D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930) a versatile genius, was a painter, short story writer, dramatist, essayist, social critic and a poet of deep instincts. As a writer, he expressed himself almost in all the literary contemporary forms of his times which displayed tremendous originality and acumen. Lawrence experienced the great power of a poet and worked as a great genius. His poetic works can be treated as his monumental contribution to modern poetry - full of rich themes, visions, technical experiences, depths and insights.

Though Lawrence is best known for his novels and less critical studies strike scholars and critics to study his works of poetry with equal interest. On the basis of the moral and cultural vision embodied in his novels, he is adjudged as a novelist of tremendous relevance to modern times. In his passion to communicate his ideas and criticism of modern industrialism, he has often violated the artistic norms of poetry. His genre of poetry has only a short space to communicate the form of art within a limited space. More than his novels, plays, short stories, it is his poetry which truly embodies Lawrence’s creative genius, characterised by an immense variety of themes and subjects. It contains Lawrence’s prophetic utterance about nature and mystery of human life which controls human happiness on the surface of the earth. Lawrence is primarily an instinctive humanist poet who was committed to the ideals of a perfect human life. His thematic concerns and preoccupations express his commitments to poetry. It is not surprising that critics like T.S. Eliot looked upon Lawrence’s poetry as rough and unfinished works of a great poet with notes of indifferent and contempt. Critics like F.R. Leavis and W.H. Auden also echoed an equally lukewarm reaction towards his poetry. But the sixties have witnessed the publication of Lawrence’s ‘Complete Poems’ as a monument of his poetic insights and styles.

The present work is not only an exhaustive study on The Complete Poems of Lawrence that he wrote during his creative life of about 25 years but it also highlights the poetic craft, experience, elegance and the Instinctive Response to Life in his poetry. Most of the critical studies of scholars on his poetry have pointed out clearly the three stages of his poetic development. The present study covers all these phases
and have tried to analyse them with a view to showing Lawrence’s instinctive vision, intuitive insight which nurtured and matured his poetic experience resulting in the heart-felt ethos to the sensitive hearts of readers.

The present work is divided into six chapters. The first chapter ‘D.H. Lawrence: A Study of Instincts’, is a brief critical account of the literary scholarship of Lawrence’s instinctive poetry. The section concentrates on Lawrence’s views on art and poetry in particular. It also shows us how a young genius poet is struggling to express with an inadequate mode of expression like Blake in ‘Poetical Sketches’ and the Wordsworth in ‘The Evening Walk’. Lawrence constantly emphasized on the qualities of spontaneity and naturalness with a touch of intimacy between art and life during the early phase of his poetry. Lawrence expresses his emotional conflicts as well as efforts to achieve an aesthetic transformation of his personal experiences of a higher human level.

The second chapter highlights ‘Early Poetry: Tradition and Experiment’ which has set a milestone of poetic experience of Lawrence’s greatest delicacy and the finest intelligence. Lawrence, infact, has put his soul into these poems and used them as a vehicle to communicate his vision of a happy and healthy life that he found particularly undermined by our pernicious and perilous industrial civilization.

His early poetry is the great autobiographical account that we find in Sons and Lovers which is based on working labour class life, where he draws their problem and predicament of the labour class system prevailing in the contemporary society. In his ‘Early Poetry’, he protests against such social order in which man is governed by machine. His ‘Early Poetry’ reveals the story of a young man who treats his young mother tenderly like a lover. He feels jealous of his father and is unable to have sustaining relationship with ‘Miriam’. Such psychology of mother pull also dominates his poems till his mother dies. It is a conflict between his instinct and social order.

The third chapter, ‘Unrhyming Poems: Milestone of Poetic Experience’ represents poet’s victory over the forces of conflict and discord. The volume was published three years after his marriage with Frieda and it offered the much needed
relief and respite to the poet from the emotional strife of his early years. Through these poems, Lawrence expresses a mood of cosmic reconciliation although it is not entirely free from jarring and discordant notes. The poet feels the sense of freedom when his mother is no more in the world to exert the emotional pressure on the poet. The Oedipal situation of the early poetry can also be interpreted as an attempt on poet’s part to overcome the false values of bourgeois class.

In the fourth chapter, we can see the second phase of Lawrence’s poetic life that he transferred his attention from the human world to an exploration of the non-human consciousness. It is the theme of otherness which dominates the poems of the section in ‘Unrhyming Poems’ which is regarded as an ‘Unexplored World of Experience’ (Birds, Beats and Flowers) which was published in 1923. These poems are written in a style of lyrical simplicity and breaks down the weight of symbolic meanings. Lawrence took his non-human world as challenge to his creative powers. Thus, Lawrence, on one hand, explored the non-human consciousness in order to widen the horizons of his imaginative sympathy and on the other hand, he comprehends and concentrates on the life of plants and animals in order to sort out their context in the human world.

After exploring the theme of otherness, Lawrence felt the harsh reality during the period of the World War. He called war as force of darkness which leads man to despair, disgust and depression. He also felt the pangs of death as he came into clutches of death. All these filled his heart with anger and frustration yet he had attacked the conventions and institutions of society which denied and destroyed life. We can witness such interpretations in the fifth chapter ‘Pansies Nettles and Uncollected Poems’ as Lawrence’s fresh horizons of poetry. These poems of the section have a satiric attack on aesthetics which checkmates the full expression of feelings and instincts. Lawrence through these poems condemns the bourgeoisie and rejects capitalism. He suggests a non-capitalist social order but failed to find its alternative. These poems suggest his struggle to align himself with the working class that he represents.

The thesis ends with ‘Last Poems of D. H. Lawrence : End of Horizons’ written under the impact of death and that of his escape into the world of metaphysics.
Lawrence’s aim was to reveal the mystery of the universe as his poetry revolves around his attempt to voice the intense visionary feelings of subjective experience. These poems can be considered as notes of a dying man. In these poems, there is a breath of the mystical air of serenity and calmness. The theme of death and resurrection prevails in these poems as Lawrence interprets death in his own unique manner not as a total annihilation of life but as a process of regeneration and renewal of life. The humanistic vision that had inspired the poet in his early years of his life acquired a new meaning and significance in his dying moments. His ‘The Ship of Death’ expresses the poet’s discovery of new meanings of his frustrations in life. It is laden with a mood of renunciation and affirmation like a seer poet.

The present study on Lawrence provides a full length study of his ideologies, ideas, visions and instincts. It concludes with a note that Lawrence is a great instinctive poet with a difference and he has reserved his place as a poet in English poetry.

I am thankful to members of staff of different libraries who provided me books, periodicals, pamphlets and research journals on Lawrence as well as on English poetry. I have no words to express my thanks to them. Those who have helped me are librarians of Central Library, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi; Central Library, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; British Council Library, Delhi; Central Library, Delhi University, Delhi; National Library, Calcutta; Library of University of Jammu and Library of K.N. Govt. Post Graduate College, Gyanpur, Sant Ravidass Nagar Bhadohi (U.P.)

I thankfully acknowledge an immeasurable debt to my esteemed supervisor, Dr. Lalji Misra, Head, Deptt. Of English and Research Studies, K.N. Govt. Post Graduate College, Gyanpur, Sant Ravidas Nagar Bhadohi (U.P.), India, whose valuable guidance, constant inspiration, rational suggestion and painstaking efforts played a vital role in completing the present thesis. He is an erudite scholar as well as a great humanitarian rolled into one which helped me in a multi-dimensional ways and without his sympathetic criticism, judicious counsels and unfailing help, the present work would not have come to such fruition. I will be ever thankful to him in my life.
I am equally thankful to Dr. S.C. Tiwari, Principal, K.N. govt. Post Graduate College, Gyanpur who provided me all facilities that I required. I am thankful to his patronising touch of compassion.

I will be failing in my duty if I do not acknowledge my elder brother, Shri Vaishno Dass Rathore and Bhabhi ji (Sister-in-law) (Lansdale, Wolverhampton, England), (Late) Om Prakash Rathore, Shri S.P. Singh Rathore (Member, Advisory Committee, His Excellency Governor J & K State), Shri Satish Rathore and Mrs. Usha Kiran, Prem Lata and Anita Rathore, my Sister-in-laws. I heartfully acknowledge my mother and my father (who is now no more) whose continuous blessings and good wishes have sustained me in bringing the present thesis to completion. I have full regards to my wife Dr. Namrata Rathore (Ph.D. in Chemistry from Jammu University) who always inspired and helped me in completing the present work. I have no words to express her help and love for me.

Last but not least, I express my thanks to Mr. Sujeet Srivastava, Anoop Srivastava and Amit Srivastava of M/S Hind Computers, Shivpur for their painstaking effort in typing the present manuscript within a stipulated time.

19 December 2002.

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