

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is primarily concerned with David Herbert Lawrence, the seeker of freedom. It explores Lawrence's immediate impulse for his quest which takes off from the universal plight of the urban middle-class individual rendered split, intellectualized and atrophied. Lawrence has undertaken the messianic task of disrupting the prevalent tradition of writing that contented itself in portraying this individual as entrapped in his own self-image and consciousness. He delivers the message of how to break out^{of} this 'cage' that represents the split, mechanical and insulated modern life on the one hand and the prison-house of language on the other. And his way is "to get back to some universal positive and loving principle which united imagination and nature instead of splitting them in two".

This study explores D.H.Lawrence, the vitalist, who has the requisites of an 'organic intellectual', capable of redirecting man's attention to the base which he tends to negate for his love of superstructural fantasies and abstractions. He rightly diagnoses that man's malaise in the present age consists in his lopsided living and conceptualization of life. He opposes it by his persuasive stance as a vitalist and suggests its transcendence through a restoration of the 'spontaneous wholeness of the organic being' of men. For Lawrence, there is no above or beyond. Values are created outright in the act of living. Therefore, the first important thing in his project is the individual and the question of his organic wholeness. Relatedly the second is the man-woman relationship, based on instinctual rather than abstracted, romantic ideas, the

third being the individual's creative relationship with the 'circumambient universe'. Such an individual of his conception rises above all kinds of false abstraction. He "innocently feels himself altogether within the great continuum of the universe" to reshape and revitalize a world gone awry.

The nucleus of Lawrence's project, therefore, is the man-woman relationship of which Lawrence thought deeply and thought long in his nonfictional writings, and no wonder, it also constitutes the very central theme of all his major novels. For him, neither man nor woman is pure male or pure female but an amalgam of both. The flesh is the female and the spirit is the male in man. His creative impulse comes from the flesh, the female part of life, the source of which is woman, the mysterious spring of creative energy. It is imperative in life to fulfil the demands of both flesh and spirit, and the possible process is the process of reconciliation with the help of the 'Holy Ghost'. This is the state of perfect freedom in life.

This reconciliation is achieved through love that is sensual, a 'baptism of fire in passion'. It takes place through silent physical communion and, therefore, is beyond the possibility of any falsification. Lawrence, therefore, rejects the 'old conscious stable ego' of the individual enshrined in the earlier social novels. His search for freedom leads him to body forth the vital, organic being, hitherto repressed by moral and sexual taboos.

The purpose of this study is also concerned with Lawrence, the novelist. His choice of the vocation of a novelist is only a necessary dimension in his quest for freedom. As an organic form, the novel has the required fluidity and polyphony which

never get ossified in his hands but prove equal to the need through his treatment of the complexity and multiplicity of the vital and organic being of the individual that he thematizes. He was enthusiastic of the capability of the inner form of the novel to represent 'the whole life trembling' in its complexities and possibilities. This sense of freedom is all the more noticeable when the Lawrentian mode of writing is compared to the common classic realist tradition of writing which in its concern for coherence and causality in narrative structure remains rigidly logocentric and totalizing. Lawrence's understanding of reality, to be precise, is never unitary or rigid. Reality appears to him as a process, opposites held in unity but active in tension. An element of indeterminacy, therefore, is always present in the configurations that reality would take. His novels are, therefore, the most dialogical ones through their elements of confusions, disruptions and self-reflexivity and hence as art form more free and autonomous. In other words, despite some ruling ideas on the part of the novelist, his texts grow polyvocal and rich in complexity. It is itself a kind of artistic freedom from abstractions of whatever kind.

Although Lawrence speaks in terms of a balance in the man-woman relationship which would lead to a balance of faculties in an individual, there has been a mixed feeling about his treatment of women in the novels. Some have gone to the extent of calling him a male-chauvinist, although the recent years have witnessed a turn towards sympathetic appreciations of his position both as a thinker and as an artist. Finally, about a century later, Lawrence studies have become 'more complex, more unstable, more unfinished' as the range and sophistication of attention paid to him increases. Lawrence is now celebrated as a cultural figure rather than merely as a writer. The

reader's response, now enormously enriched in terms of a new understanding of ideology and discourse is more open and creative. A post-modern study discovers in him a non-totalitarian, non-metaphysical and open-ended possibility of the liberation of the human mind.

Six of his major novels, viz. *The White Peacock*, *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love*, *The Lost Girl* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, are explored here from the above standpoint with two additional chapters on feminism and Post-modern Lawrence.

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