



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Vol. 11. Issue.3. 2024 (July-Sept)

INTERNATIONAL  
STANDARD  
SERIAL  
NUMBER  
INDIA  
2395-2628(Print):2349-9451(online)

THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY FICTIONS AND THE POSITION OF THE  
WRITERS WITH REFERENCE TO LAWRENCE, CONRAD AND  
RUSHDIE

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[doi: 10.33329/ijelr.11.3.40](https://doi.org/10.33329/ijelr.11.3.40)

ABSTRACT



The twentieth century was a period of literary creativity, and the works of several notable authors appeared during the period. The development of fiction as a self-conscious genre dates in part from 1926. The paper is an attempt to describe the position of the writers of fiction in the twentieth century with reference to Lawrence, Conrad and Rushdie.

**Keywords:** Novel, Twentieth Century, Position, etc.

Article information

Article Received:03/7/2024  
Article Accepted:09/08/2024  
Published online:14/08/2024

1. Introduction

"Life is not a series of gig-lamps symmetrically arranged but a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelists to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixer of the alien and external as possible?" (Modernism, by Peter Childs) Such is the position of writers of fiction in the twentieth century the modern novel registers a reaction against the "Classical realism" of Victorian fiction. What D.H. Lawrence termed "The old stable ego" Fortune, status and marital position were all-important for the Victorian as for the eighteenth-century novel. The novelist's position was an assured one, however much he might criticize or wish to reform it. His standard of significance was public and agreed; whatever was important in a character's fictional life was registered by public symbols as social, finical, or institutional change. The modern novel, on the other hand deals with contemporary life realistically. The novelists of the twentieth century is preoccupied with an exploration of the inner desires of their characters which came in conflict with demands of society and forcing them at times towards a moral mental, spiritual and emotional collapse. The modern novelist tries to portray life realistically. Methodology Entire work is base on the secondary source which gave an immense motivation to undertake this work. Most of the secondary data have been collected through library works in the different universities of India, like Assam University, Guwahati University, Tejur University for details analysis.

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## 2. Review of Literature

The available literature on this topic are: i) J. H. Stape, *The New Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, p. 103–4 ii) Meyer, B.C. (1967) *Joseph Conrad: A Psychoanalytic Biography*. Princeton University Press iii) "Salman Rushdie biography", 2004, British Counsel. Retrieved 20 January 2008 iv) D. H. Lawrence's *Discovery of American Literature* by A. Banerjee, *Sewanee Review*, Volume 119, Number 3, Summer 2011, pp. 469-475. V) *The Bloomsbury Guide to English Literature*, ed. Marion Wynne Davies (New York Prentice Hall, 1990), p. 667. However above-mentioned works have not clearly emphasis on the proposed topic. Hence the study has been proposed to discuss the Position of the Writers of Fiction in the Twentieth Century with Reference To Lawrence, Conrad and Rushdie.

## 3. Positions of novelists

The inheritance of the English novel of twentieth century – the age which produced Conrad, Lawrence, Woolf, and Joyce – seemed in the end to be little more than a greater degree of subtly in handling character, a greater flexibility in dealing with time, a compression expository technique. As Albert points out, "Henry James and Conrad evolved techniques which revolutionized the form of the novel. Basically they amount to an abandonment of the direct and rather loose biographical method in favor of an indirect or oblique narrative with a great concern for the aesthetics consideration of pattern and compositions, and a new conception of characterization built upon the study of inner consciousness"

Joseph Conrad approaches the question of subjectivity and meaning especially in the context of race and colonialism, in his novels such as *Heart of Darkness* (1899) *Lord Jim* (1900) *Nostromo* (1904), *The Secret Agent* (1907), *Under Western Eyes* (1911) Society is necessary, yet inevitably corrupting; this is a theme which Conrad explores again and again. It is the theme of *Nostromo* and the most significant thing is that in most of his novels he shows how "material interests" corrupt human relations. In *Heart of Darkness* (1902) he portrays the evils of nineteenth century colonialism in Africa with extraordinary vividness, it describes a voyage up the Congo into the heart of Africa closely resembling a journey Conrad has made. The theme of 'Lord Jim' deals with efforts of a young man of noble ideals to regain his self-respect. *Under Western Eyes* tells the desperate tale of a lovely Russian student. Conrad was a deeply pessimistic novelist. But it is significant that his pessimist carries a different quality from that of any of the other pessimistic or stoical or skeptical writer of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The last modernist novelist is D.H. Lawrence. The novel, according to him, by exploring the "Subtle interrelatedness" inherent in relationships and therefore in "life" is the perfect medium to this end. While Lawrence is not concerned with the conventional sense or meaning of morality, he is concerned with a morality that would transcend its more material and conventional variety, a morality and conventional variety, a morality that would have both man and woman realize their manhood and woman hood and thereby to realize the value of 'Life' the medium that Lawrence chose to explore his aspect was the medium of emotional and physical relationships of the characters in his novels such as *Sons and Lovers* (1913), *The Rainbow* (1915), *Women in Love* (1920), *Daron's Rod* (1922), and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* (1913) deals with ties connecting mother and son with an emotional precision (and a clarity of compelling detail that derive from the autobiographical nature of the novel) The theme involves an exploration of family relationship of a sort in which Lawrence always retained a passionate interest. In *Sons and Lovers* the background the conflict is that between the hero's working – class father and his refined middle class mother. The novel ends with the mother's death and a sort of liberation for the hero. *The Rainbow* (1915) and *Women in Love* (1920) are the two novels which deal with the relationship between the generations, the relationship between man and woman, the relationship between instinct and intellect. Thus most of Lawrence's novels are based on

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human personality and human relationships. Therefore, his position as writer of fiction in twentieth century as flawed writer who can exasperate as well as enchant.

Again, Salman Rushdie has established himself as one of the most powerful modern writer with four novels- *Grimus* (1975), *Midnight's Children* (1980), *Shame* (1983) and *Satanic Verses* (1988), he has emerged as a as a novelist of repute. The theme in his novel is fairly varied, "It is neither stereotyped nor predictable. There is nothing like a consistent theme. There are signs, however, of certain key ideas shaping up, of a perspective developing in his writing" Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is an important event in Indian English literature. The narrator hero Saleem Sinai is one of the midnight's children. There appears close identity between the hero Saleem and the writer Salman. He admits the fact that he is called Saleem and I am called Salman ..... It is not surprising that the identification is made." Rushdie's *Shame* (1983) is about Pakistan. It depicts the contemporary political situation in Pakistan. In the *Satanic Verses* Rushdie creates the necessity for all of us to create or at least choose our own life, by undermining certainty and thus authority, in "Imaginary Homelands", Rushdie says "To be an Indian writer in this society is to face, every day, problems of definitions. What does it mean to be Indian outside Indian? How can culture be preserved without becoming ossified?" Thus, in most of Rushdie's novels, the theme is of fragmented identity in a hostile world. After all, Rushdie's position in twentieth century as a postcolonial migrant writer of fiction.

#### 4. Conclusion

So, the modern novel is an extremely vital and living form of art. The modern novel thus is a constant experimenter. It has a gigantic and imperishable legacy. Writers of fiction like Henry James, Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, Elizabeth Bowen have made the English novel twentieth century very significant. Telling about the writers of fiction in the twentieth century Rushdie says, "Modern novelists are like archeologists who collect various items from the past and collate them together to make a sense of history".

#### Acknowledgement

I acknowledge Dr. Achyut Lahkar, Indrani and Urmila Lahkar for all their support and their kind guidance for the successful completion of this work. I offer my sincere thanks to the all editors and reviewers of this journal for their kind review of this paper.

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