

ความขัดแย้งกับตนเอง ในนิยายอังกฤษสมัยใหม่

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THE EMBATTLED SELF IN MODERN BRITISH FICTION:

CONRAD, JOYCE, AND LAWRENCE

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for the Degree of Master of Arts

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บทคัดย่อ

ลักษณะสำคัญอย่างหนึ่งของนิยายอังกฤษสมัยใหม่ก็คือ การพรรณนาพัฒนาการทางจิตใจของตัวละคร สภาพจิตส่วนใหญ่ของตัวละครจะผูกพันอยู่กับความคิดที่มุ่งเห็นแต่คนของตนเองเป็นใหญ่ ความสำนึกนี้ถือว่าเป็นอุปสรรคสำคัญที่ทำให้ไม่สามารถเข้ากับบุคคลอื่น ๆ ในสังคมได้ วิทยานิพนธ์นี้มุ่งชี้ให้เห็นว่า นักเขียนอังกฤษในสมัยต้นคริสต์ศตวรรษที่สิบที่สำคัญสามคนคือ คอนราค จอช และลอเรนซ์ได้แสดงความซัดแย้งภายในจิตใจของตัวละครเอก ในอันที่จะรักษาความเป็นตัวของตัวเองไว้ และยังมี ความซัดแย้งกับบุคคลอื่น ๆ จนในที่สุดสามารถสร้างความสัมพันธ์อันดีกับบุคคลรอบข้าง และสามารถขจัดความรู้สึกอ้างว้างโดดเดี่ยวให้หมดไปได้ ความหวังว่าการวิจัยนี้จะช่วยให้เข้าใจงานเขียนของคอนราค จอช และลอเรนซ์ดียิ่งขึ้น ตลอดจนความเข้าใจนิยายอังกฤษสมัยใหม่อื่น ๆ ที่คล้ายคลึงกัน คือ แสดงออกถึงความซัดแย้งภายในตนเองของตัวละคร

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ABSTRACT

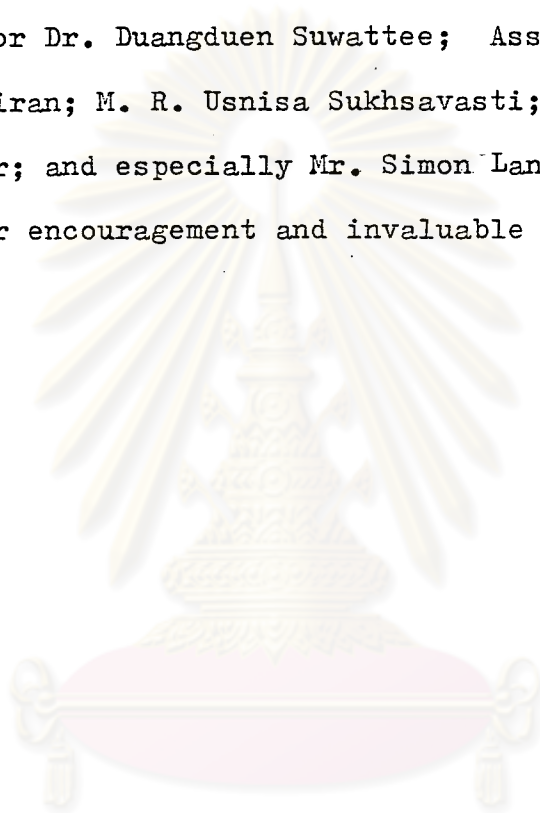
One preoccupation of modern English fiction is to depict the spiritual development of characters. The characters' states of consciousness are usually self-centered. This is the main barrier to achieving contact with other human beings. This thesis illustrates how three of the leading English novelists of the earlier twentieth century: Conrad, Joyce, and Lawrence show their protagonists' internal struggle to maintain individuality, and struggle with others to overcome loneliness through a successful relationship. It is hoped that this research will further understanding of the works of Conrad, Joyce, and Lawrence and of the embattled self in modern English fiction in general.

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Introduction

The British novel of the nineteenth century is generally believed to have reached its full development. One of the main differences between the Victorian and the modern English fiction is in the writer's portrayal of characters. The hero of a Victorian novel such as Dickens' *David Copperfield* is clearly different from Joyce's Stephen Dedalus. We find no internal monologues charting spiritual or intellectual quest in Dickens. David's life is chiefly concerned with public affairs and with what people have in common--job, social status, and marriage, for example. David Daiches has best summarized the characteristics of the Victorian novel:

The English novel, from its beginnings in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries to its great popular flowering in the nineteenth, had been essentially what might be called a "public instrument," basing its view of what was significant in human affairs on a generally agreed standard. Its plot patterns were constructed out of incidents and situations which were seen to matter in human affairs equally by writer and reader. Changes in social or economic position or in marital situation were obvious and agreed indications of a significant alteration in a character's state...¹

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, however, there was a literary revolt against the Victorian age--its bourgeois materialism, religious faith, and disregard of artistic values. What

¹David Daiches, The Novel and the Modern World (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 1.

is widely seen among modern English novelists in particular is their scepticism of middle-class values. They also react against such contemporary novelists of the naturalist tradition as Arnold Bennett, H. G. Wells, and John Galsworthy. The latter group stresses the impact of environment on the character rather than the inward world exalted by the modern novelists. As with the Victorian novelists, they probe the external life of the character. "Time and again," in the words of Frederick R. Karl and Marvin Magalaner, "we reach scenes or situations in which a new method is called for, in which the character could only be realized through an interior probe."² Likewise Virginia Woolf calls Bennett, Wells, and Galsworthy 'materialists' and complains that their work never really captures the inward vision.³ Joseph Conrad as well rejects the naturalists' realism in his letter to Arnold Bennett in 1902: "Now realism in art will never approach reality." He reveals in the Preface to The Nigger of the "Narcissus" that his own art is aimed at 'the truth' and reaching 'responsive emotions' from the reader. He tells his friend, Hugh Clifford that the imagination of the reader should be left free to arouse his feelings.⁴ The task which he is trying to achieve is, by the power of his words, says Conrad in the same Preface above, to make the reader hear, feel, and most of all 'see'.

²Frederick R. Karl & Marvin Magalaner, A Reader Guide to Great Twentieth Century English Novels (New York: The Noonday Press, 1959), p. 28.

³Daiches, The Novel and the Modern World, p. 7.

⁴Frederick R. Karl & Marvin Magalaner, A Reader Guide to Great Twentieth Century English Novels, p. 15.

Conrad, in the first decade of this century writes his masterpieces like Lord Jim and The Secret Agent in such a way to rearrange plot "not in accordance with simple chronology but with considerations of theme or character development."⁵ In the modern novel the character seems to assert against his author the right to greater freedom, to profound psychological depth, or to life that reaches freely backward and forward in time because one preoccupation of this kind of novel is to depict the character's inward and timeless states of consciousness.⁶

Two other factors in addition to the breakdown of a public sense of significance help to produce what we have called the modern novel. One is the new concept of time as continuous flow rather than a series of separate points, a concept independently enunciated in France, in Henri Bergson's concept of 'la durée', and in America by William James with his interest in the continuity of consciousness.... Closely linked with this new view of time was the new view of consciousness deriving in a general way from the work of Freud and Jung but concentrating on the fact of the multiplicity of consciousness...⁷

Thus English fiction has for several decades been coming to more 'intellectual' subjects, "a dimension which might almost be called philosophical."⁸ This sense of seriousness in

⁵"General Introduction", Notes on James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (Suffolk: Methuen Educational Ltd, 1971), p. 3.

⁶John Fletcher and Malcolm Bradbury, "The Introverted Novel", Modernism (Penguin Books, 1961). p. 51.

⁷Daiches, The Novel and the Modern World, p. 7.

⁸John Holloway, "The Literary Scene", The Modern Age (Penguin Books, 1961), p. 58.

the novel, from the late nineteenth century onwards, is also a consequence of the influence of the writers abroad such as Flaubert, Zola, Turgenev, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy. Their art is seen in contrast with that of the Victorian novelists--Dickens, Thackeray, and Trollope. The Victorians tend to be preachers, reformers, and public entertainers whereas Flaubert states his aim as follows:

"To desire to give verse-rhythm to prose, yet to leave it prose and very much prose, and to write about ordinary life as histories and epics are written, yet without falsifying the subject, is perhaps as absurd idea....But it may also be a great experiment and very original."⁹

Compared to the Victorians, these European artists aim to be more serious in subject and more poetic in style.

The difference is not one of the talent; rather it lies in the end the novelists have proposed for themselves....he (Flaubert) is taking his talent and his medium as seriously as poets do theirs...yet in spite of the genuineness of his affinity with Dickens, Dostoyevsky, with his tremendous subject-matter of man in relation to God, is plainly using the novel with a depth of seriousness quite beyond anything the early Victorians proposed for it.¹⁰

D. H. Lawrence, who in the view of most critics, is one of the most important figures of modern English fiction side by side with James Joyce, expresses his great admiration of the 'spiritual realism' of the Russian novelists in a letter to Catherine

⁹Quoted in Walter Allen, The English Novel (Penguin Books, 1954), p. 219.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 219.

Carswell of 2 December 1916: "They have meant an enormous amount to me; Turgenev, Tolstoi, Dostoievski--mattered almost more than anything, and I thought them the great writers of all time."

According to Walter Allen, all these have one thing in common with most modern English novelists' subjects: "they emphasize the individual being, the individual sensibility, the individual reaction." They react to many fields of thoughts in the late nineteenth century which stress 'group dynamics' rather than 'individual behavior'.¹¹ The artist descends within himself, says Conrad in the Preface to The Nigger of the "Narcissus". He too descends within his character to explore the lonely region of "stress and strife...the warlike conditions of existence" which is kept out of sight. The modern world, the writers of this period feel, is desperate, meaningless, and disordered.

This has been a period in which, as a result of developments in the religious, political, economic, military and other fields, men have more and more lost faith in certain traditional ways of seeing the world....a period which has seen some writers reach an ultimate point along the time of bewilderment and disillusion...¹²

Or, as Keith M. May explains

a kind of relativism had come into being so that both the world at large and the process of consciousness seemed less clearly defined and less systematically organized than of old....However, this is the century in which a vast amount

¹¹G. H. Bantock, "The Social and Intellectual Background", The Modern Age, p. 35.

¹²John Holloway, "The Literary Scene", The Modern Age, p. 51.

of systematic study has been given to the mind itself, and in which some novelists (rather more than poets and playwrights) have tried, in the absence of an inherited external scheme, to extract meaning and values from the workings of minds.¹³

The following study deals with some selected works of Conrad, Joyce, and Lawrence. What is in discussion is how the writer investigates the character's personality and consciousness which appear to be major contemporary preoccupations. These writers probe and trace their characters' obsessions with self-centeredness. Most significantly of all, they focus on the embattled selves of their heroes--their struggles with themselves and with the selves of others.



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¹³Keith M. May, Out of the Maelstrom (London: Paul Elek, 1977), pp. vii-viii.