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Joseph Conrad and Russian Literature

The work is focused on the grounds Conrad decided to write a novel "Under Western Eyes" (1911), although the whole life he was refusing any belonging to Russian literature and culture (Poland was part of Russian Empire till 1915). There are three cases that would be considered as reasons that provoked Conrad to do that.

The first and obvious one is experience of Garnett family (friends of Conrad): Constance was translating the main Russian novels and Edward was writing articles in order to explain them to English readership.

The second reason is connected with Conrad's stay on Capri in 1905, where he wrote an essay "Autocracy and War" and received a grant with a help of Edmund Gosse. Gosse was very influential person, participating in a project "Short histories of the literatures of the world" (16 Volumes) as an editor. The 12th Volume is dedicated to Russian literature (1910) and written by Waliszewski, a Polish friend of Conrad. In a letter dedicated to Waliszewski Conrad wrote: "No! No! Don't say phenomenon. That reeks of Maxim Gorki. These gallant Russians are astonishing: All their geese are swans. Oh well, that is their business. For my part, I have never been either a vagabond or an adventurer by profession, or a sort of converted savage" (originally in French, 1903).

Surprisingly, Maxim Gorky is the third reason and it would be explained why.

It will also be shown, how the experience of Garnett and Waliszewski influenced Conrad's narrative structures in "Under Western Eyes".