



## **A STUDY OF AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL, PSYCHOANALISTIC & ANTI MATERIALISTIC ELEMENTS IN D. H. LAWRENCE'S NOVELS**

**KAMEL HEZAM ALI MOQBEL**  
Ph.D Researcher, S.R.T.M. University,  
Nanded, Maharashtra. (INDIA)

**DR. RAJKUMAR M. LACKHADIVE**  
HoD, M B College, Latur.  
Affiliated to S.R.T.M. University,  
Nanded, Maharashtra. (INDIA)

### **ABSTRACT**

*Even though D. H. Lawrence writes in several literary genres such as poetry, drama, and short stories, he is well known and worldwide read for his novels. The writer here tries to trace the main reasons that make his novelist and his novels one of the most controversial writers in the twentieth century literature. The current paper intends to shed some light on the main features of his novels and how they were received by critics, authorities and readers at their publication time. He is considered one of the first great English novels who make use of the science of psychology in their novels. Lawrence is particularly influenced by Sigmund Freud's theory about the unconscious mind. He is mainly known as a novelist of sex, and this brings about a lot of trouble for him. The whole output of his genius is governed by his faith in blood-consciousness and sex, devoting his art to dramatize the sexual relationship between man and woman. He rebels against the traditional methods of writing novels. Unlike the Victorian novelists, he just concentrates in a few individuals in his novels and explores their inner subterranean passions. Lawrence's novels have personal tones, so he is considered by many critics as a great autobiographical novelist. Another feature of his novels is that he is considerably influenced by Thomas Hardy, who uses the natural scenery of the countryside as his background for his novels. Hardy's impact is very tangible in Lawrence's focus on nature. The most exciting moments of hot passions in his novels are set in the lap of nature. Lawrence, in brief, can be taken to be the revolutionary spirit of the twentieth century against tradition, religion, war and industrialization. He has the guts to shake the very fundamentals of the social and moral order. All these features of his great genius are discussed below.*

#### **1- Lawrence as an Autobiographical novelist:**

It is noted that his novels are an outcome of the personal feelings that he himself experienced during his life. One can trace an autobiographical note in almost all his novels, yet that element is very tangible in his first masterpiece *Son and Lovers*. Some critics say that Lawrence exercises a kind of catharsis during writing this novel. He writes his novels to get rid of his inner sufferings, tensions and anxieties by projecting them in fiction. He uses



novels as a kind of self-dramatization. Almost all the characters in his main novels have a remarkable resemblance to their creator, Lawrence himself. For example, Paul Morell in *Sons and Lovers*, R.L Somers in *Kangaroo* and Rupert Birkin in *Women in Love* are to great extent self-portraits of the novelists himself. Some critic says that the most striking feature of Lawrence's characters is the resemblance they bear to their creator. However, this should not be construed that his novels are nothing more that real historical records of the writer and his community. They are artistic fiction in which real, art and imagination are successfully combined together in the hand of Lawrence's great literary craftsmanship. Middleton Murry states:

*"Lawrence was a tortured soul for full fort-five years of his life, and his writings are an expression of his inner suffering, frustration and emotional complexes. They are all in the nature of personal revelations, some more, some less, but the autobiographical note runs through them all."*

The major characters in *Sons and Lovers*, for example, very closely resemble their real counterpart in Lawrence's life. Paul, the protagonist, has a very close resemblance to his own creator. Like Paul, Lawrence is also a weak and sick boy and he has a very close morbid relationship with his mother. Lawrence uses Paul as his spokesman through him he articulates his ideas and philosophy concerning life, love and marriage. Miriam in *Sons and Lovers* has a remarkable resemblance to Jessica chambers who had an intimate relationship with Lawrence. This explains the reason behind Chambers fury and thought that the incidents in the novel related to Miriam do not do justice to her. She is not satisfied with the portrayal of Miriam, because she reads Paul-Miriam relationship in the light of her real friendship with Lawrence. She does not realize that Lawrence is writing novel and not historical account of his own life. Another character that has close resemblance to real person in Lawrence's life is Mrs. Gertrude Morell. She has great resemblance to Lawrence's mother, Lydia Lawrence. Walter Morel, Paul's father is portrayed after Lawrence's father. Lawrence's father, Arthur, is a miner. His father's bad temper and uncouth manners cause Lawrence a lot of suffering, so he is harsh in portraying the character of Walter and biased for Gertrude. Lawrence's parents, like Paul's parents in *Sons and Lovers*, never enjoy a happy marital life, and this has a negative psychological effects on Lawrence like that of Paul in the novel. As Lydia Lawrence who, frustrated by her marriage life, transfer her affections to her sons and thus destroys them, Gertrude Morell, after her acute dissatisfaction with her husband, makes sons husband-substitute.

In addition to *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow* also has some autobiographical note. Tom Brangwen is portrayed as a typical portrait of Lawrence. Like Lawrence, he is the fourth child of his parents. His emotional life is also frustrated by his mother's bullying and domination. He also resembles Lawrence in the fact that he seeks self-fulfillment through marriage to a foreign lady, Lydia Lensky. However, *The Rainbow* is considered the least autobiographical of Lawrence's novels. In *Women in Love*, the protagonist Birkin is



portrayed as the self-portrayal of Lawrence himself. He is the spokesman of Lawrence's philosophy of the typical relationship between man and woman.

The setting of *Sons and Lovers* is also actually the Eastwood, the place where Lawrence was born and brought up. His close intimate connection with the mining activity near the village enables him to give a very realistic description of the miner's life and places. So far as the setting of *The Rainbow* is concerned, the story is set in the Marsh Farm located on the bank of the river Earwash at a place where it separates the counties of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. This is part of the English Midlands where Lawrence spends most of his formative years. Lawrence has witnessed by his naked eye the dehumanizing effects of the mine industry and the damage on the environment, so he gives a minute delicate real descriptions faithfully depicted from his personal experiences.

## **2- D. H. Lawrence as a Psycho-analytic Novelist:**

D. H. Lawrence is considered as one of the first great English novels who make use of the science of psychology in their novels. Lawrence is particularly influenced by Sigmund Freud's theory about the unconscious mind. This modern kind of novels called psycho-analytical novel use the psychological science and theories as a source for the study of the inner unspoken regions of the characters. For example, *Sons and Lovers* is considered as a psycho-analytical novel because it deals with the "Oedipus Complex" or the mother-fixation theory of Sigmund Freud. Paul is depicted to have an abnormal intense love for his mother. This strong abnormal mother-fixation makes him unable to establish any healthy normal relationship with other women. Thus, Lawrence writes the first psycho-analytical novel in the English literature. R.K. Sinha argues that Lawrence explores more than any other novelist the psychology of the unconscious, and discovers inversions and dissociations in human feeling and consciousness. His characters pass through various contrast states of disintegration and disillusion before they come to their inner self-realization. They suffer the conflicting forces of duality within themselves, so their inner psychological forces need to come into mutual terms before facing the outside contradictory forces. It is believed that man's behavior is a direct result of his early development as a child.

The main characters in *Sons and Lovers* are analyzed by psychological perspective. Mrs. Morel is the most important female characters in the novel. She has great influence on her son, Paul, and is responsible for the psychological disturbance in his life. Their relationship with each other has some sexual undertones. It is noted that Paul's mother is responsible for the malformation of Paul's psychosexual development. This may lead to say that Miriam is lucky enough for not ending her life with such a psychosexually malformed hero. This abnormal mother-child relationship is a depiction of the Freudian Oedipus Imbroglio. Lawrence himself had confessed to Jessie Chamber after the death of his mother that, "I have loved her, like a lover-that is why I could not love you". In *The Rainbow* and *Women in*

Love, Lawrence deals with the psychosexual disorders of the lovers and their struggles to come into a kind of star equilibrium in their relationship. as it is achieved in Ursula-Birkin relationship in *Women in Love*. In his book *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, Lawrence writes that the relationship between man and woman is an exchange of the two impulses that are attraction and repulsion of forces within themselves and , thus , cannot be described in terms of moral or social terms. He focuses in his dealing with sexual relationship on revealing the sexual instincts in his characters. He fetishises the natural impulse. In a letter to Ernest Collins, Lawrence states his believes in the blood:

*“My great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds. But what our blood feels and believes and says is always true. All I want is to answer to my blood, direct, without fibbing intervention of mind or moral or what not.”*

### **3- D. H. Lawrence as Anti-materialistic Novelist:**

Lawrence has been grouped with Ruskin, Carlyle and other Victorian writers who attack machinery. He does emphasizes in his fiction the evils brought by the industrial and material outlook of life. He criticizes the mechanical, commercial, over intellectual thought of the age. He believes that the industrial society could scarcely serve his purpose because he seeks a spontaneous harmony between human beings and nature in all its aspects. He does not only attack the machinery but also attacks the intellectual-centered. R. K. Sinha in his book *D. H. Lawrence: Essays and Letters* comments:

*“He felt, no doubt, that excessive materialization and industrialization have aggravated the present situation to the extent that man finds it very difficult to face his real self.... Lawrence realized the importance of society for an individual in achieving wholeness and felt that the industrial society did not offer any community to the individual because everyone lived in a common mechanical unison with sheer mechanical materialism in mind”*

Lawrence is shocked and horrified at the rapid growth of materialism and selfishness. Donamy Dobree believes that Lawrence has been throughout his career anti-materialistic. Lawrence believes that the division between man’s intellect and emotion leads humanity to materialize everything in life. Lawrence is a lover of nature as a reaction against the inhuman mechanical growth of industrialization. He describes very intimately the natural scenes. And uses nature as a healing source from the social diseases. Throughout his novels, he uses natural objects like flowers and trees to indicate the natural power of life in contrast with the disintegration of industry. Therefore, he takes the criticism of industrial system as a recurrent theme in his novels.

He deals with the dehumanizing effects of industry in detail in *Women in Love*. The chapter entitled “The Industrial Magnate” dedicated to diagnoses the psychological effects of the



industrial system. Gerald, who is the industrial magnate, is determined to subjugate the matter to his own will and reduce the chaos to order. There is no room for sentiments and mercy in his scientific management. The workers are no human beings, rather they are reduced to mere spiritless instruments of production. Joys go out of their lives and hope perishes as they are mechanized. Lawrence describes Gerald's system as:

*“There was a new world, a new order, strict, terrible, inhuman, but satisfying in its very destructiveness. The men were satisfied to belong to the great wonderful machine-even whilst it destroyed them.... It was the first great step in undoing, the first great phase of chaos. The substitution of the mechanical principle for the organic, the destruction of the organic unit to the great mechanical purpose. It was pure organic disintegration and pure mechanical organization. This is the first and finest state of chaos”.*

The above extraction from *Women in Love* reveals the malady of modern civilization which Lawrence has diagnosed. Thus, Lawrence sees that the tragedy of humanity in the modern age lies in the rising intellectualization of human beings. Reason elbows impulse into the shadowy background. This destroys man's spontaneous, instinctive response to life.

### **3- Conclusion:**

This paper intends to deal with the main features of the D. H. Lawrence's fiction. It has been divided into three parts. The first part draws on the autobiographical characteristics of his novels. One can trace an autobiographical note in almost all his novels, yet that element is very tangible in his first masterpiece *Son and Lovers*. Some critics say that Lawrence exercises a kind of catharsis during writing this novel. He writes his novels to get rid of his inner sufferings, tensions and anxieties by projecting them in fiction. He uses novels as a kind of self-dramatization. Almost all the characters in his main novels have a remarkable resemblance to their creator, Lawrence himself. The second part deals with D. H. Lawrence as a psycho-analytic novelist. His characters are analyzed not from a social perspective but from their inner psychological regions. In this concern D. H. Lawrence is considered ahead of his time. Lawrence is particularly influenced by Sigmund Freud's theory about the unconscious mind. This modern kind of novels called psycho-analytical novel use the psychological science and theories as a source for the study of the inner unspoken regions of the characters. The third part is dedicated to shed some light on D. H. Lawrence as an anti-materialist novelist. He believes that the industrial society could scarcely serve his purpose because he seeks a spontaneous harmony between human beings and nature in all its aspects. He does not only attack the machinery but also attacks the intellectual-centered.



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