

CONRAD'S WORKING METHODS IN

UNDER WESTERN EYES:

THE EDITORIAL CHALLENGE

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Author bio

Paul Eggert is co-editor with Roger Osborne of the Cambridge Edition of *Under Western Eyes*, due to be published in 2013, with Introduction and explanatory notes by Keith Carabine. Eggert's book *Securing the Past: Conservation in Art, Architecture and Literature* was published by Cambridge University Press in 2009, and in 2011 it won the Finneran Award of the Society for Textual Scholarship. He has prepared scholarly editions of works by D. H. Lawrence, Henry Kingsley and Rolf Boldrewood, and was general editor of the Academy Editions of Australian Literature. He is an Australian Research Council professorial fellow, based at the University of New South Wales, Canberra.

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The editorial tradition for modern works of fiction

In 1989 the renowned bibliographer and editorial commentator G. Thomas Tanselle characterised the editorial pursuit in the following terms: 'We have reason to persist in the effort to define the flowerings of previous human thought, which in their inhuman tranquillity have overcome the torture of their birth.' His formulation is almost a definition of the category of literary works and of the aesthetic realm in which they exist. Tanselle is rarely as poetic as this. He does not quite say that works are objects but only that they have a special form of existence that puts them in a privileged realm, over and apart from other writings and over and apart from us.

Tanselle is the principal inheritor, adapter and articulator of the heritage of editorial thinking that comes down to us through Sir Walter Greg in his famous essay, 'The Rationale of Copy-Text', in 1950 and through the legendary Fredson Bowers in his extensions of Greg's insight, after the 1950s, to cover the textual situations encountered in editing a great range of mainly nineteenth- and twentieth-century American and, later, British authors. This line of thinking affects the Cambridge Conrad edition fundamentally, though for the most part silently. The reason is a simple one.

After Greg and Bowers, texts of final authorial intention could be arrived at with greater subtlety than before. It was no longer the older method of ascertaining which was the latest version that the author authorised for publication – the so-called death-bed edition. The problem with this approach – let us call it, in our case, the Heinemann or the Doubleday Collected Conrad – is that, even if the author did make changes, choosing the last authorised edition as the basis of the reading text necessarily built in all the other changes made as an ordinary part of their job by typists, typesetters and editors of the editions that intervened between the manuscript and it. Following Greg and Bowers, it became a matter of choosing as copy-text the version that the author was most fully engaged in. This would typically be the manuscript; but, depending on the author's compositional habits, it could well be a later document. The editor would then ascertain critically which of the changed readings in subsequent documents or

editions could be attributed confidently to the author. Such readings would be deemed to be revisions. Being of later date than the chosen copy-text, they would be incorporated into the copy-text, thus creating in the one synchronic axis a single textual assembly from multiple diachronic sources. This could include readings from documents earlier than the copy-text if it were suspected that the person who had prepared it – a typist, say – had made errors that the author had not noticed but had passively authorised. These could be overturned.

Once the copy-text is chosen, the method operates locally, at the site of the individual revision rather than globally at the level of the text as a whole. German editors in the 1960s were having none of this, and preferred what they believed to be the firmer position of adopting one of the historical texts as the reading text of the scholarly edition, primarily on the basis that it provided a useful anchor for the apparatus. But they were not prepared to emend that text. This is because they resisted the contamination of its historical and documentary integrity that the Anglo-American editor's exercise of critical judgement would necessarily entail. Hans Zeller argued that the Greg-Bowers editor would be constantly tempted to accept as a revision any reading that seemed to the editor to be a better one, an aesthetic improvement, on the assumption that the author would only seek to improve the text.¹ From the German point of view, this method produced, not the text of final authorial intention, but what might be called the text of editorial desire.

How does the notoriously tortuous textual development of *Under Western Eyes* respond to these opposed editorial goals? Perhaps the first observation, or admission, to make is that the inhuman tranquillity of which Tanselle so beautifully writes is seductive. But it is also potentially dangerous. It is dangerous if it turns our eyes away from the all-too-human operations that have created it: the author's yes – but how tranquil did Conrad usually feel as he wrote? – and the operations upon his text of successive typists, multiple typesetters, and amateur and professional editors. Tanselle would deny none of this empirical evidence, so his retained emphasis on the aesthetic touches a sensitive editorial nerve. How can editions bridge the desire for the tranquilly complete aesthetic object on the one hand and the fact that its producers always operated in a series of historical presents on the other? And, finally, how is the scholarly editor to understand his or her

¹ For a discussion of the postwar German historical-critical editing tradition, and citations of Zeller, see Eggert, *Securing the Past: Conservation in Art, Architecture and Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 203–12.

own operations on the texts? Does the editor stand sublimely above the textual and documentary fray, understanding, judging and establishing the critical text? Or is the scholarly editor merely another intervener in what the phenomenologist, Edmund Husserl's pupil Roman Ingarden, so memorably called the 'life' of the work?² Should we understand the scholarly edition therefore as being only what every other edition is: that is, simply *another* vehicle for propelling that life of the work further, though in changed or expanded or more persuasive ways, into the future? Conrad's working methods with *Under Western Eyes* offer a fascinating case in point and, if not an adjudication, at least a clarification of the enduring editorial dilemma.

Conrad's working methods

Conrad began work on a story called 'Razumov' in December 1907. It was to have a long and arduous passage to publication in two book forms in 1911, preceded by dual serialisations in London and New York. It would be the first of his novels to achieve this initial, quadruple publication. Since the 1970s, a number of Conrad scholars have written illuminatingly on the texts of *Under Western Eyes*, at first in relation to the serialisations, the manuscript (which had been acquired by the Beinecke Library at Yale by 1938) and then, with newfound interest, to the typescript after it was donated to the Free Library in Philadelphia in 1977. David Leon Higdon wrote some important early articles in the 1980s; Keith Carabine published his book on *Under Western Eyes* in 1996, which included a new, extended analysis of the novel's composition and revision; and subsequently Roger Osborne, our co-editor on the forthcoming Cambridge edition, wrote his PhD on the novel and provided, as a second volume, a diplomatic edition of the long version in typescript that Conrad finished immediately before his nervous breakdown at the end of January 1910.³

² See *ibid.*, pp. 221–4.

³ The 1970s work includes: Emily K. Izsak, 'Under Western Eyes and the Problems of Serial Publication', *RES*, 23 (1972), 429–44; Emily K. Dalgarno, 'Conrad's Attitude to his Text', *Conradiana*, 9 (1977), 3–16; and Roderick Davis, 'Under Western Eyes: "The most deeply meditated novel"', *Conradiana*, 9 (1977), 59–75. David Leon Higdon, "'Complete but uncorrected": The Typescript of Conrad's *Under Western Eyes*', in *Joseph Conrad's Under Western Eyes: Beginnings, Revisions, Final Forms*, ed. David R. Smith (Hamden: Archon Books, 1991), pp. 83–119. Keith Carabine, *The Life and the Art: A Study of Conrad's Under Western Eyes* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996). Roger Osborne, 'For Art and Money: A Textual History and Scholarly Edition of Joseph Conrad's *Under Western Eyes*', unpubl PhD thesis, 2 vols, University of New South Wales, Canberra, 2000.

Other significant essays on the texts of *Under Western Eyes* include: Higdon, "'Word for word": The Collected Editions of Conrad's *Under Western Eyes*', *Conradiana*, 18 (1986), 129–36; Higdon, 'The Unrecognized Second Edition of

Through some sharp work comparing the timings of various letters against the large deletions on the typescript and the media in which those deletions were carried out (black ink, blue pencil and lead pencil), Osborne was able to eliminate the editorially alarming possibility that Conrad may have done the cutting when he was severely unbalanced. The revision process, in fact, came just afterwards, and the newly written ending did too. Conrad was more or less recovered before he started on the reduction of the long version to the shorter one, which at first he intended only for American serialisation. He became committed to it as he went forward with his revisions, and that shorter version is the one we read today.

As we went to work on the edition, none of the previous work on the texts and published versions of *Under Western Eyes*, including our own, was taken for granted. We had to closely inspect the manuscript at the Beinecke, the typescript at the Free, the published letters, other relevant unpublished archival correspondence, and compare it all against the evidence afforded by collating the manuscript and typescript, the four published versions of 1910–11, as well as the second English edition of 1917 and the Heinemann and Doubleday collected Conrads of 1921. This revealed thousands of variants, each of them caused by someone and done for a reason. But we were able to rule out Conrad's involvement in the texts of *Under Western Eyes* after 1911.

Manuscript and typescript

The manuscript (MS) would finally consist of 1,351 pages. From early 1908 Conrad began to send his agent James B. Pinker the developing MS in batches of usually about 10–20 pages. Pinker would have the batch typed and send it back to Conrad who made good progress for

Conrad's *Under Western Eyes*', *Studies in Bibliography*, 40 (1987), 220–25; Higdon and Robert F. Sheard, 'Conrad's "unkindest cut": The Canceled Scenes in *Under Western Eyes*', *Conradiana*, 19 (1987), 167–81; Higdon, 'Conrad, *Under Western Eyes* and the Mysteries of Revision', in *Victorian Authors and their Works: Revision, Motivations and Modes*, ed. Judith Kennedy (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1991), pp. 169–85; Carabine, 'From "Razumov" to *Under Western Eyes*: The Dwindling of Natalia Haldin's "Possibilities"', in *The Ugo Mursia Memorial Lectures*, ed. Mario Curreli (Milan: Mursia International, 1988), pp. 147–71; Carabine, 'From "Razumov" to *Under Western Eyes*: The Case of Peter Ivanovitch', *Conradiana*, 25 (1993), 3–29; Osborne, 'The Typescript Versions of Conrad's *Under Western Eyes*: Motivations, Intentions and Editorial Possibilities', *Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand Bulletin*, 26 (2002), 105–18; Osborne, 'Joseph Conrad's *Under Western Eyes*: The Serials and First Editions', *Studies in Bibliography*, 54 (2004), 301–16; and Eggert, 'Version vs Documents: The Case of Joseph Conrad's *Under Western Eyes*', in *Variante – Variants – Variantes*, ed. Christa Jansohn and Bodo Plachta (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2005), pp. 201–12.

the first few months. Pinker was paying him, as an advance on royalties, for each thousand words that he submitted for typing, creating a debt that steadily mounted.

This arrangement might have proved satisfactory except for the difficulties Conrad began to encounter with his new story from April 1908 after he had finished the St Petersburg section of the tale and shifted the action to Geneva. He began to realise it had the makings of a novel, and that he would therefore have to leave aside the completion of the novel he had been working on, *Chance*, for even longer than planned. Delays such as this occasioned some friction between Conrad and Pinker. Conrad resented having continually to go cap-in-hand to his agent, and Pinker must sometimes have despaired of the likelihood of ever being repaid. Many of Conrad's letters to friends during the twenty-six months he took to finish the novel in MS – December 1907–January 1910 – report the long days of unremitting concentration, the agonies of nervous tension whenever he was unable to see his way through a narrative difficulty, and the occasional relief afforded by his stopping to write less taxing but readily saleable prose.⁴

Some curious results of this slow textual process remain on the manuscript. Others in the past have remarked on the series of capital Ks sprinkled through the manuscript. What do they mean? They appear occasionally in the first half of the document and then with greater frequency from page 961, and especially so in the 1100s. Page 1182, has three of them: see Illustration 1. As the Ks are usually in the same position (around the mid-point of the left-hand margin, often at the extreme edge of the sheet rather than against the text), they are unlikely to be a symbol for passages to which Conrad needed to return. An autobiographical reading for them has been proposed – the K meaning either Kirylo (for Kirylo Sidorovitch Razumov) or Konrad Korzeniowski, or both, so that 'K' could perhaps have been Conrad's private nickname for his character.⁵ Yet the cause of their inscription, over and apart from the usual function of doodles, may be at least partly physical: the need to clear a clogged nib as Conrad wrote. Most such Ks are very dark, and occasionally only the stem is present, making a capital I, or the K has been inscribed, turned into a rectangle and then filled in. Pressing hard with the pen to make the ink flow or to dislodge paper fibre would explain this. A printed rather than a cursive

⁴ This was not atypical: it was also true, for instance, of his writing short stories when struggling with *Nostramo* in 1904–06.

⁵ David R. Smith, 'The Hidden Narrative: The K in Conrad', in *Joseph Conrad's Under Western Eyes: Beginnings, Revisions, Final Forms* (1991), ed. David R. Smith, p. 54.

K is a useful letter for performing this action. There are other markings: doodles that do not seem representational, and faint short lines next to one another, which equally may have been attempts to clear the nib. Similar non-textual features appear in the manuscripts of *Chance* and *Victory*.⁶

Far more significant in MS is the appearance of heavy interlinear revision. Although this varies considerably and although at times, Conrad wrote faster, four pages (about 400 words in total) per day seems to have been a typical maximum speed for this taxing novel. Conrad knew the figure all too well, lamenting to a friend and fellow-writer when the novel was well in hand: 'it takes me a day to write 4 pages. But I don't even average that'.⁷ This is so few words that Conrad must have spent much of every writing day gazing at what he had just written, and reading must have been an intimate and interwoven part of the act of composition. It is not surprising then to find that a great many revisions in the manuscript are of whole lines – often two, three or many more – scored through in their entirety. The replacement text is typically similar in wording, and sometimes quite so, but invariably features development or alteration. Occasionally, the pattern of deletions shows Conrad making a third or even fourth attempt to push the narration forwards in this fashion.

On MS 314–15, 'for- I getfulness of facts' is hyphenated over a line-break: see Illustrations 2 and 3. A five-line section of text starting 'getfulness' has been written and later deleted; next a three-line extension also starting with 'getfulness' has been inscribed and deleted; and another attempt, also three lines long, suffered the same fate before Conrad hit upon wording he found acceptable, although even it has several interlinear revisions.⁸

He may well have kept the variant versions in suspension, visible, rather than deleting before proceeding.⁹ Reading a passage and then rewriting it with some variation, appear to have given him the run-up he needed at the creative task. Having typescript prepared immediately after writing each section of manuscript is probably another expression of this need: typescript was easier to read than

⁶ They are held in the Berg Collection (New York Public Library) and the Harry Ransom Center (University of Texas at Austin), respectively.

⁷ Conrad to Stephen Reynolds, [September? 1909] (CL4 275).

⁸ He later deleted the whole passage in typescript.

⁹ This method occasioned errors in *Lord Jim*, where phrasing evidently intended for deletion was inadvertently retained, with the result that repetitions descended to the final text. For a discussion, see 'The Texts' and 'Textual Notes', in *Lord Jim, A Tale* (2011), ed. J. H. Stape and Ernest W. Sullivan II.

holograph, and thus a creative stimulus from doing so was likely. This is especially true of the composition of the first half of the novel.

Conrad's decision to have a typed copy made immediately had the effect, in practice, that composition and revision would proceed in unison with one another. Upon receipt of the typed pages, Conrad would typically revise them before proceeding with or returning to the next batch of manuscript. He called this first typing 'intermediate' typing because he knew that a clean retyping would be necessary. The first 313 pages of the extant typescript (TS) are a retyping, and nearly all the intermediate typing is lost. However, on two occasions in the first half of MS a heavily revised page of intermediate typing remains (by accident) as the last page of some MS batches. One of them is the typed page '178', replacing MS 447 and MS 448. ([Illustration 4](#)). Conrad has made alterations to the typed page to ensure continuity with the next extant page of MS that he had already written, MS 449 ([Illustration 5](#)).

It is likely that, elsewhere, some already part-completed or completed pages from the start of the next batch of MS would have been discarded as part of this process if Conrad decided to start afresh under the impetus of the just-completed revision of the previous batch. Any assessment of the textual authority of MS has therefore to recognise the fact that, considered as a document, MS does not – at least in the first 670 pages – witness an integral state of the text of the novel. By chance the two pages of MS that typed page '178' replaced were not discarded and remain amongst the pages of the manuscript. It was this survival that allowed us to reconstruct what must have happened.

The same sort of evidence is found in the second half of MS where collation shows there was only the one typing. In these later sections Conrad was still proceeding in batches – writing perhaps a dozen pages and having them typed.

When Conrad received typescript it evidently spurred him to a new effort of concentration. But he brought it to bear only on the last page of the typing, revising it, and then continuing to write in its remaining white space. This is true of TS pages 842, 899 and 1267A. In another case in the batch he later labelled as Batch D he deleted a page of typescript and continued writing in manuscript in light of the deletion. (We know this because MS 790–1 have no counterpart text, as they ought to have, at the start of Batch D.) The next page of normal, handwritten MS follows on. The revision of at least these pages was part of the compositional process.

In this way, then, a typescript emerged from the ruptures and the counteracting continuities of composition, typing and revision. The

accumulated composite document, TS, would finally enable Conrad to review the novel as a whole for the first time in April–May 1910. Although the MS is an integral document, it is not an integral version of the novel; rather, it is a series of long but discontinuous fragments. That ruled it out as a contender for copy-text in the Cambridge edition, despite its being the document on which Conrad's hand is most continuously in evidence.

On 26 January 1910 Conrad pronounced the novel 'finished'. He had finished to the bottom of MS page 1,341. He took the batch to Pinker when he went up to London on the 27th. But they had a furious row. Apparently Conrad came home and proceeded to finish the novel, pushing the MS to page 1,351 in a last effort of the will. He got the various batches of typing into order and then collapsed. His wife described the situation in a letter on 6 February 1910: 'There is the M.S. complete but uncorrected and his fierce refusal to let even I touch it. It lays on a table at the foot of his bed and he lives mixed up in the scenes and holds converse with his characters'.¹⁰

Of course, by 'M.S.' Jessie Conrad meant typed manuscript – as, with the exception of the last pages, it was. The document was a silent witness to an agonisingly protracted process of textual development that had now come, shudderingly, to a full stop. From an editorial point of view, this typescript in its unrevised state has undoubted textual authority. Collected into a single document for the first time in late January 1910, TS gathered up Conrad's compositional and revisional work on the novel since December 1907: TS had superseded the fractured witness of MS.

Revising the typescript

TS nevertheless lacked the extensive revisions that Conrad would carry out in April–May 1910. The first letter after his recovery had begun is dated 'six weeks' after the collapse. Conrad tells his friend, the novelist John Galsworthy, that he 'can't . . . revis[e] ... yet', but by 31 March he was promising to start revising 'to morrow' even though he still felt 'muddled'.¹¹ Things must have been improving by 7 April, however, when he wrote to Robert Garnett, a lawyer, who had taken over some of Pinker's role because of the argument in January: 'I send you this batch trusting to your kindness to have it put in hand at some good typing office', and on the 14th he sent another batch, adding that 'if you feel inclined to look at the stuff at all you will use the shortened

¹⁰ Letter to David S. Meldrum, *Joseph Conrad: Letters to William Blackwood and David S. Meldrum*, ed. William Blackburn (1958), p. 192.

¹¹ CL4 321, 322–3.

copy such as I mean it to appear serially'.¹² Conrad was revising TS: re-organising it into Parts and Chapters, making hundreds of changes to wording (some were extensive), deleting about 18,000 words, correcting punctuation and other matters of presentation as he went along, and finally rewriting the last chapter. Because the divisions of the narrative into Parts and Chapters *and* the big deletions are both done in blue pencil and because the divisions take the deletions into account, it is likely that Conrad went through TS a first time, looking for what to delete and how to reorganise the internal divisions, and then went through again making more localised revisions, mostly in lead pencil.

In a letter to Galsworthy of 17 May 1910, Conrad reported on Robert Garnett's helpfully 'volunteering to read over and correct the clean final copy. With three superimposed revisions there were a good many phrases without grammar and even without sense to be found in the rough typed copy. And I dreaded the task of wading through all that shallow sticky stuff again'.¹³ The dread he felt is readily explicable: his recent breakdown; his two-year struggle, immediately prior to that, to complete a novel that had skirted too close for comfort to his personal history, outlook and situation; and the cramped domestic conditions in the rented four-room cottage at Aldington in Kent where the Conrads lived from February 1909 till June 1910. (Apparently Conrad worked at a desk at the turn of the stairs, with no window, hearing the occasional squeals from his landlord's slaughterhouse below.) The dread also explains why, although Conrad started the revision with the longstanding and perhaps uninspected idea of shortening only for serial purposes (and by implication, therefore, maintaining a separate, longer version for the book form), he gradually became committed to a single form of the novel during the four weeks after the letter of 14 April 1910. It also explains why he would later state that the text 'as established in the *English Review*' would be the basis for 'The book'.¹⁴

Some 18 months later in late September 1911, Conrad was readying the MS for sale to the collector John Quinn. He must have reconsidered his decision to cut the novel, for in a letter to Galsworthy who had just read the Methuen edition and evidently criticised some aspect of it, he remarked: 'Revising while ill in bed I am afraid I have struck out whole pages recklessly . . . There are passages which should have remained. I wasn't in a fit state to judge them. Well—it's done

¹² CL4 323, 323-4.

¹³ CL4 328.

¹⁴ CL4 353.

now and let the critics make what they can of it'.¹⁵ It is difficult to know what weight to give to such a sad, unstudied remark: we can all feel sadness at the path not taken, while at another moment defend that very decision staunchly as the wiser alternative. In this regard, in a letter on 20 October 1911 to Olivia Garnett who had also just read the novel Conrad reasserted the need for at least some of those cuts as an aesthetic necessity. He acknowledged that Miss Haldin is 'a mere peg', that she 'does not move. I wanted a pivot for the action to turn on. She had to be the pivot. And I had to be very careful because if I had allowed myself to make more of her she would have killed the artistic purpose of the book: the development of a single mood'.¹⁶

It is noteworthy that his wordings are not about his jaundiced view of the Russians and Russia. Did Conrad see the Russians through the eyes of his father or his Uncle Tadeusz? More personally, did he see Razumov's betrayal as somehow parallel with his own forsaking of his Polish fatherland? Keith Carabine's introduction to the edition will show how conditioned Conrad's mind was, as he wrote, with Polish and other writings about Russia, her religious fatalism and political repression. But does one then take the next step and argue that this personal nearness explains his agonisedly extended writing of the novel over 26 months? In fact, given the other things he wrote along the way, the writing of *Under Western Eyes* was not more especially protracted than some of his other novels.¹⁷ Nor was his turning aside from the composition to write easier things unusual either. That these writings would in some ways be related to the themes of the novel, which he was doubtless still at some level turning over in his mind, is only to be expected.

In those letters quoted just above, Conrad is talking about aesthetic difficulties. He must have been intensely preoccupied with how to get a story of betrayal *told*, a story about unbearable psychological pressure that causes veiled and misleading behaviour and speeches. How would he be able to continuously ramp up the pressure on the main character, within the confines of complexly defracting

¹⁵ CL4 486.

¹⁶ CL4 489-90.

¹⁷ To Pinker, Conrad boasted in late November 1908 that he had written 100,000 words since 24 December 1907. While his estimates are often rough at best, he believed that 'It is as good as when I first began to write, quite' ([25? November 1908], CL4 154). This average of around 9,000 words per month compares favourably with his production rate for *An Outcast of the Islands* and *Lord Jim*. Conrad's 100,000 words includes three of 'Some Reminiscences', 'A Black Mate', a review of Anatole France's *L'Île des Pingouins* for *English Review*, and 'Razumov' up to Part II Chapter 4. He would soon finish three more Reminiscences and also write 'The Secret Sharer' while completing *Under Western Eyes*.

narrations: the teacher of languages' first-person account and then via his reading of yet another first-person report on events – Razumov's diary – while at the same time reporting the efforts of others to interpret reports of the main events and the motives of the characters, including especially Razumov. Deferred revelation in this maze of narration and interpretation was a tall order, even for Conrad. No wonder he struggled.

It is true nevertheless that the subject matter did bring out Conrad's anti-Russian prejudices. The Cambridge edition of *Under Western Eyes*, scheduled for publication in 2013, will give chapter and verse. The Appendix will notate the large slabs of deletion from TS and the apparatus will give the smaller deletions. In the deleted material about Peter Ivanovitch the attack on Tolstoy is plain; the denigration of Dostoevsky is slightly more veiled. The deletion of this sort of material in fact started in the lost intermediate typescript, no later than September 1908, as comparison of the manuscript with the extant typescript for that early part of the novel shows.¹⁸

My guess is that when Conrad came to shorten the novel in April–May 1910 he was pulled up short by the dismaying awareness – as any realist artificer ought to be – that, despite his deletions in September 1908, he had again unbalanced the novel by putting his finger too heavily on the scales; and that he had to decide there and then whether the novel was to be a vehicle for his historically conditioned prejudices or a realist work of art. He decided the latter was more important to him, and he removed or scaled down the offending material as part of cutting some substantial conversation scenes.¹⁹ At least this way of achieving the reduction had a counteracting benefit. The scaling back of Natalia's quest to find out what happened to her brother into a resolved position of self-sacrifice

¹⁸ It was in late September 1908 that Miss Hallowes came to do the retyping that replaced the intermediate typescript. Conrad deleted some material that contrasted Razumov's personal and political predicament with typical Dostoevskian spiritual ones and also other material that cast Peter Ivanovitch's prison experiences as a parody of Dostoevsky's memoir *The House of the Dead* (1862) and as a mockery of Tolstoy's great theme of the battle between the flesh and the spirit. Miss Haldin's conversations with the narrator were repeatedly shortened, including her attempts to understand her brother's fate and her expressions of political idealism.

¹⁹ Deletions are especially heavy in Part II Chapter 3, where about 8,350 words were cut; another 5,500 were deleted from Part II Chapters 1, 2 and 4; while Part I Chapter 3 lost 1,200 words. These were the very sections of the novel with which Conrad had struggled after March 1908, and they were the most significantly cut now. The bulk of the deletions have to do with Natalia and Peter Ivanovitch. Conrad shortened some conversations, and removed three long ones altogether between Natalia and the teacher of languages, between Natalia and Peter Ivanovitch and between the two men in a café.

is also quite clear.

It is now evident that the alterations on TS were carefully calculated and painstaking, not just a case of 'tak[ing] the guts out artistically', as he threatened to do in a grimly jocular note to Galsworthy, in order to achieve a lower word-count.²⁰ But the argument I have just put about its causation is ultimately a literary-critical and literary-biographical matter, to which, in the nature of the debate, there can be no closure. For the editor, the fact remains that Conrad himself decided that a single version of the novel would go forwards to book publication; and there would have been no room in the market for two book versions, even assuming that the longer version could later have been safely extracted from TS. So the Cambridge edition will provide this shorter version. The typescript in its revised state will therefore provide the copy-text, and the apparatus will record what Conrad jettisoned along the way.

Editorial resolution?

Seen in retrospect this final, shorter version seems like the destination of a journey. Nevertheless, to see it as a teleologically preordained one, a tranquil flowering that was always aimed at from the start and that therefore ought exclusively represent the text of the whole work, is a sentimentality. It flies in the face of the arduous textual journey of discovery that Conrad had in fact undertaken. If we instead look at the journey phenomenologically we see a writer who is not so much looking steadily at the final destination as trying to work out, at every point, where to go next, to discover what the next step will be. The evidence of this, as already argued, appears in the manuscript itself as Conrad backs up and has another go at getting to the next sentence; and, on a larger scale, in the use of the typed sections to propel his writing in the manuscript further. The retyping of the intermediate typescript of the first half of the novel served the same impulse, only on a larger scale.

At the end of January 1910 Conrad thought he had reached the destination. In retrospect we can see that he had only discovered a temporary point of stasis. His subsequent breakdown rearmed him by bringing him back to the very writing that had helped cause the breakdown, but now with a different aim and in a different frame of mind. Now in April–May 1910 he realised that this was not where the novel needed to settle. He found another, shorter solution. And having found it he sent away the typescript for someone else to deal with and to correct. In effect, he abandoned it, could not bear to look at what was, for him, all too closely associated with his recent mental and

²⁰ CL4 311.

physical suffering. A few months later he summoned up the resolve to attend to the proofs; he did settle into proof revisions for the *English Review* and then for Methuen's first edition. Via these means the novel regained his attention; but then things went wrong – we are not exactly sure what – in the supply of the Methuen proofs to him. He got angry and exploded. He never got the chance to have the whole set of proofs in front of him at once.²¹ And finally there is that letter to Galsworthy where Conrad wonders whether he deleted 'recklessly' some very good material after all. 'There are passages which should have remained.'

So what we have is a default final version to edit, but it is not one that automatically invalidates the earlier, longer version. It is more honest to say only that the final version is a different one responding to changed circumstances and intention. Both versions have a claim – different claims – to be called *Under Western Eyes*; but it might be less confusing to call the longer version *Razumov* since that was its title during nearly all of its long gestation period.²²

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Textual authority is a working, pragmatic concept. It appeals to criteria that have a certain currency in the present and, the editor hopes, in the future. Textual authority is not ownership, a concept with legal-moral implications that only cloud the editorial endeavour. Yet textual authority and textual ownership are often conflated by reviewers of editions and by those commentators who are tempted to call editions 'definitive'. There is no such textual condition.

Once the conflation of ownership and authority is removed from the editorial scene – and similarly the 1940s and postwar idea of the aesthetic object entrenched by New Criticism – the contribution that scholarly editions are best placed to make emerges as essentially historical. At their best, editions can offer a finely calibrated index of the author's career and intellectual project, and of the broader literary history and print culture of the period. Looked at in this way, the edition's reading text can equally be a final-intentions one or some other defensibly established one, since the point of the reading text becomes to afford the reader access to the apparatus, textual

²¹ Conrad to Pinker, 13 September 1911, *CL4* 478.

²² There is a great deal more to be said about the textual transmission, especially the complexities caused by Robert Garnett's correction of the two new clean-typescript copies that were sent to the *English Review* and the *North American Review* for their serialisations, and also about Conrad's deliberately variant revisions of the later section of the novel when he was working on triplicate proofs: this will be covered in my 'The Texts: An Essay' in the Cambridge edition.

commentary and explanatory notes. The reading text then serves as the common point of reference.

To speak of the edition in this way is to acknowledge the German point of view, discussed above. However, the distinct and very useful benefit of a final-intentions (Anglo-American) method of establishing a reading text is that it produces, in a finalised form, the text that one of the textual agents, typically the author and over a very limited period of time, struggled to get into a form he or she was happy with or at least decided should go forward.

Much fascinating evidence of earlier intentions is, admittedly, set aside in the finalising of a reading text. But this text crystallises for permanent view and study, one and only one – though a particularly interesting one – of the fascinating worm-holes through the textual imbroglio that the production of literary works in the Modernist period nearly always entails. It is an editorially achieved version, a diachronic retrieval from various documentary sources: some extant, some not. It is not ‘the work itself’, since there is no such securely objective thing. In particular, the critical establishment of a reading text does not negate the rest of the textual history of the work. The study of that history, especially of other versions, is perfectly legitimate. The edition’s textual apparatus is, or ought to be, designed to facilitate this study. Editors sweat tears of blood over the thousands of entries in their apparatus. They devoutly wish that readers would use them. For *Under Western Eyes* there are about 1,600 wordings in the two serialisations and first editions that vary from wordings in Conrad’s revised typescript.²³

That said, it remains true that the reading text of *Under Western Eyes*, will be much the same in wording as the English first edition. The editorial work is still proceeding, but I anticipate that we will end up with only about 200 substantives that vary from those of the Methuen first edition. Our choice of copy-text allows us to countermand the textual effects of the typescript organised and corrected by Robert

²³ Collation of TS in its revised state (TSr) against the two serials and the two first editions reveals about 1,600 substantive variants. Of them, about 360 (roughly, 23 per cent) appeared in the four printed texts (i.e. the two serialisations and the English and American first editions). The overwhelming bulk of them must have been made by Robert Garnett or his typist. Another 580 (36 per cent) appear in all the printed texts but the *North American Review*: this agreement reflects changes by Conrad that he made on duplicate or triplicate proofs of the *English Review*. About another 13 per cent are exclusively shared by the *English Review* and the Methuen first edition, mainly the result of failed transcriptions of corrections to the duplicate *English Review* proofs sent to Harpers for the first American edition. Only 2 per cent are shared by the *North American Review* and the Harper first edition.

Garnett. Thus the number of accidentals in the Cambridge edition that vary from the Methuen will be a very much higher figure, and every one of them potentially has tonal or other subtle effects on meaning and rhythm.²⁴ Of the substantives, however, many will be shifts in the alternates shall/will; these/those; this/that; which/that. Words such as these are ones with which Conrad had difficulty throughout his career. The low number of substantive differences reflects the fact that Conrad was a hardworking, attentive writer who venerated the high ideal of art and wanted to bring his novels under that banner. Thus he sought to keep control of the text of his works and to perfect them in typescript and proofs, though he cared relatively little for the inaccuracies or variation that occurred in his periodical publications, especially American ones. As a result the variant wordings in the serialisations may for some purposes prove to be more revealing than our emendations of the copy-text (TS in its revised state); and the 18,000 words left behind in TS will without doubt prove to be the most intriguing phenomenon for interpretation.

To use a critical edition with the grain is to treat its reading text as its centre and primary rationale. The justification of a critical edition may lie, however, just as much in the information, argument and evidence that the reading text indexes in the different parts of the volume. Good editions sweep away false impressions and generalisations that have hitherto seemed self-evident. They open works up for different kinds of inspection than were previously possible. This is reading against their grain. The test of a good edition is whether it manages to change the way in which the work is understood; and this is not something that happens overnight. On this reasoning an edition of the long version of *Under Western Eyes* (perhaps as 'Razumov') would also be justified since it would be a significant intervention into the literary critical debate. That, however, is a challenge for a later team of scholars to take up.

²⁴ All the printed states imposed, in the normal way, a level of regularisation. Typesetters and in-house editors would have contributed to this. Nevertheless, the underlying effect of the Garnett typescript on variants from TSr in punctuation, spelling and other accidentals was considerable. Taking Part III Chapter 3 as an example, of the nearly 570 accidentals that vary from those in TSr, 32 per cent appear in all four printed texts. The overwhelming bulk of these must derive from that typescript.

List of illustrations and captions

1. Manuscript of *Under Western Eyes*, page 1182 (Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University)
2. Manuscript of *Under Western Eyes*, page 314 (Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University)
3. Manuscript of *Under Western Eyes*, page 315 (Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University)
4. Manuscript of *Under Western Eyes*, page '447 & 448' [178] (Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University)
5. Manuscript of *Under Western Eyes*, page 449 (Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University)