

Joseph Conrad's comments about his works have until now been dismissed as theoretically unsophisticated, while the critical notions of James, Woolf and Joyce have come to shape our understanding of the modern novel. Richard Ambrosini's study of *Conrad's Fiction as Critical Discourse* makes an original claim for the importance of his theoretical ideas as they are formed, tested, and eventually redefined in "Heart of Darkness" and *Lord Jim*. Setting the narrator's discourse in these tales in the context of the dynamic interplay of Conrad's fictional with his non-fictional writings, and of the transformations in his narrative forms, Ambrosini defines Conrad's view of fiction and the artistic ideal underlying his commitment as a writer in a new and challenging way.

Conrad's innovatory techniques as a novelist are shown in the continuity of his theoretical enterprise, from the early search for an artistic prose and a personal novel form, to the later dislocations of perspective achieved by manipulation of conventions drawn from popular fiction. This reassessment of Conrad's critical thought offers a new perspective on the transition from the Victorian novel to contemporary fiction.

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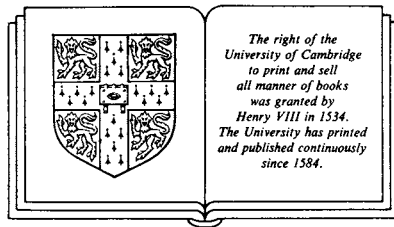
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CONRAD'S FICTION AS CRITICAL  
DISCOURSE

# CONRAD'S FICTION AS CRITICAL DISCOURSE

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*To my mother and father*

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## *Abbreviations*

The following abbreviations are used in the course of the book to refer to individual texts by Joseph Conrad. Page references to Conrad's works are to the Dent 21-volume *Collected Edition*.

<i>C</i>	<i>Chance</i>
<i>CL</i>	<i>Collected Letters</i> , ed. Frederick R. Karl and Laurence Davies
<i>LE</i>	<i>Last Essays</i>
<i>LJ</i>	<i>Lord Jim</i>
<i>LL</i>	<i>Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters</i> , ed. G. Jean-Aubry
<i>MoS</i>	<i>The Mirror of the Sea</i>
<i>N</i>	<i>Nostramo</i>
<i>NLL</i>	<i>Notes on Life and Letters</i>
<i>NoN</i>	<i>The Nigger of the "Narcissus"</i>
<i>PR</i>	<i>A Personal Record</i>
<i>SA</i>	<i>The Secret Agent</i>
<i>T</i>	<i>Typhoon and Other Stories</i>
<i>TU</i>	<i>Almayer's Folly and Tales of Unrest</i>
<i>UWE</i>	<i>Under Western Eyes</i>
<i>Y</i>	<i>Youth, Heart of Darkness and The End of the Tether</i>
<i>WiT</i>	<i>Within the Tides</i>