

Call number: 00-00-58

Offered with Comment: A half hour program discussing literary selections with professors Arthur Wills and Thomas Much of the University of Alaska Department of English. Joseph Conrad's "Nostromo"

Summary created by: Summer Dougherty

Date(s) of creation of summary: 9/6/12

Notes: Originals on 7 inch reels. Master and circulation copies on CD.

Series: Offered with comment

Because the program is being recorded during Christmas vacation when students are not readily available for discussion, there are no guests.

Professor Much introduces the novel by reading an excerpt of Albert Guerard's introduction to the set of Conrad novels put out by the Laurel editions. Guerard writes about Conrad's development of the imaginary country where the book is set and about the richness of the development of characters in this book that Conrad's other works lack. Guerard also mentions the narrative is not solely in the present but riddled with flashbacks.

Professor Much finds that Conrad writes about the characters and political roles they play as if the sources politics and political situations arise out of individual personalities and conflicts. Professor Wills, however, feels that the political situations in the novel are purely ancillary and that the novel does not comment on the revolutionary tendencies of certain South American countries nor does it try to arrive at a definitive explanation of political motives. Rather, Professor Wills feel the novel is primarily a physiological novel interested in human motives.

Professors Wills and Much talk of the biblical parallels in Nostromo, including the imaginary country Costaguana as the Garden of Eden.

They discuss the character Charles Gould's motives: whether they were purely altruistic and humanitarian or whether he was motivated by greed and glory. They discuss Gould's alienation from his wife, Gould's silver mine as his concubine, and the character Nostromo's relationship to Linda.

They speak of Charles Gould as an indictment of all British colonials: aloof, austere, impeccable, reserved, inhumane and unfeeling. Interestingly, he is the antithesis of his wife, despite them both being English. They discuss Mrs. Gould as being one of the most admirable characters and one of Conrad's more interesting women characters.

They speak of the character Nostromo, the development of his character, his virtues, his weaknesses, his supposed incorruptibility and his contradictory impulses. They speak of his wonderful abilities and sterling reputation but also of how and why he allows himself to be used.