



Robert Hampson and Véronique Pauly (eds.), *The Reception of Joseph Conrad in Europe*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022. 560 pages. ISBN: 978-1-4742-4108-3.

MARÍA DEL MAR MARTÍNEZ DE OSABA RAÑÓN 

Universidade da Coruña

This volume belongs to the series “The Reception of British and Irish Authors in Europe”, which is part of an ongoing Research Project conducted by Professor Elinor Shaffer on reception studies. The series, first published by Athlone in 1998, then by Continuum, and currently by Bloomsbury Academic, is open-ended, and includes to date, a total of twenty-seven volumes devoted, not only to remarkable British and Irish writers but also, to other eminent figures like naturalists, physicists, philosophers, historians and political figures. The scope of this series aims to deepen the knowledge of those authors by examining the way their works have been translated, published, read, reviewed, and discussed in Europe.

As the series editor remarks in the preface to this volume, Conrad’s influence is greater in Eastern Europe, due to his origin, and—even though he became a British subject in 1886—he was not seen as British across Europe. In addition, despite being famous mainly for *Heart of Darkness* (1899) and his sea stories, some of Conrad’s works like *The Secret Agent* (1907) would reveal him as a leading writer of the late imperial period.

This volume is co-edited by Robert Hampson and Véronique Pauly, both Conrad experts, and features contributions from leading international scholars who have enriched this volume with an extensive survey of the reception, translations, and publications of Conrad’s works throughout Europe.

A comprehensive timeline by Owen Knowles is included in this volume. It provides detailed information about Conrad’s first published translations, highlighting events in his life, the publication dates of critical works, and historical and political information to shed light on the reception of the author in Europe. An extensive bibliography is enclosed at the end of the volume, structured following the sequence of chapters of the book. Besides, there is an index with key words, organized in alphabetical order with the major topics and subtopics of the book, giving readers quick access to data.

The volume is structured in four different parts that will cover the reception of Conrad in thirteen European Countries and Latin America, starting with Poland, the country where Conrad’s reception has been most significant. The reception of his works differs remarkably throughout all the countries surveyed, not only because of the historical and political context

in which they were published, but also, due to cultural differences. Notwithstanding, a series of patterns and similarities among them can be discerned.

A general overview reinforces the perception that Conrad was a writer of adventures in most of the countries surveyed. The sea and exotic landscapes play a key role in his novels. However, *Lord Jim* (1899-1900) became a crucial text for Polish culture, in which moral guidance and solace were found (2022, p. 29). In Italy, Spain and Germany the reception was highly influenced by censorship due to which his works were of limited access. In the introduction by Hampson, the editor explains that—even though the first published translation was Conrad's serialization of *Almayer's Folly* (1895) in a daily newspaper in Amsterdam in 1896—this volume begins by surveying the reception of the Polish translation of his second novel, *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896) in 1897, serialized in a weekly newspaper of Warsaw. Although, as contributor Agnieszka Adamowicz-Pośpiech will show, it was not until 1899, that Conrad became widely known, after an article about talented Poles leaving the country in the journal *Kraj* (homeland) by Wincenty Lutoslawski (2022, p. 1). In the following chapter, Ewa Kujawska-Lis illustrates how the different choices made by translators in *Lord Jim* were influenced by the socio-economic and cultural context in which they emerged, thus reshaping Conrad for their different readers. Conrad's reception in Poland not only includes translations, reviews, and critical essays, but also film, television, and stage adaptations of many of his works, which promoted Conrad as a writer of the sea (2022, p. 3). In his chapter, Daniel Schümann compares the novel *Lód* (2007), written by contemporary Polish writer Jacek Dukaj's, with Conrad's Marlow trilogy, but especially with *Heart of Darkness*.

Joseph Conrad was a fluent French speaker, and French literature and culture played a key role in his life. The co-editor of this book, Véronique Pauly, and Mark Fitzpatrick give us a compelling insight into the reception of Conrad in France. Thus, the first review of his novels was in 1895, and subsequent appraisals and translations consolidated his fame there. Furthermore, his French translations paved the way for his fame in non-English-speaking nations, as they were introduced in countries like Spain or Italy and established Conrad as a writer of adventure novels.

In Germany, as Anthony Fothergill explains, only a few of Conrad's translations appeared before World War I, and later, there was a disruption as all translations were suspended. This situation lasted until 1926, when a complete edition of his works was progressively published in individual volumes by Fischer Verlag. This created a growing readership of the author, especially among German liberals. These works were last published in 1939 and evaded Nazi propaganda and control during World War II. From 1949 to 1990, Frank Förster identifies three phases in Conrad's reception in Germany.

Special attention must be given to part 3, the Spanish and Catalan reception of Joseph Conrad. In the first chapter of this section, Daniel Zurbano García explains how the first translations of Conrad's works in Spain were published posthumously by Catalan publishing house Montaner y Simón in 1925, achieving great success in the subsequent decades. The flourishing cultural period in Spain was disrupted by the outbreak of the Spanish

Civil War in 1936 and the instauration of Franco's regime preventing new translations of Conrad from appearing until 1970. Zurbano also explores the connections to prominent Spanish novelists of the twentieth century like Pío Baroja. Likewise, Javier Marías has been influenced by Conrad, and not only did he write about him on several occasions, but he also published the translation of *The Mirror of the Sea* (1906) in 1981 and a revised version in 2004 in which he praised Conrad's masterly prose style. In the following chapter, Jacqueline Hurlley analyses the first translations of Conrad in Catalonia both in Spanish and Catalan and how Montaner y Simón was the link between Spain and Latin America as they were leading in exports to South America.

In chapter fourteen, Marta Puxan-Oliva explains the approach that will examine Conrad's reception through three editors and critics: first Conrad's early editor, Joan Estelrich, secondly Josep Plá, Catalan writer and critic, and thirdly Juan Benet, Spanish writer. Likewise, Puxan-Oliva discusses how Plá's reflections about Conrad's work helped to promote readings of Conrad and steered Conrad's reception away from that of a popular adventure novelist (2022, p. 239).

Conrad's rich reception in such an unusual place as South America is due to his scene in *Nostromo* (1904), and his influence on major authors from Latin America will be portrayed in this book thanks to the contribution of María Jesús Lorenzo-Modia. She focuses on the influence of Conrad on Mario Vargas Llosa in such a way that he even went to the Congo following his footsteps and turned Conrad into a character in his novel *El sueño del celta*, published in 2010 (2022, p. 243). Regarding the reception of Conrad in Latin America, Lorenzo-Modia asserts that Jorge Luis Borges's interest in the author was key and a direct influence on other authors to read Conrad as might have been the case of Vargas Llosa. An Interview with the Nobel Prize recipient is also included, in which he states he has revered Conrad from his youth. The relationship between Borges and Conrad is also examined in the following chapter by Evelyn Fishburn in which she demonstrates how Borges introduced direct references from Conrad into two of his works.

However, in Italy, as Mario Curreli observes, many translations were marketed to present Conrad as an adventure-story writer. Thus, there was little critical interest in Conrad between the world wars (2022, p. 7). A more modern vision of the author was promoted by publishing the first complete Italian edition between 1949 and 1966. Richard Ambrosini offers an insight of the "battle for Conrad" inside and outside Italian academia, tracking his reception between 1924 and 1960, and explaining how Conrad's image in the country was framed by messages directed to an intellectual elite. Both Ambrosini and Fausto Ciompi in the following chapter, agree on the importance of Conrad's rich critical tradition in Italy.

Asparuh Asparuhov and Margreta Grigorova trace Conrad's reception in Bulgaria from 1926 to the present day, stating that many significant works are still without translation. Both Grigorova and Petya Tsoneva Ivanova illustrate the complex links found between Bulgarian maritime literature and Conrad, influenced and "conditioned by the shifting political and economic role of the sea" (2022, p. 264). In Czechoslovakia (as it was then known), Zdeněk

Beran observes how Conrad's first translations were either presenting him as an artist—as publishers disseminated authors connected to Romanticism, aestheticism and decadence—or as a storyteller, by comparing him to Rudyard Kipling and Jack London and the world of adventure, being the latter the prevailing vision.

Conrad's reception in Ireland is described by Richard Niland. He explains how, despite not having deep connections with Ireland, Conrad's contact with Irish sailors and with Irish nationalist Roger Casement in Congo influenced him, and are reflected in his works particularly in the political background in *The Secret Agent*. Niland also notes that the reception of the author in Ireland was encouraged by the Irish critic Robert Lynd, and that writers like Liam O'Flaherty and Seán O'Faoláin anticipated Achebe in their initial attraction and later opposition to Conrad's works, and how Flann O'Brien humorously compared the author with Ireland, struggling to find an identity. In Greece or Hungary, Conrad is not widely known, as Nic Panagopoulos and Balázs Csizmadia show. In Russia, as Ludmilla Voitkovska notes, Conrad's works did not find a readership, and there is minimal critical literature on him (2022, p. 15). In Yugoslavia and Slovenia, as Majda Šavle explains, although many works have been translated, attention has come to focus largely on *Heart of Darkness*. After World War II, a renewed interest in Conrad grew thanks to the distinguished Croatian literary critic Ivo Vidan.

In the Scandinavian countries, the early translations of Conrad were published for both the Danish and the Norwegian Market. Critical reception of Conrad in Denmark, as Ebbe Klitgård observes, began in 1924 with an obituary and an article about *Lord Jim* and *Typhoon* (1902). There were no new translations until 1950 and since then, there are no substantial publications about Conrad. Claes Lindskog traces the development of Conrad's reception in Sweden from his first translations to the present day, which in academia is largely part of the international discussion in English, while the general public's impressions of him stem from newspapers and essays about his works. Nowadays, Conrad is almost exclusively known as the anti-colonial author of *Heart of Darkness* (2022, p. 379).

Finally, Ludmilla Voitkovska and Dmytro Kozak explore the reception of Conrad in Ukraine where he was seen as a compatriot. Kozak identifies two periods: The first one in the 1920s, in which he was seen as an anti-colonial fiction writer and a writer of the sea and there was little critical work on him. The second one, after 1991, where there was an increase in the number of Conrad's translations, studies and popular acknowledgment, materialised with the opening of two museums in the country, the establishment of an annual Joseph Conrad-Korzeniowski Literary Prize and the inclusion of his work in the Ukrainian curriculum in literary studies.

In conclusion, this volume provides a substantial and much-awaited contribution to the reception history of the work of Joseph Conrad and his intellectual and cultural legacy, and sheds light on the life of a man who was alienated from his own world and lived in a permanent internal and external exile.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

María del Mar Martínez de Osaba Rañón holds a degree in English Studies: Language, Literature and Culture from the Spanish open university) (UNED, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia) and in Tourism Studies from Universidade da Coruña. She also has a Master's Degree in Management and Direction of Global Marketing and New Markets from Univesidad Camilo José Cela and a Master's Degree in Teacher Training from UNED. She is currently working on her doctoral thesis *The Reception of British female writers in eighteenth-century periodicals*, co-directed by Dr. María Jesús Lorenzo-Modia and Dr. Mónica Amenedo-Costa (Universidade da Coruña).