Nostromo
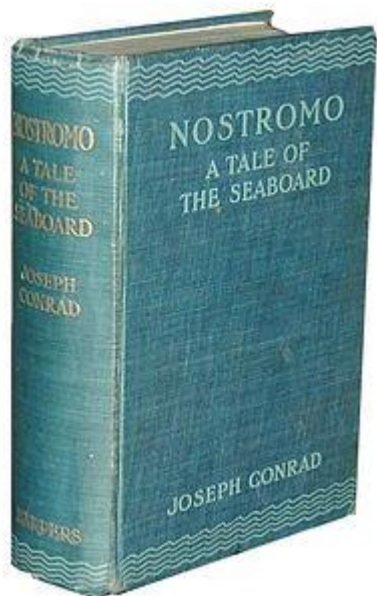
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This article is about the Joseph Conrad novel. For the fictional spacecraft, see Alien (film). For other uses, see Nostromo (disambiguation).

Nostromo

First edition cover

Author(s)	Joseph Conrad
Country	United Kingdom
Language	English
Genre(s)	Novel
Publisher	Harper & Bros
Publication date	1904
Media type	Print (hardcover)
Pages	630 pp
ISBN	NA

Nostromo is a 1904 novel by Polish-born British novelist Joseph Conrad, set in the fictitious South American republic of "Costaguana." It was originally published serially in two volumes of *T.P.'s Weekly*.

In 1998, the Modern Library ranked *Nostromo* 47th on its list of the 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century. F. Scott Fitzgerald said, "I'd rather have written *Nostromo* than any other novel." [1]

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[edit] Background

Conrad set his novel in the mining town of Sulaco, an imaginary port in the occidental region of the imaginary country of Costaguana. The book has more fully developed characters than any other of his novels, but two characters dominate the narrative: Señor Gould and the eponymous anti-hero, the "incorruptible" *Nostromo*.

[edit] Plot summary

Nostromo is set in the South American country of Costaguana (a fictional nation, though its geography as described in the book closely matches real-life Colombia). Costaguana has a long history of tyranny, revolution and warfare, but has recently experienced a period of stability under the dictator Ribiera.

Charles Gould is a native Costaguanero of English descent who owns an important silver-mining concession near the key port of Sulaco. He is tired of the political instability in Costaguana and its concomitant corruption, and uses his wealth to support Ribiera's government, which he believes will finally bring stability to the country after years of misrule and tyranny by self-serving dictators. Instead, Gould's refurbished silver mine and the wealth it has generated inspires a new round of revolutions and self-proclaimed warlords, plunging Costaguana into chaos. Among others, the revolutionary Montero invades Sulaco; Gould, adamant that his silver should not become spoil for his enemies, orders Nostromo, the trusted "*capataz de los cargadores*" (head longshoreman) of Sulaco, to hide it on an offshore island.

Nostromo is an Italian expatriate who has risen to his position through his daring exploits. ("Nostromo" is Italian for "shipmate" or "boatswain", but the name could also be considered a corruption of the Italian phrase "nostro uomo," meaning "our man.") Nostromo's real name is Giovanni Battista Fidanza — *Fidanza* meaning "trust" in archaic Italian.

Nostromo is a commanding figure in Sulaco, respected by the wealthy Europeans and seemingly limitless in his abilities to command power among the local population. He is, however, never admitted to become a part of upper-class society, but is instead viewed by the rich as their useful tool. He is believed by Charles Gould and his own employers to be incorruptible, and it is for this reason that Nostromo is entrusted with removing the silver from Sulaco to keep it from the revolutionaries. Nostromo's power and fame continues to

grow, as he daringly rides over the mountains to summon the army which saves Sulaco's powerful leaders from the revolutionaries.

In Conrad's universe, however, almost no one is incorruptible. The exploit does not bring Nostromo the fame he had hoped for, and he feels slighted and used. Feeling that he has risked his life for nothing, he is consumed by resentment, which leads to his corruption and ultimate destruction, for he has kept secret the true fate of the silver after all others believed it lost at sea. In recovering the silver for himself, he is shot and killed, mistaken for a trespasser, by the father of his fiancée, the keeper of the lighthouse on the island of Great Isabel.

[edit] Film, TV or theatrical adaptations

- In 1991 David Lean, the famous British director, was to film the story of Nostromo, with Steven Spielberg producing it for Warner Bros., but Lean died a few weeks before the principal photography was to begin. Marlon Brando, Paul Scofield, Peter O'Toole, Isabella Rossellini, Christopher Lambert, and Dennis Quaid had all been set to star in this adaptation.

- 1996, a television adaptation *Nostromo* was produced. It was adapted by John Hale and directed by Alastair Reid for the BBC, Radiotelevisione Italiana, Televisión Española, and WGBH Boston. It starred Claudio Amendola as Nostromo, and Colin Firth as Señor Gould. – *Nostromo* at the Internet Movie Database

[edit] References in other works

- Andrew M. Greeley's 1985 novel *Virgin and Martyr* has much of the story set in the fictional country of Costaguana. Many of the place names are borrowed from Conrad's novel.

- In Ridley Scott's *Alien* the mining spacecraft is named *Nostromo*. In James Cameron's sequel, *Aliens*, the Marine transport vessel is named *Sulaco*. (Also in *Alien*, the escape vessel is named *Narcissus*, an allusion to another of Conrad's works, *The Nigger of the Narcissus*.)

- In Interstate '76, a vehicular combat driving game developed by LTI Gray Matter and published by Activision, the gate guard at Autowerks Industrial Complex is named *Nostromo* . [2]

- In Dean Koontz's *Fear Nothing* (book) The main character Christopher Snow visits a man named Roosevelt Frost in search of answers. Frost lives aboard a boat names *Nostromo.*

[edit] See also

Novels portal

- Thomas L. Jeffers, "The Logic of Material Interests in Conrad's *Nostromo*," *Raritan* (Fall 2003), 80–111.

- [Politics in fiction](#)
- The novel *Historia secreta de Costaguana* by Juan Gabriel Vásquez, tells the fictional story of José Altamirano, the Colombian "informant" of Joseph Conrad that the Polish-born author all but erased from his famous tale.

[edit] References

1. **^** Watt, Ian. *Conrad:* Nostromo *(Landmarks of World Literature), Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988, p. 1.*
2. **^** http://interstate76.wikia.com/wiki/Interstate_%2776

[edit] External links

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