ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF THE WOMEN CHARACTERS IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF D. H. LAWRENCE

INTRODUCTION

D. H. Lawrence was a prolific writer of considerable power. During the nineteen years of his continuous writing, he produced forty volumes of fiction, poetry, plays, treatises, essays and critical writings. However, he is mostly remembered as a powerful and unconventional novelist.

RATIONALE OF RESEARCH

The research concentrates on the study of the women characters in the selected novels of D. H. Lawrence. The researcher examines the use of misogynistic ideas of D. H. Lawrence and compares and contrasts the women characters and Lawrence’s hostility to willful women. Study also examines the man – woman relationships in the selected novels.

The reasons of the study are to explore the situations in which women characters exercise power in relationship with men and to investigate in most of Lawrence’s work that the women characters carry dominant and active roles, which they gain empowerment in the selected novels. Although feminists are interested in criticizing the subordination of women, many works concerning women empowerment are also found in the canon. Thus, efforts to look at Lawrence’s works in relation to his women characters and power should also be given importance.
This study is significant because it provides ways to analyze power from an angle that empowers women. Although D. H. Lawrence had presented his women characters as sophisticated modern women who are liberated and powerful in leading their lives, the reality in the world still maintains that women are at the secondary position in comparison to men. By altering the presentation of women in literature, the researcher delivers the importance of power in women’s lives as it enables women empower their own lives to a certain extent if not entirely. Hence, the researcher discovers that the knowledge of power is as important as the power of knowledge in women’s lives.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The research is an attempt to investigate the needs of the learner of literature and characterization of women, which are applied in the study of the selected novels of Lawrence’s fiction. It aims to fulfill the following:

1. To study the women characters in David Herbert Lawrence’s selected novels.
2. To throw light on the work of Lawrence particularly the use of misogynistic ideas of D. H. Lawrence in women characters, as well as the characters’ differences from each other.

THE MAIN BODY OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Misogynistic ideas of D. H. Lawrence as reflected in the women characters

Lawrence had an opinion on just about everything and on the strength of his non-fictional writing we could easily take him to be anti-Semitic, a child-
beater, women-hating fascist; yet these opinions are transformed when we read his works. Again and again it is the character in the novel who is closest to his ideas i.e. a woman who is put down, and usually by a woman. This has made many critics consider him to be some kind of a misogynist. However, his deep love for his wife, Frieda belies this critical assessment. But what he did believe in is that the divorce between minds and bodies was an illness and this was inflicted on men by women as mothers and lovers, especially when entertaining fantasies about their role as political and spiritual leaders. He therefore wanted women to be put in a place subordinate to men.

2. Comparison and contrast of the women characters of the selected novels

(a) Miriam and Clara in *Sons and Lovers*
Miriam and Clara are the important characters in *Sons and Lovers*. Miriam is the heroine of the novel and Clara is a friend of both Miriam and Paul. Both have some points of similarity but many of contrast. They are mostly contrasting characters. However, both the characters play important roles in the novel.

(b) Ursula and Gudrun in *Women in Love*
The main characters in the novel are Ursula and Gudrun. Love triangles that lurk beneath the surface: Ursula’s hidden passion for Birkin, Gudrun’s relationship with Gerald. What Lawrence wants to say is that while a man-woman relationship is the basic condition of true maturity, it is not the only one because relationships are constantly evolving – some wither away and die, while new ones are born. *Women in Love* is a psychological study of individual characters and the unconscious drive that determines their actions.
3. Lawrence’s Hostility to Willful Women in The Rainbow and Lady Chatterley’s Lover

*The Rainbow* traces the story of three generations of Brangwen family descendant from a long line of small landowners who had owned Marsh Farm in Nottinghamshire. Ursula in *The Rainbow*, who seems so different in every phase of her life as she reacts to differing pressures.*Lady Chatterley’s Lover* filled with scenes of intimate beauty; the moving story of Constance Chatterley tenderly explores the emotions of a lonely woman trapped in a sterile marriage and her growing love for the robust gamekeeper of her husband’s estate. Lawrence tried to show free life in his women characters, perhaps it was his desperate struggle with his own righteous egoism, maternally derived, that led to the long series of attempts in his fiction to break women’s wills. Lawrence’s solution to the problem of breaking a woman’s will or “getting her to acquiesce of her own free will” is this: “if you wait long enough, life will do it for you.” And so he creates a heroine whose has been worn down by life’s attritions.

4. Man – Woman Relationship in the selected novels

Man-woman relationship forms the main theme of the novels of Lawrence. As a result, the novels have the theme of sex as an important theme. For example, *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* and *The Rainbow* deal with sex themes. Lawrence wants to say that sex is the undeniable fact of life and must be given due importance. Lawrence himself says: “I want men and women to be able to think sex freely, completely, honestly and clearly”. Man and woman relationship is all pervasive. It is always described as “a novel of human relationships”. *The Trespasser* and *The Lost Girl* like other novels, deal with man – woman relationship. However, the description of sex – scenes are found in the two relationships between Paul – Miriam and Paul –
Clara in *Sons and Lovers* and Birkin – Ursula and Gerald – Gudrun in *Women in Love*.

**SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

1. It carries out the study of women characters in the selected novels of D. H. Lawrence so as to discover facts in use and their appropriateness to fulfil the needs of research.

2. It attempts to evaluate and to criticize in each selected novels in wider consideration through content analysis.

3. It concentrates on selected novels by D. H. Lawrence.

4. It is limited to six selected novels written by D. H. Lawrence, although he has produced a wide range of literary works. In order for the research to be productive, it is essential for the researcher to choose a manageable number of novels. Therefore, considering the time factor, the researcher finds it practical to research only six novels of the author.

5. It intends to look at the element of women power; the researcher ensures that there are sufficient women characters in the chosen novels in order to meet the purpose of the study. Moreover, Lawrence normally constructs his novels with a limited number of characters, thus the researcher ensured that the selected novels included women characters. It is also crucial to understand that this study concentrates specifically on women characters of Lawrence’s chosen novels.

6. It is important to understand that, the notion of women and the element of power in other works of this author may differ. The range and type of power bestowed upon the women characters in Lawrence’s other novels and short stories may assert the same idea of liberation as in selected novels.
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology would focus on library sources. Primary source materials are used appropriately, such as creative works of D. H. Lawrence, which were written during the time under study. Secondary sources analyze textbook articles, publications and criticism, that overview the previous findings of the study.

CHAPTER ORGANIZATION

Chapter One – Introduction – presents a background to the study. It deals with D. H. Lawrence’s life and his family background including his works in the novels. His novels are introduced in brief. It also comments on the use of characteristic aspects in literature with special reference to D. H. Lawrence’s selected novels.

Chapter Two concentrates on women characters of the novels namely, The Trespasser and Sons and Lovers present the formation of female characters and provide a continuing discourse on their growing realization of strength of self with the advancement of the century. As regard to the women characters, it is typical for Lawrence to present them differently facing equally different dilemmas and arriving at different solutions.

Chapter Three gives a general framework of study and reviews the available relevant studies and literature. It states the contrasts of women characters in two novels, i.e. The Rainbow and Women in Love. In each selected novel the characters are based on people D. H. Lawrence knew and events recall things he experienced or knew of and it is the study of women characters and their relationships.
Chapter Four states elaborately the study of women characters in *The Lost Girl* and *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*. This chapter concentrates on exposing the readers to the productive dimension of power in women’s lives, which creates possibilities for freedom and social change.

Chapter Five is the conclusion and reviews the major points of the analysis and in the beginning of the chapter, an attempt has been made to shed light on the significance of the study. The theoretical issues of the study have been dealt with keeping in mind the discourse analysis of literature in general. The researcher has made observations and supported her comments on the basis of the analysis.