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A STUDY OF THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF FICTION
IN THE CONRAD-FORD COLLABORATION

by

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I

On October 28, 1898, in a letter to John Galsworthy, Joseph Conrad wrote, "I concluded arrangements for collaboration with Hueffer. He was pleased. I think it's all right."¹ Thus in 1898, following an introduction of the two authors by Edward Garnett, began a ten year collaboration between Ford Madox Hueffer, later Ford, and Joseph Conrad.

The two authors wrote together and conversed constantly during the early years of the collaboration. They lived at each other's homes, made joint Continental trips for the purpose of writing, and traded their individual circles of friends. Ford speaks of their continual rendering of descriptions as they drove along country lanes by voicing the images in French, translating this into English, then translating the English phrase into French again.² He adds that they would sit day after day, month after month, year after year, "devising of literature."³ They discussed and evaluated their individual as well as their joint works, during and long after the period of actual collaboration. Even Jessie Conrad, the novelist's wife, who seems to have had a personal antipathy toward her husband's collaborator, admits "...The Mirror of the Sea owes a great deal to his [Ford's] ready and patient
assistance—not perhaps to the actual writing, but that book would never have come into being if Joseph Conrad had had no intelligent person with whom to talk over these intimate reminiscences." But Conrad himself mentions the collaboration only casually in his many letters, and not at all in his autobiographical books, *The Mirror of the Sea* and *A Personal Record*.

That members of a joint endeavor to write a novel would have strong influence on each other's literary style cannot be denied. When H. G. Wells was told of the arrangement, he begged Ford not to collaborate with Conrad because he would undoubtedly spoil the latter's style. But Ford himself refused to abandon the idea, for the collaboration had been at Conrad's insistence. And the partnership, in which the elder writer had referred to Ford as the "finest stylist in England," began. Of their working relationship during these years of the collaboration, Ford says, "Conrad and I worked together during many years with absolute oneness of purpose...." However, Conrad's offhand references to the work would seem definitely to lessen this "oneness."

It was during this period that Conrad published alone his *Lord Jim* (1900), *Nostromo* (1904), *The Secret Agent* (1907), numerous short stories, and the autobiographical *Mirror of the Sea* (1906); while Ford worked alone on *The Benefactor* (1905), *The Fifth Queen and How She Came to
Court (1906), An English Girl (1907), Privy Seal (1907), The Fifth Queen Crowned (1908), and Mr. Apollo (1908). Working in the partnership, the authors produced The Inheritors (1901), Romance (1903), and The Nature of a Crime. This last work was published in 1909 in The English Review under the pseudonym Baron Ignatz von Aschendorf, and not reprinted in book form until 1924. These three novels were the only products from the joint pen of Conrad and Ford. Goldring in his biography of Ford adds "The Sisters" as an unfinished work of the collaboration, but Ford had already admitted that the fragment was entirely Conrad's. The biographical Authors Today and Yesterday states that with Ford, Conrad also wrote "Amy Foster" and "Tomorrow." According to Ford, however, the short story had been his originally, but Conrad took it over and completely rewrote it. And Conrad, in a letter of 1905, says that he discussed the play "Tomorrow" with Ford, but that the writing was done alone in Galsworthy's studio.

Conrad and Ford began the collaboration for the express purpose of writing Romance, a sketchily begun story by Ford called Seraphina. Conrad in a letter to Ford in 1903 is still referring to the book by the latter title. The work on this novel was interrupted, however, to write The Inheritors, and Romance was not completed until 1903. The authors separated shortly after the publication
of the latter, but continued their friendly and advisory relationship. Conrad writes in October 1905 to H. G. Wells that he hasn't seen anyone but Ford, who is "sort of a lifelong habit." There occurred a brief working reunion of the two authors in December 1908 for the first publication of The English Review under Ford's editorship. In July 1909, however, Conrad denies in a cold letter to Ford the charge that Some Reminiscences was in a "ragged condition," adding still more coldly that he doesn't wish to contribute any longer to The English Review. Mrs. Conrad further adds that "for the years from 1909, the two had been as far apart in thought as in actual personal contact."

Mention of The Nature of a Crime reoccurs, however, in 1924 just previous to Conrad's death, when it is published in book form. Conrad writes to his agent, Eric Pinker, July 5, 1924, "You are right. I don't want to sign any copies of The Nature of a Crime, or make myself specially responsible for that idiotic publication." Fifteen days later he writes that he does not wish O'Brien to have it for his 1924 short stories collection because it is eighteen years old. He complains that the press has been alluding to it as a fresh product of collaboration, and assures Pinker that he may deny this charge.
II

A concise statement of Conrad's theory of fiction would be difficult to find or to prove. He began writing as a sailor, continued writing as a land-trapped sea captain who had to make a living, and completed his life, writing with still a longing glance at the ocean. He never wrote any books on theory, and never published any analyses of his own novels. As he writes to Arthur Symons, "I've never asked myself, or looked into myself or thought of myself." He contends in 1918 that his methods of composition were always changing, not because he was unstable, he hastens to add, but simply because he was free. In 1923, he must admit that he doesn't know too much about his own work, which at times appears to be devoid of literary theories: as he writes to Edward Garnett:

Things get themselves written—and you like them. Things get themselves into shape—and they are tolerable. But when I want to write—when I do consciously try to write or to construct, then my ignorance has full play....

Nor has he any definite statement concerning what he wished to gain from a collaboration with the "finest stylist in England." Ford, in 1924, says that Conrad thought in French, then had to translate into English, and that he wanted to collaborate with a cultured literary Englishman.
to aid his colloquial vocabulary.  

Conrad, however, has repeatedly denied that he had ever made a conscious choice between French and English, insisting that before 1895 and *Almayer's Folly* he had been "for years and years thinking in English." Even Ford himself, in 1928, disregards his original linguistic reason for the collaboration, and says, "... what we worked at was not so much specific books, as at the formation of a literary theory...." But again this is Ford, not Conrad. It may have been as Kenner suggests, that it was Ford, and not Conrad, "who was able to disengage technique from intuition sufficiently to make useful statements about narrative procedures." 

Yet it is Conrad who writes in 1905 that "a novelist is a historian, the preserver, the keeper, the expounder, of human experience;" that "every novelist must begin by creating for himself a world, great or little, in which he can honestly believe," a world in which he is "the only reality... among imaginary things, happenings, and people." Conrad adds finally that "this world cannot be made otherwise than in[the novelist's] own image," and should come from an imagination matured by the observation of mankind with all its failings, errors, and obscure virtues. In a letter to John Galsworthy he says, "In a book... [the novelist] should love the idea and be scrupulously faithful to... [his] conception of life. There lies the honor of a writer." In this same letter he adds that the novelist
"must preserve an attitude of perfect indifference, the part of creative power. A creator must be indifferent." Although Conrad is reported to have disclaimed Flaubert as his teacher, Ford says that the French novelist was the master of style for both himself and his collaborator. And this ideal of aloofness alone shows Conrad's indebtedness to Flaubert. The latter writes, "Everything should be done coldly, with poise," and adds the words that Conrad was to echo almost exactly, "An artist must be in his work like God in creation, invisible and all-powerful: he should be everywhere felt, but nowhere seen." And Conrad was to disengage technique from intuition long enough to write in the spirit of Flaubert:

The attitude of cold unconcern is the only reasonable one.... The mysteries of a universe made of drops of fire and clods of mud do not concern us in the least. The fate of a humanity condemned ultimately to perish from cold is not worth troubling about. If you take it to heart it becomes an unendurable tragedy. If you believe in improvement you must weep, for the attained perfection must end in cold, darkness, and silence. In a dispassionate view the ardour for reform, improvement, for virtue, for knowledge and even for beauty is only a vain sticking up for appearances, as though one were anxious about the cut of one's clothes in a community of blind men.

This was how Conrad viewed the novelist. This was how he imagined the sincere, honest, and indifferent creator, who yet has an "essential humanity." But how did he view the novel itself? How did he visualize the actual technique
of writing prose fiction?

As might be expected, the problem of style concerned him most. He writes to Edward Garnett in 1896, only one year after the publication of his first novel, of his growing sophistication and conscious desire for perfection in technique. And two years later he laments, "I seem to have lost all sense of style and yet I am haunted, mercilessly haunted, by the necessity of style." Accompanying this preoccupation with style comes the novelist's obsession with language and the proper word, which Conrad saw as all powerful. As did Ford, he followed Flaubert in the unending search for the mot juste.

Conrad's almost reverent regard for words is shown in the simple statement, "I... have never sought in the written word anything else but a form of the Beautiful..." In 1899 he writes to Galsworthy, "...every word is an object to be considered anxiously with heart searchings and a spirit of severe resolution. Don't write them (words) hurriedly...." One part of the agonizing toil put into each work by Conrad was just this careful weighing of every word.

Yet still another part of each novel, related to the choice of words and as important to Conrad, was the rendering of images. As he himself writes while on an Italian tour, "I am but a novelist, I must speak in images." The problem of imagery occurs again and again throughout
Conrad's letters, and will appear again with the same prominence in Ford Madox Ford's theories of writing. To R. B. Cunninghame Graham on the subject, Conrad says, "I don't start with an abstract notion, I start with definite images and as their rendering is true some little effect is produced." Transcribing these images, Conrad dredged his own memory for scenes, locations, and figures, using always his personal conception of truth. For the truth of an image was paramount; it must have the entrails of reality. He considered any slight narrative exaggeration as no more than the slightly loudened tone of an actor on stage, the conversational voice heightened in order to convey.

But he was as careful about the above mentioned effect as he was about the truth of his images. Unusual for a novelist, he repeatedly cautions other writers not to combine action with their descriptions. Emphasizing that quality for which he has often been criticized, he states that in a descriptive passage, "any suggestion of action is detrimental. It weakens the effect." This statement points toward his famous preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus* in which he says the purpose of writing is "before all, to make you see." Without movement or action, the image may be able to arrest, for the space of a breath, the hands busy about the work of the earth, and compel men entranced by the sight of distant goals to glance for a moment at the surrounding vision of form and colour, of
sunshine and shadows; to make them pause.
for a look, for a sigh, for a smile...

But although striving for accuracy of rendition and
effect, Conrad is ever conscious of the readability of his
novels. He often speaks of his short stories as tales in
which he has tried to be simply entertaining. To him
mere technical perfection is always cold unless there is
a real glow to warm it from within.

Characterization, which so involves some writers, is
not of such primary importance to Conrad, who did not take
character as his starting point. Though humanity is his
principal interest and he considers the novelist a "chronicler
of the adventures of mankind," he writes to Galsworthy
that a novelist cannot invent depth for his characters be-
cause in nature there are only surfaces. The men and
women who populate his books were personalities he had
known or had heard about, and each new acquaintance fur-
nished a possible subject. As Ford has said, everyone
Conrad had ever known became a part of his literature.

In developing a character, Conrad emphasized what he called
an inward point of view, but exactly what he meant by this
he writes to Edward Noble:

... When I speak about writing from an in-
ward point of view, -- I mean from the depth
of your own inwardness. I do not want you
to drag out for public inspection the very
entrails of your characters. Lay bare your
own heart, and people will listen to you
for that, -- and only that is interesting.
The themes of his novels did concern Conrad intensely, however. His belief in the need for truth in fiction has already been mentioned; but joined to it was a feeling of great responsibility as a novelist. And he tried to exhibit in his writing those criteria he asked of others. As was shown by his standards for the novelist, Conrad's first concern was with mankind; he writes to Arthur Symons in 1908, "I have always approached my task in the spirit of love for mankind." Thus the most worthy theme to him was that of man's pursuit of happiness. Conceiving of this pursuit as man's motivating force, Conrad was able to see the whole of man's experience, his entire struggle and tragedy in the kingdom of the earth, as stemming from his quest for peace and contentment. This theme is central in many of the books whose material was found in Conrad's personal memories.

This brief summary of Conrad's major ideas of the novel extends from the beginning of his writing career to his death in 1924, and contains all the contradictory opinions of a mind maturing over a period of thirty years. But as was faintly suggested earlier, it was Ford who consciously thought out and systematized novel technique, and it is from him that one learns the actual theories used during the period of collaboration.

In his book, *Joseph Conrad, A Personal Remembrance*, Ford tells subjectively how he saw the collaboration and
how the partnership began. He describes his meeting with Conrad in these words:

We agreed that the writing of novels was the one thing of importance that remained to the world and that what the novel needed was the New Form. We confessed that each of us desired one day to write Absolute Prose.  

He describes his collaborator even more subjectively, adding the already expressed opinion that the collaboration was originally designed to improve Conrad's English. He says in a later article that Conrad wished an easy use of the vernacular, and that of the three kinds of the English language, the written English with no relation to life, the spoken English of the streets, and the drawing room or living language, Conrad wished to assimilate the last into his writing. Ford concludes that he may have been some assistance in this assimilation.

He lists the early problems of two authors trying to write a single work, each striving for his own note in the writing. He says Conrad one day suddenly deduced the idea that a third person was actually doing the writing, and that collaboration itself was justified because this mythical third party was composing. From that time Ford says the two authors wrote in combination rather than apart. He admits that Conrad had a greater command of architectonics of the novel, but that he himself had the greater control over words. In their collaboration and in separate works
Ford says they modified each other. Yet their relationship was essentially professional, and most of their discussions were confined to literature. They had the common ground of French literature when they had exhausted the English, and thus spent much time translating their English into French in order to judge the exactness of each word. Ford, at this point, discounts again Conrad's repudiation of the idea that he chose English over French, by pointing out that anyone who is bilingual has to make this choice every time he wishes to speak or write a syllable.

Ford tells briefly of the amount of collaboration done on each of the separate novels, which, however, will be considered in the individual sections on the novels themselves. The main purpose of *A Personal Remembrance*, besides providing a vehicle for Ford's mental picture of Conrad, is to summarize the novel technique evolved by the two authors during their collaboration. This Ford-Conrad formula for the novel will be considered under the following headings: the general effect; the philosophy behind the novel; the selection of details; conversation, with its related aspect of characterization; and style.

(1) Ford and Conrad believed that the general effect of a novel on the reader should be the same effect life itself has on mankind—-not a chronological order of events, but a first impression, then the progression backwards and forwards over the past as new bits of information are learned.
This theory indicates a close relationship to their predecessor, Henry James, who believed that the novelist's purpose was "to produce the illusion of life." Ford and Conrad thought that each novel should render its impressions gradually to the reader, as does the actual situation in which one person meets a new acquaintance. Life does not narrate, and since they wanted to give an effect of life, they, too, presented impressions rather than narrations. This would again show an influence from Henry James, for that novelist let his characters act their parts instead of narrate them.

Ford would here admit to the charge of impressionism as he states that the collaboration wished to show a mind occupied with its usual numerous thoughts. Great portions of the mind are more generally on completely extraneous objects, and it was this effect of the cluttered and alive mind that the two authors desired in their novels.

(2) The philosophy behind the novel to Ford and Conrad was twofold. First, the author must in the beginning, in the middle, and in the ending, remember his story; and second, the business of the author with the world is rendering, not altering. The first part concerns what Ford calls the progression d'effet, or the principle that every word must carry the story forward. If a word does not contribute to either movement of the action or heightened effect, it should be deleted. Concerning the rendering,
although the partnership wanted to present a unified effect, they realized this was not to be gained at the expense of falsifying the images. It was to be achieved rather by selection.

(3) Ford begins the section on selection with the statement, not original with him, that the whole of art is selection. For any mood or effect the artist must choose his own particular details from the slice of life he has used. But applying this specifically to the novel, Ford says that the principal idea is to select in such a way as to keep the reader completely unaware that the author exists. In the author's choice of images and words, he must suppress himself and remember only his story and his effect.

(4) For the pair of authors, however, in actual practice, the selection in conversation gave the most trouble. First, there is the choice of the right words for each character, that his speech will be distinctly his and no one else's. Then there appears the problem of whether to put the words directly in the mouths of the characters, or to let the author himself relate the conversations when he is supposedly non-existent to the reader. Added to this is the method by which no character should ever answer the speech that goes directly before his. The device was originally purposed to give the effect of actual conversation in which one person is so busy preparing his own
next speech that he never listens to or answers the previous remarks of those around him. Ford calls this technique, with its additional element of surprise for the reader, their interrupted method of handling interviews.

It is in the problem of rendering convincing conversations that is also found the most trying question of revealing character. Ford again presents the actual way in which men must become acquainted in life, one trait and then another revealing itself over time. It was by this natural and gradual accumulative method rather than by straight narration, that the authors wished to introduce their characters to their readers. Ford also adds here that in characterization, Conrad felt obliged to "justify" all his characters. To Conrad, before any other consideration, a story must convey a sense of inevitability, and thus he must give each figure convincing and justifiable motives as he introduces them.

(5) Finally there enters the all-consuming problem of style. Ford says in a later article that what he himself desired from the collaboration was

>a limpidity of expression that should make prose seem like the sound of someone talking in a rather low voice into the ear of a person that he liked.69

In A Personal Remembrance, however, he is more general in his statement that both he and Conrad agreed that style had no other business than to make the work interesting. A good passage of style to them was one which used fresh
usual words from the beginning to the end, for use of too startling words is as apt to become as fatiguing as overused words. There follow the corollaries that a good style would be one which would pass unnoticed by the reader, and that every word would carry the story forward.

Language is ever the concern of style, and it was over the language question that Ford and Conrad spent most of their energies. For, according to Ford, good writing depends on the per cent of right words. The collaboration aimed at an exceedingly high per cent. Conrad reworked his writing and that of the partnership extensively in order to obtain exact rather than vague connotations, and for this reason Ford says that his collaborator did not like the English language. He quotes Conrad as saying that trying to make a direct statement in English is the same as trying to kill a mosquito with a forty foot stock whip; that in English, no word is a single word or has sharp edges. According to Ford, Conrad considered all English prose as blurred.

Briefly combining and summarizing these essential points of the novel formulae of the two authors, one finds the following general ideas: (1) That the novelist should deal with life as he finds it, attempting to depict characters and images as truthfully as he is able. He should believe in his images and his personages, and attempt to communicate to the reader a sense of their reality.
(2) That style, with its selection, language, and proper wording, is the important element in rendering the effect of the images. The style should be such that maximum communication between author and reader is achieved, and at the same time it should be illuminated by the true human warmth of its author. (3) That the word itself, however exact and appropriate it must be, is subordinate to the effect and to the story. The reader must never become interested in the wording instead of the plot. And (4) that the only valid concern of an author is mankind. These points will now be studied in the three novels produced by the collaboration of Ford and Conrad, writing under the rule of their guiding principles.
As mentioned previously, the collaboration was begun for the purpose of writing Romance, but the work on this novel was interrupted briefly to write The Inheritors. The latter, written comparatively quickly, was published in 1901, two years earlier than Romance, and may therefore be considered the first product of the partnership.

Ford tells in A Personal Remembrance how he shyly carried the opening chapters of the manuscript to Conrad, and how his colleague became immediately engrossed in the story. He then expresses amazement that Conrad should have been so enthusiastic with The Inheritors, and confesses that he was bewildered by such a spontaneous interest. He suggests that it may have been the attraction of finishing a book quickly, or it may have been Conrad's affection for his collaborator. But in an article four years later, he adds that Conrad was fascinated by the interwoven theme of incest. Although the word "incest" does not seem to appear in any of Conrad's letters, in his prefaces or author's notes, or in any of his novels, Ford states that his collaborator was obsessed by the subject. He says that Conrad's strongest desire
was to write about the relations between men and women, and especially about this particular relationship because it was one of the deepest and most futile of passions. He concludes the article with this reference to the novel under discussion:

And curiously enough The Inheritors, the first of our collaborations to be published, has a faint and fantastic suggestion of—unrequited—love between brother and sister. It was as much as anything, because of this, that Conrad fiercely—almost fanatically—insisted on collaborating in this book and interrupting the course of Romance upon which we had already been laboring for several years.70

This article was not produced until four years after Conrad's death, however, and again it is all Ford. And as the suggestion of incest in the book is even less than secondary, it alone is hardly sufficient to motivate a collaboration; Ford's question still remained why Conrad should be interested in interrupting Romance to write a political satire.

But Ford's contradictory picture of Conrad extends over a period of more than thirty years, and thus at another time he blithely states that Conrad was above all a politician.77 Reference need be made only to The Secret Agent, Under Western Eyes, and the political essays of Notes on Life and Letters to realize that Conrad had more than a casual interest in politics. But he has also said in A Personal Record that an author must use his own
warehouse of memories for material unless his purpose in writing is to reprove, to praise, or to teach mankind how to behave. 78 He adds, "Being neither quarrelsome, nor a flatterer, nor a sage, I have done none of these things." 79 And yet with Ford Madox Ford, about the year 1900, he did reprove mankind in this slim volume of political satire.

The Inheritors was written during the early years of the Anglo-Boer War, a war with which Conrad was decidedly concerned. Whether or not he was above all a politician, the fact remains that his letters of 1899 and 1900 contain discussion of generals, strategies, and, to his Polish relatives, justifications of the English government and army. 80 It may have been just this fervour of the period that attracted Conrad to The Inheritors. For the book was designed as a rather allegorical backing of Balfour in the government. The villain was to be, again allegorically, Joseph Chamberlain who made the war, and the sub-villain, under a thinly veiled representation, King Leopold II of Belgium. 81 It was probably just this foolishly provoked and continued war in South Africa that seduced Conrad away from his memories and Romance.

As was mentioned, the original idea for the novel had been Ford's. The actual writing in the novel was his as well. In this work, Conrad left the composition in the hands of Ford, but put the finishing touches on the scenes himself. Ford says he would bring the meaning of
each scene into focus with his "final tap." But he also reports Conrad as saying that when the time came for each of them to publish his own collected works, he would take Romance and leave The Inheritors to Ford because it was practically all his. This Ford admits. He states that the book contains approximately seventy-five thousand words, and that "in the whole of it there cannot be more than a thousand---certainly there cannot be two---of Conrad's writing." He then proceeds to quote the two following passages as practically all of Conrad's writing in the entire book:

"'You can't frighten me,' I said....
'No one can frighten me now.' A sense of my inaccessibility was the first taste of an achieved triumph. I had done with fear. The poor devil before me appeared infinitely remote. He was lost; but he was only one of the lost: one of those that I could see already overwhelmed by the rush from the floodgates opened at my touch. He would be destroyed in good company; swept out of my sight together with the past they had known and with the future they had waited for. But he was odious. 'I am done with you,' I said.

'Eh, what?... Who wants to frighten?...
I wanted to know what's your pet vice....Won't tell? You might safely---I'm off....Want me to tell mine?...No time....I'm off.... Ask the policeman.... crossing sweeper will do... I'm going.'

'You will have to,' I said.

'What....Dismiss me?...Throw the indispensable Soane overboard like a squeezed lemon?...What would Fox say?...Eh? But you can't, my boy. Not you. Tell you... can't....Beforehand with you... sick of it....I'm off...to the Islands...the Islands of the Blest.... Come too...dismiss yourself
out of all this. Warm sand, warm, mind you. You won't?' He had an injured expression. 'Well, I'm off. See me into the cab, old chap, you're a decent fellow after all... not one of these beggars who would sell their best friend... for a little money... or some woman. Well, see me off.'

"...I went downstairs and watched him march up the street with a slight stagger under the pallid dawn.... The echo of my footsteps on the flagstones accompanied me, filling the empty earth with the sound of my footsteps."85

And the second passage of what Ford calls "complete Conrad":

"I turned towards the river and on the broad embankment the sunshine enveloped me, friendly, familiar, warm like the care of an old friend. A black dumb-barge drifted, clumsy and empty, and the solitary man in it wrestled with the heavy sweep, straining his arms, throwing his face up to the sky at every effort....

"The barge with the man still straining at the oar has gone out of sight under the arch of the bridge, as through a gate into another world. A bizarre sense of solitude stole upon me and I turned my back upon the river as empty as my day. Hansoms, broughams, streamed with a continuous muffled roll of wheels and a beat of hoofs. A big dray put in a note of thunder and a clank of chains...."86

These two passages are all that Ford attributes to Conrad alone. The other 209 pages he says he merely discussed with Conrad or wrote by himself. He concludes the allotment of each writer's separate work with this paragraph:

The punctuation... is that of the uniform edition of The Collected Works of Joseph Conrad, the cover of which gives the book to Joseph Conrad alone. The punctuation and the misprints, which are many, are American, and not the writer's [Ford himself]. The rest is.87
This would lay any blame or praise for the novel on Ford's writing desk; but actually Conrad cannot be exonerated so easily. When the time came to publish his collected works, he included The Inheritors as well as Romance. And in 1905 he describes to E. L. Sanderson an unnamed book he is sending:

Pray don't believe that the volume I am sending is aimed at individuals. It is in origin and conception directed against the tendencies of the time,—more or less of every time. We do not want to attack these with a bludgeon, and perhaps the blade of our rapier is a little thin. Otherwise I am not ashamed to stand up for the book, which has already brought me some abuse and perhaps shall bring more....

He concludes this description, which can be applied to The Inheritors only, with the words,

I haven't written it all myself but I worked very hard at it all the same. 88

Even with his alleged two thousand words only in the novel, Conrad must still be acknowledged a collaborator in The Inheritors.

"We agreed that the general effect of a novel must be the general effect that life makes on mankind. A novel must therefore not be a narrative, a report...." These words by Ford, 89 on one of the first rules evolved by the
collaboration, would thus negate plot in its usual sense. Narration would be a secondary element. Yet at the same time, if the two authors did want the novel to contain any story, they had to have some basic design that might be construed as plot. And as both Ford and Conrad were too much the story teller to allow a joint novel to become merely a shapeless blob of impressions, the three works of the collaboration do have a fundamental, although relatively flimsy, structure.

The essential plan of *The Inheritors* is unusually slim, and even Ford must admit that there is none in particular. By chaining the book to the inheritors of the title, a future race from the fourth-dimension, the authors have made the story parallel those of the late nineteenth century science-fiction. The dimensionists, a beautiful woman and her two male accomplices, have descended from the dimension of time to prepare for their inheritance of the rule of the earth. And this basic plot, with its use of the fourth-dimension, occurs in two famous novels from the realm of science-fiction, both written previously to *The Inheritors*. *The Time Machine* of H. G. Wells, published in 1895, tells the story of a man propelled ahead of the present into the fourth-dimension; and Grant Allen's *The British Barbarians*, of that same year, tells of a twenty-fifth century visitor who comes into the present,
departing into his own world by fading into the proper dimension. According to J. O. Bailey's *Pilgrims Through Space and Time*, a study of science-fiction, conceptions of time and space and stories of more than three dimensions were common only among mathematicians before the year 1895, but by the beginning of the twentieth century, the fourth-dimension had become one of the stock devices for science-fiction. That the collaborators knew *The Time Machine* is certain; both authors were personal as well as literary friends of H. G. Wells. With their glib use of fourth-dimension travelers descending into the present, that they knew *The British Barbarians* is probable. But at any rate, by 1900, it was not extraordinary that they should relate the tale of a fumbling young man of the present struggling vainly against the invasion of the fourth-dimensionists of the future.

But it was not for the sake of science-fiction that Ford and Conrad introduced this element of the future. With reference again to Bailey's work on science-fiction, one finds that the utopian or satirical science-fiction novel employs the future to illustrate a coming better world or to show man how he can build a better world for coming generations. And the collaboration is not attempting either of these purposes: Ford and Conrad are not showing men how to prepare for the future or even that there is hope for posterity; they are showing instead
the callousness of the future to the stagnant present. As
noted above, it was not a scientific satire that they wished
to create, but a political satire. Ford calls the novel an
allegorico-realistic romance, which "showed the superseding
of previous generations and codes by the merciless young
who are always alien and without remorse." And as Conrad
explains to Pawling,

> The authors by the introduction of the
> fourth D[imension] tried to remove their
> work from the sphere of mere personalities.
> They attack not individuals, but the spir-
> it of the age—the inner tendencies
> arising from a purely materialistic view
> of life which even reaches the lower
> classes....

A brief summary of the rather doughy foundation which
supports this purpose is as follows. A young English writer
becomes involved in an indistinctly explained scheme to
colonize Greenland. The colonization is to be carried on
by a little European principality, allegorically Belgium,
which attempted much the same sort of plan in the Congo.
The British government is to back this little European
country, and the journalist's part is to write for a peri-
odical applauding the government and the scheme. Also
involved are the three fourth-dimensionists, the two men
contending in high governmental circles, and the brilliant
ruthless woman. The woman of the group poses as the sis-
ter of the unwilling author, who inevitably must fall in
love with her. This unrequited affection is the only sug-
gestion of incestuous relationship in the book. But because
the couple come from different dimensions, the affair is as hopeless as the colonial scheme which the dimensionists are determined to ruin. Thus, what was originally a philanthropic enterprise is destroyed by a betrayal, arranged by the dimensionists, that brings before the public the actual brutalities, famines, and vices in Greenland. And as the scheme fails, it drags down the opponents of the futurists, leaving the latter in control of significant governmental positions. The closing scene pictures the young journalist, who had ignored his one opportunity to save the colonization and the colonizers, listlessly watching the growing dimensionist power. In the futile words of the present, he says, "Well, it is not a very gay world."95

The basic conflict of the story comes from the inward agony of the writer-hero, as he slowly realizes that the fourth-dimensionists are an actuality, and as he gradually recognizes his own impotence against them. The climactic struggle occurs in the choice he has between aiding the colonizers of the present, or ignoring the situation and thereby aiding the dimensionists of the future. His decision, colored by his love for the fourth-dimensionist woman, is his final tragedy, and he appears to doom the world as well as himself. The dimensionists are beginning to inherit the earth, and he has cut himself off from his own generation as well as from theirs.
The authors introduced the fourth-dimension to obtain a more detached view of the age, but to convince the reader of the story’s probability, they have used settings of actual places. The scenes shift from London to English country estates to Paris with an intended effect of plausibility and movement. The ordinary young English journalist is plunged into the most fantastic of situations, but in the most mundane of places. By the realistic impressions that the young man receives from these settings, an even stronger actuality is established. In the midst of futuristic conversations, dusty present day sunlight bursts through present day windows; faded brown walls and rickety chairs surround dimensionist plottings.

But external action in the form of the relentless battle for control is seen only hazily through this hero’s eyes. Scenes are conveyed to the reader by means of his impressions, and he often only vaguely understands the significance of events or the consequence of his own acts. He is an observer rather than a participant in the international crisis surrounding him, and more often than not a bewildered observer. Conrad and Ford have been consciously following their theory that the novelist should tell a story with impressions instead of narrations. They depict their hero’s mind filled with his own problems, with the inanimate objects that penetrate his consciousness, and a tiny periphery with impressions of the action.
They let him observe chewed pen staffs on tables as he wanders through climactic situations; they allow him to close his mind against excessive passions as he sits through tragedies and suicides. When he ignores the progress of the action to observe still life, the reader can only helplessly watch the bric-a-brac as well. Thus the physical action in the novel is relatively incidental, and the essence of the plot serves only as a vehicle for the Ford-Conrad novel technique.

Characterization as well is subservient to the collaboration's theories on the technique. The partnership realized that a novel must have characters, but the technique of developing and revealing these characters engrossed them more than actual personalities. They again wished to retain the impression of life, and thus desired to reveal their characters by a gradual unfolding to the reader. Ford explains this theory with the comment that the majority of novels tell a straightforward narrative, whereas in life

... in your gradual making acquaintance-ship with your fellow you never do go straightforward. You meet an English gentleman at your golf club. He is beefy, full of health, the moral of the boy from an English Public School of the finest type. You discover, gradually, that he is
hopelessly neurasthenic, dishonest in matters of small change, but unexpectedly self-sacrificing, a dreadful liar but a most painfully careful student of lepidoptera and, finally, from the public prints, a bigamist who was once, under another name, hammered on the Stock Exchange.... Still, there he is, the beefy, full-fed fellow, moral of an English Public School product. To get such a man in fiction you could not begin at his beginning and work his life chronologically to the end. You must first get him in with a strong impression, and then work backwards and forwards over his past....

This then was the theory. To the collaboration, this was to be the essence of characterization.

Using this conception in The Inheritors, the two authors devised and began with the first person method of telling the story. In this way, the reader is given a strong first impression and a gradual revelation of the narrator as well as of each other figure. The narrator conveys his impressions of the other characters to the reader, and at the same time reveals his own traits and foibles as he talks. This method was well executed later by the collaborators, especially Ford in his more mature works, but here in this early experiment with both the technique and collaboration, use of the first person is unfortunate. Perhaps it is essentially the failure of four hands trying to appear as two, or simply, as Ford concedes, an unsuccessful juvenile attempt. At any rate, neither the narrator nor any other character of the novel emerges with a realistic personality.
The narrator himself, the young writer in the colonization plot, makes a strong opening impression as a complacent, aristocratic, and self-centered young man. On the earliest pages of the story, he thinks to himself:

...I was irritated. After all, I was somebody; I was not a cathedral verger. I had a fancy for myself in those days—a fancy that solitude and brooding had crystallised into a habit of mind. I was a writer with high— with the highest— ideals. I had withdrawn myself from the world, lived isolated, hidden in the countryside, lived as hermits do, on the hope of one day doing something—of putting greatness on paper. He continues disclosing himself as he becomes acquainted with the fourth-dimensionists. The dimensionist woman explains to him the events that are to follow, while these thoughts cruise through his mind:

I was beginning to get a little tired of this. You see, for me, the scene was a veiled flirtation and I wanted to get on. But I had to listen to her fantastic scheme of things.

He is still an ordinary, unthinking Englishman, unable to grasp anything outside his own smug existence. And he is unable to understand:

"Oh, I see," he answered. I don't know what he saw. For myself, I saw nothing.

At last he does realize the dimensionists are an actual threat to the world, but by this time he is in love with the woman who is posing as his sister, and he is virtually numbed by the realization. As the action rises to a climax, the hero-narrator shows himself as a yet uncomprehending and
mundane spectator, still egocentric, but perhaps not quite as smug:

The wheels of the coupe suddenly began to rattle abominably over the cobbles of a narrow street. It was impossible to talk, and I was thrown back upon myself. I found that I was in a temper—in an abominable temper. The sudden sight of that man, her method of greeting him, the intimacy that the scene revealed... the whole thing had upset me...

We passed into one of the larger boulevards, and the thing ran silently. "That de Mersch was crumbling up," she suddenly completed my unfinished sentence; "oh, that was only a grumble—premonitory. But it won't take long now. I have been putting on the screw. Halderschmidt will... I suppose he will commit suicide, in a day or two. And then the—the fun will begin."

I didn't answer. The thing made no impression—no mental impression at all. This quotation well illustrates the contrast between the man of the present and the indifferent woman of the future. She is concerned with the plot and concentrates on her part in the international intrigue, while he occupies himself with reviewing an unpleasant scene. To the slowly mounting crisis he has no reaction.

And at the close of the book, the dimensionists have succeeded, the present is doomed, and he concludes with the still commonplace, still English but now fatalistic, shrug, "Well, it is not a very gay world." The whole affair is personal to him, and he is more perturbed by the fact that he will not see the dimensionist woman again than by the death and destruction that the future rulers of the world
have just accomplished. He began and ended with the same vagueness of purpose as of personality. There is insufficient revelation of his true character to demonstrate to the reader how a person with his traits should react, and there is not enough of this "progression backwards and forwards over his past" to convince the reader that this hero even existed before or after this particular novel.

The story is built on the hero's attitude toward the dimensionists, but he actually skims the action untouched physically or mentally. He is occasionally frightened or hysterical, but for the most part merely numb. He is so unaffected by the events of the story that his strongest feelings of compassion or hopelessness, when he does have them, are not sufficiently motivated to make them worthwhile or even credible to the reader. His moods are revealed as he comes in contact with a situation demanding some reaction: he feels superior to hack writers that he encounters in the colonization scheme; he gradually feels inferior to the dimensionists; he experiences symptoms of pity and regret; he wallows briefly in remorse; and he finally sinks into futility. But never does his personality actually develop. Never is the reader able to bring his character into a bright and steady enough light for focus.

Similarly, the other main figures in the book, the dimensionists, lack reality. This scanty development may
have been intentional, however, for the dimensionists are described as

a race clear-sighted, eminently practical, incredible; with no ideals, prejudices, or remorse; with no feeling for art and no reverence for life; free from any ethical tradition; callous to pain, weakness, suffering and death, as if they had been invulnerable and immortal.  

Little change could take place in a person of such a description; he must begin and conclude his part of the action with the same cold indifference. In this the authors of the Inheritors are successful, for the dimensionists are absolutely consistent. But their characteristics are not revealed in accordance with the theories of the collaboration. As noted by this quotation, the details are simply enumerated. They have not even the pretense of backward and forward progression; they are merely listed.

As has been repeatedly mentioned, the authors introduced this imaginary race from the fourth-dimension for the sake of distance and allegory, but included actual places for the sake of plausibility. For this same reason, the element of realism, they have sprinkled names of actual persons among their allegorical representations. The convincing names of Etchingham, Cunningham, and Granger, simply English, plausible, and capable of belonging to anyone, are combined with symbols for specific persons. Along this line of the satire, the fourth-dimensionist Gurnard stands
for Chamberlain, and the ineffectual Duc de Mersch for Leopold II of Belgium. But the name Fox for one of the dimensionists is incongruous. There have been too many men by the name of Fox in English history for it to escape without connotations. The collaboration also uses Churchill for the name of the British Foreign Secretary. Ford and Conrad probably did not have an actual person in mind here: Lord Randolph Churchill had died in 1895, and his son Winston would have been only twenty-six in 1900, too young for the role; but the appearance of such a famous name in the midst of such a fantastic and improbable sequence of events is somewhat disturbing to the modern reader.

As might be expected from the authors' impressionistic technique, descriptions of all characters except the hero-narrator are extensive. Yet even here, nothing is added to the details through successive views. As one example, the dimensionist woman is first described as:

I had looked at her before; now I cast a sideways, critical glance at her. I came out of my moodiness to wonder what type this was. She had good hair, good eyes, and some charm. Yes. And something besides—a something—a something that was not an attribute of her beauty. The modelling of her face was so perfect and so delicate as to produce an effect of frailness; her glance had an extraordinary strength of life. Her hair was fair and gleaming, her cheeks coloured as if a warm light had fallen on them from somewhere. She was familiar till it occurred to you that she was strange.
She is last described briefly with:

There was that intense beauty, that shadowlessness that was like translucence. And there was her voice.... I had not looked at her; but stood with my eyes averted, very conscious of her standing before me; of her great beauty, of her great glory. 108

She has added not a wrinkle for all her callous destruction, and the narrator has supplied not even the color of her eyes.

In the descriptions of minor characters, in the brief lifelike glimpses of men and women who generally appear only once, however, the collaboration is at its finest. The authors picture grubbing hack writers from the highest to the lowest brackets, doddering men of letters, classic government officials who want to write a book about their ancestors. They paint miniatures of dowagers with family, ruined stockholders with a family, and a single brilliant portrait of a publisher's reader that could be universal. In these deft concise sketches are found the most realistic characterizations of the novel, for in them the collaboration can rely on imagery and style rather than on living personalities.

With its plot thus relegated to a minor role, and its characters little more than pasteboard, The Inheritors is
seen at its best only when the main emphasis is on technique. Forgetting that they agreed technique is first remembering the reader,\textsuperscript{109} Ford and Conrad have written what must be viewed essentially as an experiment in style.

Noting first the opening, the reader finds, after a dedication to Conrad's son and Ford's daughter:

\textbf{CHAPTER ONE}

"Ideas," she said. "Oh, as for ideas---"
"Well?" I hazarded, "as for ideas---?"

We went through an old gateway and I cast a glance over my shoulder. The noon sun was shining over the masonry, over the little saint's effigies, over the little fretted canopies, the grime and the white streaks of bird-droppings.

"There," I said, pointing toward it, "doesn't that suggest something to you?"
She made a motion with her head---half negative, half contemptuous.

"But," I stuttered, "the associations---the ideas---the historical ideas---"
She said nothing.\textsuperscript{110}

This represents what the partnership considered the proper opening for a short novel,\textsuperscript{111} the vivid beginning that must set the tempo of the entire work.\textsuperscript{112} At the same time, the passage represents a compromise which attempts to grip the reader while it introduces the characters, a compromise that the collaboration had to effect between what Ford calls Conrad's preference for dramatic openings and his own for pensive ones.\textsuperscript{113} In almost a direct reversal of the usually accepted Conrad style, Ford would claim the description and credit the dialogue to his collaborator.
But it must be remembered that Ford and not Conrad wrote the beginning of *The Inheritors*, and by Ford's admission, he wrote the rest of the book except for the two already quoted passages that he assigns to Conrad. According to this admission, the style of *The Inheritors* will be predominantly Ford's also. And further, the attitude of the aloof yet genial Englishman hero is better suited to him than to his Polish born collaborator.

The style becomes noticeable immediately for its informal asides to the reader. Although they have not used the direct address of Thackeray, the authors have still included their reader in the scenes. The narrator in describing the fourth-dimension woman at the beginning of the book, must pause to speak to the reader,

> You know how one addresses a young lady who is obviously capable of taking care of herself. That was how I had come across her.

As the action rises, the narrator achieves a small triumph and says over his shoulder to the reader,

> I was not unduly elated, you must understand.

At the end of the story when he has given up the past and is discovering there is no future, he searches London for a sympathizer, with this aside to the reader,

> I rang bell after bell of that gloomy central London district. You know what happens.

Perhaps this is another device for convincing the reader.
that the tale is possible; perhaps the authors think that by dragging the reader in to stand beside their hero, they can arouse in him the emotions of that hero. They arrange for the reader to step into the frame occasionally that they may show him the realism of their picture. They instead succeed only in overpowering him with their paint. By including the little touches of normal existence, they have emphasized more forcibly the contrast between reality and their impossible story.

Another characteristic of the style that is felt, if not noticed, immediately is the use of anticlimax. After an emotionally pregnant scene between the warring present and future, the tempo will drop to the hero's thoughts about his own insignificant problems. The action will attain a peak; the authors will afford relief by a spot of description or the effect of a summer day on the hero-narrator. After the fall of the colonial scheme, the pity due the ruined participants is scattered among the interior decorations that the hero observes. This abrupt change from emotional impact to triviality is the only satiric device carried into the style. But in employing it, the authors have dissipated any climactic effects that their book may have contained. They are so concerned with depicting the realistic juxtaposition of passion and trivia, that they overwork the method and lose any effect it would have had.
But when the authors leave the reader to his own devices and concentrate on establishing a particular mood, they attain a style with the maximum communication. In slices of pure imagery, the collaboration creates a defined impression. They describe the room of an unsuccessful sculptor, and capture the futility, the hopeless and unexhibited genius of the artist that must keep producing, with a sentence:

The room was full of a profusion of little casts, thick with dust upon the shoulders, the hair, the eyelids, on every part that projected outward.

They gaze at the interior of an opera house and are able to render it with an appeal to more than a single sense:

There is something so fantastically tawdry in the coloured marble of the architecture. It is for all the world like a triumph of ornamental soap work; one expects to smell the odours.

They glance briefly at an English club in the early hours of the morning, and the reader is made to believe its reality:

Two men were asleep in armchairs under the gloomy windows. One had his head thrown back, the other was crumpled forward into himself; his frail, white hand just touched the floor. A little further off two young men were talking; they had the air of conspirators over their empty coffee cups.

When they do forget the fantastic fourth-dimensionists, the ineffectual narrator who must keep telling himself he is somebody, and their own progression d'effet that must keep advancing the story, they achieve the purpose of their
**technique. In such passages of description, of which there are many, the authors have selected only the essential details that will create a single mood. With the utmost conservation of the English language, they have pictured whole scenes, caused the feeling of specific moods and particular emotions. They make the reader not only see, but feel, hear, smell, and taste. In these scattered patches without action and without conversation, the authors have selected the exact word for which they expended so much effort.**

The fact that these descriptions occur without any conversation is perhaps significant. The collaboration spent much of its energy on the problem of rendering conversations, and *The Inheritors* is composed principally of dialogue. But it is also this dialogue that finally overloads the already fragile story.

On the subject of conversation, Ford says that the collaboration tried to capture the effect of actual speech, the indefiniteness and vagueness of the English talking. He says:

> If you listen to two Englishmen communicating by means of words, for you can hardly call it conversing, you will find that their speeches are little more than this: A. says, "What sort of a fellow is...you know!" B. replies: "Oh, he's sort of a..." and A. exclaims: "Ah, I always thought so...".

In *The Inheritors* this results in:
"The whiskey will be here in a minute," he said, suddenly. "I don't have it in when What-not's here. He's the Rector, you know; a great temperance man. When we've had a---a modest quencher---we'll get to business."

"Oh," I said, "your letters really meant---"

"Of course," he answered. "Oh, here's the whiskey. Well now, Fox was down here the other night. You know Fox, of course?"

"Didn't he start the rag called---?"

"Yes, yes," Callan answered, hastily, "he's been very successful in launching papers." 124

In addition to using this indefiniteness of speeches, the collaboration attempted their interrupted method of interviews, 125 the principle by which no character ever answers the speech that goes directly before his. With The Inheritors' first person narrative, this principle is accomplished by the hero-narrator's thoughts interrupting the conversations and showing directly that the characters' minds are filled with great shafts of ideas in no way connected with the action. A typical example of this is seen in a conversation between the hero and a group of fellow authors:

"A---remarkable woman---used---to live---in---the---cottage---next---the---mill---at---Stelling," he said; "she was the original of Kate Wingfield."

"In your 'Boldero'?" the chorus chorussed.

Remembrance of the common at Stelling---of the glimmering white faces of the shadowy cottages---was like a cold waft of mist to me. I forgot to say "indeed!"

"She was---a very---remarkable---woman---She---"

I found myself wondering which was real; the common with its misty hedges and blurred moon; or this room with its ranks
of uniformly bound books and its bust of the great man that threw a portentous shadow upward from its pedestal behind the lamp.\textsuperscript{126}

This is perhaps lifelike, but as noted in the analysis of the plot, if used too often and too much, it can also become poor story-telling.

In the rendering of conversations, one other point must be mentioned, the excessive use of "he said." Ford felt that "he said" could be used as often as a writer liked, and that the reader would notice it no more than "a," "and," or "the."\textsuperscript{127} But Conrad had almost a phobia about repeating the same phrase over and over, and would follow Ford's copy, substituting "he ejaculated," "he muttered," etc.\textsuperscript{128} Unfortunately he did not delete the phrase entirely. In only the first two pages of the book, one finds: "she said," "I hazarded," "I said," "I stuttered," "I began," "she asked," "I answered," "I thought," "I said," and "I affirmed." The most noticeable part of the style is this end-tagging of almost every speech. Ford judged incorrectly; the reader does notice.

When the reader approaches the last scene, he no longer cares about the plot, the characters, or the style. Instead of being tragic, the scene is pathetic. This final scene, even Ford must admit is rotten,\textsuperscript{129} as he speculates on whether his collaborator ever even read it.\textsuperscript{130} He says that he himself regarded the novel with intense dislike
from the moment it was finished, but that Conrad had hopes for its saleable qualities until it appeared in published form. It then made no impression on either the public or the critics, however. When Conrad expressed no desire to have *The Inheritors* in his collected works, Ford says he was relieved, thinking that it would be forgotten. Later it was included with Conrad's collected edition, however, and Ford asked why. His collaborator replied, "Why not? Why not republish it? It's a good book isn't it? It's a damn good book!"
Romance was the memorable, often believed to be the only, novel produced by the collaboration. The two authors met and agreed to attempt a joint work with this novel, and it was the only one of the three productions that was commercially successful. The details of the beginning of the collaboration on Romance again come from the pen of Ford. According to him, Conrad had heard of his manuscript of Seraphina and had written to him asking if a collaboration might be arranged over the story, "which Mr. Garnett had told him was too individual ever to find even a publisher." When the younger writer agreed to consider the proposition, Conrad came to Pent Farm to discuss the details and read the manuscript. Ford then relates how they argued over the treatment of the idea, and how they at last decided to collaborate.

Ford in The English Novel advises young writers to pick a subject and then live with it. This advice the collaboration followed with Romance. Hugh Kenner incorrectly places the book in distinguished company by saying that Ulysses, Madame Bovary, and Romance all took around seven years to write, but actually Ford and Conrad wrote on the five-part novel for five years. In his letters during
the years 1898 to 1903, Conrad occasionally discusses the collaboration, and casually mentions that he has been working on *Seraphina*. The name was apparently changed to *Romance* just prior to publication, for Conrad is still speaking of it by Ford's original title in the summer of 1903. The book was published that year, and was an immediate success. Conrad writes to Galsworthy in November that the first edition was exhausted after only one month of publication. He adds to H. G. Wells in that same year, "*Romance* 's gone into a second edition I hear. That, no doubt, does not mean much, but still it is better than any of my other books did do." He and Ford shared equally in the income from these sales, but in a 1914 letter Ford discloses the fact that Conrad received a two-thirds share of the cheap edition sales because he was "short at the time."

In *Romance*, although the subject had originally been discovered by Ford, the writing was not his alone. He quotes Conrad as saying:

As to collaborations, when it comes to our collected editions, you had better take *The Inheritors* because it is practically all yours, and that will leave me *Romance* --- not that *Romance* isn't practically all yours, too.

But then Ford adds the parenthetical,

Conrad talked like that!

For the writing in this novel was shared almost equally by the two authors. Ford partitions the authorship in the following manner: the first part was written by him, the
second by him also with a little on seamanship by Conrad, the third part was written sixty per cent by Conrad, the fourth part entirely Conrad's, and the fifth again by himself alone. He attributes the titles of the five sections to Conrad, saying, "There was nothing he loved so much as inventing titles for Parts: it was like being a herald proclaiming war from the steps of St. Paul's." Conrad's statement on the writing in Romance done by each author is found in his 1923 dedication of the book to T. J. Wise:

This tale as it stands here is based on F. M. H.'s MS. of Seraphine, a much shorter work and quite different in tone. On this we went to work together, developing the action and adding some new characters. We collaborated right through; but it may be said that the middle part of the book is mainly mine with bits of F. M. H.—while the first part is wholly out of Seraphine, the second part is almost wholly so. The last part is certainly three-fourths F. M. H. with here and there a par. by me.

Ford does not disclose whether he liked this novel when it was finished, but neither does he make any adverse comments about it. In discussion this particular novel, Jessie Conrad, even with her dislike of Ford, says,"...my husband had a really high opinion of the intelligence of his one-time collaborator, and also a great affection for the child of their joint fabrication, Romance." Conrad himself emphatically declares in a letter to Alfred A. Knopf, ten years after the novel's publication, "Yes, I do care very much for Romance."
In Romance, the authors are more concerned with telling a good story than with exhibiting theories of narration. Perhaps this is a result of Ford's having an outline of the plot before he and Conrad ever met and formulated novel techniques, or perhaps it is simply the result of their having the ready-made elements of a good tale. At any rate, the book contains less conscious impressionism and more natural adventure.

The original idea for the story came to Ford from an account of the trial of Aaron Smith, the last trial for piracy that had been held at Old Bailey. He had found the article in an old copy of Dickens' All the Year Round, and had decided immediately it was a subject he wanted to treat. This article by Aaron Smith, used as the basis of Ford's fiction, is a plea of innocence. Beginning abruptly with "My name is Aaron Smith. I first went to the West Indies in 1830..." the defendant tells how he was captured by pirates and compelled to travel with them until he was able to escape; he relates various adventures of his pirate captivity, his arrest, and concludes with his acquittal in England. Ford says, "The story told by him in the dock was sufficiently that of Romance as it now stands."

But Ford had taken this story of pirates, rapine, and violence and had transformed it into the backward
glance of a sixty-two year old man at the escapades of his youth. In changing the factual rendition by Smith into a work of fiction, he had also changed the tone. This complete reversal from live adventure to dead memory was to Conrad a mutilation of the subject; in the words of Ford:

Hearing, at Limpfield, the writer develop his miraculous "subject"—of Aaron Smith, last pirate ever to be tried at the Old Bailey, of the Creek with Rio Medio at the bottom of it and the pirate schooners...sailing out to the sack of the brig Victoria with her cargo of logwood, rum, raw sugar and dyes---Conrad had imagined a robust book, with every drop of the subject squeezed out of it. 152

But his story was not an exciting virile adventure, instead it was "the narrative of a very old man, looking back upon that day of his romance." 153 Conrad was aghast. Ford describes his reception of the manuscript with its dehydrated subject:

He remained...shut up in the depth of his disappointment and still more in his reprobation of the criminal who could take hold of such a theme and not, gripping it by the throat, extract from it every drop of blood and glamour....He disliked the writer as a criminal, fortune thrown away, a Book turned into the dry bone of a technical feat. 154

Conrad then presented his own ideas of how the subject should be treated, and when the collaboration began to work on Ford's Seraphina, it was with the object of infusing action back into the tale.

The joint work is still a backward view, but it is no longer the feeble reminiscences of a sexagenarian who
thinks in terms of a nonagenarian. Instead, with one brief sentence, "To yesterday and to to-day I say my polite 'vaya usted con Dios,'" the narrator plunges into his memory of the past, into his earlier days of romance. The story is essentially the same, but the approach has been modified by the presence of Conrad.

This story contained in Romance is divided into five separate parts, each of which is described briefly in the following paragraphs. In this summary, no mention will be made of time shifts or impressionistic effects involved.

The first part, entitled "The Quarry and the Beach," is devoted primarily to the introduction of the protagonist, John Kemp, and to providing a situation which will allow the young aristocratic Englishman to become involved with pirates in the first place. The actual Aaron Smith was a seaman and already in the West Indies; but John Kemp is of the landed gentry, and the situation must be furnished by the thriving smuggling trade near his mother's estate. The young man, with two Cuban acquaintances, accidentally becomes entangled in a midnight smuggling raid, and as a result he is secreted aboard a ship to Jamaica. This rather quick transition from the English countryside to the West Indies is made sufficiently convincing by the young hero's readiness to meet adventure and his willingness to be shipped off to the New World.
The second part, "The Girl with the Lizard," opening after John Kemp has been in Jamaica two years, is used to introduce the pirates and the heroine. The Cuban acquaintances of Part One, Don Carlos and Castro, reappear, bringing with them the heroine, Seraphina, and the villain, Señor O'Brien. Aaron Smith himself mentioned a beautiful Spanish girl, Seraphina Riego, but no villain. Here the fictional plot dips briefly into stock melodrama as the villain is discovered to have designs on the heroine, and her father in his power. In addition, Señor O'Brien is an Irish renegade, a high official in Havana, and secretly leader of the pirates. The pirates themselves are fierce, lawless beggars from the streets of Rio Medio, but their function, essentially political, is to harass British shipping in Jamaica. John Kemp again becomes accidentally involved, and is finally kidnapped by Don Carlos. He is taken to the Casa Riego, where Don Carlos hopes he will oppose O'Brien to protect Seraphina and her aging father.

Part Three, "Casa Riego," is the first complete departure from the Aaron Smith account. In this section, John Kemp recognizes his love for Seraphina, whom he secretly marries on request of the dying Don Carlos, and becomes aware of the tension in Rio Medio and of the increasing hatred of Señor O'Brien. In a climactic scene, the tension snaps; the aroused populace swarms into the fortress-like Casa to kill the Englishman; and in the mob
confusion, Seraphina's father is shot. During the funeral that follows, John Kemp, Seraphina, and Castro escape to sea in a small open boat.

"There was a slight, almost imperceptible jar, a faint grating noise, a whispering sound of sand—and the boat, without a splash, floated."^156 Thus begins Part Four, "Blade and Guitar." This is the longest division in the novel, admittedly by Conrad alone,^157 and the main portions take place on the ocean. After a few narrow escapes in their open boat, John Kemp, Seraphina, and Castro are rescued by the ship of a Captain Williams; but finding the way to Havana blocked by O'Brien's men, the captain is forced to put the three fugitives ashore. Once on the beach they take refuge in a cavern, where they are trapped by the pirates. Although Castro is killed here, Seraphina and John Kemp escape and make their way again to Williams's ship. And just previous to their being carried safely back to England, John Kemp goes into Havana, is recognized, and taken to O'Brien.

"The Lot of Man" titles the final section, which again weaves in the fine thread of the Aaron Smith story. He, too, was recognized as a pirate, arrested in Havana, and carried back to England for trial. He, however, did not have the formidable opponent that Ford and Conrad have created for their hero. This opponent arranges that John Kemp be identified as the notorious chief of the pirates, but
before attempting anything further, he is killed by a prisoner in the Havana prison, and John Kemp is sent to England to be tried for piracy. He stands trial in an impassioned courtroom scene, and the case appears hopeless until Captain Williams arrives with Seraphina to give his testimony. And with the slightly deus ex machina advent of the Spanish ambassador, who had found O'Brien's documents, the piracy charge is dismissed. The two lovers are reunited, and the novel ends: "And, looking back, we see Romance...." 158

This plot is not so much concerned with an internal conflict as it is with "squeezing every drop" of adventure from the original tale of pirates, love, and death. External opposition between good and evil is more distinct than any mental anguish of individual characters. Every situation involving action is utilized, and the hero is kidnapped, rescued, captured, permitted to escape, kidnapped, and saved almost too often in the course of the 541 pages. The authors invented every convincing means for John Kemp to get embroiled with the Cuban pirates, and in desperation they began inventing improbable means. As Ford says, "After two and a half years we had abandoned Romance: the problem of how to get John Kemp out of Cuba had grown too difficult." 159

And it is probably for this reason that the collaboration, after five years on the novel, ignored their theories of lifelike impressions and resorted to the last minute untangling by the Spanish ambassador. In life, the key
witness would have appeared long before or long after such an opportune moment. The real Aaron Smith had simply pleaded compulsion, obtained twenty witnesses to testify for his good character, and concluded, "...but for good friends, I should have been gibbeted like a hunted-down murderer." However, such a weary procession of witnesses at the trial of John Kemp would have made an undramatic scene for Romance, after the authors had arranged what seemed an inevitable hanging for him. Thus the collaboration was forced to compromise with drama and reality for the too convenient rescue.

Paralleling the external action is the inward growth of the hero. The authors have allowed him to tell the history, but he differs from the bewildered narrator of The Inheritors in that he is forever becoming aware of the consequences of his rash acts. The story opens when this hero is twenty-two and ends when he is twenty-four, but realization of life and death has forced itself upon him in the two year interval. He begins with a puerile longing for romance, and ends with more concern for others than for himself. And it is this maturing of the protagonist that keeps the novel outside the boundaries of a simple adventure tale for boys.

The background is predominantly the West Indies, and especially the little town of Horten Pen, the Casa Riego in Rio Medio, and Havana. It has been suggested that Conrad's
brief journey to the Gulf of Mexico provided the inspirations for this setting, but the scenes themselves lack the minuteness of Nostromo's South America and could as easily be found in the East Indies. None of the places: the storehouse of Horten Pen, the Casa with its massive walls and gates, or the prison in Havana, have details that could not be found elsewhere as well. Also the sea passages, all of which were written by Conrad, demonstrate an understanding of the ships and the ocean, but they reveal the universal sea rather than only the waters off the Cuban coast.

The views of England, found at the opening and closing of this book, give the novel its compactness and air of reality. They were adapted from the original Seraphina, and thus are used to unite the work of the two different authors. Any slight variations in the middle portions of the book are attributed to the change of scene rather than to the change of author. The scenes have the complacence and sanity of the ordinary world; only when the hero travels to some exotic land is the romance of piracy conceivable. They also provide the stable border which surrounds the middle sections of extravagant action and events. With the shift back to England for the trial, the story is brought to its starting point, and the romance is neatly sandwiched between passages of realism.
As The Inheritors, Ford and Conrad have written Romance in the first person. Thus again, the narrator can convey his impressions of the other characters while he lends the reader an impression of himself. But in Romance the method is more successful, and it is the resulting effectiveness of the characters that gives the book its meaning.

The narrator is John Kemp, the fictional Aaron Smith. Smith himself relates a six page account of his captivity by Cuban pirates, and reveals his personality only in his reactions to the piratical atrocities. John Kemp, in his 541 page rendition of the same incident, unfolds his personality by a backward and forward progression over his own past. This is perhaps the main advantage in writing the account as a memory; the narrator is able to foreshadow the action while he weaves an image of himself at twenty-three.

He makes a strong first impression as a naive young man hungering for adventure and an escape from his stifling environment:

I had not had a very happy life, and I had lived shut in on myself, thinking of the wide world beyond my reach, that seemed to hold out infinite possibilities of romance, of adventure, of love, perhaps, and stores of gold...."Confound it," I said, "I shall run away to sea! I tell you, I'm rotting, rotting!..."
This chance to run away comes in the smuggling raid, and he is able to flee to Jamaica with Don Carlos and Castro. Although these two are his only friends in the New World, his rashness and naivety cause him to suspect them of piracy, and he refuses to accompany them to the Casa Riego. But at the same time, his righteous feelings against pirates are mingled with youthful uncertainty:

I did not want to quarrel; I wanted more to cry. I was very lonely, and he was going away. Romance was going out of my life.\(^\text{164}\)

After two years in Jamaica, he stumbles into a Separatist intrigue, and unwillingly defends the wrong underdog.

I could not stand by and see them bully the wretched little creature. At the same time I didn't, most decidedly, want to identify myself with him.\(^\text{165}\)

This throws into relief his mixed feelings of chivalry and expediency, and prepares the reader for the questionable virtue of his later rescue of O'Brien.

When the hero-narrator is kidnapped by Don Carlos, he begins to see his mistake in doubting his friend.

There is no saying that I did not believe him; I did, every word. I had simply been influenced by Rockaby's suspicions. I had made an ass of myself over that business aboard the Thames.... I saw very well that there was no more connection between the Casa Riego and the rascality of Rio Medio than there was between Ralph himself and old drunken Rangsley on Hythe beach.\(^\text{166}\)

He begins to love the beautiful Seraphina:

I felt her living intensely by my side;
she could be brought no nearer to me by anything they could do, or I could promise. She had already all the devotion of my love and youth, the unreasoning and potent devotion, without a thought or hope of reward.\textsuperscript{167}

and from that time she is his first concern. He is matured by his resistance to O'Brien, but there is again the conflict between self-preservation and his English ethics. He allows O'Brien to escape during the insurrection at the Casa with the defense to himself:

I had been obliged not only to desist myself, but to save his life from Castro. I had been obliged! There was no option. Murderous enemy as he was, it seemed to me I should never have slept a wink all the rest of my life.\textsuperscript{168}

The subsequent escape from the Casa Riego is accomplished with the aid of Castro, but the events on shipboard, in the cavern, and in the Havana prison, force the young hero to rely on himself. This and the anguish he feels at the separation from Seraphina age him even further. In prison he thinks:

How I loved her! How wildly, how irrationally---this woman of another race, of another world, bound to me by sufferings together, by joys together. Irrationally! Looking at the matter now, the reason is plain enough. Before then I had not lived. I had only waited---for her and for what she stood for.\textsuperscript{169}

The final stage in the evolution of his personality is shown when he is transferred back to England to face the piracy charge, and he consoles the father who came to prison
to comfort him. At the trial, John Kemp himself recognizes his change in appearance as well as in attitude. Attempting to prove that he is not the pirate chief, he questions one of the witnesses:

I said, "Wasn't he an older man? Didn't he look between forty and fifty?" "What do you look like?" the chief mate asked. "I'm twenty-four," I answered; "I can prove it." "Well, you look forty and older," he answered negligently. "So did he."

His cool, disinterested manner overwhelmed me like the blow of an immense wave; it proved so absolutely that I had parted with all semblance of youth.

When at length he is proved innocent and the judge dismisses the charge, the hero-narrator has completed his maturation to the point that he is almost ageless.

It was rather tremendous, his deep voice, his weighted words. Suffering is the lot of us men... The formidable legal array, the great powers of a nation, had stood up to teach me that, and they had taught me that---suffering is the lot of us men!

The collaboration has succeeded in creating a hero who is worthy enough to control the reader's interest, and who at the same time owns the mingled contradictions that make a living personality.

As was mentioned in the above discussion of plot, the story is principally an opposition between good and evil; and yet these opposing forces are not distinctly white and black. John Kemp represents the good, but his nobility is mixed with the foolishness and often the cruelty of youth.
Señor O'Brien personifies evil, but his personality has such a combination of ruthlessness and martyrdom, that he is not evil enough even to be considered the antagonist. He is only nominally the villain; he too emerges as a believable human being.

The fact that O'Brien is seen only through the eyes of John Kemp makes him even more credible, for although the hero sees him as an unscrupulous villain, he will often speak with an emotion that shows him to be more of a persecuted minority at bay. As he offers the young hero leadership of the pirates, he explains, "'I tell you I do it for the sake of Ireland.'"\(^{172}\) John Kemp's reaction to the offer:

> I said suddenly and recklessly---if I had to face one race-passion, he had to look at another; we were cat and dog---Celt and Saxon, as it was in the beginning:

> "I am not a traitor to my country."\(^{173}\)

shows his bias, and points out how he will interpret O'Brien's actions.

Señor O'Brien first impresses John Kemp and the reader with:

He was rather small and round, with very firm flesh, and very white, plump hands. He was dressed in the black clothes of a Spanish judge. On his round face there was always a smile like that which hangs around the jaws of a pike---only more humorous. He bowed a little exaggeratedly...\(^{174}\)
He immediately reveals his satisfied conceit that brought him from a hunted Irish rebel to a high position in Havana. This self-esteem is demonstrated later when he reveals his love for Seraphina, and says to John Kemp:

"I am a man; you are but a boy; or else I would not have to tell you that your love"—he choked at the word—"is to mine like—like—

And although he plots against the hero for Seraphina's affection and for his own gain, John Kemp himself is not of particular importance except as an obstacle. The rather melodramatic intriguing continues, however, until the final scene between the hero-narrator and the Irish renegade turned Spanish judge. He is last seen as the insane prisoner stabs him in the back:

O'Brien's lips were pressed tightly together, the handle of the knife was against his ear, the lantern hung at the end of his rigid arm for a moment. As he lowered it, the blood spurted from his shoulder as if from a burst stand-pipe, only black and warm. It fell over my face, over my hands, everywhere. For a minute of eternity his agonized eyes searched my features, as if to discern whether I had connived, whether I condoned.

And the authors leave him on a note approaching pity.

Seraphina, who lent her name to the title of the original manuscript, is little more than a wax figure in the present volume. She inspires the hero's deepest emotions and the acknowledged villain's lasting affection, but she, as an individual, never comes out of the shadows of her black lace. Beautiful and serene, she is always
described; she is never allowed a passion of her own. The first impression she has on the narrator is:

The warm reflection of the light behind her, gilding the curve of her face from ear to chin, lost itself in the shadows of black lace falling from dark hair that was not quite black. She spoke as if the words clung to her lips; as if she had to put them forth delicately for fear of damaging the frail things. She raised her long hand to a white flower that clung above her ear like the pen of a clerk and disappeared.177

And each time she arrives on the scene, it is as a beautiful and silent apparition.

She turned her large dark eyes scrutinizingly upon me, then dropped them again. She was arranging some melon seeds in a rayed circle round the lizard that looked motionlessly at her.178

Even at an action peak, when she, John Kemp, and Castro have sought refuge in the cavern, she makes her presence felt only by:

Seraphina’s inclined pose, her torn dress, the wet tresses lying over her shoulders, her homeless aspect, made me think of a beautiful and miserable gipsy girl drying her hair before a fire.179

Only occasionally does she even split her coating of wax. It is though the authors themselves are unable to grasp her image or to decide how they want her to act; and they have left her more alive in the mind of the hero than in her own shadowy movements.

The many minor characters of the book have the brief realism of complex and contradictory personalities. There
is Captain Williams, an honorable man who has a weakness for women in his ports of call; there is the jealous Mrs. Williams, raised in a convent and unable to comprehend the ways of the world; the bluff mate Sebright, who tries to keep from the captain's wife the bachelor life of her husband. There is Cowper, who forgets his pledge of honor when it is no longer convenient to remember; the priest who could just this once condone murder; and the pirate Manuel, who alternately whines and struts in his role as a blood-thirsty poet. The sketches of Mr. and Mrs. Kemp remain vivid miniatures, which do not and were not intended to come to life. Don Carlos, the hero's sister, and Sera-phina's father are necessary for the advancement of the plot, but they have no more than a suggestion of actual personalities.

But in the figure of Tomas Castro, the collaboration has achieved a masterpiece. He has the elements of greatness and frailty, of iron supported by sand, and he reaches the heights of a supremely tragic human being. He enters when Don Carlos brings to England

a short, pursy, bearded companion, half friend, half servant, who said he had served in Napoleon's Spanish contingent, and had a way of striking his breast with a wooden hand (his arm had suffered in a cavalry charge), and exclaiming, "I, Tomas Castro!..."

He holds himself aloof from the lower classes of Rio Medio, and although he is a spy among the pirates, he is disdainful of this peasantry, secure in the knowledge of his own
importance. He is self-sufficient.

The broken plume swept the deck. For a time he blinked his creased, brown eyelids in the sun, then pulled his hat low down over his brows, and, wrapping himself up closely, turned away from me to look at the sail to leeward.

He exhibits the characteristic reactions of a man alone in his own mind:

Castro shrugged his shoulders. "Who knows?"...He released the gathered folds of his cloak, and moved off without a look at either of us.

It is his own mental image that is all important after the death of his beloved Don Carlos, and it is this dependence on himself alone that results in the unwitting betrayal of the cavern to the pirates. As the pirates wait outside for the three fugitives to die of starvation or thirst, Castro's mental image begins to flake.

He, a man, had not risen to the fortitude of a venomous creature. He was defeated. He groaned profoundly. Life was too much. It clung to one.

And his self respect worries him into despair.

The pirates devise the scheme of throwing into the cave bits of salted meat, which Castro at last eats; and when he can stand the thirst no longer, he decides to commit suicide.

He refused to bear it. He suffered too much. There was no hope. He would overwhelm them with maledictions, and then leap down from the ledge.

He views this act as a form of sacrifice, for the pirates know only that he is in the cave. And if he were to die,
they would leave without looking for the other two. He rushes to the mouth of the cavern to revel in his own freedom of will. He shouts:

"Canalla! dogs, thieves, prey of death, vermin of hell---I spit on you---like this!" 185

While the pirates stand at the top of the cliff, yelling down at him:

"He will jump! No, he will not!"
"Yes! Leap, Castro! Spit, Castro!" "He will run back into the cave! Maladetta!"
...Manuel's voiced [sic] cooed lovingly on the brink:
"Come to us and drink, Castro." 186

And Castro surrenders to his thirst.

The authors of the passage take away even the dignity of his suicide by having him deliver himself into the hands of his captors for the sake of a drink of water. To complete and emphasize the irony, these captors decide that Castro shall jump anyway, and he abandons all honor with a cry for help to the señorita and the words:

"She shall fill both your hands with gold. Do you hear, hombres? I, Castro, tell you---each man---both hands---" 187

The interested thieves ask where Seraphina can be found, and in a last flare of nobility, Castro is permitted the redemption that comes too late for his own self esteem. He answers, "At the bottom of the sea," 188 and throws himself over the cliff.

But the book is not the tragedy of Tomas Castro. To prevent his tragic figure from looming over the remainder
of the book, the authors restore his character to possible heroism. In what could amount to a happy ending for *King Lear*, the novelists put these words into the mouth of the narrator:

And yet sometimes it seems to me as if the whole scene, with his wild cries for help, had been the outcome of a supreme exercise of cunning. For, indeed, he could not have invented anything better to bring the conviction of our death to the most sceptical of those ruffians.

Noticing first the dedication of *Romance*, it is inadvertently symbolic that this more mature work of the collaboration should be addressed to the two authors' wives rather than to their children.

As observed earlier, Ford and Conrad became attracted to *Romance* for its story. Differing from their fabrication of *The Inheritors*, they began here with the ingredients of the Aaron Smith tale, and desired primarily to concoct an adventure. Whereas the style of the former was all important and all that supported the book, the style of *Romance* has been subjugated to the story itself.

Aaron Smith's "My name is Aaron Smith. I first went to the West Indies in 1830, on board the merchant ship Harrington...." has been modified by Ford and Conrad into:
To yesterday and to to-day I say my polite "vaya usted con Dios." What are these days to me? But that far-off day of my romance, when from between the blue and white bales in Don Ramon's darkened storeroom, at Kingston, I saw the door open before the figure of an old man with the tired, long, white face....

This was their agreed beginning for a long novel "in which the dominant interest lies far back in the story." It is also what Ford calls a reflective, as contrasted with a dramatic, opening, and which he claims for his own preference. This is again the idea that Ford himself wrote the description; he repeats in the preface to The Nature of a Crime that he and not Conrad is responsible for the descriptive passages of Romance. But to invalidate this claim, mention need only be made of the vivid pictures of the fog at sea, the cavern in the cliff, the street scene of Havana, and the etchings of the characters themselves in "Part Fourth" of Romance, a part that Ford concedes does not contain one word by him.

The style itself is not intrusive in Romance. In this labor of five years, the authors have apparently followed their own theory that the style should pass unnoticed by the reader, and that every word should carry the story forward. This last is a worthy aim, of necessity unobtainable, but in striving for it, the collaboration admittedly contracted and shortened the lengthy novel—"for the sake of progression d'effet."
That the entire story is a reminiscence is made plain in the first sentence. And as the narrator pauses with such asides as:

The spirit of the age has changed; everything has changed so utterly that one can hardly believe in the existence of one's earlier self. the reader is reminded that what he beholds is a memory. This remembrance method is kept fairly convincing by the hero-narrator's confession that he shall never forget some images but often forgets certain details:

But I can still remember how, at that moment, I made the acquaintance of my heart—a thing that bounded and leapt within my chest, a little sickeningly. The other details I forget.

But the method is never allowed to distract the reader. When the book is swept into a high pitch of action, the desired effect is excitement rather than reminiscence, and the hero is allowed to disregard himself and address his attention to the action. For Romance is more concerned with the progression than with l'effet.

And thus, the device of anticlimax is used sparingly. The lifelike juxtaposition of the important and the trivial is lost, but an emotional anticipation is gained. The authors leave their climaxes intact, and since the book appears in five sections, they have ended each portion on a climactic note. For example, the second part ends with:

Towards the end his breath came fast and short; there was a flush on his face;
his eyes gazed imploringly at me.
"You will stay here, now, till I die, and then—I want you to protect—" He fell back on the pillows.

the fourth part with:

"Go in there now, Señor, to be confronted with your accuser," said the official in black, appearing before me. He pointed at a small door to the left. My heart was beating steadily. I felt a sort of intrepid resignation.

And even though Ford and Conrad have sacrificed the life-like anticlimax that follows every human action and emotion, they have gained a readable quality that exhausts a first edition within a month.

The descriptive passages are also secondary to the action, and the book lacks those detached impressions that dominate The Inheritors. The authors accurately feel that if a reader is forced to stop and admire the scenery, he will lose the mood of the situation. He will be occupied with the style and the progression will be braked. Descriptions are thus used to surround the action, but are never allowed in the foreground.

With conversations as well, the collaboration is more successful in Romance. The indefiniteness and vagueness of ordinary speech is not used exclusively for communication; instead, this breaking and halting of sentences, which even Ford admits must be intolerable to read, is used only to express emotion. Stress is incorporated into the conversation with these half uttered, half choked phrases.
O'Brien realizes he has lost Seraphina's affection:

"What! Is it I, then, who have to go back? For---for you---a boy---come from devil knows where---an English, beggarly ... For a girl's whim... I---a man." 202

John Kemp rages at his adversary:


Castro faces his betrayal of the cavern refuge to the pirates:

And he---Castro---a man---a man, por Dios---had less firmness than a creeping thing. Why---why, did he not stab this dishonoured old heart? 204

And used thus carefully, the technique is effective, and the impression of inarticulate emotion is achieved.

The most successful bit of handling the interrupted method of conversation is found in the rescue scene on shipboard. John Kemp, Castro, and Seraphina have been picked up by Captain Williams, who has also captured the pirate Manuel. But the captain's wife is dubious of the propriety of the young girl being with a young man on the sea that time of night. The hero attempts to explain as Manuel begs for mercy in the background.

"What is to be done, Owen?" the woman asked, with a serenity I thought very merciless....

"Madam," I said rather coldly, "I appeal to your woman's compassion...."

"Even thus the arch-enemy sets his snares," she retorted on me a little tremulously.

"Señorita, I have seen you grow," Manuel called again. "Your father, who is with the saints, gave me alms when I was a boy. Will you let them kill a man to whom your father...."
"Snares. All snares. Can she be blessed in going away from her natural guardians at night, alone, with a young man? How can we, consistently with our duty...."

"She comes straight from the fresh grave of her father," I said. "I am her only guardian."

Manuel rose to the height of his appeal. "Senorita, I worshipped your childhood, I threw my hat in the air many times before your coach, when you drove out all in white, smiling, an angel from paradise. Excellency, help me. Excel...."

And the result has elements of the unexpected. It has the unobservable surprises that the collaboration deemed necessary for a successful rendition of conversation.

The use of the hero's thoughts to interrupt the action and show the human mind filled with more than one emotion is again not used as extensively in Romance as in The Inheritors. In the present novel, the entire action would be fatally weakened if the hero himself were not concerned with the happenings. The method is employed in the courtroom scene, however, for the purpose of showing the mental strain of the hero-narrator. As John Kemp tells his story to the court, the heat, stifling air, and emotion cause his thoughts to wander. The authors allow him to interrupt the speeches, by observing a girl in the front row or a puce-colored handkerchief of the King's Advocate, at a time when he should be most engrossed in the external action. No better illustration could be made of his emotional confusion.

Ford says that he had tried to make the original manuscript suggest the whisper of a nonagenarian, with each
sentence containing a dying fall and each paragraph fading out. But in the work by the collaboration, the main thought is for action and reality. Only the basic idea of Ford's original has survived.

The ending as well has undergone a complete metamorphosis in the hands of the partnership. Ford recalls the last sentences of his Seraphina:

Above our heads a nightingale... poured out its melody on the summer air.... As it was June it sang a trifle hoarsely.

He then quotes the ending of the final draft of Romance, allotting the portions ascribed to each author. Conrad's additions are underlined.

For suffering is the lot of man, but not inevitable failure or worthless despair which is without end---suffering, the mark of manhood, which bears within its pain a hope of felicity like a jewel set in iron....

Her first words were:

"You broke our compact. You went away from me whilst I was sleeping." Only the deepness of her reproach revealed the depth of her love, and the suffering she too had endured to reach a union that was to be without end---and to forgive.

And, looking back, we see Romance---that subtle thing that is mirage---that is life. It is the goodness of the years we have lived through, of the old time when we did this or that, when we dwelt here or there. Looking back it seems a wonderful enough thing that I who am this and she who is that, commencing so far away a life that after such sufferings borne together and apart, ended so tranquilly here in a world so stable---that she and I should have passed through so much, good chance and evil chance, sad hours and joyful, all lived down and swept away into the little heap of dust that is life. That, too, is Romance.
The stumbling halt of the original has been given a complete and finished ending.

The last paragraph itself is typically Conradian, and invites comparison with the same fleeting glimpse of romance, the same transitory fulfillment of desires, found in _Lord Jim_, also written during the collaboration years. In it Stein tells how he captured the rare butterfly, and adds:

"...On that day I had nothing to desire; I had greatly annoyed my principal enemy; I was young and strong; I had friendship; I had the love...of woman, a child I had, to make my heart very full—and even what I had once dreamed in my sleep had come into my hand, too."

He struck a match, which flared violently

"...Friend, wife, child," he said, slowly, gazing at the small flame—"phoo!" The match was blown out. He sighed and turned again to the glass case...."

With the manuscript completed, _Romance_ was published and became the aforesaid success. In a letter to Ford accompanying the final proofs, Conrad calls the whole "quite a remarkable piece of work. Quite remarkable in execution, in conception, and still more distinguished in its suggestiveness. I congratulate you."
In 1924 Ford writes in a last letter to Conrad:

You remember that, shortly before the English Review was started, we wrote in collaboration a short story called the "Story of a Crime." This you gave over to me and it was published in the first number of the English Review under a pseudonym.... I have looked at it again and it seems to me a pretty good piece of work.213

He continues with a request to publish the story, and adds:

...I think that to reprint the "Story of a Crime" as a collaboration with a note to the effect that it is old and was published under a pseudonym would have a certain literary and sentimental interest, and I should like very much to do it.214

Since the book was published with a preface by him, Conrad must have complied. He writes to Pinker that he does not want to make himself particularly responsible for what he terms an "idiotic publication," and yet in the preface itself he almost praises the story with the comment that he had always considered the work a fragment, and was surprised to find that it was rounded.215 Jessie Conrad supplies a wifely note that her husband had denied even writing the story until she found some of the manuscript pages in his handwriting.216 The preface shows that he was convinced, and that he at least acknowledged his contribution.
This is the one novel, still hardly more than a short story, that is not included in Conrad's collected edition.

And what the reader may read is the story of a middle-aged man in his leisurely autumn, who has embezzled from an estate for which he is executor. He has gambled with the money, and his Nemesis is now approaching in the form of attorneys employed to check the accounts. The executive is writing the story of his crime to the woman he loves, and confesses that he juggled the sums merely for the narcotic effect that accompanied the danger. An effect he pursued to escape his thoughts of her. He mails the letters to the woman and prepares to take poison, when the young heir of the estate decides that the auditors will not examine the books after all. But the writer has already confessed his crime and his love to the lady, and he concludes a final
letter, saying that if he can possess her, he will replace the amount he has embezzled and no one need ever know. If not, he will squander even more of the money, and then commit suicide. He leaves the decision to her with, "So then, I stand reprieved---and the final verdict is in your hands." 218

This is the simple plot of the book, which, differing from the longer *The Inheritors* and *Romance*, has no interwoven subplots.

The whole confession is written in the form of a continuous letter, with the chapters occurring at pauses in the supposed composition. The collected bundle of letters, except for the last, is presumably sent just before the writer receives his message from the heir. The last letter, a single brief one forming the final chapter, tells of the reprieve and leaves the life-or-death decision to the woman.

The setting is actually the mind of this man as he gradually unfolds his story on paper. There are few external impressions, and more important is the atmosphere. The man mentions his extravagant possessions of prints, masterpieces, and houses; his vain accomplishments of the founding of two towns, the origin of four railroads, and the opening of numerous mines; his social world of purposeless drawing room talks. He is from an age that knows these things, an age that believes in them. The authors have surrounded him with the faint breath of the era of 1910,
while they gently ridicule the complacent atmosphere which even then was meaningless.

3

The main character of The Nature of a Crime is essentially Ford Madox Ford. Conrad once advised an author to examine his own mind instead of dragging out for display the entrails of his characters. He said that the author must lay bare his own heart, and for that the reader would listen. In The Nature of a Crime, the collaboration is following this advice. Note need only be taken of the two following excerpts to see that the same person is speaking:

And out on the pavement it was most curious what had befallen the world. It had lost all interest: but it had become fascinating, vivid....Vivid: that is the word. I watched a newsboy throw his papers down an area, and it appeared wonderfully interesting to discover that that was how one's papers got into the house. I watched a milkman go up some doorsteps to put a can of milk beside a boot-scraper and I was wonderfully interested to see a black cat follow him.

I found myself on an extraordinarily bright, thistle-covered hillside without the least idea of where I was or how to get back to camp....In coming up I had had the orderly to guide me, and I had noticed nothing—not the brilliant sunlight, nor the thistles, nor the bullet-striped trees nor even the contours of the landscape. So perhaps the engrossed temperament is unfortunate.

The first is the writer in The Nature of a Crime, the second
is Ford in his autobiographical *It Was the Nightingale*. Not only is the wording the same in these two books, but the ideas and the expressions as well are identical. Conrad based his characters on actual people he knew, and here, he and his collaborator have based the personality of their narrator on Ford himself.

In this particular characterization, the partnership has not stressed the effect of life, with an introductory impression and a gradual revelation of traits, because the character himself is removed from life. He lives in a world of his own creation, a world in which he, who owns property, works of art, and fabulous wealth, possesses nothing. And it is this distance from life that achieves a reality out of his vague unreality. His unique existence is made possible by just this aloofness from ordinary life.

The continuous letter covers about eight or nine days, and at the end of this time, the reader knows the writer as well as he would know an actual acquaintance over the same period. The unnamed writer of the letter is seen as a man who believes in the reality of his own mind over that of the external world:

> On the way I met Graydon Bankes, the K.C. It would have astonished him if he could have known how unreal he looked to me. He is six feet high, and upon his left cheek there is a brown mole. I found it difficult to imagine why he existed.

He is a man of thought rather than action, a man of his age
who follows the rules even though he doesn't believe in them. He is checked by his own contemplativeness, and although there are many things he intends, he never quite reaches beyond the thinking step. For example, the young heir confesses a minor indiscretion, and he replies scathingly, "My good Edward, you are the most debauched person I have ever met," adding the mental, "I was going to let him go anyhow: the sort of cat that I am always lets its mice go." He would prefer to be cruel, but he is incapable. Even his deep love is typified by inaction. He has loved for seven years a love of the mind, without expression; the ultimate possession he requests is not physical, but that the woman merely consent to be his in sharing their thoughts alone. He says, "...for with me love takes the form of a desire to discuss...."

Although other characters do enter the narrative, they are viewed through his glazed eyes; they exist only as he sees them, and leave no more than a suggestion of actuality. Edward Burden is the heir, the stuffy, bloated young man of twenty-five, with an awed respect for the executor. Edward is depicted as a self-satisfied young millionaire trying to copy this enviable and successful man. Thus, his action in forbidding the solicitors to delve into the accounts is justified by an attempt to please the older man. Edward's fiancée is a fluttery young lady whose personality is captured by this single remark she
confides to the executor:

"Don't you think that the little measures on the tops of the new canisters are extravagant for China tea?"227

As concisely is summarized the drug addicted husband of the narrator's love. His entire character is suggested in:

You know how, occasionally, your husband would wake out of his stupors—or walk in his stupor and deliver one of his astonishingly brilliant disquisitions. But remember how, always, whether he talked of free love or the improvement in the breed of carriage horses, he always thrashed his subject out to the bitter end.228

The woman herself, for whom the narrator has felt a passion intense enough to sacrifice his life and career, never becomes real. As the writer explains about his type of love, he says that to adore a woman such as she is,

I should no doubt bring into play my own idealism. I should invest her with the attributes that I consider the most desirable in the world.229

And this he does throughout his letter. He keeps her too vaguely in the realm of the ideal.

There are no lifelike figures sketched in passing, for the narrator is too ego-centric to notice anyone outside his own small sphere.
The Nature of a Crime is another experiment in technique. As the other joint efforts, it is a study in the first person, and the story told is one centered about that hero-narrator. In this novel, the hero-narrator has a sophisticated outlook instead of the bewildered stare of Etchingham Granger or the eager glance of John Kemp. Conrad himself wonders how the partnership could ever have attempted such a feat as an analytical confession in collaboration. And yet, excepting minor obstacles, the collaboration was moderately successful. The atmosphere is as a waft from a dead forest, the attitude of the narrator is consistent, and the narrator himself has resulted in a distant but believable personality.

Ford says in his preface to the volume:

And I should like to make the note that our collaboration was almost purely oral. We wrote and read aloud the one to the other. Possibly in the end we even wrote to read aloud the one to the other: for it strikes me very forcibly that "The Nature of a Crime" is for the most part prose meant for recitation, or of that type.

The Inheritors and Romance are the written results of oral conversation and narration; The Nature of a Crime is more the result of an intellectual monologue. The style is desultory, and for the most part what would be expected from a figure such as the authors have depicted. The
hero-narrator has used a more bookish language than he would have employed in simply telling a story. He is more of an intellectual than either of the other created heroes. Neither John Kemp or the young journalist of the dimensionist plot would have said, "...he will have, sedulously, to compound my felony." 232

The writing contains digressions and interpolated discussions on drugs, the manners of professional seducers, the ways of women, the nature of crime in general. But all of these and the bits of interspersed pith are what might be found in a letter to a soul mate. Since the reader is warned from the beginning that this is what he is reading, he can find no fault with the book as long as the style remains consistent with the personality of the writer, or as long as the cultured intellectual does not drop into street slang or obvious naïveté. And while that personality holds a fascination for the reader, the style and the novel will be readable. Even small contradictions must pass, because men of reflective natures are usually contradictory.

The letter is perhaps unduly long for a simple confession of a love and a crime, but even this could be attributed to the character of its composer.

There are exceptionally few images, for the narrator seldom peers out of his own mental circle. There is also virtually no conversation, and what little occurs, is too sparse to illustrate any of the theories of the collaboration.
The book for the most part consists of philosophy—a philosophy of manners and ethics in the realm of the intellect, of the leisurely world that perished with the endless discussions of Henry James and D. H. Lawrence.
VI

The three novels produced by the collaboration were examples of a conscious literary technique, and yet were also literature directed toward the public taste. Ford tells that Conrad had great hopes for the saleable qualities of *The Inheritors*, and the mere fact that *Romance* ends as a comedy and not a tragedy may show that it, too, was designed for the ordinary reader who wants to escape happily into his romanticism. During the years of the collaboration, there was the professional author's omnipresent need to support his family; and although Ford and Conrad wished to create good literature, they also wished to produce novels that would sell. *Romance* alone obtained the hoped-for commercial success.

All three novels were written in the first person, a device which Henry James repeatedly condemned for its looseness. But the collaboration used it as an aid to their impressionism; by looking through the eyes of one man, they hoped that an effect of life could be produced on the reader. This first person point of view was a mode of expression belonging to Ford rather than Conrad, however, and may be regarded as the choice of the former. He does not say that he insisted upon use of the first person, but he does admit that he never compromised.
In considering the books individually, one finds the following general conclusions:

(1) Ford and Conrad were unsuccessful with their first joint attempt, because basically they did not believe in the characters or the situation. They were unable to communicate the necessary sense of reality for the figures that they themselves had conceived as allegorical. Only the individual images of objects and scenes they knew stand out in the novel of obvious make-believe. The book was also a failure in technique; however, for although the collaboration had created the theory that style must be subordinate to the action and that a writer must learn first of all to suppress himself in the actual practice of *The Inheritors*, they still had this to learn. They had not yet listened to Ford's own paraphrase that "blessed are the humble because they do not get between the reader's legs." But essentially the book was a failure in theme. Ford and Conrad had evolved the idea that the only valid concern of an author is mankind. In this slim volume of political satire, the social politics were used only as a starting point, and the human beings were even more incidental than their allegorical representations. Mankind was not the collaboration's concern; the novel was.

(2) In *Romance*, first of all, the authors did accept the reality of their characters; they had started with the living personality of their hero. They were dealing with
life as they found it in the trial of Aaron Smith, and the characters and images were depicted as truthfully as possible to give these events a lifelike intensity. Conrad admits that "realism in art will never approach reality," but by remaining convinced of the events themselves, the authors have left a sense of reality. And in this novel, mankind was their theme, for the actions were those of men. To be vital enough to have any purpose, the events had to be those of living men and women; the concluding thought of the book, that "suffering is the lot of men," forced the theme of the book itself to be mankind.

As a work of conscious technique, the book was also successful—the style did remain in the background. Using the style to render effects, the collaboration never allowed the words to dominate the events. They never permitted the reader to become more engrossed in the wording than in the plot. During the five years that the two authors concentrated on Romance, they gave heed to their own guiding principle that the author

> must learn that the first thing he has to consider is his story and the last thing that he has to consider is his story, and in between that he will consider his story.²⁴⁰

And this concern with the story caused the book to sell.

(3) In The Nature of a Crime, the authors again had a conviction in their invented personage whose personality began as that of one of the collaborators. The humanity
was represented by this single character and was naturally a limited slice of life, but it was still mankind; even standing apart as he did, the hero-narrator of the book was still of the world of men. The style in this book did not follow the rules of the collaboration's theory in rendering the effect of impressions, because the novel was the one of the three that was not concerned with impressionism. It was more interested in conveying ideas and the sketch of a personality than in depicting images. But this deviating style was still more in the background than the unfolding personality, and was still a technical achievement.

Thus are summarized briefly the results of the collaboration's novels. But what did the authors themselves, what did Ford Madox Ford and Joseph Conrad, derive from the loose ten year partnership and the endeavor to write novels together?

A glance at the work accomplished during the period of collaboration will show that Conrad published *Lord Jim*, *Nostromo*, *The Secret Agent*, and *The Mirror of the Sea*, besides the famous short stories "The Heart of Darkness," "Typhoon," and "Youth." And during the writing of all of these, he and Ford talked, discussed, rendered images and scenes. Ford mentions that the composition of *The Mirror of the Sea* was very much just his taking down in shorthand the words of Conrad as the latter talked. And perhaps in the relating of his experiences to a patient and intelligent listener, Conrad discovered Marlow in
himself. If even this alone had come from the years of collaboration, such a partnership would be justified.

But during this period, other elements also appeared in Conrad's writing that could be attributed to the interchange of ideas and techniques in the collaboration. There arose for the first time the device by which stories were told through a number of spectators, through a series of narrators with their own personalities and impressions of events. And there began the use of the almost classic time shift and its accompanying involuted sequence of action. Perhaps these techniques would have appeared in Conrad's novels without collaboration, or perhaps they were the influences of his other contemporaries, but the fact remains that they were first used in the years of Conrad's association with Ford.

The two authors were together continually, and although Conrad does not credit Ford with any specific influence, he does often mention their working together. And it was admitted that he also obtained the germs of the stories in The Secret Agent and "Amy Foster" from Ford. As Ford himself says, "I dare say that living constantly with a person like myself... may have influenced his style a little." And as was mentioned earlier, he further states that in the collaborated and in separate works, each author modified the other.
Yet what did Ford receive from the ten year collaboration? What could this uncompromising young author learn from a partnership with a stubborn Pole? The above passage contending that the authors complimented each other's work would apply to him as well, but in addition Ford supplies the following:

What Conrad got from me as a writer I don't know for I never thought about it, but I am perfectly certain that I...got that particular form of scrupulosity [the writing which gives every paragraph its little jolt] from Conrad.246

It is perhaps a little strong to state baldly that *Nostromo*, "The Heart of Darkness," and Ford's Tietjens novels could not have been written without the collaboration.247 Even though Ford says that his contact with Conrad may have influenced the latter's style, he concludes, "but he continued his development in that direction long after I had any finger at all in his work...."248 And whatever mutual influence occurred, Ford and Conrad each preserved his own individuality. Conrad did not attempt to reproduce the genial English charm of his collaborator, and Ford agrees that Conrad himself could not be imitated.249
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