

Rewriting The Definition of Love In Man Woman Relationship: Challenging Archetypes By Breaking Myths In D.H Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

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Abstract:

David Herbert Lawrence, a pioneering and eminent figure, who is believed to have heightened the superiority of modernity, has viewed love as a holistic and noble union of mind and body to achieve complete “wholeness”. To Lawrence, love is not static, rather a dynamic force that always remains in a motion. This is what he described as “flower of life” which, unlike regular natural flower, blossoms unexpectedly that must be enjoyed. There are three key aspects in love as described by Lawrence. First, it is a reconciliation of mind and body as described above. In Lawrence’s own words, true love is the “hastening gravitation of spirit towards spirit, and body towards body”. Second, love is “star equilibrium”, his most famous concept on love, that interprets love as a predicament in which two people, lover and his beloved, are emotionally attached deeply but they persist separately independent. Third, Lawrence regards lover’s beloved as a “divine otherness” that can never be fully possessed. In *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, Lawrence has maintained to follow this principles where the relationship between Lady Connie Chatterley and Oliver Mellors is an outburst of restorative and holistic force. As the Title of this article indicates, it attempts to explore how Lawrence has tried to challenge stereotypes by breaking myths to generate new meaning of love.

Keywords- Myths, Patriarchy, Eroticism, Language, Obscenity

Introduction:

Love in heterosexual relationship finds a new expression in Lawrence’s *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* where class-conscious, puritanical and strict stereotypes of early 20th century British society concerning love, sex and marriage have been profoundly challenged by Lawrence by his ample emphasis on sensuality and eroticism rejecting intellectuality. Considered to be a seminal text on sexuality, *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* incorporates

Lawrence's keen insight towards awakening female sensuality by keeping aside shame and societal constrictions. Through this novel, Lawrence upholds for having a "resurrection of the body" against an intellectual and mechanical environment. In defining love in a different way, Lawrence takes refuge in breaking myths through the explicit relationship between Connie Chatterley and Oliver Mellors and by throwing challenge to "purely mental" love of aristocratic upper class people. Connie, who has upbringing in a socially permissive family under her Scottish painter father Mr. Malcolm and later becomes wife of aristocratic Clifford, gets into a physical sexual relationship with Oliver Mellors, a gamekeeper belonging to lower class; and this relationship between them is formulated in such a way that it becomes a weapon for Lawrence to make direct attack on social, sexual and emotional conventions of early twentieth century British society. This path breaking relationship between them severely shatters deeply rooted myths concerning class, gender and nature of love.

Discussion:

The illicit relationship and sexual affair between Connie and Mellors is central to this novel that serves to destroy various class, gender and societal myths of early twentieth century British society where people could not fully shake off austere Victorian conventions. The compact bonding between them is totally built on sexuality, eroticism, physical intimacy, tenderness and mutual respect for each other. This strong bonding gradually becomes a counter narrative to the "all mind" existence of elite people.

The relationship between two central characters of this novel, Connie and Mellors, acts as a catalyst in breaking myths regarding class, gender and society. It breaks the myth of superiority of class. Nobody in contemporary times, could not believe that there could be a love affair between aristocratic upper class and lower class, but this relationship proves this myth false. The affair between them makes attempt to break rigid class structure of contemporary British society. It utterly opposes the idea that intimacy should be restricted in one's own social class. At the same time, it wipes out the concept that life fulfilling all kinds of desires can be lived "all in the mind" or based merely on intellect. Lawrence regards that there is no space for intellect when it comes to love or living life fulfilling all desires. It is sensuality that matters most in this regard about which Mr. Malcolm, father of Connie, tells her after Clifford becomes impotent following his fatal wound that he received in war. Connie's Marital relationship with Clifford proves as sterile and intellectual that leads to a deep void which can fulfilled only by sexual and emotional intimacy; this sexual intimacy Connie finds in Mellors who initially feels afraid to involve physically with her due to her upper class but the more the plot unfolds, he gathers courage and makes both physical and mental intimacy with her. On the one hand, Clifford is an embodiment of abstract intellectual ideas and mechanical industry which Lawrence has deemed as "dead", on the other Mellors brings the "organic way of life", replete with physical emotional touch and nature.

The relationship between Connie and Mellors further breaks the myth that female can not have sexual urge. The novel displays Connie's need for sexual fulfillment, legitimizing female sexual agency and pleasure. Connie indulges in physical relationship with Mellors and thereby becomes an active participant in her own desire and sexual fulfillment. In this regard, Lawrence's focus on sexual orgasms that Connie receives first with Michaelis, and then multiple times with Mellors, is very much instrumental in breaking Victorian myth that female desire is "improper" or something that does not exist.

This love affair between them also breaks the myth of fixed social boundaries by performing "erotic class masquerade". Mellors is designed to be a "bi-dialectal shifter" (1994: 19) who moves like a pendulum between standard English and broad Derbyshire dialect to entice Connie. This shift of dialect by Mellors is so alluring that Connie can not help participate to it. For prior to involving in sexual intercourse with Mellors, Connie Chatterley role-plays as a servant and after having sex, she performs or tries to perform Mellors's broad Derbyshire dialect. This is very instrumental in giving their relationship a shape of Bakhtinian Carnavalesque, as argued by Courtney Pina Miller. In this regard, Miller says, "...Connie and Mellors' carnivalizing exchange can be understood as the yoking of their classed and linguistic incongruities- a brief suspension of class hierarchies" (Miller 21). They also take part in role reversal because in certain scenes, Connie, intending to subvert their social positions, deliberately performs the role of a servant by making tea for Mellors. The trajectory of Connie's journey from an aristocratic upper class woman to a pregnant woman, impregnated by a common labourer marks the "symbolic termination" of elite class patriarchal family structure.

Lawrence's dislike for industry and machines gets reflected in his attempt to demolish myth revolving industry and he does it again through the unequal relationship between Connie and Mellors. Woods is very much important here because Mellors as a character can never be imagined without woods or vice versa and whenever they make physical relationship, it is in the hut that is located within the woods. Thus the lovers create a "nature oriented utopia" in the woods that acts as a rejection of the industrial "New England". Lawrence's goal is to represent the woods as a sanctuary where love and relationship between Connie and Mellors flourish. To Clifford, woods is a resource to intellectual ideas that needs to be protected but the lovers find it as a space to escape from the "ugliness of industrial capitalism".

Apart from the relationship between Connie and Mellors, the strange relationship between Clifford and his nurse Mrs. Ivy Bolton is a myth shattering element which unfolds the deterioration of contemporary British aristocratic class, simultaneously it subverts class

and power dynamics. The strange relationship between them starkly contrasts the romantic ideals of the novel presented through Connie and Mellors. Through the perverse relationship between Clifford and Mrs. Bolton, interpreted as a mix of “mother and child”, Lawrence aims to uphold the fact that in absence of a healthy, emotional and physical relationship, upper class people like Clifford resort to a distorted, infantile reliance. In addition to it, Lawrence uses this strange relationship to demolish the myth of class barriers in that Clifford, a “master” to Bolton, himself a baronet and member of elite class, is getting managed by his “servant” Bolton who uses every chance to manipulate him. Thus Lawrence uses this condemned affair to shatter the idea of aristocratic superiority.

Language is another important element in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* which Lawrence uses in a revolutionary manner through challenging archetypal patterns of early twentieth century for eradicating social, sexual and class myths of contemporary times. The novel delves deep into “the language of sacred experience” by making use of raw and uncensored words, physical descriptions to counter patriarchal, industrial and class conventions. While talking about language used in the novel, it is very important to lay much emphasis on the way in which Lawrence has given two separate names for male and female genitals of Mellors and Connie. This naming of genitals is pivotal and symbolic instrument to depersonalize the characters’ sexual confrontations and elevate them to a “primordial level”, completely free from the clutches of social restrictions. Assigning pet names to genitals, *Lady Jane* for Connie and *John Thomas* for Mellors, Lawrence aims to combat what he described earlier “sex in the head”, the intellectualization and shaming of physical desire or lust. Lawrence does make frequent use of “four letter words” and particular names for purifying them from their vulgar connotations. In addition to it, naming genitals as different characters, makes the lovers to get into the realm of “blood-conscious” level where bodily wisdom is prioritised over mental social conditioning. In this context, David J. Gordon points out, “...the genitals are given the names of persons, and parts of the body substitute for the whole body. It thus asserts imaginatively an identity between nominal and actual physical presence, but implies at the same time, as a self-conscious figure of speech, separation and incompleteness. Language enables yet frustrates. Lawrence the vivacious rhetorician evidently finds a specific satisfaction through writing, though he is compelled to seek in thought a reality beyond words” (Gordon 372). Lawrence’s use of slang and raw words infuses high level of obscenity in language, thereby he aims to criticise the language of elite class people like Clifford; at the same time Lawrence wants to demolish the shackles of patriarchy. Charles M. Burack opines, “Lawrence’s critique of language and vision not only anticipates current theoretical discussions of logocentrism and oclularcentrism, but also partially subverts the patriarchal ideology voiced by the narrator and main characters and

thus suggests that Lawrence may have had stronger sympathies with feminism that has been asserted” (Burack 104).

Conclusion

Lady Chatterley’s Lover, in every nuances, can be considered as a landmark text that has been designed by Lawrence to annihilate gendered and societal myths, rigid hierarchical class structure and austere patriarchal conventions. Lawrence has left no stone unturned to make it a seminal revolutionary novel through using unequal relationship and obscenity infused language. In this novel, Lawrence champions working class people’s labour, language and sentiment in order to fulfill his objective of breaking myths. In words of Courtney Pina Miller, “By paying closer attention to the ways in which Lawrence experiments with and values the thematic and formal fusion of working-class labour and language with avant-garde provocativeness, Lawrence envisions working-class identity as much more than one’s relationship to the means of production- he attributes ideological, cultural, psychological, linguistic, and sexual characteristics to class” (Miller 23).

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