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Sex in Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*

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D H Lawrence has been the subject of so many studies now that he has begun to seem more of an academic industry than a writer. What the critics have not done for him he has done for himself, brilliantly and persuasively putting on record his intentions. Of course, the intention was dogmatic for he was something of a puritan himself. He was out to cure, to mend and the weapons he selected for this act of therapy were some very effectively used words in the novel about which so long and idiotic a battle has raged. It is, however, doubtful whether they have been sanctified at last by such bloodless choristers as cling to the barren branches of cruel criticism. It is difficult to know what he would have felt about the public brandishing of these poor little words. He himself may have had to master severe internal resistances before arriving at a natural use of these words. The prose is natural, lyrical and unforced: nowhere is he shrill and self-conscious. Though he was ill, indeed was dying, there is no falling off in the vivid, exacerbated colouring of the mosaic of this great apotheosized novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. 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 '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 un-worshipped. 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. Actually, 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 it. 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 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"¹.

Lady Chatterley alias Connie had a brief amazing affair with Michaelis, her husband's friend before Mellors. We really find a magic world floating in the midst of liquid sex, oceanic and endless with towering waves, where the two creatures, a male and a female playing the holy game of Sex Preface:

He looked up at her with the full glance that saw everything, registered everything ... "May I hold your hand for a minute?" He asked suddenly, fixing his eyes on her with almost hypnotic power, and sending out an appeal that affected her direct in the womb. She stared at him, dazed and transfixed, and he went over and knelt beside her, and took her two feet close in his two hands, and buried his face in her lap, remaining motionless. She was perfectly dim and dazed, looking down in a sort of amazement at the rather tender nape of his neck, feeling his face pressing her thighs, in all her burning dismay, she could not help putting her hand, with tenderness and compassion, on the defenceless nape of his neck, and he trembled with a deep shudder. Then he looked up at her with that awful appeal in his full, glowing eyes. She was utterly incapable of resisting it. From her breast flowed the answering, immense yearning over him; she must give him anything, anything. He was a curious and very gentle lover, very gentle with the woman, trembling uncontrollably and yet at the same time detached, aware, aware of every sound outside. To her it meant nothing except that she gave herself to him. And at length he ceased to quiver any more, and lay quite still, quite still.²

That was the description of the heavenly sexual moments Connie enjoyed with her husband's friend. So Lawrence endured sex between any couple married or not married. Physicality practised with worshipping attitude is regarded as a heavenly affair and always praiseworthy as long as both really crave for each other. As a war victim Clifford, the royal husband got the lower portion of his body fully paralysed and became impotent. Michaelis then put forward his red hot flame of sex to her to soothe her thirsty womanhood.

On another occasion Michaelis found an opportunity to say to Connie as they were lighting candles in the hall.

“I’ll come to you, she said. She really came. He was the trembling excited sort of lover, whose crisis soon came, and was finished. But then she soon learnt to hold him, to keep him there inside her when his crisis was over. He stayed firm inside her, given to her, while she was active...wildly, passionately active, coming to her own crisis.”

Lawrence firmly believed that “real knowledge comes out of the whole corpus of the consciousness; out of your belly and your penis as much as out of your brain and mind”.

Connie wondered what Clifford would say if he knew that his robust gamekeeper Mellors had been having intercourse with her. She was really trapped in the sterile marriage. Though a handsome young man still her husband is no longer sexually valid. The poor Connie, a beautiful young lady, calm and sober by nature, controlled and rational with all the qualities of a virtuous woman but sex-starved fell prey to the youthful male vigour of Mellors. She offered herself at the altar of his physicality. The powerful man in him got her to the world of heavenly bliss of sex when she was dying for the same and slowly but inevitably going deep inside the abyss of mental agony. To her he became the real priest of sex. There started his worshipping her in the garland of sex regularly, over and over again giving her the topmost goddess status in the world.

“He too had bared the front part of his body and she felt his naked flesh against her as he came in to her. For a moment he was still inside her, turgid there and quivering. Then as he began to move, in the sudden helpless orgasm, there awoke in her new strange thrills rippling inside her. Rippling, rippling, rippling, like a flapping overlapping of soft flames, soft as feathers, running to points of brilliance, exquisite, exquisite and melting her all molten inside her. It was like bells rippling up and up to a culmination. She lay unconscious of the wild little cries she uttered at the last.”

Lawrence, the Priest of Sex wholeheartedly objected to the gross animality of human sex prevalent all over in the modern age. Sex in his hand became a case of apotheosis to the core. It has got an ever new dimension the world has ever seen or will see. A man has to see his woman as a goddess and dedicate himself at the altar of her body and soul. This soul sucking physicality attains the true level of worship. Peoples all over the world will have to go hundred years ahead to realize Lawrencian worshipping attitude to sex. Life is essentially a perfumed product of holy sexuality. So every life has to prise and worship the sex-act, the ultimate process of creating new life. In *Chatterley’s* Lawrence was in full form to establish this holy concept for the salvation of mankind.

“She opened the door and looked at the straight heavy rain, like a steel curtain, and had a sudden desire to rush out into it, to rush away. She got up, and began swiftly pulling off her stockings, then her dress and underclothing, and he held his breath... ran out with a wild little laugh...with the eurhythmic dance-movements... so that only the full loins and buttocks were offered in a kind of homage towards him. He laughed wryly, and threw off his clothes.... He jumped out; naked and white...saw nothing but ...a wonderful cowering female nakedness in flight. ...they started running back to the hut...She turned round and climbed into his lap, clinging to him. ‘Kiss me!’ she whispered...Sitting with his head dropped, he looked at the folds of her body in the fireglow, and at the fleece of soft brown hair that hung down to a point between her open thighs. With quiet fingers he threaded a few forget-me-not flowers in the fine brown fleece of the mount of Venus. There! he said. There’s forget-me-nots in the right place! She looked down at the milky odd little flowers among the brown maiden-hair at the lower tip of her body. Doesn’t it look pretty! she said. Pretty as

life, he replied. And he stuck a pink campion bud among the hair. There! That's me where you won't forget me! That's Moses in the bulrushes... There was silence. He leaned and put another piece of wood on the fire. The flame glowed on his silent, abstracted face. She waited, but he said nothing. Only I thought it would be a good way to begin a break with Clifford. I do want a child... He remained silent. She put her arms fast round his neck... She threaded two pink campions in the bush of red-gold hair above his penis. There! she said, Charming! Char and she pushed a bit of forget-me-not in the dark hair of his breast. And you won't forget me there, will you? She kissed him on the breast, and made two bits of forget-me-not lodge one over each nipple, kissing him again... He had brought columbines and campions, and new-mown hay, and oak-tufts and honeysuckle in small bud. He fastened fluffy young oak-sprays round her breasts, sticking in tufts of bluebells and campion: and in her navel he poised a pink campion flower, and in her maiden-hair were forget-me-nots and woodruff. That's you in all your glory! he said, Lady Jane, at her wedding with John Thomas. And he stuck flowers in the hair of his own body, and would a bit of creeping-jenny round his penis, and stuck a single bell of a hyacinth in his navel. She watched him with amusement, his odd intentness. And she pushed a campion flower in his moustache, where it stuck, dangling under his nose."

To Lawrence, sex is the profound manifestation of humanity, the ultimate factor of creativity. Without the touch of worship true blue sex cannot be attained. A man for the entire sense of the term has to offer his male hood for the bliss of his woman, nothing for himself in question here. In the process, of course, he enjoys paradisaical peace, becomes one with the Goddess, the omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. In the process, he worships the Supreme Goddess, the ultimate Creator as he also creates and thereby follows Her holy work. He worships the woman in the garland of sex. 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 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, particularly for writing this *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, a complete phallic novel containing the full essence of human life and living.

In a way it was a particularly symbolic gift, for the writing and publishing of this novel had hastened the end of his life. His reward was not to come from the public who eagerly paid high prices for a book they hoped was pornographic, nor from the pirates who made a fortune from unauthorized editions, nor from the book reviewers who considered the novel ugly and obscene. His reward was to come, although he did not live long enough to know it, from the many readers of this novel who have found it to be what he meant it to be:

It is---in the latter half at least---a phallic novel, but tender and delicate. You know I believe in the phallic reality, and the phallic consciousness: as distinct from our irritable cerebral consciousness of today. That is why I do the book--- and it's not just sex. Sex alas is one of the worst phenomena of today: all cerebral reaction, the whole thing worked from mental processes and itch and not a bit of the real phallic insouciance and spontaneity. But in my novel there is.

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