TREATMENT OF NATURE IN THE NOVELS OF D.H. LAWRENCE

SUMMARY

In the novels of D.H. Lawrence, nature broadly speaking has been viewed from two opposing and contrasted angles, the mystical angle and the materialistic angle. The novelist’s own vision being mystical, does not approve of the materialistic’s of the scientist’s mode of observing nature. As a matter of fact, the darkness of nature persists and will always keep on persisting, but the materialists chooses to avoid it willfully by living away nature. The readers of the novels of Lawrence witness a recurring and reveling conflict between the mystical view of nature and the materialistic, scientific approach to nature. In the last chapters of this work, this conflict has been underlined, examined and placed in the right perspective.

In nature description of Lawrence, darkness and light go together. Nature itself is dual. In the words of Graham Hough, Lawrence’s naturalism is radically dualistic. Reality exists only as a pair of opposites. If there is universal infinite darkness then there is universal infinite light. For there can not exist a specific infinite save by virtue of the opposite equivalent specific infinite. A typically Lawrences an nature description underlines emphasizes and even re-emphasizes this element not to the
exclusion of the luminous element tension. Some of the nature
descriptions of Lawrence are distinctly marked by ‘encounters between
man and the non-human’ the perpetual mystry of the animal and
vegetable creation. Obviously Lawrence’s vision of nature emanaturs
from his vision of man and life. Infact, both visions are one organic
whole indivisible. Nature in Lawrence is an inexhaustible source of
energy and vitality. Vitality responds to vitality and discovers vitality all
around in nature. This is what exactly happens in case of Lawrence’s
visualization of nature.

Lawrence is known for his graphic and fine descriptions of nature.
By temperament, he was a painter who could paint pictures with the help
of words. Lawrence’s love for nature descriptions can be explained at two
levels. Firstly he had tried his hand at painting and succeeded
considerably in producing life-like pictures. The description of Lawrence
are not photographic. But infact, he is neither a photographic nor a
historical recorder. The half creats the landscape he writes about. He
observes nature from close quarters and almost identifies himself with it.
His close proximity and infact total identification with nature enables him
to give vivid and wonderful descriptions of nature. His eyes falls on every
object of nature andsowe find graphic portrayal of even small objects,
which escape the notice of ordinary persons. Flowers are the favourites of
Lawrence. His descriptions of flowers and significant in two ways. Firstly they present the whole scene before the readers in all its charm and vividness, secondly Lawrence describes the flowers as separate, individual intitles. The multi-coloured scene of the dying day appeals to Lawrence and he can not resist the temptation of enjoying a few quiet moment. Sometimes the hot days is so suffocating that the setting sun comes as a welcome relief. Lawrence’s descriptions of places are so apt, effective and convincing that for a while we fell transported to the place. It is obvious that the picture first emerges on the metal screen of the artist and the scheme of colours is determined by the artist according to his own sensations of feelings. In the case of Lawrence, his inductions decided the shape and colours of his paintings or nature descriptions which, of course had a strong visual appeal.

The mystery of nature is indefinable open, creative, vital and eternal. The mystery with which nature is replete, is a non-human mystery in the sense that it has its own great purposes, manifestations and revelations which are beyond the meager and scantly comprehension of man, dwarfed and diminished as he is in his power of the mind. The mystery of nature is beyond the human and the inhuman. As a matter of fact, the distinction between ‘animate’ and ‘inanimate’ is man’s invention. Nature refuses to recognize this devision. Lawrence
approaches nature, inclusive of man with a mystic’s sense of awe, wonder and adoration. The colours and forms gather mysteriously from nowhere and impinge upon the consciousness of the Lawrence on heroes and heroines. Lawrence is haunted by and obsessed with the mystery of the inexhaustible that nature is the other predominant aspect of call of blood is oediply complex. It means a manifestation of enfantile sexuality in the relations of a child to its parents of the opposite sex. It is a state in which a person expresses excessive affection for the parent opposite in sex to him or her and a corresponding hatred for his or her other parent. Lawrence approaches and describes nature as is he were ‘one living continuum with all the universe’ as if he were at one with nature. He views and watches nature as ‘the real individual’. Nature in the novels of Lawrence is a source of life, new life, pure and fearless life.

Lawrence maintains that symbols stand for emotional experience and have nothing to do with any kind of mental origin. It is obvious that a symbol derives its life and strength from emotional experience. Since symbols are without any fixed meaning, it is not possible to explain them rationally. Lawrence does not belong to any literary movement. Also he is not a follower of any writer. He is original in his approach and his symbols are, therefore personal. He believes that all art is symbolic consciously or unconsciously. Symbolism is an invaluable aspect of the
modern act. The human mind functions symbolically when some component of its experience elicit consciousness, beliefs, emotions and usages respecting other components of its experience.” The former set of components becomes symbol and the latter the meaning of it. Human mind functions symbolically, and so there is a community between the nature of a symbol and its meaning. Man has always been in love with imagination since times immemorial than an ordinary flow of language. Through symbol is not a once to one correspondence like sign, yet it has its own value. Symbolism is an outward device for presenting an inward state, and literature uses adequate words to create an image of time, space or dynamic pattern of feeling. The potency of the real thing is contained in the world that creates it. In the novel symbols perform varied functions in varied ways. These may serve a character, the author, the reader of the creative. When a symbol serves a character, it carries some thing to him and shows his reaction to it. Symbol in the novel has a particular role to play, it is essentially a collective concept. But in a realistic novel, it is always casually related to its meaning. The symbolic novel imposes a particular meaning or reality.

Lawrence claims that the world of nature is not a world of pure joy, innocence and simplicity. It is a world of stark reality where incident of violence and brutality figure from time to time. In his novels Lawrence
gives us glimpses of the struggle for survival which goes on in this world. Whenever there is a scuffle between man and the other gestures, it is always man who comes out victorious in this uneven tussle. The weaker creature who happen to be at the mercy of man, are naturally the victimized. Lawrence seems to be deeply influenced by the idea of the age and specially by Darwin’s theory of the ‘origin of species’. Lawrence, especially in the context of Darwin’s theory of evolution, would condemn man’s conception of God’s creation. While discussing this view of man, Lawrence would say that nature is red in tooth and claw. The struggle for existence continues unabated in this trife-torn unversed very often causing unnecessary violence. In ‘The White Peacock’, we see how one creature overpowers another. Lawrence was against all violence and brutality in the world of nature. He was much attached to birds and beasts. Infact he could not kill any living being and least of all a bird. So hunting did not appeal to him at all.

As a matter of fact, Lawrence finds that the church has outlived it utility and powers of moving and stirring. Among the primary forces and dogmas, which mar the energy, the vitality of nature, Christianity is one of them. Lawrence discovers that the cathedrals which symbolize the dead and the dogmatic Christianity do not include nature. The church is somehow tainted, it is not ‘in touch with the vivid life of the cosmos. He
believed that if modern man was ever to re-establish a connection with the universe, he would have to reject the dead Christian ritualism and dogma. We must get back into relation, vivid and nourishing relation to the cosmos and the universe. Christianity in circumscribed by time and place, nature is eternal. In Lawrence’s view, Christian dogma is wonderless and productive of boredom, and endless boredom. On the other hand nature is permeated with a sense of wonder, which is fundamental to life.

Nature, in the novels of Lawrence is the symbol of the inexhaustible vitality, energy and mobility without which he or she cannot improve, revitalise and rejuvenate his or her half-deadened and sterile existence. In fact, it is the principle of timelessness, beckoning the time — bound and space — limited existence of the modern man to come to it for shattering man-made intellectual fancies and systems and renewing the very springs of life. Symbolically it is the struggle, the clash between the two well-known polarities of life which has an immense potentiality of symbolical meaning. For example, the flesh and the spirit individually in themselves have not much of the meaning unless and until they interact. Interaction alone in symbolical. Nature conveys to man, to be natural; to be natural is to be fearless, spontaneous, free and open. Lawrence prizes nature for flow of life. Essentially nature in Lawrence
appears as the objective correlative of the dark unconscious within manor in other words, it may be taken as the symbol of sex, the life of the flesh which is as much dark, mysterious, vital as the novelist’s nature is.

In this work we have been distinguishing three stages of consciousness from separateness to Absolute Being. The first stage is that of simple consciousness in which the knower, the knowledge and the thing known are still undifferentiated. It is present in animal and young children have a cosmic universal quality. It is lost in the second stage, but restored in the third. Lawrence, for one, seems to view nature from this stage of simple consciousness and ceaselessly admires such men and women as possess this consciousness. The nature descriptions of Lawrence prove beyond and contention that the novelist is a great pictorial artist. On landscape painting, Lawrence, writes, ‘Landscape, however is different. Here the English exist and hold their own. But for me, personally, landscape is always waiting for something to occupy it. Landscape seems to be meant as a background to an intender vision of life, so to my feeling painted landscape is background with the real subject left out.

As far as the influence of industrialism on the nature of man goes, it has certainly made him much more possessive and presumptuous. He starts presuming that through his superior powers of scientific and
analytical thinking, he can master and subjugate nature. But as Lawrence feels, nature will always remain unsubjected, dark. The nature descriptions of Lawrence show the novelist’s preference for the countries and places where greenery freshness, simplicity and darkness of nature still persist and have not been tampered with or half-trampled by the industrial wheels machine and the civilized steps of the modern man.

If nature conveys anything to man, it is simply to be natural; In other words, all that is natural, falls within the domain of nature; to be natural is to be fearless, spontaneous, free and open. Lawrence links goodness and wickedness with fear from which both are traced. Nature breathes and lives as man does without conveying any moral teachings to him. Rather in a typically Lawrence nature description, man has been viewed a san integral part of nature. Nature with the novelist is the area of the unknown, the unconscious, the incomprehensible and as such, it baffles all shapes and forms, classes and divisions, distinctions and discriminations.