CHAPTER II
PICTURESQUE DESCRIPTION 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. This hobby of Lawrence finds frequent references in his autobiographical novel, ‘Sons and Lovers’ where Paul Morel is found keenly absorbed in painting. When his mother asked him what he would kike to be, he expressed his desire to be a paintster. That was perhaps the nearest to his heart. Since he did not enjoy very good health, his interest were confined to 'racing about or making excursions into the country, or reading, or painting.' A little the novelist observes that perhaps Paul 'might also make a painter.' Even when a great tragedy strikes the family and Mrs. Morel keeps brooding over it, Paul remembers the praise showered on him by Miss Jordan for his wonderful painting and says : Mother, Miss Jordan was down today, and she said my sketch of a colliery a work was beautiful.

The descriptions of Lawrence are not photographic. In fact, he is neither a photographic nor a historical recorder. He half creates the
landscape he writes about. He chosen to belong to a place on his own terms, he makes the place his own. Perhaps he had developed a kind of hatred for the real Eastwood. Lawrence paid a visit to Eastwood in the middle twenties. William Hopkins who gave an account of this visit, said that they went for a walk on Lawrence’s last visit to Eastwood, which would make it September, 1926 or Oct, 1025. Hopkins writes:

When we reached Felley Dam (next to Felley Mill farm), he stood still and looked across to the Haggs (the Chamber's farm, of course). I went and sat by the pond. After a few minutes I turned and looked at him. He stood as stiffly as a statue, and there was an expression of dreadful pain on his face.

After a while he told me to come along.

For ten minutes he never spoke a word, and then he broke out into a lot of brilliant nonsense.

As we nearest his old house (either The Breach House of the Walker street house, I think) he never gave it a glance. I asked when he was coming over again. His reply was ‘never: I hate the damned place.\(^3\)

Thus Lawrence’s relationship with Eastwood is puzzling in many ways. It was a place he exiled himself from though it
keep coming to him. He could not cut himself off completely from this place as he could not wholly free himself from the influence of his father and his mother. He wrote to his old friends, Gertrude Cooper late in life about their youth in Eastood:

Sometimes it seems so far off:

and sometimes it is like yesterday.\(^4\)

In fact, the landscape of 'Nottingham and the Mining Countryside' is, in reality, that of an exile whose desire is not to recover a lost world, but to create one that satisfies him.

In the mind of Lawrence, Eastwood was perhaps associated with certain unpleasant memories of childhood days. So Eastwood was a place he obviously linked with unhappiness, through he never quite said why Lawrence told Louie Burrow when he got engaged to her:

You will be the first woman to make the earth glad for me mother, Jessie - all the rest have been gaits to a very sad world.\(^5\)

Although he continued to visit Eastwood for short periods, he did so after a lot of persuasion and under pressure. Perhaps the bitterness and unhappy experiences of later years are partly responsible for his changed
attitude. However, he could never forget the pleasant period of his early life and the memories of home life remained ever fresh in his mind. He wrote to Far diner in December, 1926:

Go to Walker street - Stand in front of the third house 

......... I know that view better than any in the world.........

'that's the country of my heart.  

Lawrence who witnessed with dismay the transformation of the countryside’s does not develop any liking for the commercial values of the day. Poverty, squalor and industrial degradation should have been his favourite themes, but he chose to overlook them and instead, field and farms find a place of prominence in his novels. His knowledge of the farm life is revealed in the following lines:

I met George tramping across the yard with a couple of buckets of swill and eleven young pigs rushing suggesting about his legs, shrieking in any agony of suspense. He poured the stuff into a throng with luscious gurgle, and instantly ten nooses were edispped in, ad ten little months began to slobber. Though there was plenty of room for ten, yet they shouldered and shoved and struggled to capture a larger space and many little trotters dabbled and spilled the
stuff, and the ten sucking, clapping snouts switched fiercely and twenty little eyes glared askance, like so many points of wrath. They gave uneasy, gasping grunts in their haste. The unhappy eleventh rushed from point to point trying to push in his snout, but for pains he got rough squeezing and sharp grabs on the ears. Then he lifted up his face and screamed screams of grief and wrath into the evening sky.7

The picture of the struggling pigs for a mouthful of share is really wonderful and revealing. Lawrence always liked energy and movement in nature. Like Byron, he is fascinated by the roaring and stormy sea. 'I never admire the strength of mountain and fixed rocks', he wrote in 1908, 'but the strength of the sea that leaps and foams frantically and slips back in a lame under wash.8

High and imposing mountains and tall rocks, through their awe-inspiring appearance, have always appalled to lovers of nature. However, Lawrence looks at nature from an altogether different angle and rejects or ignores the static aspects of nature. In fact, Lawrence finds the world in a dynamic state. Life, in whatever form it exist, is dynamic. Whatever is static, feels the novelist, either or losses its stature and significance Lawrence is an admire of things in motion or in fluid state. The flowing
river, the moving clouds, the roaring sea attract his attention. In ‘The White Peacock’ Cyclie and his companions ‘stood awhile on the bridge to watch the bright river swirling in a silent dance to the sea’,9 awhile in ‘Sons and Lovers’, Paul and Clara looked down as ‘the river slide by in a body, utterly silent and 10 swift, intertwining among itself like some subtle, complex creatures.’10 In ‘The White Peacock’ again, the movement of the clouds is captured thus:

Across the infinite skies of March great rounded masses of cloud had sailed stately all day,.... All day the clouds had moved on to their vast destination, .... I wished that in all the wild valley where cloud shadows were travelling like pilgrims, something would call me forth from my rooted loneliness.11

In his introduction to ‘Twentieth Century Interpretations of women in love, Stephen J. Miko remarks: when Lawrence began to write, his talent was most audience in his descriptions of nature.12

In ‘The Plumed Serpent’, Kate's journey to the lake is beautifully described. She feels fascinated by the beauty of the country. The novelist wishes to emphasize that religion and civilization preserves their strength with the help of nature: the church is dead because it represents a rootless
and alien faith. In ‘Lady Chatterley's Lover’, Connie visits the hut of Mellors in the woods. The surroundings have a charm and beauty of their own. The place is used by Mellors for breeding pheasants. It is a cool and lonely place - all calm and quiet. The spring season has been described in a charming and lucid manner, the flowers all around suggest a new life:

Then, one day, a lovely sunny day with great tufts of primroses under the hazels and many violets dotting the paths, she came in the afternoon to the cops and these was one tiny, tiny perky chicken tinily prancing round in front of a coup, and the mother hen clucking in terror.13

Lawrence is at his best when he describes his own country as we see it in ‘Sons and Lovers’. He does so with an assured intimacy 'which seldom fails or fades. He re-creates places - Derbyshire and Nottingham where he spent his early childhood. Derbyshire is the place where coal-mines touch as close neighbors the open country of great charm. The small stream, Erewash divides Nottingham shire from Derbyshire. It is a hilly country looking West to Crich and towards Matlock, sixteen miles away and east and north east towards Mansfield and the Sherwood Forest district. Lawrence visualises:

To me it seemed, and still seems, an extremely beautiful country side, just between the red sandstone and to oak trees of Nottingham, and the cold limestone, the ash-trees, the
stone fences of Derbyshire. To me, as a child and a young man, it was still the old England of the forest and the agriculture past; there were no mother cars the mines were, in a sense, an accident in the landscape, and Robinhood and his merrymen were not very far away. It is obvious that the England in which Lawrence grew up, was a country of odd mixture - partly industrialised and partly agricultural, when he chooses the title 'Nottingham and the Mining countryside', his main emphasis is on the charming countryside and not on the mines. Lawrence's eye passes clean over the industrial landscape and the links between that landscape and its markets. The only link he notes is the river which is view a border, no a waterway. Cancels and railway lines find absolutely no place in his landscape. It is full of rocks, streams and trees. The eye looks back over the ground it has covered and as if for the first time, notices the industry: 'the mines were, in a sense, an accident in the landscape'. It may appear to be surprising that the very things that have made modern Eastwood, its house, its industry, its population, its expansion, are seen as accidental in contrast with the eyes and the heart's own place the countryside.

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 entitles. Here is a brief lustration from
‘Women in Love’:

For the moment, sunshine fell brightly into the churchyard;
there was a vague scent of sap and of spring, perhaps of violets from off the graves. Some whit daisies were out,
bright as angles. In the air, the unfolding leaves of a copper beech were blood-red.¹⁵

In Lawrence, various characters feel fascinated at the sight of the flowers. Herre Ursula and Birkin are spell-bound at their sight:

The little red distillate flowers had some strange almost b mystic passionate attraction for her.¹⁶

When Lawrence talks of flowers, he at once distinguishes them as roses or Chrysanthemums or Michaelmas daisies or violets or red dahilias. Perhaps his intention is to make us aware of their shapes, colours and variety of shades. His knowledge of flowers is really marvellous. His essay ‘Flowery Tuscany’ is a mine of information on a wide variety of flowers. He observes:

Each country has its own flowers that shine out specially there. In England it is daisies and butter cups, Hawthorne and cowslips. In America, it is goldenrod, star grass, June
daisies, Maya apple and asters, that we call Michaela's
deans. In India, hibiscus and dattura and champa flowers and
in Australia mimosa, that they call wattle, and sharp tongued
strange health - flowers. In Mexico it is cactus flowers, that
they call roses of the desert, lovely and crystalline among
many thorns,\textsuperscript{17}....

Lawrence gives the impression of being an authority on flowers as he
provides detailed information which is the result of his minute
observation and deep attachment with flowers. Apart from his wide
reading, his travels across the world helped him gain first hand
knowledge of the flowers found in various countries of the world. The
change of seasons brings forth new charming blooms and Lawrence
describes how different flowers grow in plenty in different months of the
year. He observes:

\textit{It is mid-February before the first violets, the first crocus, the
first primrose. And in mid-February one may find a violet, a
primrose, a crocus in England.}\textsuperscript{18}

He goes on to furnish more details about the blossoms as the months roll by:

And now that it is March, there is a rush of flowers. Down
by other stream, which turns side ways to the sun, and has
tangles of brier and bramble, down where the hellebore has stood so wan and dignified all winter, there are now white tufts of primroses, suddenly come.¹⁹

Lawrence feels that while normal activity has continued on the surface of the earth all these years, leading of significant changes, there are numerous sports where the beauty of nature has remained intact and unspoiled. He says:

The streams run and rattle over wild rocks of secret places, and murmur through blackthorn thickets were the nightingales sign all together, unruffled and undaunted.²⁰

Lawrence knew all about wild flowers and could name most of them. Once waling with Catherine cars well, he named and discoursed upon at lest thirty different variants of flowers. While the variety o flowers maters, what figures prominently is the sense of colours. Little moved about, 'whereas the while geraniums grew magnificently.²¹ With the advent of autumn, 'the red dahlias which kept the warm light alive in their bosoms so late into the evening died in the night.²²

'The garden was a towled mass of faded pink chrysanthemums.²³
His attachment with flowers is so intense and strong, that he calls even his poems as 'Living Flowers'. Lawrence's approach to natural objects is obviously emotional. Flowers appeal to his eyes as well to his heart. In a way, he identifies beauty of flowers with human beauty or more particularly feminine charm. In 'Women in Love', gudrun has come to Shortland to teach winifred. When Gerald comes back home, he greets gudrun one morning. The presence of Gudrun makes that morning lovelier and more charming than that of flowers.

Commenting on the descriptive power of Lawrence, waiter Allen writes:

……Lawrence often appears to be much more successful - at any rate acceptable - when he is s recereatong the lives of birds, beasts and flowers.24

His eager desire for communion with natural forces led him to an imaginative study of birds, beasts and flowers. The circum elephant, the bat, the tortoise, the Kangaroo, the huming bird, the blue jay - all seemed to Lawrence living evidence of primordial existence in which man once actively participated, but from which was now cut off. Whenever Lawrence writes about animals or plants, the anger and frustration which too often intrude in his descriptions of human beings, vanish. To Wordsworth the creatures are symbols of great mysterious powers. To the naturalist, they are examples of a beautiful or interesting species to be
observed objectively. On the other hand, Lawrence, loves to be observed objectively. On the other hand. Lawrence loves them simply as neighbours. To a fig tree or a tortoise, he gives that passionate personal attention usually offered by lonely or shy people or by children. His genuine vision of plants, of animals will be treasured for all times to come.

Lawrence's keen eye falls on small objects of nature and its surroundings and we get wonderful pictures of various aspects of nature. In ‘Sons and Lovers’ Lawrence paints the setting sun thus:

The sun was going down. Every open evening, the hills of Derbyshire were blazed over with red sunset. Mrs. Morel watched the sun sink from the glistering sky, leaving a soft flower-blue overhead, while the western space went red, as if all the fire had swurm down there, leaving the bell cast flawless blue, the mountain-ash barries across the field stood fier out from the dark leaves for a moment.25

The multi-coloured scene of the dying day appeals to Lawrence and he cannot 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:

The day had been hot and close. The sun was reddening in the west as well leaped across the lesser brook. The evening
scents began to awake …… the trees were silent, drawing together to sleep.\textsuperscript{26}

The novelist believes that the day is a period of feverish activity and the approaching night and darkness signal the time of relief and rest not only for human beings, but also for trees, plants and other natural objects. Lawrence expresses the spirit of place and season wonderfully well. Here is a relevant passage from ‘The White Peacock’:

I was born in September and love it best of all the months. There is no heart, no hurry, no thirst and weariness in corn heaviest as there is in the aye. If the seasons is late, as is usual with us, then mid - September sees the corn still standing in stock. The lying corn is wet, and when you have bound it, and left the heavy sheaf to make the stood, the tresses of coasts wreathe round each other and droop mournfully.\textsuperscript{27}

Lawrence was thus a wonderful painter of scenes. He could not only paint with colours, but also with words. Lawrence was not always at his beast. As Virginia Wolf has said that he may have moments of greatness, but hours of something else, but when is at his best, he gives the impression
of living through the words that he writes and in this respect, he is
matchless and inimitable.

What goes on in the word of nature has a direct bearing on the
human world. The following passage from ‘The trespasser’ makes it
amply clear:

They are all still - gorse and the stars and the sea and the trees,
are all kissing, Sigmund. The sea has its mouth on the earth,
and the gorse and the trees press together, and they all look -up
at the moon, they put up their faces in a kiss, my darling.28

The background of these descriptions is the Isle of Wight. White the
enchanting picture of a white, sunny landscape provides the setting for
Sigmund's and Helena's affairs, it also gives glimpsers of nature. Thus
there is an inter-mingling of man and nature. Lawrence has not visualized
nature in isolation. He presents an integrated picture of man-nature
relationship, a relationship in which nature is also an equal partner.

Lawrence's descriptions of places are so apt, effective and
convincing that for a while we fell transported to the place. In
‘Kangaroo’, he builds up a new continent with its charming natural
surroundings. Here is a country largely untouched by man and seen by
Lawrence for the first time. The beauty of the place is so fascinating that he falls in love with it:

   By the stream the mimosa was all gold, great gold bushes full of spring fire rising over your head, and the scent of the Australian spring ....

And this is how hairiest reacts spontaneously to the sight of the flowers:

   And sure enough, in a few minutes came harriet's quashing cries of joy and admiration: ‘Oh, how lovely: how marvellous: but can they really be dahlias? I've never seen such dahlias: they're really too beautiful.

So both some and Hairiet are spell bond to witness the beauty of the Australian countryside and almost desire to stay on. In facts, the freshness and vividness of descriptions in the novel leave a magical effect on the minds of the readers. They lend a feeling of life. In this context, Richard Aldington observers:

   Nobody else gives you that sense that you yourself have actually experienced what he has written. An Australian friend, Mr. Adrian Lawlor, writes me that he has never seen that coat south of Sydney, but after reading Lawrence, God I've been there.
Praising Lawrence for his vivid, life-like and wonderful descriptions, Aldington adds:

But in the end as in the beginning, it must be insisted that, with all its other achievements, the supreme achievement of ‘Kangaroo’lies in its unforgettably vivid and accurate Pictures of the Australian continent, in which no other English writer has approached Lawrence.\textsuperscript{32}

Lawrence possessed the talent and temperament of a great and gifted painter referring to the characteristics of good painting, Herbert Read observes:

In the first place, therefore, a clear vision of the whole composition (emerges) in the mind of the painter. Then comes the choice of coolers based on observation, on feeling, and on the very nature of reach experience.\textsuperscript{33}

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.
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 cannot exist a specific infinite save by virtue of the opposite equivalent specific infinite. Lawrence create again and again to his dichotomy, under a great variety of names. The proper relation between the opposites has been described by Lawrence as polarity, not allowing the merging of the opposites, but maintaining both in a state of mutual, complimentary balance. In ‘Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine’, Lawrence amply clarifies his stand thus: In the beginning, the light touches the darkness, the darkness touches the light, and the two embrace. They embrace in opposition, only in their desire is their unanimity. There are two separate statements, the dark wants the light, and the light wants the dark. But the two statements are contained within the one: They want each other.

Dualism between light and darkness is not a mere dichotomy, it is a conflict. The two sides are not merely contrasted with each other, they are in active opposition. Darkness and light live in one landscape of man’s
soul; the reconciliation between the two cannot be affected by the victory of either side; as Hough puts it, they are held in ‘a state of still tension’:

Ultimately man is beyond all dark and light: We are tigers, we are lambs. Yet are we also neither tigers nor lambs, nor immune sluggish sheep. We are beyond all this, this relative life of uneasy balancing. We are roses of pure and lovely being. This we are ultimately, beyond all dark and light. Yes, we are tigers, we are lambs, both in our various hour. We are both these, and more. Because, we are both these, because were are lambs, frail and exposed, because we are lions furious and devouring, because we are both, and have the courage to be both, in our separate hour, there fore we transcend both, we pass into a beyond, we are roses of perfect consummation.36

In the above lines, tigers symbolise darkness and lambs, light. In the following nature descriptions from Lawrence, darkness and light are held in a state of still tension and complementary balance.

1. Darkness will never be light, neither will the one every triumph over the other. Whilst there is darkness, there is light; and when there is an end of darkness, there is an end of light.37
2. When darkness lies down with light, it is no darkness and light lying down with darkness is no light. They are merely a neutralization, a nothingness. In the words of Lawrence, ‘If I mix fire and water, I get quenched ash. And so if I mix the lion and the lamb. They are both quenched into nothingness.\(^{38}\)

If I assert myself a creature purely of light, it is in opposition to the darkness which is in me.\(^{39}\)

By the road and the blackthorn was in blossom, white and wet, its tiny amber grains burning faintly in the white smoke of blossom. Purple twinges were darkly luminous in the gray air, high hedges glowed like living shadows, hovering nearer, coming into creation.\(^{40}\)

‘When the woke at last it seemed as if a new day had come on the earth. How long, how long had she fought through the dust and obscurity, for this new dawn? How frail and fine and clear she felt, like the most fragile flower that opens in the end of winter. But the pole of night was turned and the dawn was coming in.\(^{41}\)

It is obvious from these passage that Lawrence present on integrated, inseparable picture of light and darkness. In fact, the novelist does not
accept their separate identity or existence. In Lawrence, the white aspects and objects of nature symbolise the negation of warmth, coldness, death-like coldness, the colder vanity and snobbishness, the cold and heartless process of industrialisation which mars the beauty and mystery of the countryside and isolates man from man. On the whole, it stand for mind-consciousness, the mechanical modes of living and being. Almost all the novels of Lawrence are characterised by the conflict between mind and instinct, knowledge and intuition, spirit and flesh, bird and serpent and in some way or the other, try trot reconcile the fundamental dualism of his mind. The winter side of Lawrence’s nature has everything to do with mind, knowledge spirit and bird.

Lawrence observes nature from close quarters and almost identities himself with it. His close proximity and in fact. Total identification with nature enables him to give vivid and wonderful descriptions of nature. His eye falls on every object of nature and so we finds graphic portrayal of even small objects which escape the notice of ordinary persons. R.K. Sinha remarks : ‘Nature is throbibly alive in his novels.’ Trees, plants, flowers, rivers - all attract his attention again and again. In every description of natural object, there is a novelly of its own.
REFERENCES

1. Sons and Lovers, p. 112

2. Ibid., p. 113


13. Lady Chatterley's Lover, p. 33
14. *Phoenix*, p. 133


17. *Phoenix*, p. 45


25. *Sons and Lovers*, p. 49

26. *The white Peacock*, p. 27


28. *The Trespasser*, p. 60

29. *Kangaroo*, p. 29


