

A Comparative Study of Women Characters in The Select Novels Of D.H. Lawrence And T. Janakiraman

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Abstract: D.H. Lawrence and T. Janakiraman in their novels portray the intricacies of the workings of the human mind, especially of women. They also stress the complexity of human nature - the dark underworld below the human consciousness which religion, civilization and morality may hide but cannot subdue or obliterate. This dark underworld is brought to the fore through the women characters – whether they are mothers, mistresses or wives, they exhibit their calculative, cunning, shrewd and destructive bent up of minds. The sons' individual, natural and passionate lives, the ardent lovers' dignity and the reputation of the family members of the husbands are spoilt or destroyed by their modern adamant attitudes.

It is revealed that the women portrayed in these novels are no more traditional but modern in their 'deliberate' attempts to achieve their own goals by exploiting the 'select' men to the core.

Keywords: women characters, roles and responsibilities.

D.H. Lawrence, the explorer-novelist of the unconscious, was the son of a coal-minor and a talented woman with middle-class aspirations. He began work as a shop-assistant, then qualified for his teaching certificate at Nottingham and taught for five years at Croyden. After a severe illness, he gave up teaching and lived, though precariously, by writing.

T. Janakiraman, one of the most popular Tamil novelists of the 20th century was born on 28, June 1921 in the village of Devangudi in Tanjore district, Tamilnadu. Thi.Jha, as he was fondly known, was a leading light of the 'Manikodi' school of writers in Tamil, the author of famous novels such as Mogamul, Chemparuthi, AmmaVandhal and Marappasu.

Both these novelists' writings portrayed the intricacies of the workings of the human mind. The smell of the soil, the taste of its food, the music of the dialect, and its peculiar cultural elitism are attractively displayed in their writings.

According to Walter Pater, a great Victorian critic, there is a distinction between the good art and the great art. The good art is the outcome of the perfect fusion of form and matter, but this good art becomes a great art only when it deals with a great theme of universal significance. In brief, an artist becomes great when he increases our understanding of human life and human nature and gives us new awareness of man's potentialities, stimulates love and sympathy for man as man and for the rest of the creation and above all, fills us with hope about the future of mankind. All this, of course, must be achieved within the artistic limits and not at the cost of art.

D.H. Lawrence and Thi.Jha were those artists who played the role of prophets. They realized that the march of the modern scientific and industrial civilization was not an advance into life but into death, because it has enslaved man to the machine. It has magnified the mind at the cost of the heart and thus has choked the sources of the free flow of sympathy; it has undermined the dignity and independence of the individual man and woman. The result is that while wealth is multiplying and science is triumphing, man is becoming more and more isolated from man, from nature and from his own self. He is conquering the universe but losing his noble soul.

The most essential thing, to these novelists, was to restore the dignity of human individual by making his heart a fountain of living water. This is possible only through love and sympathy, of this; the basic aspect was love between man and woman, which starts with their sexual relationship. Lawrence's first task was to revive the sex by lifting it up from the unspeakably degraded position to which generations of religious and moral leaders had reduced it. He boldly sanctified it and associated the sexual intercourse with the experiences of mystic's communion with God. He described this intercourse frankly and elaborately as if it were a ritual. In his treatment of human individuals, Lawrence stressed the complexity of human nature, the dark under world below the human consciousness, which religion, civilization and morality may hide but cannot subdue or obliterate:

“Ursula has a glimpse of this world, when she sees, the eyes of the wild beast gleaming from the darkness, watching the vanity of the camp fire and the sleepers...the gleam in the eyes of the wolf and hyena was the flash of the sword of the angels, flashing at the door to come in, the angels in the darkness were lordly and terrible and not be denied, like the flash of fangs.”

The meaning is that man must recognize the divine and the demonic forces latent in him, a composite of flesh and spirit and his whole effort should be directed towards the reconciliation of these oppositions in order to arrive at something higher. The union of bodies must lead to the union of spirits and to the union with the universe.

The humanism of Thi.Jha finds its fullest manifestation in his concept of womanhood set forth in his novels. His concept unfolds itself through a recapitulation of the age-old notions and consolidation of the near feminine consciousness. He begins by highlighting the ambivalence present in the treatment of women in the Indian context. The female, on the one hand, has been much exalted in India and on the other hand, she has been degraded beyond reason. Thi.Jha traces the discrimination between man and woman as the western feminists do, to the story of creation. "Man was first created and woman next. And Brahma, the creator, fashioned the feminine far better than the masculine."

The women of Lawrence and Thi.Jha whether they are mothers, lovers or wives, are very calculative, cunning, and shrewd only to make their own ends meet. They do not belong to traditional womanhood but to the modern. As D.H. Lawrence and T. Janakiraman were writers who revolted against traditions and oppression of women, we see in their depiction of mother characters, a shift from the feminine to the feminist tendencies. In their attempt to achieve their own goals fulfilled, their love is deliberately contaminated with corruption and selfishness. Mothers – Mrs. Morel and Alankaram in the novels *SONS AND LOVERS* and *AMMA VANDHAL* – exhibit selfish and corruptive love and affection upon their 'select' sons. It is customary to chant that a mother's love is unfathomable and so in that selfless and sacrificing love, heaven is visible. But there are mothers who express love towards their 'chosen' sons only to make their own ends meet.

Women as Mothers

Paul's mother, Mrs. Morel, though emotionally very affectionate, never knows a life of 'give and take' in equal proportion. She wants to possess or to dominate and to live through the surrogate satisfaction of other people's achievements, especially of their sons.

Mrs. Morel, from a highly respectable non-conformist middle class background, enjoyed a kind of 'aristocracy' among the other women of the 'between' houses, because her rent was five shillings and sixpence instead of five shillings a week. She wanted to and expected this 'aristocracy' ever to be maintained, of course, through her husband.

But her expectation would not materialize, she felt, as far as she had hope in her husband. He had hidden many things from her. He had lied about certain things. The knowledge that her husband had lied and hidden things made her hate him. When she came to know that he had not paid the rent bills and owed forty two pounds more her blood boiled. She strongly said, 'I don't like sitting on another man's chairs and eating from an unpaid table'.

She determined to fight for and come up. Now, she cleverly tried to possess her sons and through them to fulfill her expectation. Unwilling to send her sons to the coal-mining work of their father, Mrs. Morel prepares them to rise above the circumstances of their birth. Her preparation, of course, is not to make her sons 'rise above', but she to come up. Here, her motherly affection and love is tainted with selfishness. It is evident when she triumphantly remarks, 'NOT FOR NOTHING HAD BEEN MY STRUGGLE'. She first chooses Williams, her first son, because she finds him 'a clever, frank, strong and active with rather rough features and real Viking blue eyes.

When Williams attains thirteen years, she provides him her enormous and expansive support that he becomes the best shorthand clerk and book-keeper, a teacher at night schools and he does all the decent things that men do. He runs like a wind. He wins a first prize in a race. He gives all his money to his mother. He consorts with the sons of the chemist, the school master, the tradesmen, the bank manager and the doctors. He plays billiards in Mechanics Hall. Everybody praises William.

With the help of Williams, the family now moves from the Bottoms to a house on the brow of the hill, commanding a view of the valley. Mrs. Morel is very happy and proud. But when William unexpectedly dies, she quickly clings to Paul Morel, her second son. When he falls very ill, she nursed him. With the immense care of the mother, he gets up quickly. Her love and affection confines Paul within her arm-pit that he becomes a great artist.

However, behind all her affection, care and support lies the hidden selfish motive that she to attain the social status. She felt that she "had no independent existence and was deprived of any avenue of attainment with the drunkard and the coal-mining husband. He was of no use to her." So, she holds the hands of her son to get her own social ambitions achieved.

Like Mrs. Morel, Alankaram in Thi.Jha's novel, *Amma Vandhal*, too has a special love on her last son, Appu. While all her other sons have become a doctor, a teacher, an engineer, she makes Appu a Vedic scholar. Appu is her 'preferred' child. She does not pay the due attention and care to the other children. She does not even give importance to the girl child, Kaveri. To Alankaram, Appu is everything and everyone.

Alankaram's love and affection on her son Appu is not true and selfless. This mother too, has a hidden motive like Mrs. Morel. She has an illicit relationship with another man called Sivasu for years together. Everyone in the family knows it but is silent. Later, as she feels guilty of her actions, she wishes to make atonement. She thinks she cannot go anywhere else either to temples or to mutts to wash off her sin. She can

find salvation only by falling at the feet of her special son, Appu. She, succeeds partially in her attempt. She makes him a Vedic scholar. But she fails in getting the salvation from him. He refuses to do so. In their attempts to possess and fulfill their own ambitions, Mrs. Morel and Alankaram spoil their sons' individual, natural and passionate lives. The sons are unable to make progress with their mistresses. Caught in the strong dominating hold of the mothers, the sons lose their lovers.

Women in love

Lawrence's philosophy of love rests upon the basic assumption that for their fulfillment and self-realization, man and woman, the opposites, must unite with each other. The basis of this union is sex, the union of their bodies, which is something serious and sacred. It is, however, not a fusing and blending of the two into one but the balance of two distinct and opposite selves. But the two separate individuals must respect each other's independence, must be tender to each other. Conflict, of course, is inevitable. But the conflict must be creative, not destructive. The unions of the SPIRITS must lead to something beyond, to creative union with the world outside and even to the universe of nature.

But at the same time, Lawrence tries to expose keenly what is lying hidden in the minds of the individuals, especially of women. It is also the motive of T. Janakiraman to reveal what is there in the behaviour of man and woman in their relationships. Janakiraman never deals with the problems between an individual and the society. The problem of the individual is the leit-motif of his novels. Though the individual is a member of the society, the novelist gives importance only to his or her behaviour prompted by the personal impulses. The relationships are not harmonious, is what the novels are about. The couples fail to strike chords because, now in Rupert Birkin's analogy, the partners do not orbit around each other like stars, but collide like meteors, because of a flaw in character and that flaw in each instance is the desires of the female to know, to control and finally to possess her man. Lawrence and Thi.Jha's females in the novels are primal passions, fields of force whose surge and coil, if not directed by the male, will overwhelm their males.

It is all explicit by the attitude of dominance and possessiveness, revealed by the women characters who fall in love with men. Ursula and Hermione in Lawrence's THE RAINBOW and Yamuna and Thangamma in T. Janakiraman's MOGAMUL represent these characters - Ursula and Hermione fall in love with the same man, Birkin, as Yamuna and Thangamma with Babu. All these women are similar in the respect that they are possessive. The desire to possess and then to dominate men is exposed in the case of all these women.

Here, Love is encountered not as a sexual experience but as something spiritually oppressive and ultimately life-resisting rather than fulfilling.

Women as Wives

D.H.Lawrence and T. Janakiraman's heroines as wives are not engaged in the triumphs of courtship and marriage but in the negative acts of rebellion, adultery, flight, erotic anguish and self destruction. Mrs. Morel and Alankaram destroy not only themselves but also their family members especially their husbands. Walter Morel and Getrude met and knew each other one Christmas. When Getrude first met him, she thought of him rather wonderful, never having met anyone like him. She was startled to look at him and this was a new tract of life suddenly opened before her. The next Christmas, they willingly got married. They lived very happily before the birth of their first son, William. "For three months, she was perfectly happy, for six months, she was very happy". Though they lived in a small house, she felt it was convenient enough, being quite nicely furnished with solid worth stuff that suited her honest soul".

After the birth of the first child, William, Mrs. Morel, despised her husband. She turned to the child. She did not care about what her husband did. After the second son's she no longer loved him. This made Mr. Morel exceedingly irritable. When he went out of his house with his bundle, she sat trembling slightly. Her heart was brimming with contempt. What would she do, if he went to some other pit, obtained work, got in with another woman? She knew him very well. She was dead sure of him- he could not do like it. Mrs. Morel is determined and decided to throw him off from her life, half regretfully but ruthlessly, throwing him off and turning now for love and life to the children, particularly the boys. Here after, he is more or less a husk.

Alankaram, a Brahmin wife, in Thi.Jha's novel, Amma Vandhal, also despised her husband and became an adulteress for none of the mistakes or misbehavior of her husband. He was a true Brahmin and led a chaste life. She continued to remain in the family although she entertained another man of her fancy. She was very aware that her children did not like it but were silent.

Finally, when she came to know that Appu was not going to return to her house, she chose to go to Kasi to wash off her sin. But we must never forget, she had her place under her own sun. She might say that it was Sivasu who came and tormented her 'twinning his legs around her'. But the fact remains that she had allowed him. Lawrence analyses the instinctive knowledge of women. There are two aspects to women. There is the demure and the dauntless. The woman who has got to make her way in life has got to be dauntless and if she has a pretty, demure manner with it, then a lucky woman. She kills two birds with a single stone.

Conclusion

D.H. Lawrence as well as T. Janakiraman wanted to explore beneath the surface of human behaviour in an attempt to estimate the forces that motivate it. Their works are, at all times, totally concerned with discrimination between the levels of existence. The majority of people live half lives, failing to develop even a tenth of the potential that they retain inwardly without knowing it. The need to explore men's nature below its surface would lead to them into far frank discussion of sex, religion and psychology than we find in any other English and Tamil novelists before them.

For the most part, Lawrence and Janakiraman's women - their heroines - are not engaged in the triumphs of courtship, marriage and domesticity as much as in the negative acts of rebellion, adultery, flight, erotic anguish and self destruction. Their women have a special role in the negative drama. Lawrence and Thi.Jha very much understand the problem of the woman, who has effaced the real self in order to satisfy man-made images. Men had the images; they conceived the patterns- women carried them to please the men.

“But women are not fools...they have their own logic. A woman may spend years living up to a masculine pattern, but in the end, the strange and terrible logic of emotion will work out smashing the same pattern, if it has not been emotionally satisfactory.”

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