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978-1-107-01681-1 — The Inheritors and The Nature of a Crime

Joseph Conrad , Edited by Jeremy Hawthorn , In collaboration with Max Saunders

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THE
CAMBRIDGE EDITION OF
THE WORKS OF
JOSEPH CONRAD

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JOSEPH CONRAD
and
FORD MADOX FORD

THE INHERITORS:
AN EXTRAVAGANT
STORY

THE NATURE OF A
CRIME

EDITED BY
Jeremy Hawthorn

WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF
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GENERAL EDITOR'S 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.

No collected edition of Ford's work has been produced, in spite of the steady rise of his reputation in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and although some of his works have been reissued in scholarly editions, the two works contained in the present volume have not.

The present volume contains critical texts of *The Inheritors: An Extravagant Story*, and *The Nature of a Crime*, by Joseph Conrad and Ford Madox Ford. The Cambridge text of *The Inheritors* is based, in the absence of a serial edition or preprint material apart from the three short passages reproduced in Figure 1, on the first English and American book editions published by Heinemann and McClure, Phillips. The Heinemann text has been selected as the copy-text on the basis of a small number of possibly authorial textual variants that confirm that it represents a later stage of the text than the American book edition. For the Cambridge text of *The Nature of a Crime*, the surviving typescript, preserved in the Naumburg collection of Princeton

University, in its unannotated form has been selected as the copy-text. The selected copy-text is emended to incorporate some variants that are judged to be authorial from the surviving manuscript fragment in Conrad's hand, from the English and French serial editions, and from the English and American book editions. The copy-text for Ford's Preface to the work, for which no preprint material survives, is that of the French serial. For Conrad's Preface the copy-text is that of Conrad's corrected typescript, preserved in the Keating collection of Yale University, incorporating some variants from Conrad's manuscript, preserved in the same collection, in cases where the typescript and its emendations contain readings that are adjudged to be the result of Conrad's misreading of his own manuscript, or the typist's mishearing of Conrad's dictation. The only extant version of 'The Old Story' is the lightly corrected typescript preserved in the Kroch Library, Cornell University, which is accordingly provided in a diplomatic transcription for the Cambridge edition. The texts of *The Inheritors* and *The Nature of a Crime*, and of the two Prefaces to *The Nature of a Crime*, also incorporate editorial emendations.

Following standard practice, publication details refer to American or English editions (unless publication takes place elsewhere in the United Kingdom), but references are to the United States rather than to America, and to the United Kingdom except where for example English or Scottish would be more appropriate.

The editor of the present volume has faced the problem of what to call Ford, and, as the editors of *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad* have noted, no solution can wholly avoid inconsistency. Born Ford Hermann Hueffer, the writer published under several names and pseudonyms, formally changing his name to Ford Madox Ford on 4 June 1919. As co-author of *The Inheritors* he used the name Ford Madox Hueffer. *The Nature of a Crime* was first published under the pseudonym 'Baron Ignatz von Aschendorf', camouflaging its joint authorship, and was later republished as follows: the French serial was signed 'Joseph Conrad and F. M. Hueffer'; the first American edition gave the authors as 'Joseph Conrad and Ford Madox Ford', with 'F. M. Hueffer' in round brackets under Ford's name; and the first English book edition attributed the book to 'Joseph Conrad and Ford Madox Hueffer'. The present volume adopts the styling used by the editors of *The Collected Letters*: Ford Madox Ford is used throughout; his wife, born Elsie Martindale, is referred to as Elsie Hueffer and the couple are called the Hueffers.

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The support of the institutions listed on p. xii 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 Estates of Joseph Conrad and of Ford Madox Ford, and Doubleday and Company for permission to publish these new texts of Conrad's and Ford's works.

THE GENERAL EDITOR

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The typescript of Ford's 'The Old Story' is held in the Ford Madox Ford collection, collection no. 4605, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library, and thanks are due to the library for making it available for this edition. The single sheet containing preprint versions of three short extracts from *The Inheritors* in Ford Madox Ford's hand is also held in the Ford Madox Ford Collection, and the editor is grateful to the library for making it available for this edition.

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It is likewise a pleasure to acknowledge the help given by Peter Ellis, who made the dummy copy of the Doubleday, Page edition of *The Nature of a Crime* available for inspection. Lastly, at Cambridge University Press, the editor should like to acknowledge the help and support of Bethany Thomas for her ongoing support and advice; to Victoria Parrin, who saw the volume through production; and to Hilary Hammond, whose careful and sensitive copy-editing has enriched the text in numerous ways.

For their support of the Edition, gratitude must also be expressed to present and former administrators of Kent State University, including, in alphabetical order, Rudolph O. Buttlar, Carol A. Cartwright, Cheryl A. Casper, Ron Corthell, Joseph H. Danks, Todd Diacon, Robert Frank, Paul L. Gaston, Alex Gildzen, Cara L. Gilgenbach, Charlee Heimlich, Dean H. Keller, Sanford E. Marovitz, Tim Moerland, Thomas D. Moore, Stephen H. Paschen, Terry P. Roark, Michael Schwartz, F. S. Schwarzbach, Carol M. Toncar and Eugene P. Wenninger. Acknowledgement of special support goes to the staffs of Kent State University's Libraries (James K. Bracken, Dean) and Computer Services (William E. McKinley, Jr, Director). Thanks for support tasks are due to Catherine L. Tisch at the Institute for Bibliography and Editing. Jeremy Hawthorn would like to thank the Department of Language and Literature and the Faculty of Humanities, the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, for their support.

The facsimiles that precede 'The Texts: An Essay' are reproduced courtesy of the estate of Ford Madox Ford, the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University; Princeton University Library; and Cornell University Library.

CHRONOLOGY: CONRAD

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); and 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 only, except for those of *The Inheritors* and *The Nature of a Crime*.

1857	December 3	Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski (Nałęcz coat-of-arms) born in Berdyczów in the Ukraine to Apollo Korzeniowski and Ewelina (Ewa) <i>née</i> 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

CHRONOLOGY: CONRAD

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1870	May	Korzeniowski dies Conrad, a ward of Bobrowski, begins study with a tutor, Adam Pulman
1873	May	Visits Switzerland and northern Italy
1874	October	Takes a position in Marseilles with Delestang et Fils, wholesalers and shippers
1875		Apprentice in <i>Mont-Blanc</i> (to the Caribbean)
1876–7		In <i>Saint-Antoine</i> (to the Caribbean)
1878	late February or early March	Possibly attempts suicide
	April	Leaves Marseilles in the British steamer <i>Mavis</i> (Mediterranean waters)
	June	Lands at Lowestoft, Suffolk; first time in England
	July–September	Sails as an ordinary seaman in <i>Skimmer of the Sea</i> (North Sea)
1878–80		In <i>Duke of Sutherland</i> (to Sydney) and <i>Europa</i> (Mediterranean waters)
1880		Meets G. F. W. Hope and Adolf Krieger
	June	Passes examination for second mate
	August	The <i>Jeddah</i> incident
	September	Suicide of the master of <i>Cutty Sark</i>
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> , then <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
	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 career as seaman
	February	Bobrowski dies
	autumn	Meets Edward Garnett and Jessie George

CHRONOLOGY: CONRAD

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1895	April	<i>Almayer's Folly</i>
1896	March	<i>An Outcast of the Islands</i> . 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>
	after October 6	Writes to Ford about 'fair copy' of a manuscript, probably <i>The Inheritors</i>
1900	February 28	Signs a contract with Heinemann for <i>The Inheritors</i> on behalf of himself and Ford
	March	Informs Ford that McClure 'takes serialising' of <i>The Inheritors</i> in England and America; no serial publication known
	early May	McClure, Phillips typesetting of <i>The Inheritors</i> completed; copies and electrotype plates sent to Heinemann
	September	Begins association with literary agent J. B. Pinker
	October	<i>Lord Jim</i>
1901	May 23	<i>The Inheritors</i> published in United States by McClure, Phillips (in England by Heinemann on 26 June)

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>
	December	Review of 'Anatole France: <i>L'Île des Pingouins</i> ' and the first instalment of 'Some Reminiscences' in <i>English Review</i> (ends June 1909)
1909		Moves to Aldington, Kent
	April	<i>The Nature of a Crime</i> in <i>English Review</i> (second and final instalment in May)
	June	Quarrels with Ford
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 the United States)
	October	<i>'Twiixt Land and Sea</i>
1913	September	<i>Chance</i> , with 'main' publication date January 1914
1914	July 25	Departs for Austrian Poland with family; journey interrupted by outbreak of First World War
	November 3	Arrives back in England (via Vienna and Genoa) from the Continent
1915	February	<i>Within the Tides</i>
	September	<i>Victory</i>
1917	March	<i>The Shadow-Line</i>

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1919	March	Moves to Spring Grove, near Wye, Kent
	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 the United States (Doubleday)
	February	<i>Notes on Life and Letters</i>
1922	November	<i>The Secret Agent</i> staged in London
1923	May–June	Visits the United States, guest of F. N. Doubleday
	November	Ford proposes republishing <i>The Nature of a Crime</i>
	December	<i>The Rover</i>
1924	January	<i>The Nature of a Crime</i> in <i>Transatlantic Review</i> (second and final instalment in February)
	May	Declines knighthood
	August 3	Dies at Oswalds. Roman Catholic funeral and burial, Canterbury Prefaces to <i>The Nature of a Crime</i> in <i>Transatlantic Review</i>
	September 26	<i>The Nature of a Crime</i> published in England by Duckworth and in the United States by Doubleday
	October	<i>The Shorter Tales of Joseph Conrad</i>
1925	January	<i>Tales of Hearsay</i>
	September	<i>Suspense</i>
1926	March	<i>Last Essays</i>
1928	June	<i>The Sisters</i>

CHRONOLOGY: FORD

CHANGING HIS NAME from Ford Madox Hueffer to Ford Madox Ford just after the First World War signalled that for Ford, as for many, his war experiences formed the great turning point of his life. Pre-war Ford's life fell into two phases. A precocious writer, he experimented with a variety of genres: stories, poems, biography and art criticism. His collaboration with Conrad, most of which took place during his late twenties, was the apprenticeship which turned him into a serious novelist. In the following decade he began to achieve success with his topographical writings about England, his historical fiction and his criticism. With the founding and editing of the *English Review* in 1908, he became a major force in modernist writing in Britain, discovering and promoting the work of Ezra Pound, D. H. Lawrence and Wyndham Lewis, and publishing them alongside Conrad, Henry James and Thomas Hardy. The fictional masterpiece of his pre-war period, *The Good Soldier*, appeared in 1915. In the 1920s he left England and settled in France. There he began his other best-known work, *Parade's End*, a tetralogy of novels about the war, which was published from 1924 to 1928. In Paris he founded and edited the *Transatlantic Review* in 1924, publishing work by new discoveries such as Ernest Hemingway and Jean Rhys alongside work by James Joyce and Gertrude Stein. In the 1930s he divided his time between Paris, Provence and the United States, writing memoirs, reminiscential travel books and criticism alongside his novels. Ford was a prolific author; in his edition of Ford's letters (1965), Richard M. Ludwig lists eighty titles in Ford's bibliography, while David Dow Harvey's bibliography lists eighty-one titles, including collaborations and Ford's own translations.

Publication dates given below are those of the English book editions, except where first publication in the United States is indicated, and are as reported by Harvey (Harvey 1962). Many of Harvey's dates are tentative and are given in the form 'probably published in December, 1906'. In such cases the dates in question are enclosed in square brackets, as for example 1906 [December].

CHRONOLOGY: FORD

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1873	December 17	Born Merton, Surrey (now Greater London). Christened Ford Hermann Hueffer, eldest of three children of Francis Hueffer (1845–89), German musicologist and author, and Catherine (1850–1927), painter, daughter of the painter Ford Madox Brown (1821–93) and his second wife Matilda ('Emma') Hill (1829–90). Dante Gabriel and Christina Rossetti were his uncle and aunt by marriage
1874–80		Family move to Brook Green, Hammersmith, seeing much of Brown and his friends at Fitzroy Square. Ford's childhood spent in literary and Pre-Raphaelite circles
1876	January	Birth of younger brother Oliver Franz (1876–1931), novelist and journalist
1880	November	Birth of younger sister Juliet (1880–1943), translator of Russian poetry
1881	autumn	Enters Praetorius School, Folkestone, Kent, where he boards until 1888. First of many visits to Germany
1889	January	Death of father, Dr Francis Hueffer, music critic of <i>The Times</i> , Provençal scholar and champion of Wagner. Ford goes to live with his grandfather, Madox Brown, at 1 St Edmund's Terrace, Regent's Park. Attends University College School, London, for less than a year

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CHRONOLOGY: FORD

1890–1		Exploring London, moving in Fabian, Aesthetic and literary circles
1891	autumn	Publishes first book, a children's fairy tale, <i>The Brown Owl</i>
1892	[October]	<i>The Shifting of the Fire</i> (novel)
	[October]	<i>The Feather</i> (fairy tale)
	November	Received into the Roman Catholic Church during a visit to Hueffer relatives in Paris
1893	May	<i>The Questions at the Well</i> (poems)
	October	Death of Ford Madox Brown
1894	May	Elopes with and marries childhood sweetheart Elsie Martindale. Couple move to southern Kent
		<i>The Queen Who Flew</i> (fairy tale)
1896	October	<i>Ford Madox Brown</i> (biography). Meets Henry James, Stephen Crane and H. G. Wells
1897	July	Birth of first daughter, Christina
1898	September (?)	Meets Joseph Conrad. They decide to collaborate, eventually producing three books: <i>The Inheritors</i> (1901), <i>Romance</i> (1903) and <i>The Nature of a Crime</i> (1909/24)
1900	April	Birth of second daughter, Katharine
	May	<i>Poems for Pictures</i>
	October	<i>The Cinque Ports</i> (history)
	December	Collaboration with Conrad on <i>Seraphina</i> (later <i>Romance</i>) begins
1901	April	Moves near Martindale family at Winchelsea, Sussex
	June	<i>The Inheritors</i> (novel, with Conrad; May in USA)

CHRONOLOGY: FORD

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1902	[June]	<i>Rossetti: A Critical Essay on His Art.</i> Death of Elsie's father, possibly by his own hand
? 1903		Begins affair with sister-in-law, Mary Martindale
1903	October	<i>Romance</i> (novel, with Conrad)
1904	March	Onset of protracted agoraphobic breakdown. August to December: seeks cure in Germany
	[April]	<i>The Face of the Night</i> (poems)
? 1905		Meets Arthur Marwood, who becomes a close friend
1905	May	<i>The Soul of London</i> (city impressions: first volume of <i>England and the English</i> trilogy)
	[October]	<i>The Benefactor</i> (novel)
	[December]	<i>Hans Holbein</i> (art criticism)
1906	August–September	Visits United States for first time; meets Willa Cather
	March	<i>The Fifth Queen</i> (historical romance)
	May	<i>The Heart of the Country</i> (rural impressions: second volume of <i>England and the English</i> trilogy)
	[December]	<i>Christina's Fairy Book</i> (fairy stories)
1907		Moves to London, separating from Elsie. Meets Violet Hunt
	February	<i>Privy Seal</i> (historical romance: second volume of <i>Fifth Queen</i> trilogy)
	[July]	<i>From Inland</i> (poems)
	[September]	<i>An English Girl</i> (novel)
	[October]	<i>The Spirit of the People</i> (third volume of <i>England and the English</i> trilogy)
	[October]	<i>The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood</i> (art criticism)

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CHRONOLOGY: FORD

1908	March	<i>The Fifth Queen Crowned</i> (historical romance: concluding volume of <i>Fifth Queen</i> trilogy)
	June	<i>Mr Apollo</i> (fantasy)
	June	Begins affair with Violet Hunt which lasts a decade
	October	Writes to J. B. Pinker asking him to act for his cousin, ‘Baron Ignatz von Aschendorf’, as his agent for ‘The Psychology of Crime’ [<i>sic</i> , i.e. <i>The Nature of a Crime</i>]
	December	Founds and edits the <i>English Review</i>
1909		Quarrels with Conrad and Arthur Marwood. Leaves Elsie Hueffer for Violet Hunt. Later, collaborates with Hunt on <i>The Desirable Alien</i> ([September 1913]) and <i>Zeppelin Nights</i> (end of 1915). Meets (and publishes in <i>English Review</i>) D. H. Lawrence, Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis
	[March]	<i>The ‘Half Moon’</i> (historical romance)
	April–May	<i>The Nature of a Crime</i> published in two instalments in <i>English Review</i>
1910		Loses editorship of <i>English Review</i> . Moves to Germany in attempt to divorce Elsie
	[February]	<i>A Call</i> (novel)
	February	<i>Songs from London</i> (poems)
	February	<i>The Portrait</i> (historical romance)
1911		Elsie refuses to divorce. Scandal and libel action follow. Loses custody of daughters. Reconciled with Conrad and Marwood.

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	February	<i>The Simple Life Limited</i> (satirical novel published under pseudonym ‘Daniel Chaucer’)
	March	<i>Ancient Lights</i> (reminiscences)
	[July]	<i>Ladies Whose Bright Eyes</i> (historical fantasy)
	[October]	<i>The Critical Attitude</i> (criticism)
	October	<i>Daily Mirror</i> claims that Ford has married Violet Hunt, as a result of which Ford’s wife sues the newspaper
1912	[February]	<i>High Germany</i> (poems)
	[June]	<i>The Panel</i> (comic novel)
	July	<i>The New Humpty-Dumpty</i> (satirical novel published under pseudonym ‘Daniel Chaucer’)
1913	February	Damages awarded to wife in highly publicized <i>Throne</i> magazine case. In Bankruptcy Court. Ford and Violet Hunt live openly together at her house, South Lodge, in Kensington; involved with Vorticists and Imagists. Begins involvement with Brigit Patmore
	[April]	<i>Mr Fleight</i> (satirical novel)
	[October]	<i>The Young Lovell</i> (historical romance)
	[November]	<i>Collected Poems</i>
1914		Begins writing war propaganda for friend C. F. G. Masterman, Liberal cabinet minister
	January	<i>Henry James</i>
1915	August	Commissioned Second Lieutenant, Welch Regiment, based first at Tenby, then Cardiff
	March	<i>The Good Soldier</i> (novel)

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CHRONOLOGY: FORD

	[March]	<i>When Blood is Their Argument</i> (war propaganda)
	[September]	<i>Between St Dennis and St George</i> (war propaganda)
1916	July	Sees two daughters for the last time, in London. Attached to First Line Transport, 9th Battalion, Welch Regiment; under fire for ten days of the Battle of the Somme in late July. Concussed by shell explosion; sent to Casualty Clearing Station
	August	Rejoins regiment, now stationed in the Ypres Salient near Kemmel Hill
	September	Diagnosed as suffering from shell shock, reassigned to north Wales
	November	Returned to France; stationed in regiment's base camp at Rouen, assigned to bureaucratic jobs and guarding German prisoners
	December	Falls ill again and is hospitalized
1917	January	Transferred to Lady Michelham's convalescent hospital at Menton, on the Riviera
	February	Sent back to Rouen, assigned to a Canadian Casual Battalion; put in charge of a hospital tent of German prisoners at Abbeville
	March	Invalided home to England to serve in training capacity. Meets Stella Bowen
1918	April	<i>'On Heaven' and Poems Written on Active Service</i>
		Breaks with Violet Hunt
1919	January	Resigns commission
	April	Moves to West Sussex farmhouse named 'Red Ford'

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	June	Joined by Bowen. Changes name to Ford Madox Ford
1920	November	Birth of third daughter, Esther Julia (Julie)
1921	March	<i>A House</i> (long poem)
	[May]	<i>Thus to Revisit</i> (reminiscences)
1922	November	Ford and Bowen spend a month in Paris, then travel to Cap Ferrat for the winter. They decide to stay in France, alternating between Paris and Provence
1923	autumn	Based in Paris, establishes <i>Transatlantic Review</i> , published throughout 1924
	April	<i>Women & Men</i> (essays, written in 1911)
	[May]	<i>The Marsden Case</i> (novel)
	[November]	<i>Mr Bosphorus and the Muses</i> (parodic pantomime in verse and prose)
1924		Meets – and publishes – Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, Juan Gris, Basil Bunting, Jean Rhys. Takes on Hemingway as sub-editor of <i>Transatlantic Review</i> . Begins affair with Rhys. Demise of <i>Transatlantic Review</i>
	[April]	<i>Some Do Not . . .</i> (novel, first of the Tietjens, later <i>Parade's End</i> , tetralogy)
	May	Makes first of many post-war trips to the US
	[September]	<i>The Nature of a Crime</i> (novel with Conrad; first published in <i>English Review</i> 1909)
	[November]	<i>Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance</i> (memoir and criticism)

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1925	[September]	<i>No More Parades</i> (second Tietjens novel)
1926		Lecture tour in US. Moves between France and the US for the rest of his life
	[May]	<i>A Mirror to France</i> (essays)
	[October]	<i>A Man Could Stand Up</i> (third Tietjens novel)
1927		Separation from Stella Bowen
	[January]	<i>New Poems</i>
	[July]	<i>New York is Not America</i> (essays; published in US but not England)
	[October]	<i>New York Essays</i> (criticism and reminiscences)
1928	[January]	<i>The Last Post</i> (fourth Tietjens novel)
	[October]	<i>A Little Less Than Gods</i> (historical romance)
1929	[March]	<i>The English Novel</i> (literary history and criticism)
	[November]	<i>No Enemy</i> (fictionalized autobiography; published in US but not England)
1930	May	Meets Janice Biala, Polish-American painter. Lives with her in Provence, Paris and the US until his death. Develops heart trouble
1931	November	<i>Return to Yesterday</i> (reminiscences)
	[May]	<i>When the Wicked Man</i> (novel)
1933	[February]	<i>The Rash Act</i> (novel)
	[October]	<i>It Was the Nightingale</i> (reminiscences)
1934	[October]	<i>Henry for Hugh</i> (novel; published in US but not England)

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1935	[March]	<i>Provence</i> (culture, history and travel book). Attends Baton Rouge Writers' Conference
1936	[April]	<i>Vive Le Roy</i> (detective novel)
	[October]	<i>Collected Poems</i>
1937		Appointed writer and critic in residence, Olivet College, Michigan. Attends writers' conferences at Olivet and Boulder, Colorado. Robert Lowell becomes his secretary
	January	<i>Great Trade Route</i> (culture, history and travel book; published in US and Canada)
	March	<i>Portraits from Life</i> (reminiscences and criticism; published in England in 1938 as <i>Mightier than the Sword</i>)
1938		Awarded Hon. Litt.D. by Olivet
	[October]	<i>The March of Literature</i> (literary history and criticism, published in US; 1939 in England)
1939		Returns to France
	June 26	Dies in Deauville
1950		First omnibus edition of <i>Parade's End</i>
1988		<i>A History of Our Own Times</i> (history; finished by 1930, the first of three planned volumes)

ABBREVIATIONS AND NOTE ON EDITIONS

ABBREVIATIONS

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

<i>Bibliography</i>	William R. Cagle, 'A Bibliography of Joseph Conrad'. Typescript, unpublished
<i>Chronology</i>	Owen Knowles, <i>A Conrad Chronology</i> . 2nd edn. Houndmills: Palgrave, 2014
<i>Companion</i>	Owen Knowles and Gene M. Moore, <i>Oxford Reader's Companion to Conrad</i> . Oxford University Press, 2000
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
Donovan	Stephen Donovan, ed., <i>Speculative Fiction and Imperialism in Africa</i> . Volume 3 of <i>Political Future Fiction: Speculative and Counter-Factual Politics in Edwardian Fiction</i> . Pickering & Chatto, 2013
Ford, 1911	Ford Madox Hueffer, <i>Ancient Lights and Certain New Reflections: Being the Memories of a Young Man</i> . Chapman & Hall, 1911
Ford, 1924	Ford Madox Ford, <i>Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance</i> . Duckworth, 1924
Ford, 1931	Ford Madox Ford, <i>Return to Yesterday</i> . Victor Gollancz, 1931

ABBREVIATIONS AND NOTE ON EDITIONS

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- Ford, 1934 Ford Madox Ford, *It Was the Nightingale*. William Heinemann, 1934
- Ford, 2012 Ford Madox Ford, *The Good Soldier*, ed. Max Saunders. Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2012
- Further Letters* 'My Dear Friend': *Further Letters to and about Joseph Conrad*, ed. Owen Knowles. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008
- Goldring, 1943 Douglas Goldring, *South Lodge: Reminiscences of Violet Hunt, Ford Madox Ford, and the English Review Circle*. Constable, 1943
- Goldring, 1948 Douglas Goldring, *The Last Pre-Raphaelite*. Macdonald, 1948
- Hampson Joseph Conrad and Ford Madox Ford, *The Nature of a Crime*, ed. and with an Afterword by Robert Hampson. Hastings: ReScript Books, 2012
- Harvey David Dow Harvey, *Ford Madox Ford: A Bibliography of Works and Criticism*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961
- Herndon Richard James Herndon, 'The Collaboration of Joseph Conrad with Ford Madox Ford'. Stanford University, 1957. Unpublished PhD thesis
- Jessie Conrad, 1925 'Conrad's Share in *The Nature of a Crime*, and His Congo Diary', *Bookman's Journal* 12, no. 46 (July 1925), 135–6
- Jessie Conrad, 1926 Jessie Conrad, *Joseph Conrad as I Knew Him*. William Heinemann, 1926
- Jessie Conrad, 1935 Jessie Conrad, *Joseph Conrad and His Circle*. Jarrolds, 1935
- Keating George T. Keating, *A Conrad Memorial Library: The Collection of George T. Keating*. New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1929
- 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

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<i>LFMF</i>	<i>Letters of Ford Madox Ford</i> , ed. Richard M. Ludwig. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1965
Partridge	Eric Partridge, <i>A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English</i> , ed. Paul Beale. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984
<i>Portrait in Letters</i>	<i>A Portrait in Letters: Correspondence to and about Conrad</i> , ed. J. H. Stape and Owen Knowles. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996
'Register'	Gene M. Moore, comp. 'A Descriptive Location Register of Joseph Conrad's Literary Manuscripts', revised edition: www.josephconradsociety.org/o2MSS_register.pdf
Saunders I	Max Saunders, <i>Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life</i> , vol. 1, <i>The World Before the War</i> . Oxford University Press, 1996
Saunders II	Max Saunders, <i>Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life</i> , vol. 11, <i>The After-War World</i> . Oxford University Press, 1996
Seed	David Seed, Introduction to Joseph Conrad and Ford Madox Ford, <i>The Inheritors</i> . Liverpool University Press 1999, pp. ix–xxviii

LOCATIONS OF UNPUBLISHED DOCUMENTS

Cornell	Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Carl A. Kroch Library, Cornell University Library, Ithaca, New York
Dent	J. M. Dent Archive, Rare Book Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Northwestern	Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois
Princeton	Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, Princeton, New Jersey
Rushden	Heinemann Archive, Random House Group Library & Archive, Rushden, Northamptonshire

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ABBREVIATIONS AND NOTE ON EDITIONS xli

Yale	Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut
Texas	Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University Library

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.

References to Ford's works are generally to first English editions, but some more recent critical editions are cited where they present a more reliable text. Citations from critical and other works are identified by author, title and date only.

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Frontmatter

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INTRODUCTION

JOSEPH CONRAD and Ford Madox Ford¹ published three works as collaborations: *The Inheritors* (1901), *Romance* (1903), and *The Nature of a Crime* (1909 in the *English Review*; book publication 1924). Their collaboration reached beyond these works, however, as Ford helped with the composition of a number of works published under Conrad's name alone, supplying ideas and stories for 'Amy Foster' and *The Secret Agent*, and possibly writing one instalment of *Nostramo*. He also served as an amanuensis for Conrad on a number of occasions, and during the most important period of their friendship (roughly speaking from mid-1898 to mid-1909) offered financial and practical help of various sorts, including providing accommodation for Conrad and his family. The history of the two works contained in the present volume is accordingly inseparable from the history of their personal and professional relationship, including the relationships with their spouses (in Ford's case both legal and otherwise), families and (in some cases mutual) friends.

The period between the first meeting of the two writers in (probably) September 1898 and the serial publication of *The Nature of a Crime* in 1909 includes some of Conrad's best-known and most highly celebrated works: *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* (1897), *Lord Jim* (1900), *Nostramo* (1904) and *The Secret Agent* (1907). Neither *The Inheritors* nor *The Nature of a Crime* has been ranked alongside any of these achievements, and indeed although *The Inheritors* was included in Dent's 1923 Uniform Edition and a number of other 'editions' (actually reprints of the Doubleday Sun-Dial text) in Britain and the United States in the inter-war period, the omission of both works from what for the latter half of the twentieth century was

¹ As noted in the General Editor's Preface, in the present volume Ford is referred to as Ford Madox Ford, although he was born Ford Hermann Hueffer, published initially as Ford Madox Hueffer, and only formally changed his name to Ford Madox Ford after the First World War.

the standard edition of Conrad's works – Dent's Collected Edition – along with the absence of popular, paperback editions, meant that following the Second World War many admirers of Conrad's fiction were only vaguely aware of their existence, if they were aware at all. In his *Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance*, begun and completed very shortly after Conrad's death in 1924,¹ Ford claims that when he met the older writer during the early years of the First World War, Conrad proposed: 'As to collaborations, when it comes to our collected editions, you had better take the *Inheritors* because it is practically all yours, and that will leave me *Romance* – not that *Romance* isn't practically all yours too.'² Ford reports that the proposal pleased him as he intended to suppress the book, and was surprised when the novel was republished after the war in three separate editions of Conrad's works. When Ford expressed regret at this republication to his collaborator, Conrad 'remarked with a great deal of feeling – with more feeling than the writer otherwise remembers in him: "Why not? Why not re-publish it? It's a good book, isn't it? It's a *damn* good book!"'³ Ford was however justifiably annoyed when the republications failed to give him proper credit for his authorial contribution.⁴ Conrad was dismissive about *The Nature of a Crime* on different occasions (see 'The Texts: An Essay', p. 233, and the authors' prefaces, pp. 162–64), as was Ford, although Ford had more good things to say about the novella.

As 'The Texts: An Essay' in the present volume makes clear, Ford was responsible for the lion's share of the writing of both works. Before meeting Conrad, Ford had published children's books, a novel, collections of poems, a biography, a work of art criticism and a historical study. This impressive level of literary production, accomplished by the time Ford was only in his mid-twenties, continued in the period between the publication of *The Inheritors* and *The Nature of a Crime*. However, it was only with the publication of his novel *The Benefactor* in 1905 that Ford achieved any significant reputation in literary circles. Nonetheless, the association of his name with that of the sixteen-years-old Conrad undoubtedly benefitted his career.

¹ Early on in the book Ford refers to having met Conrad for the last time three weeks previously (Ford, 1924, p. 31).

² Ford, 1924, p. 119. ³ Ford, 1924, p. 120.

⁴ See the textual essay, p. 222.

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Friendships and collaborative relationships are typically overshadowed by their terminations, especially if these are bad-tempered. Conrad disapproved of, and was increasingly exasperated by, the scandals and crises of Ford's private life. In 1909, the year in which *The Nature of a Crime* was first published, this disapproval sharpened into a falling out, and although the two patched up their differences a couple of years later, their relationship never regained the closeness it enjoyed when first they were collaborating. By this time, too, Conrad had a far more substantial body of critically acclaimed fiction to his credit than he had during the time of the first two collaborations, and was emotionally and creatively far less in need of the support of a co-writer.

Later assessments by family, friends and colleagues undoubtedly served to place their collaboration in a more negative light than is merited. Conrad's wife Jessie strongly disliked Ford, and Ford's younger protégé Douglas Goldring, who was centrally involved in copy-editing *The Nature of a Crime* for the *English Review* (see 'The Texts: An Essay', p. 232), disliked Conrad to much the same degree, and had no respect for his writing. Goldring dismisses Conrad as 'a total loss' and his prose as 'largely pastiche Flaubert translated into English by someone with no great ease in the use of the language'.¹ Whatever one's assessment of the three collaborative works, however, as will be argued, without their collaboration on especially *The Inheritors* and *Romance*, it is unlikely that major works by both authors – including Conrad's great political novels from *The Secret Agent* to *Under Western Eyes*, and Ford's *The Good Soldier* (1915) – would exist in their published form. These two collaborative novels took Conrad away from compositions based substantially on his own history and life experiences, and demonstrated that he was able to write a more emotionally uninvolved, research-based fiction. They may thus have played a crucial part in his development of the narrators who recount from a distanced, often ironic, perspective that we find in *Nostramo*, *The Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes*.

In addition to its importance as a record of collaborative work between two major novelists who learned much from each other during their collaboration on it, and as a training ground for later works by both authors, *The Inheritors* is important in its own right as

¹ Goldring, 1943, p. 29.

an original blend of science fiction and political novel. *The Nature of a Crime* too has its points of interest in the merging of aspects of the epistolary novel with first-person narrative, in techniques of characterization that both writers would make use of in subsequent works, and in its depiction of the sexual hypocrisy and more general corruption hidden behind a veneer of middle- or upper-class respectability in the English social order.

The discussion that follows falls into three broad sections: the origins of the two works in the individual and linked personal and professional lives of their authors; the works' autobiographical, literary, scientific and historical sources; and, with an emphasis on the years immediately following their publication (and republication in book form in the case of *The Nature of a Crime*), the critical reception afforded to both works. The two works are considered separately and in order of publication.

THE INHERITORS

Origins

THE FIRST OF the three works published under the names of Joseph Conrad and Ford Madox Hueffer,¹ *The Inheritors* was actually begun after the two authors had worked for some time on *Romance* (initially entitled *Seraphina*). In her second memoir of her husband, *Joseph Conrad and His Circle*, published in 1935, Jessie Conrad provides conflicting reports of the first meeting between Ford and Conrad. She initially states that she and her husband were introduced to the then Ford Madox Hueffer at the house of Stephen Crane and his wife at Ravensbrook in Surrey, when the Conrads' first son Borys was just five weeks old.²

Ford's description of the first meeting between the two is different. In his 1924 memoir of Conrad, Ford locates the meeting at Grace's Cottage, Limpsfield, Surrey, where he and his wife Elsie had moved in March 1898. Ford reports that Conrad was carrying a small child (presumably Borys), and was 'conducted by Edward

¹ *The Nature of a Crime* was initially published in 1909 under a single pseudonym, but when republished in book form in 1924 the names of both authors were given. See the textual essay, p. 236.

² Jessie Conrad, 1935, p. 58.

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Garnett'.¹ In her rejection of Ford's account, Jessie provides yet another version, claiming that the first meeting took place at the house of Edward and Constance Garnett, and that Conrad was unaccompanied on this occasion as 'my baby was too young to trust alone with his father'.²

Jessie's apparent provision of two different dates and locations in the same memoir for the first meeting between Ford and Conrad underlines the need to treat her accounts with circumspection. For his part, Ford provides yet another version of this first meeting with Conrad in *Return to Yesterday*. He omits any mention of a small child, but claims that as he was wearing his working clothes, Conrad took him for the gardener.³ Max Saunders concludes that the 'precise date of the meeting [between Ford and Conrad] is shrouded in the familiar cloud of error and controversy', and his own tentative dating of this first meeting as 'probably in the first week of September [1898]' is, unless new documentary evidence emerges, as close to truth as we are now likely to come.⁴ In his *Ancient Lights and Certain New Reflections: Being the Memories of a Young Man* (1911), Ford writes that he read Conrad's first novel *Almayer's Folly* in manuscript before meeting the author,⁵ but details accompanying this claim are at odds with known facts of Conrad's life and writing history and the story cannot be relied on.

What seems certain is that during either the first, or an early, meeting between the two writers in 1898, mention must have been made of the new novel on which Ford was then working: *Seraphina*. In his first letter to Ford – which has not survived – Conrad proposed that the two of them collaborate on this novel. Ford, referring to himself in the third person as he does throughout his memoir of Conrad, reports his response to receiving the letter containing the proposal thus: 'Obviously he had told Conrad the story of John-Kemp-Aaron-Smith, for Conrad asked him to consider the idea of a collaboration over that story – which Mr. Garnett had told him was too individual ever to find even a publisher.'⁶

In Ford's account, his response to this approach was that Conrad 'had better come and see for himself what he had let himself in for',⁷ and so Conrad visited Ford at Pent Farm shortly prior to Ford's

¹ Ford, 1924, p. 15. ² Jessie Conrad, 1935, p. 63. ³ Ford, 1931, p. 52.

⁴ Saunders I, p. 521 n. 28 and p. 100 respectively.

⁵ Ford, 1911, pp. 226, 227. ⁶ Ford, 1924, p. 18. ⁷ Ford, 1924, p. 18.

subletting this property (an old farmhouse near Hythe, in Kent) to the Conrads in October 1898. Again according to Ford, after dinner the two talked about collaboration, and

Conrad confessed to the writer that previous to suggesting a collaboration he had consulted a number of men of letters as to its advisability. He said that he had put before them his difficulties with the language, the slowness with which he wrote and the increased fluency that he might acquire in the process of going minutely into words with an acknowledged master of English.⁸

Ford suggests that these ‘men of letters’ might have included Edward Garnett, W. E. Henley and Marriott Watson, but admits that of these ‘the only one that Conrad mentioned was W. E. Henley’.⁹ A letter from Conrad to Henley dated 18 October 1898 confirms that Conrad did indeed consult Henley on the possibility of collaborating with Ford, and that Henley had replied. Responding to this now lost letter, Conrad noted:

When talking to Hueffer my first thought was that the man there who couldn’t find a publisher had some good stuff to use and that if we worked it up together my name, probably, would get a publisher for it. On the other hand I thought that working with him would keep under that particular devil that spoils my work for me as quick as I turn it out (that’s why I work so slow and break my word to publishers), and that the material being of the kind that appeals to my imagination and the man being an honest workman we could turn out something tolerable – perhaps; and if not he would be no worse off than before. ... It never occurred to me that I could be dangerous to Hueffer in the way you point out.¹⁰

Work on *Romance* was slow and sporadic, and it was four years before it was published by Smith, Elder in London in 1903. During these four years Conrad completed *Lord Jim* and two volumes of stories that contained some of his best-known work, including ‘Heart of Darkness’, ‘Youth’ and ‘Typhoon’, while Ford had started a novel about Oliver Cromwell (that, like the biography of Cromwell on which Granger and Churchill collaborate in *The Inheritors*, was never to be completed), a biography of Henry VIII and two other books: *The Cinque Ports* – a historical account – and a novel entitled *The Benefactors*.

⁸ Ford, 1924, p. 36.

² Ford, 1924, p. 36.

³ *Letters*, II, 107.

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It was during this very busy period for both writers that *The Inheritors* was started, completed and published. In his memoir of Conrad, Ford writes that *The Inheritors* was begun after *Romance* was (as it turned out, temporarily) abandoned, and that ‘the *Inheritors* must have been published about 1901 and, having been written rather fast, must have been begun in 1900’.¹ Ford’s memory here is again not wholly reliable; although the novel was indeed published in 1901 (23 May in New York by McClure, Phillips, and 26 June in London by William Heinemann), it was started in 1899. Arthur Mizener reports that ‘Elsie’s diary shows that he was well into it [i.e. *The Inheritors*] by October’.² (‘Elsie’ is Ford’s wife Elizabeth, née Martindale, who married Ford after eloping with him in March 1894.) Max Saunders concurs, reporting that by the summer of 1899 ‘Ford had given up the Cromwell idea, and began a novel concerned with modern politics, *The Inheritors*’.³ According to Saunders, ‘By 6 October Ford had written enough of *The Inheritors* to try it out on Conrad’.⁴ Ford reports this meeting in his memoir, describing Conrad sitting gloomily reflecting upon his career and of the ‘near-impossibility of wrestling with’ the English language, upon his difficulties with *The Rescue*, with mounting debt and another impending attack of gout, and the fact that his mare, Nancy, needed shoeing. Ford then entered the room, took out the manuscript of the first chapter of *The Inheritors*, sat down, and began to read it aloud.⁵

At the end of the first paragraph Conrad said: ‘Mais mon cher, c’est très chic! What is it?’ At the end of a sentence on the sixth page he was exclaiming: ‘But what is this? What the devil is this? It is très, très, très chic! It is *épatant*. That’s magnificent.’ And already the writer knew that either he was in for another collaboration or that he would hand over the manuscript altogether.⁶

Quoting a less favourable early response from Conrad to the novel, from Elsie Hueffer’s diary, Arthur Mizener records that, on 6 October,

[Ford] drove ‘over to the Pent with the manuscript of the opening chapters of the novel rather shyly in his pocket’. ‘Conrad [was] upset with novel,’ Elsie noted, but he was nevertheless ready to enter into the project, and the Fords came to the Pent for a fortnight’s visit and ‘long heated discussion[s], lasting well into many nights’ that were a great trial to Jessie.⁷

¹ Ford, 1924, p. 74. ² Arthur Mizener, *The Saddest Story* (1971), p. 51.

³ Saunders I, p. 118. ⁴ Saunders I, p. 120. ⁵ Ford, 1924, p. 132.

⁶ Ford, 1924, pp. 132–3. ⁷ Mizener, *Saddest Story*, p. 51.

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An undated letter from Conrad to Ford confirms that in addition to person-to-person work on the novel, Ford sent material to Conrad for comment and revision.

The MS came back in fair copy. I read it and am quite struck. There are excellencies there. I don't send you the 2d copy because I don't want you to be disturbed at your last chap. It will want correcting here and there and in places 'il y a des longueurs.' The effect is remarkably weird as a whole.

We must read together and talk a little.¹

The editors of the volume of the *Collected Letters* in which this letter appears note that the “‘remarkably weird” nature of the work suggests *The Inheritors*’, and propose that any date from 6 October 1899, when Ford delivered the first few chapters, until early 1900, is possible.² If this is correct, it would suggest that Conrad was revising manuscript chapters either in person with Ford, or as they were posted to him, and then having these back ‘in fair copy’ either handwritten or (almost certainly, given the reference to a second copy), typed most likely by an agency typist. Ford’s later description of the two writers’ collaborative methods of composition in his preface to *The Nature of a Crime* (see pp. 165–7) matches such a process, except that in the case of the later work each writer appears to have taken turns in reading aloud to the other.

In a now lost letter, Ford, according to a later letter from Conrad of 12 November 1899, had exhibited ‘signs of nervous irritation and ... exasperated tone’, and had revealed that his wife seemed to think that Conrad had induced him to waste his time. Conrad attempted to console and reassure Ford, before commenting directly on their collaboration on *The Inheritors*, declaring that ‘If I had influence enough with the publishers I would make them publish the book in your name alone – because the work is all yours – I’ve shared only a little of your worry.’ He continued:

Whether I am worth anything to you or not it is for you to determine. The proposal certainly came from me under a false impression of my power for work. I am much weaker than I thought I was but this does not affect you fundamentally. Heinemann (and McClure too I fancy) are waiting for our joint book and I am not going to draw back if You will only consent to sweat long enough. ...

Do come when you like. Bring only one (or at most two) chapters at a time and we shall have it out over each separately.³

¹ *Letters*, II, 234.

² *Letters*, II, 234 n. 1.

³ *Letters*, II, 219.

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Robert McClure, brother of the American publisher Samuel Sidney McClure, acted as the latter's London agent. That Conrad's 'fancy' concerning his interest was well founded is confirmed by a three-paragraph letter from him to Conrad dated 23 November, 1899, the middle paragraph of which reads: 'Will you let me see the "Extravagant" novel when it is finished? We are certain to want the book for United States, and I particularly want to serialise it too, if it will cut up reasonably well.'¹ Conrad forwarded this letter to Ford, and, seemingly still attempting to reassure and mollify his collaborator, wrote at the bottom of it, 'Dear Ford – Let this cheer you up in your arduous labour. I wrote McClure that the thing is making good progress.'²

That Conrad's input in the process of composition was secondary and limited is also confirmed by other commentators. Jessie Conrad – who would not be likely to underestimate her husband's contribution to a joint composition – stated more than three decades after the novel was published that *The Inheritors* 'is practically all F. M. H.'³

A less diplomatic comment on the collaboration than that contained in the letter to Ford of 12 November 1899 is found in a letter from Conrad to Edward Garnett of 26 March 1900. Garnett was by this time working for the publishing house of William Heinemann, having been dismissed as publisher's reader by T. Fisher Unwin at the end of 1899. *The Inheritors* was to be published by Heinemann in England, and, as Max Saunders notes, Conrad's letter appears to be an attempt to dissociate himself from *The Inheritors*.⁴

I set myself to look upon the thing as a sort of skit upon the political (?) novel, fools of the Morley Roberts sort do write. This in my heart of hearts. And poor *H* was dead in earnest! Oh Lord. How he worked! There is not a chapter I haven't made him write twice – most of them three times over.

This is collaboration if you like! Joking apart the expenditure of nervous fluid was immense. There were moments when I cursed the day I was born and dared not look up at the light of day I had to live through with this thing on my mind. *H* has been as patient as no angel had ever been. I've been fiendish. I've been rude to him; if I've not called him names I've *implied* in my remarks and in the course of our discussions the most opprobrious epithets. He wouldn't recognize them. 'Pon my word it was touching. And there's no doubt that in the course of that agony I have been ready to weep more than once. Yet not for him. Not for him.

You'll have to burn this letter – but I shall say no more.⁵

¹ *Letters*, 11, 222 n. 2.

² *Letters*, 11, 222.

³ Jessie Conrad, 1935, p. 64.

⁴ Saunders I, p. 121.

⁵ *Letters*, 11, 257.

When Edward Garnett published this letter twenty-five years after it was written, Ford was, not surprisingly, hurt, and wrote to Garnett making this clear.¹

In a letter dated 17 March 1900, Ford wrote to Walter Jerrold about his various writing projects, and included the comment that ‘the Conrad–Hueffer novel went off to the printers on Friday’.² However his mention of ‘the printers’ must refer to the publishers rather than the printers, as the book had not at this time even been accepted for publication (see ‘The Texts: An Essay’, pp. 217–18 for details of the negotiations with publishers).

Sources

RICHARD HERNDON has claimed that *The Inheritors* is ‘a pastiche novel, drawing situations and themes from various literary sources’.³ Among these he includes Ford’s earlier published fairy tales, noting that while these contained magical elements, in his novels Ford ‘always provided for the sceptics alternative, natural explanations of the miraculous happenings’,⁴ as he does in *The Inheritors*. Whether or not one accepts the label ‘pastiche’, *The Inheritors* clearly does draw on a range of sources. The most important of these are the then fashionable interest in the ‘fourth dimension’ and a popular fascination with the possibility that scientific advances would open new realms of achievement (and danger) for humanity; contemporary politics, both domestic and international; changes in the realms of professional writing, both journalistic and book publishing; and the authors’ personal histories – which of course overlapped with changes in the realms of professional writing. Some of these sources were refracted through literary works by other authors and this, along with the complications inevitably associated with dual authorship, frequently renders the tracing of specific sources less than straightforward.

¹ As Owen Knowles reports, the letter to Garnett is extant (TS, Northwestern), but unavailable for publication, although Max Saunders was allowed to use extracts from it in his biography of Ford (*Further Letters*, p. 192). For Ford’s detailing of the passages in *The Inheritors* that, according to him, were Conrad’s, see Appendix A, p. 275.

² Quoted in Goldring, 1948, p. 85. ³ Herndon, p. 51.

⁴ Herndon, p. 81.

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The Fourth Dimension

WRITING TO his agent J. B. Pinker on 14 July 1901, Conrad informed him that ‘There’s a Daily Mail man coming to see me on Tuesday’ (*Letters*, II, 341). The article produced by this visit, published in the newspaper on 19 July, reports of *The Inheritors* that ‘It is interesting to learn that Mr. Conrad and Mr. Hueffer got the first idea of their book from a striking sentence of Mr. H. G. Wells.’¹ Linda Dryden has pointed out that during the composition of *The Inheritors*, the two authors and H. G. Wells – who were all living in relatively close proximity to one another, in Kent – ‘met up on a very regular basis’.² Conrad had written to Wells after the latter reviewed *An Outcast of the Islands* anonymously in 1896, following which an exchange of letters and then personal meetings took place once the reviewer’s identity was revealed. In his first letter to Wells, Conrad reported that he had read ‘the “Time Machine” the “Wonderful Visit” the “Bacillus” volume of short stories’, and that he was expecting delivery of *The Island of Dr Moreau* (*Letters*, I, 282). Ford too, in his 1924 memoir of Conrad, writes of a visit the two writers made to Wells and describes their joking about *The Invisible Man* when the bell-push on Wells’s villa operated without being touched. Ford adds that this novel made ‘an extremely marked impression’ on both writers, and that ‘as far as memory serves, *The Invisible Man*, the end of the *Sea Lady* and some phrases that book contained, and two short stories called, the one *The Man Who Could Work Miracles* and the other *Fear*, made up at that date all the English writing that, acting as it were as a junta, we absolutely admired’.³ Dryden notes that Wells himself, in his autobiography, writes of *The Time Machine* (1895) that ‘The idea of treating time as a fourth dimension was, I think, due to an original impulse; I do not remember picking that up. But I may have picked it up, because it was in the air.’⁴

The Time Machine is of particular interest given that it contains mention of the fourth dimension. In the opening chapter of the novel,

¹ A brief extract from the article, including this quotation, is printed in the Liverpool University Press edition of the novel (1999, p. 158).

² Linda Dryden, ‘*The Inheritors*, H. G. Wells and Science Fiction: The Dimensions of the Future’, *Conradiana*, 49, nos. 2–3 (Summer–Fall 2017; actually published 2021), 103–20 (114).

³ Ford, 1924, pp. 42–3.

⁴ Dryden, ‘*Inheritors*, Wells and Science Fiction’, 107, quoting from H. G. Wells, *An Experiment in Autobiography: Discoveries and Conclusions of a Very Ordinary Brain*, vol. 11 (1934), p. 645.

during an ‘informal gathering’ at the house of the ‘Philosophical Inventor’ known as the time traveller, time itself is defined as the fourth dimension.

‘Clearly,’ the Philosophical Inventor proceeded, ‘any real body must have extension in *four* directions: it must have Length, Breadth, Thickness, and – Duration. But through a natural infirmity of the flesh, which I will explain to you in a moment, we incline to overlook the fact. There are really four dimensions, three which we call the three planes of Space, and a fourth, Time. There is, however, a tendency to draw an unreal distinction between the former three dimensions and the latter, because it happens that our consciousness moves intermittently in one direction along the latter from the beginning to the end of our lives.’¹

The book also depicts a world divided between two classes of being that are the descendants of humanity: the peaceful but vulnerably innocent Eloi, and the brutal Morlocks. Another work by Wells that might have influenced one or both of the authors is *The Wonderful Visit* (1895), which also involves a visitor to earth from another dimension – although in this case the visitor is an angel, who, unlike the Dimensionists in *The Inheritors*, is shocked and dismayed by what he experiences of life on earth to such an extent that he returns whence he came rather than seeking to gain power on earth.

Wells’s 1897 novel *The War of the Worlds* had helped to familiarize readers with the idea that those who visited earth from elsewhere might not necessarily have benevolent intentions. As will be seen in the section below on the novel’s reception, many American reviewers of *The Inheritors* associated the fourth dimensionists with Nietzsche’s *Übermensch* (overman), an association that appears to have been prompted by publicity material put out by the American publisher, but that has some textual basis as Granger’s self-declared sister insists that ‘mine is the master mind’ (157.9–10). Max Saunders reports that Ford was reading Nietzsche before he was twenty,² and there are scattered references to the writer throughout Conrad’s letters. In one to Helen Sanderson of 22 July 1899, Conrad refers to ‘the mad individualism’ of the German (*Letters*, 11, 188). Richard Herndon points out that ‘During the fall of 1899 ... Edward Garnett published a short essay summarizing and commenting on Nietzsche’s philosophy’ that Conrad had read and discussed with others.³ The conceit of a visitor

¹ H. G. Wells, *The Time Machine* (1895), p. 2. ² Saunders I, p. 49.

³ Herndon, p. 127. Conrad mentions the article in letters to Garnett of 26 October and 9 November 1899.

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from the fourth dimension allowed the writers to link the popular interest in Nietzsche's theories with this imagined space.

Wells, then, may have been responsible for making one or both of the authors of *The Inheritors* aware of the concept of the fourth dimension, although his association of it with time is different from the way it is presented in the novel. More generally, Wells's success with what we would now term science fiction will not have been lost on the seriously debt-laden Conrad, who was painfully aware of the difference between *succès d'estime* and a bestseller status that ensured a significant income. In a letter to publisher William Blackwood of 31 May 1902, Conrad lists a number of writers who 'had to suffer for being "new"', apologizing that 'in a time when Sherlock Holmes looms so big I may be excused my little bit of self-assertion' (*Letters*, II, 418).

Wells's comment that the fourth dimension was 'in the air' at the time *The Inheritors* was planned and written can be substantiated by reference to a range of sources. Mark Blacklock, for example, refers to newspaper reports of an Oxford undergraduate who, on the night of 21 April 1900, committed suicide by jumping out of a window after having 'raved about the fourth dimension'.¹ Wells's view is also echoed in a recent commentary. In his introduction to an annotated edition of Edwin A. Abbott's fantasy *Flatland*, Ian Stewart notes that 'The fourth dimension was very much "in the air" in the late 1800s. The interest began among scientists and mathematicians, but their excitement transmitted itself to the general public.'² First published in 1888 under the pseudonym 'A. Square', *Flatland* purports to be written by an inhabitant of a two-dimensional universe who describes his and his fellow two-dimensionists' experience of being visited by an inhabitant of a three-dimensional universe. As Stewart notes, 'The difficulties that a two-dimensional being experiences in comprehending the third dimension are used to help Victorians living in a three-dimensional space accustom themselves to the radical but enormously popular idea of a fourth dimension.'³ As *The Inheritors* opens with an encounter between Arthur Etchingham Granger – an inhabitant of the familiar three-dimensional world of the novel's readers – and a

¹ Mark Blacklock, *The Emergence of the Fourth Dimension: Higher Spatial Thinking in the Fin de Siècle* (2018), p. 194.

² Edwin A. Abbott, *The Annotated Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions* (1884; annotated edition 2002), with an introduction and notes by Ian Stewart (2008), p. xix.

³ Abbott, *Annotated Flatland*, intro. Stewart, p. xvii.

woman who claims to have come from the fourth dimension and who attempts to provide Granger with an understanding of the nature of this dimension, a number of commentators have raised the possibility that one or both of the authors had read Abbott's book. There is, however, no evidence that they had (or had not), and they could have picked up the concept from a variety of public and personal sources.

These sources include a range of contemporary writers in addition to Wells, and there is a sense in which the most revealing uses of the concept are the fleeting, parenthetical ones that indicate that the writer is referencing a piece of common knowledge that requires no exposition. Examples from Rudyard Kipling and Henry James serve to illustrate the point. Kipling's collection of short stories entitled *The Day's Work* (1898) contained two references to the fourth dimension. The first is in the title of a story: 'An Error in the Fourth Dimension'. The fourth dimension is mentioned only in the title of the story, and has a purely metaphorical purchase (the plot involves an American resident in England who gets his butler to flag down an express train, for which act he is threatened with legal action by the railway company until they hear that he owns a railway in the United States). Also in this collection, a tale entitled 'The Brushwood Boy' contains another throwaway reference to the fourth dimension. A three-year-old child is dreaming that he is voyaging in a small clockwork steamer, but feels less and less in familiar territory. 'He told himself repeatedly that it was no good to hurry; but still he hurried desperately, and the islands slipped and slid under his feet; the straits yawned and widened, till he found himself utterly lost in the world's fourth dimension, with no hope of return.'¹ As it is scarcely conceivable that a child of this age could have a concept of the fourth dimension, the term must be being applied by the narrator, presumably to the land of dreams. Kipling returns to the concept four decades later, in the third chapter of his autobiographical memoir *Something of Myself* (1937), remarking in retrospect of his early life in India when he worked as a journalist, that 'Having no position to consider, and my trade enforcing it, I could move at will in the fourth dimension',² where he appears to be equating the fourth dimension with the fourth estate.

A year before the publication of *The Day's Work*, Henry James's *The Spoils of Poynton* (1897) has Fleda Vetch, asked by Mrs Gareth to

¹ Rudyard Kipling, *The Day's Work* (1898), pp. 400–401.

² Rudyard Kipling, *Something of Myself* (1937), p. 56.

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name what the latter has achieved by the transformation of her room, respond: ‘It’s a kind of fourth dimension. It’s a presence, a perfume, a touch. It’s a soul, a story, a life.’¹ It is the casual, varied and pointedly metaphorical rather than technical or scientific use of the concept in these examples from a time just prior to the authors’ composition of *The Inheritors* that merits note.

There is however one specific event that almost certainly feeds in to the presentation of the fourth dimension and its representatives in the novel. In a letter of 29 September 1898 to Edward Garnett, Conrad opens with the information that he has that day returned home from a visit to Dr John McIntyre in Glasgow. McIntyre was one of the first radiologists, and his scientific explorations were first discussed and then demonstrated at the meeting.

All day with the shipowners and in the evening dinner, phonograph, X rays, talk about *the* secret of the universe and the nonexistence of, so called, matter. The secret of the universe is in the existence of horizontal waves whose varied vibrations are at the bottom of all states of consciousness. If the waves were vertical the universe would be different. This is a truism. But, don’t you see, there is nothing in the world to prevent the simultaneous existence of vertical waves, of waves at any angles; in fact there are mathematical reasons for believing that such waves do exist. Therefore it follows that two universes may exist in the same place and in the same time – and not only two universes but an infinity of different universes – if by universe we mean a set of states of consciousness; and note, *all* (the universes) composed of the same matter, *all matter* being only that thing of inconceivable tenuity through which the various vibrations of waves (electricity, heat, sound, light etc.) are propagated, thus giving birth to our sensations – then emotions – then thought. Is that so?

These things I said to the D^r while Neil Munro stood in front of a Röntgen machine and on the screen behind we contemplated his backbone and his ribs. The rest of that promising youth was too diaphanous to be visible. It was so – said the Doctor – and there is no space, time, matter, mind as vulgarly understood, there is only the eternal something that waves and an eternal force that causes the waves – it’s not much – and by the virtue of these two eternities exists that Corot and that Whistler in the dining room upstairs (we were in a kind of cellar) and Munro’s here writings and your Nigger and Graham’s politics and Paderewski’s playing (in the phonograph) and what more do you want? (*Letters*, II, 94–5)

The possibility that different universes exist in tandem is close enough to the idea that human beings could be expelled from the world of three dimensions to the fourth dimension, only to return as conquerors –

¹ Henry James, *The Spoils of Poynton* (1897), chapter 21.

the conceit which the fourth-dimensionist woman imparts to Granger in the opening chapter of *The Inheritors*. Some of the insights gained by Conrad during his meeting with John McIntyre may well have fed into other descriptions in the novel. In chapter IV, for example, the narrating Granger says of Mrs Hartly's large grey eyes that 'They seemed to send out waves of intense sympatheticism. I thought of those others that had shot out a razor-edged ray' (29.9–11).¹

‘A Sort of Skit upon the Political Novel’

CONRAD'S COMMENT that 'I set myself to look upon the thing as a sort of skit upon the political (!) novel, fools of the Morley Roberts sort do write' (*Letters*, II, 257), states what is obvious to the common reader, that in its account of parliamentary power struggles, imperialist adventures and atrocities and their impact upon domestic politics, and the involvement of an increasingly powerful set of newspaper barons in these matters, *The Inheritors* is a political novel. Whether one accepts that the novel is indeed a 'skit' – a claim that is probably at least partially a defensive attempt on Conrad's part to suggest that he did not take the novel too seriously – there is no doubt that *The Inheritors* is political in a different sense from, for example, 'Heart of Darkness', in that the imperialist atrocities are reported rather than presented directly, as the action of the novel takes place exclusively in Europe – in England and in Paris.

Morley Roberts (1857–1942) was a prolific English novelist whose works incorporated experiences and information gathered during extensive foreign travels, including to Oceania, Africa and the United States – where he spent three years from the age of nineteen. Which if any of his novels Conrad had read is unclear, but one that has interesting points of contact with *The Inheritors* is *The Colossus*, published in 1898 and so being read and reviewed at the time both Conrad and Ford were working on *The Inheritors*. The title would have had a specific connotation for contemporary readers: a punning cartoon ('The Colossus of Rhodes') published in *Punch* magazine (10 November 1892) depicted Cecil Rhodes, who had just announced his intention to construct a railway from Cape Town to Cairo, with one foot in Cape Town and the other in Cairo. *The Colossus* opens with the hero, Loder, attempting to overcome practical, financial and political problems to build a railway from Egypt to Cape Town. His female admirer Lady Bontine gives her account

¹ References to the texts of the present edition appear in round brackets. These references, along with others to Cambridge Edition volumes, employ both page and line numbers (e.g. 38.16–17).

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of what is involved in his master plan: ‘It’s something about the railway and the French financiers and the Germans. Mr. Oppenheimer and Mr. Romney are all in it. And the Egyptians won’t, or something; but what it is they won’t I don’t know. For it’s most confusing, and worse than chess.’¹ *The Inheritors* also has its planned railway and its French financier Halberschrodt, but where Roberts’s novel glorifies empire building and empire builders, *The Inheritors* portrays them in a thoroughly negative manner.

More than any other fictional work written in part or wholly by Conrad, *The Inheritors* contains a number of characters whose resemblance to real-life models was readily apparent to contemporary readers. In a letter to Ford of 21 July 1901, in which Conrad reports on a meeting with Sidney Southgate Pawling (1862–1922), a partner in the London publishing house of William Heinemann that published *The Inheritors* in England, he makes reference to a number of these actual or supposed real-life models.

I kept my gravity in the big armchair and with extreme sobriety made suggestions: the authors by the introduction of the *4th D* tried to remove their work from the sphere of mere personalities. They attack not individuals but the spirit of the age – the immoral tendencies arising from a purely materialistic view of life which even reach the lower classes (Slingsby, I suppose).

I had hard work to keep my countenance with the photo of the Great Callan, on the mantelpiece, looking at me. Pawling wanted to know who Fox was. I smiled enigmatically. P has read the book. He talked glibly of the D de Mers[c]h, of your aunt (she’s no aunt of mine) in Paris, of Churchill of Gurnard (he called him Chamberlain half the time) of Polehampton (he winked and I winked), of Callan —“That’s Crockett”. My lower jaw fell.

(I swear that this is exactly and verbatim what happened) He looked me hard in the eye.

“Of course it’s Crockett. There’s no man who had worked that kind of business more.”

I asked him not to let it out; and he said “oh no. Of course not.”

(*Letters*, II, 344–5)

‘Crockett’ is Samuel Rutherford Crockett (1859–1914), who wrote under the name of S. R. Crockett and was published by T. Fisher Unwin, who had published both Conrad and Ford. Crockett was at the forefront of a publishing trend that focused on mass sales, and his reputation as a

¹ Morley Roberts, *The Colossus* (1899), p. 16. The name ‘Bontine’ calls to mind Conrad’s friend Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham, who corresponded with Roberts. In the Harry Ransom Center at Austin there are ten or so letters from Roberts to Edward Garnett, so that it is quite possible that either or both Conrad and Ford had met Roberts or had heard of him from friends.

writer who aimed at an emerging popular market allowed serious writers such as Ford and Conrad to treat him and his work in a dismissive manner. However, Pawling's identification of Callan with Crockett is almost certainly wrong, as Conrad's response to the suggestion makes clear. In fact, the novelist most given to portentous pronouncements attacking contemporary materialism was not Crockett but Hall Caine (1853–1931), and at least one reviewer of *The Inheritors* named Hall Caine as the model for Callan (see below). Sir Thomas Henry Hall Caine CH KBE was an extremely popular and prolific writer, reputed to have sold more than 10 million books in his lifetime. In *It Was the Nightingale* (published three and a half decades after *The Inheritors* and three years after Caine's death), Ford reports that his Blue Angora cat was named Hall Caine. This might confirm a somewhat irreverent attitude to the writer, although the same source also records that Ford named his potato plants after various friends, including Conrad.¹

The novel's presentation of Callan does indeed appear to build on aspects of Hall Caine's novelistic career, but the character's personal habits are reminiscent of those of a very different novelist: Henry James. Callan's habits of speech in particular appear to be sly representations of James's. While no recordings of James speaking have survived, in 1943 Elizabeth Jordan published a short account of James's habits of verbal delivery. James was a stutterer, and his speech retained characteristic pauses and repetitions that he used to overcome this problem. Referring to James's 'habit of speech in his later years', Jordan notes that almost invariably 'he broke up his sentences into little groups of two, three, or four words, and repeated each group three times', and provides a transcript of James speaking in conversation during a dinner party 'in the first conversation I ever had with him'.²

The editors of Conrad's *Collected Letters* (*Letters*, II, 345) suggest the following additional real-life models.

Fox:	The newspaper baron Alfred Harmsworth, who was shortly to become Lord Northcliffe
De Mersch:	King Leopold II of Belgium
Churchill:	The politician A. J. Balfour

¹ Ford, 1934, pp. 113, 111.

² Elizabeth Jordan, 'Henry James at Dinner', *Mark Twain Quarterly*, 5 (Spring 1943), 7–8; reprinted in Norman Page, ed., *Henry James: Interviews and Recollections* (1984), p. 75. Richard Herndon provides further parallels between James and Callan (Herndon, pp. 90–92).

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Joseph Conrad, Edited by Jeremy Hawthorn, In collaboration with Max Saunders

Frontmatter

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Gurnard: The politician Joseph Chamberlain

Polehampton: The publisher T. Fisher Unwin, who had published both Conrad and Ford

It is also very likely that the character Lea is based on the publisher's reader Edward Garnett, who again had played an important part in the professional careers of both authors and who would become a close friend of Conrad's. The painter Jenkins, to whom Granger and Churchill pay a visit (55.1), is based on Ford's grandfather, the painter Ford Madox Brown (see below). Even Mr Slingsby, whose economic difficulties are recounted by the great lady met by Granger at the neighbourhood celebration (121.14), may have a real-life counterpart: in *Ancient Lights* Ford makes passing reference to 'an elderly and poaching scoundrel called Slingsby',¹ although this description hardly matches the worthy individual described as having fallen on hard times in *The Inheritors*.

In his memoir of Conrad, Ford notes that from the start of their collaboration on *The Inheritors* the authors were clear as to what sort of novel they were writing.

The novel was to be a political work, rather allegorically backing Mr. Balfour in the then Government; the villain was to be Joseph Chamberlain who had made the war. The sub-villain was to be Leopold II, King of the Belgians, the foul – and incidentally lecherous – beast who had created the Congo Free State in order to grease the wheels of his harems with the blood of murdered negroes and to decorate them with fretted ivory cut from stolen tusks in the deep forests.²

'The war' in question was the Second South African War, known popularly in Britain as the Boer War, which lasted from 11 October 1899 to 31 May 1902. Joseph Chamberlain was British Colonial Secretary in the period leading up to the war, and it was the British government's refusal to accede to the South African government's ultimatum that British troops be withdrawn from the borders of the Transvaal and Orange Free State that led to the South African declaration of war. As Conrad's letter to Ford of 21 July 1901 makes clear, the identification of Gurnard with Chamberlain was picked up without difficulty by contemporary readers, and perhaps this goes some way to explaining why, in a letter to the *New York Times* dated 2 August and published 24 August 1901, Conrad took pains to insist that the novel 'is not directed against tradition; still less does it attack personalities. The extravagance of its form is meant to point out forcibly the materialistic

¹ Ford, 1911, p. 129. ² Ford, 1924, pp. 133–4.

exaggeration of individualism, whose unscrupulous efficiency it is the temper of the time to worship' (*Letters*, II, 348).

The novel's politics are, then, something of a stew composed of several ingredients: domestic conflict between the Liberals represented by Gurnard–Chamberlain and the Conservatives represented by Churchill–Balfour, the debates around the South African War and the atrocities committed by the Belgians in the Congo (with de Mersch representing King Leopold II). Leopold and his country's criminal behaviour in the Congo had been a clear target in Conrad's two works of fiction set in Africa: 'An Outpost of Progress' and 'Heart of Darkness', so that there are passages in *The Inheritors* in which it is hard to be sure whether Ford is echoing and perhaps guying aspects of Conrad's African fiction, or whether he is aiming not at his collaborator but directly at Leopold and the Belgians. To take just one example: Granger discovers that de Mersch's plan is to get the British government to provide the backing for a railway across Greenland, and 'the British public was to be repaid in casks of train-oil and gold and with the consciousness of having aided in letting the light in upon a dark spot of the earth' (26.4–6). The wording appears to echo many passages in 'Heart of Darkness' that mock the philanthropic pretensions of the Belgian monarch, but whether Ford has Conrad as well as Leopold in his sights is impossible to say.

It is thus not unreasonable to see 'Heart of Darkness' as an important source for *The Inheritors*, as without Conrad's novella the collaborative work would certainly not exist in its published form. Indeed, the wildly unrealistic description of the people of Greenland as 'blacks' (122.22–23) might suggest a deliberate attempt on the part of the authors to link their fate to that of the native people in Conrad's African fictions. However, in *The Inheritors* the authors are able to situate readers in the position of those who are invaded by a stronger race, rather than allowing the oppression of the weak by the strong to be experienced purely from the perspective of one of the strong, albeit an atypical one. In the earlier work readers are invited to consider such a perspective only fleetingly, early on in the novella when Marlow draws the attention of his listeners to how the Roman conquest of Britain would have been experienced by the vanquished. In contrast, throughout *The Inheritors* readers experience the conquerors – the fourth dimensionists – as their own potential oppressors, and not as their own people.

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Painting and Writing

It is not only in metaphorical references to imperialist predation that light and dark perform an important rôle in *The Inheritors*. In his introduction to the 1999 edition of the novel, David Seed comments on the ‘special value of light and colour in the novel’,¹ linking this to Ford’s family heritage. Of his grandfather Ford Madox Brown, Ford remarked that ‘with his square white beard and his long white hair cut square, [he] exactly resembled the King of Hearts in a pack of cards’.² Describing the painter Jenkins early on in *The Inheritors*, Granger uses the same comparison, noting that he ‘had the ruddy face and the archaic silver hair of the King of Hearts’ (55.16–17). Seed suggests that the influence of Ford Madox Brown and his fellow Pre-Raphaelites runs through the whole novel, in use of impressionistic techniques that favour vagueness, haziness and indistinctness. Here again, however, it would be unwise to assume that these stylistic aspects of the novel stem exclusively from the influence of his family tradition on Ford. It has long been noted that Conrad’s ‘Heart of Darkness’ is packed with images of indistinctness and haziness: the word ‘indistinct’ occurs five times in this work – once in the work’s final paragraph – and ‘vague’ six times; and early on in his narrative the frame narrator delivers the much quoted comment that for Marlow, ‘the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that, sometimes, are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine’ (2010, p. 45). One characteristic aspect of the style of *The Inheritors* – its very heavy use of ellipsis points and unfinished sentences – is linked to this prioritization of suggestion over statement and vagueness over clarity, and attracted much comment from early reviewers.

David Seed also notes that ‘*The Inheritors* accumulates an extraordinarily varied series of scenes which examine every phase of writing from drafting and editorial negotiations to correcting galley proofs and publication’, such that writing ‘becomes not a solitary display of talent but an engagement with the different commercial pressures of the age. *The Inheritors* depicts a literary world where the man of letters is being displaced by the press and in that respect it reflects changes which had been accelerating in British society since the 1870s.’³

¹ Seed, p. xiii. ² Ford, 1934, p. 251. ³ Seed, pp. xix, xx.

Arthur Granger's move from respected but poverty-stricken writer of novels to well-paid hack writer of journalistic pieces funded by, and offering support to, specific political interests, is thus representative rather than idiosyncratic. Both Conrad and Ford were confronted with choices similar to those faced by Granger, choices that linked artistic integrity to poverty and hack work to a regular income.

Reception

FOLLOWING SIMULTANEOUS publication of *The Inheritors* in Britain and the United States – and no prior periodical publication – reviews of the novel started to appear in both countries in June 1901. Not all reviews suggested a first-hand acquaintance with the novel: in 'Books and Authors' the *Minneapolis Journal* mentions 'The Fourth Dimensionist, who narrates the story' while in 'Other New Books' the *St Louis Republic* reassures readers that 'The story is well told and has a happy and consistent ending.'¹ Most reviewers were better informed, however, and certain common themes quickly emerged in both Britain and the United States.

From the start, the novel's collaborative authorship attracted comment, often alongside attempts to identify which of the two writers was responsible for which parts or aspects of the novel. While Conrad and his earlier fictions were known to readers and reviewers, Ford was very much an unknown quantity, and accordingly it was generally Conrad's previous publications with which the novel was compared.

The fourth-dimensionist theme caught the attention of reviewers, often alongside surprise that this fantastic plot element appeared in a novel that also dealt so directly with issues of contemporary politics that it was easy to link characters to well-known leaders and politicians. Some reviewers went so far as to name these real-life models and to refer to the novel as a work of satire. The term 'science fiction' did not enter general use until the 1920s, but reviewers recognized straight away that *The Inheritors* was generically related to popular novels by such writers as H. G. Wells, Robert Louis Stevenson and Rudyard Kipling (the *Literary Era's* 'New Books' notes that the heroine, 'who is one of the "superseders"', is a twin sister to Kipling's

¹ *Minneapolis Journal*, 29 June 1901, p. 15; *St Louis Republic*, 29 June 1901, p. 6.

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“Vampire”).¹ A perceptive Australian reviewer placed the novel in a specific subgenre:

‘The Inheritors’ (Heinemann) belongs to a class of literature in which may be reckoned some very remarkable performances. [Bulwer-]Lytton, in his ‘Coming Race’, gave us a description of an imaginary world, placed in a mysterious subterranean region. The state of things in ‘Vrelya’ was supposed to represent the probable result of the working out of certain political and social theories. Mr. H. G. Wells has also from time to time horrified us by nightmare accounts of the beings who may some day supplant our unfortunate descendants.²

Many reviewers linked the fourth dimension and its inhabitants with the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, whose name and theory of the overman had, as already mentioned, been used in publicity material circulated by the American publisher. Another recurring focus of reviews involved style, and especially the authors’ use of ‘dots and dashes’ – ellipses and unfinished sentences.

Collaboratively authored works of fiction were rare enough in 1901 to make it impossible that the joint authorship of the novel should escape commentary from reviewers. The *Scotsman’s* reviewer noted that although Conrad had ‘changed the scene of interest and taken to himself a collaborator, “The Inheritors” has all the characteristic features of his work, and notably a certain curious obscurity’.³ In the United States, the reviewer for the *Boston Morning Journal* agreed, declaring with misplaced confidence: ‘Mr. Conrad’s name is accompanied on the title page by that of Mr. Ford M. Hueffer, but there is nothing to indicate any hand but Mr. Conrad’s in the actual writing.’⁴ However the reviewer for the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, having run through the novel’s characters, asked rhetorically ‘Which of the collaborators does this suggest?’, and answered his own question: ‘Scarcely Conrad, whom we should judge from his first book to be of Dutch origin.’⁵ One review hits the mark so squarely that it raises the suspicion that its author was possessed of some inside knowledge:

As to *The Inheritors*, perhaps we shall not be far wrong if we take it that the younger author contributes the central idea, the plot, and general situation, and first works out the various scenes in the rough, and that the elder man, bringing his

¹ *Literary Era* (September 1901), 530.

² *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 7 October 1901, p. 6. The review was reprinted in two other periodicals. ‘Vrelya’ should be ‘Vril-ya’.

³ *Scotsman*, 4 July 1901, p. 2 (*CR*, 1, 351).

⁴ ‘A Clever Novel’, *Boston Morning Journal*, 6 July 1901, p. 5 (*CR*, 1, 374).

⁵ ‘An English Political Puzzle’, *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 21 June 1901, p. 6 (*CR*, 1, 368).

experience of life and insight to bear, by a series of slight touches, recasting, and deletions, gives the whole book that style, intention, and atmosphere which the public has already seized in his former works as defining his judgment of life.¹

There was more agreement when it came to deciding whether the collaboration was a success. 'L. R. F. O.', writing in the *Speaker*, declared that 'collaboration is more than usually destructive of unity in *The Inheritors*'.² The American reviewer of the *Springfield Republican* concurred:

The peril which collaboration brings to a successful author has rarely been so forcibly shown as in 'The Inheritors', by Joseph Conrad and Ford M. Hueffer, which is published by McClure, Phillips & Co. Mr. Conrad has done some brilliant work, and 'The Nigger of the Narcissus' and 'Lord Jim' are among the best sea tales of recent years. But 'The Inheritors' is an absolute and dismal failure, a satirical novel which so misses the mark that the mark is not even visible to the reader.³

The *Athenæum*'s reviewer agreed that the novel was unlike Conrad's earlier works, but was nonetheless positively impressed.

What Mr. Hueffer's share in the production of 'The Inheritors' may have been is not a matter with which we are here concerned. Certainly there is little trace in this book, save in the astonishing subtlety and cleverness it betrays, of the Joseph Conrad of 'Lord Jim' and the Far East. Here there is no coral-island witchery, no musical crash of surf upon tropic sands. But we find instead an amazing intricacy, an exquisite keenness of style, and a large fantastic daring in scheme. 'The Inheritors' are the coming people, 'the dominant seventh' of the earth, or, as the superbly sketched heroine (an outstanding, forceful figure, unburdened even by a name), who is their very archetype, calls them, 'dwellers in the Fourth Dimension'.⁴

This reviewer is not alone in mentioning the novel's 'cleverness'; it is a quality regularly attributed to the novel on both sides of the Atlantic, in Britain often disparagingly. The reviewer for *The Times* complained that the novel 'leaves the bewildered student with the impression that it is a very clever book, and that he is a very stupid person for not seeing what it is all about'.⁵ The *Daily Chronicle* opens its review with the observation that 'this book strikes us as not being nearly as clever as its authors intended it to be', but somewhat grudgingly, after having outlined the political plot (using the names of the supposed real-life models), concedes: 'Incidentally, as it were, there

¹ 'A Correspondent', *Academy*, 20 July 1901, p. 43 (*CR*, 1, 357).

² *Speaker*, 13 July 1901, pp. 424–5 (*CR*, 1, 354).

³ *Springfield Republican*, 23 June 1901, p. 15 (*CR*, 1, 372).

⁴ *Athenæum*, 3 August 1901, pp. 151–2 (*CR*, 1, 360).

⁵ *The Times*, 3 September 1901, p. 9 (*CR*, 1, 364).

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is some cleverish work in the book.’¹ In a more positive review the *Daily News* noted that ‘The book is extremely clever’, while the *Graphic* warned that ‘it is cleverly written, but decidedly stiff to read’.² The *Glasgow Evening News* took a similar line in ‘A Dot and Dash Novel’: ‘It is undoubtedly a clever story, with numerous slashes and sly digs at journalism and journalists, but we prefer our Conrad neat, the Conrad of “The Nigger of the Narcissus” and “Youth”. If this collaboration has been entered into as a diversion, we hope that Mr. Conrad will quickly return to his first love – the sea.’³ The cleverness was acknowledged in American responses: the review in the *Boston Morning Journal* bears the heading ‘A Clever Novel’,⁴ and the *Omaha Daily Bee*, in ‘New Books and Magazines’, concluded that it was ‘a book that Americans will like for its cleverness and decided audacity’.⁵

Many reviewers recognized that in generic terms the novel was something of a hybrid, with the reviewer for the *Pall Mall Gazette* finding it ‘a very curious extravaganza which may be construed as a political satire, a tract for the times, or simply a romance of the supernatural’.⁶ Some reviewers used a comparative approach to present the fourth dimension to their readers, with the *Manchester Guardian* bringing in ‘the Martians of Mr. Wells’,⁷ and a range of others suggesting a source in Nietzsche’s overman. The *Chicago Daily Tribune* noted in ‘Original in Conception’ that “‘The Inheritors’ is a curious book, which the publishers describe somewhat wildly as “a Nietzschean romance”, and the authors, Joseph Conrad and Ford M. Hueffer, as “an extravagant story”, which is a much more just description.”⁸

While many reviewers were intrigued by the fourth-dimensionist thread in the plot, a common complaint was that it was inadequately integrated with the more realistic account of national and international political machinations. As the *Scotsman* put it: ‘The main idea of the story, that of a small class of persons who have come on earth from the fourth dimension, is a needless excrescence on a story which would have had a much stronger human interest if its authors had been con-

¹ *Daily Chronicle*, 11 July 1901, p. 3 (*CR*, 1, 353).

² *Daily News*, 24 July 1901, p. 8 (*CR*, 1, 358); *Graphic*, 10 August 1901, p. 192 (*CR*, 1, 362).

³ *Glasgow Evening News*, 15 August 1901, p. 2 (*CR*, 1, 362).

⁴ *Boston Morning Journal*, 6 July 1901, p. 5 (*CR*, 1, 373).

⁵ *The Omaha Daily Bee* (Nebraska), 26 June 1901, p. 7.

⁶ *Pall Mall Gazette*, 16 April 1900, p. 1 (*CR*, 1, 350).

⁷ *Manchester Guardian*, 10 July 1901, p. 4 (*CR*, 1, 352).

⁸ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 22 June 1901, p. 9 (*CR*, 1, 370–71). ‘An Extravagant Story’ is the novel’s subtitle.

tent to do without this kind of cheap transcendentalism.’¹ The *Spectator* agreed: ‘It is not enough to point to two or three characters in a book and say “These are beings from the Fourth Dimension, and have come to inherit the earth,” and then make these people attain their ends by the very earthly methods of cleverness and extreme unscrupulousness.’²

The novel was widely recognized as a political *roman-à-clef*: the reviewer for the *Academy* describes it as ‘an allegory, a satire *à clef* if you prefer’.³ The *Daily Chronicle* reviewer was not alone in referring to characters by the names of their putative real-life models. ‘The end of it all is she marries Mr. Chamberlain, and upsets the apple-carts of Mr. Cecil Rhodes and another statesman, who might be a combination of Lord Salisbury, Mr. Balfour, and one or two other distinguished politicians.’⁴ The reviewer for the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, in a piece entitled ‘An English Political Puzzle’, displays an impressive knowledge of the British political scene.

In a vague way the authors have probably had in their mind’s eye the annexation of the Transvaal, or at least of Rhodesia. The two leading politicians introduced, Churchill and Gurnard, seem vaguely to adumbrate Balfour and Chamberlain, while Fox, who starts a daily in support of the Churchill–Mersch scheme, suggests the Newnes–Pearson–Harmsworth type. Two caricatures of the kind may be found in Callan, the successful novelist, whose portrait would fit ‘Hall Caine’ as well as another, and Polehampton, the publisher, whose portrait does not fit Mr. Fisher Unwin, though we believe that Mr. Unwin published Conrad’s first book and possibly ‘lost a hundred pounds over it’.⁵

A perceptive review (‘Literary Notices’) in the *Sheffield Daily Independent* concludes as follows:

The philosophy of the book we take it is that the present race is being eaten up with altruism and ethics; it has grown too sorrowful and pitiful, and has sought solace too much in art and creeds. In its place will spring up a race – the Inheritors – clear sighted, practical, incredible, without ideals, prejudices, or remorse, with no feeling for art and no reverence for life, callous to pain, suffering, and death. ‘The Inheritors’ is a clever yet tantalising book, in which political portraiture takes a prominent place. The counterparts of Balfour, Chamberlain, Rhodes, and others are easy to identify.⁶

¹ *Scotsman*, 4 July 1901, p. 2 (*CR*, 1, 351).

² *Spectator*, 13 July 1901, p. 62 (*CR*, 1, 355).

³ *Academy*, 3 August 1901, p. 93 (*CR*, 1, 358).

⁴ *Daily Chronicle*, 11 July 1901, p. 3 (*CR*, 1, 353).

⁵ *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 21 June 1901, p. 6 (*CR*, 1, 368).

⁶ *Sheffield Daily Independent*, 16 August 1901, p. 2.

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Perhaps surprisingly, the recognition that the novel sees altruism as existing society's Achilles heel does not lead to comparisons with *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, even though this earlier work of Conrad's is mentioned by a number of reviewers.

One recurrent element in reviews of the novel prompted a response from Conrad himself. In a letter to Ford of 11 July 1901, Conrad writes:

Note the Scotsman's review. Obscurity!

Do you see what's the matter? It is the typographical trick of broken phrases: . . . that upsets the critic. Obviously. He says the characters have a *difficulty of expressing themselves*; and he says it *only* on that account.

We must be careful of that with our next. (*Letters*, 11, 340)

Conrad's comment seems to have been triggered by the reviewer's complaint that "The Inheritors" has all the characteristic features of his work, and notably a certain curious obscurity. His characters never seem quite to understand what they want to say or have a singular difficulty in expressing themselves.¹ The *Academy* was more blunt: 'We remember no book in which so many sentences collapse upon dots',² while the review in the *Glasgow Evening News* is entitled 'A Dot and Dash Novel'.³ For the *Book Buyer's* reviewer,

Ouida, and other ladies of the pen, have familiarized us with the use and the abuse of the asterisk, but a page of dialogue in *The Inheritors* resembles nothing so much as an unpatched sailcloth. It is literally full of holes. As a way of expressing broken, hesitant conversation, such a manner is open to a good deal of criticism. It is baffling to look at. The patches of black dots dance before the reader's eyes like an optical illusion or a chart for testing astigmatism.⁴

A hundred and fourteen years later Anne Toner saw the novel's abundance of marks of ellipsis in the light of Conrad's penchant for turning 'ellipses into atmospheric obscurities', noting that he 'favoured ellipsis points from the beginning of his literary career', and drawing attention to a remark made by the elderly relative Granger meets in his club, who claims to remember Granger and his 'sister' 'as tiny little dots'.⁵

¹ *Scotsman*, 4 July 1901, p. 2 (*CR*, 1, 351).

² *Academy*, 3 August 1901, p. 93 (*CR*, 1, 360).

³ *Glasgow Evening News*, 15 August 1901, p. 2 (*CR*, 1, 362).

⁴ *Book Buyer* (September 1901), 137 (*CR*, 1, 377).

⁵ Anne Toner, *Ellipsis in English Literature: Signs of Omission* (2015), pp. 156–7.

The exclusion of *The Inheritors* from the edition of Conrad's works that served as the standard source for much of the latter part of the twentieth century – the Dent Collected Edition – meant that the novel was often passed over by critics of his work. There are however important exceptions to this pattern of dismissing the novel, two of which stress its likely rôle in preparing the ground for Conrad's great political novels.

In his 1967 study *Conrad's Politics*, Avrom Fleishman notes that 'by writing an allegory, in *The Inheritors*, of the transition from the Liberal tradition of free trade and non-intervention to the Unionist policy of economic and military expansion (as in the Boer War), he was able to catch his adopted nation at a crisis and turning point in its colonial policy'.¹ For Fleishman, then, *The Inheritors* serves as testing ground for the more profound treatment of political themes in Conrad's later fiction. If the character Gurnard represents an early attack on the imperialist Joseph Chamberlain, as Fleishman notes, 'Chamberlain remained for Conrad the *bête noir* of modern politics and figured later as the probable model for the Parliamentary opponent of the great Personage in *The Secret Agent* – "that brute Cheeseman".'² From this perspective, the admittedly not wholly successful *The Inheritors* was a necessary stepping stone on the route to *The Secret Agent* and Conrad's other great political novels and shorter fictions from *Nostromo* to *Under Western Eyes*. In an article from 1974, John A. Meixner develops a similar case.

Ford is probably correct in saying that by 1898 Conrad was regarded as a continuer of the Stevenson tradition, and that Henley had convinced him (probably with Garnett's assent) that his only chance to make a living lay in writing about the sea. With *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* and 'Youth', the sea and the exotic East were certainly the subjects around which his reputation was already growing. Thus, *The Inheritors* had the important, fortunate consequence of pushing Conrad in a quite different, and deeply congenial, direction: the exploration of political and revolutionary subjects – which was to be carried forward in the writing of 'The Informer', *The Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes* – and *Nostromo* as well.³

For Ford, too, the novel's use of an alienated first-person narrator whose account charts his social and moral decline and fall (and defeat

¹ Avrom Fleishman, *Conrad's Politics: Community and Anarchy in the Fiction of Joseph Conrad* (1967), p. 125.

² Fleishman, *Conrad's Politics*, p. 135 n. 3.

³ John A. Meixner, 'Ford and Conrad', *Conradiana*, 6 (1974), 163. Meixner's '1889' has been corrected to '1898'.

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at the hands of a loved but ruthlessly self-seeking woman) must have provided the author with insights that helped him to produce what is perhaps his greatest work: *The Good Soldier*.

*THE NATURE OF A CRIME***Origins**

IN HIS 1931 memoir *Return to Yesterday: Reminiscences 1894–1914*, Ford writes as follows of *The Nature of a Crime*:

[W]hen it was republished, twenty years or so after it was written, neither Conrad nor I could remember anything about it and both at first denied that it existed. I had however, much earlier, written about half a long short-story having the same subject. The story was one my grandfather used to tell about one of his wealthy Greek art patrons who imagining himself to be ruined, wrote a letter to his mistress to the effect that he was going to commit suicide rather than be detected in a fraudulent bankruptcy and then found that bankruptcy could be avoided.¹

This account suggests (without quite stating it unambiguously) that the proposal to republish the story did not come from either of the authors. However, as is demonstrated in the textual essay by reference to letters exchanged between the authors, it was Ford who proposed the republication to Conrad, who did not deny that the story existed but who reported his belief that it was unfinished.² The earlier short story to which Ford refers is almost certainly ‘The Old Story’, included in the present edition as Appendix B. If *The Nature of a Crime* was written twenty years prior to its republication, that would fix a date of composition of 1904. However, as is argued in the brief introductory comments to ‘The Old Story’ in Appendix B, there is strong if not absolutely conclusive evidence suggesting that ‘The Old Story’ was written no earlier than 1905. It is impossible to determine why Ford abandoned ‘The Old Story’ and started afresh on *The Nature of a Crime*; it seems equally possible that he mislaid the unfinished story, or that for artistic reasons he felt the need to make a fresh start.

An additional piece of evidence involves the similarity of the opening of the published story to Ford’s poem ‘Views’, which is reprinted in the explanatory note for 168.3. This note summarizes the evidence concerning the poem’s date of composition, but the similarity

¹ Ford, 1931, p. 199.

² See pp. 232 and 163 in the present volume.

between the poem and the opening of the story suggests a common origin in an event, encounter or relationship in Ford's life, and Elsie Martindale's trip to the Continent in February 1906 offers a likely source. In 'The Old Story', the woman addressed in the prefatory section is in Bordighera, Italy, near the border with France and close to the French town of Menton, while in the poem and *The Nature of a Crime* she is 660 kilometres (410 miles) further south, in Rome. This change of location might suggest a desire to recast the plot in a way that engages directly with Elsie and her involvement in Ford's complicated domestic life. The South African back story provided to explain the narrator's responsibility for the estate he manages in 'The Old Story' disappears completely from *The Nature of a Crime*, and it is possible that the South African war loomed larger in the public mind when the earlier fragment was composed than when Ford recast the story.

Sources

UNLIKE ARTHUR Granger in *The Inheritors*, the anonymous narrator of the novella remains in England for the whole of the narrative present. But the story shares with the longer work a cosmopolitan vision, a sustained insistence that individual actions and emotions are not just framed but also in part engendered by the cultural and social contexts in which they unfold. As the letters written by the narrator are addressed to a (presumably British) woman in Rome, a focus on cultural difference runs throughout the work, even though the narrator travels no further from London than to the English south coast. The Englishness of both writers was qualified and tempered by experiences and upbringing that were distinctly foreign. This is most obvious in the Polish-born Conrad's case, but Ford too was well able to look at England and the English from the perspective of other countries – most notably Germany and France. The portrayal of Edward Burden, with his hypocritical sexual morality and his philistine disapproval of all that falls outside of Britain and its empire – as in his preference for Indian over Chinese tea – may reflect Ford taking some revenge for the treatment he felt he had suffered as a result of British small-mindedness.

Both writers were admirers of the fiction of Guy de Maupassant, and *The Nature of a Crime* bears witness to this admiration not only in terms of Maupassant's technique but also of his scornful portrayals of

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bourgeois hypocrisy. Conrad's letters confirm the powerful influence the French writer wielded not just over himself and his collaborator but also over his immediate circle of friends. Writing in French to his cousin by marriage, Marguerite Poradowska, in late October or early November 1895, Conrad confessed a fear that this influence might be excessive.¹ A later letter to Ford responded to the news that his wife Elsie was planning to translate Maupassant;² her *Stories from Maupassant* was published in 1903, and Conrad helped with proof correction. A year later, Ada Galsworthy, the companion of another friend of Conrad's, John Galsworthy, published her own translated tales: *Yvette and Other Stories*. Yves Hervouet has argued that Conrad's collaboration with Ford, far from weaning him from a linguistic reliance on French authors during the years 1898–1904, actually consolidated it. 'Not only did they often converse in French and read French books together ... they also used French in the process of composition and, more importantly, they made Flaubert and Maupassant their "chief masters in style".'³

One technique for which Maupassant was renowned was the use of an unreliable narrator. The unreliability of the narrator of *The Nature of a Crime* is not a matter of the accuracy of the factual details transmitted in his account, but rather of the moral (or immoral) attitudes that his letters so confidently display. Ford was to hone his use of an unreliable narrator to a point of perfection in *The Good Soldier*, and in comparison with the later and longer work the technique is used relatively crudely in *The Nature of a Crime*. But a first-person written narrative in which an unsympathetic narrator unwittingly reveals various unpleasant qualities and actions is very much in line of descent from Maupassant, as is the somewhat abrupt and unexpected plot resolution.

A number of earlier literary works may have served as models for the story, as various scandals had made the subject of financial dishonesty a favourite topic for fictional exploration. When the book editions were published, one reviewer suggested that Harley Granville-Barker's play *The Voyage of Inheritance*, first performed in 1905, might have served

¹ *Letters*, 1, 183, dated by the editors of the *Collected Letters* as either 19 October or 5 November. 'J'ai peur que je ne sois trop sous l'influence de Maupassant. J'ai étudié "Pierre et Jean" – pensée, méthode et tout – avec le plus profond désespoir'.

² *Letters*, 11, 435. The letter is tentatively dated 19 July 1902 by the editors.

³ Yves Hervouet, *The French Face of Joseph Conrad* (1990), p. 221.

as a source.¹ Edward Voysey is a man of stern principles who is faced with a moral choice when he learns that the family business that he is to inherit has been defrauding its clients for years to enable his father to speculate with their money. Shortly after he learns this, his father dies and he has to decide upon a course of action. One possibility, as in *The Nature of a Crime*, is to remain silent about the deception but to work to restore the money that has been stolen. Hilaire Belloc's novel *Emmanuel Burden* (1904) is, given the name of its main character, another possible source. The novel was inspired by the case of Jabez Balfour, who was tried for fraud and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment in 1905. Balfour's trial was given considerable coverage in newspaper reports, and Cedric Watts has convincingly argued that Conrad's dishonest speculator in *Chance*, de Barral, may well be based in part on him.²

The complexities of Ford's private life during the early years of the twentieth century constitute one inescapable biographical source for the story. The narrator's passionate if self-denying desire for a married woman, and Edward Burden's confession to the narrator shortly before his marriage that he has kept a mistress, mean that a concern with the tension between public norms of sexual morality on the one hand, and private passions and responsibilities on the other, is maintained throughout the story. It is perhaps revealing that the short passage preserved in Conrad's hand, and almost certainly composed by him, focuses not on this sort of tension, but on the nature of marriage, an institution that is described without obvious irony as 'august'. Conrad had married Jessie George in 1896, and by 1909 had two sons: Borys, born in 1898, and John, born in 1906.

Reception

AFTER FIRST publication, it took a decade and a half before the work generated serious attention from reviewers, its initial appearance in the *English Review* in 1909 having evoked little public response. In 1924 the situation was very different. Book publication of the

¹ 'Disinterested', 'A Conrad Story', *Catholic Press* (Sydney), 19 February 1925, p. 3.

² Cedric Watts, *Joseph Conrad: A Literary Life* (1989), p. 118. Richard Herndon suggests that the maiden name of William Morris's wife – Jane Burden – could have influenced the choice of name (Herndon, p. 267 n. 2).

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work in September that year took place less than two months after Conrad's death, on 3 August, when reactions to this event were still circulating. As one reviewer commented in 'Books of the Month': 'Conrad's death makes the fragment of exceptional interest.'¹ Ford's own memoir of Conrad was published the same year, probably in November,² and helped to maintain the burst of public interest initiated by the older novelist's death. Of the two writers, it was Conrad who, even prior to his death, enjoyed an international reputation, while Ford – who was undoubtedly responsible for the lion's share of the writing – had to suffer a succession of reviews that were far more interested in reading the work as Conrad's than in considering his own contribution to it. The heading above a review in the *Christian Science Monitor* – 'A Forgotten Story by Conrad'³ – strikes a representative note, while the *Birmingham Post's* 'Conrad and Collaborator'⁴ is perhaps even more demeaning in its omission of Ford's name. The *Aberdeen Press and Journal's* reviewer shared these attitudes in 'Conrad and Hueffer': 'This book, though not quite a success as a story, is interesting for two reasons: first, because every scrap of Conrad is precious to Conrad lovers; second, for the light it sheds on literary methods of collaboration.'⁵

'J. A.'s' review 'Conrad in a Jig-Saw Puzzle: Pangs and Pleasures of Collaborating', in the transatlantic edition of the *Daily Mail*, used the story as a platform from which to consider the nature of literary collaboration. 'How do two separate minds combine to produce one united whole? Which does the thinking and which the writing? Or do their functions overlap? Does one collaborator begin a sentence and the other finish it, or do they both think completely and simultaneously?'⁶

As was the case with *The Inheritors*, reviewers frequently attempted to distinguish the respective contributions of the two authors. For Hunter Stagg, in 'News of Books and Writers', the reason for the long years of neglect suffered by the story since its initial periodical publication was easy to explain: 'For me it would be, first, that there appears to be more of Ford than of Conrad in the little story; and, second, not

¹ *The Review of Reviews* (London), 15 November 1924, p. 348.

² Harvey, p. 62.

³ *Christian Science Monitor*, 22 November 1924, p. 8 (*CR*, IV, 410).

⁴ *Birmingham Post*, 7 October 1924, p. 6 (*CR*, IV, 396).

⁵ *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 20 October 1924, p. 3.

⁶ *Daily Mail Atlantic Edition*, 15 December 1924, p. 9.

much of the best of either.’¹ The *Spectator*’s reviewer noted that Mr Hueffer ‘has always been spontaneous and fluent’, and declared ‘that by all tokens this tale is his’.² Forrest Reid agreed: ‘The whole story, in its spiritual atmosphere (or perhaps I should say in its lack of spiritual atmosphere), strikes me as definitely unlike Conrad.’³ An American reviewer had recourse to sexual innuendo to defend the same conclusion.

There is an effeminateness of touch, a mincing glorying in detail that would make me think of the virility of Conrad only by virtue of the striking contrast to the rest of the work. It is difficult to fancy that the rugged Conrad could have written or have passed upon a sentence such as: ‘Your dress brushed the herbs; it was grey and tenuous: I suppose that you do not know how you look when you are unconscious of being looked at?’⁴

For ‘J. A.’, the work was ‘a study in self-revelation that would do credit to the most morbid and introspective of the Russian novelists’.⁵ He (or she) was not alone. In ‘Recent Books’, ‘R. B.’ found the book ‘a psychological study in the mixed Russo-French manner’,⁶ while ‘C. E. H. J.’ declared that ‘As a study of self-revelation it would not have come amiss from the most morbid of the introspectionists of Slavonia’.⁷ Whether these comments were aimed at Conrad’s national and ethnic origins is impossible to say. One reviewer was familiar enough with Conrad’s fiction to note shrewdly that the work ‘represents Conrad in a mood not unlike that which he expressed in “The Return”, and it shows Ford in a state of comparative rationalism’.⁸

Many reviewers found the authors’ prefaces to the story worth positive comment. Conrad’s remark in his preface that ‘what impresses me most is the amount this fragment contains of the crudely materialistic atmosphere of the time of its origin’ (193.11–12) was quoted by many reviewers, and misattributed by one – Allan Nevins – to

¹ *Richmond Times Dispatch* (Virginia), 11 January 1925, part v, p. 13.

² *Spectator*, 4 October 1924, pp. 472, 474 (*CR*, IV, 395–6).

³ Forrest Reid, ‘A Conrad Story’, *Nation & The Athenaeum*, 11 October 1924, pp. 58, 60 (*CR*, IV, 397).

⁴ F. Vinci Roman, ‘Early Conrad’, *World*, 12 October 1924, p. 8 (*CR*, IV, 407–8). ‘Mincing’ was a word regularly used to imply effeminacy or homosexuality.

⁵ ‘Conrad in a Jig-Saw Puzzle: Pangs and Pleasures of Collaborating’, *Daily Mail Atlantic Edition*, 15 December 1924, p. 9.

⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, 25 January 1925, part III, p. 22.

⁷ ‘Book Reviews’, *Singapore Free Press*, 17 November 1924, p. 5.

⁸ Ben Macomber, ‘Conrad and Ford an Interesting Mixture’, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 12 October 1924, section D, p. 4D.

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Ford. Along with a number of reviewers, Nevins also commented on Ford's appendix: 'But those who like to rummage among the shavings from a great author's work will find profit in the appendix, wherein Mr. Hueffer explains just how he and Conrad collaborated on "Romance", and quotes passages in which Conrad's work is set in italics. The italicized portions reveal the astonishing fact that all the really brilliant writing is from Conrad's pen.'¹ Alas, the American book edition had initially reversed the attributions reported by Ford, so that an erratum slip had to be inserted in later bindings of the work to confirm that the passages in italics were assigned by Ford not to Conrad but to himself.

Following the critical responses that accompanied the novella's book publication in 1924, the work has generally been accorded at most a brief comment by critics more interested in the process of collaborative composition than in the specifics of this particular product of the authors' joint endeavour. In common with *The Inheritors*, *The Nature of a Crime* was omitted from the Dent Collected Edition of his works and was accordingly out of print for many years. However, as Ford's reputation has risen in recent years, critics of his work have paid more attention to the novella and to the links between it and his better-known compositions. Eric Meyer's 1990 article "'The Nature of a Text': Ford and Conrad in Plato's Pharmacy" subjects the work to deconstructive analysis.

The Nature of a Crime is a novel about *writing*, is a text about the nature of textuality; and its deepest secret is its insight into the act of inscription as one of violence tenuously deferred, of rupture precariously postponed, and of death only narrowly averted – all of which are simultaneously set against a subtext of unrequited love yet unrealized, of jointure placed in an impossibly distant future, and of rebirth promised but never fully delivered. The nature of the text, then, is ambivalent and finally undecidable, defying our attempts to finalize its plot, refusing the closure of a definite ending, and eluding all efforts to fix its meaning.²

Paul Skinner's long article "'I Can Hear Our Voices": Revisiting *The Nature of a Crime*' provides a detailed account of the work's genesis, starting with Ford's 'The Old Story', and then following Ford's and Conrad's collaboration, its culmination in publication in the *English Review*, and republication in the *Transatlantic Review*. Skinner notes

¹ [Allan Nevins], *Sun* (New York), 27 September 1924, p. 6 (*CR*, IV, 406–7).

² Eric Meyer, "'The Nature of a Text': Ford and Conrad in Plato's Pharmacy", *Modern Fiction Studies*, 36, no. 4 (Winter 1990), 499–512.

that a number of critics have linked the use of the first-person narrator in the novella with Ford's use of a comparable narrative technique in *The Good Soldier*. For Skinner, however, 'The most striking "family" resemblance' between the two works of fiction is 'the ways in which the written – the letter within the novel, the novel itself – is punctuated by the endlessly recurring insistence that we are listening to a voice talking'.¹

¹ Paul Skinner, '“I can hear our voices”: Revisiting *The Nature of the Crime*', Conrad First: The Joseph Conrad Periodical Archive (www.conradfirst.net/conrad/scholarship/authors/skinner.html).