



PROJECTION OF DYNAMICS OF SELF AND SOCIETY IN THE FICTIONAL WORLD OF D. H. LAWRENCE : A NOTE

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ABSTRACT

This paper deeply analyses the projection of dynamics of self and society in the works of D.H. Lawrence. He is an excellent artist who presented something to his society by reflecting on his personal and social experiences in shaping of all his major novels where the dynamics of self and society are placed side by side. Lawrence's effort for the liberation of human spirit is hailed in all respects through this article.

Generally acknowledged as a writer of the Romantic full blooded poetical prose, D. H. Lawrence was a writer of romantic temperament and managed to weave his life experiences into his writings so that a knowledge of his life and experiences is indispensable for a right understanding and appreciation of his works. His genius was at once fertile and versatile and he has left behind a respectable body of works - novels, short stories, essays, literary and descriptive and collection of poems, besides a large number of letters, quite a few of which are fairly illuminating. However, the readers are concerned here mainly with his novels which occupy their attention rather exclusively.

It is generally held that Lawrence is an excellent artist who presented something to his generation. As he was deeply affected by the happenings around him his works were considered nothing but a mixture of self and society, and he too affected the actions of the people around him. His novels are based on his experiences accumulated through various phases of life. Rowse asserts rather confidently,

"he was a part of me : he had entered into my veins at every vulnerable moment, of adolescence changing into maturity. He was woven in the fibers of my mind and heart" (p 63).

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1P a g e



Today Lawrence's reputation as an artist, novelist, poet, critic and painter has come to stay. Lawrence is more alive today than at any other time in the twentieth century through his novels and short stories which continue to be reprinted and translated all over the world. He has to his credit publication of such notable novels as *The White Peacock*, *Trespasser*, *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love*. Gamini Salgado comments thus :

"His expository writings until recently apologized for and Embarrassedly passed over even by admirers of Lawrence the Artist, are being read with a new respect" (p93).

The high seriousness of his avowed purpose as a novelist that the purpose of art is moral, not aesthetic not decorative but moral has been admitted. His triumphant claim is as follows :

*"I am a novelist. And being a novelist,
I Consider myself superior to the saint,
The scientists the philosopher and the poet,
Who are all great masters of different bits of man
Alive but never get the whole hog" (185).*

Commenting upon the peculiar unsettling effect Lawrence had upon his readers, Harold Nicolson says, "he always weaves a scar upon our human complacency" always weaves a scar upon our human complacency" (p265). Even though a lot of criticism has been leveled against him, contemporary criticism has stemmed the tide against Lawrence by according him his rightful place as 'both visionary and prophet'. In the words of F.R. Leavis, like William Blake, Lawrence had the power of distinguishing his own feelings and emotions from unconventional sentiments. He had the "terrifying honesty" one can compare him with another visionary poet Walt Whitman who celebrates from first to last the great pride of a man in himself in **Leaves of Grass**. Catherine Carswell friend, biographer and admirer found in Lawrence a man of rare genius. It is no exaggeration to say that the hallmark of Lawrencean fiction is the venture into the woman. Lawrence studied, loved and understood the "woman" and there was no aspect of the female psyche which escaped his notice. The Lawrencean woman is all women and he documented the delicate nuances of feminine beauty, her appeal and vulnerability. He did expose the dominating, jealous and frustrated women. Lawrence thus showed all types of women in his novels and he himself was very much involved with all these women.

Criticism of Lawrence while admitting his complexity highlights his originality and applauds his venture into the hitherto uncharted territories of the man woman relationship. Most of his novels deal with human relationship and it is here that the

dynamics of self and society makes his novels alive and interesting for his readers. Dynamics of self and society is very much evident in his characters incidents objects and story shapes which he gives to his manuscripts. He is a writer always striving for different types of experiences. He wrote some novels dealing with his personal relationship **Sons and Lovers** about his relationships with his mother and also his relationship with his girl friends. These relationships are quite different from each other as they are based on different dynamics of self and society. The Rainbow holds forth the promise of hope; Women in Love is characterized by the apocalyptic vision. Lawrence's fictional style is viewed by modern critics as a major breakthrough in narrative art. Aurom Fleishman in his essay "He do the Polis in Different Voices : Lawrence's Later Style" says :

"That Lawrence is a master of English prose, whose style reaches a new Plateau in the 1920's, on which it moves in a number of exploratory directions after a breakthrough in narrative art" (p 162)

English fiction reaches a high point with the introduction of the Laurentian idiom-direct sensuous and explicit. There were four things which Lawrence did supremely well viz-a-viz writing about non-human nature, writing as a stranger about places and people he sees for the first time, criticising books and describing dynamics of self and society between man and man or man and woman. W.H. Auden selected "Birds, Beasts and Flowers" as Lawrence's finest poetical, Beats and Flowers" as Lawrence's first poetic achievement. **Studies in Classical American Literature** also came in for special appreciation. As Auden puts it,

".....He (Lawrence) is often quite dotty, he does not make the faintest pretence at being objective, but he is so passionately interested in the work he is talking about and so little interested in his reputation as a critic that even when he is violently and quite unfairly attacking an author he makes him sound for more exciting and worth reading than most critics make one sound whom they are professing to praise" (P 47)

The dynamics of self and society, plays a vital role in shaping the psyche of his characters in his novels, and his novels are autobiographical in nature as he depicts the dynamics of self and society within him and with the people around him. E.M. Forster considered Lawrence "greatest imaginative novelist of our time" (p 219). Aldous Huxley insisted like Leavis upon his greatness as an artist by saying, "Lawrence was always and inescapably an artist" (P 254). Commenting on the Laurentian genius, F.R. Leavis said, "to read Lawrence's best work is to undergo a renewal of sensuous and emotional life and to learn a new awareness" (PP 231-232). One cannot escape the influence of the dynamics of self and society presented through his novels. His novels bring renewal to a dead life, emotions to a stone heart and love to hateful man. Lawrence was special in his personal life and all his personal traits and his experiences make him almost a complete man of very unique dynamism. He remained a symbol of ever flourishing life:



“He aimed to enter into other lives and not only human lives. With wild things, flowers and birds, a rabbit in a share the speckled eggs in a hole in the ground, he was in primal sympathy” (P 218)

D.H. Lawrence was fully aware of the fact that the world was undergoing a change. He noticed the passivity in the male, the masculine protest in the women Mechnization. But still it seemed that there was craving for unity. This stage of a changeable awakening is visualized in **Sons and Lovers**, **Lady Catterlays Lvoeres**, **The Lady Bird and the Border Line**. **The Rainbow** stresses the positive aspect while **Women in Love** deals with disintegration, decay and dissolution. **The Man who died**, the masterpiece of Lawrence summarizes principal theme, i.e., “a revelation of the strength and weakness of his utopian ambition, dealing with his exploration of a whole man alive in the flesh stressing the role of self and society in bringing a change in the useless and meaningless life. The process of awakening, regeneration, rebirth and resurrection is the central force of Lawrence’s creative fiction.

In his novella, Lawrence dispenses with the time, honoured roles of the prophet, the Messiah and the teacher of mankind and follows the personal destiny of the Christ figure. The action centres on the painful recovery of the Christ figure and his venture into the women. This novel **The Man who died** deals with Lawrence’s exploration of the greater life of the body the resurrection of the whole man – alive in the Flesh. It is here that the dynamics of self and society plays a vital role in bringing a healthy change to this otherwise useless and meaningless life. Lawrence’s personal and social experiences play a major role in the shaping of all his major novels where the dynamics of self and society are placed side by side. His novels out and out reflect his secret relationship with almost all his girl friends, friends and his close relationship with his own mother as his father was unable to give love and warmth to his mother. The outside influence of money of his girl friends and the dynamics of self and society play a significant role in shaping the self dynamics of Lawrence. **The White Peacock**, a tragic love affair between middle class people in London and Isle of Weight somehow shows the outside influence of many of his girl friends and the dynamics of self and society.

Sons and Lovers bis Lawrence’s autobiographical novel carrying universal appeal and enlightening Lawrence’s views regarding dynamics of self and society. As the name indicates, this novels deals with something which is quite untalked and unacceptable – “a relationship between Paul and Morel and his mother” (Ford 282). It stresses the strain of mother’s hold on her son’s life and his effort to shun away that hold. Paul Movel is the depiction of D.H. Lawrence himself and his friend’s theory of Oedipus complex. Due to the hoists and turns of his life, Lawrence had a better understanding of the dimensions of relations of an individual with others. These relations are shown in various dimensions which provide to one a peep into the conscious thinking of the people involved and help in understanding these relations



in a better light. It is here that one can see the dynamics of self and society dominating the life of a protagonist and he remains in dilemma whether to accept his mother or go by his own choice of woman.

Dynamics of self and society is central to all Lawrence's novels and the interaction between various characters continues in **The Rainbow** and **Women in Love**. This merging is there not only physical, among Lawrence's characters but affects the overall relationship in his novels. The influence of male upon female and female upon male cannot be underestimated in Lawrence's novels. In his essay, "Of Being and Non-Being", Lawrence outlines the central importance of the man-women relationship to the regenerative process:

"In life, then, no new thing has ever arisen, or can arise, save out of the impulse of the male upon the female, the female upon the male... as in my flower, the pistil, female is the center and swivel, the stamens, male, are close clasping the hub, and the blossom is the great motion into the unknown, so in a man's life, the female is the swivel and centre on which he turns closely, producing his movement" (P 561)

Thus, given the primary of the man-woman relationship, it will be seen that the sexual act becomes the via-media of a delicate balance of the sexes. If this is achieved, it created the new-being. "This is the desire of every man, that his movement, the manner of his walk, and the enter effect of his mind, shall be the pulsation outwards from the stimulus received in sex, in the sexual act, that the women of his body shall be the begetter of his whole life, that she, in her female spirit, shall beget in him his idea, his motion, himself" (P 562). D.H. Lawrence believes in the regeneration of the human soul. One has to break away from the hide bound social consciousness. The first step in this regenerative process is a total break away from the unreal world. Lawrence himself found his British surrounding unfit for this kind of development. Therefore, he moved to Italy and other places where people were not artificialized by their environment. The woman accelerates the regenerative process in man, brings him forth into being". It is in his relationship with his female friends and his own mother that his dynamics of self and society comes into force. In this way, **The Rainbow** also explores the dynamics of self and society in all aspects, creative as well as destructive.

The total dependence of man on woman, the dominance of the women upon the man can have tragic overtones. Instead of a liberating effect, the man-woman relationship can prove stultifying a – nullity. Marriage could then become an arena where the concerned parties are involved in a deadly conflict for supremacy. Lawrence believes that husband and wife should not impose restriction on each other. Rather, they should trust each other and sex should be a medium of emotional satisfaction. Intermingling of the dynamics of self and society. Can be seen in **The Rainbow** and **Women in Love**, which are examples of Lawrence's genius and both these novels complement each other in the fulfillment of these dynamics. In short, it may said that **The Rainbow** is a forerunner to Lawrence's dynamics of self and society

process. The novel **The Rainbow** is an explicitly symbolic novel which shows the dynamics of self and society and relationships that exist in the novel change in customs and values are visible in individual choice of intimacy and personal relationship. Lawrence believes strongly in self-dynamics to give shape and direction to life in such a scenario. The women – an embodiment of the “unknown” mystery the man has to plumb. **The Rainbow** is a novel of passion. Tom Brangwen is isolated in his awareness of love being the primordial passion. He desired “to find in a woman the embodiment of all his inarticulate, powerful religious impulses. He had something to lose which he was afraid of losing, which he was not sure even of possessing. Lawrence shows here how the dynamics of self and society is at the heart of society. The business of love war, at the bottom of his soul, the most serious and terrifying of all to him” (Sagar 48)

The conclude, Lawrence, through **The Rainbow** and **Women in Love** tries to usher in the hope of a better world where the dynamics of self and society will merge into a single whole to give some meaning to this otherwise meaningless life of ours. Still there is hope for regeneration and revival through mergence of these clashes of human values. This will bring healing into the lives of many of us as we have lost the much needed vivacity, zeal, enthusiasm and spirituality in our lives. Thus, Lawrence’s novels brings to us the hope of a rainbow or a bright future and the redemption of our lives. What is required at present is healthy mergence of the dynamics of self and society to complement human effort towards revival and regeneration. Lawrence’s effort for the liberation of human spirit in really to be hailed in all respects.

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