

A10 NOSTROMO 1904

A. First English edition.

(1) First printing, domestic issue

NOSTROMO | A TALE OF THE SEABOARD | BY | JOSEPH CONRAD | “*So foul a sky clears not without a storm.*” | SHAKESPEARE. | [*publisher’s device*] | LONDON AND NEW YORK | HARPER & BROTHERS | 45, ALBEMARLE STREET, W. | 1904

Collation: [A]⁴ B-2H⁸; pp. [i-viii] [1] 2–480 (p. 187 misnumbered ‘871’); 181 x 121 mm.; printed on wove paper.

Contents: p. i, half-title ‘NOSTROMO’; p. ii, list of four works by Conrad plus the two collaborations with Ford; p. iii, title; p. iv, blank; p. v, dedication to John Galsworthy; p. vi, blank; p. vii, ‘CONTENTS.’; p. viii, blank; pp. 1–480, text; on p. 480, ‘[*short rule*] | PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED, LONDON AND BECCLES.’

Binding: a. Blue smooth cloth. Front cover printed in light blue ‘[*five wavy lines*] | NOSTROMO | A TALE OF | THE SEABOARD | JOSEPH CONRAD | [*five wavy lines*]’; spine stamped in gold and printed in light blue ‘[*in light blue: five wavy lines*] | NOSTROMO | A TALE | OF THE | SEABOARD | JOSEPH | CONRAD | HARPERS | [*in light blue: five wavy lines*]’. All edges trimmed. White wove end-papers.

b. As in binding (a) except in paper wrappers. Title written in pencil on cover and spine.

Copies examined: TXL (binding (2))

(2) First printing, colonial issue

NOSTROMO | A TALE OF THE SEABOARD | BY | JOSEPH CONRAD | AUTHOR OF | “LORD JIM,” “YOUTH,” “TYPH00N,” “THE NIGGER OF THE ‘NARCISSUS’” | ETC., ETC., | “*So foul a sky clears not without a storm.*” | SHAKESPEARE. | [*publisher’s device*] | LONDON | GEORGE BELL & SONS | AND BOMBAY | 1904

Collation: [A]⁴ B-2H⁸; pp. [i-viii] [1] 2–480 (p. 187 misnumbered ‘871’); printed on wove paper.

Contents: p. i, half-title ‘{bl} Bell’s Indian and Colonial Library{/bl} | [*rule*] | NOSTROMO’; p. ii, list of four works by Conrad plus the two collaborations with Ford; p. iii, title; p. iv, ‘*This Edition is intended for circulation only in India | and the British Colonies.*’; p. v, dedication to John Galsworthy; p. vi, blank; p. vii, ‘CONTENTS.’; p. viii, blank; pp. 1–480, text; on p. 480, ‘[*short rule*] | PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED, LONDON AND BECCLES.’

Binding: a. Red vertically ribbed cloth. Front cover blind stamped ‘[*within a single rule border*] NOSTROMO | A TALE OF THE SEABOARD’; spine stamped in gold and blind ‘[*in blind: ornamental bar*] | NOSTROMO | A TALE OF | THE SEABOARD | [*short rule*] | JOSEPH | CONRAD | [*in blind: ornamental bar*] | [*in blind: publisher’s*’

device] | GEORGE BELL & SONS'; back cover blind stamped '[within a single rule border; publisher's device]'. Top and fore-edge trimmed; bottom edge untrimmed. White wove end-papers. Bound in at the end is a 16page publisher's catalogue dated August 1904 for Bell's Indian and Colonial Library and Bohn's libraries.

b. Paper wrappers. No copy located. The book is advertised in the publisher's catalogue as available in both cloth and paper wrappers.

Copies examined:

Notes

First printing: Conrad began *Nostromo* on Christmas day 1902 as a story of an anticipated 3500 words which Pinker might offer to the Northern Newspaper Syndicate for serialization. Negotiations with the syndicate, however, broke down when they sent Conrad an agreement with a clause restricting him from serializing his work elsewhere while *Nostromo* was running and also increasing the minimum length by 10,000 words while haggling about the price. Conrad was indignant and returned the agreement to Pinker January 19 stating, "These are business methods which I know well and don't like. 35000 words (to 40) is my length and ££150 is the price." Pinker then suggested Harper to which Conrad replied in a letter dated 16 March 1902 [i.e. 1903]: "However as to Harper I don't care much. All I regret is that the bad fit [of gout] has not allowed me to prepare for transmittion to you a considerable batch of *Nostromo*. The syndicate is out of the question. It is easier for me to make now a story of 75 to 80 thou, which will be I think easy to place serially and shall make a volume. What I expect is that you will get for it at least as much as I had for Jim in Egsh rights above viz ££500 (300 serial 200 book). Of course you shall have a free hand with that and most of the MS shall be in your possession by June."

Nostromo had now evolved from a story into a novel and Conrad, plagued by ill health, in debt to Pinker and in need of new advances against the still unfinished book, wrote to Pinker explaining that if he were unable to complete the book, Ford Madox Hueffer would do so. "Hueffer who is in possession of my innermost mind (and of my notes) on that story is confident of his ability to finish it should something unforeseen occur; and in that case he would *not* expect his name to appear at all. Therefore you will risk but little – unless my reputation is of no value at all. Pray let me know categorically whether 75000 words are enough for a 6 / - vol on which we could get a decent advance for serial purposes. I take it 75000 are as good as 80 or 90. I want to concentrate the story as much as possible." In May Conrad agrees to let Harper handle the serial rights, but went on to say he would prefer an English publisher, Heinemann for choice both because they had sent off *Typhoon* well and because he felt an obligation to them for the delay the writing of *Nostromo* had caused to *The Rescue* which he still owed to them. Pinker, however, had agreed with Harper that they should have both book and serial rights and so Harper became Conrad's fifth publisher in England in his, to then, ten book career. The economic necessity to serialize his work prevented Conrad, through most of his thirty years as a writer, from settling on a regular publisher: during his life time his books appeared under the imprints of nine British and ten American firms. Harper placed *Nostromo* serially with *T.P.'s Weekly* in England but was not successful in securing American serial publication.

Finally, in December, copy began to go to the printer and Conrad wrote apprehensively and somewhat testily to Pinker: "Whatever happens I *must* have proofs of the book. They can't do better than send them out to me from N. York. I can't let a book of mine go into the world without careful personal revision. Let them pull off galley slips in the US – or else here if they are going to set it up here. And I *will not* put up with the American spelling in the *English* edition. I would rather – and I will too – fling the thing into the fire. Till I am sure of that they shan't get a page more out of me. Let it be clearly understood."

Conrad had a running battle with Harper throughout 1904. The proofs, Conrad complained, were appalling and were not coming to him regularly. "Pray note: I shall not send more copy to Harpers till I get slips returned from T.P." he wrote to Pinker in August. Harper, on the other hand, was exasperated at Conrad's failure to get the completed manuscript to them: "We must really ask you," their London office wrote September 1, "to let us have the completion of 'copy' at once, as the delay is getting very serious, as not knowing how much the book makes we cannot order the paper." But completion of copy for *Nostromo* was more difficult for Conrad than for any other book he wrote. Page after page of manuscript and then of proof required revision. In a letter to Pinker dated 31 August 1904, 4 a.m., he wrote, "I could not resist the temptation of a Sunday intervening and kept the ms to work at it a little more. I corrected it to such a purpose that, as you see, I had to rewrite some thirty odd pages the typed copy being quite impossible."

When page proofs came to him in September and while reading and correcting these he again found places where revision was needed. This first set of page proofs, running to 475 pages, was so extensively revised that second proofs were required. These ran to 478 pages and the printer, probably believing the job to be finished except for minor corrections, filled out the last signature with two pages of advertisements. However, Conrad was still unhappy with the ending and, indeed, wanted to make yet further alterations at other points in the book. By some dexterous tightening up here and spacing out there, the printer managed to confine the revisions to the space available without greatly shifting his type from page to page until he reached the end of the final signature. Here Conrad had considerably enlarged his text and resetting was required. The new version extended the text to page 480, causing the advertisements to be dropped.

Sets of both the first page proofs (475 pages) and the second page proofs (478 pages) were bound in the same blue cloth binding in which the book was published. One set of the bound first page proofs, correctly recognized as such by George Keating,²⁵ was presented by Conrad to J.B. Pinker. A similarly bound set of the second page proofs, however, Keating erroneously describes as "the newly discovered first issue of the first edition."²⁶ These extensive revisions in proof were another point of friction between Conrad and Harper. On 18 October 1904 he wrote to Pinker: "It is atrocious that the Albemarle Street people [Harper] should keep back the whole amount because of the acct for corrections. I have never been treated like this before and I've had to do with publishers and had corrections on proofs. I do know something about it. There is not if I am to judge by former experience more than ££7 worth of corrections. They are on the whole less than the *Rce* corr^{ons}. It's a fact. Half at the most I think. They are all in the last 8 pages. In the bulk of the book they are simply verbal alterations that should not be charged to me."

The next day, still smarting from the charges for corrections, Conrad received his copies of *Nostromo* and wrote to Pinker, "I am disgusted at the slovenliness, meanness of the book's get up – the horrid misprints, the crooked lines, the dropped punctuation marks. By Jove a fourth of the pages slants! I've never seen anything like this! It's painful!" He then goes on to protest Harper's withholding payment and on October 31 wrote to Pinker again to complain about what he regarded as the bad send off they had given the book. That ended Conrad's association with the Albemarle Street office, though for the next seven years Harper continued to be Conrad's principal publisher in the United States.

No records from the Harper London office have survived. In the absence of more specific information, it can only be reported that Wise stated the first printing consisted of 2000 copies for England plus an additional 1000 copies for the colonial market. The copies for the colonial issue were supplied to George Bell & Sons in sheets and bound by them.

Publication: On or about 14 October 1904 at 6s. The British Museum depository copy was received October 18. It was noted in the *Westminster Gazette* October 17 but reviews did not appear in the London papers until October 26.

Subsequent printings: A second printing followed in 1905 after which the first English edition of *Nostromo* was not reprinted.

B. First American edition.

First printing

[*in red*] NOSTROMO | [*two rules*] | A Tale of the Seaboard | [*rule*] | By | Joseph Conrad | “So foul a sky clears not without a storm” – *Shakespeare* | [*publisher’s device*] | New York and London | [*in red*] Harper & Brothers Publishers | 1904

Collation: [1–20]¹⁶ signed [1]⁸ 2–40⁸ (the signing ‘8’ appears on p. 107 and is repeated on p. 113); pp. [i–vi] [1–2] 3–630 [631–632] [2]; 187 x 125 mm.; printed on wove paper.

Contents: p. i, title; p. ii, ‘[*within a single rule frame*] Copyright, 1904, by HARPER & BROTHERS. | [*short rule*] | All rights reserved. | Published November, 1904.’; p. iii, dedication to John Galsworthy; p. iv, blank; p. v, ‘Contents’; p. vi, blank; p. 1, ‘[*within a frame of two rules*] PART I | The Silver of the Mine’; p. 2, blank; pp. 3–631, text; p. 632 and the last two pages, blank.

Binding: Green smooth cloth. Front cover printed in black and orange with a design incorporating a shovel on the left side within a frame with a fruit design in the upper left and lower right corners, and stamped in gold ‘NOSTROMO | [*fancy*] by | [*triangle*] JOSEPH [*triangle*] CONRAD [*triangle*]’; spine stamped in gold ‘NOSTROMO | [*fancy*] by | JOSEPH | CONRAD | HARPER’. All edges trimmed. Heavy, white wove end-papers. Dust jacket of light brown wove paper printed in black.

Copies examined:

Notes

First printing: Harper entered *Nostromo* for copyright in the United States 22 January 1904 and, about the same date, began receiving proofs of the installments of the book as it appeared in *T.P.’s Weekly*. Each of these was set in type and galley proofs were pulled, two sets of which were supplied with especially printed wrappers and deposited in the Library of Congress between 29 January and 23 July 1904. These wrapped parts, twenty-two in each set, were prepared for only the first 457 of the 631 pages of text. Before publication, which was not until fall, proofs from the first English edition, with Conrad’s revisions, were sent to New York and the type of the first American edition was corrected. Though both editions incorporate the changes Conrad made between serial and book publication, they differ greatly in capitalization, punctuation, and, occasionally, in paragraphing. Harper’s first printing, numbering 3000 copies, was ordered 16 September 1904.

Publication: On or about 23 November 1904 at \$1.50. Two bound copies of the completed book were deposited in the Library of Congress November 22. Though published in England in mid-October, *Nostromo* was held back in the United States until after the November 8 Presidential election which fully occupied the public attention at the time.

Subsequent printings: A second printing of 1050 copies was made in 1905, but sales soon tapered off and copies from this printing remained in stock for eight years. From 1906 through 1913 *Nostromo* sold an average of only 67 copies a year. A third printing of 300 copies followed in 1913 to keep the book from going out of print. With the popularity of *Chance*, sales increased and

further reprintings were called for in 1914 (300 copies), 1915 (500 copies), 1916 (500 copies), and 1917 (1000 copies). The book went out of print in 1920 and has removed from the Harper list December 11th of that year. Copies from the 1917 printing were bound in a style uniform with the Doubleday, Page cloth bindings. This was part of an agreement between Harper and Doubleday, Page, announced in *Publishers' Weekly* in June 1916, under which the Harper Conrad titles were made available in the Doubleday, Page "Deep Sea" format after 1 July 1916. Harper hoped the binding uniform with Conrad's other works would stimulate sales of *Nostromo* works. In 1951 Random House reprinted *Nostromo* from the first American edition setting in their "Modern Library" series, adding an introduction by Robert Penn Warren.

C. Second English edition, with an author's note.

First printing

[*within a single rule border*] [*within a single rule frame*] JOSEPH CONRAD | [*below the frame, rule*] | [*in orange*] NOSTROMO | A TALE OF THE SEABOARD | [*ship device*] | "So foul a sky clears not without a storm." | SHAKESPEARE. | LONDON & TORONTO | [*in orange*] J. M. DENT & SONS LTD. | PARIS: J. M. DENT ET FILS

Collation: [A]⁸ B-2I⁸; pp. [i-vi] vii-xiii [xiv-xvi] [1-3] 4-492 [493-494]; printed on wove paper.

Contents: p. i, half-title 'NOSTROMO'; p. ii, list of five works by Conrad; p. iii, title; p. iv, 'Originally published in 1904 by Messrs. Harper Brothers. | First issue of this edition 1918.'; p. v, dedication to John Galsworthy; p. vi, blank; pp. vii-xiii, 'AUTHOR'S NOTE' signed 'J.C. | October 1917.'; p. xiv, blank; p. xv, 'CONTENTS'; p. xvi, blank; p. 1, 'PART FIRST | THE SILVER OF THE MINE'; p. 2, blank; pp. 3-492, text; on p. 492, '[*short rule*] | PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY RICHARD CLAY & SONS, LIMITED, | BRUNSWICK ST., STAMFORD ST., S.E. 1, AND BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.'; p. 493, ship device; pp. 494-496, publisher's advertisements.

Binding: Grey-green or light olive green vertically ribbed cloth. Front cover stamped in brown '[*within a series of four ornamental rules*] NOSTROMO | [*publisher's device*] | Joseph Conrad'; spine stamped in brown and gold '[*in brown, two rules*] | [*in brown*] JOSEPH | [*in brown*] CONRAD | [*in brown, two rules with a shell and rope design*] | NOSTROMO | A Tale | of the | Sea-Board | [*in brown, publisher's device*] | [*in brown*] J.M.Dent | [*in brown*] & Sons Ltd. | [*in brown, two rules*]'. All edges trimmed, top edge stained dark green (frequently faded to brown). White wove end-papers. Dust jacket of off-white wove paper printed in red and olive brown, with a portrait of Conrad on the front.

Copies examined:

Notes

First printing: The first printing of the second English edition of *Nostromo* consisted of 1500 copies, all issued domestically. These were received, 1000 on 30 November 1917 and 500 on 3 April 1918 and bound between 6 December 1917 and 29 May 1918. The text derives from that of the first English edition, though the Dent editors made an effort to regularize punctuation.

Publication: 25 January 1918. The British Museum depository copy was received January 24th.

Subsequent printings: A second printing of 1100 copies was ordered and received 14 April 1919 and bound between 22 March 1919 and 1 July 1920. The third printing, 1630 copies, was received 30 June 1921 and bound between 23 July 1921 and 14 August 1924. Both reprints are so designated on their title page versos.

D. Second American edition.

(1) First American printing

Published as volume VII of the Doubleday, Page 'Sun-Dial Edition' of Conrad's works (see Bla, below).

(2) First English printing

Published in the Dent 'Uniform Edition' of Conrad's works (see Blb, Vol. VII, below).

E. Third English edition.

Published as volume VII of the Heinemann edition of Conrad's works (see B2, below).