

Moral Education through Literature with Special Reference to Novels of DH Lawrence

Hemraj

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6 Abstract

7 Literature always has been playing the role of moral and ethical values; it's not a mere
8 instrument for rejoicing our nerves or entertaining us. It tries to lights up our subconscious
9 mind to bring it to the conscious stage to enable it to understand the complicacies of life and
10 intrigue situations. Thereby, we become able to understand the nuances of life, the good and
11 bad. Perfect idealism can be taught through literature only as literature transcends the
12 reality; it touches down on the grand imagination. Moral and ethical values can be enthused
13 better in an emotive and sensitive person; literature does this phenomenon abundantly. It
14 creates the positive vibes which make the affected reader or audience crave for the adoption of
15 values inherent literary description. There is nothing better than literature which may create
16 the ripples, even in a cruel criminal, for the actions have been committed. He or she may
17 repent for the crimes or wrongdoings and crave for reforms. So, literature has ever played an
18 undisputed role in social reforms.

Index terms— education, morality, values, spirituality, ethical, divinity, sex

1 Moral Education through Literature with Special Reference to Novels of DHL

22 Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:

23 2.1. Introduction

24 After the discovery of printing, the role of literature has been acknowledged in providing moral education. It's
25 evident from the fact that literature could be relied upon to find the answers whenever one is in a dilemma on the
26 best way. There is no doubt that the fictional lives have affected generations of readers and, because of their power,
27 and beauty influenced many lives in a profoundly moral sense. The French and Russian revolutionary terror and
28 twentieth-century horrors have made it clear that high culture and moral virtues may not be compatible. It was
29 because literature prevalent at those times affected the common people at large than highly cultured society,
30 particularly that literature was specially written for those depressed classes. So, the role of literary works cannot
31 be ignored in shaping and cultivating our cultural, ethical and moral senses.

³² 3 II. Moral and Ethical Values in the Novels of DH Lawrence

33 As moral values emanate from the deep-rooted strands of mind, morality can be best analyzed in the literary
34 works which delve deep into the mental agonies of a character and psychologically examines the various aspects
35 of the personality and attitudes of its Author: Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Jr. Translation Officer. e-mail:
36 rajvictor76@gmail.com A characters. In this respect, DH Lawrence stands a top in developing his characters
37 internally, psychologically. The characters in his novels go through the mental processes which determine their
38 ultimate actions to follow. An internal conversation taking hold in the minds of characters is abundantly reflected
39 while facing the realities of lives.

40 Lawrence was a prolific writer. He started his career as a writer with some poems. In his novels, he shows
41 the conflict between instinct and intellect. The life of the individual was presented as part of a larger life flow.

4 III. MORALITY AND SPIRITUALITY

42 This larger life flow has its own currents which carry the individual's larger flow of life. In his novels, there
43 is a penetrating criticism of modern society. Such a criticism reveals Lawrence's sustained creative effort. He
44 interprets life in all its wide variety. His novels reveal his penetrating insight into life and terseness of life.
45 Lawrence depicts the dehumanizing forces of our society.

46 Lawrence was against the machine-centered civilization of our times. He felt that our material civilization
47 dehumanizes man. Lawrence's novels focus on feminine interest. He expresses sympathy for the social plight of
48 intelligent women trapped in a maledominated society. In his early development as a novelist, Lawrence took
49 up the cause of feminism, insisted on women's rights, thus opposing the tyranny of the male world. He was
50 beginning to express ideas from the feminine point of view. The great achievement of Lawrence is the recognition
51 of the female principle of vitality competing with the male principle in vitality. Lawrence admits that it has
52 come from Hardy's women like Elizabeth-Jane, who are more intelligent and stronger-willed than men. The new
53 element developed in Hardy and Lawrence in their portrayal of women character as states of being, rather than
54 as a refined social class and moral choice. Lawrence is concerned with the principle of life itself, invisibly realized
55 in humanity as sex, seen visibly in the world as what we call nature. His characters are all human beings with
56 common weaknesses and virtues, and are neither saints, nor angels, nor unredeemed villains.

57 Lawrence was aware of the social history and the forces at play in his own mother's life. As a young man he
58 expected a lot too much from the women he came in contact with, and whom he loved. He wanted them to be
59 his teachers, mentors and spiritual leaders. Lawrence searched for a long time for the perfect Global Journal of
60 Human Social Science expression of his ideas in a woman, but he was disappointed. Therefore, he invented them.

61 Few writers in modern English literature have reached the pinnacle of uncritical admiration and vilification,
62 and this is rightly attributed to the personality of Lawrence himself. His admirers too have not always been
63 an asset to him. Some extreme derogatory remarks such as a sex-soaked genius', or hardly more literate, 'sick'
64 muddle-headed, sex-mad D.H. Lawrence' have affected how Lawrence, arguably many readers have regarded
65 the finest English novelist. The controversy that has encircled Lawrence arose out of a misunderstanding of
66 what he was saying, and also out of confusion between a dislike of his moral attitudes, especially towards sex
67 and a consequent inability to perceive the amazing literary genius with which these attitudes are portrayed in
68 the novels. Lawrence has emerged as a genius out of educational and class background, devoid of middle-class
69 advantages possessed by the literary figures of that time, some critics began to patronize him. As Lawrence
70 himself has admitted that in the early days they were always telling him that he has got genius as if to console
71 him for not having their inestimable advantages. Such an extreme example of this type appeared in a British
72 council pamphlet on D.H. Lawrence in which Kenneth Young wrote that Lawrence's 'dogmatic insistence that he
73 alone held the truth About the universe surely reflects a deep-seated Feeling that he had missed the fruits of the
74 Normal public school and university education, Which gave his literary contemporaries a Breadth of knowledge
75 and assurance that he Always lacked' 1

76 4 III. Morality and Spirituality

77 Lawrence's works can be best understood by studying the class classification prevalent in the late 19th-century
78 often, the middle class and upper-class friends were puzzled by his illogical rejection of their values and their
79 qualified friendship.

80 Sex to Lawrence, is conceived as being closer to the traditional Christian view of marriage than it is to modern
81 concepts of free love, promiscuity as can be observed from his novels, he seems to have developed a disgust for
82 cheap exploitation of sex.

83 Lawrence portrays a world that has become increasingly apparent since World War I. He has always dealt with
84 sex. To Lawrence sex, is self-justifying that it is not subject to judgment by other values but is indeed the source
85 of other values. Lawrence is most modern in his treatment of sex. There is nothing in him of the ?? Kenneth
86 Young, British Council pamphlet 1952, P 16-17

87 Victorian prudery and inhibitions. He insisted on the sacred nature of sex, on the religious element in its
88 consummation. He is the most honest man who treated the subject with great freedom, one who examined both
89 the physical and spiritual aspects of the matter. Lawrence has been a pioneer in breaking down sexual taboos in
90 literature in a very real sense; he was a pioneer in reinventing women the novels introducing the inner conflicts
91 and the sexual feeling which had been denied to women in English fiction for nearly a century.

92 In 'The Rainbow' Lawrence openly deals with sexual matters. Ursula, daughter of Anna, remains always
93 enquiring and unfettered. Her path is partly intellectual and partly sexual. She succumbs to the darkness as she
94 reconciles consciousness with unconsciousness and accepts her destiny. No other writer had depicted the main
95 tensions of industrialized man or the issues which at once separate and bind the sexes.

96 Sons and Lovers are based on the relationship in terms of sexual desires fulfillment. Paul is attracted towards
97 Miriam. In course of time both Paul and Miriam realized that they were in deep love with each other, but Paul
98 could not touch her. Then he meets Clara Dawes, wife of Baxter Dawes, who was five years senior to Paul. She
99 was lovely and charming. She fascinated Paul. She became the mistress of Paul, but she refused to divorce her
100 husband. Here it is quite explicit through the characters that Lawrence himself was not sure about his ideas.
101 He was settled between old Christian values and modern open sexual relationship. Again, Paul began to meet
102 Miriam, and finally she yielded to his savage passion. Even then he felt dissatisfied. So again, he turned to Clara.
103 He stayed with her for some time. But still Miriam loves Paul sincerely. She always prays for his safety and

104 security. She feels that she is absorbed in him. She feels that she is dominated by him. But at the same time,
105 she is inhibited by her intense religiosity.

106 Here it is obvious that Lawrence's characters are of dual nature. At the end, Lawrence is not able to give
107 a permanent solution to this problem. He cannot make a perfect balance between the sexual relationship and
108 spirituality. All his characters are in dilemma, they are not sure whether they are on the right path or not.

109 Lawrence attributed the contemporary spiritual crisis of the Christian west to this association of rationality
110 with divinity. It not only linked the idea of sin with freedom, but also made freedom a source of all human
111 tragedy. Lawrence maintained that organized Christianity was always on the side of mind negating the body and
112 all sensuous experience. Thus, the genuine religious consciousness of the west, deprived of all living experience,
113 felt thwarted and frustrated and revolted against Christianity and its morality of the rational. Lawrence differs
114 significantly from those modern primitivisms who advocate sexuality as a mode of transcendence. It was his
115 conviction that physical consummation by itself was not the goal of life unless it resulted in the consummation
116 in flesh. Sexuality divorced from a consummation in spirit was negative and destructive. It was no substitute by
117 itself for the ultimate or the Transcendent. Lawrence associated sensual consummation with Aphrodite worship.

118 The Renaissance reversal to sensuous forms in art, Lawrence felt, was nothing but Aphrodite worship, a self-
119 conscious pursuit of the sensuous in which the senses 'seek the reduction of flesh, the flesh reacting upon itself,
120 to a crisis, an ecstasy, a phosphor scent transfiguration in ecstasy. This quest, he maintained, was incomplete,
121 for it ignored the other consummation in spirit. Renaissance had substituted an absolute of sensuality for the
122 philosophical absolute of the church. The self was negated in both of them.

123 **5 IV. Divinity and Spirituality**

124 Lawrence's approach to sex would, thus, appear to be part of a new philosophy of self born out of the rejection of
125 the absoluteness of the concept of the original sin. Lawrence felt that the denial of sex had violated the freedom
126 of self and had led to a false conception of reality. It had superseded the prophetic wisdom of the glory of the
127 self and the resurrection of the body.

128 Divorcing the concept of sin from sex, Lawrence made a plea for a new ontology. He accepted and emphasized
129 the finitude of self in its totality, as opposed to the doctrine of the immortality of soul and as a consequence
130 rejected the concept of a philosophic absolute. He sought to restore back the self to its primary state of glory
131 and rejected the path-way to redemption through a religion that advocated self-denial and self-abnegation. In
132 the process, he became the most vocal prophet of the body.

133 An ethics based on the denial of self in any form had no place in Lawrence's worldview. He considered the
134 rejection of the old morality of sin as a necessary pre-requisite of the liberation of man from the shackles of an
135 old and dying tradition. By placing the seat of sin in human mind, Lawrence transferred the problems of sin
136 and evil from self's finitude to its freedom. The self had to find its own salvation, not in an abstract scheme of
137 morals, but in the loving reality, felt in through the "blood".

138 Lawrence's art in this respect suffered from an overemphasis on the passion and the sensual in life, but perhaps
139 it was due for its negation since the days of Paul. The over stresses in Lawrence are, as D.W. Foster has pointed
140 out: ? patently the effects of a heroic attempt to restore balance where a culture has tried to live on the level of
141 consciousness and will, dead from the neck down. ?? Lawrence's ideas are within a definite moral tradition which
142 leads to the development of a Romantic view about nature which was essentially a 19th-century phenomenon.
143 His ideas are not merely the distorted and Lawrence's ideas change and develop throughout his writing career
144 and he himself was violently opposed to taking up fixed moral positions.

145 Essentially, Lawrence's insistence on sex is a moral insistence on the need for an awareness of the possibilities
146 of life. The moral basis of his view of sex is important. Sex to Lawrence, is conceived as being closer to the
147 traditional Christian view of marriage than it is to modern concepts of free love.

148 Lawrence remained puritanical in his attitude towards the unconventional sexual behavior throughout his life,
149 but his deep ideas always involved a respect for life and disgust for cheap exploitation of sex. To Lawrence sex
150 has always been remained a religious activity.

151 According to Lawrence soul of man and the soul of woman is new with the infinite delight of life and the
152 ever newness of life. So, a man and a woman are new to one another throughout a lifetime, in the rhythm of
153 marriage. Sex is the prime factor in determining balance of male and female in the universe, the attraction, the
154 repulsion, and the transit of neutrality, always different, always new. Sex to Lawrence was important because it
155 was the only chance civilized man had in contact with the greater universe of nature and hence of reality, but
156 modern industrial civilization had perverted man perverted sex. Lawrence acknowledges that this perversion had
157 resulted in a split between thought and feeling, so that men became dominated by their minds and made no
158 effort to recreate the two in harmony. True moral awareness of life was only possible when thought and feelings
159 were united in the whole man.

160 Lawrence's concern was sole with the primitive and uncivilized. for Lawrence, Sex is not merely an end in
161 itself, not merely an entertainment or a means of producing children, but a means towards determining reality,
162 and this reality is seen as existing in the immediate world of nature. His works are appealing in nature as his
163 philosophy is naturalistic, and his emphasis on superb evocations of a sense of the fullness of life in his natural
164 descriptions of places and things. According to him to be alive in the flesh is magnificent, and sexual fulfillment is

165 the awareness of this life in oneself and the world outside. The world of nature is conceived as supplying meaning
166 to existence, as an antithesis to the diseased world of man in society.

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169 Global Journal of Human Social Science peculiar aberrations of one man. Lawrence was some sort of noble
170 savage himself, that he was an emotional rather than an intelligent writer, and that his continued insistence on
171 sex precludes any real regard for the intellect. Lawrence believes it to be a matter of the utmost vital urgency
172 that man should accept his physical and animal nature. Nature is right, and in so far as it is to be followed,
173 man's animal nature is a good and admirable quality. Lawrence develops this idea to its logical conclusion,
174 making sexual relationships the basis of his naturalistic viewpoint, for in a world dominated by the huge excesses
175 of industrial society, sex is the only remaining link with nature.

176 Lawrence sees sex as the particular problem of the 20 th century, and where he and his characters are concerned
177 it is essentially through sexual relationships of a particular kind that fulfillment in life can be obtained, but he
178 refuses to accept that these are universal laws for all men. Most readers today understand Lawrence's position
179 sympathetically and acknowledge that he stood for values of some impossible in a world whose traditional values
180 were fast-changing. It is explicit that Lawrence's emphasis on sex is exaggerated, whilst he himself regarded a
181 true understanding of it to be central to his work. He stressed on the ideas on modern civilization with which
182 he was dealing. It is important to learn what Lawrence understood sex to be. He did not write to convey moral
183 ideas on sex or anything else, but rather that the moral ideas emerge themselves from the imaginative experiences
184 of the writing career. Lawrence was an emotional writer.

185 Lawrence is concerned about certain ideas and values, but these values are not fixed or absolute doctrine. He
186 did not claim these ideas to be valid for all people at all times. He believed in the strong views on the suitability
187 of the novel form. He always tried to seek new and varied techniques in his works, but as he is too emotional
188 and unrestrained to concern himself with the technical problems. So few critics have given Lawrence the credit
189 he deserves as technical innovator. His interpretation of the function of characters in his novels is original and
190 imaginative. Lawrence felt that moral ideas could be discussed in the novel at a supreme level of artistry and he
191 develops purely realistic level of new trends in the novel form. His novels can be understood by looking into the
192 development of the themes and ideas, which dominates his novels.

193 Thus, it is evident from the above discussion that the study of literature provides us that very humanizing
194 power that engages feeling and imagination, and gives the wisdom for valuing dignity and high spirits. For moral
195 absolutes, great literature works as a source of human aspiration for the highest ideals. Literature also dealt
196 with the complexity of moral dilemmas set against the relativity of experience. Literature has great formative
197 power on public morality. We are influenced to behave in a particular way as our personality gets affected by the
198 stronger personality of the author. Role of moral education through literature has been persisted, and played a
199 key role in formulating national policies in any nation in the twentieth-century.

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