



# Intimations of Joseph Conrad

---

A Century of Sightings and Citings of  
Conrad's Presences in Print, Crafts,  
Media and Monuments

---

G.W. Stephen Brodsky

palgrave  
macmillan

# Intimations of Joseph Conrad

G. W. Stephen Brodsky

# Intimations of Joseph Conrad

A Century of Sightings and Citings of Conrad's  
Presences in Print, Crafts, Media and Monuments

palgrave  
macmillan

G. W. Stephen Brodsky  
Sidney, BC, Canada

ISBN 978-3-031-67917-9      ISBN 978-3-031-67918-6 (eBook)  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-67918-6>

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2024

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use. The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG.

The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

If disposing of this product, please recycle the paper.

*Books are divisible into two classes, books of the hour and books for all time.*

—John Ruskin

*Books are made from Books.*

—Voltaire

*In all the devious tracings the course of a sailing-ship leaves upon the white paper of a chart she is always aiming for that one little spot... But if you have sighted it on the expected bearing, then the Landfall is good.*

—Joseph Conrad, *The Mirror of the Sea*

*Professor Emeritus Jacques Berthoud (1935–2011), Conradian ne plus  
ultra, a generous soul whose mentoring wisdom, good humor and  
forbearance weathered his charge's improbabilities and absence in alien  
climes where ignorant armies clashed by night*

## EDITOR'S PREFACE

Shortly after Joseph Conrad's first novel, *Almayer's Folly*, was accepted for publication in October 1894, he met his publisher T. Fisher Unwin and his manuscript's two readers in Unwin's office. One of those readers, Edward Garnett, would later recall how Unwin casually referred to Conrad's "next book," and the new author silenced his audience by remarking, "I don't expect to write again. It is likely that I shall soon be going to sea" (Garnett, *Letters* 3–4). Perhaps Conrad was merely setting low expectations for his publisher. After all, he had done so for himself in a letter that he had written to his cousin by marriage Marguerite Poradowska earlier that year while waiting for word regarding the manuscript's review. "To be completely frank," he confessed, "I don't feel any interest in the fate of *Almayer's Folly*. It is finished. Besides, it could in any case be only an inconsequential episode in my life" (CL 1:161). How could he have foreseen that some thirty years after this "inconsequential episode," his portrait would appear on the cover of *Time* magazine, and he would be hailed on both sides of the Atlantic as one of the great living writers in the English language?

Over the ensuing century, the qualities of Conrad's fiction appealed with growing strength not only to his readership (who, admittedly, were slow to recognize what some early critics saw as Conrad's "genius" [Sherry 5–8]), but also to future authors. In some cases that influence is obvious—particularly regarding the story, topicality, and title phrase of *Heart of Darkness*. In other cases, although Conrad's influence is subtler, his presence made itself felt just as meaningfully (if sometimes unexpectedly) in

many parts of the literary world, from his death in 1924 up until today. It is that dimension of Conrad's accomplishments that the book before you reveals.

The "today" part of this assertion is what has made G. W. Stephen Brodsky's Conrad scholarship so valuable for *Joseph Conrad Today*, the publication of the Joseph Conrad Society of America. Early in my editorship of *JCT*, issues began including a regular feature called "Conrad Sightings." Contributors were invited to write short pieces noting Conrad's presence anywhere—in movies, advertisements, theatrical performances, books, art of various kinds, and so forth. The idea was to demonstrate Conrad's continuing relevance through his appearances across a wide range of cultural productions.

Over the years, Stephen Brodsky has penned the lion's share of these Sightings, many of which have been substantially revised and compiled in this volume for the first time. Yet, the significance of his work in this area far exceeds mere quantity. As readers will discover, he dramatically expanded the original idea of the column by offering a steady stream of thoughtful and detailed examinations of just how important Conrad turned out to be for what seems like countless later authors (and his ties to a few earlier ones and contemporaries). To accomplish this feat, Brodsky brought to his study an unmatched combination of an impressively wide reading and a cosmopolitan sensibility, an acute attention to the smallest details, and a creative approach to discerning Conrad in some of the most unlikely places. He thus laid bare a wealth of Conrad Sightings—of influences, presences, and intimations—in writers, filmmakers, and their works across an extraordinary breadth of time and space. Furthermore, as readers of this volume will learn, the connections unveiled within are not just matters of coincidence or accident; rather, they reflect evocatively on Conrad's powers as a keen, articulate observer of human nature and behavior.

Brodsky enhances his study by describing such varied links as those between Conrad and a pub, hotel, training ship, sculptures, and memorials; a school of cabinetry; and a shipwright and his replica. Rounding out the book is a collection of illustrations confirming its view of Conrad set in the physical world. The result of all these inspired explorations presents a fresh composite portrait of Conrad in word, image, object, and place. Ultimately, in addition to the many satisfying surprises and illuminations

that readers will find in *Intimations of Joseph Conrad*, Stephen Brodsky delivers new ways of understanding not only the many authors and others who appear below, but also their predecessors who, with characteristic modesty, expected never to write again.

Annapolis, MD, USA

Mark D. Larabee

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing a book is a challenge at any age. Understandably at age ninety I have taken up the gauntlet thrown down by my own hand and no other's ambivalently and with not a little trepidation. This is a joust against intractable Time, a tug of war against the perverse inertia of words and the malignity of error. The daunting task has required encouragement in quantity more than equal to doubt, achieving my fixity of purpose to take and keep the strain. That has been granted to me without stint by the invited editor of this book, Captain Mark D. Larabee, USN retired, former Associate Professor, US Naval Academy. He has exemplified the sentiment expressed by Novalis, the *nom de plume* of polymath litterateur Baron Friedrich von Hardenberg (1772–1801): "It is certain that my conviction gains infinitely when another believes in it." Conrad chose it as *Lord Jim's* epigraph. So, this recognition of my writerly ally is a sighting of sorts—part and parcel of the theme of this book.

Conrad presumably meant that apothegm to describe Charlie Marlow's lone ambivalent sympathy to speed Jim on his way out of sight of "the world," on his anabasis from disgrace through solitary travails to sacrificial victory in obscurity. A modicum of encouragement, if not acclaim, is not amiss if the writer is to stay the course—although the paradox is, that every writer descends alone into the obscurity of self. (Acclaim was a felicity Conrad would not achieve in any measure for a decade after *Lord Jim*.) Conrad's early mentor Edward Garnett must have sustained Conrad in writing the novel; as if an avatar of Garnett, Mark Larabee has offered constant encouragement even before my decision to write this book. Throughout, not only has his sage and meticulous corrective counsel been

invaluable, his words of encouragement have firmed my resolve to see it through.

My thanks are the rightful due also to Professor Agnieszka Adamowicz-Pospiech, University of Silesia, Katowice, Vice President of the Joseph Conrad Society of Poland, for her useful information anent the Conrad monument at Gdynia, Ms Elizabeth (née Canney) Cox, Diana Rayne Issokson of the staff of the University of Kent, and Christopher Ardern Walsh for their indispensable help in providing information, both photographic and verbal, on the triptych at Bishopbourne's Conrad Hall, and Mr Colin Elliott, the hall's caretaker, for his historical information.

The last shall be first, and the first last. As always in these jousts with words and with life, Kathleen—Kit, my far better other self, seventy years a bride—has borne the weighty fardels of a soldier then a scholar by turns, not merely forbearingly, but with a will. In a couple of notes in the chapters to follow, I confess that it was she, not I, who sighted Conrad in novels I had yet even to read. It was she who nearly half a century ago in word-processing's early days selflessly struggled to learn to boot up and save on floppy discs, she who sought out footnotes, she who produced the typescript of an obese two-volume dissertation while making a home for her family, she who endured loneliness, discomfort, displacement and dis-possession because of my restless pen, yet always indulged her writerly spouse's peculiarities and silences, she who has been privately the first copy editor and proofreader of every word I have written—to her yet again I offer my undying love and gratitude.

G. W. Stephen Brodsky

# CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Imperialist Colonialism and the Received Canon</b>	<b>13</b>
	<i>Conrad's Ghost—An Unrestful Tale of Conrad and Roger Casement</i>	13
	<i>The Mission Song—A Post-Postcolonial Sighting</i>	16
	<i>Conrad and “Nationalism” in the Centenary Year of The Arrow of Gold</i>	19
	<i>A Modern Heart of Darkness—Sven Lindqvist, Exterminate All the Brutes</i>	23
	<i>Sightings and Citings in The Voice of England</i>	26
	<i>The Canon Withers, Whither Baugh?: Conrad in A Literary History of England</i>	27
<b>3</b>	<b>Contemporaries and Others: Sightings by and of Conrad</b>	<b>33</b>
	<i>Through a Glass Darkly: Conrad's Sighting of Matthew Arnold (1822–88)</i>	34
	<i>The Other Joseph Conrad</i>	39
	<i>Joseph Conrad, Tadeusz Bobrowski, and Molière's George Dandin</i>	44
	<i>Conrad, Ford, and Narcissus: A Postfactual Sighting Through the Looking-Glass</i>	48
	<i>Conrad and Violet Hunt</i>	52
	<i>Conrad, Wilson, Everest, and Victory in Defeat—A Sighting</i>	53

	<i>A Sighting of Conrad in Fitzgerald's The Last Tycoon</i>	55
	<i>Conrad's Age of Sail: Derek Lundy's The Way of a Ship</i>	56
<b>4</b>	<b>Conrad and War, and Its Aftermath</b>	<b>69</b>
	<i>Conrad Sightings in Two Wars</i>	70
	<i>Sightings in a Fog: Conrad's "The Tale," Ian McEwan's Atonement, and Martha Grimes's The Knowledge</i>	72
	<i>Reception as Lethal Inspiration: Conrad's Romance and Hankey's "Romance"</i>	77
	<i>Sighting: Joseph Conrad Stalks Nazi Paris</i>	80
	<i>Postwar Economic NeoImperialism in Le Carré's The Constant Gardener</i>	82
	<i>Conrad and the Post-Apocalyptic Novel: Paul Scott's The Chinese Love Pavilion</i>	84
<b>5</b>	<b>Conrad's Influence in Postmodern Literature and Abroad, and in the Performing Arts</b>	<b>89</b>
	<i>Comforting Myths and Conrad's Discomfort</i>	90
	<i>Conrad Seen and Not Seen Inaugurally in Plain Sight in Embers</i>	91
	<i>Seeing Freddie Double: A Sighting of Joseph Conrad</i>	92
	<i>A Glimpse of Joseph Conrad in Albert Camus's The Plague?</i>	93
	<i>The Catastrophist and the Shifting Shapes of Darkness: A Conradian Presence in Post-imperial Congo</i>	96
	<i>Joseph Conrad in Iran</i>	100
	<i>Odi et Amo: Conrad's "The Return" Revisited in Chéreau's Gabrielle</i>	101
	<i>Ladies in Lavender: A Lightly Lavender-Tinted Conrad Sighting "Exterminate All the Brutes": Kurtz's Legacy in An Apocalyptic Documentary Film</i>	106
	<i>The Secret Agent as Opera: A Revenant Sighting of a Musical lieu de memoire</i>	107
<b>6</b>	<b>Conrad in the Spy Novel and Modern Popular Literature</b>	<b>111</b>
	<i>Spying on Lord Jim's Double Agent Avatar: Conrad in John Le Carré's Our Game (1995)</i>	112
	<i>Joseph Conrad in John Le Carré's The Honourable Schoolboy</i>	117
	<i>A Sighting at the Corner of the Eye: Conrad and le Carré's The Little Drummer Girl</i>	119

<i>R. B. Cunninghame Graham in Paraguay</i>	121
Saturday— <i>A Conrad Mystery Sighting</i>	122
<i>Roland's Early Erotic Feast and a Sighting of Marlow's Early Exotic East in Ian McEwan's Lessons</i>	125
<i>A Sebald Sighting of Conrad</i>	127
<i>Conrad's Theft from Altamirano in The Secret History of Costaguana</i>	127
<b>7 Monuments of Words and Wood in Craft Ashore and Crafts at Sea, in Bronze and Stone</b>	133
<i>The Joseph Conrad pub</i>	134
<i>The Fullerton Hotel Plaque</i>	135
The Sailing Ship <i>Joseph Conrad</i>	137
<i>A Chance Sighting in Wood and Words: Conrad, Masefield, Krenov, Van Norman and Munday</i>	139
<i>Tremolino, Trem, Lance Lee, a Retrospective Monumental Conrad Sighting and a Personal Reminiscence</i>	145
<i>Jacob Epstein's Bronze Bust of Conrad</i>	149
<i>The Gdynia Conrad Monument as Crypto-Discourse</i>	152
<b>8 Conclusion: A Tale of Two Cities, a Plaque, a Triptych, a Beginning and an End</b>	159
<b>Envoie</b>	185
<b>Bibliography</b>	187
<b>Index</b>	197

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**G. W. Stephen Brodsky, CD, PhD** a specialist in Conrad Studies, Literature of War and Renaissance Drama, is a retired Special Lecturer in Literature at Royal Roads Military College, Canada. He is the author of (among other titles) *Gentlemen of the Blade: A Social and Literary History of the British Army* (1988) and *Joseph Conrad's Polish Soul* (2016). He has written extensively in journals on his areas of specialty, especially on Conrad's life and works.

## ABOUT THE EDITOR

**Mark D. Larabee, PhD** editor of *Joseph Conrad Today*, is a retired Associate Professor of Literature at the US Naval Academy. He is the author of *Front Lines of Modernism: Remapping the Great War in British Fiction* (2011), and *The Historian's Heart of Darkness: Reading Conrad's Masterpiece as Social and Cultural History* (2018). He also has written on Ford Madox Ford, World War I art and literature, and Japanese literature.

## LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 8.1	Entrance to 47 Nowy Świat, Warsaw, Poland, <i>gratia</i> Jolanta Dyr. Photograph by Jolanta Dyr, 29 September, 2012, 11.18:18. Wikimedia Commons, “Wiki Loves Monuments Project, 2012 initiative”: “I, the copyright owner of this work, make it available under the license below: This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 license. License type: CCA-BY-S-A 3.0.”* Commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/file:47, Nowy_Świat_Street_-02.jpg	168
Fig. 8.2	Conrad Plaque at 47 Nowy Świat, Warsaw, Poland, <i>gratia</i> Jolanta Dyr. Photograph by Jolanta Dyr, 29 September, 2012, 11.17:47. Wikimedia Commons, “Wiki Loves Monuments Project, 2012 initiative”: “I, the copyright owner of this work, make it available under the license below: This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 license. License type: CCA-BY-S-A 3.0.” Commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/file:47, Nowy_Świat_Street_-02.jpg	169
Fig. 8.3	<i>Tremolino</i> , based on plan of Tartane Español ( <i>Mirror of the Sea</i> ). Pen-and-watercolor Sketch by Author	170
Fig. 8.4	<i>Trem</i> , built by Lance Lee, scaled down version of <i>Tremolino</i> . Pen-and-watercolor Sketch by Author	171
Fig. 8.5	Conrad Plaque at Fullerton Hotel, Singapore, <i>gratia</i> Bogdan Kosar. Photograph by Bogdan Kosar: License:CC-BY-S-A 4.0. <a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/">https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/</a> , via Wikimed.HTML	172
Fig. 8.6	Wreck of <i>Otago</i> . Pen-and-watercolor sketch by author	173
Fig. 8.7	Bust of Joseph Conrad by Sir Jacob Epstein	174

Fig. 8.8	Conrad Hall, Bishopsbourne, Kent, UK. Photograph by Elizabeth Cox, Canterbury (first cousin once removed), on request of author, sent by email, 25 November, 2023, cited in Acknowledgements	175
Fig. 8.9	Conrad Triptych at Conrad Hall. Photograph by Elizabeth Cox (See Fig. 8.5, above)	176
Fig. 8.10	<i>SV Joseph Conrad</i> , Mystic Maritime Museum, Mystic, CT, USA. Pen-and-watercolor sketch by author	177
Fig. 8.11	Prow and figurehead of <i>SV Joseph Conrad</i> . Pen-and-watercolor Sketch by Author	178
Fig. 8.12	Conrad Monument at port city of Gdynia, Poland. Pen-and-watercolor Sketch by Author (orientation of Conrad monument to Sails monument not represented in reality)	179
Fig. 8.13	Joseph Conrad Pub, Lowestoft, Suffolk, UK. Pen-and-watercolor sketch by author	180
Fig. 8.14	Krenov-style artisan Geoffrey Munday. Photograph by Victoria Munday, author's daughter, as requested by author	181



## CHAPTER 1

---

# Introduction

“Pass the bottle,” I said. It was a summer evening in 1995, the centennial year of the publication of Joseph Conrad’s first book, *Almayer’s Folly*. We were sitting at an institutional table of formica and steel in the gloom of a residence room with subdued lighting at Kent State University in Ohio. The event occasioning our presence there was a Conrad conference sponsored by the Institute of Bibliography and Editing, titled “Conrad’s Century: The Past and Future Splendor.”

Just the two of us, Ed Bojarski and me. Pass the bottle. Code for “I’m one of you” and “you’re one of us.” For, every Conradian knows that phrase from the opening passages of “Youth.” It wasn’t a bottle, really. It was my metal pocket flask of Bruichladdich single malt from which Ed was gratefully topping up one of the stirrup cups that always traveled with me as lenitive after a day of conference papers ranging from stimulating to turgid. Spirit to restore the spirit.

Ed—Edmund—Bojarski, US Navy veteran of World War II, of Polish heritage, with a history afloat and a natural affinity for Conradians, and discoverer of *Otago* for Conrad scholars. The hulk of Conrad’s first and only command lay cast up near Hobart, Tasmania, her skeletal iron ribs, their aspect starkly human, sticking up from the sand, when he saw her—where they may be sighted today black-etched against the searing azure of the antipodean sky. The life of *Otago* built in 1869 would bring dockings not imagined by her builders—Mauritius, where in 1888 Conrad suffered rejection by Eugénie Renouf, and Adelaide, where he soon after

relinquished his command—perhaps because of the owners’ wish for another voyage to Mauritius. Seven years later, himself stranded ashore, Conrad published his first book, *Almayer’s Folly* (1895), beginning his second “life.” Stories are like that. They are born, they travel, destination unknown. “From Helicon’s harmonious springs a thousand rills their mazy progress take.”<sup>1</sup>

Another centennial year, this one a century since Conrad’s death on 3 August 1924, is a proper time to revisit the master and mark him to his place,<sup>2</sup> gauging his legacy since his having earned his Canterbury headstone epitaph “sleep after toyle, port after stormie seas.” Master mariner and pioneer author of modernist technique Joseph Conrad (1857–1924) achieved such eminence in his lifetime that his presence, explicit or implicit, could readily be found in the works of not a few contemporaries of consequence.

Moreover, through the century since his death, he has lived on as a presence in the works of later authors to the present day. Conrad’s own beginnings are illustrative. Young Konradek Korzeniowski’s sighting of Victor Hugo’s novel, *Les Travailleurs de la mer* (*Toilers of the Sea*), inspired him with a love of the sea even before he saw the Mediterranean for the first time at Marseilles in mid-October of 1874 at age sixteen years and ten months. Had Conrad not read *Les Travailleurs de la mer*, he might never have conceived a passion for the sea and ships, and he might never have followed a life’s azimuth leading to authorship.

While on the subject of Guernsey’s fisherfolk, we may as well continue with a fishing analogy describing the same gift that Hugo bestowed on Conrad, that Conrad has bequeathed to a century of authors to the present. Although fly casting has been the aristocrat of the piscatorial art ever since Izaak Walton’s *The Compleat Angler* (1653), spin casting with a lure has a modicum of prestige; but the sport’s *hoi polloi*—the present writer among them—prefer float fishing with a common bait caster reel and heavy line. A float is set at a length to allow the weight affixed below it to sink with the line, leader and baited hook to a fish-tempting depth. Most authors of literary fiction may be likened to the lead weight—even those who have a claim to the unbearable lightness of being. (In the year 2084, the centenary of Milan Kundera’s novel of that name, a future generation will mark him to his place.)

They cause a ripple of acclaim in the literary pond, sink, and the waters close over them once more *calme et plat*, to quote from Conrad’s quote from Charles Baudelaire’s *Fleurs du mal*, published in 1857, Conrad’s birth year, an uncanny prolepsis of Conrad’s despairing epigraph to *The*

*Shadow-Line*.<sup>3</sup> A few authors, gifted with an indefinable timeless alchemy, may be likened to the float, which remains in sight, with every zephyr creating ripples ever wider through time. Their works continue to be seen, read, felt along the blood of later novelists and playwrights. Like Baudelaire, Conrad is—not *was*, be it noted—among that anointed few. The 1960s saw an efflorescence of Conrad biographies and critical studies; but these are not at all what the present book is about, and we shall leave them relegated to Conrad bibliographies such as the inaugural Teets and Gerber bibliography (1971) with its almost two thousand entries of Conrad criticism.

This book is about Conrad's "ripples," his reception by, and influence on, authors of literary fiction which resonates explicitly or implicitly with a Conradian presence, *passim* or ambient. In 2009 Mark D. Larabee, editor of the Joseph Conrad Society of America's newsletter *Joseph Conrad Today (JCT)*<sup>4</sup> conceived an inspired notion: an invitation to readers to submit finds of Conrad's presences for publication in a section of *JCT* to be headed, "Sightings." Thus began the present author's body of sightings spanning fifteen years. Some of the sightings are not literary. Monuments, ships, and even cabinetry find a place.

Versions of these have been collected in this volume, along with others I have found and published as parts of articles or reviews. Each sighting is described in its context—a couple of certain or likely sightings *by* Conrad, Molière and Matthew Arnold. Of course, along with them and the aforementioned Victor Hugo, a vast number of other authors who influenced Conrad could be cited, as each of his novels' epigraphs attest. For instance, Thomas Carlyle, from whom Carlyle likely borrowed Novalis,<sup>5</sup> borrowed in turn here for our Acknowledgements. The rest are sightings or ambient intimations of Conrad's presence—fiction and social commentary in novels and film by significant authors who carry his legacy, from contemporaries such as H.G. Wells and Lytton Strachey to moderns Albert Camus, John Le Carré and Ian McEwan and John Banfield.

Until now, the readership for most of those sightings, published piecemeal in semiannual issues of the newsletter, has been a limited coterie of individual and institutional subscribers. Collected for the first time in book form, these sightings along with others, valuable as referents, will reach an international readership of scholars and generalists interested in not only Conrad, but a broad range of authors ranging from Matthew Arnold, Ford Madox Ford, Violet Hunt and Scott Fitzgerald, to the moderns of a world canon, such as W.G. Sebald, Salman Rushdie, Adam Hochschild,

John Le Carré, Jan Morris, Azar Nafisi, Sven Lindqvist, Maurice Wilson, and many more.

Looking back from them through time we may, as I have said, mark Conrad to his place, affix his position on the chart of world literature. In *The Mirror of the Sea* his essay “Landfalls and Departures,” superficially a disquisition on seacraft, may be read as an analogue of humanity’s history in general, and Conrad’s life of the mind in particular:<sup>6</sup>

A “Departure” is not what a vain people of landsmen may think. The term “Landfall” is more easily understood; you fall in with the land, and it is a matter of a quick eye and of a clear atmosphere. The Departure is not the ship’s going away from her port any more than the Landfall can be looked upon as the synonym for arrival. But there is this difference in the Departure: that the term does not imply so much a sea event as a definite act entailing a process—the precise observation of certain landmarks by means of the compass card. (*MS* 3)

A ship “may have been at sea [. . .], for days.” Conrad writes; but “as long as the coast she was about to leave remain[s] in sight” the ship has not begun “the enterprise of a passage:”

The taking of Departure, if not the last sight of the land, is, perhaps, the last professional recognition of the land on the part of the sailor. It is the technical, as distinguished from the sentimental, “good-bye.” Henceforth he has done with the coast astern of his ship. It is a personal matter for the man [. . .]; the seaman takes his departure by means of cross-bearings [. . .] (4).

“Departure” may also be understood, then, as Conrad’s departure from Kraków for Marseilles, with only the landmarks on the “coast” of his *szlachta* past guiding his moral compass’s bearings. A charted position is where two or more bearings intersect. The more bearings taken, the smaller their area of intersection, and the more accurate the plotted position. “Your Landfall,” Conrad writes, “you meet at first with a single glance. Further recognition will follow in due course.” Conrad in France and England, as well as literally at sea, would locate himself precisely on a metaphorical “track-chart at noon” (4), from shootings of the sun by sextant.<sup>7</sup>

Every bearing has its reciprocal, in the exact opposite direction. Those first departure bearings, their reciprocals pointing back to Kraków, were Conrad’s starting orientation of spirit, his beginnings to be seen in his