

Quadrant II - Notes

Programme: Bachelor of Arts (Third Year)

Subject: English

Paper Code: ENC 110

Paper Title: British Literature: The Early 20th Century

Unit: 01

Module Name: Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*: An Introduction

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Notes

Background to the 20thc.

- The Age of upheavals, world wars and angst.
- W.H. Auden calls it the "Age of Anxiety"
- England was establishing her domination as a major colonial power.
- Period was most stressful due to the numerous wars
- 1899-1902 Boer War (was fought between the British Empire and two independent **Boer** states, the South African Republic [Republic of Transvaal] and the Orange Free State, over the Empire's influence in South Africa)
- 1914-1918 World War I (28 July 1914 - 11 November 1918)
- 1939-1945 Holocaust ---World War II (1 September 1939 - 2 September 1945)

Features of Modernism: 20th c.

- Individualism. In **Modernist** literature, the individual is more interesting than society.
- Experimentation. **Modernist** writers broke free of old forms and techniques.
- War lit-. The carnage of two World Wars profoundly affected writers of the period eg. War poets like Wilfred Owen and W.H. Auden.
- Absurdity
- Symbolism
- Formalism

T.S.Eliot and Ezra Pound and novelist William Faulkner, were pioneer modernists. **British** modernists include Joseph Conrad, E. M. Forster, Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf, and D. H. Lawrence.

Joseph Conrad (December 3, 1857–August 3, 1924)

- Polish British Writer
- Childhood in Poland and Russia
- 1878 worked as a seaman on English ships
- 1880 began his career as an officer in the British merchant service.
- 1886 became a British citizen
- Works: ***Almayer's Folly*** (1895), ***Lord Jim*** (1900), ***Heart of Darkness*** (1902), ***Nostramo*** (1904), ***The Secret Agent*** (1907), ***Victory: An Island Tale*** (1915)

Short Stories ---eg: The Secret Sharer

Joseph Conrad: A Brief background

- Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski, was a Polish-British writer regarded as one of the premier novelists to write in the English language.
- a master prose stylist who brought a non-English sensibility into English literature.
- Uses winding, indirect, tautological, and sometimes frustratingly ambiguous narrative structure
- Before his writing career, he worked on the sea, rising from apprentice to captain. He uses his maritime experiences in his fiction.

Heart of Darkness: A brief introduction

- ***Heart of Darkness***, novella by Joseph Conrad, was first published in 1899 in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine and then in ***Conrad's Youth: and Two Other Stories (1902)***. It examines the horrors of Western colonialism, depicting it as a phenomenon that tarnishes not only the lands and peoples it exploits but also those in the West who advance it.
