

**REVIEW OF: JOSEPH CONRAD. *WITHIN THE TIDES*
(THE CAMBRIDGE EDITION OF THE WORKS OF JOSEPH
CONRAD). EDITED BY ALEXANDRE FACHARD WITH
AN INTRODUCTION BY LAURENCE DAVIES AND NOTES
BY ANDREW PURSELL AND ALEXANDRE FACHARD.
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Within the Tides was published for the first time in Britain by J.M. Dent and Sons on 24th February 1915 and in the United States by Doubleday, Page and Company on 15th January 1916. The stories were written and published serially between 1910 and 1914 in both countries before being published as a collection. The idea of the volume took shape gradually, as Conrad kept changing not only the order of the stories, but also – in response to suggestions from the publishers – the title itself. At first the book was announced as *The Planter of Malata and other stories*, then *Within the Surf* or *Within the Surge*. Eventually it appeared as *Within the Tides*. “Between 1910 and 1915 Conrad gave considerable thought to putting recent stories in the right order and right collection [...] [and] [a]t the start of 1915, Conrad [...] fumbled for a name.” (xxvii). After the first book edition came others, including the ‘Uniform Edition’, the ‘Collected Edition’ and the ‘Concord Edition’ published by Dent, Heinemann and Doubleday. Although the British and American collected editions are trusted “by scholars, students and the general reader alike, the received texts published [there], and in various reprintings of them since 1921, have proved to be at least as defective as their predecessors.” (xiii) The present volume of the Cambridge Edition answers the need for an accurate and authoritative edition of Conrad’s work, providing us not only with annotated texts of the stories collected in *Within the Tides* (based on various copy-texts) and its ‘Author’s Note’ of 1921, but also with an ‘Introduction’ which traces the literary history of the work, outlining “its genesis, sources and early reception.” A section entitled ‘The texts: an essay’ presents “the textual history of the volume, examines the origin of its individual texts and explains the policy followed in editing them.” (xiii) Then comes the ‘Apparatus’, which consists of three sections: ‘Emendation and variation’, ‘Emendation of accidentals’ and ‘End-of-line word-division’. The first section records the Cambridge Edition’s emendations of “substantive readings together with the variants in substantive readings amongst the texts col-

lated" (263), while the second section presents emendations of accidentals and the last (and shortest) section records "editorial decisions on the word-division of divisible compounds that are ambiguously hyphenated in the copy-text." (373) The 'Apparatus' documents the discussion presented in 'The texts: an essay'. 'Textual notes' "deal with cruxes and textual issues" (xiv) and appendices shed new light on the stories of the collection. Appendix A introduces "The original manuscript ending of "Because of the dollars". Appendices B and C present "A terribly strange bed" by Wilkie Collins and extracts from "Uncle Z" by Greville Phillimore, which can be considered as possible sources for "The inn of the two witches". The last appendix contains an "Extract from *More Memoirs (and Some Travels)* by George Brown Burgin" which presents "the synopsis of a novel, 'The Predecessors', [brought to Burgin by Stephen Crane] which had originally been imagined as a play to be written in collaboration with Conrad" (401) and later became a source for Conrad's original idea of "The planter of Malata". The 'Explanatory notes' deal with topics that are not easily found elsewhere, citing the sources which were known to Conrad and his first readers. There are also glossaries explaining foreign words and phrases as well as nautical terms which appear in the stories of the collection. At the end of the volume there is a map of south-east Asia in the late nineteenth century which allows us to identify places and routes. The map and the illustrations inserted at the end of the volume supplement the discussion of the texts of the stories in the collection. The book opens with a 'Chronology' of Conrad's life and the publication dates of his works.

The Cambridge Edition of *Within the Tides* is intended to be used by the Conrad scholar and the general reader alike. The 'Apparatus', the essay on texts, the 'Textual Notes' and the appendices will be of interest to scholars, who will find them highly stimulating, while the general reader (together with the specialist) will enjoy reading the 'Introduction' and the 'Explanatory Notes'.

The 'Introduction' and the section entitled 'The texts: an essay' are of particular interest in that they give not only detailed presentations of individual texts, but also an outline account of the atmosphere of Conrad's times, the circumstances in which he wrote and the realities of the literary market in the wake of historical events (e.g. the impact of the war on the publishing trade) – in short, the background against which the volume was created and published, together with its reception.

The 'Introduction' by Laurence Davies opens with the statement that "here are four tales, each with its own narrative strategy." (xxv) Davies observes that the stories of the volume draw on motifs from Conrad's earlier works (such as "Heart of Darkness", "Karain – a Memory" and "Falk") as well as from his works in progress, i.e. the novels *Chance* (1914) and *Victory* (1915).

As has already been mentioned, Davies' essay traces the origins of the stories, their sources, contexts and early critical reception. The author rightly hopes that on reading the essay, the reader "comes away with a more thorough understanding of *Within the Tides*, both 'as a financial operation', as Conrad once called it [...] and as art." (xxvi)

Discussing Conrad's opinion (expressed by the writer in his later years) that each volume of his short stories has its own character, Davies argues that the words uttered

by the Editor in “The Planter of Malata”: “In many ways money is as dangerous to handle as gunpowder. You can’t be too careful either as to who you are working with” [...] speak for the collection as a whole. (xxvii) However, he leans toward the opinion that a better title for the collection would have been *Tales of Hearsay* – an idea abandoned by Conrad – as all the stories involve gossip, rumour or anecdote: “In every case, narrative devices create a critical distance between text and reader – in some cases, more than one distance [...]” (xxvii)

Davies outlines the consequences of Conrad’s mental breakdown in 1910. As usual, suffering from gout, “mental darkness” and physical as well as mental debilitation, Conrad wrote short stories instead of continuing longer works. As Davies argues: “[a]t any given time, Conrad might be writing one short story, revising another and contemplating others, not knowing what would remain a shorter work and what would go on growing into a novel.” (xxxii) At that time, however, writing short stories and serialized novels was becoming more remunerative. Thus, while working on *Chance*, Conrad wrote “The Partner”. However, he did not write any other stories before he had completed the serial version of *Chance*. Then, while thinking of another novel, he wrote something shorter, namely three more stories collected in *Within the Tides*. Davies gives an account of the process by which Conrad wrote “The Inn of the Two Witches”, “The Planter of Malata” and “Because of the Dollars”. In the section entitled ‘Sources and contexts’ he discusses borrowings in *Within the Tides*, noting that “[all] the stories provide examples of engagement with other writings and writers better seen as contra-textual than inter-textual: that is to say, they play off broader literary traditions and popular conventions as much as specific texts.” (xxxvi) He is also of the opinion that in tracing allusions, presences and reactions to other works, cultural phenomena or events in the present volume, “it may be as helpful to write of *contexts* as of *sources*.” Later on in the ‘Introduction’ Davies thoroughly examines the stories one by one (in order of composition) giving an account of their historical background as well as pointing out literary connotations, affinities and allusions. The ‘Introduction’ presents various readings and possible understandings of Conrad’s protagonists and their fates. The last section deals with the early reception of the volume, presenting a wide spectrum of interpretive perspectives, from the glowing to the hostile. Davies notes that in the British press there was more admiration than criticism, adding that Conrad was very sensitive about criticism and that this was not only connected with “the power of reviews to encourage or deter prospective buyers. He needed advocates rather than barkers, thoughtful interpreters rather than show-offs [...]” (lxvi) Davies also gives an account of the American reception of the volume, which was equally diverse. What distinguished the American attitude from the British was “the greater emphasis on the romance of the exotic.” (lxx) The ‘Introduction’ ends with the scholar’s reflections on the commercial fortune of *Within the Tides*, which is “more a tale of afterlives than afterlife,” as two stories – “The Inn of the Two Witches” and “Because of the Dollars” have been commercially successful, while “The Planter of Malata” and “The Partner” have had little commercial success. At the end of his essay Davies notes that the opinions of early reviewers have not been forgotten: the whole volume is

seen as being uneven. He expresses the hope that the appearance of more and more texts presenting “a more nuanced approach” to the individual stories – together with the publication of the present volume containing the first critical edition – “may lead to a more generous reassessment.” (lxxii)

Davies’ essay is not only very erudite, but is also extremely witty and written with a light touch. In this connection it is enough to mention his very first and last comments. Referring to Conrad’s opinion “on the writing of short fiction as ‘convict labour’,” Davies remarks that “if he was a convict, doomed to the literary equivalent of breaking stones or picking oakum, he was a cunning one, managing always to preserve something of his own.” (xxv) Commenting on “the most notorious dismissal of the collection” produced by F.R. Leavis, who says that the stories are “shockingly bad magazine stuff,” Davies adds: “Yes, one might retort, but Conrad’s magazine stuff.” (lxxiii) Although the essay provides a significant amount of information not only about Conrad and his times, but also about literature and the publishing trade, it is extremely readable.

The section entitled ‘The texts: an Essay’ is of great value for Conrad specialists. Davies starts with Conrad’s reasons for writing the stories collected in the volume, namely the need to have a break from longer works and – not least – the economic need: short stories earned more money than novels. Discussing the work that Conrad put into the final composition of the volume and its title, the essay outlines the textual histories of the stories in order of composition. The discussion “takes up writing, revision and serial publication, followed by a justification of the choice of copy-text and emendation.” (176) Details of the first British and American editions are given, together with a history of the later editions published during Conrad’s life. Then follows a discussion of the emendations to the volume as a whole and to the Cambridge Edition in particular. At the end of the essay the ‘Author’s Note’ is discussed in the same way as the individual stories of the collection.

The Cambridge Edition aims to present the reader with Conrad’s own text by discarding those changes that have been introduced without Conrad’s authorization. However, “corrections by editors and compositors of manifestly defective wording have been accepted, and adjustments required to save the author from his own errors.” (251) The Cambridge Edition of *Within the Tides* “removes from the received texts successive layers of non-authorial intervention affecting substantives and accidentals, and restores Conrad’s own wording, pointing, emphases and orthography.” (262) What is more, the reader can observe the removal of these layers of intervention and rediscover Conrad’s texts on his own. The texts of “The Partner” and “The Inn of the Two Witches” are presented in a more “Conradian form” for the first time. “The Partner” has been cleansed of “the ubiquitous interventions of Harper’s over-zealous staff,” while in “The Inn of the Two Witches” changes to the original wording have been reversed, as have deletions of several parts of the original text. The stories in the volume “are published here in forms more authoritative than those in which they have hitherto appeared in print, and provide the reader with a reliable text of the last volume of short fiction seen into print by Conrad during his lifetime.” (262) The reader

has a unique chance to commune with what is truly Conrad's work, observing the changes and corrections which over the years have been made by the editorial staff of every publisher – and which now, thankfully, have been removed by the editors of the Cambridge Edition.

