

SYNOPSIS

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The Indian historical novels of John Masters: A critical study.

The present dissertation modestly attempts to study John Masters the following historical novels:

1. Bhowari Junction
2. Nightrunners of Bengal

John Masters, who spent several years of his life in British India, is a significant, modern Anglo-Indian novelist. He is known for the historical novels and the romantic novels about India. His two historical novels mentioned above deal with the major events in the Indian history like The Royal Indian Navy's Mutiny and the Rebellion of 1857.

The first chapter, which forms an introduction, recounts the biographical details of John Masters with special reference to his career as a novelist. It also takes into account a brief historical survey of the tradition of Anglo-Indian Fiction.

The second chapter which throws light on which deals with the theory, tries to define the genre of historical novel in the light of the definitions given by some important critics like Georg Lukacs, Butterfield, Jonathan Neild and others. It critically discusses the characteristic features of the historical novels with reference to the art of characterization plot construction etc. It also theoretically discusses the process of the combination of the history and literature.

The third chapter studies John Masters Bhowani Junction as a historical novel. It tries to assess how the novelist presents Anglo-Indians' search for their identity against the historical background of India's struggle for Independence. It critically discusses the role of the characters like Patrick Taylor, Victoria Jones and Gandhi. It also points out how Masters deals with the role of all India Congress in the creation of the historical atmosphere during the last days of the British rule.

The fourth chapter considers Nightrunners of Bengal as a historical novel. It treats

John Masters recreation of the socio-cultural and political ethos at the time of the 1857 rebellion. It critically throws light on John Masters' racial point of view towards India of the day.

The fifth and the concluding chapter tries to assess John Masters' achievements as a historical novelist and compares John Masters with another significant Anglo-Indian novelist named M. M. Kaye who also deals with the same historical background for her fictional works.