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A Personal Record

Joseph Conrad

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A Personal Record is an autobiographical work (or "fragment of biography") by Joseph Conrad, published in 1912. It has also been published under the titles A Personal Record: Some Reminiscences and Some Reminiscences. Notoriously unreliable and digressive in structure, it is nonetheless the principal contemporary source for information about the author's life.[citation needed] It tells about his schooling in Russian Poland, his sailing in Marseille, the influence of his Uncle Tadeusz, and the writing of Almayer's Folly. It provides a glimpse of how Conrad wished to be seen by his British public, as well as being an atmospheric work of art.[citation needed] The "Familiar Preface" Conrad wrote for it includes the often quoted lines: "Those who read me know my conviction that the world, the temporal world, rests on a few very simple ideas; so simple that they must be as old as the hills. It rests notably, among others, on the idea of Fidelity." A Personal Record (1912) both documents and fictionalizes Joseph Conrad's early life and the opening stages of his careers as a writer and as a seaman. It is also an artistic and political manifesto. The introduction traces Conrad's sources and gives the history of writing and reception. The essay on the text and the apparatus set out the textual history. The notes explain literary and historical references, identify places, and gloss foreign terms. Four maps and a genealogical table supplement this explanatory material. This edition of A Personal Record, established through modern textual scholarship, presents Conrad's reminiscences and the volume's two prefaces in forms more authoritative than any so far printed.

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