

Notes

(*Heart of Darkness* and *The Shadow-Line* contain many terms relating to ships and seafaring. These are listed in the **Glossary of Nautical Terms** that follows these notes.)

HEART OF DARKNESS

1. The “somewhere” is in Conrad’s short story “Youth”, published in September 1898. The story opens with a situation very similar to that at the opening of *Heart of Darkness*, and the narrator observes of Marlow and his companions that “Between the five of us there was the strong bond of the sea”.
2. Sir Francis Drake (?1540–96) was the first Englishman to sail around the world in his ship the *Golden Hind* (1577–80); Sir John Franklin (1786–1847) led an expedition consisting of two ships, the *Erebus* and the *Terror*, in search of a North-West Passage linking the Atlantic and the Pacific, but he and all his men perished in the Arctic.
3. A celebrated wine made in South Italy and praised by the Roman poets Horace and Virgil.
4. Although the name is never actually used, the “river” is clearly the Congo. The Société Anonyme Belge pour le Commerce du Haut-Congo had its headquarters in Brussels – also unnamed, but the prototype of the “city” referred to a little later.
5. The Danish captain of the *Florida*, Johannes Freiesleben, had been killed in circumstances very close to those described by Conrad. (As often with Conrad, the fictional name is close to the real one.)
6. “Whited sepulchre” is a phrase of Biblical origin (see Matthew 23:27) denoting the hypocritical pretence of purity.
7. An ironical adaptation of another New Testament phrase, “swept and garnished” (Matthew 12:44 and Luke 11:25).
8. Used on old maps to denote Britain and its possessions worldwide. The other colours mentioned represented, respectively, France, Portugal, Italy, Germany and Belgium.
9. The Latin greeting “Ave Caesar, morituri te salutant” (“Hail Caesar, those who are about to die salute you”) was traditionally used in Ancient Rome by gladiators about to fight.
10. Specialist in mental illnesses.
11. Yet another expression deriving from the Gospels (Luke 10:7).
12. To make bricks without straw is an ancient expression, originating in the Old Testament (Exodus 5), meaning to try to perform a task without the essential materials.

13. Foolish or incompetent people.
14. A devil, especially the one in the Faust legend to whom Faust sold his soul.
15. Colloquial shortening of "confabulation", a facetiously pedantic term for a conversation or gossip.
16. It has been suggested that, deliberately or otherwise, Conrad is here confusing the name of J. T. Towson, who published volumes of navigation tables (1848–9), with a book by another author, Nicholas Tinmouth, who in 1845 published his *Inquiry Relative to Various Important Points of Seamanship*.
17. Presumably elastic-sided boots.
18. A Winchester rifle is defined as "a breech-loading slide-action repeating rifle with a magazine attached under the barrel".
19. A breech-action rifle named after its designers.
20. Slang expression signifying nervousness or panic.
21. Coarse linen fabric used mainly for furnishings.
22. Jupiter (Jove), the most important of the Roman gods, is associated with lightning and thunderbolts.
23. Double-breasted overcoat worn by men.
24. Another Biblical allusion here used ironically: at the time of Christ's death, "the veil of the temple was rent" (Matthew 27:51 and elsewhere).

THE SECRET AGENT

1. Ford Madox Ford (1873–1939), close friend and collaborator of Conrad's and an important novelist, autobiographer and literary editor in his own right.
2. Sir Robert Anderson's *Sidelights on the Home Rule Movement* (1907).
3. *The Torch* is probably a private joke, since (as Norman Sherry has pointed out in his *Conrad's Western World*, p. 211) there actually was an English anarchist publication with this title, published by the children of W. M. Rossetti, who were cousins of Conrad's friend F. M. Ford (see note 1 above). *The Gong* perhaps hints at another anarchist publication, the *Alarm Bell*.
4. Four-wheeled closed carriages, the driver sitting in front.
5. Four-wheeled carriage with a folding hood.
6. Two-wheeled cabs carrying one or two passengers; the driver sat above and behind.
7. A kind of tailcoat.
8. Literally "Look for the woman" (French): common expression signifying that the explanation of something that seems puzzling usually involves a woman.
9. Vladimir quotes the opening words of the phrase "Vox et praeterea nihil" (Latin: literally "A voice and nothing besides"), an ancient expression of unknown origin that originally referred to the nightingale.

10. In Greek mythology, the Hyperboreans were a mythical race believed to dwell beyond the north wind (Boreas); hence the word comes to mean "of the far north". Verloc's usage may be a malapropism for "hypocritical" or some other word, or may be a reference to Vladimir's origins in a remote northern land.
11. Jargon or gibberish (French).
12. Hat with a flap behind.
13. On parole, i.e., a prisoner who has been released before the end of his sentence and is subject to certain restrictions on his liberty.
14. German name for Mariánské Lázně, a Bohemian spa town which Conrad visited in 1883.
15. Cesare Lombroso (1836–1909), Italian criminologist, whose *L'uomo delinquente* (1875) expounded his influential theory that criminal tendencies are manifested by physical characteristics.
16. Colloquially abbreviated form of "detective".
17. Here, a place of corrupting ease; the North Italian city is said to have weakened the morale of Hannibal's troops when they were garrisoned there in 216 BC.
18. Roman emperor who ruled AD 37–41 and was notorious for his cruelty.
19. Well-known English version of an epigram that appears in a letter of 13 August 1728 by a French writer, Mlle Aïsse, and was first published in 1728.
20. Ankylosis, medical term for stiffening of the joints.
21. A mixture of methane and other gases that forms in coal-mines and explodes on contact with air.
22. A prison sentence of seven years with hard labour.
23. The twelve members of a jury.
24. A puzzling word in this contest, and presumably an instance of Conrad's not infrequent Gallicisms: "balle" in French means both "bullet" and "ball", and the latter English word seems intended here.
25. Alfred Wallace (1823–1913), the naturalist whose work followed very similar lines to Darwin's, published *The Malay Archipelago* (1894); Conrad knew the book well and drew on it freely as a source.
26. Here, a facetious expression for a remote and uncivilized region; the name originates in Thackeray's fairy-tale *The Rose and the Ring* (1855).
27. An old name for the Houses of Parliament.
28. Silenus, in Roman mythology, is a satyr associated with drunkenness: he appears in Virgil's *Eclogues* VI. (The name is also used earlier in the novel for the Soho restaurant frequented by the Professor.)
29. Perhaps a reference to the "pale horse" ridden by Death in Revelation 6:8.
30. Piece of hand-luggage with two compartments.
31. The wife of Odysseus, who remained faithful to him during his long absence at the Trojan War and during his subsequent wanderings.
32. Literally, "road of pain or sorrow" (Latin): the road travelled by Christ on the way to the Crucifixion, marked by fourteen "stations".

33. A translation of a line from the Roman poet Horace (Odes, III,i,40). The meaning is that affluence (signified by the possession of a horse) brings anxieties.
34. The Greek philosopher taught his pupils by talking to them as they strolled together; hence the school of philosophy founded by them was known as the Peripatetics.
35. An Old Testament reference (Daniel 5) to the warning that appeared at Belshazzar's feast.
36. The phrase is slightly adapted from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, I, ii, 180 ("funeral baked meats"). Since the play concerns a wife who to some extent has colluded in the murder of her husband, the reference may be dramatically significant.
37. Another Biblical allusion, this time adapted from Isaiah 22:13 ("Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die").
38. An adaptation of the saying attributed to the Greek scientist Archimedes: "Give me somewhere to stand, and I will move the earth."
39. Board bearing advertisements and carried through the streets by a man who had it suspended by straps ("the leather yoke") from his shoulders and carried a similar board behind.

THE SHADOW-LINE

1. Borys Conrad, born in 1898 and christened Alfred Borys Konrad Korzeniowski, was the elder of Conrad's two sons. He is the author of *My Father: Joseph Conrad*, published in 1970.
2. Conrad is, as often, mistaken about the chronology of his own life, since there is clear evidence that work on the story was begun early in 1915 and was completed before the end of that year.
3. The lines come from Baudelaire's sonnet "La Musique", included in his collection *Les Fleurs du mal*. The meaning is, roughly, "At other times, dead calm the great mirror of my despair".
4. The flag of the British merchant marine.
5. Literally "Lord" (Arabic), and used as an honorific title among Muslims.
6. I.e., the Malay Archipelago.
7. Malay seaman.
8. The Solo (modern Surakarta) river in Java runs into the Solo Sea.
9. In the Philippines.
10. Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, celebrated in 1887 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of her accession.
11. Native servant.
12. An echo of *Hamlet*, I, ii, 133.
13. Like "pen-pusher", a disparaging term for a clerk ("quill" being an old-fashioned pen).

14. Roman god of the sea.
15. Passed the sandbank or "bar" (barrier) of sand at the entrance to a harbour. The phrase became familiar to non-sailors through Tennyson's famous poem, "Crossing the bar".
16. Detached.
17. Belongings or baggage.
18. In what is now Vietnam.
19. The modern Con Son, a group of islands east of Cape Cambodia.
20. Legal document or contract.
21. Related to cholera.
22. Horse-drawn carriage (the word is of Hindi origin).
23. Another echo of *Hamlet*, this time to the famous soliloquy ("To be or not to be") in III, i. "Coil" here has the meaning of worldly anxieties or occupations.
24. Near Bangkok.
25. A river in what is now Thailand.
26. Flap.

Glossary of Nautical Terms

- aft:** towards the rear of the ship.
- all aback:** with the sails pressed close to the mast by the wind.
- anchor-watch:** seamen on duty while the ship is at anchor.
- a-starboard:** *see* starboard.
- astern:** towards the rear of the ship.
- awning:** canvas roof to provide shade or shelter over part of deck.
- awning-deck:** the part of the deck sheltered by the awning (*see above*).
- baulk:** a wooden beam.
- belaying-pin:** pin to which ropes could be fastened ("belayed").
- binnacle:** box containing the ship's compass.
- bluejackets:** members of the Navy (as distinct from merchant seamen).
- bows:** the front part of the ship.
- braces:** ropes attached to a yard enabling the position of a sail to be changed.
- bulkheads:** partitions.
- cock-billed:** (of an anchor) pointing downwards, hence ready to be lowered.
- companion-way:** staircase leading to cabin.
- coxswain:** helmsman, i.e. one responsible for steering the ship.
- cuddy:** small cabin.
- fairway:** navigable portion of a river or harbour.
- fireman:** stoker.
- fore-end:** towards the front of the ship.
- halliards (halyards):** ropes for raising or lowering a spar.
- hatchway:** opening in deck to provide access to lower part of vessel.
- helm:** steering-wheel of a ship.
- helmsman:** man responsible for steering.
- leech-line:** rope used for tying up a folded sail ("leech" meaning the edge of a sail).
- lubber:** awkward or inexperienced sailor.
- mizzen-mast:** mast at or near the rear of the ship.
- offing:** part of the sea visible from the shore.
- pilot-house:** enclosed structure on the bridge of a ship containing apparatus for navigation.
- poleman:** member of crew responsible for taking soundings (*see also* "sounding" and "sounding-pole").
- quarter-deck:** part of the deck often reserved for officers.
- reach:** open stretch of water on a river.
- ringbolt:** bolt with a ring at one end.
- roadstead:** area near the shore where ships may safely anchor.
- scow:** flat-bottomed boat.
- scuppers:** openings in a ship's side through which water can escape.
- sheered:** swerved.
- snag:** navigational hazard, especially a tree or part of a tree lying in the water.

sounding: measuring the depth of the water by the use of a line or pole.

sounding-pole: *see previous entry.*

sprits: spars attached to the mast and enabling a sail to be manoeuvred.

stanchions: vertical poles used as supports.

stern-sheets: the part of an open boat nearest the stern (back).

taffrail: rail at the stern (rear) part of a vessel.

trireme: in the ancient world, a galley with three banks of oars on each side.

trucks: circular blocks fixed to mast-heads.

windlass: machine or device for raising or lowering the anchor, the chain being wound around a revolving drum.

yards: wooden spars attached to the mast, from which the sails hung.

yawl: sailing vessel with one large and one small mast.

A Conrad Chronology

- 1857** Józef, Teodor Korzeniowski (later Joseph Conrad) born on 3 December at Berdyczow (Berdichev) in the Ukraine, only child of Apollo and Ewa Korzeniowski.
- 1859** The family move to Zhotomir, where Apollo works in a publishing house.
- 1861** They move to Warsaw, where Apollo edits a literary magazine and engages in political activities. In October he is arrested and imprisoned for seven months.
- 1862** In May, Apollo and Ewa are deported. They travel with their child to Vologda, some 300 miles north of Moscow; on the journey Józef develops pneumonia, and in Vologda Ewa falls seriously ill with tuberculosis.
- 1863** The family are allowed to move south to Chernikhov, near Kiev.
- 1865** Death of Conrad's mother on 18 April. From this point the child spends much time with his uncle Tadeusz and his maternal grandmother.
- 1868** Conrad and his father move to Lvov in Poland, then in 1869 to Cracow. Conrad's father dies on 23 May. The boy is cared for by his grandmother during the next few years, and goes to school in Cracow and Lvov.
- 1873** He spends several months in Switzerland on account of chest trouble.
- 1874** He travels from Cracow to Marseilles, and goes as a passenger to Martinique in the West Indies. Back in Marseilles by June of the following year, he sets off for Martinique again, this time as an apprentice on the same ship. He makes a third visit in 1876.
- 1878** Having lost a good deal of his inheritance (possibly through gambling), he attempts suicide. In April he sets sail on a British steamer for Malta and Constantinople; later he sails to Lowestoft and sets foot in England for the first time. He makes three trips between Lowestoft and Newcastle, and is very lonely in London. In October he joins a British ship bound for Australia, returning to London twelve months later.
- 1880** He qualifies as a second mate in the British merchant navy, and goes again to Australia.
- 1881** In September, he joins the *Palestine*, bound for Bangkok, but bad weather and damage to the ship lead to long delays. The voyage does not begin until September 1882, and in March 1883 the ship is abandoned between Java and Sumatra after its cargo of coal has caught fire.
- 1883** Conrad spends some time in Singapore, then returns to London. He visits his uncle in Marienbad. On returning to England he joins a ship bound for the Far East and Australia, but after a quarrel with the captain he leaves the ship in Madras in April 1884. He sails from Bombay to London and spends the winter there, qualifying as first mate.

- 1885 He sails to Singapore and Calcutta.
- 1886 Back in England, he becomes a British citizen and obtains his master's certificate.
- 1887 He sets sail for Java and, after a back injury, spends some time in hospital in Singapore.
- 1888 He goes to Bangkok to assume command of the *Otago* (the experience is later used in *The Shadow-Line*), and takes the ship to Singapore, Sydney, Melbourne and Mauritius. He remains with the *Otago* until March 1889, then returns to England as a passenger.
- 1889 In London, in September, he begins his first novel, *Almayer's Folly*. In November he visits Brussels in search of a post in command of a Congo steamboat. (The interview and the ensuing voyage provide the basis for *Heart of Darkness*.)
- 1890 He visits his uncle in the Ukraine, then in May sets sail from Bordeaux for the Congo.
- 1891 In January, suffering from malaria, he arrives in Brussels, then spends some time in hospital in London. In May he spends a few weeks at a spa near Geneva. Later in the year he accepts the position of chief officer on a ship bound for Australia, and makes a second voyage on the same ship in the following year.
- 1893 Back in London by July, he revisits his uncle in the Ukraine. For a time he is unemployed and continues work on his novel. In November he sails to Rouen and stays there for a month, continuing to write.
- 1894 *Almayer's Folly* is finished in April and accepted for publication in October. He begins his second novel, *An Outcast of the Islands*.
- 1895 *Almayer's Folly* is published in April but achieves little success. Work on the second novel continues.
- 1896 *An Outcast of the Islands* is published in March. Conrad marries Jessie George in the same month, and they spend about six months in Brittany. In September they return to England and live in Stanford-le-Hope, Essex. Conrad is now working on *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*, which is published late in 1897.
- 1898 Conrad's son Borys is born. The Conrads move to Kent. Conrad begins *Lord Jim* (published 1900) and *Heart of Darkness* (published 1899). He makes an unsuccessful attempt to return to sea.
- 1903 He publishes *Romance* and begins *Nostramo* (published 1904).
- 1906 He publishes *The Mirror of the Sea* and begins *The Secret Agent* (published 1907). Birth of Conrad's second son.
- 1907 He begins *Under Western Eyes* (published 1911).
- 1908 He begins *A Personal Record* (published 1912).
- 1912 He finishes *Chance*, work on which has occupied him for a number of years: on its publication in 1914, it becomes a best-seller. He begins *Victory* (published 1915).
- 1914 When war breaks out, the Conrads are travelling in Poland and have a difficult journey home.
- 1915 Conrad writes *The Shadow-Line* (published 1917).
- 1919 He publishes *The Arrow of Gold*.
- 1920 He publishes *The Rescue*.
- 1921 He publishes *Notes on Life and Letters*.

- 1922** His dramatisation of *The Secret Agent*, completed in 1920, runs for ten performances at the Ambassador's Theatre, London.
- 1923** He visits New York and publishes *The Rover*.
- 1924** In May he declines a knighthood. He dies of a heart attack on 3 August and is buried in Canterbury. *Suspense* (1925), *The Congo Diary* (1925) and *Last Essays* (1926) are posthumously published.