

Dominance and Equality as a Contradiction in the Works of D.H. Lawrence and Kamala Das

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Abstract

This research paper is an academic exercise and interpretation of selected works of Kamala das and D. H Lawrence. It examines the interesting and intriguing personalities behind their writings. The work of Lawrence and Kamala Das brings out their search for a compatible relationship. They both suffer personal agony all through their life. We need to go deeply to the core to understand their personality and intention in their writings.

I intend to examine the Lawrence ideology in his works like Sons and Lovers, The Rainbow, Women in love which shows how he employed an art, especially through novels to reveal his message which is an eradication of conflict between intellect and, the natural instinct, which will lead to the fulfillment of the desire by creating a balance between the relationships. The research will also convey the views concerning morality and life which are central to human existence.

Out of all Indian English Poets, Kamala Das (1934-2009) has achieved an important position in the pioneering of confessional mode of writing like her other counterparts like Anne Sexton and Sylvia Path. She suffered in her incompatible marital life which tortured her mentally and physically. Her husband, instead of providing her romantic environment maintained a distanced relationship with her. This attitude completely frustrated her.

Keywords

Dominance, Modernist, Equality, Oppression

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The D.H Lawrence 's novels and Kamala Das's poems give a view of the personal agony which they had to suffer in their lives, their works depict the story where they struggle to come out from the bondage of their personal relationships. D.H. Lawrence's major novels *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love* brings into play a whole gamut of polyphonic voices lending the texts a dynamic perspective. This becomes clear from the novel, *Women in Love* where we can visualize a multiplicity of unmerged voices of different characters who represent various points of view lending the novel a polyphonic dimension. The objective of the present research is to study the particular fictional works, the idea of the wholeness of life that seems to be Lawrence's and Kamala Das's preoccupation as an artist. An examination of the writer's idea of the integrated life which necessarily involves an inquiry into the conception of the human self and its varied relationships not only with the human and the non-human worlds but also with the realms of art and of the beyond.

The English Literature world over is dominated by the modernist movement which brought the social alterations and encounters which created an incredible change in the way of writers.

Lawrence gripped with the essence of cruelty customary in the 19th century. As he saw the tragic times he always felt disgusted with the conditions of the society. The offense which the upper-class people and supporters of industry committed during the Victorian days. The workers were the creating an irresistible environment for which is because of an idea, religion, hope, love, clothes, the relationship between the workers and their employers. This led to inequality between the classes as a hierarchical order. Kamala Das on the other hand wanted to come out of the bondage of a patriarchal society that was very rampant during those times. She knew that the male domination was very prevalent in the society. the historical revelations of Lawrence and Kamala Das which are very similar to each other; how these visions were formed; and what idea of historical process of dominance and equality they imply. Lawrence being a British writer suffered the same psychological experiences same as of Kamala Das who writes against the social background of India. The poems of Kamala das extend our understanding of life, especially that of women's inward experience. She is more of a poet, a feminist and a confessional than any other poet. In her poetry, women's problems need a different lens and different semantic sets to express them. Being a woman and love poet, Kamala das regrets that critics never realize the value of her work. But Kamala Das turns out with boldness to stand against the odds of scandal indignity, and character assassination. She is a liberated women and a creative writer. It is undeniable that all the works of Das have a stamp of her identity and her liberated

spirit. She was fighting for her life from the bondage of social values and morals which had been suppressing for a long time in the society. She seems to be a solitary visionary standing all alone and aloof like a feminine Columbus in the creative discovery of her passionate self. Both Kamala Das's life and works are so controversial and unconventional and she encourages many writers to follow her style, to tell the truth, both her poetic version and her personal life. This is because she examines more boldly that what a man would do, the pangs and frustrations of love, from her various profoundly personal and subtly physical angles. As we talk about D. H Lawrence he always talks about people, man – woman and the complexity of the relations they have to go through. His works do not give us a clear picture of gender equality. As a child, D.H Lawrence, like Paul in the novel *Sons and Lovers*, was blended in the world of his father, who was a miner by profession, who was the most righteous man with the right sense and that of a harsh mother with her predictable aspirations. Lawrence's inability to reunite these two figures in his life and, as a result, he had to reject both, which is confirmed by his desirability to a socially atypical woman, Frieda von Richthofen, who helped him in his freedom from the bondage of puritan values and the narrowmindedness of provincial Midlands. The present research of my work focuses on the discussion of masculine studies in the fiction of classic literature. The study talks about the *Sons and Lovers* (1913), which gives the importance of masculinity prevalent during those times. The effects of social practices and the socio-historical context in which Lawrence wrote these novels are also examined. The study utilizes Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity to explicate Lawrence's depiction of dominant masculinity through his character. The findings reveal that Lawrence aligns his male protagonist to the dominant role by sanctioning aggressiveness, autonomy and violence. On the contrary, Kamala das always knew that society is ruled by men; gives specific rules and regulations for women. They try to bind a woman as a wife, as a mother avoiding her to have a self-realization. Das wants to whack away the outdated values of the society.

Kamala Das writes: "My mother did not fall in love with my father . They were dissimilar and horribly mismatched. (Das 11).

But her mother's fearfulness created an illusion of domestic harmony, and produced some half a dozen children of dark skin and ordinary features.

A woman is considered to play the role of mother and most importantly a wife, who is dependent on her husband for everything and desires for a child to have that respect and consideration. Also, with physical domination and disloyalty, the absence of love in a man-woman relationship is a spontaneous form of male oppression. Loveless relationships are intolerable. These writings were written when there were complications

in the human psychology. In connection with the real-life situations, there is flow of thought giving the scope to experiment and is considered as one of the important themes. After the First and the Second World Wars, there was a change in the mentality of the people. The popular writers like Sigmund Freud and Jung initiated for the theory of development which came into progress by the brilliant novelists during that time period. The crux of the writings with a concept of imagination, reason and experimentation was majorly a part of the Lawrence's published *Sons and Lovers*. The novel exposes the subtle and complicated minds of the central characters like Gertrude, Paul, Miriam and Clara. Lawrence has analyzed the complications of human minds and the relationship revolving around the adulthood. Mr. Morel is depicted as the one who displays the qualities of a male-oriented society and the wife as a strict conformist in moral behavior. The personality of Mrs. Morel dominates the entire novel with her intelligence and strong will. Miriam cannot grow in harmony with her partner. The poems of Kamala Das are a call to every Indian woman begged down for centuries by age-old customs and time-honored conventions, to the shake of her, docility and to fight against a social injustice against her gender. The strong ambition for freedom, which includes the freedom to revolt, forms the central theme in many of her poems. She talks about the male offenses in her poems and builds up a construction of protest and revolt through her poems. Several poems of Das depict the boredom and dullness of sex within and outside marriage. Their love is a disgusting lust, a poor substitute for real love. As said by Prasanthi.

The life of Das's persona may be considered a tale of her experiments with love and the repeated failures of her experiments force her ego to be resentful and defiant. She looks upon each encounter as a substitute for the real experience of true love . (Prasanthi 34-35)

Taking in view Lawrence's other novel *The Rainbow* in which Tom and Lydia struggle with each other but their marriage is ultimately a success. Initially, there were some problems in the early stages of their marriage. The women in Brangwen Saga learn to thrive independently of their men. In the novel, we can say that Marriage is the central concern and is prioritized. In Lawrence's eyes, marriage is the essential means through which man can come into direct contact with nature, and ultimately achieves moral awareness. The real significance of marriage lies in whole family relationships and not only in the awareness, morals and otherwise which husband and wife may derive from each other. But at the same time, Lawrence feels that the actual physical sexual relationship provides the final and real moral contact. The real achievement of Tom

Brangwen's life lies in his ability to submit his will to the wider implications of life, and the same situation does not prevail in between Will and Anna in the second

generation which becomes the failure in their relationship. Tom and Lydia achieve a balanced relationship that liberates them, enabling them to live from their own centers while dependent upon each other. On the other hand, Will concentrates on Anna and tries to force her to accept him on his own terms, and ultimately neither of them changes significantly by the other and the marriage does not become a new birth of life for both of them. The Wills characteristics can be defined through the traits like 'fright', 'humiliation, indignity', as he refuses to release himself in the way that Tom had done. According to him, he feels that he cannot change the things which he has already fixed, as his will was already decided and no one can destroy him. Will is always afraid of the unknown and seeks comfort and security in Anna and in his love of the church, and all of these are used as chances to escape from rather than to come into contact with life. After having come into contact with this type of atmosphere, Anna comes to hate Will for his dependence on her and she becomes complete and detached in herself and in her children. Sometimes Will tries to be humble and admits that without his wife he is nothing, but he does all this unnaturally through fear and not through a real spontaneous defeat for Will, though at the same time it hardly provides any victory for Anna. Female dominance in *Sons and Lovers* is depicted through the relationships between the main female and male characters. It depicts the female dominant action against male passive reaction. Mr. Morel is one of the isolated people in the house. The house, in which the family of Mr. Morel lives, is built by Mr. Morel. However, he feels that he can only rest and be at peace in his mind when he is at work not in his house. The house deepens Mrs. Morel's anguish and self-denial. She feels suffocated as if she is buried alive. According to Alastair Niven, Mrs. Morel has an emotional power far beyond her husband's, as the verbs Lawrence uses to show how great the conflict is between her and her husband.

Lawrence Narrates

There began a battle between the husband and wife a fearful bloody battle that ended only with the death of one. She fought to make him undertake his own responsibilities, to make him fulfill his obligations. But he was too different from her. His nature was purely sensuous, and strove to make him Morel, religious. She tried to force him to face things. He could not endure it – drove him out of his mind. (D. H. Lawrence 14)

Lawrence supposed that the most important motive of man is human activity. Man is not confined to one direction only; apart from sexual desire, man has creative or religious impulses. The creative and religious impulse is what Lawrence refers to as a pure form of the disinterested urge of the male to make something wonderful, through its own self, faith and delight which can make

everything going. The relationship between two males is one of the themes of *Women in Love*. But Birkin's problem of man to man relationship has been left unsolved in the novel. However, the works like *Aaron's rod*, *Kangaroo*, and *The Plumed serpent* may be regarded as the unreal version of Lawrence's theory of the man-to-man relationship. In these novels, Lawrence has, with great acumen, outlined two aspects of man to man relationship.

The relationship between two men as individuals; and the relationship of men in society . (D. Lawrence 02 and 207).

In the Indian literary writers, Kamala Das is a feminist fighting to liberate women from the bondage of conventional social values and morals which had been suppressing them in her country for a long time. Kamala Das weaves poems in original unpremeditated, automatic and aesthetic construct of sounds and symbols. In her poem, Kamala Das goes out to seek love outside the orbit of marriage in her inner longing which is fresh with new experiences of love. The dominant outlook of the men is the major reason for the unhappiness of women. They are suffering and are silent about their condition. Women all over the world are fighting for recognition and survival. On the other hand, women have been exploited by men of all ages. From Hardy to Hemmingway, the desirable woman portrayed is passive and subservient. As she said that women's ego is not harmful to the society, she raises her voice to define equality between the two worlds that is masculine and feminine. The Indian poets used to write in the English language mostly to depict the real picture of the country. In all respects, Indian civilization and culture are not at all omitted in their writing. Both Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das through their works portray women as the major character as heroines which are portrayed as a dog, dolls, etc., through these characteristics the entire women do not get freedom, we cannot stop women from shedding tears. We can see women who want to live with their husbands, family members even after oppression, and leading a troublesome life throughout. But, Kamala das never accepted this culture which she clearly explains through her poem "*An Introduction*" which portrays her suffering resulting she came out from that bondage and showed despite of living in the patriarchal society she can lead a healthy life of her own, and women do have the existence other than prevalent domestic affair which we can also see in the writings of Lawrence which depicts a kind of conflict and is being criticized by the critics like George Ford, Keith Sagar. This pattern divides the composition into three different stages in which the first phase depicts the Lawrence 's bonding and attachment with his mother , in phase two the critics shift their sympathy from mother to father and in the next phase, we can see the author's wish to defeat the love for mother. In the last phase, Lawrence returns to the love scheme without caring defeat of the woman. He

then wanted to reunite his mother and father, which made her weak physically and artistically.

Conclusion

Kamala Das may be described as a feminist. She explains the social norms of the patriarchal culture through her poetry, she always brought up the themes exploring for the rights of women on the other hand, and Lawrence always wanted to have a sexual revolution which will give freedom to women who can create an order to come out from the bondage of the society.

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