate in <i>Tilkhurst</i> (to Singapore and India) |
| 1886 | | Submits ‘The Black Mate’, perhaps his first story, to <i>Tit-Bits</i> competition |
| | August | Becomes a British subject |
| | November | Passes examination for master and receives ‘Certificate of Competency’ |
| 1886–7 | | Second mate in <i>Falconhurst</i> (British waters) |
| 1887–8 | | First mate in <i>Highland Forest</i> , <i>Vidar</i> (Eastern seas) |
| 1888 | January 4 | Signs off <i>Vidar</i> in Singapore |
| 1888–9 | | Captain of <i>Otago</i> (Australia and Mauritius) |
| 1889 | autumn | Begins <i>Almayer’s Folly</i> in London |

CHRONOLOGY xix

| | | |
|--------|---|--|
| 1890 | February–April May–December | In Poland for first time since 1874 In the Congo as second-in-command, then temporarily as captain, of <i>Roi des Belges</i> |
| 1891 | | Manages warehouse of Barr, Moering in London |
| 1891–3 | | First mate in <i>Torrens</i> (London and Plymouth to Adelaide) |
| 1893 | | Meets John Galsworthy and Edward L. ('Ted') Sanderson (passengers on <i>Torrens</i>) |
| | autumn November | Visits Bobrowski in the Ukraine Signs on as second mate in <i>Adowa</i> , which sails only to Rouen and back |
| 1894 | February August–September mid-August late October autumn 27 December | Bobrowski dies At Champel-les-Bains, near Geneva, Switzerland, for hydrotherapy Begins writing short story 'Two Vagabonds' First three chapters of 'Two Vagabonds' completed Meets Edward Garnett and Jessie George Alters title 'Two Vagabonds' to <i>An Outcast of the Islands</i> . Chapter 8 completed |
| 1895 | late January early March April 12 April 1 May to 4 June 15 July 24 July to 7 August 8 to 21 August 23 August 17 September | Chapter 10 completed Visits Marguerite Poradowska in Brussels. Chapter 12 completed <i>Almayer's Folly</i> At work on chapter 17 Visits Champel again for hydrotherapy Now at work on chapter 23 (400 MS pages (22 chapters) completed) Yachting cruise in the North Sea Undertakes three business trips to Paris on behalf of friend G. F. W. Hope's brother-in-law Sells <i>An Outcast of the Islands</i> to T. Fisher Unwin Completes <i>An Outcast of the Islands</i> |

xx

CHRONOLOGY

| | | |
|------|----------------|---|
| 1896 | March | <i>An Outcast of the Islands</i> published (August in America). Marries Jessie George |
| | September | Settles in Stanford-le-Hope, Essex, after six-month honeymoon in Brittany |
| 1897 | | Begins friendship with R. B. Cunninghame Graham; meets Henry James and Stephen Crane |
| | December | <i>The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'</i> |
| 1898 | | Meets Ford Madox (Hueffer) Ford and H. G. Wells |
| | January | Alfred Borys Leo Conrad born |
| | April | <i>Tales of Unrest</i> |
| | October | Moves to Pent Farm, Postling near Hythe, Kent, sub-let from Ford |
| 1899 | February–April | 'The Heart of Darkness' in <i>Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine</i> |
| 1900 | September | Begins association with literary agent J. B. Pinker |
| | October | <i>Lord Jim</i> |
| 1901 | June | <i>The Inheritors</i> (with Ford) |
| 1902 | November | <i>Youth: A Narrative and Two Other Stories</i> |
| 1903 | April | <i>Typhoon and Other Stories</i> |
| | October | <i>Romance</i> (with Ford) |
| 1904 | October | <i>Nostromo</i> |
| 1905 | June | <i>One Day More</i> staged in London |
| 1906 | August | John Alexander Conrad born |
| | October | <i>The Mirror of the Sea</i> |
| 1907 | September | <i>The Secret Agent</i> . Moves to Someries, Luton, Bedfordshire |
| 1908 | August | <i>A Set of Six</i> |
| 1909 | February | Moves to Aldington, Kent |
| 1910 | June | Moves to Capel House, Orlestone, Kent |
| 1911 | October | <i>Under Western Eyes</i> |
| 1912 | January | <i>Some Reminiscences</i> (as <i>A Personal Record</i> in America) |
| | October | <i>'Twixt Land and Sea</i> |
| 1913 | September | <i>Chance</i> , with 'main' publication date of January 1914 |

CHRONOLOGY xxi

| | | |
|------|---------------|---|
| 1914 | July–November | Visits Austrian Poland with family; delayed by outbreak of First World War; returns via Vienna and Genoa |
| 1915 | February | <i>Within the Tides</i> |
| | September | <i>Victory</i> |
| 1916 | April | Revises ‘Adelphi Library’ publication of <i>An Outcast</i> for the collected editions and writes prefatory ‘Note’ |
| 1917 | March | <i>The Shadow-Line</i> |
| 1919 | 29 January | Completes ‘Author’s Note’ for <i>An Outcast of the Islands</i> |
| | March | Moves to Spring Grove, near Wye, Kent. Dramatic version of <i>Victory</i> opens in London |
| | April | Revised ‘Author’s Note’ for <i>An Outcast</i> completed |
| | August | <i>The Arrow of Gold</i> |
| | October | Moves to Oswalds, Bishopsbourne, near Canterbury, Kent |
| 1920 | June | <i>The Rescue</i> |
| 1921 | January–April | Visits Corsica. Collected editions begin publication in England (Heinemann) and in America (Doubleday) |
| | February | <i>Notes on Life and Letters</i> |
| 1922 | November | <i>The Secret Agent</i> staged in London |
| 1923 | May–June | Visits America, guest of F. N. Doubleday |
| | December | <i>The Rover</i> |
| 1924 | May | Declines knighthood |
| | 3 August | Dies at Oswalds. Roman Catholic funeral and burial, Canterbury |
| | September | <i>The Nature of a Crime</i> (with Ford) |
| | October | <i>The Shorter Tales of Joseph Conrad</i> |
| 1925 | January | <i>Tales of Hearsay</i> |
| | September | <i>Suspense</i> (unfinished) |
| 1926 | March | <i>Last Essays</i> |
| 1928 | June | <i>The Sisters</i> |

ABBREVIATIONS AND NOTE
ON EDITIONS

ABBREVIATIONS

[London is the place of publication unless otherwise specified.]

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Belcher | Mary Gifford Belcher, ‘A Critical Edition of Joseph Conrad’s “An Outcast of the Islands”’. Texas Tech University, 1981. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation |
| <i>Bibliography</i> | William R. Cagle, ‘A Bibliography of Joseph Conrad’. Typescript, unpublished |
| Burton | Sir Richard Burton, <i>Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah</i> . 2 vols. Tylston and Edwards, 1893 |
| CEW | Norman Sherry, <i>Conrad’s Eastern World</i> . Cambridge University Press, 1966 |
| CR | <i>Joseph Conrad: The Contemporary Reviews</i> . General Editors Allan H. Simmons, John G. Peters and J. H. Stape, with Richard Niland, Mary Burgoyne and Katherine Isobel Baxter. 4 vols. Cambridge University Press, 2012 |
| <i>Documents</i> | <i>Conrad between the Lines: Documents in a Life</i> , ed. Gene M. Moore, Allan H. Simmons and J. H. Stape. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000 |
| Garnett | Edward Garnett, ed., <i>Letters from Conrad: 1895 to 1924</i> . Nonesuch Press, 1928 |
| Gordan | John Dozier Gordan, <i>Joseph Conrad: The Making of a Novelist</i> . Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1940 |
| <i>Letters</i> | <i>The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad</i> . General Editors Frederick R. Karl and Laurence Davies, with Owen Knowles, Gene M. Moore and J. H. Stape. 9 vols. Cambridge University Press, 1983–2007 |

ABBREVIATIONS AND NOTE ON EDITIONS xxiii

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Low | Hugh Low, <i>Sarawak: Its Inhabitants and Productions</i> , Richard Bentley, 1848 |
| Najder | Zdzisław Najder, <i>Joseph Conrad: A Life</i> , translated by Halina Najder. New York: Camden House, 2007 |
| <i>Portrait in Letters</i> | <i>A Portrait in Letters: Correspondence to or about Conrad</i> , ed. J. H. Stape and Owen Knowles. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996 |
| Wallace | Alfred Russel Wallace, <i>The Malay Archipelago: The Land of the Orang-Utan and the Bird of Paradise</i> (10th edition) Macmillan, 1890 |

LOCATIONS OF UNPUBLISHED DOCUMENTS

| | |
|------------|---|
| Berg | Berg Collection, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations |
| Detroit | Special Collections Department, Detroit Public Library |
| Huntington | Huntington Library, San Marino, California |
| Lilly | Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana |
| Rosenbach | The Rosenbach of the Free Library of Philadelphia |
| Yale | Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University |

NOTE ON EDITIONS

REFERENCES TO Conrad’s works are to the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Joseph Conrad where these have been published. Otherwise, references are, for the sake of convenience, to Dent’s Collected Edition, 1946–55, whose pagination is identical with that of the various ‘editions’ published by Doubleday throughout the 1920s. References to the Cambridge Edition take the following form: title (year of publication), whereas publication dates are not provided for citations from Dent’s Collected Edition.

Citations from critical and other works are identified by author, title and date only.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-12644-2 - An Outcast of the Islands
Joseph Conrad
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-107-12644-2 - *An Outcast of the Islands*
 Joseph Conrad
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION

CONRAD'S *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896) returns to the moral world and thematic concerns of his first novel, *Almayer's Folly* (1895), and to the South-East Asia of his own experience, as he imaginatively revisited the tropics he had left behind him some eight years previously. In committing himself to the novel's writing, Conrad was also taking farewell of his sea-life. The decision to become a professional writer had evolved slowly, in the same way that what was originally to be a short story transformed itself into a full-length novel about moral crisis and its consequences as Conrad discovered that his materials demanded more ample development. While not wishing to pursue the analogy too far, it is perhaps no coincidence that, at the outset of his second novel, the hero's 'little excursion into the wayside quagmires' is intended as no more than 'a short episode – a sentence in brackets so to speak – in the flowing tale of his life: a thing of no moment to be done unwillingly yet neatly and to be quickly forgotten'.¹ Like his central character, Peter Willems, Conrad was to discover that there was to be no going back.

He had composed *Almayer's Folly* intermittently over a five-year period (1889–94), the manuscript accompanying him from London to various parts of the world – Austrian Poland, the Ukraine, the Congo Free State, Australia and France. By contrast, *An Outcast* took little more than a year to write, from mid-August 1894 to mid-September 1895,² and was composed in two places: the writer's London lodgings near Victoria Railway Station, and the Hôtel de la Roseraie in the Geneva suburb of Champel-les-Bains, during visits to undergo hydrotherapy treatment for a condition then called 'neurasthenia' (and now termed clinical depression).

The events of *An Outcast* form a prequel to those in *Almayer's Folly*, providing the back-story, as it were, and featuring some of the same

¹ See p. 13.4–6. Subsequent references to the texts of the present edition appear in round brackets.

² For a detailed discussion of the novel's composition, see 'The Texts', pp. 294–303.

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-107-12644-2 - *An Outcast of the Islands*
 Joseph Conrad
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

xxvi

INTRODUCTION

characters, character-types and thematic materials – the nature of personal loyalty, the contours of cultural identity and small-scale colonial politics. This arrangement suggests, first, that his initial foray into literature deserved a prequel, and, through this, more generally, how the writing of one text provides the impetus for another; and, secondly, his desire to deepen and develop his engagement with the fictional world that he had created in his debut. Conrad himself dubbed this period of his career his ‘first phase, the Malayan phase’;¹ and, as well as offering a prologue to *Almayer’s Folly*, *An Outcast* is also the central term in an eventual trilogy-in-reverse, with *The Rescue*, begun in 1896 but only finished in 1919, as its final term. Just as *An Outcast* originates in *Almayer’s Folly*, so *An Outcast*, in turn, heralds *The Rescue* in the ‘rumour’ that Lingard had rescued ‘the yacht of some big wig from home, somewhere down Carimata way’ (21.25–26).

As originally sketched out, Conrad’s intention in *An Outcast* was ‘to describe in broad strokes, without shading or details, two human outcasts such as one finds in the lost corners of the world. A white man and a Malay.’² In this scheme Peter Willems, a self-seeking Dutchman engaged in the colonial enterprise, and Babalatchi, a Malay *éminence grise* involved in no less self-seeking political scheming, provided the tale’s twin focus; Conrad’s greatly reworked version foregrounds the former’s role over the latter’s, and, as in *Almayer’s Folly*, goes on to dramatize the self-obsession and tragi-comic myopia of a European outwitted by his supposed cultural and moral inferiors. When lamenting that the beginning of ‘Two Vagabonds’ was proving ‘heavy going’, Conrad mused ‘Do you think one can make something interesting without any women?!’ (*Letters*, 1, 171); in the tale’s expanded form he would address this uncertainty through the interaction of the male characters with the *femme fatale* Aïssa and, to a lesser extent, Willems’s wife Joanna.

In a letter written within a week of the novel’s publication, Conrad declared that writing was now his ‘sole means of support’.³ While such material concern underscores the fact that he had proposed marriage to Jessie George in January 1896, the acknowledgement serves as a tacit confession that he had largely abandoned the idea of returning to the sea to earn his livelihood. Although he intermittently expressed a

¹ ‘Author’s Note’, *Tales of Unrest*, ed. Allan H. Simmons and J. H. Stape (2012), p. 5.5.

² Conrad to Marguerite Poradowska, [18? August 1894] (*Letters*, 1, 171).

³ Conrad to Karol Zagórski, 10 March 1896 (*Letters*, 1, 266).

INTRODUCTION

xxvii

desire to do so,¹ his increasing commitment to the craft of writing is evident in his correspondence of this time and in the almost trouble-free history of this novel's composition, due in no small part to the careful guidance and tutelage of Edward Garnett, senior reader for T. Fisher Unwin Ltd, the firm that had published Conrad's first novel.

ORIGINS

IN HIS 'AUTHOR'S NOTE' to *An Outcast of the Islands*, Conrad identified Garnett as 'responsible for this book' (5.24–25), claiming the unthreatening suggestion, made during an after-dinner walk, as its precise inspiration: 'You have the style, you have the temperament; why not write another?' (5.30–31). Conrad recalled the moment with some precision: 'The word "another" did it. At about eleven o'clock of a nice London night, Edward and I walked along interminable streets talking of many things, and I remember that on getting home I sat down and wrote about half a page of *An Outcast of the Islands*' (6.8–12). Memories of Christmas 1923 at 'Oswalds', the Conrads' home near Canterbury, amplify the author's account of how Garnett inspired him to 'go on writing':

If he had said to me, 'Why not go on writing?' I should have been paralysed. I could not have done it. But he said to me, 'You have written one book. It is very good. Why not *write another*?' Do you see what a difference that made? Another? Yes, I would do that. I *could* do that. Many others I could not. Another I could. That is how Edward made me go on writing. That is what made me an author. (Garnett, p. vii)

In this version of events, which Garnett himself endorsed,² Conrad traced the recollection to another occasion – to 'The first time I saw Edward' – a meeting arranged and presided over by Unwin that probably took place at the National Liberal Club in November 1894. As important as the link to Garnett is Conrad's declaration about the role played by his second novel in his career: it made him an author, as he turned from the labours of the sea to no less strenuous ones at his desk.

¹ See, for instance, Conrad to R. B. Cunninghame Graham, 31 January 1898 (*Letters*, II, 31).

² Garnett recalled this meeting as having taken place in November 1894 (Garnett, p. vi). Although his chronology contradicts fact, with Conrad having embarked in mid-August on the story that would in time evolve into *An Outcast of the Islands*, the anecdote, replete with elements of myth, none the less seems true in its general lineaments.

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-107-12644-2 - An Outcast of the Islands
 Joseph Conrad
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

xxviii

INTRODUCTION

For Conrad, 1894 was a year of professional and private separations. His year began in Rouen aboard the *Adowa*, a ship belonging to the short-lived Franco-Canadian Transport Company that planned to carry French emigrants to Québec; it failed when an insufficient number turned up, and on 17 January Conrad, back in London, signed off. Unbeknown to the 36-year-old seaman, this date would mark the end of his Merchant Service career. The following month, his maternal uncle, and since 1869 his guardian, Tadeusz Bobrowski passed away, leaving Conrad feeling ‘as if everything has died in me’ (*Letters*, I, 148). And, on 24 April, to his relation-by-marriage and fellow novelist Marguerite Poradowska (1848–1937), he announced ‘the death of Mr. Kaspar Almayer’ (*Letters*, I, 153), yet another separation, as he let go of his first novel.¹

In May, Conrad’s income, derived from his stake in the shipping firm of Barr, Moering and Company,² was supplemented by the interest on his uncle’s legacy (with the legacy itself, 15,000 roubles, to be paid a year after Bobrowski’s death).³ If not quite the generous £500 a year and the room of one’s own that Virginia Woolf laid down in fantasy for a writer, this windfall afforded some stability for the would-be author, who bluntly declared to Garnett: ‘I *won’t* live in an attic!’⁴ Even so, a future direction was not yet clear to him, nothing having come of his plans to find another ship.

A quarter of a century after the event, in the ‘Author’s Note’ to *An Outcast*, Conrad recalled the feelings of ambivalence with which he embarked upon his second novel. Despite having completed *Almayer’s Folly*, he still believed himself a sailor who had written a novel: ‘Neither in my mind nor in my heart had I then given up the sea’ (5.9–10). Its composition, however, had left ‘the memory of an experience that, both in thought and emotion, was unconnected with the sea’. The dawning awareness of a beckoning, alternative future assumed the force of a betrayal: ‘that part of my moral being which is rooted in consistency was badly shaken. I was a victim of contrary stresses’

¹ *Almayer’s Folly* was published by T. Fisher Unwin a year later, on 19 April 1895.

² See Tadeusz Bobrowski to Conrad, 19/31 August 1883, and the Bobrowski ‘Document’ in Conrad’s *Polish Background: Letters to and from Polish Friends*, ed. Zdzisław Najder and trans. Halina Carroll (1964), pp. 94, 200.

³ Amounting to 1,200 roubles (or £120), the interest was the equivalent of fifteen months’ wages in the *Torrens* – in which Conrad had served as first mate at a salary of £8 per month. See Zdzisław Najder, *Joseph Conrad: A Life*, trans. Halina Najder (2007), pp. 190–93.

⁴ Garnett, p. xiii.

INTRODUCTION

xxix

(5.16–17). These ‘contrary stresses’, the desire to return to sea and the dawning awareness of himself as an landsman and author, not only shape this period of Conrad’s life, but also subtly inflect the novel he was then working on, one that begins with a departure and is concerned throughout with the nature of loyalty, commitment and identity.

A more prosaic origin for Conrad’s decision to turn to writing can be traced to the need to escape the sheer boredom he experienced on shore between ships. Before joining the *Torrens*, he accused himself of ‘vegetating’, afterwards of spending his days ‘in disheartening indolence’; aboard the *Adowa* he complained of being ‘paid for my boredom’; and once back in London he felt condemned to ‘idleness’.¹ Writing provided a way out of this ennui as re-immersing himself in recollections of the exotic world of the Far East gave him a vitality and colour absent from his day-to-day life. But *An Outcast* also quickly introduced Conrad to the drudgery and rigours of a writer’s life. Less than two months into the process of composition, he confessed to progressing ‘very cautiously with a vagabond under each arm, in the hope of selling them to Fisher Unwin. Slave trade!’²

John Dozier Gordan, the American Conrad enthusiast who was the first scholar to consider Conrad’s early career in detail, speculates that, as Conrad began composing *An Outcast* before T. Fisher Unwin had accepted *Almayer’s Folly* for publication, ‘it could have been only to while away time’ as he continued to seek out a ship.³ Conrad remained undecided, remarking in mid-July 1894 that *Almayer’s Folly* ‘could in any case be only an inconsequential episode in my life’ (*Letters*, I, 161). In mid-May, he referred to an anticipated command that failed to materialize; in early October, he was ‘busy with negotiations for several ships’; and by the end of that same month he was ‘negotiating with some Liverpool people’ who have ‘a pretty little ship’.⁴ At Garnett’s first meeting with him in November, in response to Unwin’s reference to a ‘next book’, he stated: ‘I don’t expect that I shall write again. It is likely that I shall soon be going to sea.’⁵ And even as his work on the novel drew to a close, he announced his intention ‘to buy a ship and command it for a voyage of two or three years’, but only immediately to

¹ Conrad to Marguerite Poradowska, *Letters*, I, 98, 131, 136, 150.

² Conrad to Poradowska, 10 October 1894 (*Letters*, I, 180).

³ Gordan, p. 19.

⁴ *Letters*, I, 158, 175, 185.

⁵ Garnett, pp. vi, viii.

characterize that as 'just an idea'.¹ But by that point, such a project seems to have been more wishful thinking, a nostalgic backward glance, as references about returning to sea were already being steadily replaced by comments documenting progress on *An Outcast*, specifically, and on the craft of writing generally.

His commitment to authorship as a vocation had, in fact, been underway for some months. The progress of his first novel through press was concurrent with the composition of his second. Conrad completed the manuscript of *Almayer's Folly* in April 1894; and, two months later, on 4 July, forwarded a revised typescript to Unwin. A month later he visited Switzerland for hydrotherapy, and from there – with Unwin's decision still unknown – he informed Marguerite Poradowska in mid-August that he had begun to write a short story titled 'Two Vagabonds', then projected as a piece of 'twenty to twenty-five pages'.² This effort would grow into *An Outcast*, a novel of nearly 110,000 words. While honing his new craft, Conrad, lacking a literary agent and himself dealing with getting manuscript into typed copy, was learning the business side of authorship. Shortly after beginning his new work, he sold the copyright of *Almayer's Folly* to Unwin (a decision he would later bitterly regret); then, as he was completing chapter VIII, the first proofs of *Almayer's Folly* arrived. Finally, with seventeen chapters of *An Outcast* completed Conrad returned to Champel and, whilst there, read the encouraging reviews of *Almayer's Folly*.³

The development of *An Outcast* charted Conrad's maturation as a professional author in another way: his choice of mentor. When he began writing, his Franco-Belgian friend and relation by marriage, Marguerite Poradowska, acted the role of literary confidante. It was to her, and in French, that he first outlined 'Two Vagabonds' and reported his early progress and frustrations. Throughout *An Outcast's* composition Conrad increasingly turned to Garnett for literary direction and advice when they met 'in little Soho restaurants, in Newgate Street, St Paul's Churchyard and in a Mecca café in Cheapside', with Garnett meting out both appreciation and judicious criticism.⁴ And it was Garnett to whom he sent the news on 17 September 1895 of 'the

¹ Conrad to Émilie Briquel, 26 August 1895 (*Letters*, 1, 244).

² Conrad to Marguerite Poradowska, [18? August 1894] (*Letters*, 1, 171).

³ Conrad to T. Fisher Unwin, 4 October 1894; to Poradowska, 27 December 1894, and 2 May 1894 (*Letters*, 1, 176, 193, 214). See also *Almayer's Folly*, ed. Floyd Eugene Eddleman and David Leon Higdon (1994), pp. xli–xlvi, and *CR*, 1, 13–60.

⁴ Garnett, p. xiv.