

Sex in Lawrence

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D H Lawrence above all other writers excited and still excites love and scorn of equal intensity. And the fuel of this excitement has always been the very mode of his shattering the veil of reticence hiding the basic relations of sexes. His very explosive and iconoclastic attitude opposing all the religious tenets and regarding sex as the basis of salvation causes a sex-happy embarrassment as a token of scorn, sometimes separately, sometimes together. The more of this fusion takes place in an intelligent reader's mind, the more likings and more respects he grows in his mind for this artist Lawrence who worships life in the garland of sex. On the other hand, the poor readers of ordinary merit really deprive themselves of tasting the fruits of the life-garden of Eden cleaving away love from embarrassment which is actually another form of love-wave in human ocean, in which, Lawrence says, one has to swim and swim creating sex-effects.

Sex is not only on the body surface of the she-being or the he-being though we happen to see so in the form of the full breasted girl of twenty like Miriam in *Sons and Lovers*, or in the form of 'John Thomas and Lady Jane' in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, but, in order to get sex for the entire sense of the term, one has to probe the 'interior Africa of the human psyche' as well, failing which sex derived is one sided, narrow-minded, and unworshipped. The thrust of a sword has to be respectfully offered in the softly-opened body, the door for our in-going and our out-coming, because respect goes to our Father, the Inscrutable, the Unknowable whom we come to know in the flesh, in woman. In her we go back to the Father, but like the witness of the transfiguration, blind and unconscious. The outside body-flame is attributed to the inside altar of mind. The silent amazing force-assertion inside the fleeced mount of Venus is but an opening chapter to sex-criteria. If it is stopped here in this first chapter as it gets in almost all the cases foolishly, ignorantly, disrespectfully, it should be called the devious operation of sex having no conception of art in it and this is the operation of sex basing on which Bernard Shaw condemned sex through marriage, the legalized prostitution. From this point of view Shaw can be taken as very similar to Lawrence as he also attacked devious operation of sex or to some extent, inartistic sex.

Sex in Lawrence is out and out a case of apotheosis. Lawrence sings of the identification of the divine with the sex. The divine symbolizes the infinite and the so called sex finite but in his works, neither the finite nor the infinite exists in itself. Like Tagore, in Lawrence also, the finite is constantly melting itself into the infinite and the infinite is constantly expressing itself through the finite. In his religion, sex-act is as holy an art as god-worship: man becomes god at the time of creation, the job of god. Hence sex-act can no longer be treated as any dirty affair in human society. All the so called dirt becomes beautiful dirt as we go along with Lawrence and look upon the sex-act as a key to unlock the mystery of the 'otherness' which lies beyond the boundaries of man's conscious mind. This very sex-act, in accordance with Lawrence, is not merely a bodily intercourse but a surface meaning of an apparent approach to creative art performed in divine tune. As we worship goddess in the garland of flowers, we do the same thing with the woman in the garland of sex and thereby turn ourselves the priest of sex. In her sex-participation taking in the man, her all pervading creativity is manifested. Like Shiva-Linga (Lord Shiva's penis) worship in Hinduism, Lawrence also highlights male creativity in guise of 'John Thomas' taking shelter in the temple of 'Lady Jane'. In *Chatterley's* his Mellors fastens

fluffy young oak-sprays round Connie's breasts, sticking in tufts of bluebells and campion and in her navel he poises a pink campion flower, and in her maiden-hair forget-me-nots and woodruffs. And then she also pushes a campion flower in his moustache. Thus we see the couple worship each other first with flowers which are nothing but the sexual organs of the plants and which represent their mutual sex organs. When we worship gods and goddesses, we cannot do so with the help of our organs because they are non-living images and that is why we offer them our sex in the form of flowers. And we enjoy their holy blessings as we get our prayers granted just like getting lovely children as a result of intercourse,' the power-process of the strange, soft-heavy weight of the mystery balls'.

Lawrence weaves the Oedipal theme into the texture of his novel *Sons and Lovers* in the realm of a deep respect-affection relation between mother and son. Frustrated in her conjugal expectations, Mrs Morrel moves away from her husband and lavishes all her love on his son Paul selecting him as her one and only lover. This soul-sucking love between mother and son has really been very respectfully delineated with the attribute of sexual urges present in them: 'suddenly their eyes met, and she smiled to him ---- a rare, intensive smile, beautiful with brightness and love'. Paul has wanted his mother to remain perpetually young so that he can enjoy her bodily, the source of which comes from the first helpless infatuation he felt when he was a child ---- a child who could understand, even at that stage, the greatness of sex, and developed his worshiping attitude to women through sex. Thus we see the holy sex-act which can very well take place between man and goddess, man and his art, man and his knowledge can also take place between mother and son. But this worship is subjected to be happened under the special circumstances and in the life of a very special person like Lawrence, the 'Priest of Sex'. If anybody regards this affair as a case of perversion on the part of Lawrence, he simply fails to assess the latter. The poor soul will have to be born again and again to feel the fact that the incense of Lawrence's sex-worship does reach up to the heaven. This love between mother and son is so great, so compact, so tight in size and shape that the sweater girl Miriam stands to be a sexless sweetheart and Clara, a victim of sexual spuriousness.

The relationship between Ursula and Skrebensky in *The Rainbow* is really based on their sexual piety for each other. Ursula, in the process of her womb filling, gets a dimension as a pious participant in the sex-act, because in the weeks of passionate ecstasy he had been with her in her desire, she had created him for the time being. Strange, what a void separated him and her. She, however, feels that her lover will come out of 'Eternity to which she herself belonged'. And then in the blowing clouds, she sees a band of faint iridescence colouring in faint colours a portion of the hill and forgetting, startled, she looks for the hovering colour and sees a rainbow forming itself. As a sign of hopeful and bright future, Ursula sees this rainbow and understands its promise. The essential embodiment of Lawrence's philosophy of sex has been very well revealed in a few scenes highlighting sex-meditation which the people of that time could not take into their feelings, either for not having that much depth of mind to realize the fact or at least for not having that type of approach to life or worse still, they could not come out of the meaninglessness of tradition of sex-concept. With this inability of coming out of the meaninglessness of tradition, though they talk about change as a development, and futility of timid adherence to tradition, they condemn Lawrence as an uncultured man insensitive to 'ordinary social morality'. All these changes are very well answered back when he says, 'all I want is to answer to my blood, direct, without any intervention of mind, or moral, or what not'.

Women in Love, written in a fluid and unrestrained style, introduces characters who are realized from within as vortices of electro-magnetic energy alternately attracting and repelling. Ursula

with the help of her falling into trance through sex-meditation gets the 'eternal' male, Berkin who has polarized within himself the two centres of consciousness, the blood and the brain, because this blood and brain flows to him right from the womb of Ursula --- a mystic connection between the sexual impulses of Ursula and that of the eternal male known to be as Berkin. A vein of mysticism always runs through this thought and the channel of mysticism always makes inroad to women, the holy indoor of men's ingoing.

Gilbert, a young schoolmaster in *Mr Noon* makes a fine display of artistic strokes of sex-life spanning from the courting rituals of a small Nottinghamshire town to self-discovery and passion with a married woman in Germany. Suffocated in conjugal life Johanna needs some fresh air to breathe shaking off the male desire of possession of the female. This is Gilbert who flows the gentle breeze in her life --- the spiritual man in him offers himself up sexuality. Had it been a lusty mating and possession on the part of Gilbert, it would have turned into a mere pornography which is never true of Lawrence. Thus Gilbert, in the form of incarnation brings salvation.

Sex is the very essence of life, failure of which happiness, the ultimatum of life can never be acclaimed. Lettie in *The White Peacock* mistakes this point and loses herself in her children and the surface value of the society. If the child bearing has been the symbol of sex-happiness, then we would call her a happy housewife, but she never tastes life-juice; she simply cannot do so as she ceases to have her spiritual existence to be derived from the loins of George.

All the reactions in the world have to be failed for having sexual coldness what we see between Helena and her teacher-lover Siegmund in *The Trespasser*. Life is no dream, but a strong liquor of reality. It has to be achieved through sex-worship helping oneself get spiritual salvation what Helena fails to bring to Siegmund who really needs so very badly.

A superficial study of the novels of D H Lawrence might lead one to think that he is a sensualist and a voluptuary who takes delight in the blatant depiction of sex. But nothing could be further from the truth. T S Eliot, one of the harshest critics of Lawrence writes in *After Strange Gods*, 'no one was less a sensualist than Lawrence'. The fact is that Lawrence believes sex to be a primary fact of life and an undeniable reality. He treats it with holy reverence that needs no unnatural secrecy about it and really trusts in a kind of sex mysticism which the people of yesterday could not understand and some people of even today doubt. Let us hope, tomorrow peoples all over the world will achieve finer intellect and assess Lawrence as a priest ushering salvation to mankind. Let us hope, tomorrow Lawrence will be treated as a litterateur in the true fervour of religion of humanity.

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