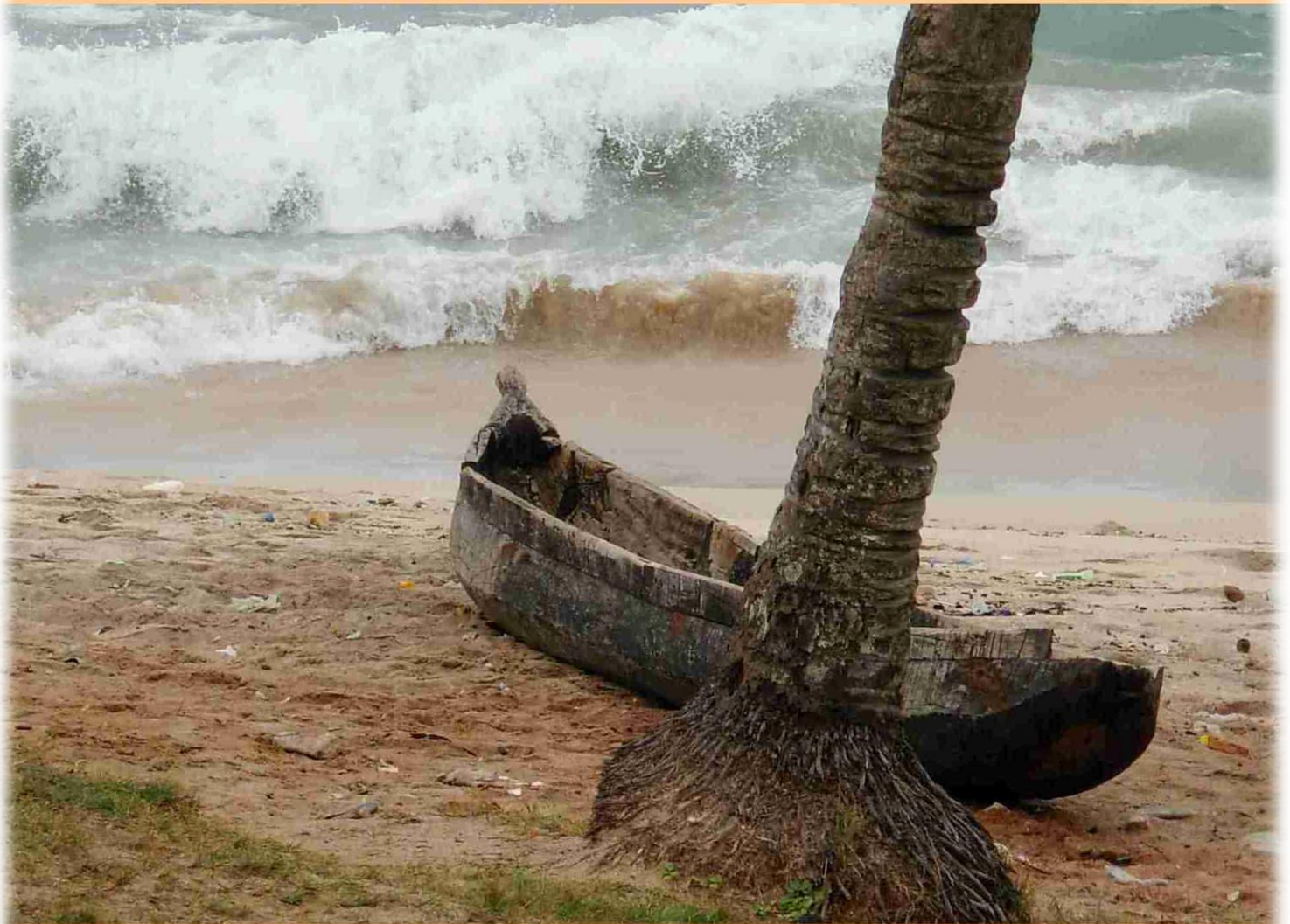


Heart of Darkness

Jądro ciemności



WYDANIE DWUJĘZYCZNE

ILUSTROWANE

Joseph Conrad

Heart of Darkness

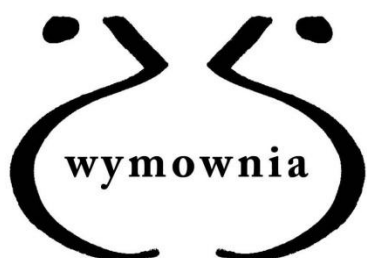
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Jądro ciemności

Polska wersja językowa w tłumaczeniu Anieli Zagórskiej z 1930 r. Angielska wersja językowa zgodna z wydaniem oryginalnym sprzed 1923 r. Zachowano pisownię oryginalną.

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**WYDAWNICTWO
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Joseph Conrad, właściwie Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski herbu Nałęcz (ur. 3 grudnia 1857 w Berdyczowie, zm. 3 sierpnia 1924 w Bishopsbourne) – pisarz i publicysta angielski pochodzenia polskiego.

Józef Korzeniowski był synem pisarza i działacza niepodległościowego Apollona Korzeniowskiego. Nie ukończywszy gimnazjum wyjechał w 1874 do Francji i zaciągnął się na statek jako prosty marynarz. W 1894 osiadł w Anglii i poświęcił się pracy pisarskiej; zaledwie rok później wydał pierwszą powieść *Szaleństwo Almayera*. Publikując na obczyźnie używał pseudonimu Joseph Conrad, który utworzył z imion: Józef i Konrad.

Wybitna twórczość Korzeniowskiego pozostaje zjawiskiem odosobnionym w literaturze światowej, łącząc w sobie nurt romantyzmu z pozytywizmem, symbolizmu z impresjonizmem. Michał Choromański w tytule jednej z powieści nazwał Josepha Conrada „Słowackim wysp tropikalnych”. Większość przekładów na język polski, autoryzowanych przez Korzeniowskiego, jest dziełem kuzynki pisarza Anieli Zagórskiej.

Aniela Zagórska (ur. 26 grudnia 1881 w Lublinie, zm. 30 listopada 1943 w Warszawie), polska tłumaczka. Spokrewniona z Józefem Korzeniowskim (Josephem Conradem), w latach 1923–1939 przetłumaczyła prawie wszystkie jego dzieła; za przekłady te w 1929 otrzymała nagrodę polskiego PEN Clubu.*



Aniela Zagórska i Joseph Conrad, 1914 r.

Heart of Darkness



The *Roi des Belges* (franc. "Król Belgów"), belgijski statek rzeczny, dowodzony przez Conrada w górnym biegu rzeki Kongo, 1889.

I

The Nellie, a cruising yawl, swung to her anchor without a flutter of the sails, and was at rest. The flood had made, the wind was nearly calm, and being bound down the river, the only thing for it was to come to and wait for the turn of the tide.

The sea—reach of the Thames stretched before us like the beginning of an interminable waterway. In the offing the sea and the sky were welded together without a joint, and in the luminous space the tanned sails of the barges drifting up with the tide seemed to stand still in red clusters of canvas sharply peaked, with gleams of varnished sprits. A haze rested on the low shores that ran out to sea in vanishing flatness. The air was dark above Gravesend, and farther back still seemed condensed into a mournful gloom, brooding motionless over the biggest, and the greatest, town on earth.

The Director of Companies was our captain and our host. We four affectionately watched his back as he stood in the bows looking to seaward. On the whole river there was nothing that looked half so nautical. He resembled a pilot, which to a seaman is trustworthiness personified. It was difficult to realize his work was not out there in the luminous estuary, but behind him, within the brooding gloom.

Between us there was, as I have already said somewhere, the bond of the sea. Besides holding our hearts together through long periods of separation, it had the effect of making us tolerant of each other's yarns—and even convictions. The Lawyer—the best of old fellows—had, because of his many years and many virtues, the only cushion on deck, and was lying on the only rug. The Accountant had brought out already a box of dominoes, and was toying architecturally with the bones. Marlow sat cross-legged right aft, leaning against the mizzenmast. He had sunken cheeks, a yellow complexion, a straight back, an ascetic aspect, and, with his arms dropped, the palms of hands outwards, resembled an idol. The director, satisfied the anchor had good hold, made his way aft and sat down amongst us. We exchanged a few words lazily. Afterwards there was silence on board the yacht. For some reason or other we did not begin that game of dominoes. We felt meditative, and fit for nothing but placid

staring. The day was ending in a serenity of still and exquisite brilliance. The water shone pacifically; the sky, without a speck, was a benign immensity of unstained light; the very mist on the Essex marsh was like a gauzy and radiant fabric, hung from the wooded rises inland, and draping the low shores in diaphanous folds. Only the gloom to the west, brooding over the upper reaches, became more sombre every minute, as if angered by the approach of the sun.

And at last, in its curved and imperceptible fall, the sun sank low, and from glowing white changed to a dull red without rays and without heat, as if about to go out suddenly, stricken to death by the touch of that gloom brooding over a crowd of men.

Forthwith a change came over the waters, and the serenity became less brilliant but more profound. The old river in its broad reach rested unruffled at the decline of day, after ages of good service done to the race that peopled its banks, spread out in the tranquil dignity of a waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth. We looked at the venerable stream not in the vivid flush of a short day that comes and departs for ever, but in the august light of abiding memories. And indeed nothing is easier for a man who has, as the phrase goes, “followed the sea” with reverence and affection, than to evoke the great spirit of the past upon the lower reaches of the Thames. The tidal current runs to and fro in its unceasing service, crowded with memories of men and ships it had borne to the rest of home or to the battles of the sea. It had known and served all the men of whom the nation is proud, from Sir Francis Drake to Sir John Franklin, knights all, titled and untitled—the great knights—errant of the sea. It had borne all the ships whose names are like jewels flashing in the night of time, from the *Golden Hind* returning with her rotund flanks full of treasure, to be visited by the Queen’s Highness and thus pass out of the gigantic tale, to the *Erebus* and *Terror*, bound on other conquests—and that never returned. It had known the ships and the men. They had sailed from Deptford, from Greenwich, from Erith—the adventurers and the settlers; kings’ ships and the ships of men on ’Change; captains, admirals, the dark “interlopers” of the Eastern trade, and the commissioned “generals” of East India fleets. Hunters for gold or pursuers of fame, they all had gone out on that stream, bearing the sword, and often the torch, messengers of the might within the land, bearers of a spark from the sacred fire. What greatness had not floated on the ebb of that river into the mystery of an unknown earth! . . . The dreams of men, the seed of commonwealths, the germs of empires.