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978-0-521-19799-1 - Youth, Heart of Darkness, the End of the Tether

Joseph Conrad

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THE
CAMBRIDGE EDITION OF
THE WORKS OF
JOSEPH CONRAD

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EDITED BY

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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 'Youth', 'Heart of Darkness' and 'The End of the Tether', stories first published in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* and later collected in a volume originally titled *Youth: A Narrative and Two Other Stories* (1902). The Cambridge texts of the stories are based on various copy-texts – the manuscripts and typescripts that have survived and early printings – and incorporate readings drawn from later authoritative documents as well as editorial emendations. In the absence of any manuscript or typescript, the text of the 'Author's Note' is based upon the page-proofs of the version printed in the second English edition (J. M. Dent, 1917).

The 'Introduction' provides a literary history of the work focused on its genesis, sources and reception, including its place in Conrad's life and art. The essay on 'The Texts' traces the textual history of the volume, examines the origins of its individual texts and explains the policies followed in editing them. The 'Apparatus' records basic

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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. Appendices deal with the tangled pagination of the manuscripts of 'Youth' and 'Heart of Darkness', and present Blackwood's Memorandum of Agreement for the *Youth* volume, published here for the first time. The 'Explanatory Notes' comment on specific readings that require glosses, dealing with sources, identifying real-life place-names and related matters, as well as explaining foreign words and phrases. Nautical terms are dealt with separately in a glossary. Supplementing this material are maps and illustrations.

Although they may interest the great variety of readers, the 'Introduction', 'Explanatory Notes' and glossary are intended primarily for a non-specialist audience, whereas the textual essay, appendices and 'Apparatus' are designed with the textual scholar and specialist in mind.

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.

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A number of individuals kindly supplied information or otherwise shared their expertise. Warmest thanks are due to Laurence Davies and Jeremy Hawthorn, who generously read parts of the manuscript and whose meticulous readings prompted a number of invaluable corrections and refinements. I owe special thanks to Leigh Mueller, whose careful and sensitive copy-editing not only saved me from many small errors and infelicities of expression, but also enriched the text in numerous ways. Other friends and colleagues unhesitatingly responded to requests for information or other kinds of scholarly help: Anne Arnold, Helen Baron, Lesley Bratton, Addison Bross, Mary Burgoyne, Keith Carabine, Alexandre Fachard, Carole Jones, Captain Alston Kennerley, Dale Kramer, Sheila MacKenzie, the late Hans van Marle, Marion Michael, Gene M. Moore, Donald J. Shewan, Yasuko Shidara and Harold Ray Stevens. For assistance with on-site verification of the texts I am indebted to Robert W. Trogdon. Thanks for assistance with support tasks are due to Catherine Tisch. Lastly, gratitude is also expressed to Linda Bree, Liz Davey and Maartje Scheltens at Cambridge University Press for steadfast support and helpful advice.

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My most profound debts are to Allan H. Simmons and J. H. Stape, long-standing friends and close working colleagues, who have generously commented and advised on all aspects of this edition since its inception, and to the late S. W. Reid, former Chief Executive Editor of

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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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 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, unless otherwise specified.

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
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)

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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)
1888–9	Captain of barque <i>Otago</i> (Bangkok to Australia and Mauritius)
1889 autumn	Begins <i>Almayer’s Folly</i> in London
1890 February–April	In Poland for first time since 1874
May–December	In the Congo. Second-in-command, then temporarily 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	Visits Bobrowski in the Ukraine

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November	Signs on as second mate in <i>Adowa</i> , which sails only to Rouen and back
1894 January	Signs off <i>Adowa</i> , ending his career as a seaman
February	Bobrowski dies
	Meets Edward Garnett and Jessie George
1895 April	<i>Almayer's Folly</i>
1896 March	<i>An Outcast of the Islands</i> . Marries Jessie George
July	Completes a draft of 'An Outpost of Progress', his first African story
September	Settles in Stanford-le-Hope, Essex, after a six-month honeymoon in Brittany
1897	Begins friendship with R. B. Cunninghame Graham; meets Henry James and Stephen Crane
November	'Karain: A Memory' in <i>Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine</i> , beginning a fruitful association with the Blackwood firm
December	<i>The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'</i>
1898	Meets Ford Madox (Hueffer) Ford and H. G. Wells
January	Alfred Borys Leo Conrad born. Possibly composes a draft of 'Youth'
April	<i>Tales of Unrest</i>
June 3	Completes revision of 'Youth'
mid-June	Plans a collection of stories, the future <i>Youth</i> volume
September	'Youth' in <i>Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine</i>
October	Moves to Pent Farm, Postling, near Hythe, Kent, sub-let from Ford
mid-December	Begins a story titled 'The Heart of Darkness'
1899 January 13	Sends first batch of 14,700 words of 'The Heart of Darkness' to Blackwood, foreseeing a story of two serial instalments
February	Serialization of 'The Heart of Darkness' begins in <i>Blackwood's</i> thousandth number
February 6	Completes 'The Heart of Darkness', informing Blackwood that three serial instalments may be needed

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April	Serialization of 'The Heart of Darkness' ends
June?	Begins drafting <i>Lord Jim</i> , still a short story for inclusion in the <i>Youth</i> volume
1900 mid-May	Negotiates revised contract to publish <i>Lord Jim</i> as a separate volume
June 5	Signs contracts for <i>Lord Jim</i> and the <i>Youth</i> volume, which awaits a new third story
September	Begins association with literary agent J. B. Pinker
October	<i>Lord Jim</i>
1901 June	<i>The Inheritors</i> (with Ford)
1901 September– March 1902	Sets aside the incomplete <i>Youth</i> volume to write stories for <i>Typhoon and Other Stories</i> and to collaborate with Ford
1902 March 17	Begins 'The End of the Tether'
May 20	Completes 14,500 words of 'The End of the Tether'
May 31	At a London hotel, an impatient William Blackwood refuses to buy the copyrights of <i>Lord Jim</i> and the unfinished <i>Youth</i> volume, telling Conrad that he is a financial 'loss' to the firm
June 23	An overturned lamp at Pent Farm causes fire and destroys part of 'The End of the Tether' manuscript and typescript
July	Serialization of 'The End of the Tether' begins in <i>Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine</i> . Receives award of £300 from Royal Literary Fund
October 16	Completes 'The End of the Tether' while staying with Ford in Winchelsea
November 13	<i>Youth: A Narrative and Two Other Stories</i> published in Edinburgh and London
December	Serialization of 'The End of the Tether' concludes
1903 February 25	<i>Youth</i> volume published by McClure, Phillips in America
April	<i>Typhoon and Other Stories</i>
October	<i>Romance</i> (with Ford)
1904 October	<i>Nostramo</i>

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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	Moves to Aldington, Kent
1910	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>'Twi'x't Land and Sea</i>
1913 September	<i>Chance</i> , with 'main' publication date of January 1914
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>
1917 March	<i>The Shadow-Line</i>
July 4–17	Revises proofs of Dent's edition of the <i>Youth</i> stories
September	Second English edition of the <i>Youth</i> volume published by J. M. Dent, with first appearance of 'Author's Note'
1919 March	Moves to Spring Grove, near Wye, Kent. Dramatic version of <i>Victory</i> opens in London
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

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August 3	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>

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ABBREVIATIONS AND NOTE ON EDITIONS

ABBREVIATIONS

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

<i>CEW</i>	Norman Sherry, <i>Conrad's Eastern World</i> . Cambridge University Press, 1966
<i>CFFS</i>	Henry Morton Stanley, <i>The Congo and the Founding of its Free State: A Story of Work and Exploration</i> . 2 vols. New York: Harper, 1885
<i>CH</i>	<i>Conrad: The Critical Heritage</i> , ed. Norman Sherry. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973
<i>Companion</i>	Owen Knowles and Gene M. Moore, <i>Oxford Reader's Companion to Conrad</i> . Oxford University Press, 2000
<i>CWW</i>	Norman Sherry, <i>Conrad's Western World</i> . Cambridge University Press, 1971
<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; also published as <i>The Conradian</i> , 25, no. 2 (2000)
Firchow	Peter Edgerly Firchow, <i>Envisioning Africa: Racism and Imperialism in Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness'</i> . Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000
Hervouet	Yves Hervouet, <i>The French Face of Joseph Conrad</i> . Cambridge University Press, 1990
Hochschild	Adam Hochschild, <i>King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa</i> . Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999
Kimbrough	Robert Kimbrough, ed. <i>Joseph Conrad: 'Heart of Darkness'</i> . 3rd edn. New York: Norton, 1988
<i>LBM</i>	<i>Joseph Conrad: Letters to William Blackwood and David S. Meldrum</i> , ed. William Blackburn. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1958

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- Letters* *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad*. 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
- LL* *Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters*, ed. G. Jean-Aubry. 2 vols. Heinemann, 1927
- Najder Zdzisław Najder, *Joseph Conrad: A Life*. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2007
- OED* *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd edn. Oxford University Press, 1989
- OHYS* *One Hundred Years of Singapore*, ed. Walter Makepeace, Gilbert E. Brooke and Roland St J. Braddell. 2 vols. John Murray, 1921
- Portrait in Letters* *A Portrait in Letters: Correspondence to and about Conrad*, ed. J. H. Stape and Owen Knowles. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996
- ‘Register’ ‘A Descriptive Location Register of Joseph Conrad’s Literary Manuscripts’, comp. Gene M. Moore. *The Conradian*, 27, no. 2 (2002), 1–93
- Watts 1977 Cedric Watts, *Conrad’s ‘Heart of Darkness’: A Critical and Contextual Discussion*. Milan: Mursia International, 1977
- Watts 1995 Cedric Watts, ed. *Joseph Conrad: ‘The Heart of Darkness’*. Everyman Edition. Dent, 1995
- Watts 2002 Cedric Watts, ed. *Joseph Conrad: ‘Heart of Darkness’ and Other Tales*. World’s Classics Edition. Oxford University Press, 2002

LOCATIONS OF UNPUBLISHED DOCUMENTS

- Berg Berg Collection, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations
- Colgate Everett Needham Case Library, Colgate University, Hamilton, New York
- NLS National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh
- Yale Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut

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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 to author, title and date of publication.

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INTRODUCTION

YOUTH: A NARRATIVE AND TWO OTHER STORIES is as famous amongst Conrad's volumes of stories as *Lord Jim* is amongst his novels – and more deservedly so', observed Richard Curle in the first full-length study of Joseph Conrad's works.¹ Published in 1902 and commonly regarded as inaugurating his major period, the *Youth* volume is a key work in the writer's canon. It sees the first two appearances of the narrator Marlow, represents the flowering of Conrad's five-year connection with Blackwood, the publishing house that also brought out *Lord Jim* (1900), and marks an important attempt by the writer to adjust the terms of his 'difficult' art to a wider British audience.

The first story, 'Youth' (1898), regarded by early reviewers as one of the finest short fictions in the English language, became a repeatedly anthologized piece during Conrad's lifetime and continues to exert a popular appeal as one of his most celebrated sea-tales. Although less widely read, 'The End of the Tether' (1902) has nevertheless won admirers as diverse as Henry James, George Gissing and T. S. Eliot. The volume's centrepiece is, of course, its famous (and now famously controversial) African novella of 1899, 'Heart of Darkness'. If this work has acquired an iconic status comparable to that of Edvard Munch's painting *The Scream* (1893), its title has by contrast become something of a tired cliché through overuse in sensation-seeking newspaper headlines. Conrad, who modestly hoped that the story might have a continuing 'vibration', would have been astonished by its later emergence as, variously, a twentieth-century 'classic', a foundational work of European Modernism, a challenging problem story and a litmus test for a variety of theoretical preoccupations.

Evolving over a period of four years, the collection's final contents were partly shaped by a change of plan forced upon Conrad at an

¹ *Joseph Conrad: A Study* (1914), p. 53. As with Dent's Collected Edition of the stories (1946), the present volume adopts the title *Youth, Heart of Darkness, The End of the Tether* as a clearer and more informative alternative to the original historical title.

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earlier stage in his preparations. With 'Youth' and 'Heart of Darkness' already written by 1899, he assumed that a short story in progress with the provisional title of 'Jim, a Sketch' would join these two works, so forming a trio of Marlow tales, with a number of thematically linked 'foils and notes' (*Letters*, II, 271). This plan was later overtaken by events (and the collection delayed) when it became clear that the sketch was burgeoning into a full-length novel and would have to be published separately as *Lord Jim*. Needing a new third story, Conrad composed 'The End of the Tether' at a relatively late stage and under pressure to meet the volume's publication deadline of November 1902. If these altered circumstances initially led him to regret that an early plan was compromised by the loss of the 'Jim story', he would later claim that its replacement contributed to a different kind of triptych, 'which in its component parts presents the three ages of man, (for that is what it really is, and I knew very well what I was doing when I wrote "The End of the Tether" to be the last of that trio)' (*Letters*, VIII, 300–01).

**CONRAD'S BLACKWOOD CONNECTION,
1897–1902**

THE *YOUTH* STORIES belong to Conrad's Blackwood period, a five-year attachment to the Edinburgh publishing house whose monthly journal, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* or '*Maga*', had been founded in 1817 by the Scots publisher William Blackwood as a Tory alternative to the *Scots Magazine*. Across the nineteenth century, particularly under the control of John Blackwood, the venerable *Maga's* literary successes had included works by Edward Bulwer-Lytton, R. D. Blackmore and almost all of George Eliot's novels. By the second half of the century, articles on travel and Empire had become prominent in its issues, with features by explorers like John Hanning Speke and Richard Burton. As early as 1896, Blackwood's literary editor, David S. Meldrum, urged William Blackwood (1836–1912), the founder's grandson, to consider Conrad as a likely acquisition: 'What you write me about getting hold of a paying novelist', Blackwood replied, 'is very much what we know, and have felt ourselves, and the difficulty is to spot the men who are just rising into a reputation, and whose work would be likely to carry large sales with it. . . . If you hear anything good about Joseph Conrad,

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will you kindly let me know. I have read none of his things. Is he not a Yankee author?'¹

Conrad's first contact with the publishing house took place in May 1897 when, guided by his friend Edward Garnett, he submitted 'Karain: A Memory', a story originally written for the open market. Upon its acceptance, Conrad responded positively to Blackwood's invitation to make their association into a longer-term commitment. The last few months of 1897 found him pondering the magazine's ethos and acquiring a sense of its audience: he read and discussed with Blackwood the issues of *Maga* sent to him and even familiarized himself with Margaret Oliphant's two-volume *Annals of a Publishing House: William Blackwood and his Sons* (1897).

This new affiliation coincided with Conrad's difficult initiation into professional authorship. Aged forty in December 1897 and soon to become a family-man, he was nevertheless a relatively fledgeling professional author of only three years' standing and still seeking a secure place in the late-Victorian literary establishment. Since early 1896, he had been engaged in a painfully unrewarding struggle to make progress with 'The Rescuer' (later *The Rescue*), even while being dogged by acute financial problems and the need to produce saleable copy. In addition, the 'rising' but needy author had during 1897 become increasingly disillusioned with his first publisher, the prickly T. Fisher Unwin, and was in the position of a freelance writer, who, without a literary agent, was having to market his own work.

Unsurprisingly, the dilemma of whether to pursue a career as writer or seaman, still alive in 1898, was responsible for other creative stops and starts. His professional life was to be further complicated in late 1898 when, in an effort to give his work a wider appeal, he entered into collaboration with Ford Madox Ford, a project that would find him increasingly dividing himself between his own work and a time-consuming partnership. In short, Blackwood's approach coincided with a period when Conrad, desperately searching 'for ways to obtain bread and *peace*' (*Letters*, II, 7) was eminently ready to embrace a long-term publishing association that would, he hoped, bring increased sales and much-needed stability to his early career.

Why was Conrad attracted to the Blackwood house? Although the firm's reputation had diminished since its mid-Victorian heyday, it was still in the 1890s a potent 'name', with a long-established magazine

¹ Blackwood to Meldrum, 27 May 1896 (NLS MS 30382).

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that mixed serious articles on current affairs at home and abroad with short fiction and serialized novels. No small part of its initial appeal for Conrad, however, was the promise of steady income and some alleviation of ‘the state of protracted tension and anxiety as to the saleability of his work’, which beset him during 1897.¹ There were thus good economic and career grounds for aligning himself to a publisher who would pay him 45 shillings per 1,000 words, market his fiction on a long-term basis in both serial and volume form, and regularly step in to rescue him from pressing debts. If his association with the publisher never brought him anything like financial security, it nevertheless provided much needed professional stability and welcome relief from marketplace pressures.

Soon coming to appreciate the more intangible benefits of his new connection, Conrad confessed that he would ‘much rather work for *Maga* and the House than for the “market”: were the “market” stuffed with solid gold throughout’ (*Letters*, II, 376). Much of its growing appeal had a personal and social basis. In the 61-year-old Blackwood, he found not only a gentleman-publisher and patron with whom he could maintain a personal link, but also a sustaining father-figure who presided benevolently over a largely male family, whose nucleus included Blackwood’s two nephews, George William and James Hugh, as well as David S. Meldrum, head of the firm’s London office and himself a novelist, who would become Conrad’s friend and ardent supporter. But the family also extended outwards, with Blackwood making personal contact with his writers, as when in March 1898 he dined at the Garrick Club with Conrad and the young American author Stephen Crane – ‘types of the men we want to get round the firm’ (*LBM*, p. 21) – encouraging them to enjoy their collective bond, as if members of a hospitable gentleman’s club. In part, many of the values sustaining the venerable Tory dynasty of ‘the House’ and its family – solidarity, male camaraderie, loyalty and pride in time-honoured British traditions – were similar to those that Conrad had cherished as a seaman and must have made the firm seem like a propitious artistic home to him.

Conrad’s Blackwood association was, moreover, established at a time when the writer of Polish origin was making a concerted attempt to cultivate a wider readership, acquire a sharper sense of audience and

¹ ‘Introduction’, *Letters from Joseph Conrad, 1895–1924*, ed. Edward Garnett (1928), p. xxix.

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negotiate with his 'English' literary identity. As a beneficiary of the publisher's habit of nurturing promising talents, Conrad was a house-author with unusual freedoms. The firm's in-house letters recognized that he was 'too good' a writer ever to be "popular" in the popular sense' and admired the 'brilliant' author's tenacity in refusing to do 'any pot-boiling' (*LBM*, pp. 122, 57, 40). No constraints were placed upon his choice of subjects or methods, and, when his stories grew beyond their predicted limits (as they invariably did), the long-suffering publisher waited patiently for copy and adjusted his schedules accordingly. These generous conditions meant that Conrad now had time and opportunity to meditate upon the cardinal rule of the literary marketplace, that 'to know whom to write for is to know how to write',¹ and to devise his own unofficial contract with the popular market and ideological forces as they had helped to shape Blackwood 'traditions'.

Writing for *Blackwood's Magazine* meant, in the first place, access to a wide readership: the monthly enjoyed an annual circulation of nearly 50,000 in the United Kingdom, 12,000 in America during the years 1897–1900 and additional sales in the colonies.² It also brought with it a well-defined target-audience, with a distinct social and political identity. Traditionally, the Blackwood family had regarded its magazine as speaking to, and for, an upper-middle-class male audience – politicians, other Establishment opinion-makers, the clergy, military personnel and members of the gentlemanly professions – on matters of serious interest at home and abroad. Under pressure from increased competition in the 1880s, the firm was also keen to expand its niche markets to include a colonial and military readership and actively sought to multiply essays and tales focussed on British overseas possessions, a policy that may account for the mutual attraction between the firm and Conrad, who was certainly aware of the journal's overseas readership: 'There isn't a single club and messroom and man-of-war in the British Seas and Dominions which hasn't its

¹ Virginia Woolf, 'The Patron and the Crocus', *The Common Reader, First Series* (1925), ch. 17.

² David Finkelstein, *The House of Blackwood: Author–Publisher Relations in the Victorian Era* (2002), p. 166. For further consideration of Conrad's relations with his *Blackwood's* audience, see Ivo Vidan, 'Conrad in his *Blackwood's* Context: An Essay in Applied Reception Theory', *The Ugo Mursia Memorial Lectures: Papers from the International Conrad Conference, University of Pisa, September 7th–11th 1983*, ed. Mario Curreli (1988), pp. 399–422, and Todd G. Willy, 'The Call to Imperialism in Conrad's "Youth": An Historical Reconstruction', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 8 (1980), 39–50.

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copy of *Maga* – not to speak of all the Scots in all parts of the world’ (*Letters*, iv, 506). From its inception, the journal had represented a High Tory paternalist strand of the conservative movement, resolute in its support for the British imperial endeavour, forward-looking in its economic policy and backward-looking in its respect for traditional authority as, among other things, a necessary check upon the ‘fanaticism or bigotry’ of Radicalism that ‘would in time destroy our most precious and priceless heritage, the national character’.¹

Although the exotic Eastern settings of Conrad’s earliest fiction do not disappear in his works for *Maga*, those settings now combine with markedly English forms of address and a more overt emphasis upon features of the ‘national character’: the bracingly masculine and patriotic note in ‘Youth’; the newly invented English sea-captain and narrator, Marlow; and Whalley’s connections with the emergent British colony in the Straits Settlement in ‘The End of the Tether’. Of all of Conrad’s *Blackwood’s* stories, ‘Youth’, the first composed for the magazine, is the most responsive to its ethos and target-audience. (It would be ‘a favourite item for *Maga’s* readers’, predicted a delighted *Blackwood (LBM)*, p. 28). Its opening pages introduce Marlow, an English persona and convivial tale-teller, as well as devising a first-person oral formula in tune with *Blackwood’s* preference for stories ‘dealing with matters from a first hand picturesque point of view combined with interest for the general reader’.² These pages also envision the sea as a central feature of the national character – ‘This could have occurred nowhere but in England, where men and sea interpenetrate’³ – even while they promise a potentially exotic yarn of ‘the Eastern seas’, so anticipating a combination of the familiar and ‘picturesque’ congenial to *Blackwood’s* readers.

Conrad supplies Marlow with a group of four English listeners – including a company director, an accountant and a lawyer (‘a fine crusted Tory, High Churchman, the best of old fellows, the soul of honour’ (11.11–13)) – who make up a clubbish gathering around the claret bottle and may be seen to reproduce a typical cross-section of the journal’s target-audience. A fraternity of professional men, all in their middle years, the group-members are bonded together by their past

¹ Anon., ‘National Institutions and Popular Demands’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 165, no. 1000 (February 1899), 450.

² William Blackwood to Roger Casement, 4 September 1905 (NLS MS 30393).

³ See 11.2–3. Subsequent references to the texts of this edition appear in round brackets.

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careers in the British Merchant Service, with a nostalgic preference for the good old days and an instinctive leaning towards Marlow's taste for reading Frederick Burnaby's adventurous *Ride to Khiva* (1876) rather than Thomas Carlyle's philosophical *Sartor Resartus* (1836). Attuned to this specific readership, Conrad's fiction incorporates for the first time some of the markers of genteel exclamation: 'By Jove! this is the deuce of an adventure' (17.29–30).

Although Conrad later flattered Blackwood by professing to be "plus royaliste que le roi" – more conservative than Maga' (*Letters*, II, 162), his works for the firm after 'Youth' suggest a new ambition to build into his fiction his own off-centre position as a cosmopolitan European and exploit a growingly sophisticated sense of how a concept of Englishness can be used to complicate the contract between writer and English audiences. Figuratively speaking, this contract proves to be one with many hidden codicils. Thus, if Marlow the narrator partly grows out of his creator's need to find an English voice and persona appropriate to *Blackwood's*, it may also be true, as John Galsworthy remarked, that 'though English in name', Marlow is 'not so in nature'.¹ Galsworthy's description here allows for the possibility that, in the later 'Heart of Darkness' and *Lord Jim*, Marlow may unite within his own apparently single identity the position of both welcoming English host and disconcerting stranger. Unlike the Marlow of 'Youth', the narrator of these two later works has a more agitated and abrasive relationship with the representative values of his audience: in 'Heart of Darkness' he has already become a teller of untypical yarns, is not always attuned to what his 'audience would best like to hear' (47.37), sits apart from the group in semi-Buddhist withdrawal and, when darkness falls, cannot even clearly identify and locate his listeners.

By late 1901, Conrad's relationship with Blackwood himself was also becoming more strained and agitated. The causes for this growing estrangement were twofold. The long-suffering publisher, increasingly embroiled in Conrad's financial troubles, finally balked when asked for a large loan against future copyrights and, in May 1902, told him that the firm could not continue to carry him at a loss. The other reason for the break was that from 1900 onwards Conrad had engaged a literary agent, J(ames) B(rand) Pinker, who, although initially barred from interfering in his affairs with Blackwood, was seen by the publisher as an intrusive middleman. When the breach finally arrived after the

¹ 'Reminiscences of Conrad: 1924', *Castles in Spain & Other Screens* (1927), p. 78.

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publication of the *Youth* collection in late 1902, it was an unwelcome shock to Conrad, who later came to look back upon the five-year association as the happiest period of his literary career; for its part, the Blackwood house, while never quite fully appreciating the scale of Conrad's achievement, took an obvious pride in including 'Heart of Darkness' in the thousandth issue of *Maga* and in having nurtured the author of the *Youth* volume – according to Meldrum, 'the most notable book we have published since George Eliot' (*LBM*, p. 172).

SOURCES

AS WITH MANY of Conrad's most characteristic works, the three stories in the *Youth* collection evolve out of a rich matrix of personal, historical and literary sources. By the end of his sea-career in January 1894, Conrad the seaman had acquired a prodigiously wide experience of then-remote parts of the world, and at a time when he could observe the shifting contact-points between European and non-European within the wider context of colonialist expansion. Surveying the range of Conrad's life-experiences, Henry James would later write to him admiring 'the prodigy of your past experience': 'No one has *known* – for intellectual use – the things you know, & you have, as the artist of the whole matter, an authority that no one has approached.'¹ Drawing variously upon this rich inheritance, the *Youth* volume makes an imaginative return to three different phases of Conrad's past. 'Youth' recalls his first voyage to the 'East' in 1881–3 as a 23-year-old seaman; 'Heart of Darkness' is loosely and impressionistically based upon events during a traumatic visit to the Congo in 1890, an episode that, according to Garnett, formed 'the turning-point in his mental life', 'determined his transformation from a sailor to a writer' and 'swept away the generous illusions of his youth';² and the early parts of 'The End of the Tether' draw upon Conrad's visits to colonial Singapore and the hinterlands of the Malay Archipelago during the 1880s. One of the early titles Conrad considered for this volume – *Tales of Memory* – underlines the sustained effort of retrospection that went into its making, while also pointing to a further significant fact about the handling of some of the autobiographical material: that is, with the introduction of Marlow, the very *act* of memory, the often difficult process of recovering and recreating meaning

¹ *Portrait in Letters*, p. 58. ² *Letters from Joseph Conrad, 1895–1924*, p. xii.